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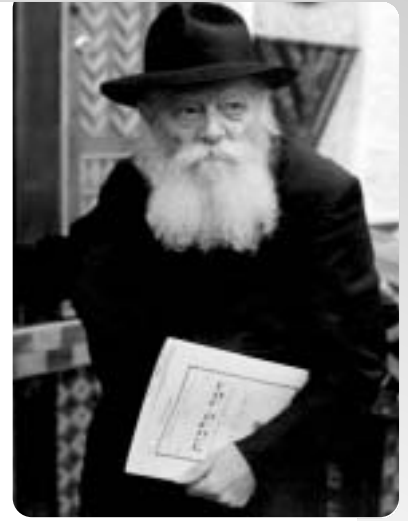
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CHANUKA: LIGHTING UP THE MARKETPLACE

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



SHABBOS PARSHAS VA'YEISHEV; 25TH DAY OF KISLEV, 5750

1. We find a unique phenomenon regarding Chanuka. The story of Chanuka is related at length in a text called Megillas Antiochus. Although this text is not one of the 24 books of the Bible, the *halachic* authorities do refer to it, and, in certain communities, it is customary to read this text in public on Chanuka. This fact, however, seems to be an apparent contradiction. If Megillas Antiochus is not given the status of a book of the Bible, why is it read in public in certain communities?

The question is reinforced by a comparison to Purim. In many respects, Chanuka and Purim have equal status: Both were instituted by the Sages, and work is permitted on both of them, etc. In regard to the text which records the holiday's miracle, however, we find a drastic contrast. Megillas Esther is considered one of the books of the Bible. Indeed, it is given special importance. Our Sages relate that, "All the books of the prophets and the holy writings will be nullified in the Messianic age with the exception of the book of Esther." It will remain forever like the Five Books of Moshe and the *halachos*. Also, it is a *mitzva*

to read the Megilla on Purim. But neither of these factors apply to Megillas Antiochus. There is a further difference between the two: The Megilla of Purim is named after Esther, a righteous woman and the heroine of the story, whereas the Megilla of Chanuka is named after Antiochus, a wicked gentile.

The above difficulty can be explained as follows: Chanuka and Purim represent the refinement of the lowest levels of existence, the transformation of darkness to light. The Chanuka miracle took place at a time of great spiritual darkness, when the Greeks had entered the Sanctuary. Nevertheless, despite their desire to make the Jews "forget Your Torah and violate the decrees of Your will," G-d "delivered the mighty into the hands of the weak... and the impure into the hands of the pure," and wrought the miracle of the Chanuka lights.

Similarly, the Purim miracle occurred in a time when darkness was prevalent. Haman, the enemy of the Jews, and Achashverosh, a wicked king, were in power over the entire civilized world. Nevertheless, the self-sacrifice of Mordechai, Esther, and the Jewish people as a whole, transformed the entire situation and

brought about salvation for the Jews.

There is, however, a difference in the manner in which the Sages determined to have the holidays commemorated. The commemoration of Purim centers around activities carried out in one's home (the Purim feast) or in the synagogue (the reading of the Megilla), i.e., these activities are set within a Jewish environment.

The commemoration of Chanuka, however, centers around *pirumei nisa*, publicizing the Chanuka miracle. Thus, the Chanuka candles are lit "at the entrance to the house, on the outside," and must burn "until the Tarmudites are no longer present in the market-place." Thus, these candles are intended to illuminate the public thoroughfare and should burn until even the last individuals are no longer present in the streets.

Significantly, all these terms, "Tarmudites," "market-place," and "public thoroughfare," are all associated with the forces of evil. Through the light of Chanuka, symbolic of "the candle of *mitzva* and the light of Torah," these forces are transformed into good.

This quality represents the advantage of Chanuka over Purim.

Although Purim also expresses transformation, that transformation involved the fate of the Jewish people and is commemorated by celebrations among the Jewish people themselves. In contrast, Chanuka is commemorated by spreading the light of the candles into the market place, effecting the gentiles as well.

In addition to the above concept, to resolve the questions raised from the outset, it is necessary to explain the refinement of the gentiles and the seventy languages they speak. In general, there are two approaches to this service of refinement:

a) The revelation from above to below: When one's service in the realm of holiness is powerful, the light of holiness is drawn down to even the lowest levels and brings about refinement. Chassidic thought describes this concept with a metaphor of a large torch which draws sparks to it. This effect can be compared to the process of refinement accomplished through Torah study. The very fact that a person studies about a certain Torah subject causes the refinement of that subject in the world at large.

b) The elevation from below to above: This movement involves lowering oneself and involving oneself (needless to say, according to the Torah's guidelines) in activities with gentiles and their languages and thus, employing these activities and languages for the sake of Torah and the service of "Knowing G-d in all your ways."

To focus on the concept of the gentile languages. In the beginning of Creation, everyone spoke *Lashon HaKodesh* (the Holy Tongue), as the Torah states, "The entire earth was of one language." After the construction of the tower of Babel, G-d "confused the speech of the entire earth," and from that time onward, people began to speak in different languages.

It is improper to speak about

mundane matters in *Lashon HaKodesh*. If so, the question arises: During the many generations that existed before the tower of Babel, when *Lashon HaKodesh* was the only language spoken, how was this "holy tongue" used for mundane matters. Furthermore, this epoch included several generations, e.g., the generation of Enosh and the generation of the flood, when the people were decadent idolaters. How could *Lashon HaKodesh* be used by these individuals?

The concept can be explained as follows: Every element of existence, even the most mundane matters and those which oppose holiness contains

Chanuka is commemorated by spreading the light of the candles into the market place, effecting the gentiles, as well.

a spark of holiness and has its source in *Lashon HaKodesh*. As explained in *Tanya*, G-d created the world through speech and the name of an object in *Lashon HaKodesh* is the mechanism by which the Divine life-force is drawn down for this object.

Thus, originally, when *Lashon HaKodesh* was spoken, even in regard to mundane matters, it served to reveal the Divine life-force present in each entity. Every individual, regardless of his spiritual level, even one who rebelled against G-d, brought out the Divine life-force present within the world through the mere use of *Lashon HaKodesh*.

Nevertheless, the sin of the tower of Babel brought about a descent in the spiritual level of the world. When the people of that era wanted to cut themselves off from their spiritual source, they prevented the possibility of revealing the Divine life-force through speech. (Hence, there is, as mentioned above, precautions against using *Lashon HaKodesh* for mundane purposes.) Thus, G-d's "confusion of the languages of the world," began a new order of service. It was no longer possible for speech, in and of itself, to be a positive act. Rather, effort had to be made that when one descended to speak these other languages, one intended to elevate them to holiness.

The Alter Rebbe explains the difference between the letters of *Lashon HaKodesh* and the letters of other languages as follows: The letters of *Lashon HaKodesh* can be compared to stones, which are creations of G-d, whereas the letters of other languages can be compared to bricks, which are formed by man. By speaking these languages for a constructive purpose, and in particular, using them to teach Torah, one builds "the wall of Torah" with these "bricks."

Though the above is the general rule, nevertheless, even after the tower of Babel and the spiritual descent it caused, every person – gentiles included – shares a connection to *Lashon HaKodesh*. Therefore, there is the potential to reveal the G-dliness invested in Creation through other languages, as well. When G-d "confused the languages of the world," He also included some elements of *Lashon HaKodesh* in other tongues. As an example of this concept, the Sages explained that certain words in the Torah, like "Yegar Sahadusa" and "totafos," which are found in other languages are, in essence, words from *Lashon HaKodesh*.

Furthermore, there are other

commentaries that explain that these words are originally from other languages. Nevertheless, they have been elevated to the point where they can be used in the Torah. This principle is further expressed in the books of the prophets where foreign languages are used to communicate many concepts including those on an extremely elevated plane, e.g., Daniel's prophecy of the advent of the Messianic era. This reveals that there is the potential to elevate these other languages to the realm of holiness and accomplish an even higher level in the refinement of the world than that which can be accomplished through *Lashon HaKodesh*.

Based on the above, we can understand the difference between the refinement of the gentiles and the world at large associated with the Purim miracle and that associated with Chanuka. The Purim miracle resembles the refinement of the world which was accomplished through speaking *Lashon HaKodesh* in regard to mundane matters. Even though Megillas Esther contains certain Persian words and names (including the name, Achashverosh) and was transcribed into the Persian chronicles, this shows how the holiness of the Megilla descended to the lowest levels. Nevertheless, because this refinement came "from above," it did not effect the Persians on their own level. Thus, the name of G-d was not included in the Megilla, lest the Persians substitute the name of one of their deities for it when translating it.

To emphasize this concept, it is called Megillas Esther. This name indicates that Esther, symbolic of the forces of holiness, is the one who accomplishes this process of refinement.

Chanuka, in contrast, elevates and refines the gentiles as they exist "in the market-place," i.e., on their own level, before they have been

influenced by *Lashon HaKodesh*. Nevertheless, on that level itself, they are transformed into holiness.

For this reason, the Megilla of Chanuka is called Megillas Antiochus. Antiochus, the wicked, is the villain of the narrative. Furthermore, the narrative does not become a part of the Bible, thus, reflecting how it refers to the gentiles on their own level. Nevertheless, through the service of Chanuka, this narrative becomes transformed to the extent that Torah authorities refer to it and, in certain communities, it is customary to read it on Chanuka.

* * *

***Chanuka is also
connected with
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This implies that, first
and foremost, a
person must involve
himself with the
education of his own
children.***

Greater potential for this service is generated on the present day which is:

a) Shabbos Chanuka – on which the holiness of Shabbos is drawn down into all aspects of Chanuka, including the service of transforming the gentiles.

b) Shabbos VaYeishev – The opening verse of this portion states: "And Yaakov settled in the land of his fathers' sojourns, the land of K'naan." This contains an allusion to the two processes of refinement mentioned

above. "The land of his fathers' sojourns," refers to service within the realm of holiness, and "the land of K'naan," refers to the service of the refinement of the world at large.

2. Based on the above, we can understand the practices followed by the Rebbeim in connection with *Nittul* (which generally falls on or in proximity to the Chanuka festival). The Rebbe Rayatz taught that it is customary not to study Torah on that night in order not to increase the Divine life energy present. The Rebbe Rayatz continued that his father, the Rebbe Rashab, would either play chess (or give advice to others to play chess) on that night.

The lesson that can be learned from this is as follows: When a Jew is in a situation which – because its level is very low – he cannot elevate in a direct manner through studying Torah, he should use that situation to produce a benefit in an indirect manner, for example, by playing chess, a game which is connected with the intellect. Firstly, it sharpens one's intellect. Secondly, playing successively can increase the respect with which one is held by gentiles. And thirdly, at times, it can produce a direct financial benefit.

Similarly, each person in his own way must use *Nittul* in a positive way. Rather, than merely do nothing, he should perform acts connected with wisdom, or connected with charity and kindness, or connected with the proper functioning of his home.

In this vein, the story was once told of a *yeshiva* student who wore a jacket which was missing a button. When he was asked why he did not fix it, he replied that *Nittul* was approaching and that he was putting off fixing it until then. The *yeshiva* student couldn't conceive of time that would be spent without any positive input. Hence, knowing that he could not study on *Nittul*, he planned to use the time for another constructive act.

3. Chanuka is also connected with *chinuch*, education. This implies that, first and foremost, a person must involve himself with the education of his own children, both his sons and daughters, by teaching them about the holiday and training them to observe its *mitzvos*. (In regard to sons, even those under *bar mitzva* age, this involves lighting the Chanuka candles. It is not customary for daughters below *bas mitzva* to light candles. Nevertheless, it is proper to train them in other aspects of the observance of the festival. Indeed, our Sages stressed how women are obligated in all aspects of the holidays observance since the miracle also involved a woman.

Similarly, the children should be given *Chanuka gelt*. This custom should be carried out at least twice throughout the holiday and if possible every day. (Needless to say, money itself should not be given on Shabbos.)

Since Chanuka is connected with "illuminating the public thoroughfare," it is an appropriate time to devote oneself to reaching out to those Jewish children who do not receive any Jewish education, those who study in "public schools."

Similarly, since Chanuka is connected with "illuminating the public thoroughfare," it is an appropriate time to devote oneself to reaching out to those Jewish children who do not receive any Jewish education, who study in "public schools." We must try to bring them into a program of Jewish education. In particular, efforts should be made to use the midwinter vacation they are given to involve them in a program of Torah study.

These efforts should be expanded in an effort to educate the world at large, spreading Torah and *mitzvos* among Jews and the seven *mitzvos* given to Noach and his descendants among the gentiles, and in this way, reveal how the entire world was created only for the purpose of expressing G-d's glory. This will be realized in the Messianic Redemption when, "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of G-d as the waters cover up the ocean bed."

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ידו אדונינו מורנו ורבנו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד

...THEN YOU WILL SUCCEED

BY RABBI LEVI YITZCHOK GINSBERG
MASHPIA AT YESHIVAS TOMCHEI T'MIMIM – LUBAVITCH, Kfar Chabad
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY



We are now in the midst of the luminous days of the holiday of Chanuka, particularly in preparation for its climax on Zos Chanuka, when we were commanded in the *D'var Malchus* of Parshas VaYeishev, to publicize, particularly in the these days of “*pirsumei nisa*,” the miracles that are happening in our times (especially, and not to be satisfied with publicizing the miracles of the past) with an emphasis on its relevance to bringing the true and complete Redemption in actual deed.

(*Chassidim* have always known that until the “new teachings” that we will hear speedily from Melech HaMoshiach, we must “live” with the last *sicha* that we have heard from the Rebbe, for now from that particular week and on that particular subject. As has been publicized on numerous occasions (and all the more so in our situation that the Rebbe is *chai v'kayam* in its simplest interpretation, except that “our eyes do not see”), the Rebbe has said, “If only *Anash*, particularly the T'mimim, would be strict in observing the words of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, even the *sichos*, particularly from 5710 and the year before.” (*Igros Kodesh*, Vol. 3, p. 24), and “*Der Rebbe haht altz bahvahrnt*” – that he constantly looks

for “the answers to all the questions being asked” in the *maamarim* and *sichos* of the Rebbe Rayatz delivered during the last year (*Toras Menachem* 5710, p. 20.))

We will open this week with a story from a Jew who recently become close to the Rebbe *shlita* MH”M via his picture:

Chaim Kimmerschlag, a Jew from Kibbutz Regavim in the Taanach area, had an alternative medicine clinic in Tel Aviv. At this point in his life, he had no open connection to Torah and *mitzvos* observance in general, nor any direct connection to Chabad in particular. He didn't know anything about Chabad and the Rebbe *shlita* more than what he had heard in the Israeli media, which is not known to be very supportive. So “literally by chance,” as in many locations throughout the country, people erected a large picture of the Rebbe MH”M *shlita* with the caption “From His Teachings – His Instructions,” directly in front of his clinic. (This would be an appropriate opportunity to give a hearty “*Yasher Ko'ach*” to those responsible for this project. Countless Jews have come closer to *Yiddishkeit* by merely seeing a picture of the Rebbe MH”M *shlita*, and the following story is one of many such

cases to prove this point.)

Every day upon entering and leaving his place of work, Chaim would stumble across the Rebbe *shlita*'s picture, without feeling that it had the slightest relevance to him. Then, he had a particular problem of a serious nature, and all efforts to solve it through conventional or alternative methods were to no avail. The situation continued to worsen from day to day.

When a person finds himself in distress, he tries to find solutions that he would never be prepared to consider under normal circumstances, lest he appear as someone grasping at straws.

Once he passed near the Rebbe *shlita*'s picture, deeply troubled and concerned over his nagging problem. He had heard in the media about the faith of *chassidim*, so he apparently decided that he had nothing to lose. He directly turned to the Rebbe, and said quite simply, “They say that you are Melech HaMoshiach and that you are *chai v'kayam*. I don't know what the truth is, but I have a very serious problem and I don't see a way to get out of it. If you will help me to solve this matter, I will know that what they say is true, and I will also try to

do something positive in this direction...”

A few days passed, and the matter was worked out – without any rational explanation! Chaim was stunned. But he still thought that perhaps this was all just a coincidence...

After another few days, the problem sprouted up again, with no logical solution on the horizon. Chaim already knew where to turn, so he approached the Rebbe in exactly the same fashion, and to his utter disbelief – the problem was completely solved. This time, he was absolutely certain from where his help was coming, and he immediately began to inquire more about the Rebbe MH”M *shlita*.

Chaim walked into his local Steimatzky bookstore (he was not yet familiar with Kehos or any other Chabad publishing house) and asked for a book about the Rebbe. They told him that they had no such book, but he would not relent. He entered the manager’s office, and practically flipped over the table. “What is this? The leading chain of bookstores in Eretz Yisroel doesn’t have a single book about such an important figure in the Jewish world?!”

In the end, the manager promised him personally that he would order some book about the Rebbe within the week. The following week, the Steimatzky store received a copy of Rabbi Simon Jacobson’s book, *Towards a Meaningful Life*. Chaim, who wanted to know everything about the Rebbe, read the book with tremendous interest from cover to cover. Afterwards, he went back to the store and ordered another thirty (!) copies for all his friends and family...

This is the way that he began to introduce himself to the wonderful world of Chabad. He met with Lubavitcher *chassidim* and heard directly from them that the Rebbe

answers questions and does miracles even today – this he could tell them himself – and about the unique channel of *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe *shlita* through *Igros Kodesh*.

Chaim was still just starting his path towards a life filled with Torah and *mitzvos*, but he immediately bought the entire set of *Igros Kodesh* for his library, and began to seek the Rebbe’s advice on every serious matter. Even in his work in alternative medicine, when he didn’t have a suggestion for a patient, he referred him to the right address... Needless to say, Melech HaMoshiach’s picture appeared prominently on the walls of his home and his clinic.

One day, a woman from Zichron Yaakov came into his clinic, complaining about certain health problems. Chaim recommended that she take magnesium, however, she expressed her objection to this drug. As she was speaking, she noticed the Rebbe *shlita*’s picture on the wall and asked him, “What connection do you have with him? From where do you know him? You don’t look religious or anything like that...”

“This is my Rebbe,” Chaim responded plainly. “I seek his advice on every serious problem, and the Rebbe answers me – usually through ‘*Igros Kodesh*.’”

“If so,” the woman said, “is it possible to ask him about this drug?”

Chaim said yes, grabbed a volume of *Igros Kodesh*, and opened it “at random,” as he declared “*Yechi Adoneinu*.”

Chaim began to read the answer, located in Vol. 4, p. 352: “In response to...that he informs about the state of his wife’s health, I will mention her when I will be at the *Tzion* of my honored father-in-law, the Rebbe, and surely he will arouse great mercy for her. She has certainly received some instructions from the doctor and is following them, and I

In accordance with the Rebbe shlita’s emphasis upon the miracles that are occurring in our time, we have the privilege and obligation to pursue anyone who has even the slightest doubt on whether he should agree to take any serious step in life without seeking the Rebbe’s advice and consent, and to explain to him that the Rebbe will surely “find the way” to respond and answer him during this brief time when we do not see him literally with our eyes, via Igros Kodesh, etc.

will be interested to know besides what he writes on the matter of bitter salt and magnesium...

The woman was shocked. The Rebbe was talking about the very magnesium that the whole discussion had been centered upon just a short while earlier!

She asked to see the answer for herself, and took the volume of *Igros Kodesh* to read it on her own. She read with growing interest the entire remainder of the correspondence, where the Rebbe explains at length: "While G-d heals all flesh and perform wonders, in any event, the ways of nature also have some hold, albeit very slight. I heard once from my honored father-in-law, the Rebbe, that the Alter Rebbe once went to someone who was seriously ill, *lo aleinu*, and healed him with a piece of *shmura matza* "un halba glahz vasser" (and half a glass of water), as in any case, there must be some hold in nature. May G-d Alm-ghty hear his prayers and requests so he can bring good news."

This was even more amazing. At the beginning, she was shocked. This time, she broke out in tears. The Rebbe *shlita* continued to write: "I will be interested to know in what manner things worked out...and if he will remain in the *ohel* of Torah, etc."

It turns out that this woman had learned in the Beis Rivka School in Kfar Chabad under HaRav Meir Freiman, of blessed memory. However, with the passage of time and the events of life, she was carried further and further away from the *ohel* of Torah... She felt that the Rebbe was now calling her back home.

As we said, this woman was from Zichron Yaakov, and the local *shliach* there is HaRav Yosef Yitzchak Freiman, the son of HaRav Meir Freiman, of blessed memory. The circle had been closed. She started to come to Torah classes at the Chabad House, and returned to a life of

Torah and *mitzvos* – "he will remain in the *ohel* of Torah, etc."

About a year ago, during Elul, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Freiman came to the Beis Nachum Yitzchak Synagogue in Kfar Chabad's *shikunim*, and with much enthusiasm, retold this story to those assembled. Among those who "just happened" to be present was another *shliach*, who ran a Chabad House in a different location. This *shliach* was having doubts whether to make his annual calendar for his Chabad House supporters with a picture of the Rebbe *shlita*, due to its more expensive nature. However, after hearing Rabbi Freiman's story, he immediately understood that the Rebbe was now sending him a clear message about the importance of putting the Rebbe's picture in every possible place.

In the Rebbe *shlita*'s famous letter of Chamisha-Asar B'Shvat 5709 (during the lifetime of the Rebbe Rayatz, *nishmaso Eden*), the Rebbe writes (see *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. 3, p. 54):

Once, there was an *avreich*, who was forced to flee his home. He had no connection to the *avoda* of *t'filla*, he was neither an intellectual nor an *oved*. He had no sign of a beard, and had never learned in Tomchei T'mimim or any other *yeshiva* at all. He roamed to a faraway land, both in distance and in matters of *Yiddishkeit*. Then, after a certain period of time, letters for my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe *shlita*, began to arrive from men and women from this place. For example, a woman who owned a business had an offer to rent a store and an apartment in one part of town or another, and she asked the Rebbe *shlita* for a decision on what she should do. She had never seen him. She knew that my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe *shlita*, had not only never been in her town but also not in her country, and she was neither *Anash* nor a descendant of *Anash*. Yet,

when she heard such "words from the heart" from this *avreich* – There is a Rebbe in Israel who has no natural limitations, and anyone who wants to follow a certain path in business, in the conduct of his home, etc., should not make a move without asking the Rebbe – and she recognized that this *avreich* spoke from his heart words of truth, and she obeyed by writing the abovementioned question, she thus belongs to the *nifneh* [i.e., a term referring to *maamud*, the giving of a fixed monthly sum of money for the Rebbe's personal household expenses]. She became closer to *Yiddishkeit*, and in the coming days, she will surely take steps towards *kashrus*, family purity, etc., in her home.

(Please note that we are talking about someone who does not yet observe *kashrus*, family purity, etc. Nevertheless, the Rebbe first causes amazement that people speak with her about the Rebbe Rayatz, writing to him, giving "*nifneh*," etc., and only "in the coming days, she will surely take steps towards *kashrus*, family purity, etc.!")

The Rebbe concludes: **These are the chronicles of a simple *avreich*, who did all this not out of self-sacrifice and *kabbalas ol*, as he didn't see this as the opposite of logic, nor even the opposite of his human intellect.**

On the simple basis of what he actually saw, what the Rebbe says goes, and his *bracha* is a *bracha*. Even the animal soul agrees with this, as this did not come from the knowledge of deliberation or the study of *s'farim*. This came from experience, his and that of many of his friends, which showed him *az m'haht gefahlg't iz geven gut, un az m'haht nisht gefahlg't haht men gehah't a p'sak* (when people obeyed (the Rebbe), it was good, and when they didn't obey, they received a "*p'sak*"). Therefore, just as he is not embarrassed to tell the address of an expert doctor to all his acquaintances

who need one, similarly, when he sees someone in a state of confusion or trying to find a solution to a basic question of life, he tells him, "Israel is not a widower; you have whom to ask." Furthermore, he doesn't wait until his friend comes to him to investigate if there is a Rebbe, since the majority of people don't even know what a Rebbe is. Instead, he goes to him and explains that he should not rely whatsoever upon his own understanding, not on the *shadchan*, not on the doctor, and not on the middleman, for they leave doubts, whereas [the Rebbe] has a guaranteed path for solving his doubts. And our Sages have said, "Words that come from the heart, enter the heart" ...

It is quite simple that a person who believes with complete faith, conducting himself according to the opinion and *bracha* of a certain person on all matters, and he knows that his friend needs to make a decision on an important matter regarding children, life, and sustenance, etc., or on an issue of life-and-death, *r"l*, out of a sense of humanity, *ahavas Yisroel*, *pikuach nefesh*, etc., even if he only has a glimmer of hope that maybe he will heed his words, he must pursue after his friend and tell him, "Have mercy on yourself, the members of your household, and everything you possess. Don't rely upon your own understanding; learn *chassidus*, connect to this person, act according to his words, and then you will succeed."

There is known the promise of the Alter Rebbe "*az vahs chassidim velen tahn velen zei matzliach zain*" (what *chassidim* do, they will succeed) ...

They came to Paris and the surrounding area – hundreds, perhaps thousands and thousands of our fellow Jews, may they increase in number. According to what the Rambam writes on the matter of

speech, they spoke among themselves at length and in brief. Many thousands of these people came with questions about an operation, a *shidduch*, or a request for a *bracha* for the New Year, etc. Indeed, if people would tell them who the Lubavitcher Rebbe is – some story, even without any explanation, then the next time, something from his *sichos*, and afterwards, from his teachings – countless Jewish souls, their children, and their grandchildren would connect to the Tree of Life, adding light into their homes, becoming "*anshei Moshe*" (connected to the Rebbe, the

"Don't rely upon your own understanding; learn chassidus, connect to this person, act according to his words, and then you will succeed."

extension of Moshe in every generation), people of high standing, who would also strengthen all of the institutions willingly and gladly, not just to seek honor.

And in return for all this – this one turns to his *mosad* and that one turns to his business, each one assuring himself that he gives "*nifneh*," gladly and generously, confident that his portion stands ready, according to the words of His honored Torah, actual self-sacrifice, and the *avoda* has apparently not yet begun.

In accordance with the Rebbe

shlita's emphasis in that *sicha* upon the miracles that are occurring specifically in our time, we have the high and great privilege, obligation, and responsibility to pursue anyone who has even the slightest doubt on whether he should agree to take any serious step in life without seeking the Rebbe's advice and consent, and to explain to him that the Rebbe will surely "find the way" to respond and answer him during this brief time when we do not see him literally with our eyes, via *Igros Kodesh*, etc. We must also spread the Rebbe MH"Ms picture to every possible location and in every possible way to connect Jews to the Rebbe.

The questions and doubts that someone might have on so simple a matter stem from a slight error – one of the tricks of the "*kluginker*," who faithfully does his job and *shlichus* (to entice and incite). There are those who seem to think that we're just talking about a case of "luck" or a "search for signs," and therefore, they bring "proof and evidence" from this that the Rebbe did not give an instruction for such conduct. However, there were numerous occasions when there were such instructions, whether in a *yechidus* to a private individual or in public *sichos*, e.g., Shabbos Parshas Noach and Shabbos Parshas BaMidbar 5749, when a certain question or doubt arose regarding a particular Jewish custom, to open a *seifer* and act accordingly. The Rebbe would refer to the saying of our Sages – "he who violates a [decision by] lot is likened to one who violates the Ten Commandments." Yet, there was no regular fixed instruction to "search for signs" and "to cast lots." There was even a footnote to one of the *sichos* where the Rebbe took exception with the use of *sifrei kodesh* in this manner (although as mentioned, the Rebbe actively instructed a number of people to do so occasionally).

(To be continued.)

CHASHMONAIM OF OUR TIMES

BY MENACHEM ZIEGELBOIM AND SHNEUR ZALMAN BERGER



STORY #1 GUESTS AND MORE GUESTS

R' Mordechai (Motte) Sirota had a heart of gold, and this quality, more than any other, is what characterized him. For years, he devoted body, soul, and money to others, as we will relate.

They said of him that when the *chassid* R' Simcha Gorodetzky was taken to Siberia after being caught by the NKVD, R' Mordechai realized that R' Simcha would suffer from the terrible cold, and so on the spot he removed his fur coat and gave it to R' Simcha.

With the outbreak of World War II, hordes of civilians were conscripted to fight the German enemy. Since R' Mordechai was the father of eight children, he was excused from army service and he was assigned to civil defense. However, within a few months, he was excused from that too, since one of the people in charge had compassion on him and he let R' Mordechai go home.

The war was a time of chaos. As the German army approached

Moscow, hundreds of thousands of refugees fled the city for Middle Asia. Many of them found refuge in Tashkent.

Among the hundreds of thousands of refugees were thousands of Jews who arrived in Tashkent bereft of everything, having no food, money, or much of anything else. Many Jews wandered the streets without knowing where they would sleep that night.

R' Mordechai Sirota, who was already a veteran of the city, opened his heart and home to them. He had only three small rooms in which he, his wife, and eight children were crowded, but every refugee who had no place to go, knew he could head towards R' Mordechai's house.

The crowding didn't deter R' Mordechai. When he heard that a train had arrived with Jewish refugees on board, he would go to the train station and look for Jewish faces. When he found Jews, he would bring them home with great respect and would give them a meal. They were also able to stay for long periods of time. One family lived in his home for two years!

*Every year as we watch the Chanuka lights, we tell of the Chashmonaim, who battled for the holiness and purity of our Torah. The Chashmonaim raised the torch of Jewish pride, in the face of insurmountable odds. * From then on and in every generation, brave "Chashmonaim" have arisen who have fought against our enemies. Despite the prevailing impurity, they have preserved Torah and mitzvot uncompromisingly and have managed to illuminate their surroundings with holy light. * We present to you eight stories about eight Chashmonaim who fought their enemies and won. * Part 1 of 2.*



A Lubavitcher who lived in his home for a while related: "I arrived at his house late at night. I saw many people sleeping on beds, on tables, and under tables. I looked for the host, but didn't find him, so I decided to put my head down somewhere and sleep when I suddenly noticed him sleeping on the floor in the hallway, together with the guests."

R' Mordechai even had guests who were dangerously sick, and he helped them, to the best of his ability, until they became better.

He not only provided people with food and a place to sleep; he tried to find them employment so they could support their families with dignity. He set up numerous families that were poor and were hungry for bread.

Since R' Mordechai's *chassidic* soul burned within him, his home was a place where the great *chassidim* and *mashpiim* felt comfortable. *Anash* of Tashkent knew that when they wanted to *farbreng* they should go to

the house of R' Mordechai Sirota, who was an unparalleled host. The great *mashpiim* of the day *farbrenged* there. These included R' Yona Paltaver, R' Yisroel Neveler, R' Peretz Motchkin, R' Shlomo Chaim Kesselman, and R' Mendel Futerfas.

Hosting refugees in his home was no simple matter. Most of them had no identification papers, and the NKVD did searches in the homes of people who had guests without documents, yet R' Mordechai was not put off, choosing instead to endanger himself and continue having guests.

Once, late at night, R' Mordechai found out that the NKVD was doing a search of houses in the area. He quickly (and gently) aroused his sleeping guests and took them down to the cellar. He then covered the opening with a table. The police discovered nothing.

R' Mordechai's daughter, Clara Goldschmidt, relates: "It happened a few times that the NKVD visited without us getting prior warning. Sometimes my father would get rid

of them with a bribe of money or vodka, and they left. But it often happened that they would take my father with them for an interrogation.

"I was a little girl and was very afraid. I thought he would come back (it would generally take a few hours) and say there wouldn't be any more guests, but he wasn't scared and he continued to bring home more and more guests.

"I remember one particularly dreadful night. They knocked at the door, and as usual, my father tried to convince them that the guests were poor relatives who had no place to go, but they didn't want to listen, and to the sounds of screaming on the part of family and guests, they took my father and mother for interrogation. We cried and cried. We were very afraid for our mother, because she was very delicate.

"Our prayers helped, and late at night my parents returned. The sparkle in their eyes told us that they would be continuing to host guests as always."

STORY #2 KASHRUS AND NETILAS YADAYIM IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH

R' Shmuel Barzin was a *chassid* of the previous generation who did a great deal for his fellow *chassidim*. His home was wide-open to them, even to those who were fleeing the NKVD, and this entailed great danger.

One of his guests was the famous *chassid*, R' Yona Cohen (Poltaver), who was wanted by the NKVD for a long time. It was the night of 19 Kislev 5708 (1948), and the plan was that people would come to *farbreng* at nine o'clock. The family sat down to eat before seven o'clock with R' Yona, when there was a knock at the

door and in came a Jew who was suspected as an informer.

When he saw R' Yona, he sat down at the table too, and chatted about this and that. R' Yona was unhappy about this because he was usually hidden in an inner room. He hinted to R' Shmuel, but it was too late. Apparently, it had been agreed upon in advance that if the man tarried it was a sign that their prey was there and they should pounce. Within half an hour the NKVD burst in and arrested R' Yona.

That night they did a thorough search of the house and among other things, they found pictures of the Chabad Rebbeim. The agents asked R' Shmuel to identify the people in the pictures, and he said: This one's my grandfather, this one's my old

uncle, this one is a distant relative, etc.

One of the agents cynically remarked: You have very distinguished relatives. If you're their relative, they ought to have a better *chassid* than you!

R' Shmuel sat in jail for ten months, and was interrogated and tortured mercilessly. They tried to extract the names of other *chassidim* from him, but he kept his lips sealed. For a long time they did not allow him to sleep. When his head fell forward in sleep, the jailor would wake him up. This was for the purpose of weakening him and breaking his spirit.

They cut off his beard while his hands were tied. He related that at the end of one of the interrogations

one of the high officers wanted to beat him, but he told him, “An officer as high-ranking as yourself shouldn’t dirty his hands on an old Jew,” and the man left him alone.

R’ Shmuel’s son, R’ Peretz Barzin, relates: “At one of the interrogations, one of the interrogators wanted to beat him, and my father suddenly got up and took the chair he had been sitting on and raised it up and said, ‘If you come any closer I’ll break this over your head.’ His threat worked and the man retreated.

“As a result of this persecution, my father began to experience terrible stomach pain. The hospital did emergency surgery for four hours with a local anesthetic. He was so weak that the doctors didn’t dare to

put him out completely. He told me that he still remembered what took place during the operation.

“When he was recovering after the operation, he refused to eat the *treif* hospital food. The doctor who had operated on him wasn’t Jewish, but she had pity on him and asked him, ‘If I buy a new pot, and you tell me what to cook, fresh fish, cereal, or vegetables, will you believe me?’ My father agreed.

“For over a week she took care of him devotedly, and when he had recovered somewhat, he was sent back to prison.”

A relative of the family, R’ Zushe Gross relates: “After a few days of terrible interrogations in which he

barely ate anything, they brought him *treif* cooked food and offered it to him for the purpose of breaking his spirit. He refused to eat it.

“At a certain point, one of the interrogators had pity and quietly asked him what he would agree to eat. He said he would eat bread and milk. The interrogator brought him bread and a cup of milk, but he refused to eat this as well.

“What now?” he asked.

“With his remaining strength, R’ Shmuel said he had to wash his hands. The interrogator went wild with anger, but he finally gave in and sent him with one of the soldiers to wash his hands. The soldier even gave him a cup.”

STORY #3 TORAH STUDY SUPERSEDES ALL

The self-sacrifice exhibited by R’ Nachum Volosov to learn and spread Torah was incredible, reaching its peak with his appointment as assistant to the *chassid* R’ Yona Cohen (may Hashem avenge his blood), the *menahel* of the network of underground *yeshivos* of Tomchei T’mimim.

These were extremely difficult times. The communist authorities persecuted religious Jews in general and Chabad *chassidim* in particular. *Shuls* were closed down, *s’farim* and *sifrei Torah* were confiscated, and Torah study was considered an unforgivable crime for which dozens of *chassidim* were sent to jail and exile. Some of them were taken out to be shot without a trial.

Nachum Volosov was 23 when he was called to a secret meeting in the home of the *chassid*, Rav Mordechai Eliezer Lapatavsky, who was R’ Yona Cohen’s right hand man. R’ Lapatavsky described the terrible



situation Tomchei T’mimim was in very emotionally:

“I see that Tomchei T’mimim in Russia is getting smaller and smaller in a most shocking way and in another little while it will disappear, G-d forbid, from Russia. Therefore we have no other choice but to cast our lives aside and to make souls for Yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim!”

The words were tough and the reality was even tougher. None of those present had any doubt, but that they needed to take action in a way of *mesirus nefesh*.

At that fateful meeting, Nachum Volosov was appointed R’ Yona’s assistant. His jobs were to start new branches of the *yeshiva*: to travel to different Russian towns and to find boys who were willing to learn, and who had their parents’ consent; to find *shuls* whose *gabbaim* agreed to let the boys in to learn; to find *mashgichim* and those who could give *shiurim* so they could run the new *yeshivos*.

R’ Nachum took the job on with the greatest responsibility. He traveled often to various towns

throughout Russia to test the *talmidim* and to give money to the *yeshivos*, which were in a precarious financial state. He also founded new *yeshivos*. Remember, R' Nachum was all of 23 years of age!

R' Nachum described the first thing he did after being appointed assistant:

“When I got the order from R' Mordechai Eliezer to start new branches of Tomchei T'mimim, I went to Karalevitz and I found an excellent *bachur*, someone whom everyone liked, Moshe Rubinsohn (Maishke Karalevitzer). He was learning Tur at the time with the *gaon* and famous *rav*, who had been head of the *mesivta* of Tomchei T'mimim in Lubavitch when it was first founded, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Dubrawsky. It was no easy task to influence Maishke to go to Berditchev, but when he took on this leadership role and went to

Berditchev, he devoted himself to his work with all his heart, his soul, and might, and excelled in his lectures and in his fatherly devotion to each of his *talmidim*.”

For the next three years, R' Nachum founded new branches of Tomchei T'mimim, transferred money, found *talmidim*, tested them, etc. He needed to travel all over the Soviet Union and was in constant dread of the secret police.

Throughout all those years, he did not touch his beard, but tried to cover it with a scarf. Having a beard drew attention and could have gotten him thrown in jail. Nevertheless, he continued to keep his beard without diminishing his work, which was to breathe life into Tomchei T'mimim.

Then one day he was arrested. It was while he was in Yekaterinaslav. He was caught with a large sum of money in his possession, which he was planning to distribute to the

various *yeshivos*. The danger was great since a young bearded *bachur* with such a large sum of money immediately aroused suspicions of plotting against the communists.

Throughout the night, he remained in jail in trepidation. He knew that the worst was yet ahead of him.

In the morning, the door opened, and to his amazement, the jailor informed him that he was free. Just like that, with no explanation.

Whenever R' Nachum told this story he said he was sure that Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneersohn, *a"h*, former *rav* of Yekaterinaslav, had arranged things with the local authorities and in exchange for a bribe he was freed.

Naturally, he went from the jail to the next underground *yeshiva* in order to support the teachers and students.

STORY #4

“WHOEVER RAISES HIS HAND...”

The elder *chassid* R' Shmuel (Mulle) Pruss relates:

At a certain point, there lived twenty young married men in Riga, myself included. We realized that the time had come to begin to think about a *mikva*, since no others existed, because all of them had been shut down.

One day we convened to come up with a plan of how to build a *mikva*. The first problem was getting a permit. It was clear to us all that we couldn't ask the government for a permit, since they wouldn't give it. After a long discussion, we came to the conclusion that we needed to build a secret *mikva* in the cellar of the *shul*. The *shul* had a spacious cellar and it could be divided in half, with one section for the *mikva*. The

plan was to build it in the *shul*, because if it would be anywhere else, the NKVD could easily close it down. However, if it was located in the only remaining *shul* in the city, they would have a more difficult time closing it down.

Then we had to arrange things with the government appointed *gabbaim*, and with the members of the committee, who were twenty



elders, most of them devoted informers.

One day, the father of the *chassid* R' Notke Berkahan came to town. He was a brave Jew who feared no one, and when he heard of our plan, he jumped right in. First, he asked where we would obtain the money we need for construction. We said that there was a Jew in Moscow who pledged to pay the costs. Then he said we couldn't build the *mikva* without telling the *shul's* committee members, and he decided to call an official meeting to discuss the topic.

We didn't know how he planned on getting a positive decision without the NKVD finding out about it, but since he said so the meeting took place at the *shul*.

At that time, a Tamim who had learned in Lubavitch lived in Riga, but he was somewhat distant from *Anash*. He was an *erlicher Yid* and his name was Berel Schwartzman. In the

middle of the meeting the door opened and in walked Berel, without permission, and he began speaking about the importance of a *mikva* and that all of Judaism depended on it.

He became very emotional and he went over to the *aron kodesh*, moved aside the *paroches*, opened the doors, and loudly said: "Jews, listen! Whoever raises his hand against the building of the *mikva* will never see the sunlight again, neither he nor his family!"

He asked all present to vote, and aside from one or two who voted against, everybody else was afraid of his curse. He had made his declaration so emphatically that throughout the construction process, none of them dared to report to the NKVD offices.

The construction took a few months and miraculously it remained

a secret. When the time came to open the *mikva*, they needed a permit from an engineer who was a distant Jew. The man suddenly decided that he wanted a larger sum of money for his permit but the contractor said he couldn't pay him more than they had agreed upon. The engineer insisted he wanted more.

The *mikva* was ready, and had even been filled up, but it couldn't be opened without the engineer's permit.

When I heard this, I called one of my good friends, Shlomo Feigin, and we went to the *shul* together. We walked in, as though by chance, and met the *gabbai* who said, "Ah, you're here. Go in and see what we're building."

Of course, we had been involved behind the scenes, but they didn't

know this. We went inside and saw the *mikva* and innocently asked, "Why did you build a bathhouse here?" The *gabbai* corrected us and said, "It's not a bathhouse but a *mikva*."

"*Mikva*?" wondered Shlomo, "you mean something holy? So what's this man doing here?" and he pointed at the engineer (who was "that type of Jew" and looked that way).

As he said this, he took off his coat and rolled up his sleeves as though he was going to hit him. The engineer feared for his life and fled.

Obviously all these activities were fraught with great danger and were done with self-sacrifice that was beyond reason, but this is what *chassidus* had taught us – *mesirus nefesh* for *mitzvos*, especially for purity.

(To be continued.)

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THE FUNDAMENTALS OF OUR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION



*We must study the “laws of chinuch.” * What parents do affects their children. * What did the Rebbe say about television? * The dangers of the Internet. * A speech by Rabbi M.M. Gluckowsky, rav in Rechovot. * Part 2 of 2.*

(Continued from last week.)

We cannot demand *chassidische* behavior and *yiras Shamayim* (fear of Heaven) from our children, and expect them to know what is truly important and what is trivial, when we, their parents, bring all kinds of things into the house about which it says in the *HaYom Yom* of 11 Teives: “Man’s life depends on the air around him. Without air, one cannot live ... when you live in the atmosphere of Torah and *mitzvos*, this is a healthy life; when you live in an atmosphere of heresy, this is not a healthy life, and there’s a constant tendency towards becoming ill with contagious diseases.” What sort of atmosphere do parents create in the house when they bring in all sorts of undesirable things?

I once asked someone: If a man with long hair, four earrings in his ear, and five rings in his nose would knock

at your door and say, “Hi, can I come in for a few minutes and tell you some jokes and other interesting things?” most people would say, “No thank you,” and would close the door.

And yet, that man sits in his radio studio and is permitted (by you, the parents) to stroll freely around your house, and to say whatever he wants! This has an impact on the atmosphere in the house, and we even consider this normal! I must tell you that most news shows today are forbidden to us, according to *Shulchan Aruch*, and we must know that we have to get rid of the garbage so that the atmosphere of our homes isn’t polluted, and is instead suffused with the atmosphere of Torah. No fooling around! It makes an impact on a level that you can’t even imagine, and if you’ve sold out then be honest and say, “We’ve sold out,” and do something about it!

I know a number of homes where one of the spouses cries about the havoc that one of the things mentioned previously has wreaked on the other spouse. They call me up anonymously to ask what to do when the husband is immersed in these things, or what to do when the wife is. I tell them that a *chassidische* home cannot have these things. What the Rebbe says, applies to us. Our homes must be in accordance with the Rebbe’s *ratzon* (will), and the Rebbe clearly says what he wants.

The Rebbe wrote this letter to parents in Kfar Chabad:

It is a great wonder that you don’t give any mention to the vital matter regarding the students of the *talmud Torah*. Namely, I have received negative reports from a number of sources about the behavior of the students of the *talmud Torah*, especially on Friday nights and Yom Tov, and also Erev Shabbos and Yom Tov, as well as their behavior in *shul* on weekdays. Despite the fact that part of the responsibility is the teachers – for *chinuch* of *talmidim* according to Torah is also regarding their behavior outside the walls of the *talmud Torah*, especially in a holy place like a *shul* and *beis Midrash* – but an important part, and perhaps the main part, is the responsibility of the parents.

The Rebbe emphasizes, “perhaps the main part is the responsibility of the parents,” and when the Rebbe says, “perhaps,” for us it is a certainty. In other words, the main responsibility is on the parents, the father and mother, who must instill good character traits in their children with all the means at their disposal. Even if they are busy, it remains their main responsibility!

This does not apply just during school hours, but also Erev Shabbos and Erev Yom Tov, in the afternoon, and on Shabbos and Yom Tov, because then the main responsibility falls on the parents, and this must be used for Torah and *yiras Shamayim*. When the Rebbe writes like this, we can see how responsible we are for our children’s free time.

Once a year we have the *mitzva* of, “*v’higadita l’bincha*” (on Pesach, relating the story of the Exodus from Egypt to our children). We are told, “the Torah spoke of four children.” In other words, before you begin telling your children the story, you should know that children are not all the same. Every child has his own personality and character.

One of the things that we need to devote ourselves to during the half an hour a day when we think about our children, as the Rebbe Rashab said to do, is to analyze each child to see what makes him or her different than the other children.

There are naïve children and complicated children, easy children and hard nuts to crack. No need to panic. Sometimes the hard nuts later turn into the most successful children. These children have a lot of energy, which, if directed properly, will do them and all those around them a great deal of good.

Another important thing to remember when it comes to *chinuch* is to be aware of different situations. The Rebbe writes in a letter to a woman who was becoming a nursery school teacher that the main emphasis of

chinuch for children that age is on good habits and consistency, and not much on explanations and logic. This is because through consistency and routines, our Torah, Jewish traditions, and *hiddur mitzvos* (punctiliousness in *mitzva* observance) become engraved within the children at a very young age.

This point also appears in the principles of *chinuch* written by the Rebbe Rayatz in chapter 8: “There’s no comparison between *chinuch* and guidance of a *yeled* (young child) and the *chinuch* and guidance of a *naar* (older child). The *chinuch* of a *yeled* is mainly about hygiene, *tznius*, and

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manners, not to be a glutton and the like. [This phase of education deals with] trivial but essential things, being as they are the foundation that distinguishes animal life from human life.

“The *chinuch* of a *naar* is a step above that, and the emphasis is on learning and saying *brachos*, learning *derech erez* (respect for others), respect for parents, listening to teachers.

“And there’s no comparison between the *chinuch* and guidance of a *naar* to the *chinuch* and guidance for a child approaching *bar mitzva*. For him, the emphasis is on observing *mitzvos b’hiddur*, observing the times for

davening with a *minyán*, diligence in learning, diligence in time, learning from those above him. And this is what *chinuch* and guidance are about, raising the child who is being educated from level to level, until the proper level.”

Here is an example: We all know that meat and soup strengthen the body more than a little milk, yet if we feed a month-old baby meat and soup, he will die, *ch”v*, and if we feed a big boy only milk, he will weaken. We need to feed older children the proper food for them, and we need to give babies what they need.

So too with *chinuch*, we want our children to be *frum* and *chassidische*, but sometimes there is a lack of coordination when we demand things of them that are not age-appropriate. It has happened more than once that I go to the *mikva* and hear a child screaming. I go and take a look and see a three-year-old being held by his father in the water and the father telling the screaming child to close his eyes and mouth and he’ll put him under the water.

I went over to a father like this and said: What are you doing? He says: What do you mean what am I doing! I want the boy to *toivel* (immerse) in the *mikva*!

I said: He’s three years old. If you are interested – and this has been tested and proven – in your son never going to the *mikva*, then continue doing what you are doing. Don’t you realize that what *you* understand, your child does not? This is not appropriate for a child of this age, and you are only scaring him!

I sometimes see a father with a four- or five-year-old next to him in *shul*, and the father says, “Sit and *daven*,” because this is how we need to learn to *daven*. And I see the poor child left with nothing to do. *Davening* does not interest him. I see how the father makes *davening* hateful to his son.

Every age has its “vessel,” its capacity, and a parent needs to match the message to the vessel of the child. You need to know how to communicate according to the child’s age and level.

Once, Rabbi Moshe Hecht, *shliach* in New Haven, wrote to the Rebbe that he instituted the daily *shiur* of T’hillim in all the classrooms. The Rebbe wrote back that the younger children don’t need to say the entire daily *shiur*, and it’s enough if they say one chapter, since they’re little children. The Rebbe did not push everyone to say the entire *shiur*, as important as it is to say the entire *shiur*, because it was not age appropriate.

The same is true for older children. There’s a letter from the Rebbe to the administration of Yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim in Montreal about the *talmidim* who wanted to go to the Rebbe for Yud-Tes Kislev. The *hanhala* felt that if the *talmidim* went away for a few days it would ruin the momentum of their learning.

The Rebbe wrote back (in the 50’s): It’s known that American children should not be tested when it comes to their *kabbalas ol*, especially when they want to come here also to see their families. This desire of theirs is very strong. Instead of battling them, the Rebbe advised them to use their wanting to go on the trip to get them to learn some chapters of *Tanya* by heart or some pages of Gemara, so they would have to strengthen their learning in order to be able to do what they wanted.

So when we’re talking about *chinuch*, there needs to be an awareness of what the child/student is all about.

The mashpia R’ Nissan Nemenov, *a”h*, wrote to the Rebbe that he sees things that the *talmidim* do that are the opposite of what their behavior ought to be, yet he’s afraid that if he tries to correct it, it would fall into the category of a “decree that the public is unable to fulfill.” The Rebbe replied

that it is true – there are things that if you try to insist on them, they are in the category of “decrees that the public is unable to fulfill,” so sometimes there are things that the students need to know you’re opposed to but you don’t insist on. (This approach also needs to be age-appropriate.)

In the Rebbe Rayatz’s principles of *chinuch*, the Rebbe writes that when you see a child with two faults, you can’t deal with everything at once; you need to work gradually, starting with the worst of the two faults. Why should you only pick one fault? The Rebbe Rayatz explains that when the child sees that you’re not choking him, he sees that you give him room to

There are concepts about the Rebbe that we got in our chinuch and they are “givens” for us, but this is not necessarily the case for our children.

breathe, then he will be willing to listen to what you’re saying since he sees that the parent respects him and gives him room.

When speaking of *chinuch* we must know our children and consult people about how to work on them. There is nothing wrong with consulting with *mashpiim* or other parents. After all, these are *dinei nefashos* that are not black and white. Rather they are things that are constantly changing, and getting good advice can only help.

The Maggid of Mezritch said, “If only we kissed a Torah with the same love that the Baal Shem Tov kissed the children when he brought them to

school.” We see that when the Baal Shem Tov took the children to school, he loved them very much and gave expression to that love by kissing them. This is one of the things that we, as parents, need to know. We need to give expression to our love for our children, because when there’s love, everything goes better, and then the *brachos* go better, and so on.

The Rebbe Rayatz writes in chapter 14 of his principles: “However, the toughest and strongest *chinuch* and guidance must be framed in love and proper manners. Aside from love and good manners helping towards the goal of getting the child to accept the instructions of the educator and guide, and his education and guidance, it also has five benefits when done with love and with proper manners.

Here are two of them: 1) the esteem for the teacher and guide is raised in the child’s eyes when he sees the determination of the educator and guide, 2) the child sees that it’s not because of cruelty or anger or annoyance that the teacher acts so strongly with him, and supervises every single detail. It’s not because of cruelty, anger, or annoyance whether in learning or behavior but out of his love for him.”

We often want to protect our children, but this can result in tension and pressure. The Rebbe says it must be done, “out of love and in a way of proper manners,” and then the child understands that the toughness is not coming from cruelty, anger, or annoyance. When a parent speaks in an angry, annoyed, or cruel tone, the child thinks the parent hates him or doesn’t love him, and he doesn’t get the real message of concern for his welfare.

I remember that when I learned in the *yeshiva* in France, the *rosh yeshiva*, Rabbi Yosef Goldberg, who was 71 at the time, asked me if I was willing to get up every morning at five o’clock to learn *Shev Shmaata* in the woods that surrounded the *yeshiva*. I didn’t know

what he wanted from me and unfortunately, I turned him down. Yet I understood that the *rosh yeshiva* wanted to learn with me in the forest every morning, and this meant he loved me and wanted what was good for me, and this naturally resulted in my being far more receptive to his influence.

To conclude with one more point: Our relationship with the Rebbe is one of the things that affects our very soul. Every person must think about how much of a role the Rebbe plays in his or her home. Is he a central figure or is the Rebbe off in a corner?

Furthermore, there are concepts about the Rebbe that we got in our *chinuch* and they are “givens” for us, but this is not necessarily the case for our children. Children need to see that the Rebbe is a central figure in our lives. This is done by having set times to study the Rebbe’s teachings, by our fulfilling his instructions, going on *mitzvaim*, and putting our heart and soul into the Rebbe’s *inyanim*.

I remember that when I was a *bachur* in Oholei Torah, the *mashpia* called me over and asked me what the difference was between a *rosh yeshiva* and the Rebbe. I didn’t know what he was getting at, so he said: The difference between them is not that the *rosh yeshiva* knows how to learn 1000 pages of Gemara and the Rebbe knows more. The Rebbe is a human being and the Sh’china speaks from his throat. It’s another league entirely. The Rebbe is the Moshe Rabbeinu of our generation, the Moshiach of the generation, etc.

We must instill these ideas in our children. We must tell them stories about the Rebbe, and use our Shabbos table for this, to say a *sicha* at the Shabbos table, etc.

I know parents who take their children (at the appropriate age) on *Mivtza T’fillin*, and have them hold the bag of *t’fillin* so the children have a share in *Mivtza T’fillin*. This is *chinuch* to love *mitzvaim* and it instills the importance of the Rebbe in our lives. The way we bring the Rebbe into the center of our lives is the way Hashem will help us so that our children will absorb this as a matter of course.

To end with a story: I once met a *baal t’shuva* in Toronto, a lawyer, who became *frum* through my father. It began when his father fell on the street one day, and in the course of his being treated, a tumor was discovered in his head. The doctors said the father had a few months left to live, and his son came to *shul* in order to have a *MiSh’Beirach* said for his father. That’s where he met my father. My father suggested that he write to the Rebbe, and they did so. A month later, when his father went for a medical examination, the tumor had disappeared.

This story took place thirty years ago, and the father is hale and hearty till this day. The boy, who was 16 at the time and had seen an open miracle, became a Lubavitcher and his children attended Lubavitch schools.

He once visited Eretz Yisroel and I asked him why he had gone to a Chabad *shul* of all the *shuls* in Toronto,

when it wasn’t even the nicest looking *shul* around. He told me: When I was four years old we lived near the Chabad *shul* and I went to a kindergarten that was located in the *shul*, and I really liked kindergarten. Whenever I passed the Chabad *shul*, I had pleasant memories of the time I spent there. So, when I felt I needed to go to *shul*, I picked the Chabad *shul*!

You hear this? A four-year-old who received warmth and love, had those feelings remain with him years later, and this drew him to Chabad!

As parents, we put in a lot but we don’t necessarily see results right away. That’s the way it is with *chinuch*. We plant seeds but don’t see immediate growth. We need to know that when we sow, in the end something will sprout forth. If we invest our strength, then Hashem helps and we later get to see the results of our work.

May Hashem help us strengthen our homes in all *chassidische* ways and as it says in the *HaYom Yom* for 22 Tammuz: “A *chassidic* aphorism leads to clearness of the mind and cleans the heart. A good *chassidic* practice illuminates the home. A *chassidic niggun* strengthens hope and trust, brings joy, and places the home and its inhabitants in a ray of light.”

G-d willing, when the Rebbe is revealed, we will be able to say, “see what we have raised.” Our children should be loyal soldiers who go in the Rebbe’s *derech* in all matters. May we merit to see this immediately.

(From an evening for parents/educators sponsored by Agudas Chassidei Chabad of Eretz Yisroel.)

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SHLUCHIM RELATE

BY NOSSON AVROHOM AND PINCHAS PIZEM

A selection of amazing stories that were told at farbrengens during the Kinus HaShluchim 5764.

THE REBBE PROMISED AND WE GOT THE MONEY

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Friedman, director of a Chabad House in Ohr Yehuda, relates: It's close to two years since one of the families in Ohr Yehuda became acquainted with the work of our Chabad house and began the process of becoming *frum*. The process was a slow one for a number of reasons, with the two main reasons being that the family was poor and the father was not Jewish.

The oldest boy was the exception. In contrast to the rest of his family, he took giant steps towards becoming *frum*, and after a short period of time he began learning in Yeshivas Ohr Simcha in Kfar Chabad.

This year, as Tishrei approached, and I saw that he was truly serious and that it wasn't a passing youthful fancy, I decided he had to fly to the Rebbe and personally experience the unbelievable *chayus* that Tishrei in Beis Chayeinu is all about. The problem was that the family didn't

have the money for it.

At one of the Chabad house *farbrengens*, we explained to the participants how important it was to go to the Rebbe, and how this boy was our representative. We didn't raise much money that night, but I was still determined that he go.

In a conversation I had with him a few days later, I promised him that I would pay whatever he needed for the trip. That same day he went to a travel agent and arranged a ticket.

A few days before the flight he

met me on the street and told me how uncomfortable he felt knowing that I was paying for his ticket when he knew the financial situation at the Chabad house wasn't great to say the least. When I saw that this really troubled him, I suggested that he write to the Rebbe about it.

We went to the Chabad house, and after he wrote his letter he put it in a volume of *Igros Kodesh*. The answer was to a *chassid* who had printed a *Tanya* and the Rebbe said he should send a bill to the secretaries, and he would pay all the expenses of the printing.

When I saw this answer, I encouraged him and said there was no reason for him to feel bad, since the Rebbe would surely cover the expense.



Rabbi Menachem Mendel Friedman

The boy went to Crown Heights for Tishrei and had an incredible experience. When he returned he was full of *simcha* and amazement. He excitedly described his experiences, the wonderful atmosphere, and the clear sensation that the Rebbe was indeed in 770 and taking care of his flock.

The boy's family is Georgian, so the boy would *daven* at the Georgian *shul*. Upon his return from New York, the *shul* made a big deal about his trip, and he shared the highlights of it with them. He told them that it was none other than the director of the Chabad house who paid for his ticket.

A few days later, one of the *gabbaim* of that *shul* met me and asked me to give him a bill for the ticket, since he wanted to bring it up at the *shul's* weekly meeting.

A week went by and the *gabbai* met me again and told me that the boy's trip was an honor and privilege for the entire community, and so the *shul* committee had decided to pay for the expenses of the trip.

HITLER AND HAMAN NEARLY SUCCEEDED IN SDEROT

Rabbi Chananel Pizem, of the Chabad house in Sderot, relates: A few days before my trip to the Kinus HaShluchim, I found out about a boy who lives in my neighborhood who was planning on marrying a non-Jewish girl. When I heard about it, I didn't lose precious time. That same evening I went to his house and tried to talk to him about the ramifications of marrying a gentile. At first he refused to listen, but I didn't give up and continued talking words that came from the heart, including chilling stories that showed how awful intermarriage is and what an enormous tragedy it is for the Jewish people. I began to make an impact on him and after a



Rabbi Chananel Pizem

long conversation, he promised to think about what I had said.

The next day he came to my house and asked to write to the Rebbe. I explained what that entails and that we need to prepare for it. He agreed and sat down to write. He asked for "a good and long life and that he wanted Hashem to give him the ability to be a good Jew and to keep Torah and *mitzvos*." He didn't write a word about the gentile girlfriend.

The letter he opened to was in volume 23 of *Igros Kodesh* and he opened to p. 374. The Rebbe explains about wiping out Amalek, about Haman and Hitler (may their names be erased), and how their sole desire was to annihilate the Jews, and when a Jew thinks about marrying a non-Jew he helps them. The Rebbe ends the letter with numerous *brachos* and with the eternal promise that if he will be involved with Torah and *mitzvos*, all the *brachos* will be fulfilled.

When he read the letter he was very moved and very uncertain about continuing the relationship with his girlfriend. While still uncertain, he left my house and went on his way.

Since the end of the letter was about the great influence parents have on their children, I went to

speak to the parents that same day. At first his parents took a liberal position and said their son was an adult and knew very well what was and wasn't good for him. I spoke to them about the terrible tragedy that assimilation brings upon the Jewish people, and *baruch Hashem*, within a short while they were on my side.

A few days went by and the boy came to the Chabad house and poured out his heart, saying that since he had written to the Rebbe and had gotten that amazing answer he had had no peace. We spoke about the many challenges before him and I encouraged him to do what he had to do.

He broke up with the girl and now puts on *t'fillin* every day and regularly participates in the *shuirim* at the Chabad house.

WHEN THE IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL LISTENED TO THE REBBE

Rabbi Moshe Antizada, rav of an Iranian congregation in Netanya, relates: Friday morning, two weeks ago, I landed at Kennedy airport in New York on my way to the Kinus HaShluchim. Unlike other years, this time I encountered difficulties with the immigration officials. After going to the area where entry visas are examined, I was sent to a

waiting room by a federal investigator, where a number of Middle Eastern-looking people were sitting. The person accompanying me said that my passport said I was born in Iran and he explained that I had two choices. I could wait for hours to be interrogated by immigration officials or I could take the next plane back to Israel. From his tone, I understood that I wouldn't be released that fast, or at all.

Time passed and I didn't get even a hint as to whether I was getting anywhere. Since I didn't have a volume of *Igros Kodesh* with me, I was at a loss as to what to do. Then I reminded myself that a *chassid* in trouble needs to picture the Rebbe and ask for a *bracha*. I lost no more precious time but went to a corner of the room, pictured the holy face of the Rebbe, and asked that since I had come for the Kinus HaShluchim, the Rebbe should help me.

From that point on things began to be resolved one by one, extremely quickly. Within a few minutes an El-Al stewardess came in, and when she saw me she asked why I was waiting there. I told her what had happened, and she said she was there to help with this sort of complication.

A few minutes after that, I was called to the interrogator's office. The stewardess translated our conversation. He asked me questions about my moving to Eretz Yisroel and whether I still had ties with anyone in Iran. It was a little after nine in the morning and I really wanted to *daven* in the Rebbe's ten o'clock *minyán*!

At a lull in the conversation, I asked the stewardess to tell the official that I was a *shliach* of the Lubavitcher Rebbe and that I had come to see him. Incredibly, when he heard this, he asked me in surprise, "You're connected with the

EMERGENCY LANDING WITH 14 SHLUCHIM ON BOARD

"A plane belonging to Czech Airlines with 400 passengers aboard, made an emergency landing in Iceland after the American embassy in Prague received word of a bomb threat on board. In an interview with Galei Tzahal, Chabad *shliach* in Elad, Eliezer Weisfiche, who was on the flight said that after a search of the plane, in which nothing was found, the next day, at 4:00 Israeli time, the plane would continue on its way to Kennedy airport in New York." This was the news report Tuesday morning, 23 Cheshvan.

In the midst of the drama sat fourteen *shluchim* who were on their way to the Kinus HaShluchim. After flying from Israel to Czechoslovakia and waiting in the terminal a few hours, they boarded a Czech Airlines flight for New York. It was a little after one in the afternoon, Czech time. There were many Israelis on board, among them some tourists. We put *t'fillin* on them, and spoke to them about *Yiddishkeit* and the *besuras ha'Geula*. The atmosphere was fantastic.

Five hours went by when suddenly we saw that instead of the skies brightening, they were getting darker. We were quite surprised since we had intended on *davening* Mincha when we landed in New York.

Then we heard the pilot saying, "We're experiencing mechanical problems. Please fasten your seatbelts and prepare for an emergency landing."

The announcement about mechanical problems and an emergency landing shocked us all. We were terrified. The news blackout of what was really going on, made some of us think that there were other reasons for the emergency landing. The stewardesses rushing around only made us more nervous and everybody proposed a different theory for the sudden landing.

From that point on, things moved very quickly. A quarter of an hour later, the wheels of the plane touched the runway and the sight that met our eyes only raised the panic level higher. All along the runway waited police, firemen, and ambulances. The passengers looked terror-stricken.

The pilot asked us all to exit in an orderly fashion. We packed up our personal belongings and began going down the ramp. We could see rows of dozens of American soldiers with rifles, looking extremely serious. We *davened*, and in the midst of the crisis we felt that as the Rebbe's *shluchim* we'd be all right.

The soldiers checked us carefully and directed us grimly on to some old rickety buses. From there we went to a giant hangar where American soldiers put our belongings through the X-ray machine, and checked us carefully once again. From there we boarded military vehicles to the passenger terminal, where they told us the real reason for the emergency stop – that someone had said there was a bomb on board and therefore the U.S. government didn't allow the plane to land in its territory before it was thoroughly checked.

From the terminal they brought us to a nearby hotel, and the next leg of our flight was postponed until the next day so the plane could be thoroughly examined. At the hotel, many of the Israelis who hadn't been willing to put on *t'fillin* earlier now happily did so, and there was a terrific feeling of unity among the Jewish passengers. We sat for hours and *farbrenge*d together.

One *shliach* concludes the story as follows: After I finished putting on *t'fillin* with one of the passengers, he said "Yechi" a number of times. I asked him where he knew the words from, and he said he had seen it on my *yarmulke*!

I asked him how he knew it by heart, and he smiled and said: You don't know how many times I explained what was written on your *yarmulke* to both Jews and non-Jews!

The next day the *shluchim* left the hotel for the military base and from there they left for Kennedy airport and the Kinus HaShluchim.



Rabbi Moshe Antizada

Lubavitcher Rebbe?” On the spot, the questioning was over and he stamped my passport and accompanied me out.

The stewardess told me in amazement that this was the first time she had ever seen a suspect released so quickly before.

TURNING-POINT ON A BUS

Rabbi Moshe Axelrod, director of the Chabad house in Atlit relates: A few months ago, as I was walking down the street, a young man, a fresh *baal t’shuva*, came over to me and excitedly said, “Thanks to you I’m doing *t’shuva*!”

I tried to remember him, but I couldn’t. He began telling me what had happened: A few years ago, while on a bus ride from Atlit to Chaifa, I had gone over to him and asked him to put on *t’fillin*. He had refused, saying it wouldn’t help him in life at all.

We got into a discussion and I learned he was a soldier and he was on his way to take a test for a license, which he had failed a number of times, though he didn’t know why. I told him that if he put on *t’fillin*, and decided to put them on every morning, I was 100% sure that he would pass the test.

He agreed and I gave him the Shma to say and he committed to

putting on *t’fillin* every morning. A few hours later he passed the test. He was thrilled and he decided that despite the difficulties he would keep

his promise.

Some time later, when he had made his peace with his decision to put on *t’fillin*, he thought, why should he say only the Shma? Some time later he added Mincha, too. Then Maariv. He began going to classes and became completely religious.

SHE WROTE TO THE REBBE AND WON THE LOTTERY

Rabbi Elimelech Shachar, director of Chabad *mosdos* in Rechovot, relates: A year ago, a woman from Netanya called me who sounded very upset. She said that she had been divorced from her first husband a number of years before, had remarried, and now her present husband was distancing her from all



Rabbi Moshe Axelrod



Rabbi Elimelech Shachar

her relatives and didn't give her enough money for household needs. She finished her sad story saying that because of her troubles she didn't see any purpose to life, and that we, Chabad, were her last hope.

I was very touched by her story, and I immediately asked her to make some good resolutions, then I sat down to write to the Rebbe about her situation. In the letter I opened to, the Rebbe was writing to a woman who was asking for a *bracha*, and he asked her to participate more in *shiurim* and the activities of N'shei Chabad in her area.

I called the woman back and told her the Rebbe's answer. At first, she was unwilling to do what the Rebbe said, but when her situation got worse, and I urged her to do what the Rebbe said, she went to a *shiur* in her area.

On her way home after the *shiur*, although she hadn't done so in the past, she tried her luck and filled out a lotto form. The next day, she won a very large sum of money.

"I GOT MY LIFE AS A GIFT"

Rabbi Shneur Zalman Kurant, director of the Chabad house in Gan Yavne: In Gan Yavne there's a special man by the name of Reuven Gaz, a *mekurav* of the Chabad house, but not yet fully observant, though he puts *t'fillin* on every morning.

A few years ago, he had a series of heart attacks and was in the hospital in critical condition, barely

able to move. His condition got worse and the doctors didn't hold out much hope for him. His family, who were well aware of his condition, began crying and prepared for the worst.

One day, when their despair had overcome their faith and hope, they decided to see what the Chabad house could do for them. They came to me and told me the story. I explained that they needed to write to the Rebbe, and I told them how to do so. Each of them made a positive commitment and then they wrote their letter, describing Reuven's health and asking the Rebbe for a *bracha* that Reuven get better.

In the letter they opened to, the Rebbe referred to someone who was seriously sick, and wrote that he should check his *t'fillin* and *mezuzos*, and then the Rebbe wished **health and *arichus yamim*** (long life).



Rabbi Shneur Zalman Kurant

I explained to the family the importance of checking *t'fillin* and *mezuzos*, and said that in many similar situations, the Rebbe said to check them. They brought the *mezuzos* and they were all fine. I asked for the *t'fillin*, but they said they were relatively new and had been recently checked.

After some more convincing, they sent over the *t'fillin*. The *sofer's* discovery shocked us all. The words "milk and honey" were written twice instead of once. I said that *chalav* (milk) is an acronym for ***choleh lev*** (heart trouble). The *t'fillin* were fixed that day, and a short time afterwards, against all the gloomy prognostications of the doctors, Reuven got out of bed and was back to normal.

"I got the gift of life," Reuven says, "and I owe it to Chabad and the Lubavitcher Rebbe."

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A MAN OF TRUTH WITH THE PRIDE OF YAAKOV

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN BERGER AND AVROHOM RAYNITZ

*He spent years in labor camps after sacrificing himself for someone else, nevertheless he continued to observe mitzvos at great personal danger. * A profile of a courageous man with a heart of gold – R' Yosef Motchkin, a"h. * Part 2 of 2.*

TRUE JEWISH PRIDE

As was mentioned earlier, R' Yosef was unusually courageous. Even under the most difficult conditions, he adhered to a life of Torah and *mitzvos* and did not consent to veer from the ways of Judaism the slightest bit. He had true Jewish pride. There were prisoners who wanted to get into the good graces of the camp authorities and they tattled on R' Yosef and about his religious ways, but R' Yosef retaliated in various ways until they learned to fear him.

R' Yosef's *mechutan* (relative by marriage), Rabbi Yisroel Pinsky of Yerushalayim, says that he once saw a letter that a Jew named Schneider wrote in which he emotionally thanked R' Yosef for protecting him from the gentiles in the camp. The gentiles started up with him and beat

him up and when R' Yosef saw this, he gave them what they deserved, and since he was strong they didn't dare raise a hand against a Jew again.

One time, the camp commanders decided to abuse R' Yosef by putting him in a cell with a Nazi prisoner. Apparently the Nazi didn't know that R' Yosef was a Jew because he began boasting of his exploits during the war. R' Yosef couldn't take it, and he removed the board that supported the bed and began beating the Nazi with it until he killed him. After this was discovered, R' Yosef was confined to a small and low solitary cell in which one could neither stand upright nor sit. After a long time without food, he fainted and it was only by a miracle that he managed to regain his strength.

Despite the difficult living

conditions, along with the hard labor the prisoners had to do, R' Yosef was careful not to become contaminated by forbidden foods. R' Mulle Pruss was a foreman in a factory in the camp and he was able to cook for himself in a room that was set aside for the foreman. R' Yosef would go to his room often, where they cooked together. Naturally, the little bit of food they had wasn't enough to stave their hunger, but at least they were always able to eat kosher food.

Rabbi Zalman Sudekevitz helped them by sending them food packages and generally looking after them. He followed one of the camp commanders when he came to Tashkent occasionally, and one day R' Zalman lay in wait for him and when they had a moment alone together, he offered him a huge bribe so the man would bring a pair of *t'fillin* to the camp. The commander agreed and passed the *t'fillin* along to the happy recipients.

One day, one of the gentile prisoners noticed the green bag that the pair had hidden. He was sure they were hiding something valuable and he decided to steal it. The next time the *chassidim* looked for the *t'fillin*, to their great dismay they were gone.

R' Yosef was not the type to let it go at that. He made a secret investigation and quickly discovered who the thief was and asked him to return the *t'fillin*. The man denied having taken them. R' Yosef beat him up until the man confessed and returned the *t'fillin*. The two *chassidim* were devastated when they saw that the thief had cut the boxes open and the *t'fillin* could no longer be used. Shortly thereafter, they obtained another pair of *t'fillin*. This time they hid it better.

THE SECOND IMPRISONMENT

R' Yosef was in labor camps during the final years of World War II. The war came to an end, and many Chabad *chassidim* left Russia via Lvov. His brother, R' Yehuda Leib (Leibel), was one of those who organized the smuggling of these *chassidim* out of Russia.

At this time, R' Yosef worked outside camp grounds and only had to return to the camp at night. Before the last train left, his relatives suggested that he take advantage of this and escape from the camp. R' Yosef refused to do so, saying that if he escaped, the authorities would search for him far and wide and

would clamp down on security on the border, and perhaps a whole trainload of *chassidim* would be caught. He preferred to forego his own freedom to ensure the safety of others.

His relatives and most of his friends left the Soviet Union, but his brother, Mulle, couldn't leave while his brother remained in exile. He decided to wait for his brother. They loved each other dearly and had done many brave things together in order to help Jews in difficult, even dangerous, circumstances.

Although he had been sentenced to five years, he was freed earlier, after three and a half years. His freedom didn't last long. The authorities knew that his brother and other relatives were involved in the smuggling of Jews out of Russia, and they decided to take their revenge on the brothers.

When R' Yosef and R' Mulle learned about this, they ran for their lives to another city. The NKVD didn't give up and they took off in pursuit of R' Yosef, investing great numbers of people and resources to do so. Many *chassidim* were arrested and interrogated with the goal being

to find out where R' Yosef was hidden. One of those *chassidim* was R' Refael Nimotin. The authorities somehow found out that R' Refael knew where R' Yosef was and he was interrogated time and again for a year, but said nothing incriminating.

R' Yosef and R' Mulle continued to flee from city to city and from place to place. After wandering around the vastness of the Soviet Union, they arrived in Kutais, Georgia. The authorities suspected that he had fled there and they sent a notorious informer there who dressed as a *chassid* and tricked many a *chassid*.

One day they met. R' Yosef knew about this informer and about how he was the cause of the deaths of *chassidim*, and that he deserved to be killed according to Torah law. R' Yosef had a revolver and thought of killing him, but he realized that the ring had been drawn tighter around him. He saw secret agents following his every move. The NKVD agents finally showed up one day to arrest him. He jumped out a second storey window in a last attempt to flee but his glasses fell off and without them he couldn't see well, and that's how he was caught. The informer had succeeded and the two brothers were arrested and taken to the Spalerka prison in Leningrad, where the Rebbe Rayatz had been imprisoned.

They were interrogated and were put on trial for being Lubavitcher *chassidim*. The brothers maintained that they weren't great *tzaddikim* and weren't considered *chassidim*. The NKVD mockingly replied, "Now that most of the *chassidim* have left the Soviet Union, you are considered great *chassidim*."

When he was in prison in Spalerka, R' Yosef met Mrs. Minna Chein, *a"h*, the wife of the *chassid*, R' Avrohom Aharon Chein, *a"h*. After her husband's arrest, she had gone to the prison to bring him *matzos*. When she arrived at the jail and asked that the package be delivered to him, she



too was arrested. Since it happened in the month of Nissan, she was wearing summer clothes. She was interrogated for months and R' Yosef met her one day when it was already winter. Winter in Leningrad is freezing cold, and Mrs. Chein suffered greatly. R' Yosef was bundled up in warm clothes and without saying a word he took off his scarf, his sweater, coat and gloves, and gave them all to her, knowing that this meant he would not have warm clothes for himself.

The warden saw this and he couldn't hide his amazement. "Here, everybody steals, and you're giving her your winter clothes as a gift?!"

MESIRUS NEFESH TO HELP JEWS

The judges sentenced them to 25 years and hard labor in Siberia. They were sent to Siberia shortly thereafter on a trainload of prisoners. The brothers were separated and were sent to different labor camps. R' Yosef was sent to a camp in Varkota. Throughout their stay, the brothers met only twice, once with permission and once when R' Yosef managed to sneak into the camp, and miraculously, he wasn't punished.

When he had to use his great strength to help a Jew, he didn't hesitate for a second. He once saw a huge gentile hitting a member of the Chein family in the camp. R' Yosef didn't think twice but punched the gentile in the face, shattering several teeth.

This act of heroism nearly cost R' Yosef his life. Late at night when he was busy heating the oven with logs of wood, he saw three men with knives approaching him. He realized they were friends of the gentile and that they had come to take revenge. He quickly stood behind the door, holding the iron shovel he used to put the logs in the oven. When the three of them entered, R' Yosef surprised them and hit them in the



R' Yosef Motchkin (center) receiving the championship cup in the chess competition that took place between the camps

face with the hot iron, burning them beyond recognition. They fled for their lives, screaming in agony. From that time on, the camp knew not to mess with R' Yosef!

During the Doctors' Trial, when rumors spread that Stalin planned on expelling the Jews of Russia and wiping them out, *r"l*, the camp commander called R' Yosef to his room and said, "We'll be finished with you in a little while."

Unfazed, R' Yosef replied, "We'll

yet see who will be finished..."

Two months later the news arrived of the mysterious death of Stalin, and the commander said to R' Yosef in amazement, "How do you Jews always know what's going to happen?"

His brilliant mind was a great asset in the camp. His knowledge gave him a place of honor and the prisoners would consult with him. He was a champion chess player and when the camp held a competition, he won first place. Then there was an intra-camp competition, and R' Yosef was awarded the title of Champion Chess Player in the Camps. This made the camp officials respect him and helped a great deal in camp life.

Nevertheless, the conditions this time around were much harsher than in the previous camp. He could not obtain kosher food, and he continued to be extremely careful, with self-sacrifice, regarding what he put in his mouth. One of his new friends in the camp was a Polish Jew who was an expert watchmaker. He got a special room in the camp and had a small oven. The two of them baked *matzot* in this oven for Pesach.

His good friend, R' Mulle Pruss, and his sons, R' Berel and R' Zushe,



R' Yosef with his friend, R' Refael Nemotin

who lived in Riga, sent him food packages. R' Zushe Pruss relates:

“My father made sure to send him food packages. It wasn't at all simple, because if we openly sent him packages, we would be investigated as to our connection to him. We had to find someone who would agree to send him packages, presenting himself as a relative. We did some careful checking and found a woman who lived in another city, and she presented herself as his aunt. We paid her nicely for this.

“We prepared good food for him that was perfectly kosher, and not only food but medicine and special foods, because there are many illnesses in Siberia because of the cold and lack of nourishing food. We hid money in the sugar so he could buy additional food and be able to survive.

“We'd go at night to the next city where the 'aunt' waited for us, took the package, and sent it to R' Yosef Motchkin.”

FREEDOM

After nine years, in the year 5720 (1960), R' Yosef was freed after pressure from Israeli diplomats. Thus, R' Yosef was relieved of serving the

entire 25-year sentence.

This Israeli pressure was miraculous. One of the prisoners who had been with R' Yosef was a Jew by the name of Yosef Miller. After Miller was freed, he got permission to leave for Eretz Yisroel. He took a job in a communications office, a department of the Israeli government that helped Russian Jews. Mr. Miller remembered his friend rotting away in Siberia and began exerting pressure in the right places until R' Yosef was released.

(R' Yosef had another friend in the Israeli Establishment by the name of Mr. Koppel Skop, who was the head of the Shin-Bet in the sixties. After R' Yosef was released, the two remained

*In another yechidus,
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of their lives!*

in touch by corresponding. In one of the letters that R' Yosef kept, Koppel asked him to send him a *Tanya*.)

R' Shmuel Pruss made it out to Eretz Yisroel and Yosef Miller sent a telegram to R' Shmuel Pruss, who sent his son, R' Zushe, to the main post office in Tel Aviv, where he telegraphed the Rebbe and R' Peretz Motchkin, R' Yosef's father, with the news. Shortly before this, his brother, R' Mulle, had been freed.

For the next six years, the brothers lived in Tashkent but they were constantly on edge lest the Russians change their minds and incarcerate them once again. Therefore, they wandered from one place to the next.

* * *

The Rebbe kept constant tabs on the brothers as demonstrated in the letters he sent to their father in Montreal. The Rebbe blessed and encouraged his family, and expressed his joy regarding every bit of good news.

After many years of suffering, the brothers left the Soviet Union. Their leaving was connected with the Rebbe's intervention in a deal that was signed between Canada and Russia. The Russian government asked the Canadian government to allow them to buy large quantities of wheat. When the Rebbe learned of this, he told R' Leibel Kramer, the director of Tomchei T'mimim in Montreal, to use his influence among Canadian government figures to get them to demand the addition of another clause in the deal which would include the release of the Motchkin brothers from the country. The pressure helped, and Russia agreed to free the brothers. They left Russia for Canada in 5726 (1966).

The brothers were reunited with their father and the joy was indescribable. The *chassidim* in Montreal were thrilled to meet the brothers, and the following Shabbos



During the writing of his *k'suba* in Kfar Chabad. (From right to left) Rabbi Shneur Zalman Gorelik, R' Yosef, R' Shlomo Chaim, R' Chaim Binyamin Brod

there was a grand *farbrengen* with all of *Anash* and the *T'mimim* of Montreal in attendance. That Shabbos was called Shabbos HaGadol and the *mashkeh* flowed...

During the course of the *farbrengen* R' Yosef reviewed the *maamer* "*U'S'fartem Lachem*" by heart, and then said that when he walked with his father in Leningrad on his way to *shul*, his father reviewed *maamarim* by heart and they became engraved in his mind.

The brothers were soon granted a long *yeichidus* with the Rebbe. The Rebbe asked them, among other things, about the state of Jews and Judaism in the Soviet Union. In another *yeichidus*, the Rebbe said to R' Yosef that the years they had sat in Soviet prison would not be counted off the years of their lives!

Shortly after leaving, R' Yosef met R' Nissan Neminov. During the emotional reunion, R' Nissan said: Since I sent you to try and get R' Mulle Pruss out of jail (a failed attempt which landed R' Yosef in jail), I've felt personally responsible, and not a day has gone by in which I haven't thought of you and *davened* for you.

When R' Yosef repeated to his family what R' Nissan had said he added, "And R' Nissan doesn't exaggerate!"

TEARS OF JOY AND EMOTION

Throughout the years that he lived in the Soviet Union, R' Yosef couldn't find a proper *shidduch*, especially when he was struggling to survive for years. After leaving the country, no longer a young man (he was 46), he married Chaya Estulin, daughter of the famous *chassid*, R' Zalman Leib Estulin. The Rebbe said the wedding should take place in Kfar Chabad, and R' Yosef's friend R' Shmuel Pruss helped arrange everything. The reception took place at the Pruss family's home and from



R' Yosef lifted up at his wedding



(From left to right) R' Yosef, R' Nachman Shapiro, R' Peretz Motchkin, and R' Levi Yitzchok Shapiro

there the large procession walked to the central *shul*, where the wedding took place.

As R' Yosef was led to his wedding, Mr. Yosef Miller, who had seen to his release, stood off to the side and cried tears of joy. After the wedding the couple moved to New York and lived in Crown Heights.

His brother-in-law, R' Naftali Estulin, relates: "The Six Day War broke out a few months after the wedding, in Iyar 5727. When R' Yosef heard that Jews were being killed in Eretz Yisroel, he sent in a letter to the Rebbe asking for permission to go

and fight. He waited for an answer, but didn't get one. On Shabbos, when the Rebbe entered the *shul*, he looked for R' Yosef, and when he found him he said, "Good Shabbos" with a smile that expressed his pleasure at R' Yosef's willingness to leave his new wife to go fight our enemies.

"When R' Yosef told me this, he said that from that time on he felt a special connection to the Rebbe."

On Simchas Torah when he got to *shul* and saw the large crowd, he used his strength to push inside and get closer to the Rebbe. Despite his age, he made his way through the human

wall and suddenly found himself facing the Rebbe. The Rebbe smiled and, in Russian, he said: Keep on going and you'll be a leader.

After acclimating to the U.S., R' Yosef opened a successful textile business. He gave most of the money he earned to *tz'daka*. His friend, R' Sholom Ber Drizin, said that R' Yosef found it hard to relate to the practice

of American businesses of hoarding money in the bank, etc. R' Yosef was a Jew who lived in the present and he would quote the verse, "This is the day that G-d made, let us rejoice and be happy in it" – How can you think about tomorrow?" he would ask, "when you can help a Jew today?"

His way of doing business made a *kiddush Hashem* (sanctification of G-d's name). Even the gentiles who worked with him realized he was someone special. One of the people he did business with told R' Drizin: Motchkin is special, not an ordinary man. The way he acts, he's like one of G-d's special creations.

R' Zalman Deitsch, who worked near R' Yosef, said: Jews in financial trouble knew they could get help from R' Yosef. He loaned large sums of money without asking for guarantors. One time he made an exception and he sent someone to ask me to be a guarantor. The person was known to me as someone not particularly reliable, but since R' Yosef had sent him to me, I gave

him a note that I guaranteed the loan.

A few hours later, R' Yosef came by and he said, "What's hateful to you don't do to your friend," so you want to know why I sent this person to you, someone whom I don't rely on myself? I'll tell you the truth. I don't need your guarantee, and as soon as the person left, I tore it up. I only wanted the person to know that he had to repay the loan.

Another story that illustrates R' Yosef's special character: R' Yosef also gave many loans to Lubavitchers back in Russia. When he arrived in the U.S., he saw that some of those people who hadn't repaid the money crossed the street when they saw him coming, out of embarrassment.

R' Yosef once complained to one of these people, "I didn't ask you for the money, so why can't we remain good friends?"

* * *

R' Yosef's three daughters follow in the ways of their parents. They point out his *joie de vivre* and they say that he always came to their house with a smile.

He was a wonderful *baal menagen* (soulful singer) and he knew *niggunim* of *chassidim* of earlier generations. He sang *niggunei t'filla* and *d'veikus* of *chassidim* of the previous generation.

After all his travails, R' Yosef was fortunate to see children and grandchildren going in the ways of Torah and *chassidus*.

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PLAYING DREIDEL

Why do we play dreidel on Chanuka? What do the letters on the dreidel symbolize? What is the connection between the dreidel game and Moshiach? This and more in this fascinating article about the dreidel game.

Based on a *shiur* given by Rabbi Yitzchok Yehuda Rosen, prepared for publication by Menachem Ziegelboim

We know that every *minhag* contains many secrets, and that “*minhag Yisroel Torah hu*” (a Jewish custom is Torah). One of the accepted customs is the playing of the *dreidel* game on Chanuka. The *dreidel* is a top with the letters **Gimmel, Shin, Nun, and Hei** or **Gimmel, Pei, Nun, and Hei** written on each of its four sides. There are many explanations given for the custom of playing *dreidel*. There are some who spoke very highly about it and about its tremendous impact, while there were others who thought the game shouldn't be played at all.

* * *

When the Beis HaMikdash still stood and our ancestors fought the Greeks, they played *dreidel*. In the book *Otzar Kol Minhagei Yeshurun* it says, “The reason we play *dreidel*

during Chanuka is because they decreed that Torah shouldn't be studied, as we say in the “*al HaNissim – l'hashkicham torasecha*” (to make them forget Your Torah), and at that time they all learned by heart and in one group so that one could remind the other and so that nothing would be forgotten. Regarding the decree that they shouldn't assemble in groups, the *chachamim* found a wonderful solution. They made the *dreidel* game to show their enemies should they be discovered that they were playing a game and not learning, and with this invention they were able to learn and teach ... Therefore we have this game as a remembrance of the miracle by which they didn't forget G-d's Torah, which has stood by our ancestors and us.”

However there were those who were opposed to the *dreidel* game when it was played for the purpose of earning money or anything else, and thus there is a possibility of it

resulting in stealing, unless everything is returned at the end of the game.

A DREIDEL MADE OF WOOD OR METAL

Chassidim and many pious Jews played with wooden *dreidels*, as it is brought in the book *B'nei Yisachar*, where it explains that the *dreidel* should be made specifically of wood. He brings a proof for this from the words of Yechezkel, “And you, son of man, take a piece of wood and write on it for Yehuda, etc., and take another piece of wood and write on it for Yosef, etc., and put them together as one piece of wood.” Come and examine what it says in the verse, “And Yehuda he sent before him to Goshen...” to Yosef; two Moshiachs, connecting *Geula* to *Geula*. So this directive is specifically with wood, because “man is a tree of the field.” And you know already that the name Yud, Hei, Vav, Hei is numerically equivalent to “*eitz*” [according to one of the *kabbalistic* permutations of letters].

But the *s'farim Minhagei Chasam Sofer* and *Safra Raba D'Yisroel* bring that the Chasam Sofer played *dreidel* one of the nights of Chanuka with a special silver *dreidel*. In the book *Ben Beisi* it is written: The Jewish custom of the holy nation is that on Chanuka *dreidel* is played with

dreidels of “metal or wood,” for according to the Chasam Sofer it makes no difference whether it’s wood or metal.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LETTERS ON THE DREIDEL

The four letters on the *dreidel* seem like a simple acronym for Nes Gadol Haya Shom (a great miracle happened there). For this reason, those in Eretz Yisroel use a Pei instead of the **Shin** so that the letters stand for, “a great miracle happened here.”

But if you look into the holy *s’farim* you’ll find many explanations written by *g’dolei ha’chassidus* and the *g’dolei ha’mekubalim* about the letters and the deep secrets contained therein, and most of the *g’dolei Yisroel* continued using *dreidels* with a Shin even while living in Eretz Yisroel.

In the *Tzemach Tzaddik* he found a hint as to why children played *dreidel* on Chanuka with the letters Gimmel Sh’an’a on it, because the

Chazal say that all the miracles come from the palace of Moshiach, and during Chanuka a light from Moshiach descends. This is hinted at in the letters on the dreidel, which add up to “Moshiach,” 358.

holy *s’farim* say that Chanuka is the *g’mar tov* of the year, as it says, “*tashev enosh ad da’ka*” with the word “*daka*” being numerically equivalent to 25, which refers to the 25th of Kislev. Thus we write ‘Gimmel Sh’an’a,’ which is the *roshei teivos* of “*g’mar shana*,” for this is the end of the heavenly judgment for the new

year and we need to do *t’shuva* so that it be a good year.

In the book about the author of *B’nei Yissaschor* by Rabbi Nosson Ortner, he relates that when he was a child he stayed in the *beis midrash* of the Belzer Rebbe, and one of the nights of Chanuka the *shamash* searched for a wooden *dreidel* with a Shin and not a Pei on it, for the Rebbe, because his custom was to spin the *dreidel* a few times on one of the days of Chanuka. I happened to have a *dreidel* like that in my pocket and I gave it to him. Later on, when the *shamash* went in to the Rebbe, the Rebbe said to him, “Today I played with your *dreidel*. You should know that the B’nei Yisachar says that if we twirl it below, it turns things around up Above.”

In the *B’nei Yisachar* it says that the letters on the *dreidel* correspond to the four nations: Bavel, Yavan, Madai, and Edom, each of which fought with the Jewish people in another way, one with the body, one with the intellect, and those that opposed the Divine power. The four correspond to inanimate, plant life, animal life, and man. This is hinted at in the letters: *Guf, Sechel, Nefesh HaKol*.

Another hint to these letters is brought in the work *Imrei Pinchas*. “The Rebbe of Koritz says that the letters allude to all the *mitzvos* of Chanuka, i.e., lighting the *menora* and Hallel. The Nun and Shin are for *neiros shmoneh* (8 lights) and the Hei and Gimmel are for “*Hallel Gamur*” (i.e., we say all of Hallel). The Rebbe of Komarna brings a similar allusion in his father’s name – that the Nun and Shin are for “*Ner Shemen*” (light of oil), and the Hei and Gimmel are for “*Hallel Gadol*.”

The *Imrei Noam* writes a hint to the custom of playing with a *dreidel* with these letters on it and says that the five letters, Mem, Nun, Tzaddik, Pei, and Chaf correspond to the five



middos: chesed, g'vura, tiferes, netzach, and *hod*. The letters Pei and Chaf correspond to *netzach* and *hod*, which are called *shomrei ha'g'vuros*, i.e., the letters Pei and Chaf (*pach=jug*) hint to the jug of oil, which corresponds to the *middos* of *netzach* and *hod* and are hinted at in the letters on the *dreidel* (***netzach hod shomrei g'vuros***).

In *Damesek Eliezer* it says, "It's known that we play with a little top with the letters Gimmel, Shin, Nun, and Hei on it, and apparently this was established for *pirsumei nissa* (to publicize the miracle). Wouldn't it have been better to write out these words on signs and to hang them in the streets in order to publicize the miracle? But it's better to have a little *dreidel* with only letters as *roshei teivos* that spins, over a large sign which hangs motionlessly ... and when it spins, Hashem makes miracles."

RULES OF THE GAME

There are deep secrets hidden within the rules of the game. In *Meir Einei Chachamim* it explains at length about the game when it's played for money, and when the *dreidel* lands on the Shin or Nun, then nothing is earned, and when it falls on the Gimmel or the Hei, money is taken from the pot. A Gimmel means you get everything (*gantz*), a Hei means you get half (*helft*), a num means you get nothing (*nisht*), and the Shin means you pay into the pot (*shtel*). There's a deep secret explanation to those who know *kabbala*. End of quote.

The Komarna Rebbe explains it thus: "That with the Nun you add money and not with the Shin, and that you get half with the Hei and everything with the Gimmel, seems – according to my father and teacher – to be because the four letters are *roshei teivos* for ***Ner Shemen Hallel Gadol***, i.e., when we light the *menora* we think about drawing down two

yichudim to the third *yichud*. Therefore we add money if the *dreidel* lands on the Nun, which stands for "ner," in order to add and complete the other two *yichudim* with the *yichud tachton*.

And the reason we take half the money when the *dreidel* lands on the Hei is because when Hallel (for Rosh Chodesh) is said all year, we say only half of it, but if the *dreidel* lands on Gimmel we take all the money, because it shows that on Chanuka we say the entire Hallel.

The Shefa Chaim explains why the Gimmel is the lucky number and

"It's better to have a little dreidel with only letters as roshei teivos that spins, over a large sign which hangs motionlessly ... and when it spins, Hashem makes miracles"

the Shin is not, "because the reason we play with the *dreidel*, which has the letters "Goshna" written on it, is because the Arizal says that "Goshna" is the *klipas noga*, which is the *klipa* that has both good and bad in it, and we are like this *dreidel*, for sometimes we get a Gimmel and are successful, but sometimes we get a Shin and lose all we've earned."

THE LETTERS SYMBOLIZE MOSHIACH

Rabbi Refael of Barshid said: "Just as there are 70 facets to Torah, so too there are 70 facets to

minhagim, and *Chazal* say that all the miracles come from the palace of Moshiach, and during Chanuka a light from Moshiach descends. This is hinted at in the letters on the *dreidel*, which add up to "Moshiach," 358.

In *Yichaven Pe'er* it says that when R' Bunem of P'shischa said, "*nacheish yinacheish shnei Meshichin*," he understood the secret of the *dreidel* game, because the letters Nun, Gimmel, Hei, and Shin add up to the same amount as the letters of Moshiach, for Chanuka is a preparation for and leads to Moshiach.

The B'nei Yisachar writes that by playing *dreidel* one can nullify many negative forces: "And with this you'll understand the custom of our fathers, which is Torah, that during Chanuka (which is the "*chinuch*" for the future *Geula*, speedily in our days), the children play with squared off pieces of wood with letters Gimmel, Shin, Hei, Nun etched in them, one letter per side, and this wooden top spins on a central point to show that these kingdoms, which are alluded to in these letters, which oppose Holiness by way of separating [from the Divine unity] by spreading out to all sides, all spin on the central point – the Jewish people, who unite all the sides. Therefore the sides rotate on the point and all will be nullified to the center, "*v'az yahapoch el amim, safa brura yachad likro b'sheim Hashem*" (then the nations will be transformed into [one] clear language to call upon the name of Hashem), at which time the *zohamas nachash* (the filth of the primeval snake), which has the letters of Gimmel, Shin, Nun, Hei will be nullified – and then Hashem rules, ruled and will rule (with this same *gematria*), and this will be with the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu speedily in our days amen."

(To be continued.)

HATZLACHA RABBA!

RABBI YEHESKEL LEBOVIC



WHY SO HARSH

A *chassid* of the Alter Rebbe, very rich, learned, and a *baal tz'daka*, suffered the loss of his fortune and became a pauper, incurring large outstanding debts as a result. In addition, he had initially committed to help relatives marry off their daughters and providing for their dowries – not to mention his own daughters, engaged and soon to get married.

He poured out his heart to the Alter Rebbe, who paused in profound *d'veikus*, and then said: “You have told me everything you need, but have not spoken about what you are needed for...”

Upon hearing these sharp words, the *chassid* fainted, and upon being revived, threw himself into intense service of Hashem through complete application in *davening* and learning, to the point of forgetting his troubles.

Two Shabbasos passed and the following Monday the Rebbe summoned him, instructing him to return home and resume his business. Within a short time, he was blessed with great success, recouping all his losses, repaying all his debts, and being able to keep all his above-

mentioned commitments.

We have to understand why the Rebbe had to first crush him prior to his becoming blessed with tremendous success?

He poured out his heart to the Alter Rebbe, who paused in profound d'veikus, and then said: “You have told me everything you need, but have not spoken about what you are needed for...”

TWO LEVELS OF HATZLACHA

This question can be connected to another question. In reference to Yosef's stay both in Potifar's house as

a slave and subsequently his stay in prison, the Torah relates that in both instances he was exceedingly successful in all his undertakings. However, there is a notable difference between the two texts. Regarding his success in Potifar's house it states that Hashem brought success to whatever came “in his hand,” while this mention of “his hand” is missing in the description of his success in jail.

The reason for this difference can be understood from a statement of the Tzemach Tzedek (*Ohr HaTorah* on these *p'sukim*) that “success (*hatzlacha*) is *mazel*, luck, just like we call a successful person a *bar mazel* (one endowed with *mazel*).” There comes a point when, upon seeing how consistently successful an individual is, everyone looks at his success as miraculous, beyond the norm of nature. This is demonstrable by the continuous, ongoing success that this individual has in undertakings that come to “his hand.” It is obvious from the quantitative dimension of his success. He has “golden hands”; whatever he touches turns to gold. In this type of success, his hands and what he undertakes with them, are blessed with inordinate success.

Although it is clear to the objective onlooker that such success has to have a Divine source, the vessel through which this success flows is the person's hands and actions.

A higher form of success is that which is so qualitatively wondrous that from the very onset the human mind has to recognize the Divine origin, the Hand of Hashem, of such success, and needs no strings of repeat successes to demonstrate that it is so. Even one single instance of such success is already readily seen for what it is – wondrous, blessed success, of Divine origin. In this type of success, there is no need to fashion a success-vessel based on human hands and actions through which the success will flow. On the contrary, the person experiences the huge success without having to lift a finger, let alone a whole hand. Indeed, it is as if the individual and his actions are inconsequential and non-existent, with the *mazel* just coming his way.

SLAVE AND PRISONER

When Yosef was Potifar's slave, he was not thoroughly *battel* (nullified to his master). True, the Gemara does say that "the hand of a slave is like the hand of his master" and "whatever a slave acquires belongs to his master," indicating thereby the intense element of *bittul* (nullification) that a slave has towards his master. However, this very terminology indicates the other side of the coin, i.e., that the slave is not totally *battel*. On the contrary, he still has "a hand," except that it is subjugated to the master. He is able to acquire – so he is a somebody after all – but once he has acquired it, it belongs to the master.

When the *pasuk* states that Potifar saw that he was blessed with success and that Hashem was with him in all that he undertook (in spite of Potifar being idolatrous, so how did he know to attribute the

success to G-d?) it was, says Rashi, on account of Yosef constantly mentioning the name of G-d at every turn, "the Name of Hashem was habitual in his mouth."

Here too, as much as he was *battel* to Hashem, his mouth, just like his hand, was still a *metzius* (an existential, non-nullified entity), and was an additional means of eliciting and being a vessel for the Divine success; his speech (constantly saying "baruch Hashem," or the like), as well as his hands, were fitting, measured vessels for the measured flow of the G-dly blessing of *hatzlacha*.

In contrast, a prisoner has no

We chassidim are undergoing a process that tends to generate feelings of "when are we finally coming out of this state of imprisoning limbo?"

hands, as it were, does not accomplish anything, and, at most, performs only forced labor. In a sense, he has lost his entire *metzius* and it's as though he does not exist altogether. Although this is applicable to any prisoner, in the case of Yosef (or any *tzaddik*, such as the Alter Rebbe, who was incarcerated) the state of imprisonment elicited within him a reciprocal spiritual state of utmost *bittul* and became a reflection thereof.

Hence, the higher form of success can only come if the person is so totally *battel* that the flow of success merely flows unto – rather than through – him, without recourse to

his hands, actions, and words of his mouth. This is the kind of success with which Yosef was blessed during his prison stay, when he became no *metzius* altogether.

In contrast, while being a slave and possessing *metzius*, hands and mouth, these became the measured vessels to receive the measured blessing of success, and therefore, the Divine origin of this success, in this case, was evident only by virtue of continued and repeated success in "all that he did" and said.

THE REBBE KNOWS WHAT IS NEEDED

The Alter Rebbe recognized that the type of success that this very needy *chassid* required was the higher type, as he had reached a point where even declaring bankruptcy would not have helped. It could only have helped to cancel his debts but not the moral obligations and commitments which he had undertaken. So, in order to generate within him a total state of *bittul* to the point of possessing neither hands nor mouth, he had to shatter his *metzius*, as spiritually lofty (he actually was one of the very prominent *talmidim* of the Rebbe) as he was. To do so, he questioned his very *metzius*: "What are you needed for" – who needs you and your *metzius*?

It had the desired effect and he became wondrously blessed with success.

Since Gimmel Tammuz, we, *chassidim*, are undergoing a process that tends to question our *metzius* and generate feelings of "when are we finally coming out of this state of imprisoning limbo?" It is assuredly in order that, as a result, we may be blessed with wondrous, G-dly success, culminating with the arrival of Moshiach, *b'karov mamash!*

(Based on Likkutei Sichos vol 25 p. 213-219. The story can be found in "Extraordinary Chassidic Tales p.6)

THE PEACE AGREEMENT THROUGH TORAH EYES

BY SHAI GEFEN

“THE MORE YOU GIVE IN, THE MORE THEY WANT”

The Rebbe MH”M is the only one who, right after the Six Day War, warned what would happen if they “merely” talk about “small concessions.” He said it would lead to their giving back Yerushalayim, giving weapons to murderers, and he explained what autonomy amounts to. While everybody smirked, ignored him, or was thrilled over the Camp David Accords, the Rebbe was the only voice opposing it. The Rebbe against the world.

Today we no longer need proofs to understand what happens to someone who starts making concessions. Does anyone remember the minister who led the campaign “Peres Will Divide Yerushalayim” eight years ago? Today he is the one who is suggesting the division of Yerushalayim, giving away neighborhoods on the outskirts of Yerushalayim, and uprooting tens of thousands of Jews from their land. Reading what the Rebbe said 25 years ago makes your hair stand on end.

One of the most unique *sichos* is definitely the *sicha* which the Rebbe said 25 years ago this week. In light of the terrible situation in Eretz Yisroel, with the political establishment in a shambles, and everybody competing to see who can promise more concessions to the Arabs, while the Arabs *plotz* laughing at us and refuse to accept our offers, take a look at excerpts from the shocking *sicha* of Yud-Tes Kislev 5739:

It was said a number of times that there’s a clear *p’sak din* in the Torah (the reason for repeating it time after time is in order to “withdraw from a prohibition,” which necessitates repeating it even more than 100 times, especially when this entails danger to life and “danger is more serious than a prohibition) about when gentiles come to a place where Jews reside. It makes no difference whether it’s in Eretz Yisroel or outside it, or whether if it’s while the Beis HaMikdash stood or during exile. [The law being that] even if they say they come only “for matters of straw and hay” – and this might be their real reason (as the Torah testifies) but there’s a doubt or a shadow of a doubt, to the point that the doubt is very slight – then being that this is a city near the border, and through this the land will be opened up before them, the clear *din* is that even on Shabbos we must take weapons and armaments and stand strong to prevent their entering the city!

Furthermore, “Even if they haven’t yet come, but are preparing to come,” even when it’s only something we know about, a doubtful bit of knowledge, or even a shadow of a doubtful bit of knowledge that perhaps they are “preparing to come” – the Torah declares – when it comes to a *din* of the Torah there’s no difference whether it’s one doubt or 100 doubts – you must take weapons and stand strong against them.

All the more so is it forbidden to offer to open the land up before the

nations of the world, *r”l*, or even to give a foothold in a place where Israeli settlements are, and even if only one Jew lives there.

Some ask: The point of the concessions is to make peace, and peace is an important principle of the Torah, which says, “great is peace for the entire Torah was given to make peace in the world” – how is it possible in such a situation to stand with weapons and not give in an inch since this is what it says in the Torah?!

The answer is that only the peace that Hashem agrees to can have any permanence, whereas peace that comes about through concessions leads, *r”l*, to war, may it not come to pass. The only way to achieve “and I will give peace in the land” – the peace that Hashem wants – is by acting in accordance with *Shulchan Aruch*: “go in My statutes and guard My commandments.”

Since our generation is an orphaned generation, in which the darkness is doubled and redoubled – as said many times – therefore everything is shown in the clearest, most open way.

There exists the concern that if you make concessions to *goyim* they will ask for more and more until they ask for everything. In order not to enable Jews to act in opposition to true peace and the will of Hashem and His Torah, we needed open miracles so that the nations of the world would not want to accept what was offered them. We’ve seen the



miracles that happened, miracles that are completely not understandable according to nature! Open miracles. Even though Jews forced themselves to give up land, the Arabs didn't agree to accept it!

Along come Jews, who for many years running spoke strongly against giving away land, and now, since "their *yetzer* forced them," they announce that they want to give away land, though they made it conditional and said that amidst the land they'd give away there would remain something in Israel's possession. And those who were a bit stronger said that the "something" that would remain wouldn't be 400 *parsa* by 400 *parsa* [the biblical dimensions of the Holy Land] but would at least be bigger than the land that was in Israel's possession until the Six Day War...

Although they [the Arabs] could have gained lots of territory, they did not agree to accept these offers and they did not want to sign on any paper, but they demanded more and more!

From all this we clearly see that even when Jews force themselves to give up parts of Eretz Yisroel, they are shown from Above – in a miraculous way – that the *goyim* do not agree to accept it since they want more. As said before, this teaches us that true peace is only according to Torah, whereas peace that is essentially against *halacha* will not succeed.

Although everybody knows what the real meaning of "autonomy" is, Hashem does not rely on this. Rather, He shows what happens in the territories and even in the Old City of Yerushalayim. And even before they gave them weapons for the police, and even before they allowed them to vote for those who would represent them, the Arabs had already attacked the army and the police. This is not the place to detail the rest of the things going on there. Let what is

printed in the newspapers suffice. There's no need to wait for revelations of far more serious things that happened there.

When the Arab sees that the Jews are weak and afraid of the *goyim* and want to give away their land, etc., it causes him to get braver and to exhibit more *chutzpa*. To strike, to infiltrate and terrorize in those places where (not only the Jewish army is, but also) the Jewish police is, and the details were already printed in the papers, in addition to the facts that are hidden from the public.

All these details – that the Arabs are already raising their heads and taking action – [are things that] Hashem shows us even before they are given autonomy in order to make it clear to the Jews what kind of results autonomy will produce. All the more so in this case, when they know what autonomy is and don't need to guess, since, as said previously, they actually saw it. Wherever there was autonomy, as soon as they were given even a semblance of autonomy, they sent the Jews away from all the places where they were given this power.

All the more so after giving them autonomy, that this will open the land before them, *ch"v* – of course they won't be able to do anything against the Arabs! After establishing autonomy, will Arabs care what so-and-so along with his friends decided a month before that, that a Jew is allowed to settle there? That's a "joke and a mockery."

They say we must concede since Hashem commanded, "don't start up with the little *goy*," and all the more so with the "big *goy*." Moreover, since we need the money and weapons we get from the U.S., we mustn't anger them, and therefore, we must concede. But as was said numerous times, if they do concede there won't be, *r"l*, anything to use the money and weapons for!

As we see now, when we make

*Only the peace that Hashem agrees to can have any permanence, whereas peace that comes about through concessions leads, *r"l*, to war, may it not come to pass. The only way to achieve "and I will give peace in the land" – the peace that Hashem wants – is by acting in accordance with Shulchan Aruch – "go in My statutes and guard My commandments."*

concessions, immediately they ask for more...and they even said that before they sign the final agreement, they will ask for more. They've already disclosed what they'll ask for: the Old City of Yerushalayim!

Although they say they didn't speak about giving away the Old City until now, the truth is they spoke about everything at Camp David and even before that – to the point that they spoke about giving away all the territories [they had just conquered] immediately after the Six Day War!

The reason that the more we concede the more they want is since they see Jews giving in to pressure, even conceding on half or a third or a quarter, they don't lose hope because what will they lose if they get a third or quarter now and then continue to pressure?

FOUR GROUPS OF LIARS

It's just like the four groups who stood at the Reed Sea, when each one tried to convince us of the justice of their approach. There are those who talk about unilateral withdrawal; ignominious flight from Yesha, and then, they maintain, the solution will fall into place like the waving of a magic wand.

A second group speaks of a bilateral agreement, which will include uprooting Jews and giving large sections of the Negev to the Arabs.

The third group is the Right, which speaks only of autonomy for the Arabs.

A fourth group suggests the Partition Fence, which has almost been declared illegal and there's even a threat about petitioning the court for war crimes in the Hague.

The end of all these groups is known ahead of time, as we have seen what happens when each of these approaches is tried, for we have tried it all: We ran from Lebanon and saw what happened. The Oslo Accords

were signed ten years ago and we saw what that got us.

The solution of "*d'var Hashem zu halacha*" is the only one that hasn't been tried. It's such a simple solution, so practical, so realistic and appropriate for the jungle of the Middle East, but they prefer not to try it because it's not liberal and doesn't reflect the worldviews of the liberals who want to lead us to the slaughter. Anyway, it's very appropriate for someone who hasn't lost his basic survival instinct.

"*D'var Hashem zu halacha*" – the way the *Shulchan Aruch* in *siman* 329 suggests is one without diplomatic,

Open miracles. Even though Jews forced themselves to give up land, the Arabs didn't agree to accept it!

political concessions, and it deals with the root of the problem, "you go out against them with weapons so that the land won't be easy for them to conquer." This is the recipe for success. The approach of concessions of half, a third, a quarter, and all other attempts, have failed.

I would suggest to the *rabbanim* of the Pikuach Nefesh committee that they launch a ceremony to mark the signing of a peace agreement according to Torah, to counter the launching of the Geneva Agreement. This would be a true and lasting peace. As opposed to the fraudulent and anarchistic agreement that Beilin and Olmert are suggesting.

THE PARTITION FENCE WILL PROVE IT

Remember how they warned us

that we must have a partition fence? All of them, led by the Left, rallied in support of the fence. The *goyim*, too. Suddenly the background music has changed, and the thing that used to be the call of the hour and the epitome of enlightenment has become a "rotating sword" for the government. This teaches us that when we cave in to temporary pressure it boomerangs back in our faces.

The fence is a brief antidote and it lowers the tension somewhat, but it doesn't solve anything. This approach reflects what has been going on with us for the last 37 years since the Six Day War. Concession led to concession. Pressure brought on more pressure. The appetites of our enemies only grew and we all live the consequences, as the Rebbe put it: You can live without America for a few days and when they see our resoluteness they'll stand by our side.

We've seen a number of times lately how America waited for us stomp on the head of the snake that is Arafat, but we were afraid of the "goy within you."

We're better off doing what we've got to do immediately, than waiting for it to exact a heavy price from us.

YASHAR KO'ACH TO THE RABBANEI PIKUACH NEFESH

As opposed to the thunderous and shocking silence of all those groups who are supposed to loudly protest, we must praise and say "*yashar ko'ach*" in the name of the tens of thousands of loyal Jews, to the hundreds of *rabbanim* of Pikuach Nefesh, who fearlessly went out against the act of treason in Geneva. The worldwide media response to their *p'sak halacha* proves that the power of the *rabbanim* is very great and what a pity that we don't use it.

The Rebbe constantly demanded that the *rabbanim* voice their protests on the topic of giving away land so that their voices are heard from one

end of the world to the other. The Rebbe spoke about the *chillul Hashem* and bloodshed when *rabbanim* remain silent and don't respond immediately to outrageous suggestions like those in the Geneva Agreement.

In the p'sak *halacha* of the *rabbanim* of Pikuach Nefesh they deflected the "Divine anger" and the tremendous desecration of G-d's name, in the face of the sheep-like silence of everyone else. Every Jew who believes in the *Shulchan Aruch* must support the *rabbanim* in their battle, especially when we see exactly who attacks the *rabbanim*.

From this, we can understand the great importance in publicizing the *piskei din* against every concession, for these concessions are about uprooting Jews from their land. We demand of the *rabbanim* of Pikuach Nefesh when all those on the Right have become

You can live without America for a few days and when they see our resoluteness they'll stand by our side.

Beilin's accomplices: You must lead the battle for Daas Torah! Don't be afraid! Say it loudly and clearly, "it's *d'var Hashem, zu halacha!*"

"WE WERE LIKE S'DOM, LIKENED TO AMORA"

The terrible things going on with the administrative detention of Noam Federman cannot let us rest. The man is being held without being told what the charges are against him and with

no end in sight. Up until this week, he was deprived of basic amenities, which is why he went on a hunger strike for over 50 days. Knesset member Dovid Azulai told me that after he visited Federman in his cell, he was concerned for Federman's life and said there are people who want him dead.

This shocking state of affairs is reminiscent of totalitarian regimes, which eliminated (i.e., murdered) those who opposed the government down in dark cellars. Noam Federman is the only prisoner being held in administrative detention. Our Security forces have no problem with those Israeli Arabs who are members of Hezbollah and El Qaeda or who collaborate with suicide bombers. Their big problem is Noam Federman.

Even if we think there is truth to their claims against Federman, so let them put him on trial! All those organizations that protect the civilian rights of Palestinians suddenly forgot the rights of a prisoner under administrative detention without trial and without justice. A double standard.

Federman's situation is in the category of "do not stand by your brother's blood," and we must all try to work on his behalf and not allow them to wipe out this man and his spirit when his only crimes are that he lives in Chevron and he leads the fight for Eretz Yisroel.

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