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BEIS MOSHIACH

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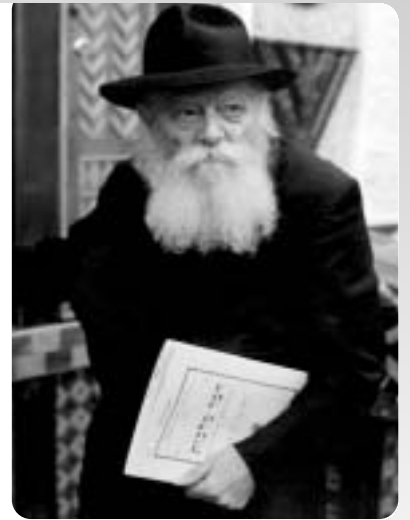
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YAAKOV AVINU: THE COMPLETE JEW

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



SHABBOS PARSHAS VA'YEITZEI; 11TH DAY OF KISLEV, 5750

1. This week's portion, Parshas VaYeitzei, begins the narrative of the life of Yaakov Avinu, which continues until the conclusion of the Book of Bereishis. Our Sages declare: "The deeds of the patriarchs are a sign for their descendants." Implicit in that statement is that the patriarchs' deeds are not merely an indication of what will occur to the Jewish people in future generations, but they exert an influence on their descendants' future, causing it to mirror their different activities. In that context, the events of Yaakov's life contain significance for every Jew, for they help shape his future.

Significantly, we find a contrast between Yaakov and the patriarchs who preceded him, Yitzchok and Avrohom. Our Sages explain: Yishmael descended from Avrohom, and Eisav descended from Yitzchok. But regarding Yaakov — his bed was perfect; i.e., all of his sons were righteous.

The question arises: How is it possible for the patriarchs who were "a chariot for G-d," [i.e., they were totally given over to G-d's will], to have descendants like Eisav and

Yishmael? We are forced to say that the fact that the patriarchs had such children was also representative of their high level. The Hebrew expression for "descended from" (*yatza mimenu*), can also be interpreted as "was expelled from." Avrohom and Yitzchok's process of self-refinement included the expulsion of the undesirable traits represented by Yishmael and Eisav. Once the patriarchs were purged of these qualities, their own service remained untainted.

To explain the relation of the above to our individual service of G-d: The service of *chesed* ("kindness", the attribute that characterizes Avrohom's service, which is related to the service of doing good), must be limited, constrained so that one's kindness is not bestowed upon those who are undeserving. Accordingly, it is necessary to nullify, to expel entirely, any undesirable element (for example, Yishmael, who is representative of the *chesed* associated with *klipa*, evil). Correspondently, the service of *gevura* (might, associated with the quality of fear and thus, with the patriarch Yitzchok as the verse states "the fear of Yitzchok") must also involve the negation and the

estrangement of all connection with the quality of might associated with *klipa* (as personified by Eisav).

This explanation, however, raises a question: Since Yaakov was not at all involved with the service of the expulsion of evil (as reflected in his having children who were all righteous), it would seem appropriate that his service be carried out entirely within *Eretz Yisroel*, the realm of holiness. But that was not the case. Yitzchok is described as "a perfect burnt offering" and was forbidden to depart from *Eretz Yisroel*, whereas Yaakov left the Holy Land twice, once to Charan and once to Egypt.

The difficulty is further emphasized by the fact that Lavan, Yaakov's host in Charan during the time when he established his household (and thus, laid the foundation for the Jewish people in all future generations), was a dishonest person, and Egypt, where Yaakov spent his final (and according to our Sages "best") years, was "the most depraved of all countries."

The above difficulty can be resolved by the explanation of a related question: On the surface, the

statement that all of Yaakov's sons were righteous is difficult to understand. We find that Reuven "disturbed his father's bed." This difficulty can be resolved by the *Midrash's* description of Reuven as "the first to repent." The Holy One, blessed be He, told Reuven, "There was never a person who sinned before Me and repented. You opened the path of *teshuva*."

From this statement, it appears that Yaakov's raising a family who were "all righteous" included and depended on the service of *teshuva*. Reuven's *teshuva* complements and contributes a deeper dimension to

Since Yaakov was not at all involved with the service of the expulsion of evil, why did he leave the holy land twice, once to Charan and once to Egypt?

the righteousness of Yaakov's children as implied by our Sages' statement: "In the place of *baalei teshuva*, even the totally righteous cannot stand." *Teshuva* produces a deep and powerful love for G-d which surpasses the love of the completely righteous.

With this background we can understand the contrast between Yaakov and Avrohom and Yitzchok mentioned above: Through expelling the undesirable qualities represented by Yishmael and Eisav, Avrohom and Yitzchok were able to reach a level of perfection. This level, however, has no connection with the

transformation of evil. On the contrary, the evil remained in full force and, therefore, it had to be expelled.

This is evident from the fact that Yishmael and Eisav did not become *baalei teshuva*. Furthermore, both Avrohom and Yitzchok were willing to accept them even though they remained "wicked." Thus, Avrohom prayed, "May Yishmael live before you," and Yitzchok desired to bless Eisav.

In contrast, Yaakov's "bed was complete," i.e., he transmitted to his sons the potential to be righteous through the service of *teshuva*. Their efforts were not confined to the expulsion of evil. They were involved in its transformation into good through the service of *teshuva*, "transforming sins into merits." Ultimately, Yaakov also has the power to refine Eisav and draw out the lofty sparks of G-dliness contained within him.

2. The connection between Yaakov and the service of *teshuva* goes beyond the potential he granted Reuven for that service. Yaakov, himself, carried out a service of a parallel nature. Thus, we find two thrusts within Yaakov's behavior: the service of the righteous and the service of *baalei teshuva*. This is paralleled by the fact that he lived both in *Eretz Yisroel* (the service of the righteous) and in the Diaspora (the service of *baalei teshuva*).

Thus, Yaakov's descent to Charan and Egypt reflects the unique nature of his service, for it is through the transformation of these lowly lands into holiness that Yaakov expressed the ultimate power of *teshuva*. For this reason, it was in Charan (the Diaspora) where Yaakov established his household and in Egypt (the "nakedness of the land") where he spent his "best years." By elevating and refining the aspects of the world, transforming darkness into

light, one prevents any possibility of the darkness having a negative effect.

This explanation, however, raises a question: Since the highest levels of Yaakov's service were reached in (and through the transformation of) the Diaspora, why did he spend the majority of his life in *Eretz Yisroel*?

This question can be explained as follows: Yaakov's service includes the totality of the different approaches to the service of G-d. In particular, his life can be divided into three different periods: a) the time he spent in *Eretz Yisroel*. This

From Yaakov Avinu we derive the power to elevate the gentiles and influence them to fulfill the seven universal commandments given to Noach and his descendants.

includes the 63 years he spent together with his parents, Yitzchok and Rivka, as well as 14 years he spent in *Beis Eiver* before arriving at Charan, and also the 31 years he lived there after his return. b) The twenty years he spent in Lavan's house in Charan; and c) His final seventeen years which were spent in the land of Egypt. These three periods are representative of the three rungs of *tzaddikim* ("the righteous"), *beinonim* ("the intermediate"), and *rasha'im* ("the wicked") which, as explained in the beginning of the *Tanya*, include the

totality of the Jewish people.

Each one of these levels has a unique dimension which the others do not possess. The advantage of a *tzaddik* is that he is involved only with good and holiness. Evil has no place in his world. On the contrary, he rejects it and hates it totally.

The advantage of the *beinoni* — “the level of all men to which all men should strive” — is that he is involved in a constant battle between the good inclination and the evil inclination and through his service, the good inclination is always victorious. Thus, he “never violated a transgression in his lifetime, nor will he transgress.” His thought, speech, and action are only directed toward good. Though evil thoughts occur to him, he immediately rejects them, pushing them away with both hands.

The *rasha* also possess an advantage for through the service of *teshuva*, his wicked deeds are transformed into good and he reaches a level higher than that of the righteous.

The potential to carry out these three levels of service comes from Yaakov’s service in the three places: *Eretz Yisroel*, Charan, and Egypt. Yaakov’s service in *Eretz Yisroel* reflects the service of the *tzaddikim*. His service in Charan, refining and elevating the sheep of Lavan, reflects the service of the *beinonim* and his service in Egypt, the “nakedness of the earth,” is representative of the service of *teshuva* which elevates the *rasha'im*.

Although one might question how it was possible for a single individual, Yaakov, to carry out these three different services, encompassing three different time periods and three different places, since the “perfection” of Yaakov’s “bed” includes all three services, we are obligated to say that they are three dimensions of a single thrust.

This difficulty can be explained as follows: The ultimate rung in the service of G-d is not a combination of different services, but rather, a single all-encompassing commitment, which includes all the different manners of expression. Regardless of the person’s place or situation, he will have an appropriate service with which to express his commitment to G-d. Yaakov serves as a paradigm for such a commitment. The three services he carried out in the three different places, *Eretz Yisroel*, Charan, and Egypt, reflect his total and complete commitment to G-d’s service.

The Mittlerer Rebbe’s redemption gives the potential for every Jew to be redeemed, to rise above all limitations and all factors which hinder his service.

In this context, we can understand the difference between the “sign for his descendants,” generated by Yaakov’s service, and the sign generated by the services of Avrohom and Yitzchok. Avrohom’s and Yitzchok’s services teach us how to live in the realm of holiness and reject the influence of evil. Yaakov’s service generates a more encompassing influence. Yaakov’s soul includes within it all the souls of the entire Jewish people. Thus, his service serves as a sign for all the *tzaddikim*, *beinonim*, and *rasha'im* — i.e., the totality of the Jewish people — in all the generations to come.

Furthermore, from Yaakov, each Jew derives the potential for making the total commitment described above, which finds its expression in all of these three different services.

Each individual can find parallels to these three services within his personal life. Everyone has certain holy objectives which by nature he strives to fulfill (*Eretz Yisroel*, the service of the righteous). Similarly, we all have certain areas in which we find ourselves faced by a challenge and a conflict arising from our evil inclination (Charan, the service of the *beinoni*). Also, there are other areas where the challenge is greater and the influence of *teshuva* is necessary to correct our behavior (Egypt, the elevation of the wicked).

There is a connection between these three services: Generally, a *baal teshuva* (the level to which the *rasha'im* must aspire) does not become a *tzaddik* immediately. This represents too extreme a transformation. Instead, he passes through a stage where he has a conflict between his good inclination and his evil inclination, and yet does not transgress (the level of the *beinoni*). Only afterwards does he reach a level where his evil inclination does not present a conflict, for he has transformed it and thus, negated all possibility for sin.

Likewise, within a *beinoni* we can also find a parallel to these three services. There are aspects of the *beinoni*’s service which resemble the service of the righteous, i.e., he has no conflict and no desire other than the fulfillment of G-d’s will. Similarly, he has aspects of his service where he faces greater challenges. Though he does not sin, in these aspects he must consider himself “like a wicked person,” i.e., “not that he is actually wicked, but that he shares the temptations of the wicked in his thoughts and meditations, and he must constantly

fight to divert his attention from them.”

Within a *tzaddik* as well, there are also parallels to these three services as implied by the expression, “there is no righteous man on earth who will do only good and not sin.” Even according to the Chassidic interpretation of the level of a *tzaddik*, there are still certain challenges he faces. Furthermore, as explained above, even a *tzaddik* must carry out the service of *teshuva* (the service of the *rasha'im*). To reach this level, he must strive hard, a struggle which parallels the constant efforts of the *beinoni*.

Parallels to these three services can also be found in a Jew's daily life. The time a Jew spends in *shul*, the times of study and prayer parallel *Eretz Yisroel*, the service of the righteous. His activity in permitted matters, earning a livelihood and the like, parallels the challenges of the Diaspora. Within this general category, there are two subdivisions: one which resembles Charan and the service of the *beinonim*, and more severe challenges where he confronts gentiles who worship false gods and indeed, think that their money that the Jews received from them was granted to them by these false gods (the service within Egypt which parallels the elevation of the

rasha'im).

Similarly, parallels to these three services can be found within the history of our people. The first level relates to the era when the *Beis HaMikdash* was standing, and the second two levels relate to different periods within our service in exile. The power to carry out all these three services comes from Yaakov's journey to Charan.

In particular, in the present generation, the last period of exile, the exile of Edom, we are involved with gentiles who are associated with idol worship. Nevertheless, from Yaakov our patriarch, we derive the power to elevate the gentiles and influence them to fulfill the seven universal commandments given to Noach and his descendants. Indeed, from the very recent events we see the gentiles' society being transformed and overturned, and all this happening in a peaceful manner, without disruption. This is surely an indication that, as the Rebbe Rayatz stated, we are nearing the end of the exile. All that is necessary to do is “polish the buttons” and the Redemption will come immediately.

3. The above concepts are related to Yud Kislev, the Mitteler Rebbe's day of redemption, which was celebrated this year on Erev Shabbos, the day directly related to the preparations for this Shabbos.

The essence of the Mitteler Rebbe's redemption is that notwithstanding his imprisonment (an exile within exile), ultimately, the gentiles recognized the need to free him. This redemption, like the redemption of the other Rebbeim (the Alter Rebbe, Tzemach Tzedek, and the Rebbe Rayatz) is also a reflection of the refinement of the gentile nations, to the extent that when the Tzemach Tzedek was redeemed, he received the title, “an honored citizen for all generations.”

The “deeds of our Chassidic patriarchs are a sign for their descendants.” The Mitteler Rebbe's redemption gives the potential for every Jew to be redeemed, to rise above all limitations and all factors which hinder his service. To connect the redemption of Yud Kislev with an unbounded increase in our service, it is proper to organize Chassidic *farbrengens* in every place Jews are found.

These *farbrengens* should be continued on Yud-Daled (the 14th of Kislev and the 15th of Kislev (the day in Kislev when the moon is full), thus leading to the redemptions of Yud-Tes Kislev and Chanuka. May these redemptions lead to the ultimate Redemption led by Moshiach. May it come now, immediately.

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THE ESSENCE OF MOSHIACH REVEALED

BY RABBI SHOLOM YAAKOV CHAZAN
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY



If you ask a Lubavitcher *chassid* what the source is for the proclamation of “*Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V’Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach L’Olam Va’ed*,” it stands to reason that he will refer you to the *sicha* of Beis Nissan, 5748. In that *sicha*, the Rebbe tells the people of the generation that they must add life to the leader of the generation. This added life comes through proclaiming “*Yechi HaMelech*,” and this proclamation, the Rebbe continues, brings about the coming of Dovid Malka M’shicha.

There will be a few who will remember to mention another *sicha* that deals with the subject, the *sicha* of Shabbos Parshas Toldos 5752 (note 13). There the Rebbe explains the meaning of the proclamation, “*Yechi Adoni HaMelech Dovid L’Olam*.”

At first glance, there doesn’t appear to be an essential or substantial difference between the proclamations of “*Yechi HaMelech*” and “*Yechi Adoneinu*,” except that “*Yechi HaMelech*” is a general proclamation that does not refer specifically to Melech HaMoshiach, whereas, the proclamation of “*Yechi Adoneinu*” is more specific, signifying none other than Melech

HaMoshiach.

However, when we delve into the *sichos* that explain the content of these two proclamations, we find that they express two entirely different matters:

In the above mentioned *sicha* of Beis Nissan, the Rebbe explains that the content of the proclamation of “*Yechi HaMelech*” is the crowning of the king, through which we achieve the coming of Dovid Malka M’shicha.

However, in the *sicha* of Shabbos Parshas Toldos, which was meant to interpret the proclamation of “*Yechi Adoni HaMelech Dovid L’Olam*” (corresponding in our generation to “*Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V’Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach L’Olam Va’ed*”), we find a different style of explanation:

“Last week’s Haftora concludes with the proclamation of ‘*Yechi Adoni HaMelech Dovid L’Olam*,’ signifying the eternity of the sovereignty of Dovid continuing with the sovereignty of Shlomo, and its perfection through Melech HaMoshiach, who is ‘from the seed of Dovid and from the seed of Shlomo.’ This proclamation

represents the revelation of the existence of Melech HaMoshiach.”

In other words, this proclamation is not connected to *crowning* the king, but the *revelation of the existence* of Melech HaMoshiach. This point, by the way, is also explained in the *sicha* of Beis Nissan (note 44), where the Rebbe emphasizes that the proclamation of “*Yechi HaMelech*” discussed there does not refer to a coronation.

We see that the content of the two proclamations is different – not just in their style and language, but primarily in their content, as well. “*Yechi HaMelech*” refers to the crowning of the king, while “*Yechi Adoneinu*” represents the revelation of the existence of Melech HaMoshiach.

MOSHIACH IN ESSENCE AND MOSHIACH IN THE WORLD

To understand the difference between the crowning of the king and the revelation of the existence of Melech HaMoshiach, there must first be an explanation of the concept of Moshiach’s manifestation in the world.

In the *Hadran* on Rambam (5746), the Rebbe explains that the advent of Moshiach has two dimensions: a) the revelation of Melech HaMoshiach in the world, to the point that all will know that he is Moshiach. In other words, Moshiach is not just a means to repair the world, but an end in itself; Melech HaMoshiach must be revealed in the world, which is higher than the concept of repairing the world. b) Afterwards, and as a direct result of this revelation in the world, Moshiach “will repair the entire world,” bringing it to a state of perfection.

These two dimensions correspond to two types of kingship (*Hemshech* 5672, Ch. 122): a) sovereignty and elevation that comes primarily from the people who place him over them and make him their king, as is said, “there is no king without a people”; b) a sovereignty which does not require any approval whatsoever from anyone, as he already is in essence a king. This second type of kingship is apparent even “without a people.”

These two types of kingship are also expressed in its mode of conduct (as explained at length in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 30, from p. 100): a) the role of the king, as expressed in the activities and conduct of the kingdom. In other words, the kingdom is only according to the appointment to fulfill the appointed task, something which is additional to a person’s existence, as exemplified by the rule of the kings of Israel. Kingship of this type may cease at a certain point. b) a king in essence, i.e., one who is essentially loftier than all others, and thus, he conducts himself as a king, as exemplified by the kings of the House of Dovid, who were kings in essence. The strength of their sovereignty and elevation is embedded in the essence of their soul and their very being.

This type of kingship is eternal and will never cease.

(This fundamental difference is also expressed in the inheritance of the kingship among the kings of the House of Dovid and other kings, and in connection with the state of the sovereignty of the son during the life of his father. See there at length.)

In this light we can understand why the Rambam describes Moshiach as “a king from the House of Dovid.” Moshiach is a matter unto itself, above and beyond correcting the world, at the level of “a king in essence,” independent of a people.

***Only after the
revelation of
Moshiach’s essence
and as a direct result
of this comes his
revelation through his
actions – “and he will
correct the whole
world.”***

Thus, Moshiach attains the level of *yechida*, comparable to the Unique One of the World. Only after the revelation of Moshiach’s essence and as a direct result of this comes his revelation through his actions – “and he will correct the whole world.”

THE THIRD AND HIGHEST LEVEL: THE ESSENCE OF THE SOUL OF MOSHIACH

In the *sicha* from Shabbos Parshas Toldos, the Rebbe provided a new and lofty innovation on the issue of Moshiach’s coming: the *hisgalus* of the essence of the soul of

Moshiach, which is above all description and limitation, higher than the level of “a king in essence” that corresponds to the level of *yechida*, as *yechida* is just one of the five names given to the essence of the soul.

As is explained there at length, there are two central aspects: the “atmosphere” of Moshiach and the “light” of Moshiach. The atmosphere of Moshiach refers to the essence of Moshiach’s soul, higher than all description and limitation, including the level of *yechida*. In other words, the revelation of his *metzius* (being, existence) as Melech HaMoshiach is the main innovation in the coming of Moshiach. However, the light of Moshiach refers to the revelation of Moshiach through his actions which comes as a result of the revelation and extension of his *metzius* as Moshiach.

Thus, in addition to what is explained in this *sicha* and in the *kuntres* “On the Essence of Chassidus” regarding the nature of Moshiach as the general pervasive level of *yechida*, and what the Rebbe writes in the *Hadran* on Rambam (5746) about how Moshiach is a matter unto itself (a king in essence, higher than the mission to repair the world), in this *sicha* the Rebbe reveals a very novel and lofty innovation regarding the essence of Moshiach. Namely, that the true concept of Moshiach is expressed in the revelation of the essence of his *metzius* – that he is literally one with the essence and being of G-d Alm-ghty, which transcends any description and categorization.

(It is important to note that these two *sichos* use the saying of “*Modeh Ani*” as a means to explain this innovation. In other words, the innovation of *chassidus* and Melech HaMoshiach penetrates the entire course of a person’s existence, starting from the first moment of

one's daily life. In the *kuntres* "On the Essence of Chassidus" the Rebbe explains the innovation of *chassidus*, the "*yechida*" of the Torah, which adds in clarity and vitality to all (the other appropriate explanations of "*Modeh Ani*" within the four) portions of the *Pardes* of the Torah. The Rebbe explains in the *sicha* from Shabbos Parshas Toldos the innovation that is expressed immediately "upon awakening from his sleep" – the essence of the revelation of his existence – before saying "*Modeh Ani*." This sweetens the conduct of *chassidim* by the care exercised to go to sleep with one's head covered, wearing a proper *tallis katan*, so that his arousal from sleep will be fitting.)

According to what has been explained about future matters being dependent upon our actions and *avoda* in the present, the drawing down of the two aspects in the coming of Moshiach: a) the level of "a king in essence" (*yechida*), b) the *hisgalus* of the essential *metzius* of Melech HaMoshiach – is achieved through two types of *avoda*.

As is explained in the *Hadran* on Rambam (5746), the coming of Moshiach as a matter unto itself (higher than correcting the world), the aspect of "a king in essence" (*yechida*) comes through the involvement in Torah for its own sake, i.e., learning Torah without any other objective or means – just pure study for the sake of Torah and the knowledge of G-d. This means that in order to draw down this lofty level of Moshiach, there must be the highest level of the study of Torah.

However, as explained in the *sicha* from Shabbos Parshas Toldos, the revelation of this essence will not necessarily come about through those supernal concepts connected with the level of *yechida*, such as the study and spreading of the teachings

of *chassidus*, the *yechida* of Torah. Rather, this is achieved through the fulfillment of *mitzvos*, primarily simple matters, such as providing a Jew with his material needs – which are connected to the essence of one's being, soul in body. This even includes the custom of giving Chanuka *gelt*, i.e., actions connected with the *mitzva* or custom (even if it's not a *mitzva*) of giving of *tz'daka*. And as is explained in *chassidus*, the drawing down of the essence is only achieved through physical *mitzvos* in the realm of action. The Rebbe places an emphasis upon the lowest possible level – money, the world of the inanimate! The Essence and

***After the revelation of
the existence of
Melech HaMoshiach
he is then revealed
for all to see through
his actions.***

Being of G-d Alm-ghty is expressed specifically in this lowly material world.

**THE PROCLAMATION OF
"YECHI ADONEINU" BRINGS
ABOUT THE REVELATION
OF THE ESSENCE OF THE
SOUL OF MOSHIACH**

From all that has been stated above, it is understood that the proclamation of "*Yechi HaMelech*" – which the Rebbe explains in the *sicha* of Beis Nissan as the very substance of the coronation of the king, which brings about the coming of Dovid Malka M'shicha, i.e., that the time of "Arise and sing, Dovid Malka M'shicha" has arrived – has

two aspects:

First, there is the revelation of the activities of Melech HaMoshiach, i.e., the connection between the king and the people on the level of revelations, through the vitality that the king gives them and the vitality that the people add to the king. In addition, this proclamation also brings about the revelation of the level of "a king in essence," Moshiach as he is beyond his mission of "correcting the world," the level of *yechida*. This is exemplified by the enthronement of Shlomo during the life of Dovid, despite the fact that he was already fit for sovereignty from the moment he was born. If so, what was the whole purpose of this enthronement, while Dovid was still serving as king? Shlomo's meriting the crown immediately upon his birth was only in potential. But when Shlomo was actually crowned upon the command of Dovid, Shlomo became an actual king, even during the life and rule of Dovid. The crowning resulted in a revelation of the level of "a king in essence."

However, the substance of the proclamation of "*Yechi Adoni HaMelech Dovid L'Olam*" (corresponding to "*Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V'Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach L'Olam Va'ed*"), as explained in the *sicha* of Shabbos Parshas Toldos is the revelation of the essential existence of Melech HaMoshiach, and how it is one entity with His Blessed Essence and Being, above and beyond all measure and description. The essence of Moshiach's existence is beyond all aspects of coronation, as a coronation does not possess the strength to draw down so essential a level. The content of this proclamation is the *hisgalus* of the essence of the existence of Melech HaMoshiach.

Yet, this proclamation also

includes the proclamation of “*Yechi HaMelech*,” for after the revelation of the existence of Melech HaMoshiach he is then revealed for all to see through his actions.

In fact, the proclamation of “*Yechi Adoneinu*” became a regular occurrence starting from Simchas Torah 5753, when there were no *sichos*, no *farbrengens*, no dollars, no open revelations. The *hiskashrus* was revealed on a much deeper and more inner level, the connection of one essence with another.

ROSH CHODESH KISLEV 5738 – THE BIRTH OF A NEW ERA

The Rebbe revealed by Divine providence the highest level on Moshiach and his coming on Rosh Chodesh Kislev:

Rosh Chodesh in general signifies the birth of the new moon. The unique quality of the birth of the new moon on Rosh Chodesh in contrast to its fullness on the fifteenth of the month (as explained

in the aforementioned *sicha*) is in relation to its state of existence. After the total concealment of the moon, it renews itself and reveals its existence, an essence higher than all revelations. In contrast, the fullness of the moon on the fifteenth of the month is only in connection to its light, the level of revelations, where the moon’s radiance increases from day to day.

Similarly, we find in connection with the renewal of the true and complete Redemption through Dovid Malka M’shicha – “for they are destined to be renewed as it [i.e., the moon] is” – as exemplified specifically by the renewal and rebirth of the new moon, the *hisgalus* of the essence of the existence of Melech HaMoshiach. This concept is far loftier than the completion and fullness of the light of the moon, i.e., the revelation of Melech HaMoshiach through his actions.

This is especially true in connection with Rosh Chodesh Kislev, which has a quality unlike any other Rosh Chodesh. On this day, as is explained in the *sicha*, the essence beyond revelations penetrates even the level of revelations. When the light of the moon increases in strength, even this essential level is felt and perceived.

This is most fitting in relation to what the Rebbe said in his room on Motzai Simchas Torah 5738, regarding the *tzimtzum* for the formation of the worlds, which compelled the revelation of the *kav*. Similarly, there is the present state of “your seat is missing,” where the Rebbe is not with the congregation at *farbrengens*. However, this need not detract from the joy of Yom Tov. In other words, the fact that the revelation of the essence is presently lacking will bring and compel the “missing,” beginning the new era of the Rebbe’s *hisgalus*, which commenced on Rosh Chodesh Kislev



5738, when the Rebbe left his room and went home.

However, due to the immense joy over the great miracle of that day, we have neither absorbed nor understood – or better said, we could not know – about the new era that stands before us. Only on Rosh Chodesh Kislev 5752 did the Rebbe reveal what was the great revelation that began on Rosh Chodesh Kislev 5738: the *hisgalus* of the essence of his existence, the *hiskashrus* of one essence to the other, in a manner that penetrates even the level of revelations, i.e., the Rebbe's influence upon *chassidim* is felt in a revealed way in the essence that is higher than revelation.

In fact, in 5738 a new phase began even in the Rebbe's activities, the purpose of which is to prepare the world for Moshiach's coming, beginning with worldwide printings of the *Tanya*, emphasized as bringing the wellsprings of *chassidus* themselves to every location. As the year continued, the Rebbe founded a special institute to print all the writings of our Rebbeim. Regarding his own teachings, the Rebbe started to edit and disseminate his *sichos* in an orderly manner. This was unlike what had been in previous years, when it took considerable effort to get the Rebbe to edit the *Likkutei Sichos*.

A new era also began then in the Rebbe's activities with Jewish children and his unique relationship with them. As is explained in the *sicha* from Shabbos Parshas Toldos, the special quality attributed to Jewish children is much greater than that of their adult counterparts, as with children, "the light is in a state of revelation" and their *hiskashrus* to G-d comes from the very essence of their soul.

In 5740, the Rebbe began his campaign of "And the hearts of the fathers will return through their

sons," along with the rallies that the Rebbe frequently held with children, and the establishment of *Tzivos Hashem* in 5741. (As the Rebbe noted to one of the *chassidim* who wanted the children kept back from the platform where the Rebbe sat during *farbrengens* (the custom began then for children to sit near the Rebbe's chair), "You are a civilian; they are enlisted men...")

At this same time, there commenced a new era in preparing the world for the coming of Moshiach. The Rebbe began to speak (in Kislev 5742) about the acronym for that new year – "This will be the

***The real essence
behind Yud-Tes
Kislev as the Rosh
HaShana of chassidus
only became revealed
some one hundred
years after the Alter
Rebbe's imprisonment
and release.***

year of the coming of Moshiach."

This new era was highlighted by the *sicha* from the night of Simchas Torah 5752, when the Rebbe said that when we look at children, we see "*M'shichoi*" (My anointed ones), as their entire existence is Moshiach. This is particularly so in our generation with the children of "*Tzivos Hashem*," in whom it is openly recognized how they are "My anointed ones," thus preparing for the imminent revelation of the overall Moshiach.

In other words, since 5738, the

Rebbe has revealed a new aspect of his connection with the people of his generation. On the other hand, he has also demanded accordingly that their *avoda* be fitting – *hiskashrus* of one essence to the other. As is explained in the *sichos* of Shabbos Parshas B'Shalach and Beis Nissan 5748 (among others), the leader of the generation is the heart of the entire Jewish people, and all their vitality and very essence are dependent upon him, as the vitality of the heart that goes to the limbs of the body is the same for all equally.

The Rebbe has expressed this in his conduct with other Jews during recent years, as exemplified by the distribution of dollars and *kuntresim* to all Jews, great and small, the general *yeichiduius*, etc., and particularly through his activities with children, in whom the matter shines openly. During this period, we have also felt how the wondrous revelations that we have merited from the Rebbe are in a manner of "squandering the treasures," instilled with the essence of vitality to the entire Jewish people.

All this began on Rosh Chodesh Kislev, the "birth" of this new era, as the moon that is renewed and reborn on Rosh Chodesh.

**CHASSIDIM CELEBRATE THE
REVELATION OF THE
ESSENCE**

This sweetens what *chassidim* have established for generations by their celebration of a day of thanksgiving on Rosh Chodesh Kislev, even though the Rebbe made his *seudas hoda'a* that year on Zos Chanuka.

In accordance with the explanation in Shabbos Parshas Toldos that the quality of the birth of the new moon of Rosh Chodesh relates to its *metzius*, the revelation of its essence, this is the innovation of Rosh Chodesh Kislev 5738. On

that day, the essence was revealed: the Rebbe went home after a period of concealment – “your seat is missing.” There were not any revelations yet – the Rebbe had not made a *farbrengen*. All this began on Yud-Tes Kislev and continued on Chanuka with the distribution of Chanuka *gelt*, *kos shel bracha*, and giving *sichos* on fast days, etc. Nevertheless, this was the revelation of the essence, the dawn of a new era in the conduct of the leadership.

In this *sicha*, the Rebbe revealed to us why the celebration of Rosh Chodesh Kislev is for generations. This is not just giving thanks for the miracle of the Rebbe’s recovery, as this is not enough to establish the day for generations, just as we don’t find the establishment of a holiday when events of a similar nature occurred with the previous Rebbeim. Instead, we are talking here about a new revelation in the Rebbe’s *hiskashrus* to his *chassidim*. Until then, the highest level of *hiskashrus* was the general *yechida*, as explained in the *kuntres* “On the Essence of Chassidus.” Now, however, there has been revealed the deepest level of *hiskashrus* between Rebbe and *chassid*: essence with essence in the most literal sense.

(The Rebbe’s special *farbrengen* of Zos Chanuka 5738 can be seen to a certain extent as compensation for Simchas Torah. The Rebbe had spoken with the doctors on numerous occasions about the appropriate means to compensate the *chassidim* for what happened on Shmini Atzeres and Simchas Torah.)

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ROSH CHODESH KISLEV AND YUD-TEK KISLEV

The Rebbe specifically explained and emphasized in his *sichos* that when events occur at various times, it is not coincidental; they are connected to those times. Similarly, we see that when *s’farim* and *maamarim* are published, they have a connection to the specific time of the publishing.

It is noteworthy to mention that the *sicha* on *chassidus*, which explains the nature of *chassidus* and Melech HaMoshiach was given on Yud-Tes Kislev, the Rosh HaShana and Mattan Torah of *chassidus*. However, the great revelation regarding Melech HaMoshiach and his arrival was specifically on Rosh Chodesh Kislev, and not on Yud-Tes Kislev, as would seem more appropriate.

This reveals to us something entirely new. The essential *hiskashrus* between the Rebbe and *chassidim* is higher than the connection between the Rebbe and *chassidim* through *chassidus*. This was revealed on the holiday of the Rebbe – Rosh Chodesh Kislev, the birth of this new era. However, the innovation explained in the *kuntres* “On the Essence of Chassidus” was in connection with the nature of *chassidus*, and thus, was appropriately given on Yud-Tes Kislev, the Rosh HaShana of *chassidus*.

(Some may question why this

matter only became truly revealed in 5752 and not in 5738. But in fact, the real essence behind Yud-Tes Kislev as the Rosh HaShana of *chassidus* only became revealed some one hundred years after the Alter Rebbe’s imprisonment and release. Thus, it may be that the true nature and essence behind a particular auspicious day becomes revealed only after it has been revealed to the world and accepted as such through the actions of the people in that generation.)

We can now understand the special attention that must be given to this *kuntres*, in addition to the special attention that must be given to the *sichos* of 5751-5752, which include those of an especially unique nature, e.g., *Kuntres “Beis Rabbeinu Sh’B’Bavel”* (Shabbos Parshas VaYeishev and Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim 5752). In this light, special attention should be given to the *sicha* from Shabbos Parshas Toldos 5752, which could perhaps best be called *Kuntres “Rosh Chodesh Kislev.”*

As we stand in the month of Kislev, the month of Redemption, after Rosh Chodesh Kislev, the birth and revelation of Moshiach, leading to the auspicious day of Yud-Daled Kislev, the day that connected the Rebbe with the *chassidim*, may we soon merit the complete *hisgalus* of the Rebbe MH”M, and proclaim before him:

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A SHTRAIMEL – ONLY IN LUBAVITCH!

Why did the Rebbe Rayatz begin wearing a shtraimel at the wedding of the Rebbe MH”M in Warsaw?

The Rebbe Rashab and the Rebbe Rayatz wore a *shtraimel* only in Lubavitch. It is told (Migdal Oz, p. 221) that before the Rebbe Rashab traveled to his wedding in Avrutch, his father, the Rebbe Maharash, told him not to wear a *shtraimel* at his wedding, because the *shtraimel* was only to be worn in Lubavitch.

The Rebbe Maharash was so particular about this point that he sent the servant R’ Levik along with the Rebbe Rashab to the wedding so that he would make sure that his order was carried out. Indeed, at the wedding, the Rebbe Rashab’s *mechutan* (relative by marriage), R’ Yosef Yitzchok of Avrutch, wanted to put a *shtraimel* on his head, but R’ Levik quickly removed it.

The Rebbe Rashab wore a *shtraimel* only in Lubavitch, and when he traveled out of the city to health resorts and the like, he did not wear a *shtraimel*. His son, the Rebbe Rayatz, did the same. Thus, from the time he left Lubavitch in the year 5676 (1916), he did not wear a *shtraimel*.

Even after accepting the Chabad leadership in 5680 (1920), when he was in Rostov, and afterwards in Leningrad, he did not wear a *shtraimel* (as remembered by R’ S.Z. Gurary, *a”h*). However, the Rebbe Rayatz began wearing a *shtraimel*

once again, starting with the wedding of the Rebbe MH”M on Yud-Daled Kislev 5689 (1928) in Warsaw. The *shtraimel* the Rebbe Rayatz wore at the Rebbe’s wedding was the *shtraimel* of the Rebbe Maharash.



The first time the Rebbe Rayatz wore the *shtraimel* was on Monday, 13 Kislev, in the evening, at the “groom’s meal.” This was recorded in the memoirs of a friend of the Rebbe’s household, R’ Elya Chaim Altheus (may Hashem avenge his

blood), where he says that the Rebbe Rayatz walked in to this meal dressed, “in Shabbos clothes, with a gartel and a *shtraimel* from the holy head of our master and great teacher, *zt”l* [referring to the Rebbe Maharash]. We who were especially close were literally frightened by the awesomeness that rested upon his pure face, as his countenance shone forth rays of light from the holy *shtraimel*. I cannot describe it, but you will certainly merit to see it, because from the time of the wedding and on, thank Heaven, he wears this *shtraimel* every Shabbos, like in Lubavitch. Grateful am I that I have lived and endured and reached this time.”

Apparently, this is what the Rebbe Rayatz told the Rebbe *shlita* after the wedding (Hei Teives 5689; *Seifer HaMaamarim* 5689 p. 65-6):

Tonight I saw my father [the Rebbe Rashab, who had passed away] holding a silk handkerchief in his hands and looking extremely happy. He said to me: “*Mazal tov far dem hittel* (mazal tov for [wearing] the hat).” The hat I wore is my grandfather’s [the Rebbe Maharash]. I wanted to wear my father’s hat, but I ended up wearing my grandfather’s hat. This was the second time I saw my father after the wedding [of the Rebbe MH”M].

The first time I saw my father after the wedding I was wearing the hat, too, but he didn't say "mazal tov" then; he only said "mazal tov" the second time.

Thus, the Rebbe Rayatz wore the Rebbe Maharash's *shtraimel* at the Rebbe's wedding. The obvious reason it was not worn until the wedding is because the *shtraimel* was worn only in Lubavitch. Being that until that time, even though they had already left the town of Lubavitch for Rostov and from there to Leningrad, the town of Lubavitch still remained the permanent and primary place for the Rebbeim,

although temporarily they were in exile, therefore he didn't wear the *shtraimel* out of Lubavitch.

However, at the wedding of the Rebbe, on Yud-Daled Kislev 5689 – "the day which connected me with you and you with me," paving the way for the advent of the seventh generation, our generation, whose purpose and mission is to complete the task of bringing Lubavitch and its wellsprings to the entire world, resulting in the true and complete Redemption – the Rebbe Rayatz began to wear a *shtraimel*, since Lubavitch had, in effect, moved to Warsaw, as seen in the letter from

the Rebbe Rayatz (quoted below).

Accordingly, the Rebbe's wedding was in Warsaw (and not in Riga, where the Rebbe Rayatz lived), for the central *yeshiva* of Yeshivos Tomchei T'mimim was in Warsaw. As the Rebbe Rayatz writes to his uncle, R' Moshe Horenstein, in a letter dated 14 Cheshvan 5689: "We want the *kabbalas panim* (reception), *badekenish* (unveiling), and *chuppa* to take place, *l'mazal tov*, in the house and grounds of the Yeshiva Tomchei T'mimim. May we experience the delight of a microcosm of a microcosm of Lubavitch."

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*Selections from a farbrengen with R' Avrohom Drizin-Maiyor at the “thanksgiving meal” of Rosh Chodesh Kislev 5742 in 770. * From a t’shura printed for the bar mitzva of his great-grandson, Yehuda Leib Drizin.*

CHASSIDIM DIDN'T DARE DESCRIBE THE REBBE

Everybody here spoke about things connected with the Rebbe’s *peulos* (activities), but although our Rebbeim wrote explicitly that true *hiskashrus* (connection, bonding) to the Rebbe is through *hiskashrus* to their *peulos*, I still think there are times to speak about the Rebbe himself.

Chassidim always and forever didn’t know how, and didn’t dare, to define what a Rebbe is, what the essence of a Rebbe is. Even the greatest *chassidim* and *maskilim* (intellectuals) did not pride themselves with an opinion on this subject. The only way we can talk about the Rebbe himself is by saying what the Rebbeim themselves said.

It’s an interesting phenomenon, but something very clear that we saw by the Rebbeim – that the events that occurred to them, the imprisonment, sicknesses, etc., “revealed” them to us

and revealed them to the world, in ways that were unknown before then.

I’ll tell you a story. I don’t know if you’ll be impressed by it but it’s a story that’s worth telling, and it’s connected with Rosh Chodesh Kislev. The son of R’ Moshe Binyamin Kaplan told me about a certain professor (doctor), a big expert (I don’t want to say his name) who was one of those who examined the Rebbe at that time.

We all know Dr. Weiss. He was so amazed by the Rebbe that he became a *chassid*, but this professor that I’m telling you about, was a completely different type. A very cold sort, and firm, to the point that they say about him that even if he became a *baal t’shuva* he wouldn’t disclose it because of the shame involved.

Anyway, this professor had absolute humility before the Rebbe. When he was asked, “What did you find in the Rebbe?” he said, “When I came to the Rebbe, I saw that the

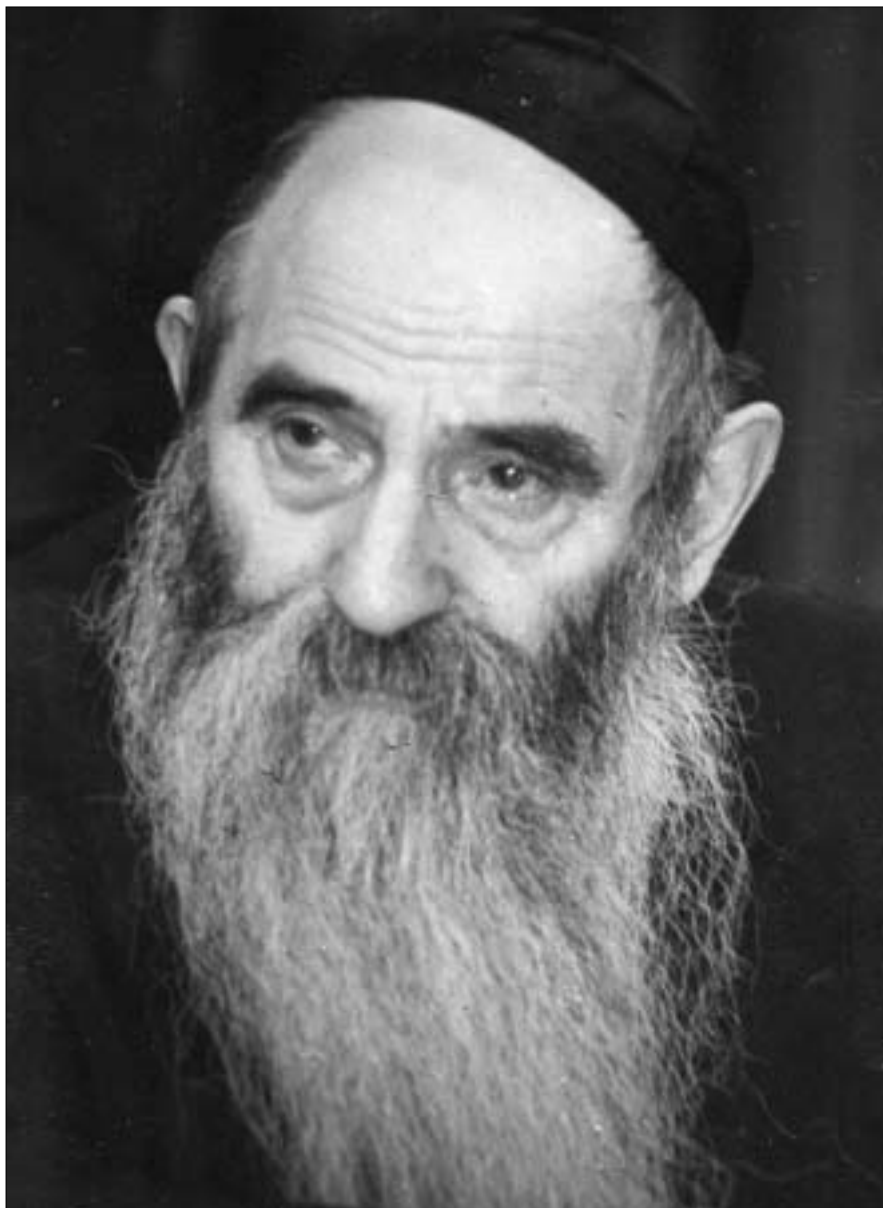
heart and body were in serious condition. In all my cases, I know that the heart is the organ in charge, and someone with a heart in that condition, like the Rebbe’s, cannot work at all. Yet with the Rebbe I saw, for the first time in my life, a person whose mind rules absolutely and completely!”

This is what the professor said. He wasn’t talking *chassidus*. He didn’t even know of the concept of “*mo’ach shalit al ha’lev*” (the mind rules the heart). He spoke in dry, medical terms. The big expert was astounded and expressed his amazement about a medical condition – that in all the cases he had seen, he had never encountered anything like it. A case where the heart and body were in the condition they were in and only the head and brain ruled the body absolutely, in a way that amazed him and that he had never previously encountered.

HOW DOES THE REBBE RESPOND TO LIFE AND DEATH QUESTIONS?

As we said, the events that took place with our Rebbeim reveal what they are to the world. This was the case with the Alter Rebbe, for when he was imprisoned he was revealed “before the eyes of the nations and ministers,” etc., and we know the stories about it.

I don't mean that these things revealed to us what a Rebbe is and what his essence is. We'll never know that and nobody can know it, but they were revealed to us by way of "process of elimination." They were revealed to the world even in the dry medical language of the experts, that "this is no ordinary being."



The same is true for the illness in 5738, for it was then that all sorts of amazing things were revealed to all. It was literally a *gilui Elokus* (a G-dly revelation). Top doctors who had no connection to Judaism at all, saw open G-dliness, and marveled at the supernatural phenomenon of "the mind ruling the heart." I don't mean that these things revealed to us what a Rebbe is and what his essence is. We'll never know that and nobody can know it, but they were revealed to us by way of "process of elimination." They were revealed to the world even in the dry medical language of the experts, that "this is no ordinary being."

This is relevant in practical terms, because these are things that every one of us needs to know. We are witnesses sometimes to all sorts of debates with *misnagdim*, and the biggest mistake is that sometimes we have these debates as though this one says this, and that one says that; as though there are two views. The real answer that we need to give at all these debates is "my thoughts are not your thoughts." We're not talking about an ordinary man whom we have the ability to measure.

I was once in Boston seeing a world-famous mathematician. He had seen the Rebbe many times. He's not a *chassid*, and he took the liberty of asking the Rebbe some questions which we wouldn't dare to ask. He said that he once asked the Rebbe: When they come to you with life and death questions, how does the Rebbe answer them on subjects that he has no connection with whatsoever?

The Rebbe answered: I answer according to what comes to mind at that moment.

Do we have any idea what this means?! As it says about Yirmiyahu the Prophet – that a prophecy of *g'vura* (severity) came forth through him and a prophecy of *chesed* (kindness) came forth through

Yeshaya the Prophet. Each generation gets what it needs. “The Divine presence speaks from his throat” literally.

We aren’t talking about the Rebbe *shlita’s* great qualities – nobody has any grasp of them. One who prides himself, thinking he understands something – this is mere foolishness. What we need to know is – and on Rosh Chodesh Kislev even those “furthest away” saw this – that even the physical body, the regular functioning of the heart and body and the rule of the brain, when it comes to our Rebbeim, leaders of Israel, as we saw with the Rebbe, it’s completely different.

We’ve already said that we don’t have the right to speak about the Rebbe *shlita*. *Chassidim* never dared to speak about the Rebbe’s great qualities because nobody has a smidgen of an idea when it comes to these things. *Chassidim* would only speak about the great qualities of great *chassidim*, but not about the Rebbe and his *madreigos* (levels), because we simply can’t grasp this. Who can speak about the Rebbe and about his *madreigos*?! The Rebbeim themselves! We are allowed to repeat what the Rebbeim said.

In *Toras Sholom*, the Rebbe Rashab speaks about the Alter Rebbe. I don’t need to repeat everything written there. Each of you should take a *Toras Sholom* and you’ll see the loftiest of lofty things said about the Alter Rebbe that were never said before. From that we can see a tiny drop of what a Rebbe, the *nasi ha’dor*, is about.

HOW CAN YOU SLEEP IN THE MIDDLE OF A FARBRENGEN?

“Fortunate are we and how good is our portion.” I merited to be with the Rebbe Rashab, but how can you compare? The Rebbe Rashab would *farbreng* three times a year, each time

for three to four hours, but in our generation, we are privileged to an abundance of *farbrengens*! An abundance of *gilui ohr* (revelation of light), the likes of which never existed before! “Fortunate are we and how good is our portion.” However, it must also lead us to making a *cheshbon ha’nefesh* (spiritual accounting).

I don’t want to rebuke anyone. By *chassidim* there was no such thing as “*elte Yidden*” (old Jews). *Chassidim* always said, “*alter yungerman*” (an elderly young man). An *alte Yid* is nothing, yet still and all, I, an *alter Yid*, wants to ask: Do we all relate properly to the great miracle that we are privileged to so many *farbrengens* and to so such a great revelation of light?

I’ll tell you the truth, and when you say *l’chaim* with some *mashkeh*, believe me, I’m telling the truth. I can’t stand the sight of someone sitting at the Rebbe’s *farbrengen* who is not fully alert. We have merited such a revelation of light, the likes of which didn’t exist before, that we did not have with any of the Rebbeim, so how can you sit at the Rebbe’s *farbrengen* so calmly, without trembling?! I’ll tell it to you straight: I can’t stand it! We must constantly remember “before whom you stand.” There are people who sit at the *farbrengen* who look exhausted. It’s terrible! It’s playing with fire!

We need to talk about this now, in the middle of the night! G-d forbid, not at the expense of *mivtzaim*, which the Rebbe encouraged us to do, but now, in the middle of the night, when the world is asleep, *yechidei segula* (unique individuals) need to convene and talk about this.

I am not the critical type. I look at the young men with the utmost *bittul*, but each one of the young men must look at the *Toras Sholom* to see what it says there about the Rebbe so

that you tremble and know how to approach the Rebbe’s *farbrengen*!

When the Alter Rebbe sang the *niggun*, “*Tzena U’rena*,” *chassidim* trembled and feared to look upon his holy face. They trembled from the fire. The “know before whom you stand” has to affect us to the core of our souls. This awesome revelation of light that we are privileged to have, so many *farbrengens* with the Rebbe, must not get us into a feeling of routine and habit.

At each *farbrengen*, we must feel that sensation of fear that the *chassidim* of the Alter Rebbe felt. You cannot go and sit at the Rebbe’s *farbrengen* with equanimity. We must constantly think about before whom we are sitting and who is speaking to us. When we contemplate this, every second spent at a *farbrengen* will be with the utmost alertness!

THE ‘TRUTH’ OF THE WORLD

I remember a *farbrengen* with the Rebbe Rayatz in which he said, “5680 (1920) *iz geven kodem z’mano*” (1920, when the Rebbe Rashab passed away, was before his time). The Rebbe didn’t explain what he meant, but he repeated this line a number of times. It was at the beginning of his *nesius* (leadership). He also said then that his father, the Rebbe Rashab, was a great *vatran* (generous person) in matters of *ahavas Yisroel* and he was even *mekarev* Jews who didn’t deserve it. And the Rebbe said then, “*Ich bin nit vi der Tatte*” (I’m not like my father). Yet we saw that the Rebbe Rayatz was in this very matter, a thousand times more!

I remember that in Rostov there was a Jew by the name of Rizik. He was very far from *Yiddishkeit* yet the Rebbe Rashab was very much *mekarev* him. On Shabbos, he would often send him Nachman the *meshares* (servant) to help out. Despite his distance from *Yiddishkeit*,

he came to the Rebbe often.

In 5680 when the Rebbe Rashab passed away, you couldn't console Rizik. His broken-heartedness and incessant mourning was terrible. He told his household to fast many days. He was broken and depressed by the Rebbe's passing. When friends asked him why he mourned so much, he answered: I'm a smart man. I've traveled the world and met many people, great and small. Wiser and less wise. It's all good and well, but in only one corner of the world was there Truth – by the Rebbe! And a world without truth is a world that one cannot live in.

What should we say? In our times, in our days, we see how everything is lies. We don't need to go on at length about this, but anybody who is out in the world sees what's going on. And Hashem gave us, of all people in the world, the privilege, that we are in the four cubits of Truth! This should make us exceedingly happy! A true *simcha* which should burst forth unbounded! We must constantly remember before whom we stand, and learn *chassidus* in a way of *derheren* (internalizing it).

We must dance with joy, the enormous *simcha* over what we have merited ought to break all boundaries. Just to sit and look at the Rebbe *shlita*. What more do we need than that?! It says in the *s'farim* of the Mittlerer Rebbe that when "you greet your teacher on *yom tov*, it's a *hamshacha* (spiritual channeling) for the *avoda* of the entire year." The very sight – just to look at the Rebbe when he says a *maamer*, or when singing a *niggun* of the Alter Rebbe. Anybody who has even a bit of a *neschama* can attain very high levels!

Fortunate are we and how good is our portion. There are those who think that the Rebbe, as it were, "lowers himself" when he interacts with all the people who come to him.

This is our entire fortune! The Alter Rebbe with all the "*haskala*" (intellectual teaching) and after the entire pathway of *chassidus* Chabad of refining the *mochin* (mind), what he demanded was "*b'poel mamash*" (actual deeds). Come, let us burst into joyous song until *klos ha'nefesh* (expiry of the soul). For our great fortune. Because the Rebbe fulfills in us "raising the pauper from the dust." The Rebbe takes us out of the dust and the garbage and raises us up to the sky and gives us an unlimited portion. He takes "limping Jews" with "limping souls" and elevates them.

Chassidim would only speak about the great qualities of great chassidim, but not about the Rebbe and his spiritual heights, because we simply can't grasp this.

"FORTUNATE ARE WE AND HOW GOOD IS OUR PORTION"

They sang the *niggun* "*Lchat'chilla Aribber*." Why do we sing this *niggun*? Is it because we know the Rebbe Maharash? No! We sing this *niggun* because it's the Rebbe *shlita's niggun*! The Rebbe sees everything and atones for everything. The Rebbe has the same *avoda* as the Rebbe Maharash – *Lchat'chilla Aribber*. This is why we see that the Rebbe *kocht zich* about the Rebbe Maharash. This whole thing is not at all simple. It's very lofty. All the Rebbeim make

demands of us. They demand a great deal. Yet the demand of *Lchat'chilla Aribber* is completely different; it's another thing entirely. If you don't understand, you don't understand, but it's completely different. Incomparably different.

Day and night, we must learn. In our free time we must be busy with *mitvtzaim* with complete strength and devotion, but in the middle of the night a new *chassid* must be born! We must meditate and learn *chassidus*, to think about the *Lchat'chilla Aribber* of the Rebbe, and by doing so, be born anew!

"If our mouths were full of song like the sea, and our tongues with music like the tumultuous waves." Today, on Rosh Chodesh Kislev we must praise and thank Hashem for giving us the Rebbe *shlita*. As we would thank our father for the best present in the world that he could give us. Simply to thank Hashem, to sing and dance and rejoice! Thank you, Master of the Universe! Thank you for giving us the Rebbe *shlita*! We must hold dear every move the Rebbe makes. Nobody has been privileged to what we, in our generation, have been privileged to.

May Hashem help that the Rebbe be illuminated in us, within us. This is not my line. The famous *chassid*, R' Shmuel Munkes said, "The Rebbe is like the sun!" The sun gives life and illuminates, saving us from all sorts of illnesses. The Rebbe shows us what is truth and what is false, and the main thing is that the Rebbe protects us so that no harmful agents can even approach us.

We must value every moment that we can gaze upon the Rebbe. I'm an old man already. You must take *mashkeh* and say *l'chaim* that I merit to gaze upon the Rebbe's holy face at *farbrengens* and at every opportunity to hear the Rebbe properly. It's literally a G-dly revelation. *Lchaim, l'chaim u'l'vracha!*

WHEN THE REBBE LOOKS AT A CHASSID

In recent years, the Rebbe began distributing dollars at *farbrengens*. I don't understand heavenly things and I don't know why dollars are being distributed, but it seems to me that the Rebbe simply wants to see every single person personally. People used to have private audiences, but now that this is no longer possible, the Rebbe wants to look at each person.

Chassidus is Truth and the Rebbe is the Truth of the generation. We must dance day and night without end. True, the Rebbe is the genius of geniuses, but this is not the main thing. When the Rebbe *farbrengs*, we hear and feel the "Anochi" (the Divine "I" like in the Ten Commandments). Whoever wants to be an *emeser Chassidisher Yid* (a really *chassidic* Jew), I have one piece of advice for him: look at the Rebbe's holy face during a *farbrengen* as a *chassid* ought to look, and you'll be a *chassidic* Jew!

The Rebbe *shlita* is Truth. Truth that is above the natural order. Today, Rosh Chodesh Kislev, we need to know that "this day is holy to our masters" ... We need to know that the Rebbe is *bli g'vul* (unlimited). The Rebbe looked at me last Shabbos and transformed me. The devotion of *chassidim* to the Rebbe is on the level of *yechida sh'b'nefesh* (the highest level of the soul). It's not a matter of logic. There are no explanations for it. That's just the way it is. May Hashem help that we have a real connection to all of this.

This is a *seudas hoda'a* (thanksgiving meal), but the Rebbe *shlita* is above all this. All the talk about the devotion *chassidim* have towards the Rebbe, about "my soul yearns for you," is not it. There is no talk nor explanation in the world which can truly describe the devotion and *hiskashrus* of a *chassid* to the Rebbe. In order to feel it, you need to say *l'chaim*. You need to sing a

chassidische niggun. It's better than all the explanations. Those who are here now, at this Rosh Chodesh Kislev *farbrengen*, can feel what is meant by the outpouring of the souls towards the *neshama klalis* (all-inclusive soul) of the Rebbe.

Someone asked me to tell a *chassidische* story. We don't need stories. What's happening here tonight is the best and most *chassidic* story. It's the story of the outpouring of the *chassidic* soul to the Rebbe. Let us sing together the Rebbe's *niggun*, "Tzama Lecha Nafshi." When we see the Rebbe

Someone asked me to tell a chassidische story. We don't need stories. What's happening here tonight is the best and most chassidic story. It's the story of the outpouring of the chassidic soul to the Rebbe.

sing this *niggun*, we literally see the idea of "Tzama Lecha Nafshi" (my soul thirsts for You). We cannot mimic this song, but we still need to sing this *niggun*.

I'm a little Jew, but I had the privilege of hearing a little bit from the elder *chassidim*, and therefore I advise you: When you look at the Rebbe, look as when the Alter Rebbe came out and is singing "Tzena Urena," and *chassidim* were afraid to look at him. We look at the Rebbe and don't know what we're looking at. We

need to know that the Rebbe is *bli g'vul*. The soul needs to thirst for the Rebbe, not only in the heart but in the mind.

They always said, throughout the generations, that the elders lacked in *hiskashrus*. Today too, some of you certainly think so. I'm a little Jew, but old ... and believe me when I tell you here and now that not only is it not true, but to the contrary; it's the exact opposite. In our day, by the elders, the Rebbe *shlita* is dear in a manner that touches the core of the soul. I can't talk, and I don't want to talk, but the elders are *mekusharim* today in an infinite manner, in a wondrous way.

At the *farbrengens* I sit facing the Rebbe and it's frightening ... I am *moser nefesh* (self-sacrificing) ... so that I can have the privilege of gazing upon the Rebbe. Last Shabbos the Rebbe looked at me and turned my *kishkas* (innards) inside out.

The *hiskashrus* of the elders today is a *hiskashrus* of the essence. I may not speak about it. I don't deserve to speak about the Rebbe, but sometimes you have to say what must be said, and as long as I'm not "over and done with" I want to say that there's *ruach, nefesh*, and *neshama*, and the *neshama* pours itself forth before the Rebbe and G-dliness.

We dwell in materiality, we are sunk in physicality, and Hashem does wonders and give us the privilege that we have a connection to the infinite. Higher than the heavens and the heavens of the heavens and above all "supernal entities," and what the Rebbe Rashab said about the Alter Rebbe is what we ought to feel every time we look at the Rebbe *shlita*!

Today, Rosh Chodesh Kislev, we need to sing and dance and say *l'chaim* that the Rebbe be healthy and that we merit to have some sort of connection. "Fortunate are we and good is our portion." Thank you, our Father in heaven, for giving us the Rebbe *shlita*!

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יחי אדוננו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד

JEWES GO OUT OF GALUS WITH A NIGGUN

BY Y. TURIN

*Liba and Mordechai (Mark) Brotzky are a musical couple and parents of musical children. They appear together on the double cassettes “HaNiggunim HaMichuvanim – The Precise Melodies of Chabad Rebbes.” * Their story is a fascinating account of Russian olim who studied music and left a promising career behind for a life of Judaism.*

I first became acquainted with the Brotzky's in 5752 when I looked for Lubavitch musicians for a program I was doing in Savyon. How do you penetrate a group of elites, sated with all material good, who seemingly lack for nothing? Torah? Religion? *Chassidishkeit*? To invite them to a *shiur*? A *shiur* in *chassidus*? Something about mysticism? *P'nimius ha'Torah*? They have plenty of things to occupy them in their free time. They practice, plan, and organize...

“An Evening of Contemplation and Song.” Something “classical,” “cultural,” a sophisticated atmosphere, a sophisticated presentation – “intellectual enjoyment,” in the language of the mystics. For this purpose, I needed sophisticated musicians, those who understand the “classical,” and who can perform on a “high level” and “*al taharas ha'kodosh*,” and *baruch*

Hashem, I found it all!

Mark and his wife Liba Brotzky, a musical couple. He plays the violin and she plays the piano. They have a professional musical background, are *baalei t'shuva*, and they know a lot about *niggunei Chabad*, not only in the musical sense but also in the *chassidic* sense.

Since that time, I've connected with this wellspring, which is the Brotzky family, who produce and disseminate *chassidic niggunim*, *niggunei Chabad*, the holy melodies of the Rebbeim and of *chassidim*, with new arrangements that remain faithful to the source. The Brotzkys feel like one of the brooks that branch out from the wellspring of *chassidic* song – to disseminate and raise public awareness of the power of a *chassidic niggun*, which contains the *Toras ha'chassidus*, *p'nimius ha'Torah*, in an endless, sweet and

pure, wordless format.

Twelve years ago, when you and Mark performed in one of the elegant homes in Savyon, you were an anonymous couple. Today you produce *chassidic niggunim*. Did you always work together?

Since Mark and I know each other, we've performed together in concerts of classical music. After we became *baalei t'shuva*, we couldn't appear together for *halachic* reasons.

We received a *heter* from a *rav* to appear that night in Savyon. Since that time, we didn't think we could do something together, until *b'hashgacha pratit*, in a completely unexpected way, we were led by Hashem to our first production together in “*HaNiggunim HaMichuvanim*,” the *niggunim* of our Rebbeim. This was our first effort with *niggunim*.

When did you begin working in this direction?

Eight years ago. My husband was invited by N'shei Chabad to plan something special involving *niggun*, in honor of the Annual National Kinus of N'shei Chabad in Eretz Yisroel which took place in Binyanei HaUma.

Mark set up a *chassidic* orchestra in the lobby of the hall, which included Avi Ben-Yosef on the oboe, Ariel Cohen E-Loro at the keyboard, and himself on the violin. The threesome stood there with pictures

of the Rebbeim in the background, and played a *niggun* associated with each of the Rebbeim.

Afterwards we taped the *niggunim* for ourselves to hear how they sounded. The results were so beautiful that we decided to produce them professionally and that's how "*HaNiggunim HaMechuvanim*" was produced in Kislev 5756.

A production like this needs lots of money. How did you do it?

The truth is we didn't estimate our costs properly and we didn't realize ahead of time that it would cost so much. It could be that if we knew it to begin with, we wouldn't have started the project, but once we began, we couldn't stop.

I'm making a big deal of the fact that you founded a *chassidic* production company, and the reasons for that are due to the uniqueness of your production and approach. How would you define your uniqueness?

We are identified today as a corporate entity by the name of "*Heichal HaNegina*," whose purpose is to protect, produce, and disseminate Jewish melodies in general and Chabad *niggunim* in particular.

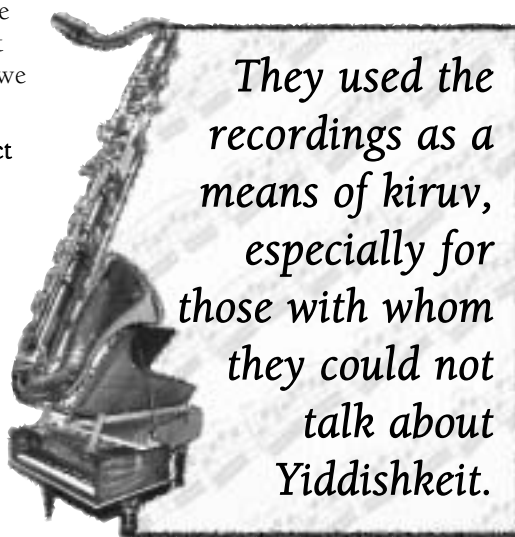
Our uniqueness lies in the fact that we put in great effort and attention to produce *chassidic niggunim* in a classical format without tampering with the original tune. We use our classical musical training, our rich knowledge of musical structure, a bit of creative grandiosity, plus the combination of various instruments, and the harmony of accompanying voices, to enhance and beautify *chassidic niggunim*.

A *niggun* has a deep, inner, holy content and value, and you absolutely cannot do as you please with it. We once opened to a letter in the *Igros Kodesh* that

dealt with the arrangement of Chabad *niggunim* in which the Rebbe expressed great apprehension "that adapting it will change the form and content, and it's possible that it would reach the point of the reward being offset by the loss" ... (*Igros Kodesh*, vol. 18, letter # 6657).

To answer your question, our uniqueness, I think, is in the musical richness and beauty along with protecting the holiness of the *chassidic niggun*, its content and form.

Would you call it: the *t'shuva* of



classical music?

I would call it, "a change in values." Once, when classical music filled our entire lives, the music was of primary importance. Today, after we've found the real thing of value, classical music is not of value to us anymore, and has no place in our lives. But the knowledge of musical structure is not something we're throwing out; we use these tools. You can say we elevate them to *k'dusha*.

* * *

When did you become *baalei t'shuva*?

Before that happened, we were at the searching stage. There were many things we didn't understand and we sought answers for disturbing questions. My brother-in-law (my husband's brother) knew of our search, and he referred us to R' Shlomo Kotzobayevsky who was a *mekurav* of Rabbi Yitzchok Arad, who had helped him a lot. He suggested that we try to be helped by him, too.

So, we got to know the Arad family, with whom we are very close till this day. Hashem had *rachmanus* on us and helped us find this wonderful family. From that point on we deepened our connection with *chassidus Chabad*, *Toras Ha'chassidus*, and the *chassidic niggun*.

Did you leave Russia as a married couple?

I came from Moscow with my parents at the age of 11 and Mark came with his parents from Moscow at the same age. We met and married here. I got married when I finished high school. It's incredible how Hashem arranged everything *b'hashgacha pratit*.

One day I was sick with fever. My mother had a good friend who had come with us from Moscow,

with whom we had gone through Ulpan together. She called her sister-in-law, a doctor, to come see me. The doctor prescribed an antibiotic, and *baruch Hashem*, I recovered.

A few years went by and throughout all those years, my mother's friend kept bringing up the idea of a *shidduch* between me and her nephew. "He's so talented and your daughter is also musical... Nu, let's do it." But nothing happened.

Hashem's ways are wondrous, and when I was in eleventh grade I was invited by my nephew, who was also a musician, to attend a meeting of young musicians from the Academy of Music, at the Kinneret. I was thrilled to attend and there, of all places, Hashem wanted us to finally meet me, the young musician, and my mother's friend's musical nephew, a promising violinist, who also "happened" to be the son of the doctor who treated me that first winter in Eretz Yisroel. Our ways haven't parted since that meeting, and *baruch Hashem*, we've built a home together.

Since that time, you've shared a musical career?

We received our musical foundation starting from age 6, in

Russia. Here we continued our studies with the best teachers available, and later went on to the Academy of Music. As a young musical couple, we performed together at concerts and planned a great career.

Mark was a very promising violinist. He won an international youth competition and we anticipated a glowing future from him. I was complimented all along and was considered a talented and very promising pianist. Nearly every summer we went abroad to study with the greatest violinists and pianists. We applied to the best schools in the world, but nothing came of it in the end. Hashem had another plan.

What happened?

We became *baalei t'shuva*. This was something that made our parents really upset for they had hoped for an international, musical career for us. Till this day I don't think they've made their peace with it.

You gave up on your life's dream, so what did you do instead?

Since we met R' Arad, my husband began learning *chassidus* with him. For an entire year we



listened, were impressed, and absorbed, but aside from lighting Shabbos candles, we did nothing else towards observing a life of Torah and *mitzvos*. Then we attended a week's seminar at Arachim, and that's when it clicked.

There, at this intensive program, in a closed-in atmosphere, our hearts opened and everything we had learned and absorbed for a year suddenly found their mark. I'll say to the credit of the organizers that



with their help, another two Lubavitchers joined the ranks of the king's army. That was the first Shabbos we observed.

When we left on Motzaei Shabbos a heavy silence prevailed on the way home. "Nu, what do we do?" we asked each other. It was clear to us that we would be returning home different people than the ones who had left the house.

* * *

After becoming *baalei t'shuva* we still kept up with the Arads, and became acquainted with *chassidic niggunim*, at first at *farbrengens* and then on tapes. The Nichoach tapes sounded strange to us at first, with their simple arrangements and basic production. I didn't like it, but the process of developing a deep understanding of what a *niggun* is, slowly began. We learned that a *niggun* has an essential value and that a *niggun* is different than all other music, different in essence. A *chassidic niggun* is not just another song or tune. A *chassidic niggun* is in the category of inner speech – a gushing forth and *chayus* which contains a specific content. Every *niggun* has its way of communicating. As we delved into *niggunim*, we just naturally stopped listening to classical music, thus removing it completely from our lives.

So you just left it all behind, with no pangs of conscience, with no hesitation, after all those years of study and perfecting your musical

technique, after all those dreams of international fame?

We are convinced that in the end, nothing will have been in vain. We see the fruits of all the work we put in, today, as we realize our true *shlichus*.

What is your role in this?

Everything having to do with arranging and producing.



Do you play, too?

I play the piano and keyboard. My husband takes *niggunim* from the *Seifer HaNiggunim*, from Nichoach tapes, and from collections of *niggunim* that we have, that were preserved by *chassidim* and were taped by *baalei negina*, many of whom are no longer alive. He compares different versions of

niggunim and chooses the *niggunim* from amongst them.

I arrange the *niggunim*, compose the background music – an addition that enriches the *niggun*, and create the proper harmony among the instruments. This is what determines the ultimate results, i.e., whether something new and fresh will be created or the *niggun* will go lost among all the sounds and additions.

So you've been privileged to enlist your musical talent in *avodas Hashem*. Do you feel lucky?

Every day I'm amazed once again and I thank Hashem for the abundance of ideas and creative abilities that He has infused me with. I feel that it's not me who does it. It doesn't come from me; it's Hashem doing it and He gives me the privilege of being the means through whom it is done. It's not me; it's Him. I'm just the *keli*.

* * *

What reactions did you get to your production of "*HaNiggunim HaMechuvanim*"?

They were overwhelmingly positive. Friends told me they used the recordings as a means of *kiruv*, especially for those with whom they could not talk about *Yiddishkeit*, and the results were impressive.

People who were far from *Yiddishkeit* were ready to listen and most, if not all of them, admitted that the *niggunim* gave them a spiritual lift. There were also

heartfelt expressions of thanks for enabling people to be exposed to such powerful spiritual beauty. Friends told us about Leftist relatives who are “allergic” to anything that gives off a whiff of Judaism, who listened, were impressed, and called to say how much it affected them.

A particularly moving story happened in a summer camp for Jewish kids in Russia. The counselors weren’t always sure about who was Jewish. On visiting day *HaNiggunim HaMechuvanim* played in the background and suddenly, the grandmother of one of the children they weren’t sure about exclaimed, “I know that tune. That’s a *niggun* I heard at home.”

What are your plans for the future?

We are about to finish producing traditional Chabad *niggunim* on disc called “*Otzros HaNiggun*,” and then we’ll continue with the next production.

Where do you do your work?

We do all the arrangements in our home studio, and we do the final recordings in a rented studio. We hope to get our own studio one day.

How are your children affected by growing up in this musical family?

Our children love *niggunim*, enjoy *niggunim*, learn and sing *niggunim*, and they all have a share in the work. *Baruch Hashem*, they are all musical and perpetuate the family legacy. Some of them belong to a *chassidic* choir and even study music. Lately they’ve all joined in singing on a tape of Jewish songs for children. All in all, they are part of the musical harmony in every stage of production.

You work under difficult circumstances, and you haven’t made your fortunes yet. What gives you the strength and determination

to keep going?

We hope and believe that we’ll also profit monetarily from this, but what really gives us the *chayus* and *simcha* to continue is the sense of *shlichus*. Our first goal is *hafatzas ha’maayanos* of *chassidic niggun* in the garb familiar to the modern ear, and to bring it to the widest possible listening audience.

* * *

How do you see this work as fulfilling your share in bringing the *Geula*?

We definitely believe that this is a big part of our personal *shlichus*, and that it’s also part of our contribution to bring the *Geula*. In *Tikkunei Zohar* it says that Yisroel goes out of *Galus* with a *niggun*, and this certainly doesn’t refer to just any song or any tune but to the pure and holy *niggun*.

The Rebbe says that from any discipline, from any meeting between Jews, you have to come out with something practical. What practical thing shall we go away with from this meeting of ours?

We must get our homes, our environments, our schools, etc., to know that Jews need to listen, to sing, and to play and live *niggunim al taharas ha’kodesh*. A properly sung or played *niggun*, a holy *niggun*, arouses the soul and connects us to that which is pure and elevated. All music influences the soul. The question is what direction is it being drawn in. When it’s not being drawn towards *k’dusha*, then perforce it’s being drawn the opposite way. Music doesn’t go through a filter to the brain. It goes directly into the heart, straight to the *neschama*, and before you realize what happened, it already made its mark. There is no *pareve* music.

How do you do that? How do you remove the influences and habits of all sorts of non-*niggun*



music, some of which are considered kosher?

We have to acquire knowledge, to learn *inyanei chassidus* about *niggunim*, to absorb the fact that a *niggun* is part of one’s *avodas Hashem*, especially in school, to develop this awareness by having classes in the curriculum on *niggun*, and strengthening this at home, too.

Practically? To accustom the ear and the soul to hearing a *chassidische niggun*. To listen to *niggunim*. To learn *niggunim*. To sing *niggunim*.

During recess at school, *niggunim* should play in the background. *Chassidic niggunim* should play a more dominant role, especially in arts and crafts. Just as we wouldn’t allow non-kosher food into our mouths, so too we shouldn’t allow non-kosher “food” for our souls. And by doing so, we will greet Moshiach and got out of *Galus* together with song.

“ON THIS DAY JEWISH HEARTS WILL BE AROUSED”

BY MENACHEM ZIEGELBOIM

Stories concerning the imprisonment and release of the Alter Rebbe

PART I

When the Alter Rebbe was arrested, the Czar's soldiers brought him on an exhausting trip to the capitol of Petersburg, a trip that took a few days, where he was incarcerated in the infamous Petropavelski prison, where the worst criminals and traitors were imprisoned. It was early morning and the sun had just risen, and the skies over Petersburg had begun to clear. The wardens put the Rebbe in a large room, packed with officials, men and women, who even at that early hour were busy at their desks.

When the Rebbe walked in, they all stopped and stared. Under his arm, he held his *tallis* and *t'fillin*. He wore a long, fine-looking coat, and his face shone like an angel. His appearance caught the attention of everybody present. The officials saw his glowing face and gazed in wonderment.

“Is this the one who betrayed the Czar?” they murmured in surprise to one another. “Is this the man who they say attempted to undermine the Czar's rule?”

The Rebbe, who was deep in thought, did not pay attention to the stares. He turned eastward, removed his *tallis* from the bag, put it on his shoulder and began carefully checking

the *tzitzis*, as though he was standing in the *beis midrash* back in Liozna. When he was finished, he said the *bracha* carefully and wrapped himself in his *tallis*.

The officials continued to stare in wonder. What was going on here? This prisoner was a criminal and traitor?!

The Rebbe removed himself completely from what was going on around him. He took out his *t'fillin* and put them on. This instilled fear in all present in the large room. After all this, the Rebbe stood in a corner and began to daven. His quiet voice pierced the stillness with its sweetness, “*Hodu L'Hashem, kir'u vishmo, hodi'u va'amim alilosav...*”

PART II

After the Alter Rebbe's release from jail, the *chassidim* greatly rejoiced. Wherever the news of his release reached, the day was declared a *yom tov*. The tension and fear, which had prevailed during the waiting period, had dissipated, and thousands of *chassidim* breathed a sigh of relief.

Chassidim of the Rebbe wanted to write a special *megilla*, *Megillas Yud-Tes Kislev*, which would describe the imprisonment and redemption and

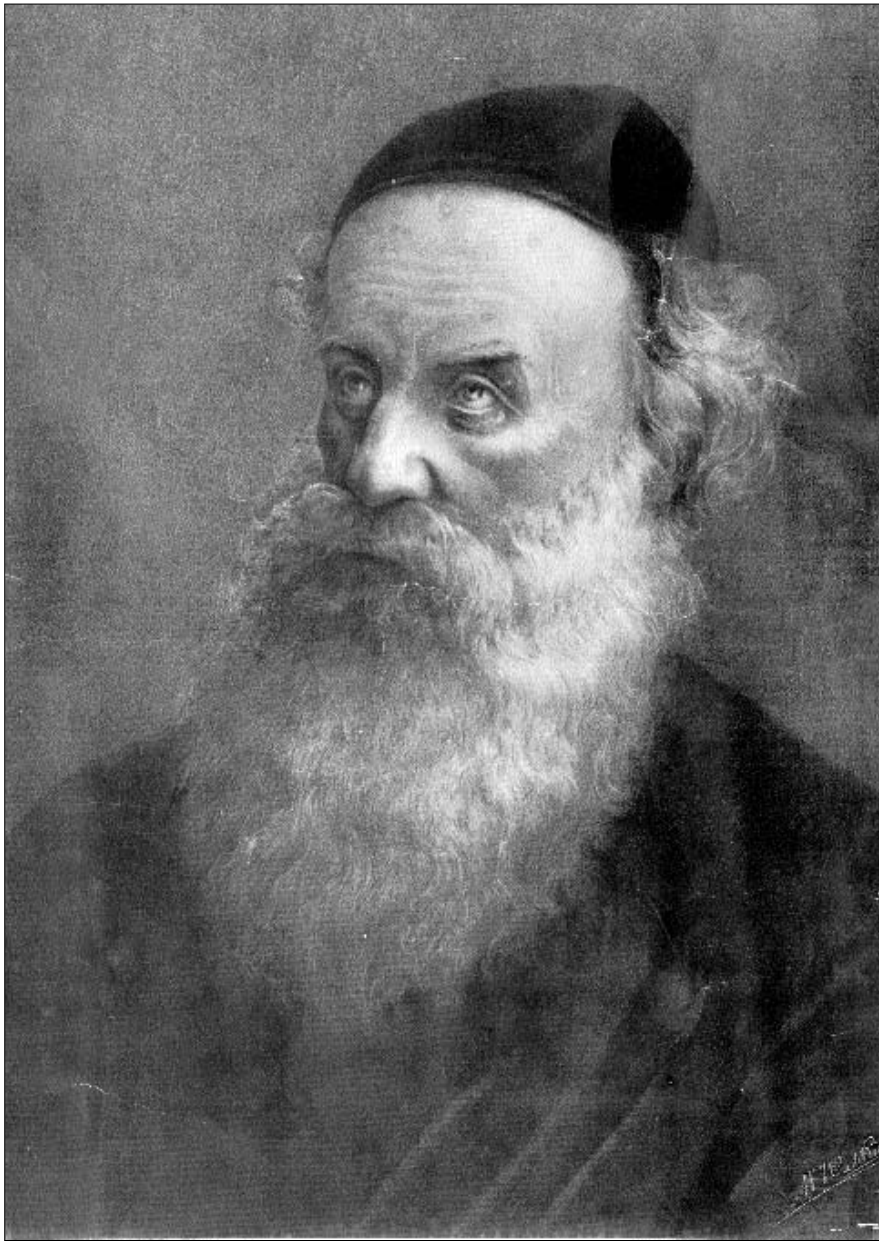
the great miracles that occurred so that future generations would know about it.

After the *chassidim* agreed to write this special *megilla*, the great and elder *chassidim* asked the Rebbe for his permission. The Rebbe thought it over and then said, “This will arouse the ire of the *misnagdim*. In any case, this day will be established as an eternal holiday among the Jewish people, in which the great Name will be magnified and sanctified, and thousands of hearts will be aroused to *t'shuva* and service of the heart, because what happened was engraved in the heart of Israel up Above, and it is written in the heart of Israel down below.”

This statement, reached all the *chassidim* throughout White Russia, and was a comfort.

PART III

Yud-Tes Kislev – Rosh HaShana L'Chassidus. *Chassidim* gathered to *farbreng* with the Rebbe Rayatz, who *farbrenged* in a heartfelt and sweet manner. From time to time, a *chassid* raised a cup of *mashkeh* and said *l'chaim*, and the Rebbe graciously responded. At the end of a *niggun d'veikus*, the Rebbe began to speak about the significance of the day,



Aside from this picture of the Alter Rebbe, the man kept one other chassidic practice. Every year, on Yud-Tes Kislev, he would put on special clothes and be transformed into a new man. He observed this day as a holiday. He held a farbrengen and invited the chassidim who lived in his area.

explaining the *maaleh* (unique quality) of Jews in general and *chassidim* in particular.

“Great *kochos* (abilities) lie hidden within *chassidim*,” said the Rebbe with great feeling. “These *kochos* come to us as an inheritance from our fathers.”

The Rebbe paused, closed his eyes, thought for a while, then gazed upon the *chassidim* present and began to tell a story:

A rich man lived in the verdant suburbs of greater Petersburg in a spacious villa. Liveried servants stood on duty throughout the house and a magnificent garden surrounded it. It was hard to believe that the villa belonged to a Jew, and not to just any Jew but to a staunchly religious Jew!

However as time went by, the more wealthy the man became the less time he devoted to studying Torah. Even his *mitzva* observance began to wane. Since he was in constant contact with other wealthy men, he began arranging parties in his salon, and he participated in them to the wee hours of the morning.

Despite his neglect of Torah and *mitzvos*, he still kept one holy item in his home. It’s doubtful whether even he knew why he did so. Maybe he did it because of the *chassidic* feeling he had absorbed or perhaps for some other reason. In any case, that is the way it was.

In his private chamber, he had a picture of the Alter Rebbe. The Rebbe seemed to look down on the occupants of the room. The wealthy man zealously refused to remove this picture from the wall.

Aside from this picture of the Alter Rebbe, the man kept one other *chassidic* practice. Every year, on Yud-Tes Kislev, he would put on special clothes and be transformed into a new man. He observed this day as a holiday. He held a *farbrengen* and invited the *chassidim* who lived in his area.

Every year, *chassidim* would sit in his palatial home *farbrenge* and relating the wonders of the day, telling of the highs and lows of the story of imprisonment and release, and they would give praise to the Almighty for the wonders He performed for their Rebbe.

In the year our story took place, the *farbrengen* took place as usual, but something happened. The *chassidim* sat and *farbrenge* and sang *niggunim* which aroused the heart and inspired the listeners. Then an older *chassid* cleared his throat and spoke about the significance of the day. He described what had happened to the Alter Rebbe at length, and added praise and thanks to Hashem.

From time to time, he paused, took a deep breath, and gazed over the crowd of *chassidim*. Then he continued with his inspiring words.

In the meantime, the wealthy man took one cup of *mashkeh* and then another, and he opened up and absorbed the words of *chassidus* and inspiration. The *chassidim* were hanging on the words of the *mashpia*, and they didn't take any notice when the head of the household got up and left the room. It was almost dawn before they realized their host's absence. The man had disappeared. It was quite strange.

They decided to look for him. "Perhaps something happened to him and he needs help," said someone, and the *chassidim* scattered throughout the many rooms of the house in anxious search for the master of the house.

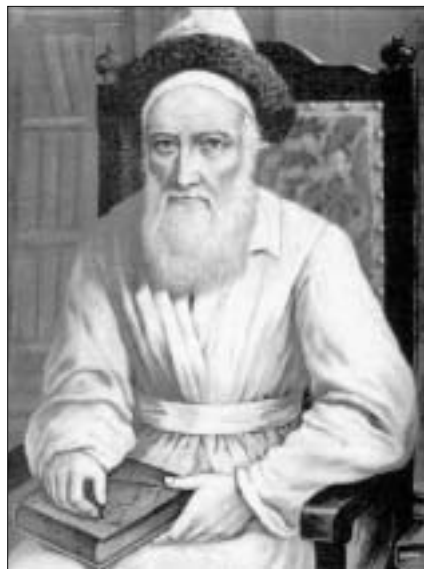
When they came to his office, they nervously opened the door and immediately recoiled at the sight they beheld. For a moment, they found it hard to believe that it was the distinguished wealthy man they knew, but on second glance they realized that it was indeed him.

The man was lying prostrate on

the floor in his expensive clothes, his face pale and his eyes closed. Tears flowed from his eyes and his body shook in suppressed sobs. From time to time, he spoke to (the picture of) the Alter Rebbe: "Oy, Rebbe, look at me, look at what I've come to. I want to do *t'shuva*."

There was silence and then a chilling wail: "Rebbe, help me!"

From that day on, the man changed his lifestyle completely. He began observing *mitzvos* punctiliously, as he used to do. Indeed, concluded the Rebbe Rayatz, this day will be marked as a holiday among the Jewish



people forever, in which the great Name will be glorified and sanctified, and the hearts of thousands in Israel will be aroused to *t'shuva* and service of the heart.

(Based on *Likkutei Dibburim*)

PART IV

In *Reshimos D'varim*, the *chassid* Rabbi Yehuda Chitrik tells an amazing story about the file that contained all the documents regarding the arrest and investigation of the Alter Rebbe.

One day a Lubavitcher *chassid*, a *chassid* of the Rebbe Maharash, came to Lubavitch. He was a scholar and a

G-d-fearing man. It was not for naught that he was chosen to serve in the position of *chassidische shochet/bodek* for the Chabad community in greater Petersburg.

The *chassid* stayed in Lubavitch for a while and before returning to his city, he had a *yechidus* with the Rebbe Maharash. He presented his *Pa"n* with his requests, and the Rebbe gave him a hearty blessing. Before leaving, the Rebbe said to him:

"You live in Petersburg, the capitol, and so I have a request. You surely know where the Czar's building of archives is, where all government documents are kept. There, among thousands of documents, is the file of our great Rebbe regarding his imprisonment. The file contains all documents relating to his arrest and interrogation as well as his release. I want you to go there and take that file for me."

The *chassid* was shocked. How was he supposed to get into the building and how was he to know where to find the file?

The Rebbe responded to his unasked questions: "The file is in room X, on the right side, three shelves down." The Rebbe proceeded to tell him how to get to the room, describing the hallways he needed to walk through, the entrances and exits, and even the office itself.

Being a loyal *chassid*, he did what he had been told without asking questions. When he got to Petersburg, even before going home, he went to do the Rebbe's bidding.

He quickly found the room. It was empty. He quickly went over to the closet the Rebbe had described, glanced at it and counted the shelves until he found the one the Rebbe wanted. Within seconds, the file was in his hands.

He had nearly left with his treasure in hand when he felt a heavy hand on his shoulder. He jumped in fright and



turned around to see a tall, broad-shouldered official with eyes burning in anger. Based on the man's grip on him he could tell the man was strong and it was fruitless to attempt to flee.

The *chassid* turned pale and trembled. He knew he was in deep trouble. He closed his eyes and tried to connect with the one who had sent him there, the Rebbe, knowing that it was only this merit that would stand by him now. When he reopened his eyes, he met the angry gaze of the official once again.

"From where do you get the nerve to break into my office and to take secret documents?" he thundered. "Surely you know that for a crime like this you'll get at least ten years in a labor camp in Siberia!"

The mighty arm of the official shook the cowering *chassid*, and his ire increased by the moment. The *chassid* just looked back fearfully and kept quiet. Once again, the official's voice rang out: "Tell me Jewboy, who sent you here, and how did you know where to locate the file you wanted? If

you tell me the truth I'll make sure to lighten your sentence, which will be severe in any case."

The official closed and locked the office door. Now he had all the time in the world to interrogate the hapless *chassid*. In the meantime, the *chassid's* thoughts raced. He realized he had been caught red-handed and any attempt at an excuse would fail. After thinking it over, he decided that he since he was the Rebbe's *shlich* he had nothing to fear. He turned the matter over in his mind and concluded that the best approach was to tell the truth.

"I'll tell you the truth," he began after a prolonged silence. "In the town of Lubavitch there's a distinguished rabbi, leader of the Chabad *chassidim*, whose name is Schneersohn. This rabbi is a descendent of the Alter Rebbe, and this file contains the documentation of the Alter Rebbe's arrest. This distinguished rabbi sent me here to take the file. He even described your office, the bookcases and all, and exactly where I would

find the file of his great-grandfather."

A heavy silence followed this explanation. The man stood an arms-length away from him. The fire that had burned in his eyes had disappeared. His look was now thoughtful, almost dreamy. The *chassid* realized that something was afoot and he waited further developments. He knew that his fate was in G-d's hands.

After another lengthy silence, the man said, "If Rabbi Schneersohn sent you, I'll leave you alone and won't hand you over to the police."

The *chassid* was shocked. He hadn't dreamed of this turn of events.

"You are probably wondering Jew, why I suddenly changed course. You should know that I do not know your Rabbi Schneersohn, but I knew his father, Rabbin Menachem Schneersohn. I saw him for the first and last time in my life when he was here for a meeting of Jewish rabbis regarding education [i.e., the famous meeting that took place in the year 5603 (1843)]."

The *chassid* continued to stand there quietly, waiting to hear more.

“It was during the rabbinical conference about religion and Jewish education. This was by request of our government, led by the mighty Czar. Additional people were permitted to participate and listen in to most parts of the conference. One of those participants was our Czar, Nicholas I. He would attend the meeting disguised as an ordinary person, and so nobody recognized him aside from two or three people who kept it a secret, by his explicit order. I was one of those people. I was a boy at the time, a private in the Czar’s celebrated army, who stood on guard near the doors of the hall, ready for any order. I stood there and was a witness to the many discussions that took place.

“At one of the meetings, Rabbi Menachem Schneersohn spoke in his language. I couldn’t understand him but I saw that he was very agitated. When he finished, the translator began translating what he had said into Russian. [The translators were the *chassid* R’ Shmarya Chaiken and Feitelson, the son of the *chassid* R’ Mordechai of Leipli, devotees of the Tzemach Tzedek.] When the translator finished his work, the rabbin motioned with his finger that he hadn’t translated everything.

“Minister Uberov, who was sitting there, told the translator to repeat the translation, this time doing it properly. Again the rabbin motioned with his head that the translation was lacking and that he was not satisfied.

“Tension filled the room. Something was amiss. I saw how the translator had a look of despair in his eyes as he cast a helpless look at the rabbin. Minister Uberov looked from the translator to the rabbin, trying to understand what was going on. It was extremely uncomfortable. “Translate it again, properly!” ordered Uberov for the second time, sounding quite irritated.

“The translator turned pale and not having any other choice, he repeated what the rabbin had said, word for word. ‘If the Russian government forces the curriculum proposed by the *maskilim* and government officials on the Jewish schools, within another fifty years there will be a revolution in Russia and the Czarist government will be deposed.’

“If it had thundered in the room at that moment, it would have been

“Uberov was furious. The other rabbis turned white and sat transfixed in their places. Out of the corner of my eye, I could see the Czar’s face. No emotions were apparent. He just motioned to us with his finger to take the rabbin to jail.”

nothing compared to what had just been uttered. This was a clear call for revolution against the glorious majesty of the Czar!

“Uberov was furious. The other rabbis turned white and sat transfixed in their places. Out of the corner of my eye, I could see the Czar’s face. No emotions were apparent. He just motioned to us with his finger to take the rabbin to jail.

“We quickly approached the rabbin and took him off to the nearby prison. His crime was obvious: traitor

to the Czar, a crime punishable by death.

“The rabbin was placed in his cell and I remained outside to guard it. A few minutes later, I heard the sound of the rabbin calling to me from the other side of the door. When I asked him what he wanted, he said he knew good and well what sentence awaited him, and he requested that I bring him some water with which he could wash his hands so that he could say the Jewish prayer which is said before dying.

“Whoever stood near the rabbin couldn’t help but be impressed by his captivating personality. I couldn’t refuse his request, so I brought him a half a cup of water. Then I heard him praying. His voice was mournful but pleasant. It was obvious that he was praying to his G-d with all his heart, and I stood outside, profoundly moved and tearful.

“Shortly thereafter came the surprising order from Czar Nicholas to release him and to allow the rabbin to return to the meeting. Before parting from this celebrated rabbin, he blessed me that in the merit of my helping him I would rise in rank.

“Indeed, from that time on I began to quickly rise in rank, and within a few years I had become a senior general. When I got older I was appointed to guard the government’s archives, an honorable and responsible position, and that is what I’ve been doing these past years.”

The man finished his story and was silent. The *chassid* stood there, trying to mask his emotions. After all, he had just heard a firsthand incredible account of the Tzemach Tzedek, who sacrificed his life for pure Jewish education.

“Since you mentioned the name Schneersohn I will release you. Get out of here before I change my mind!”

(Based on Reshimos D’varim, vol. 1; pg. 125-127)

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WITH WHOM ARE WE PREPARING TO BUILD TRUST

BY SHAI GEFEN

FLIGHT IS THE BEGINNING OF A FALL

The prime minister's recent declaration – that he is committed to continuing with the Road Map – is frightening and bodes tragedy, *ch"v*. What's worse is that he said he plans on dismantling the settlement of Netzarim in the Gaza Strip, along with other settlements, as part of "taking steps to build trust" with our murderers.

With Hashem's help, Sharon won't be able to uproot even a single Jew from our land, and his end will be like the end of all the other prime ministers from the Right and the Left who tried to uproot settlements in Yesha. Not one of them completed his time in office.

Sharon spoke about "steps to build trust." With whom does he want to build trust? In recent years, about five thousand mortars landed in Gush Katif. Miraculously, they didn't kill anybody, but it sure wasn't due to any great strength of ours!

Our prime minister is about to give a prize to despicable terrorists, those who send mortars our way, even at Sderot (near Sharon's ranch) and *kibbutzim* in the Negev, and lately even at the industrial area of Ashkelon. These are the people Sharon wants to work with?!

In a painful *sicha* that was said in 5738, in the middle of the cursed Camp David Accords, the Rebbe MH"M screamed that the big problem is that terrorists interpret every thing that is said as capitulation, and then

they conclude that they can go further in their murderous work. Even if Sharon doesn't actually dismantle settlements, just talking about it gives the terrorists the motivation to continue attacking Jews, because they realize that their war is working and is producing the desired results.

The Rebbe said as much to then Minister of Transportation Moshe Katzav, on Yud Shvat 5752. "You understand Arabic, so go and ask an Arab how he interprets it when they say 'autonomy.'"

Now we don't need to ask Arabs how they understand the significance of Sharon's announcements. Their reactions are known to us ahead of time, and who knows, *r"l*, how much Jewish blood it will cost us? This is the same prime minister, who announced his agreement to give them a Palestinian state, and then was the first to call Israeli actions as "occupation." Now he is promising to dismantle settlements, something that no prime minister said before. This is extremely serious.

And how is it that people living in Eretz Yisroel, religious Jews, who promised the electorate that they would not support a government like this, are continuing to relax on their comfortable ministerial chairs? How are Mr. Lieberman and Mr. Benny Alon, and Mafdal ministers giving the government its mandate, which it intends to use on uprooting Jews and endangering the lives of millions of us?

It is we who have to give an accounting, we who have to look in

the mirror and ask ourselves how we became docile followers after Yossi Beilin's whims. What happened to us lately that the extreme Left has become the trendsetters, and we allow ourselves to be led like sheep to the slaughter?

FOUR HEADS OF THE SHIN-BET

The Left continues to sell us the Geneva Agreement, and in its attempts to do so, it cynically uses former Defense figures in order to frighten us into supporting another dangerous fake peace. Three weeks ago, four former heads of the Shin-Bet were interviewed, and they threatened that if we don't make concessions we can expect a catastrophe.

Everybody knows who's behind those interviews, what their real significance is, what their political views are, and who they belong to. The newspaper didn't report the backgrounds of some of those interviewed, who repeatedly hugged Arafat and Abu Mazen, and just ten years ago told us that only Arafat will bring us peace and what would happen if we didn't give him control.

The paper didn't tell us how those leaders were the ones who recommended that Arafat be given tens of thousands of weapons for him to fight terror... They don't tell the people about their avowed Leftist views. They "forgot" to mention about how some of those "heads" instigated provocations of the Right and invented the imaginary "Jewish underground," and used agent provocateurs in order to

besmirch a huge group of people whose only sin and crime is that they believe in Eretz Yisroel.

The funny thing is that the former Shin-Bet heads are threatening us with a catastrophe when who was it other than them who brought upon us the biggest catastrophes of all? 1000 killed since the Oslo Accords and tens of thousands of wounded.

One columnist in *HaModia* outdid himself when he recommended that we listen to the “professional” opinions of those former Shin-Bet heads. My innocent question is: didn't we listen to their recommendations this past decade, and look where it got us?

We need to know that the views of these former Shin-Bet leaders are merely political views and not security views, though they try to present it as such. This was one of the biggest mistakes Israel made – that political views infiltrated the security sector, and our situation continued to deteriorate. Instead of admitting the mistake, they continue to wallow in the mud and even threaten us with catastrophes.

THE GENEVA INITIATIVE AND SHEEP-LIKE SILENCE

Yossi Beilin is celebrating. He simply floated the Geneva Initiative and the prime minister went out with his own initiative of dismantling settlements. The European anti-Semites (who only recently buried a sharp report on anti-Semitism), who are behind the Geneva Initiative and are paying to have it distributed to every home in Eretz Yisroel, are celebrating. They see how the Jewish nation barely responds to Beilin and Co.'s *chutzpa*, and instead of giving them what they deserve, they continue to be dragged along in the direction the Initiative is leading us in.

The Geneva Initiative, for those who have glanced at it, reveals that it's not a Leftist cartel that wants to arrive

at a solution in exchange for concessions that wrote it, but a group who, at best, suffer psychological disorders, and in the worst case scenario are traitors who collaborate with our enemies. They suggest that international forces protect Israeli citizens and that Israel be stripped of its ability to protect itself. Dismantling settlements, giving away land even from the Negev and the area of the Dead Sea, for every kilometer that we retain in Yesha. Whoever read the Initiative understands why European anti-Semites back it and are trying to sell it to us.

What's our reaction? Silence. There's no question that if *rabbanim* from all circles would get up and scream about this, it would disappear off the agenda. Here's what Rabbi Drukman said about the agreement:

“It's a pamphlet that is funded by anti-Semites who invested millions of dollars into it (which they could have used to help the sick and unfortunate and broken families – Beilin's “sacrifices of peace”), and whose goal is the ridding the land of the Jewish people by abandoning them as prey to predatory animals under the guise of a Palestinian state. This fraud does not deserve to enter a Jewish home, and should be burned.

“Shame on Yossi Beilin and his cohorts. The tragedies they brought upon us aren't enough for you – 1000 killed and thousands wounded – that they continue their diabolical and traitorous plans whose true goal is the annihilation of the Jewish people, *r"l*, from Eretz Yisroel, the land that was promised to us by Hashem!

“The former chief rabbi, Rabbi Herzog, *zt"l*, didn't hesitate to publicly rip up the British White Paper whose purpose was to prevent Jews from coming to Eretz Yisroel. The Geneva Initiative is far worse than the White Paper if only because Jews have initiated it, as it says, ‘those who ruin



The big problem is that terrorists interpret every thing that is said as capitulation, and then they conclude that they can go further in their murderous work. Even if Sharon doesn't actually dismantle settlements, just talking about it gives the terrorists the motivation to continue attacking Jews, because they realize that their war is working and is producing the desired results.

and destroy you, will come from you.”

Time and again the difficult question arises: why the silence? When an agreement is put on the table for discussion, we need to hear a *p'sak halacha!* As Rabbi Drukman put it to those who interviewed him on Channel 10: “During the Holocaust there were complaints about *rabbanim* who kept quiet and didn't warn the people. Today *rabbanim* are telling you what's going to happen and you're ignoring it.”

On Yud Shvat 5738 (as in dozens of other *sichos*), the Rebbe called upon *rabbanim* to be the first to protest about things like this and not to wait until they're asked:

A *rav* can wonder why he should *pashen* the *din* before being asked; he'll wait until he's asked and then he'll respond ... As said before, regarding danger to life there's a clear *p'sak din* in *Shulchan Aruch* that “one who is asked is disgraced,” for he needs to announce to begin with that if such-and-such a situation arises, the *halacha* is such-and-such. So you cannot maintain that you need to wait until you're asked and only answer at that point, because the *p'sak din* in *Shulchan Aruch* is “he should have spoken publicly,” etc.

There are *rabbanim* who responded already, and said the *p'sak din* in this, and there are many *rabbanim* who, for various and odd reasons, have not yet responded to the question.

There is obviously no need to wait until they come and ask the question, because the question has been asked already, and is already a Topic of the Day ...

On the other hand, all those in the government who oppose Beilin and who say that he is a traitor and goes against the law, as Minister of Education Livnat said, have nobody to complain to after they did not bring those who brought the Oslo tragedy upon us to trial, thus proving there's no justice, and giving tacit permission

for those who continue on that route. The prime minister and his ministers can only complain to themselves.

JUMPING INTO THE FIRE

As we hear about all sorts of peace initiatives fostered by the U.S. and European countries, it pays to reexamine what the Rebbe said on Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah 5751 (edited *sicha*):

Giving away parts of Eretz Yisroel doesn't only oppose halacha but also opposes simple logic ... since even the most frightened individual wouldn't willingly dance in the fire and wouldn't willingly offer his throat to the knife ... and giving away parts of Eretz Yisroel is just like jumping into the fire!

... as we see (as said many times) in this too, that in world events taking place various signs of the *Geula* have been fulfilled. Starting with the sign (in Yalkut Shimoni) that “the time for your redemption has arrived), as we see “kingdoms are starting up with one another,” especially in the Arab countries. (Including what we've seen lately in what is called the “Peace

Conference,” where they announced that they are ready to give up everything for the sake of “peace,” as it were, and it actually turns out that “[there are] no bears and no forest” (i.e., it is only an illusion)! So it is clear that the only thing that can result from that “Peace Conference” is damage and destruction, as has happened till this day.)

On Shabbos Parshas Metzora 5741, the Rebbe spoke about the danger inherent in agreements that go against all logic:

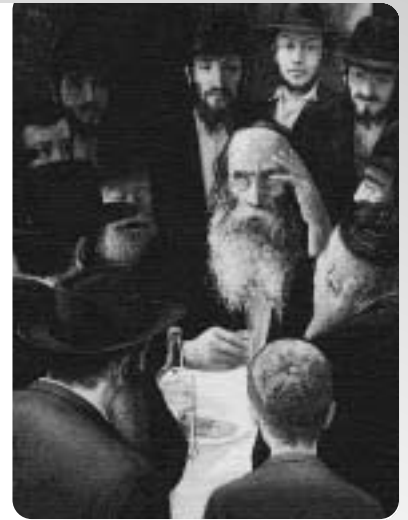
The present Knesset is not a true house, for in this house sit Communists, Moslems, and Christians, and even those who want to give away all of Eretz Yisroel ... Therefore there must be, “and the house is broken,” and the making of a new house, a real house ... Instead of establishing this day when they signed the unfortunate agreement as a holiday, they should have established this day as a bitter, terrible, painful, frightening day. Signing this agreement is a tragedy... In the history of the Jewish people never was there a situation in which Jews themselves offered to do something as shocking as giving away parts of Eretz Yisroel that belong to them to gentiles!

Over the generations, the Jews endured many troubles but a tragedy like this, which has been going on as of two years ago, has never been experienced before!

Giving away parts of Eretz Yisroel doesn't only oppose *halacha* but also opposes simple logic ... since even the most frightened individual wouldn't willingly dance in the fire and wouldn't willingly offer his throat to the knife ... and giving away parts of Eretz Yisroel is just like jumping into the fire! Those who want to give away parts of Eretz Yisroel – despite the fact that it says, “I give it to you as a possession” – sit in the Knesset, and being that this is the case, we need to “break the house”!

TRUTH AND DECEIT

BY RABBI YEHESKEL LBOVIC



BE ATTUNED TO OTHERS' FEELINGS AND WEIGH YOUR CHUMROS

Reb Mendel Futerfas, a”h, was once *farbrenging* in a Russian home. Though the *baal ha’bayis* was not a full-fledged *chassid*, he felt close to the *chassidim* and was basically an observant Jew. How thrilled was he that R. Mendel had agreed to *farbreng* with fellow *chassidim* in his home. His wife – a nice but simple woman – was especially elated, and she prepared some special dishes for the occasion. The *chassidim*, however, were reluctant to eat of her delicacies, knowing that this household wasn’t necessarily meticulous in certain aspects of *kashrus*.

As the hours dragged on, she became acutely aware that her food wasn’t being touched, and felt bad about it. Reb Mendel, finely attuned to these nuances, suddenly picked up some of her delicacies, ate them and praised her food, making sure that she saw and heard him...

Premise: a *chassid* has to be discerning in determining whether a “*chumra*” (non-obligatory stringency) of his might impinge upon or slight or disparage another Jew, or might

conflict with another area of *halacha*.

The Frierdike Rebbe (*Likkutei Dibburim*) stresses that a *chassid* needs to have *havchana* (discernment) to determine wherefrom comes the inner voice which guides him in his decision-making process (determine who is

The chassidim, however, were reluctant to eat of her delicacies, knowing that this household wasn’t necessarily meticulous in certain aspects of kashrus...

the “*zoger*”): is it the G-dly soul, the intellectual soul, or the animal soul? Sometimes even a *tzaddik* may have difficulty making the right choice, when the options contemplated are all connected to *k’dusha* (holiness) and he doesn’t know how to weigh the merits of all the options and

decide which way to go (as in the story of R. Nochum of Chernobyl, who once was in a quandary as to how to disburse a certain sum of *tz’daka*).

SUPPORTING SOURCES

We find support for this premise in Parshas VaYeitzei and Parshas Lech Lecha.

PARSHAS VAYEITZEI:

Question: how did Yaakov marry two (or four) sisters, if the forefathers obeyed the Torah before it was given? Doesn’t the Torah prohibit marrying two sisters in their lifetime?

Since Rashi doesn’t even address this question altogether, we can assume that there is an answer so simple as to be self-understood. Various answers are given, which obviously are not Rashi’s position. He can’t agree with the Ramban’s answer that Yaakov observed the Torah only while living in Eretz Yisroel (he married the sisters in the Diaspora), for Rashi himself holds that Yaakov did observe the 613 *mitzvos* while sojourning with Lavan (B’Reishis 32:5). He probably also doesn’t agree with the position that the forefathers had full Jewish status

even before the Torah was given. And consequently, Leah and Rachel had to convert before marrying Yaakov. As a result, sisters who convert lose their blood relationship by virtue of the *halacha* that “a convert is considered a newly born babe.”

This would then explain why he married them: they were not *halachically* related as sisters once they had converted. It is unlikely that Rashi, who interprets the simple *p’shat*, would agree to this answer, because (a) there are no grounds to assume, in *p’shat*, that there was full Jewish status before the Torah was given. Rather, everyone had the law of a Ben Noach (a descendant of Noach, commanded in the observance of only 7 *mitzvos*). Whatever else the forefathers observed was only by virtue of accepting *chumros* (stringencies) upon themselves, rather than being under obligation to do so; (b) hence, the whole institution of *halachic* conversion had no place; (c) even if we would grant that there was grounds for *halachic* conversion even at that time, it still would not detract from another basic factor (which seems to be the basis for the prohibition of marrying sisters): it does not sit well

for two sisters, who possess natural, mutual sisterly love, to have that love become undermined upon marrying the same man (at that time polygamy was permitted for men) and they having to each vie for his love and affection and become jealous of each other, to the point of enmity.

Thus, even if conversion had a place, and even if as a result their blood relationship would cease, their natural sisterly love would remain intact – so why disturb it by Yaakov marrying both of them?

THE COMMITMENT MADE THE WHOLE DIFFERENCE

The simple reason and answer is that Yaakov had *committed* to marry Rochel, and should he have not kept his word – for whatever good reason – it would have been a situation of extreme deception. At that time, all of humanity (the B’nei Noach) had accepted upon them not to be deceitful to one another, and this became a binding obligation. This is why Yaakov exclaimed to Lavan upon finding out that he had deceived him and given him Leah instead of Rachel: “Why did you deceive me?!” (B’Reishis 29:25) Therefore, the “*chumra*” of not marrying two sisters was overruled

by this prohibition against deceitful behavior.

PARSHAS LECH LECHA

The same question is raised in reference to Avrohom Avinu waiting until he was 99 years old to circumcise himself by G-d’s command. If he observed the torah before it was given, shouldn’t he have circumcised at a much earlier date?

Here, too, this “*chumra*” of circumcision was overruled by a clearly stated prohibition that applies to B’nei Noach: the prohibition against murder and bloodshed applies also to suicide and self-mutilation. Short of the G-dly command to circumcise, circumcision is tantamount to self-mutilation, which is prohibited. He therefore had no choice but to wait until G-d’s command to circumcise.

Chassidim especially have to live by the yardstick of *emes* (truth) and avoid deceitful behavior. If the *Alter Rebbe* would have omitted the word “*emes*” in his epistle (#2 in *Igeres HaKodesh of Tanya*), he would have gained another 50,00 *chassidim*. However, he demanded *emes* (*HaYom Yom Menachem Av 10*)

(Based on *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 5, p. 141-149.)

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THE EMERGING FAITH OF SCIENCE

On Sunday, the 28th day of MarCheshvan, the 1st day of the Torah reading Toldos, Dr. Aryeh Gotfryd, PhD, former Professor at the University of Toronto and advisor to government and business on a wide range of ecological affairs, visited Yeshiva Tiferes Menachem of Sea Gate to *farbreng* and share the latest findings and insights of the scientific world. Dr. Gotfryd's presentation was more than challenging for all those present, if not for his ability to talk in a layman's terms that made the concepts accessible to everyone.

All those gathered at the *farbrengen* were treated to an insider's talk on what science really has to say. Today, at least at the higher levels, science is no longer denying the existence of G-d, as many were and continue to be taught in high school. On the contrary, science itself has become a signpost of the approach of a new era, a time that will openly acknowledge the existence of G-d. Moreover, science is publicizing and spreading these undisputable findings which prove the existence of G-d. This is a phenomenon the Rebbe MH"M identified with the approach of the imminent Redemption.

Dr. Gotfryd, well-versed in both science and *chassidus*, qualified his scientific discussion with its practical application in our service as Chabad *chassidim*.

He related that the amazing statement of science, "the ultimate ground of reality is an indivisible wholeness which is conscious and responds to our decisions to change the way things work, and is in a constant creative dynamic with all of physical reality – is basically a statement that means scientists have discovered G-d in a physics lab."



Dr. Aryeh Gotfryd *farbrengen* in Yeshiva Tiferes Menachem in Seagate, NY

All these disclosures of modern science, as Dr. Gotfryd related, are necessary for several purposes. Firstly, it supplies us with parables and examples of how G-d works. Secondly, new technologies, which are brought about through science, are here to serve a G-dly purpose. For example, Yeshiva Tiferes Menachem's live broadcast of its classes and *farbrengens* utilizes internet technology to spread the knowledge of Torah and *chassidus* to virtually every corner of the world. Science's highest purpose is when the scientific knowledge itself reveals G-dliness, not just when it serves as an example, as mentioned above.

Dr. Gotfryd kept everyone wide-eyed and excited with the vast amount of scientific and *chassidic* knowledge he placed on the table. One student commented after the gathering that he had never heard a better *farbrengen* and was greatly inspired. Dr. Gotfryd not only added depth and inspiration to the daily service of those present, but

presented a testament to the truth and holiness of the Torah.

The really good news is that Dr. Gotfryd will be returning to the Yeshiva of Sea Gate for its Torah by the Sea 10-day learning excursion December 26 – January 4, '04. He will speak on the topic of Science and Faith, entitled, "On the 7th Day Science Rested." Other speakers for the program will include Rabbi Heschel Greenberg, Rabbi Simon Jacobson, Rabbi Y.Y. Jacobson, Rabbi Shloma Majesky, and Dr. Dovid Sholom Pape. Their talks will include, "As the Dreidel Turns," "Under the weight of a free society: A 21st century profile for Jewish Survival," "The Clever Jew and Secularism," "The 5 W's of Chassidus: When a Jew becomes a *chassid*," & "Will believing in Moshiach help me pass my Calculus exam?" Interested students should register online at www.tiferes.org or call (718) 333 – 1176.

RAV NOTKE BERKAHAN, A”H

As the Rebbe’s *shluchim* gathered for the *Kinus HaShluchim*, a *shliach* for many years and the chief rabbi of Riga, Rabbi Sholom Uri Nosson Notte (Notke) Berkahan, passed away.

His memoirs were published in *Beis Moshiach* (Hebrew section) just a few months ago. This was the first time that R’ Berkahan publicly revealed chapters of his adventure-filled life. This turned out to be his last interview. Here are some highlights of his life as he recalled them:

R’ Berkahan was born in Riga in 5683 (1923). His father was Alexander Zusman Berkahan. The family’s *chassidic* roots: his grandfather on his father’s side was Rabbi Yeshaya Berkahan, a *chassid* of the Tzemach Tzedek. His mother’s grandfather was a *chassid* of the Tzemach Tzedek and her father was a *chassid* of the Rebbe Maharash.

He learned in the local school until age 4 and then attended the Torah V’Derech Eretz school, which was run by Rabbi Chadakov, who in later years became the Rebbe’s secretary. At the age of 10, he saw the Rebbe Rayatz a number of times when the Rebbe was staying in Riga.

As R’ Berkahan told *Beis Moshiach*: “I saw the Rebbe Rayatz seven times. I was at the *davening*, *farbrengens*, and had a *yechidus* along with my father.”

When his brother Yeshaya Chanoch (may Hashem avenge his blood) was appointed *rav* of the town of Gustina, which was near Riga, he went to learn in Yeshivas Tomchei T’minim of Gustina.

During World War II R’ Berkahan fled Latvia with his family. Latvia was soon conquered by the Nazis. After much travail, he arrived in Samarkand, where many *chassidim* fled during the war.

After the war, R’ Berkahan married Tzippora, daughter of the *chassid* Nachum Yitzchok Lerman. They wandered from place to place until they came to Riga. There, together with the tiny Chabad community, they observed a religious life despite the persecution from the Communists. R’ Berkahan ignored the authorities and even then was *mekarev*

Jews to Judaism and *chassidus*. His most famous *mekurav* is Professor Yirmiya (Herman) Branover.

He was a *chassid* and *mekushar*, and in those crazy times, he carried out many missions for the Rebbe throughout the Soviet Union. One of these missions was to locate *chassidic* manuscripts in Soviet towns and to send them to the Rebbe. When he left the Soviet Union in 5729 (1929), he took out many of these manuscripts with him, hidden in his luggage.

Rabbi Berkahan settled in the Chabad section of Lud and worked among the Russian immigrants there under the organization SHAMIR. In 5738, he was sent by SHAMIR to work among Jews in the Soviet Union. This was at the beginning of perestroika, and R’ Berkahan wasn’t afraid of the communist authorities and on the Rebbe’s *shlichus*, he circulated among Soviet cities, distributed Jewish and

chassidic books, encouraged Jews to observe *mitzvos*, and even printed a *Tanya* in a number of places.

In 5749, he arrived in Riga and within a short time he received the Rebbe’s *bracha* for ongoing *shlichus* in the city. A year later, he was elected as chief rabbi of Latvia. There are numerous *baalei t’shuva* around the world thanks to R’ Barcahan’s *shlichus* in Latvia.

Last Zayin Adar II there was an evening held to salute his work, which was also a birthday celebration marking R’ Barcahan’s 80th birthday. The leaders of the Jewish community, along with present and past leaders of the country, wealthy contributors along with members of embassies and the Jewish Agency, all came to salute the work of Rabbi Berkahan. It was an impressive event, in which public figures of all groups expressed their appreciation for his fifteen years of work in Latvia.

R’ Berkahan continued his work despite his age, until being diagnosed with a serious illness. On Thursday, 25 Cheshvan, he passed away. He is survived by his wife, his son Menachem Mendel, his daughter Tamara Gorelick, his daughter Chasia Neimark, and grandchildren, many of whom are *shluchim* of the Rebbe.

