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News

The international weekly for aiding the coming of Mashiach
BEIS MOSHIACH

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Beis Moshich (USPS 012-542) ISSN 1082-0272 is published weekly, except Jewish holidays (only once in April and October) for \$130.00 in Crown Heights, \$140.00 in the USA & Canada, all others for \$150.00 per year (45 issues), by Beis Moshich, 744 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY and additional offices. Postmaster: send address changes to Beis Moshich 744 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409.

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NEW YEAR FOR TREES, NEW LIFE FOR JEWISH LIFE

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



SHABBOS PARSHAS B'SHALACH; CHAMISHA-ASAR B'SHVAT, 5750

1. Chamisha Asar B'Shvat is Rosh HaShana of the Trees. The connection between this holiday and our service is evident from the phrase “for a man is like the trees of the field.” Our Sages explain that a fruit tree is a metaphor for Torah sages, and by extension, the Jewish people, since “all your sons are students of the L-rd.” From a certain dimension — the aspect of man that is comparable to a fruit-bearing tree — the Rosh HaShana of the Trees adds a level of fulfillment above that associated with Rosh HaShana, the day of man’s creation.

It is written, “He (G-d) placed the world within your hearts,” i.e., everything that exists in the world also exists within a Jew’s heart. Indeed, it would be more appropriate to reverse the order of the statement and say that because something exists within a Jew’s heart, a parallel is brought into being within the world at large.

Thus, we can use a metaphor of land to refer to the Jewish people, as the verse states, “You shall be a desired land.” All the characteristics

of land, including the potential to produce fruit, are reflected in the Jewish people. In particular, they share a special connection to the chosen land, *Eretz Yisroel*, and the seven species of fruit for which *Eretz Yisroel* is praised in the Torah.

Each of the seven species is employed as a metaphor for the Jewish people. The Jews are called “the first of His grain” (referring to wheat and barley). Psalms describes the Jews as “a vine brought forth from Egypt” (grapes). Similarly, we find the metaphors of figs: “the first fruit of the fig tree in its season;” pomegranates: “your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates;” olives: “The L-rd called your name, ‘a green olive tree, fair, with goodly fruit;” and a date palm: “Your stature is like a palm tree,” and “the righteous will flourish like a palm tree.”

Since Chamisha Asar B'Shvat is the Rosh HaShana of the Trees, it generates new life energy for the service of the Jewish people, who are likened to trees.

In comparing grain and fruit, we find two fundamental differences:

a) Grain is the staple of our diet and is necessary for the maintenance

of our health. Fruit, in contrast, is not required for these reasons and is eaten primarily for the pleasure it brings.

b) The growth potential exhibited by trees far exceeds that of grain. Although there is an abundant increase in quantity, the harvested grain is of the same nature as the kernels that were originally planted. The seed of a fruit tree, however, is of an entirely different nature than the fruit that is later harvested.

Similarly, regarding our service of G-d, the metaphor of fruit trees alludes to a service that is not limited to the basic necessities but one that generates pleasure. It reveals the potential for growth. Not only a quantitative increase, but a leap to a higher level, a new framework of reference. Chamisha Asar B'Shvat, Rosh HaShana of the Trees, generates new energy to carry out this service, and also to carry out the service described by the metaphor of grain.

There is an added dimension to the above services this year, when Chamisha Asar B'Shvat falls on Shabbos. Shabbos is also connected with the service of pleasure, sharing

an intrinsic bond with the service alluded to by fruit.

The weekly Torah portion, Parshas B'Shalach, also contributes to this theme. B'Shalach describes the Jewish people's exodus from Egypt. Our Sages associated two of the verses quoted above (which use the fruits of *Eretz Yisroel* as metaphors for the Jewish people, namely, "a vine brought forth from Egypt" and "your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates") with the exodus.

The concept of planting and harvesting is connected with the concepts of exile and redemption, as the Alter Rebbe relates in *Torah Ohr*: "We find the expression 'sowing' used in regard to the Jewish people in the Egyptian exile, as it is written, 'I will sow it for Me in the land.' Our Sages declared, 'A person sows a *kur* to reap a harvest of several *kurrim*...' It is written, 'Israel is sanctified unto the L-rd, the first of His grain.' The emphasis here is on 'His grain,' the fact that the Jewish people are G-d's produce... Just as a person sows grain for the additional amount that will grow, so too, since G-d wanted the revelation of G-dliness in the world to be increased...He sowed Israel, His produce, so that His glory would be revealed in an increased manner. Thus, there will be a great revelation of G-dliness on this lowly plane, just as in the higher spiritual worlds...as will be revealed in the Messianic age. The Jewish people are the ones who cause this great revelation..."

The Alter Rebbe continues, employing both the metaphors of grain and a vine to describe the activities of the Jewish people. Similarly, the Midrash uses the metaphors of sowing grain and planting trees and vines to describe G-d's sending the Jewish people into exile in Egypt.

The metaphor of implanting or "sowing" the Jewish people into exile is relevant on a personal level, relating to how the soul descends into the world to elevate the body, the animal soul, and its portion in the world at large, making a dwelling for G-d in the lower worlds. Through our fulfillment of *mitzvos* (also described by the metaphor of sowing), we draw down the revelation of G-dliness into the world.

2. As mentioned, this revelation of G-dliness is brought about by the Jewish people's Divine service. Accordingly, each of the seven species for which *Eretz Yisroel* is praised, i.e., the produce which the

G-d sowed the Jewish people, his produce, so that his glory would be revealed in an increased manner.

Torah regards as praiseworthy, serves as a metaphor for different aspects of the service of the Jewish people. The first two species, wheat and barley, are species of grain. Our Sages explain that wheat is food for human beings, whereas barley is primarily used for animal fodder. Thus, these two species refer to the service of the G-dly soul and the service of the animal soul, respectively.

The Hebrew word for man, "adam," is related to the word "adama" (I resemble), as in, "I resemble the One above." This is a fitting description of the G-dly soul. Barley, "food for the animal (soul),"

is intended to elevate and refine the animal soul. Although this service represents a descent, ultimately, it elevates even the G-dly soul itself by lifting it to a higher rung of Divine service.

To explain: The animals were created before man. In our own lives, we are required to feed our animals before we eat. This pattern is reflected in our spiritual makeup. The G-dly soul is "the second soul in Israel." Before the G-dly soul is fully manifested in the body, the animal soul has already established its hold.

Furthermore, for most Jewish people, the primary service is the refinement of the animal soul. The Alter Rebbe writes, "the attribute of the *beinoni* is the attribute of all men." A *beinoni*'s service involves refining the animal soul, which "originates in the forces of evil, invests itself in his flesh and blood, and has not been transformed into good."

The reason that the G-dly soul is forced to descend and invest itself in the animal soul, which is material in nature, is associated with that metaphor of sowing seeds. The animal soul is compared to the earth. Nevertheless, since its source is above that of the G-dly soul, it has the potential to produce growth. Its refinement can bring one to greater heights than the service of the G-dly soul alone.

This explanation, however, raises a question: If the essential service is the refinement of the animal soul, why is wheat mentioned before barley in the verse praising *Eretz Yisroel*? It would seem that barley should be granted precedence.

To explain: It is impossible to begin working on the animal soul alone. To refine the animal soul, it is first necessary to reveal the light of the G-dly soul. When sowing seeds, the growth potential is latent in the

earth; but unless a seed is sown, that potential will never be expressed. Similarly, because the animal soul is material in nature, the G-dly soul must invest itself within it to bring out the power of its source.

This concept is reflected in our daily service. According to the Jewish calendar, a day begins at night. The recitation of the *Shma* is the first *mitzva* to be fulfilled each day. In the *Shma* we proclaim, “And you shall love the L-rd, your G-d,” the service of the G-dly soul. Only thereafter does the verse continue, “with all your heart,” interpreted by our Sages to mean “with both your hearts,” i.e., with the animal soul, as well. Only after the G-dly soul expresses its love for G-d is it possible to refine the animal soul and transform it so that it too expresses love for G-d.

Similarly, each morning, when a person arises as “a new creation,” he begins his day with the declaration “*Modeh Ani*,” the acknowledgement of the G-dly soul. And only afterwards he begins the service of working to refine the animal soul.

This pattern is alluded to in the verse, “Draw me out, we will run after You.” “Draw me out” is singular, referring to the service of arousing the G-dly soul. “We will run after you” is plural, referring to the combined activity of the G-dly soul and the animal soul. First, the G-dly soul is aroused. Then, it invests itself in the animal soul and motivates it to the love of G-d. This, in turn, brings out a greater love in the G-dly soul, to the extent that it is motivated to “run.”

Now we can understand why wheat precedes barley in the verse cited above. The first efforts in harvesting the produce of the Jewish people must be directed to wheat, arousing love for G-d within the G-dly soul. Only then is it possible

to proceed to barley, the refinement of the animal soul. It is through “the barley harvest,” however, that even the G-dly soul can be lifted to a higher rung.

3. As mentioned above, not only the grains but also the five fruits for which *Eretz Yisrael* are praised are metaphors for the service of the Jewish people. Furthermore, this service is also connected with the refinement of the animal soul:

a) Grapes: Wine is described as “bringing joy to man and G-d.” The name for G-d used here, “*Elokim*,” refers to the aspect of G-dliness that limits and conceals revelation in

It is impossible to begin working on the animal soul alone. To refine the animal soul, it is first necessary to reveal the light of the G-dly soul.

order to allow the creation of a limited world. Thus, wine “brings joy to...*Elokim*,” ensuring that the forces of concealment will not prevent the revelation of G-d’s inner qualities on this plane. Implied in this service is the refinement of the animal soul to the extent that it will no longer conceal G-dliness.

b) Figs: According to certain opinions, the Tree of Knowledge was a fig tree. All opinions agree that after the sin, Adam and Chava were able to correct a portion of the shame caused by their sin by wearing clothes made from fig leaves. Thus, eating figs is associated

with the refinement of the spiritual descent caused by this sin.

c) Pomegranates: Pomegranates refer to the fulfillment of *mitzvos*, as our Sages commented, “Even the empty ones among you are as full of *mitzvos* as a pomegranate is of seeds.” Doing *mitzvos* involves material objects, emphasizing the elevation of this lower plane of existence.

There are two dimensions as to how pomegranate seeds compare to the service of refining the material world through performing *mitzvos*. Whereas grape seeds can be seen through their skin, pomegranate seeds are hidden. This reflects how the *mitzvos* are invested and hidden in the material aspects of our existence. Also, each pomegranate seed is associated with a separate portion of the fruit. This relates to the concept that every Jew, even “the empty ones,” are “filled with *mitzvos*,” i.e., they are beings of substance.

d) Olives: “An olive releases its oil only when it is pressed.” This alludes to the service of self nullification, which is on a higher level than subduing the animal soul in the process of refinement.

e) Dates: Our Sages state that a date palm produces fruit after seventy years. Seventy refers to the completion of the task of refining our seven emotional attributes, the essential aspect of our service at present. The period of seventy years also implies that much effort and energy is invested in this service. Nevertheless, just as the effort required surpasses that required for other fruit, so too, the sweetness of the fruit is much greater.

The Baal Shem Tov interpreted the verse, “You shall be a desired land,” explaining that the Jewish people are like choice land in which are buried treasures of jewels and

pearls. In addition to the produce the land provides (grain, necessary to maintain one's existence, and fruit, which brings pleasure) the land provides treasures, giving a person much greater pleasure than fruit. This refers to the revelation of the inner dimension of the Torah, which, in his well-known parable, the Alter Rebbe described as the most precious jewel in the king's crown. The Alter Rebbe explained that the jewel must be pulverized and mixed with water to form an elixir to be poured upon the mouth of the king's bedridden son in the hope that one drop will enter his mouth and save his life. From this explanation, we see two dimensions to the revelation of the inner dimension of the Torah. One dimension is the need to save the life of the King's son, i.e., to preserve the Jewish people in the darkness of exile. And on a deeper level, the revelation of the quality of pleasure in Torah is a preparation for the revelation of the inner dimension of the Torah in the Messianic age.

Shabbos completes and fulfills the days of the previous week. This year, Chamisha Asar B'Shvat falls on the Shabbos that contributes fulfillment to the fortieth anniversary of Yud Shvat. As explained in the previous *farbrengens*, the service of the seven *Nesiim* (who parallel the seven fruits for which *Eretz Yisroel* was blessed) in spreading the wellsprings of Chassidus outward,

May these efforts lead to the period of ultimate growth, the Messianic age, when all our service carried out in exile will blossom.

has already been completed in abundance, in a manner of pleasure.

Thus, from the above, we can derive several directives to be applied in our behavior. The Rosh HaShana of the Trees should inspire each person to increase those aspects of his service related to pleasure and growth, the two concepts we learn from trees, as explained above.

Also, included in the concept of growth are the activities a person undertakes to influence others, beginning with the members of his family and those living around him. Thus, he becomes like "a fruit tree, yielding fruit after its kind whose seed is within it."

[Indeed, the latter concept sheds light on the following problem: The Mishna describes Chamisha Asar B'Shvat as "Rosh HaShana for a tree," yet, in most texts, we find the holiday described as "Rosh HaShana

of the trees," using the plural form. This distinction, however, alludes to the fact that each tree serves as the source for others.]

May these efforts lead to the period of ultimate growth, the Messianic age, when all our service carried out in exile will blossom. The connection of the concept of growth to the Messianic era is emphasized by the fact that Tzemach, one of Moshiach's names, means "growth." Similarly, in the Messianic prophecy, "a scepter shall arise in Israel," the word for "scepter," *shevet*, also means "branch." Similarly, the prophet declares, "A shoot shall come forth from the stem of Yishai, and a branch shall grow forth out of his roots."

The above relates to this week's Torah portion, Parshas B'Shalach, which describes the final stages of the exodus from Egypt. It is also related to the Messianic redemption, as it is written, "As in the days of your exodus from Egypt, I will show you wonders." Our Sages alluded to this connection, associating the song sang by Moshe at the Sea of Reeds with the ultimate song of redemption to be sung at the coming of Moshiach. May we experience the final redemption, and all journey to *Eretz Yisroel*, where we will "eat of its fruit and be satiated with its goodness." May it be in the immediate future.

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THE KING DOESN'T NEED YOUR TATTERED PILLOW

BY RABBI CHAIM ASHKENAZI, MASHPIA, YESHIVAS TOMCHEI T'MIMIM, LOD
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

Prior to Chaf-Zayin Adar Rishon 5752, it was easy to be a Lubavitcher and to believe that the Rebbe is Melech HaMoshiach, as all the revelations had proved this. Everyone saw the Rebbe shlita in all his glory, leading the whole world, and they would always ask at every step of their lives, "What does the Lubavitcher Rebbe say?" and the Rebbe would tell them what to do in connection with all that was happening in the world. This was not a question of faith or knowledge, but a saying based on the fact that everything would always work out logically in the end.

There is a story about the Mezritcher Maggid, who once sent one of his students to a certain tavern to learn something there about *avodas Hashem*. The student traveled to this tavern, and heard how a drunken gentile was telling his friend that the royal tax collectors came to his house for the debt he owed. Since he had nothing in his house except for a

dirty and tattered pillow, they confiscated the pillow. "I don't understand the king," the drunkard told his friend. "Doesn't he have any pillows? And even if he doesn't, what good will a dirty and tattered one like that do him?"

"Of course, the king doesn't need your pillow," his friend responded. "But the king wants you to know that

there is a king!"

This is the central point of our *avoda* in this world: to know that there is a king, to know that there is a Master of the universe!

And if someone should ask: Does this require special *avoda*? Anyone who is truthful to himself knows that there is a Master of the universe!

The simple answer to this is: True, everyone can **say** that there is a king, but not everyone really **knows** that there is a king, and not everyone knows what a king is. There is the famous story about when the Alter Rebbe returned from the Mezritcher Maggid, and his father-in-law, who was known for his opposition to *chassidus*, asked him, "What did you learn there?" The Alter Rebbe responded, "I learned that there is a Master of the universe!" His father-in-law immediately called one of the maidservants, and asked her, "Is there is a Master of the universe?" to which she replied, "Of course there is!" He then turned to the Alter Rebbe and said, "Nu, even the maidservant says that there is a Master of the universe. You don't have to travel to Mezritch for that!" The Alter Rebbe answered him, "She says, I know!"

The meaning of the Alter Rebbe's

words will be understood after we delve a bit into the previous story. Why did the Maggid send the *chassid* to that tavern? Couldn't he have sent him to some normal taxpayer who also understands that there is a king to whom we have to pay taxes? At first glance, it would seem that someone who pays more taxes has a far greater sense of knowledge of the king's existence!

However, the truth is that if the whole purpose was to emphasize the existence of a king whose sovereignty as a powerful ruler is expressed through tax collection, then whoever pays more taxes has a greater recognition of the king's *metzius*. In our case, however, we're talking about an entirely different type of king.

It is known that when the Czar was executed, *chassidim* said that it will no longer be possible to understand the *chassidic* example of what a king is. Yet, wouldn't it seem that there were other kings and rulers even after the Czar's death? The explanation is that the sovereignty of the Czar was unique, since he did not rule over the people with brute force (as did Saddam Hussein, *yemach shmo*), rather, the people recognized that he was the country's true leader, and thus, everything belonged to him.

Thus, the Maggid sent the *chassid* specifically to that inn. When a wealthy person pays several thousand rubles in taxes, he doesn't feel that the king runs the country. He feels a sense of partnership in the country's expenses, since after all, he does benefit from the police, army, and all the other services that the king provides. Just as he pays for the upkeep on his own home, so too with the whole country. But when the king takes a tattered pillow, then he perceives in a revealed fashion that the king is the *baal ha'bayis*. The king doesn't need the pillow to pay his

soldiers' wages, he takes it only to show who's the boss. This example is an illustration of the king in his purest form. The wealthy man who pays his taxes **says** that there is a king, but the poor drunk **knows** it!

IN GREATER DEPTH

As is known, knowledge of the king's existence is attained at varying degrees of profundity. If this applies with a flesh and blood king, then all the more so with the Creator, the Infinite King of all kings. Each day in our *avodas Hashem*, we can reveal

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newer and deeper knowledge of this *metzius*.

There is a story about the Saadia Gaon, who accepted a period of exile upon himself, and would go from town to town with poor people, thus concealing his identity. Once he came to a certain city, where a wealthy man, who welcomed all of his guests with great warmth, hosted him. The Saadia Gaon was also received with much hospitality and friendliness, despite the fact that his host was unaware of who he was. After a few

days, the host realized that his guest was none other than the Saadia Gaon. He entered the Saadia Gaon's room, fell upon the floor in tears, and begged forgiveness. The Saadia Gaon didn't understand what had happened, so the wealthy man told him, "Only now did I realize that you are the great master, etc. If only I had known this before!"

"You gave me all the good that you possess," the Saadia Gaon said. "If so, what difference would it have made if you had known who I was? What more could you possibly have done?"

"If I had known before who you were," the wealthy host replied, "I would have done it with greater devotion and enthusiasm!"

Some time later, the Saadia Gaon said, "It was then that I learned a [new] method in *avodas Hashem*. Every day, I rise higher through Torah and *mitzvos*, and I recognize the Creator today more than yesterday. Therefore, the *avoda* of yesterday is considered of no value, and for this we must ask forgiveness!"

This also explains the expression in *Tanya*, "All of his days in *t'shuva*," thus, all the *avoda* in this world is called in *chassidus* "the *avoda* of *t'shuva*." This is not due to the committing of transgressions, *ch"v*, which certainly requires immediate *t'shuva*. This refers to *t'shuva*, from the etymological root "to return," "and the spirit will return to G-d Who gave it." From what have we distanced ourselves that we need to return? From the **knowledge** of the fact that there is a king.

If we only **say** that there is a king, it is similar to the thief who kisses the *mezuza* before leaving his house to make a robbery. He also **says** that there is a king, yet "he **calls** to G-d for success in his thefts." He does not see this as a contradiction, since he **says** the *metzius* of G-d. However, the *metzius* of easy money accessible

through stealing – he **knows**.

As explained in *chassidus*, one of the reasons for the soul's descent into this world is in order to **know** G-dliness. Before its descent into this world, back in *Gan Eden*, the soul enjoyed the radiance of the *Sh'china*, and in connection with this minute illumination, the soul's *metzius* was recognizable. In other words, it says that there is G-dliness, but it *knows* itself.

To illustrate the nature of this knowledge, *mashpiim* at *farbrengens* would bring the following parable: Once in a certain village, there lived an uneducated and illiterate Jew who retained a *melamed* in his home to teach his children, and also to read him his mail when it arrived. Once a letter arrived from the villager's family, informing him that his father, *r"l*, had passed away. The *melamed* read this, and as he continued, he suddenly saw the man lying on the floor in a dead faint. Naturally, he was immediately revived, and when the *melamed* asked him what happened, the villager said, "You read that my father had passed away."

"I don't understand," the *melamed* said. "I was the one who was reading. You only heard it from me second-hand, yet you fainted, and I didn't."

"But it's my father, not yours," the villager replied.

This illustrates why we say "knows" or "says." In *Gan Eden*, the soul is illuminated by the radiance of the *Sh'china* in a manner of "knowing the *metzius*." This is similar to the *melamed* reading the letter bearing sad news. He only has knowledge of the *metzius*, even though he knew this first in a more direct fashion, whereas, the villager experienced knowledge of the *mehus* (essential nature). Even though he heard the bad tidings on a second-hand basis, this fact has no relevance in connection with knowledge of the *mehus*.

WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH...

Therefore, the soul descends to this lowly world, with all its hindrances and concealments at every step of the way, not only to attain the knowledge of the *mehus* of G-d's radiance afterwards in *Gan Eden*, but also the knowledge of His very nature with the coming of Moshiach.

Just as in the parable of the drunk and the pillow, so too, we find in real life: When a Jew has no disturbances in his *avodas Hashem*, standing at the level of someone who is spiritually wealthy with everything coming easily for him, his *metzius* appears in a most revealed sense. This is his usual nature; he has no need for *avodas Hashem*. It's

***His rebbe asked him,
"And if you had just
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you give half of it to
G-d?"***

a pleasure for him to fulfill Torah and *mitzvos*, thus, their fulfillment is no proof that he knows that there is a king. However, when he stands at a spiritually poor level, with the *avodas Hashem* coming with considerable difficulty and the *mitzvos* are fulfilled only with great effort on his part, then we see that he recognizes the existence of G-d. If despite all the hardships, he fulfills Torah and *mitzvos*, this proves that he knows there is a king!

There is a story about someone who went to his *rebbe* in request of a *bracha* for *parnasa*. The Jew said that if G-d will give him this many forests, he'll give G-d half. And if G-d will give him this many houses, he'll give G-d half, and so it went in a variety of

possibilities (similar to those who promise before buying their lottery ticket that if they win, they'll give 50%, even 90%, to charity). The rebbe asked him, "And if you had just one chicken, would you give half of it to G-d?"

No response.

What did this mean? It turns out that this was all he possessed – one chicken. This was an expression of his true *metzius*, therefore, to give half of this to G-d – that's a different story.

Even if the wealthy taxpayer gives more than a million dollars every year, this doesn't show him that there is a king. However, when that other poor soul gives up his tattered pillow (be it willingly or by force) – this really teaches him that there is a king.

This is the whole purpose behind all the trials we confront in the world. They place the Jew in a situation where he feels under pressure – problems with *parnasa*, health, *ch"v*, etc., and all he wants is to be left in peace. Just then, someone comes to him and says, "Put on *t'fillin*. Come to a Torah class. Go on *mitzvaim*. Help someone." Such a request comes hard for him right now. He would rather involve himself in more pressing and important matters. At this moment, his entire world is a tattered pillow.

He might think to himself: *Ribbono Shel Olam*, I'm under such pressure. I'm so confused, troubled, and tired. What do You stand to benefit from my putting on *t'fillin*, *davening*, going to a *shiur*, or helping others? What good is it all if I'm so stressed? It would be far better if You went to someone who has all his material needs and plenty of free time on his hands. It's no problem for him to stop what he's doing and carry out Your Will.

The answer to this is that G-d doesn't need this – *you do*. **You** need to know that there is a king. The Alter Rebbe writes in *Likkutei Torah* on the *pasuk*, "For G-d tests...to know," that the intention is not that G-d should

know, but that man should know.

Such a moment brings expression to the *pasuk* “You shall surely place a king upon you.” When a Jew does G-d’s will with feeling even under such circumstances, this represents the fulfillment of His desire for “a dwelling place for Him in the lower realms.” In this manner, he scratches away at the layer of “I” that interferes with his knowledge of the king’s existence. Another layer and another layer throughout his life – until the days of Moshiach, when we will all **know** that there is a king, as is written, “and all flesh will **see**,” “and the earth will be filled with the **knowledge**,” “for all will **know** Me.”

The *avoda* of today is on the level of **saying** in relation to how things will be at the coming of Moshiach, when “all will **know**.” This also explains why our entire approach towards G-d is called “betrothal,” whereas, when Moshiach comes, it is called “marriage.” Before a betrothal, there is no relevance to a woman saying that she has a husband, even though it had been proclaimed in heaven forty days prior to conception. However, after betrothal, while she can already **say** that she has a husband, we see that it isn’t until after marriage that she **knows and feels** that she has a husband.

It is told that *chassidim* asked the Tzemach Tzedek what difference does it make if we learn *chassidus* today or not, if we will all learn *chassidus* anyway when Moshiach comes? The Tzemach Tzedek responded that the difference is the “*Aha!*” This can be compared to someone who hears voices behind a wall and doesn’t know exactly what is happening there. Afterwards, when the partition is opened, he says, “*Aha!* That’s what I heard!”

All of our knowledge, after all the *avoda*, is still only the knowledge that there are things on the other side of a wall, and at any moment, the partition

will be removed and we will say, “*Aha!*”

It is also explained in *chassidus* what is written in Megillas Ester, “The Jews fulfilled and accepted.” Our Sages say that at *Mattan Torah* they only **accepted**, but during the time of Haman they **fulfilled**. The Rebbe Rayatz asks: How can we understand this? At the time of *Mattan Torah* there were such great revelations, whereas in the time of Haman it was at the level of

“It was then that I learned a [new] method in avodas Hashem. Every day, I rise higher through Torah and mitzvos, and I recognize the Creator today more than yesterday. Therefore, the avoda of yesterday is considered of no value, and for this we must ask forgiveness!”

“I will surely hide [My face],” a doubled and redoubled state of concealment. The explanation is that at the time of *Mattan Torah*, due to all the great revelations, it was comparable to the wealthy man. Why shouldn’t he pay his taxes to the king? It’s worth it for him to do so. However, in the time of Haman, there was nothing, and the Jewish people were considered as the skin of an onion. Nevertheless, they remained steadfast in their faith, and

thus, we have a clear expression of how they knew there is a king. Otherwise, there is no logical reason why they stood with such self-sacrifice against all rational odds.

ESPECIALLY NOW!

Similarly, we find in the seventh generation. Prior to Chaf-Zayin Adar Rishon 5752, it was easy to be a Lubavitcher and to believe that the Rebbe is Melech HaMoshiach, as all the revelations had proved this. Everyone saw the Rebbe *shlita* in all his glory, leading the whole world, and they would always ask at every step of their lives, “What does the Lubavitcher Rebbe say?” and the Rebbe would tell them what to do in connection with all that was happening in the world. This was not a question of faith or knowledge – just a **saying** based on the fact that everything would always work out logically in the end.

The faith in the Rebbe MH”M during those years did not come from knowledge instilled within one’s soul, but from pure logic. As is known, logic lives on a seesaw – sometimes up, sometimes down, depending upon a person’s changing mood, due to the number of hours he slept, the meal he ate, how many people annoyed him that day and why, and many other factors that cause someone to decide rationally as he does.

But today, after Chaf-Zayin Adar Rishon and Gimmel Tammuz, when it is impossible to understand all this logically, and in fact, everything seems to appear as a tattered pillow, this is the opportunity to give to the king, to give the Rebbe what he invested in us all these years from the moment he accepted the leadership, feeding us one single message: On to the Redemption! He has already told us who the Redeemer is and that he is here with us.

Let’s greet him now in the truest sense!

THE BABA SALI: RABBI YISROEL ABUCHATZEIRA

BY RABBI SHOLOM BER VOLPE
TRANSLATED BY ALEXANDER ZUSHE KOHN



“From his shoulders up – taller than any of the people” (Samuel I, 9:2) is how one might attempt to describe the Rebbe. Ironically, the fact that the Rebbe soars above all others sometimes leads people to think that many Torah leaders of our generation do not appreciate the Rebbe’s greatness. Nothing could be further from the truth! In fact, it is hard to find a Torah leader of our times who does not have some type of a direct connection with the Rebbe, and who does not stand in awe of him.

HaGaon HaChassid Rabbi Sholom Ber Volpe, author of numerous *s’farim* on *nigleh* and *p’nimius ha’Torah*, has compiled an encyclopedic work that brings to the public awareness some of the very warm relationships that the Rebbe has with many leading scholars, *roshei yeshiva*, and

tzaddikim. We present here the first in a series of columns aimed at bringing this awareness to the English-speaking public. It is our belief that for many people, understanding the extent of the Rebbe’s influence over leaders of non-Lubavitch circles is key to their acceptance of the Rebbe’s leadership. May we merit the Redemption immediately – Now!

Baba Sali was the crown of Torah and holiness of North African Jewry and a great miracle worker. Born on Rosh HaShana of the year 5650 (1889-90), in Tafllilat, Morocco, he was the son of the *gaon* and kabbalist, Rabbi Massud Abuchatziera (who was the son of the holy *gaon* and miracle worker, author of many *s’farim* on *nigleh* and *nistar* – including *Petuchei Chotam* and *Machsof HaLavan* – Rabbi Yaakov Abuchatzera, interred in Damanhūr, Egypt).

As a child, the Baba Sali practiced fasting and self-mortification, and in general, was removed from worldly

matters. He would spend eighteen hours a day in seclusion studying the revealed and kabbalistic dimensions of Torah. In this manner, he grew ever more brilliant and righteous, and became one of “the holy ones on the earth.” Even as a child, the Baba Sali performed miracles and his prayers were known to bring salvation.

When he was a young man, the Baba Sali’s father passed away. Subsequently, the Baba Sali became the *rosh yeshiva* in Tafilalat. In the year 5681 (1930-31), he visited the Holy Land for a year and stayed in the Old City of Yerushalayim, lingering in the shadows of its wise men at Yeshivat Ben Porat Yosef. The great scholars and *tzaddikim* of Yerushalayim were overjoyed at his arrival, extolling his greatness, and the sincerity with which he served G-d. During his stay in Eretz Yisroel, he visited Tzfas and became close to the Saba Kadisha¹, the renowned kabbalist Rabbi Shlomo Alefandri of sainted memory.

Upon his return to Morocco, the Baba Sali succeeded his brother (who was killed *al Kiddush Hashem*) as leader and spiritual mentor of the community. For many years, he

served as head of the rabbinical court of Arpod and its environs; eventually, he moved to Risani. In the year 5711 (1950-51) he moved to Eretz Yisroel, where he settled in the holy city of Yerushalayim. In 5714 (1953-54), he returned to Morocco to uplift and strengthen the Jews there. From time to time, he would reside with the Moroccan communities of France. In 5724 (1963-64), he moved to Israel for good, settling in Yavneh and then Ashkelon. In 5730 (1969-70), he established his residence in Netivot.

Baba Sali's mind was constantly focused on G-d, and all his actions reflected his anticipation of Moshiach's coming. He even had a special set of clothes interwoven with golden threads with which to welcome the Redeemer at the appointed time.

The Baba's Sali's holy name spread throughout Israel and the world, and thousands of people flocked to his home to receive his holy blessing. The *tzaddik* would pray for those in need of children, for those in need of healing, for those in need of food and clothing. Indeed, the Baba Sali's holy prayers brought salvation in all areas of life, and his miracles completely transcended the natural order.

The Baba Sali continued to study Torah and serve G-d with self-sacrifice even during his last days on earth, when he was sick, weak, and in great pain.

On the 4th day of Shvat 5744 (January 8, 1984), (less than a year after the passing of his saintly son, Rabbi Meir o.b.m.), the Baba Sali departed this world at the ripe old age of ninety-four. Jews throughout the world mourned the loss of this great *tzaddik*, who would say that he had accepted suffering upon himself in atonement for the Jewish people.

CONNECTED TO THE BAAL SHEM TOV AND THE ALTER REBBE

The Baba Sali was deeply connected to the Baal Shem Tov and his disciples – particularly the Alter Rebbe, author of the *Tanya* and *Shulchan Aruch*.

During the years 5714-5724 (1953-1964), there were times when the Baba Sali took up residence in France. Since he liked to serve G-d in seclusion during the period leading up to the high holidays, he would sometimes spend the month of Elul in Yeshivat Tomchei T'mimim

“Who are you to judge between these giants? I know who the Baal Shem Tov is! Now, get up and leave – I don't want to see you by my side!”

Lubavitch of Brunoy, in order to avoid being disrupted by the many people seeking his blessing. There, he was given two rooms in which to study and pray, and he would learn the Alter Rebbe's *Likkutei Torah* every night from midnight to dawn.

The great *gaon* Rabbi Yehoshua Chadad, a *rav* in Milan, told me that during Elul of 5716 (August-September 1956) he was fortunate enough to be the Baba Sali's *chavrusa* for the study of *Likkutei Torah*. He recalls that every day toward

morning, after they finished studying, prayer services would be arranged for the *tzaddik* and he would pray the morning services and go rest. The day before Yom Kippur, the *tzaddik* requested that a *shochet* be brought to slaughter his *kaparos*. Rabbi Chadad brought him Rabbi Yoel Adleman o.b.m. After the *kaparos* were slaughtered, Rabbi Chadad asked Baba Sali what he thought of the *shochet*. Baba Sali replied, “Even Moshe Rabbeinu can eat from what he slaughters.” Afterwards, Baba Sali told him about a *shochet* who would wet his knife with the tears that rolled down his face during his recital of the Shma before going to bed; the *shochet* would use this moisture to examine and smoothen his knife.

Since the anniversary of a *tzaddik's* passing is an auspicious time in Heaven, many people have the custom of omitting the Tachnun prayer on such a day. The Baba Sali, however, did not follow this practice – with one exception: 24 Teives, the anniversary of the Alter Rebbe's passing.

The *gaon* and *chassid*, Rabbi Machluf Aminadav Krispin, *rav* of Kiryat Bialik, who married the Baba Sali's granddaughter (we will speak more at length about him in the chapter on his father-in-law, Rabbi Meir Abuchetzeira, of sainted memory), told me an incredible story about the *tzaddik* that he himself had witnessed. In his own words:

“I KNOW WHO THE BAAL SHEM TOV IS!”

“In 5740 (1979-80), I was fortunate enough to have a private audience with the Rebbe. The Rebbe asked me to tell him something about the Baba Sali, and I related the following story:²

1 Hebrew, Holy Grandfather — i.e., elderly *tzaddik*.

2 What follows are Rabbi Krispin's own words.

“When the *tzaddik* arrived in Eretz Yisroel in 5724 (1963-64), he stayed by his son-in-law (who was also his brother’s son), Rabbi Avrohom Abuchatzaira o.b.m., in the city of Yavneh. There was a *kollel* in this city, and the *rosh ha’kollel* was a great *gaon* who traced his lineage directly to the Vilna Gaon. This *rosh ha’kollel* asked me to arrange an audience for him with the Baba Sali. I entered the *tzaddik*’s room and told him that the *rosh ha’kollel* requested an audience with him. When the *rosh ha’kollel* entered, the *tzaddik* treated him with great respect, and asked that *mezonos* and whisky be brought in order to say *l’chaim*.’

“I don’t know how they ended up speaking about the Baal Shem Tov and the Gra,³ but in the midst of their conversation the *rosh ha’kollel* remarked dismissively: ‘The Baal Shem Tov cannot be compared at all to the Vilna Gaon when it comes to *nigleh*.’ Upon hearing these words, the Baba Sali became very upset and said, **‘Who are you to judge between these giants? I know who the Baal Shem Tov is! Now, get up and leave – I don’t want to see you by my side!’**

“When the *rosh ha’kollel* left the room, I, who had remained with them throughout the entire conversation, followed him out, deeply embarrassment at having caused the whole thing by arranging the meeting. I said to him, ‘How could you enter the lion’s den like that and speak in such a manner?’

“I was embarrassed to go back to the Baba Sali, and went instead to my uncle, Rabbi Avrohom, the rabbi of the entire area. While I was with Rabbi Avrohom, I was informed that the Baba Sali wanted to see me. I entered the *tzaddik*’s room, and he said to me, ‘What did you do to me?’

You brought me someone who speaks against the Baal Shem Tov!’ Then he added, **‘You will see – if tomorrow this *kollel* remains in Yavneh, I am not the Baba Sali.**’ I left the room and repeated the Baba Sali’s words to Rabbi Avrohom. Rabbi Avrohom began to cry, and he said, ‘What are we going to do without the *kollel*?’

“I replied, ‘The Baba Sali knows what he’s doing.’

“Neither the *tzaddik* nor I told anyone about what had transpired. Nevertheless, the very next morning, the council head of Yavneh contacted the *rosh ha’kollel*, and said, ‘I have been informed by the Interior Ministry, who has informed me that they are eliminating the funding for the *kollel*.’

“From that day on, the *kollel* was no longer in Yavneh!

“Not long after this episode, the *tzaddik* asked his son-in-law, Rabbi Avrohom, to pack up his things, and he moved to Ashkelon.

“This was the story I told the Rebbe during my private audience with him. The Rebbe listened intently, and when I was done, he spread his holy hands apart, and said passionately, ‘Indeed! How can you keep stories like this to yourself?!’”

SAVE THE MOROCCAN CHILDREN IN ISRAEL FROM DETRIMENTAL EDUCATION.

The *tzaddik*’s connection to the Rebbe was quite amazing. In a letter dated 26 Teives 5712 (January 24, 1952),⁴ the Rebbe wishes the Baba Sali well upon his arrival in Eretz Yisroel. Addressing the *tzaddik* as the “pillar of Torah, holy lamp, one of the ‘lofty ones,’ a large, golden crown from the head and beyond,” the Rebbe writes as follows:

“In honor of your ascent to our holy land, may it be rebuilt and established through our righteous Moshiach speedily in our time. May your arrival be blessed before G-d. ‘The steps of man are established by G-d.’ Since G-d has granted you the privilege of ascending to our holy land – may it be rebuilt and established – surely the Supernal providence has placed upon you a special mission [to fulfill] upon the holy land. That is, to breathe an invigorating spirit into our Sephardic brothers, and to be an influence on them in all matters pertaining to the strengthening of Torah and *mitzvos*, and especially, that they keep a careful eye on all their children – both sons and daughters – without exception, that they not fall into the wrong education networks, G-d forbid, but rather, receive an education of Torah and *mitzvos*, awe of G-d, and the tradition of our holy forefathers, in educational institutions that are conducted in a spirit of holiness. In the merit of your work to carry out this mission with self-sacrifice, may G-d grant you a long, good, and pleasant life, in the spirit of the verse, ‘they will still be fruitful in old age, vigorous and fresh,’ and may you succeed in your mighty work to make ‘the Torah great and glorious,’ and may you have abundant success in your personal spiritual and physical matters.”

KING AND LEADER OF OUR SEPHARDIC BROTHERS

A biography of the Baba Sali entitled *Sidna Baba Sali* relates that the Baba Sali began seeking the Rebbe’s advice as early as 5712, when he was considering leaving Eretz Yisroel, where he had moved to from Morocco only a year earlier:

“His entire purpose in ascending

3 HaGaon Rav Eliyahu, the Vilna Gaon.

4 Igros Kodesh, letter # 1, 370.



The Baba Sali with his son-in-law, Rabbi Yashar Edrei

to the Holy Land was in order to study Torah and serve G-d without disturbance. However, because of the poor spiritual conditions in the land of Israel at the time, he was considering leaving the holy for the mundane, and perhaps, moving to the United States... where one can devote oneself to the study of Torah and the worship of G-d without too much trouble. ... In a long letter, comprising teachings from the Talmud, *kabbala*, and *chassidus*, the Rebbe explains to the *tzaddik* that Heaven had appointed him to be ‘a comprehensive⁵ man and a leader of Israel,’ whom tens of thousands of Jews listen to and whom Heaven had given extraordinary abilities [to function in this capacity]. It would thus be appropriate, the Rebbe suggests, for him to remain in the land of Israel, where he would be in close proximity to our Sephardic brothers, who thirst for the word of G-d.”

Similarly, in a letter to the Baba

Sali dated 9 Nissan 5712 (April 4, 1952),⁶ the Rebbe writes:

“I was pleased to receive your original important letter, as well as your letter of Adar. Let me state here my opinion in response to your question...concerning the fact that you moved to the Holy Land in order to immerse yourself in the study of Torah and the worship of G-d, but are now considering moving to the United States.”

Parenthetically, Rabbi Benzion Grossman, who was a regular visitor at the Baba Sali’s home, told me that many years ago he heard from those who were close to the *tzaddik* an explanation of why the *tzaddik* wanted to move to the United States in 5712, when there were hardly any religious Jews there and, in particular, no organized Sephardic communities. They said in the Baba Sali’s name that his main reason for wanting to do this was in order to live in close proximity to the Rebbe, for he felt

spiritual guide.

6 Igros Kodesh, letter # 1,499

7 Klipos, or forces of impurity.

that this would greatly enhance his efforts to hasten the Messianic Redemption. This also explains why the Rebbe’s opinion about his moving to the U.S. was so important to him.

The Rebbe goes on to write him a long letter full of Kabbalistic teachings, and advises him to remain in the Holy Land, because he is a king, as in the Talmudic teaching, “Who are the kings? – the rabbis [are the kings]!” The Rebbe explains to the Baba Sali that he is “a comprehensive man and a leader of Israel, whom tens of thousands of Jews listen to... The honorable *Gaon* has been given the great and awesome merit of using the talents that G-d has graced you with and the royal treasures that have been passed on to you, generation by generation, from your holy ancestors, to lead the holy communities who follow you into war against the evil inclination, the husks⁷ and the Other Side,⁸ to fight the war of G-d, and to publicize G-dliness in all of your surroundings.”

In a letter dated 13 Nissan 5713 (March 29, 1953)⁹ the Rebbe tells the Baba Sali that he is happy to hear that the *tzaddik* does not harbor any resentment toward him for advising him (in the abovementioned letter) to “devote your powers to work for the public [welfare] rather than dwell in solitude. Indeed, it is written in *Rav Sherira Gaon’s Letter* that when Rav came to Bavel he did not establish his residence in a place of Torah, but rather, specifically in a place that was barren of Torah, where he dedicated himself to closing the breaches in Torah observance.”

8 Sitra Achra, the realm of evil and impurity.

9 Igros Kodesh, letter # 2,083.

5 “Ish klali” — i.e., one whose soul encompasses the souls of many others, and who serves as their

WARM RELATIONSHIP

On the 21st of Tammuz 5712 (July 14, 1952)¹⁰ the Rebbe wrote the following to the administrators of the Oholei Yosef Yitzchok educational network in Eretz Yisroel:

“I have been informed that the Rav Abuchatzaira issued a [supportive] letter about you. I’m surprised that you did not notify me about this before. Please send a copy of the letter.”

In a letter to the same educational network dated 9 Elul 5713 (August 30, 1952) the Rebbe writes:¹¹

“Surly you will remain in contact with the *rav* and *gaon*, the *rav* and *chassid*, etc., etc., our teacher the *rav* Rabbi Yisroel Abuchatzaira... The warm relationship will surely benefit both parties.”

Similarly, in a letter dated 9 Nissan 5712 (April 4, 1952)¹² the Rebbe writes to the *chassid* Rabbi Eliezer Karasik o.b.m., one of the esteemed elder Chabad *rabbanim* in Eretz Yisroel:

“Enclosed please find a copy of my letter to the *rav* and *tzaddik*, etc., our teacher the *rav* Rabbi Yisroel Abuchatzaira *shlita*. If it’s not too much trouble, I would request that you go with another two people to visit him at his home, **and tell him that at my request you are paying him an honorary visit.**”

The Baba Sali always supported all the Rebbe’s activities. When he went back to Morocco in 5714, and he saw what the Rebbe’s emissaries

had accomplished there in all the cities and towns, he sent the Rebbe an enthusiastic thank you letter.

The Baba Sali related that when he was in Morocco, the Rebbe used to send him the *s’farim* of the Lubavitcher Rebbeim, and he would send the Rebbe the *s’farim* of his grandfather Rabbi Yaakov Abuchatzaira *zatzal*.¹³

When he returned to Eretz Yisroel in 5724, he maintained a warm connection with the Rebbe and his emissaries. When the T’fillin Campaign was launched, he came out in support of it, together with Rabbis Ezra Etya *zatzal* and Rafael Baruch Tolidano *zatzal*. He also issued a call in support of the Shabbat Candles Campaign, in which girls over the age of three are encouraged to light Shabbat candles. When he was told that a certain rabbi came out in opposition to this campaign, he said, “*What is a wingless fly in comparison to the great eagle of the heavens?*”¹⁴

SUPPORTING THE REBBE’S ACTIVITIES

Fighting at the Rebbe’s side to correct the “Who is a Jew?” problem, the Baba Sali signed the proclamation issued by *g’dolei Yisroel* in support of the struggle against the Vienna conversions, and in support of inserting the words “*halachic* conversion” into the Law of Return.

On the 24th of Teives 5743 (January 19, 1982) the *tzaddik* sent a telegram to a gathering that was

being held at the initiation of, and in the presence of, the Gerrer Rebbe¹⁵ *zatzal*. The telegram stated as follows:

“I take the opportunity of this great, exalted, and holy occasion to join the holy cry of all those of wholesome faith of our people Israel, in all places, which calls for the deplorable law, the terrible decree of “Who is a Jew” to be rectified. Let this law in our Holy Land finally be rectified, and let only *halachic* conversions be recognized, with the term “*halacha*” included in the Law of Return.”

In 5741 (1980-81), the Baba Sali issued a letter of blessing to all those participating in the Rebbe’s “Letter in a Torah Scroll Campaign” by purchasing letters in the special Torah scrolls for children. In the *tzaddik*’s own words:

“We are all awaiting and anticipating the complete Redemption at the hand of our righteous Moshiach. Toward this end, we must band together and cause all the Jewish people to band together. The holy *Admur shlita* of Lubavitch has recently turned his attention to banding together all the Jewish children through the writing of a special Torah scroll for the Jewish children, who are the Army of Hashem. It is a great merit for each and every Jewish child to purchase a letter in this Torah scroll, and I send my personal blessing to every boy and girl who will be written into the Torah scroll of the Army of Hashem, and surely we will all merit the

10 Igros Kodesh, letter # 1,721.

11 Igros Kodesh, letter # 7,978.

12 Igros Kodesh, letter # 1,500.

13 Hebrew abbreviation for “of sainted memory.”

14 The Sages tell us that even the idle talk of *tzaddikim* contains instruction. Perhaps the Baba Sali was alluding to the following: It is

explained in the teachings of Kabbala and Chassidism that the right wing represent love for G-d, and the left wing awe of G-d. When an act is performed with love and awe of G-d, the wings elevate the act to “stand in the presence of G-d.” The larger the wings, the higher the act soars. A “wingless fly” thus symbolizes a

person who has no love and awe of G-d, and whose Mitzvahs, therefore, do not fly up to “stand in the presence of G-d.” On the other, the “great eagle of the heavens” symbolizes the *tzaddik* whose mitzvos soar above all others.

15 Rabbi Simcha Bunim Alter, the “Lev Simcha.”



immediate coming of the Messianic king, may he arrive and redeem us and lead us upright to our holy land.

“The servant of G-d who anticipates imminent redemption, Yisroel Abuchatziera.”

In the beginning of Menachem Av 5747 (July-August 1986) the Baba Sali issued a warning letter (together with Rabbi Yitzchok Kaduri) against those who had harmed the *chassidim* learning *Tanya* in Williamsburg.

“All of this [was done to them] because they disseminate the

teachings of *chassidus* and are attached to the Light of the Seven Days – i.e., the holy Baal Shem Tov may his merit protect us – in the analytical and in-depth manner of Chabad, which has its holy roots in the G-dly *tanna*, our teacher, the *Baal HaTanya V’HaShulchan Aruch*¹⁶ and his successors, **up to and including the miracle of our generation, the *gaon* and holiness of Israel, our holy master, the *Admur* of Lubavitch *shlita*.**”

I heard a number of stories about

the Baba Sali from his son-in-law the *gaon*, Rabbi Yashar Edrei:

1. “During the seven days of mourning for the passing of his son the *tzaddik*, Rebbe Meir *zatzal*, the Baba Sali received a letter of consolation from the Rebbe. Upon receiving it, he stood up and, weeping, he said, ‘**Who am I, and what am I, that the *Admur* of Lubavitch should think of me and send me a letter of consolation?**’”

2. “The Baba Sali was once brought a piece of honey cake that

16 Lit., “Master of the Tanya and the Code of Jewish Law.” *Tanya* is the seminal work of Chabad Chassidism, authored by Rabbi Schneur Zalman

of Liadi, the founder and first Rebbe of Chabad-Lubavitch. At the request of his mentor, Rabbi Dovber of Mezritch (the Baal Shem Tov’s

successor) Rabbi Schneur Zalman also authored his own code of Jewish law.

the Lubavitcher Rebbe had sent him. Upon receiving it, he rejoiced as though he had just found a treasure. He immediately called for me and the rest of the family, and with profound joy, he gave us each a piece of the cake, and told us that it was a great merit and a wondrous *segula* to eat from the cake that the Rebbe had sent.”

3. Once, a certain rabbi visiting the Baba Sali was looking at an album with pictures of the Rebbe, and he asked the *tzaddik* what he thought of the fact that Lubavitcher *chassidim* say the Rebbe is Moshiach. The Baba Sali smiled and, with a mixture of enthusiasm and awe, he said, “*Ishtahil kilshi*” (an Arabic expression meaning: everything is appropriate for him, he is deserving of all things).

4. Some young men who had spoken against *chassidism* once came to visit the *tzaddik*, but he refused them entry, saying, “Whoever opposes the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov pushes away Moshiach.”

* * *

The *gaon* and *tzaddik* Rabbi Yosef Deitch o.b.m., liked to tell the following story: “I once participated in one of the *tzaddik’s seudos*, and I repeated a Torah thought from the Lubavitcher Rebbe. When I mentioned the Rebbe’s name, the *tzaddik* lifted his hand and said, ‘His will be a gathering of nations’” (B’Reishis 49:10; this verse speaks of Moshiach).

* * *

The *chassid* Rabbi Moshe Deitch (Yosef Deitch’s son) tells the following story: “With the approach of Rosh HaShana 5740, I traveled to the Rebbe. Before leaving, I went to

see the Baba Sali in Netivot. He asked me to get him a blessing from the Rebbe for a particular matter. When I had my private audience with the Rebbe, I gave the Rebbe a slip of paper with the *tzaddik’s* request. The Rebbe said: ‘Rabbi Yisroel Abuchatzzeira?! He is a *BaalShemsker Yid!*’¹⁷ Then the Rebbe showered blessings upon him for the matter he had requested.

“A few weeks later, on Motzaei Simchas Torah, when I joined the thousands of *rabbanim*, *chassidim*, and good Jews receiving ‘*kos shel bracha*’ from the Rebbe, the Rebbe asked me: ‘How is Rav Abuchatzzeira? I heard a rumor that he came down with a severe cold on Erev Yom Kippur.’

“I said: ‘His *rebbeztin* told me over the phone that he feels better now.’

“The Rebbe then blessed him with a swift recovery and with long life in his capacity [as a great spiritual leader]. The Rebbe also gave me a small bottle of *mashkeh* to give the Baba Sali for a [swift] recovery. When I returned to Eretz Yisroel, I immediately went to the Baba Sali and gave him the bottle. The Baba Sali was overjoyed, and called for wine, fish, and meat to be brought immediately for a *seudas mitzva*. At the *seuda*, the *tzaddik* spoke with great awe about the Rebbe’s holiness.”

* * *

Rabbi Meir Abuchatzzeira of Brooklyn (who is very involved in bringing Jews back to their roots) related the following story: “In 5730 I had a private audience with the Rebbe. I asked the Rebbe for a blessing to move to Eretz Yisroel, and the Rebbe said, ‘No. Your place is

here.’

“Since this was my first private audience with the Rebbe, and I was not yet a *chassid*, I said, ‘But I don’t like it here in the U.S. Every day I pray that I should finally be able to go back to Eretz Yisroel.’

“Patiently, the Rebbe said, ‘How many years have you been praying for this? Ten years? *Nu!* I have been praying for this for seventy years already.’

“What’s interesting is that during the very same period my parents went in to the Baba Sali, and asked for a blessing that I should merit to come to Eretz Yisroel very soon. The Baba Sali answered with these words: ‘Meir needs to remain in America with the Lubavitcher Rebbe.’”

* * *

The *chassid* Rabbi Moshe Edrey (the brother of the Baba Sali’s son-in-law, Rabbi Yashar) relates the following:¹⁸ “I merited to be among those who were very close to the Baba Sali *zatzal*. There were times when I visited him twice a day... Once, on my way back from a live broadcast¹⁹ of the Rebbe’s *farbrengen*²⁰ (in a settlement called Brush, near Netivot), I made my usual stop at the *tzaddik’s* home. I entered his room and sat down on the bed opposite the *tzaddik*. The *tzaddik* had nodded off, and so, I waited quietly for him to open his eyes... When he saw me he asked, ‘What are you doing here?’

“I replied, ‘I came to say Tikkun Chatzos with the *tzaddik*.’

“The Baba Sali looked amused. He poured me a *l’chaim* and, as always, I reviewed for him some of

night in Israel.

²⁰ Chassidic inspirational gathering, at which the Rebbe delivers a talk or a series of talks on Torah issues.

¹⁷ Yiddish, “A Baal Shem Tov style Jew”: This is a Chassidic expression for a Jew who works miracles or otherwise transcends the natural order.

¹⁸ See Rosh B’nei Yisroel and HaTzaddik HaBaba Sali.

¹⁹ When the Rebbe held his *farbrengens* in New York, it was usually late at

the things the Rebbe said at the *farbrengen*.

“Afterwards, I asked him: **‘When will the Lubavitcher Rebbe *shlita* come to the Holy Land?’**

“The Baba Sali’s face grew serious, and with great feeling, he said: ‘Moshe Rabbeinu did not enter the land of Israel because he was like the face of the sun, whereas the land of Israel is [only] like the moon. If Moshe would have entered the Land, the Land would have become embarrassed. Therefore, only Yehoshua, who is like the face of the moon, entered the Land. In the future, however, when the light of the moon will equal the light of the sun, the land of Israel will become like the face of the sun. **That’s when Moshe Rabbeinu will enter the Land.** Enough said.’”²¹

* * *

The *chassid* Rabbi Yosef Ma’atuf relates the following story: “I once participated in a *rabbinic* feast that took place in the home of the Baba Sali. Each of the *rabbanim* present told a story of a *tzaddik*. One of the participants began telling a story about the Rebbe. At the mention of the Rebbe’s name, the Baba Sali immediately stood up on his feet in honor of the Rebbe (despite his weakness and frail health at the time).”

²¹ V’dai La’meivin.

* * *

I heard the following from Rabbi Chaviv Biton of Kfar Chabad: “In 5741, my wife Miriam and I traveled to the Rebbe to receive a blessing for children. Before leaving, we went to see the Baba Sali and request his blessing. When he heard that we were going to the Rebbe he asked me to give the Rebbe his personal regards. Then he said enthusiastically (in Arabic): **‘He is the greatest of us!’**”

* * *

The *gaon* and *tzaddik* Rabbi Yoram Abargyl of Netivot related the following: “Whenever the name of the *Admur* of Lubavitch would be mentioned in the presence of the Baba Sali, he would say: **‘He is the complete Israel. He is the perfection of everything. As for us, if we could only merit to learn at least one virtue from him.’**”

* * *

My friend Rabbi Yaakov Weintraub, head of Kollel Beis Yisroel (named after the Baba Sali) in Netivot, wrote me the following:

“Before traveling to see the Rebbe in 5741, I went in to the Baba Sali to receive his blessing for the trip. As soon as he heard that I was on my way to the Rebbe, he rose to his full height, grasped my hand in his two holy hands and said, ‘As soon as you

get there, give the Rebbe my regards **and tell him that I pray for him three times a day.**’

“When I got there, I gave over this message to the Rebbe’s secretary, and within a short while the Rebbe returned regards to the Baba Sali. When I went back to Eretz Yisroel, and I gave the *tzaddik* the Rebbe’s regards, his face radiated with joy and pleasure. On a later occasion, when we were sitting at *Melaveh Malka*, the *tzaddik* motioned for me to come closer to him, and he whispered in my ear: **‘Moshiach is near, near, near – very near.’**”

Upon the Baba Sali’s passing, the Rebbe sent his family a letter of condolence:

“The Abuchatzzeira family. I am very grieved upon hearing of the passing of the *rav* and *tzaddik*, the *vassik* and *chassid*, the G-d-fearing man, the nice one and pleasant one, the great one and son of great ones, crowned with virtues and lofty attributes, famous in Torah and awe [of Heaven], who sat in judgment, and whose net was spread, etc., our teacher the *rav*, Rabbi Yisroel Abuchatzzeira, peace unto him. May G-d comfort you among the other mourners of Zion and Yerushalayim. From here on, may only goodness and benevolence find you, always, all the days.”

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CHASSIDIC ARTIST

BY MENACHEM ZIEGELBOIM

*Chassidic artist, Zalman Kleinman, who is known for his moving pictures that depict chassidic life, was nearly lost to Yiddishkeit. * What follows is a profile of an artist, his difficult life, and his artistic work. * Based on the memoirs of his sister, Mrs. Rochel Zamir of Tel Aviv. * Part 2 of 2.*

(Continued from last week.)

After a long and exhausting trip, the three of them returned to Samarkand in Uzbekistan, to Itta's in-laws, Rabbi Nachum Shemaryahu and Malka Sossonkin. Although the trip was over, reacquainting the children with *Yiddishkeit* was quite a challenge. When their aunt, Itta, tried to convince Zalman to wear a *yarmulke* or to say a *bracha*, he adamantly refused on account of the anti-religious, communist education he had received for four years. Seeing the two arguing, Rabbi Sossonkin told his daughter-in-law, "Itta, you did what you had to do; you rescued the children from the *goyim*. Now, allow *me* to educate


them."

Rabbi Sossonkin took on the role of *mechanech* and said that the children had to get used to their new home before anything else; they were not to be pressured about religious matters. The adults needed to be patient and the children would eventually adapt. So when it came Yom Kippur and the entire family went to *daven*, Zalman stayed home alone. At night, when the fast was over, Rabbi Sossonkin asked Zalman if he enjoyed music, and said that there were people who did not *daven* but went to the *davening* in order to hear the *niggunim*. That was all he said.

Zalman distanced himself from anything associated with religion, until one day Rabbi Sossonkin told him, "Whether you want to believe in G-d and Torah or not, you should know what it's about." Zalman, who loved to read, accepted the challenge. He enrolled in the underground *talmud Torah* run by Rabbi Gurevitz, who was an excellent teacher and had a rapport with the children. Zalman relearned the Alef-Beis, how to read, stories from the Torah, and writing.

The *goyishe* teacher who had adopted Zalman, however, didn't give up on him. She continued to send Zalman letters telling how much she missed him and worried





about him. She also sent him books. Rabbi Sossonkin gave Zalman the books after checking their contents, and threw out the letters. He explained that he didn't want to cut Zalman off from his past all at once. Since Zalman wasn't given the letters, he didn't know his teacher's address in Leningrad, so he couldn't reply. Thus, the connection between them eventually petered out.

With Rabbi Sossonkin's wise and sensitive approach, Zalman developed an interest in *Yiddishkeit*. A few months later, he celebrated his *bar mitzva*. All of *Anash* in Samarkand participated. Zalman reviewed a *maamer chassidus*, which left his audience amazed by the child who, just a few months earlier, couldn't remember the Alef-Beis and didn't speak Yiddish.

In 5705 (1947), the Sossonkin family and the Kleinman children left Russia with the forged passports of Polish citizens. After staying in Lvov/Lemberg, they boarded the train that took them to Krakow in Poland. From there they went to Germany and then to the last transit camp in Paris where they stayed for two and a half years.

Zalman met the (future) Rebbe MH"m, son-in-law of the Rebbe Rayatz, and participated in one of his *farbrengens* (see picture).

After their protracted stay in France, the family was able to emigrate to Eretz Yisroel on a small boat. Many passengers were seasick, including Mrs. Sossonkin and her adopted granddaughter, Rochel.

"We traveled for a week on stormy seas," says Zalman's sister Rochel Zamir. "As the boat

approached the coast of Eretz Yisroel, it was nighttime and we could see the lights of Chaifa. The passengers began climbing up to the deck in great excitement. Each one, in his language, began uttering words of thanks and excitement.

Each person expressed his feelings in his own way. We crowded around our grandparents, and my grandfather emotionally said, 'This is Eretz Yisroel, the land of the Jewish people. Here, the policemen are Jews, the drivers are Jews, the signs are written in Hebrew...'

"We were ecstatic when the boat put down its anchor. We burst into song, some with pioneer songs, others with *chassidic niggunim*, but we shared the joy. We had come to our land."

After a period of acclimation, Zalman went to learn in the Yeshiva Tomchei Tmimim in Pardes, Lud. Their his natural talent for drawing burst forth. His friends say that they would often find him sitting among the trees of the orchard that surrounded the *yeshiva*, paintbrush in hand, involved in his work.

From Lud he moved to Kfar Chabad, where he devoted himself to art. He didn't have a place to live, but he tried to conceal this from others. He slept on a bench in the *shul*, ate skimpy meals at the kiosk of Mrs. Gittele Friedman, a^h, and stored his things in the attic of the kiosk. He worked a day or two a week at various jobs in the field or orchards,

and painted the rest of the time. He lived hand to mouth, but refused to accept help. His sister once offered to pay Gittele what her brother owed her, but she refused to take the money



Zalman answered him in a straightforward manner, "When you come, you see the official farbrengen. What you're seeing in this picture is the farbrengen that takes place after you leave."

saying, “Zalman told me explicitly that if I get money from someone, he will stop eating here.”

On one of his visits to the Sossonkins in Yerushalayim, the Rebbetzin wanted to give him pocket money, but Zalman refused to take it. So the Rebbetzin secretly put ten liros in his coat pocket. This was a nice sum at that time. She was happy, knowing that the money would help feed him. How disappointed she was a month later when she found the money under the velvet tablecloth.

When Rabbi Efraim Wolf, principal of the *yeshiva*, heard about how Zalman lived, he tried to help him. He said that Zalman could live at the *yeshiva* and paint and nobody would bother him. When Rabbi Sossonkin discussed this with Zalman, Zalman refused, saying, “Not only will I not be helping the *yeshiva*, but I’ll be living off the *yeshiva*!”

Zalman continued living this way until one morning, when Rabbi Elimelech Perman, z”l, a widower and one of the *ziknei Chabad*, noticed him. Rabbi Perman was an early riser, and when he got to *shul*, he saw Zalman sleeping there, as usual, on a bench, with his hand as a pillow and his coat as a blanket. He suggested that Zalman sleep on a folding bed in his apartment. At first, Zalman refused, but Rabbi Perman urged him, and Zalman finally agreed. Some time later, Zalman finally got his own room.

Everybody knew that Zalman painted. Mr. Zalman Shazar, head of the Jewish Agency, once came to visit Kfar Chabad. R’ Pinye Altheus, who had been appointed over the Kfar by the Rebbe, brought Mr. Shazar to Zalman’s room and showed him his paintings. He was very impressed, and on the spot, gave him a scholarship to study art. Zalman went to a number of art

MEMORIES OF HOME

RUSSIAN CHILDREN IMAGINING THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF GEULA OF ELIYAHU HANAVI

R’ Zalman’s sister, Rochel Zamir, recalls a memory of her parents:

Every Friday night, when my father, z”l, would *daven* at home and the Shabbos candles burned, my mother, z”l, played a game with us in which we imagined going to Eretz Yisroel. Her yearning and anticipation for our holy land were so strong that she successfully conveyed them to us. As we played, the shutters would be closed and the door locked in order to hide the candles and the *davening*, and in order to prevent us from going out and the neighbors’ children from coming in.

But the fire of love, the anticipation and yearning for Eretz Yisroel and her family could not be extinguished. She expressed it in our game, and gave us a love for Eretz Yisroel and the feeling of anticipation for Salvation.

We children looked forward to Friday nights because we loved the game. This is how it worked: each of us, my sister and brother, myself, and my mother had a bundle. In the bundle were pillows, etc. Each of us held his and her bundle as he/she walked the length of the room and sat down. My mother explained and announced; “Now we are on the train traveling from Leningrad to Odessa!”

We got off our chairs, walked the length of the room and sat down on the couch. My mother said, “Now we are on the boat sailing from Odessa on the Black Sea towards the Mediterranean Sea, and the ship will travel until Jaffa port.” We were so very happy. In our imagination, we would live out the events in our game. When we would arrive in Eretz Yisroel, my mother would describe the life there.

We were especially impressed by two details, that fruits are more plentiful than potatoes and that before Moshiach comes, Eliyahu HaNavi will announce the coming of Moshiach from Har HaKarmel.

schools and showed them his portfolio of paintings. They all told him that his work far surpassed the level of studies they offered.

On that occasion, Shazar saw a painting of a *chassidische farbrengen*, which was full of life and feeling. Shazar expressed his surprise over the fact that it depicted a *farbrengen* the likes of which he wasn’t familiar (Shazar regularly attended the Yud-Tes Kislev *farbrengen* in Kfar Chabad). Zalman answered him in a straightforward manner, “When you come, you see the official *farbrengen*. What you’re seeing in this picture is the *farbrengen* that takes place after you leave.”

In 5714 (1954), Zalman was drafted into the Israeli army, and throughout his thirty months of service, he didn’t eat from the army kitchen. The first months were extremely difficult for him. He didn’t eat in the mess hall and he had nothing else to eat, so he was constantly hungry. They suggested that he go to the mess hall and choose something appropriate to eat, but in his characteristic way he said, “Since I have a Lubavitcher beard, I don’t want to enter the mess hall and cause others to stumble. If they see me sitting there, they’ll think that all the food is *kosher l’mehadrin*.”



During his basic training, his talent for art became famous. The chief rabbi of the army, Rabbi Goren, z"l, transferred him to the military chaplaincy and gave him the job of decorating *shuls* in various army camps and illustrating the weekly *Machanayim*. Since he wasn't tied down to a particular base, he was paid and this solved his *kashrus* problem.

At the end of his army service, Zalman asked the Rebbe for permission to travel to the U.S. in order to study art. The Rebbe answered: If you want to study art, the place to go is Paris.

Zalman went to Paris and visited exhibits and museums. That is where he met his wife-to-be, Rosa Newhouse, who descended from a family of *rabbanim* and the *Ba'CH*. She is the only daughter in this chain. They married and then went to America.

Throughout the years, the Kleinman home was open to guests, especially to *baalei t'shuva*. Guests who came to the Rebbe and were seeking their way in *Yiddishkeit*, found the Kleinman home inviting and their many questions answered. Zalman



A *farbrengen* with the Rebbe MH" M (before he accepted the *nesius*) in Paris. The Rebbe is seated at the head of the table. R' Zalman is at the left (circled).



A self-portrait of Zalman Kleinman teaching his son the *sugya* of "an ox that gores a cow"

spent many hours in conversation with his guests, and many of them owe him a debt of gratitude for his help in their becoming *frum*.

Life for the Kleinman couple wasn't easy. Neither of them had parents and they had no support. At first, Zalman worked at odd jobs, but he didn't earn much. After their children were born, he began earning, with great difficulty, also from his illustrations of books. At some point, he started working for the *Algemeiner Journal* as artistic editor and caricaturist. He slowly gained recognition as an artist. Eventually his exhibits were displayed at the Brooklyn Museum, in Philadelphia, in Canada, etc.

But his main recognition came from the Jewish world, from *chassidim*. Zalman's drawings were an amazing depiction of Jewish and *chassidic* life.

When he gained recognition for his work, his financial situation improved but he continued his modest way of life as before. A large portion of the money he earned he gave to *tz'daka*, mostly as *mattan b'seiser* (anonymous giving).

Zalman was a man of integrity, modest and retiring. He was a good man, straight, refined, and possessed of intellectual wealth in all areas of life. He quietly painted and devoted his free time to Torah study. He never sought praise nor students. When parents came to him and asked him to teach their children art, he would say, "If the child is drawn to art, on his own, it's good to teach him. Otherwise, a child shouldn't be pressured, because it's very hard work that requires enormous soul powers."

Zalman's artwork expresses his *chassidic* feelings. His painting are full of Jewish and *chassidic* subjects such as *d'veikus* in *davening*, *farbrengens*, the Yom Kippur *davening*, Kiddush Levana, and

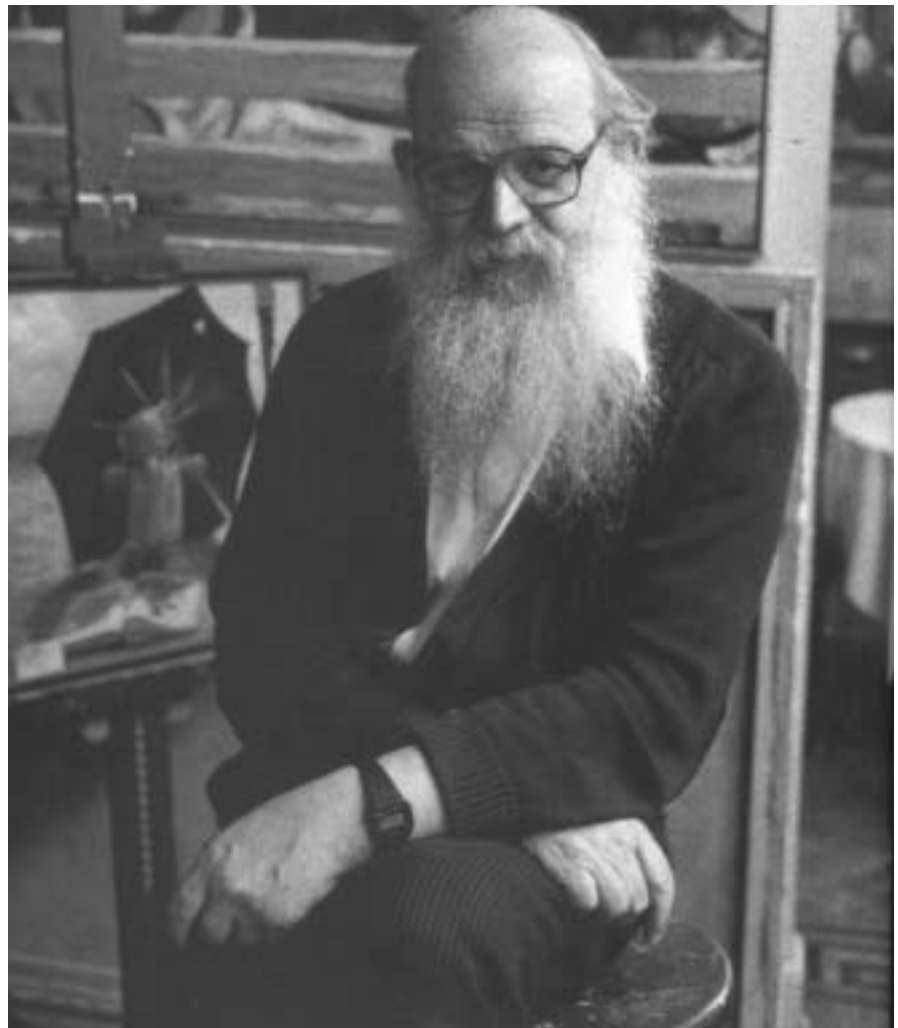
chassidic dancing. He also excelled in scenic paintings, portraits, and the illustration of books. R' Zalman also knew how to include themes of *simcha* and even *chassidic* humor in his art, like the famous depiction of the *chassidic kuleh* (a heels over head somersault in full *chassidic* regalia, including a hat), or the *meshuga*, as well as the drunk being carried home by his fellow *chassidim*.

R' Zalman was skilled in capturing a desired setting and was inspired by his environment. When he was in Kfar Chabad, his paintings reflected the *chassidic* life of the Kfar in those days, the old Arab houses, the huts, and the puddles and mud that filled the

Kfar. When he was in Crown Heights, he rendered houses American-style, the snow, and even American cars that were double-parked.

R' Zalman's art covers a wide array of themes, starting with his Bible scenes, such as Lot fleeing from burning S'dom, the Covenant Between the Pieces, the Splitting of the Sea of Reeds, Dovid HaMelech, Shimshon and Yiftach, up until the Maggid lecturing in the marketplace and the Holocaust. He also illustrated the Haggada.

His works of art make a deep impression on those who see them. They arouse a yearning for *Yiddishkeit* even within the hearts of



R' Zalman Kleinman



those who are still far from it.

The Rebbe sent him the following letter regarding the impact of his paintings (*Igros Kodesh* vol. 15, p. 395):

B”H, 9 Elul 5717

Brooklyn

The *avreich* Zalman *sh’yichyeh*

Sholom U’*bracha*

I just received an article from a newspaper entitled “Letter to the Diaspora” (in English from 8 Tammuz 5717) with drawings included that made an impression on me, specifically because they are drawn as is, without “tricks” – not even with artistic tricks. It would be fitting and even proper that you draw a complete album of Kfar Chabad like this, not only as it is now but also the way it was when you first came there, so that the album will show the development of the Kfar. There is also the additional benefit in portraying the Kfar as it is now, since the hope is for it to soon develop even more. If this series of pictures is successful, you should also think about producing them in a permanent way, whether as an album, or individual lithographs. The main thing is, as said before, that the pictures should portray the simplicity of realism, and you shouldn’t be fazed if someone says that a photograph would suit this purpose just as well and a picture isn’t needed. The difference is obvious between a photograph and a drawing by

an artist, even when the drawing is extremely realistic.

Obviously, if there are expenses associated with producing these drawings, they will be paid for from a special fund, including payment for your efforts, and I await your response with good news.

It’s unnecessary to add that I don’t mean just the houses and the like, but also and mainly drawings of life in the Kfar, from the most spiritual to the most physical.

You certainly have *shiurim* in *nigleh* and *chassidus*, in addition to the *shiurim* that are taught publicly which you participate in.

With blessings for a *k’siva va’chasima tova* and good news in the above-mentioned.

* * *

R’ Zalman passed away at a relatively young age, having endured much suffering in his short life. He is survived by *chassidic* children and grandchildren. His *chassidic* paintings live on, adorning thousands of homes, and depicting *chassidic* life with an intensity of emotion and fervor.

(Thanks to Mrs. Rochel Zamir, R’ Zalman’s sister, for this article is based on her memoirs in her book, *Shlichus Chayai*. Note: the drawings throughout this article are R’ Zalman’s, and they are only partial views of larger paintings.)

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FAITH & INTELLECT: FROM CONFLICT TO CONVERGENCE

BY PROF. SHIMON SILMAN
RYAL INSTITUTE ON MOSHIACH & THE SCIENCES, TOURO COLLEGE



“Especially on the day of the hilula, they should strengthen their faith in G-d and in Moshe, His servant, and in his extension, the Baal HaHilula...”

(Letter of Yud Shvat, 5715. Igros Kodesh, vol.10, p. 305)

There are two searches for truth: one from above and one from below. The former is the search of the man of faith, and the latter is the search of the man of intellect. By definition these two approaches are opposites, and historically the tension between them was the source of great conflict. Yet, the ultimate goal, which is attained in the Era of Moshiach, is the convergence and unification of these two searches.

In this paper we make some general observations about faith and intellect, the conflict between them and the ultimate union between them.

This issue is in fact one of the oldest in Jewish philosophy. It was addressed by Rav Saadia Gaon in his *Emunot V'Deot*, Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi in the *Kuzari*, and especially by Rambam in *Moreh Nevuchim*, which was addressed to those who had been

influenced by the philosophy of Aristotle. More recently, the Tzemach Tzedek, in his *Seifer HaChakira*, again addressed these issues, unifying the discussions of the earlier Jewish philosophers with the concepts of *kabbala* and *chassidus*.

The difference between the approach of the man of intellect and the man of faith can be seen most clearly from an analogy drawn by the Rebbe Rashab, contrasting Rambam with Aristotle. Both Rambam and Aristotle were philosophers, but there was a fundamental difference between them. Rambam first fixed a central point and then drew a circle around it. Aristotle first drew the circle and then groped to find the center. What does this mean? Rambam set the belief in G-d as the foundation, the central point of his philosophical investigations. Thus he was able to

successfully draw the circle of intellect around it. But Aristotle did the reverse. He started with the circle – human intellect. His subsequent attempt to identify the central point of origin did not succeed.

Corresponding to this fundamental difference between the *philosophy* of Rambam and Aristotle, we find that there is a fundamental difference between the *philosophers* themselves. The Tzemach Tzedek says that both Rambam and Aristotle worked on finding proofs of the existence of G-d. The difference between them was that whenever Aristotle would find a proof for the existence of G-d he would become more arrogant, because his newfound proof made him a greater philosopher. With Rambam it was the opposite. Every time he found a new proof for the existence of G-d he would become more humble. His new knowledge of G-d would inspire within him a deeper awe of G-d.

There is a sequel to the Aristotle story. The *Seider HaDoros*, a book on the chronology of the world, relates that Aristotle himself came in contact with Shimon HaTzaddik and was greatly influenced by him. The influence of “the Shimoni” (as

Aristotle called him) on Aristotle was so great that he said he was ready to revise his entire philosophical system to be based on what he learned from Shimon HaTzaddik. However, Aristotle felt that he was too old to start over.

LEVELS OF INTERACTION

Chassidus is the wisdom that brings unity to all knowledge and directs it to the Messianic knowledge of G-d. Thus, in *chassidus* we find faith and intellect discussed not as opposing forces, but as two complementary methods of attaining an awareness of G-d. In fact, the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach says that the barrier between faith and intellect was actually broken with the redemption of the Previous Rebbe on Yud-Beis Tammuz, 5687 (1927). The miracles of that redemption were of the type where the supernatural and the natural – the infinite and the finite – work together. So from then on there was no real barrier between faith and intellect.

Some of Melech HaMoshiach's discussions of this topic focus on Rambam's statements concerning faith and knowledge. Most prominently, Rambam begins his major work *Mishneh Torah* by saying that "The foundation of all foundations and the pillar of all wisdom is to *know* that there is a First Being," rather than by saying "...to *believe* that there is a First Being." Similarly, Rambam ends *Mishneh Torah* by discussing how the world will be filled with the *knowledge* of Hashem in the Era of Moshiach, without mentioning faith. To explain this, the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach identifies various levels in the relationship between faith and intellect.

Firstly, there is the basic faith which is a prerequisite to the observance of the *mitzvos*. To do a *mitzva*, which is a commandment, one must first believe that there is a Commander Who commanded the

mitzva. This is not just a matter of faith, however; the existence of G-d is a fact that is within the realm of knowledge.

This faith which precedes knowledge is analogous to the commitment to observe the *mitzvos* which must precede the actual observance of the *mitzvos* – the famous declaration of "Na'aseh V'Nishma" ("We commit ourselves to do it, then we will understand it") that the Jews made before receiving

We need faith not only to pick up where intellect leaves off, since we do not yet have an understanding of the higher concepts, but even in those areas where we already have knowledge and understanding, we still need to have faith.

the Torah.

Following this faith there is actually a commandment to know G-d. It is one of the 613 *mitzvos*. This is not just a general knowledge as in the first level, but involves detailed knowledge about G-d – all the information about G-d that the human intellect can comprehend. It is this knowledge that Rambam is describing at the beginning of *Mishneh Torah* when he says, "The foundation of all

foundations and the pillar of all wisdom is to know that there is a First Being and He brings all beings into existence. Everything that exists in the heavens and the earth, and whatever is included in them, exists only from the truth of His existence..." Rambam continues to elaborate on this throughout the first four chapters of the book.

Attaining knowledge of G-d, however, is a continuous process, and each individual can understand only so much according to his capacity at any given point in time. Here, faith plays a role once again: What I have been able to learn and comprehend about G-d until now I *know*. That which is beyond my grasp now, I *believe* in. Later, as I learn more, things for which I had to rely on faith will be understood intellectually and will become part of my knowledge. This is an ongoing process – an upward spiral – with an elegant interplay between faith and knowledge. Today's faith becomes tomorrow's knowledge. A new horizon is then opened up and I begin to grasp higher things with my *faith*. Later, this too will become knowledge. Faith and intellect are both faculties of the soul that are used in conjunction to attain truth.

At this level too there is an analog to observance of the *mitzvos*. After our initial commitment, we apply the full capacity of our intellect to understand the *mitzvos* as much as possible. This is the in depth study of the Torah, especially as it is developed in the Talmud and *chassidus*.

There is a third, more intimate connection between faith and knowledge in which faith applies to knowledge itself. Since human intellect is finite and G-d is infinite (in fact, G-d is even beyond the infinite), when one uses human intellect to try to understand G-d, he is applying a finite tool to something that is infinite (and beyond). Only

faith has the capacity to grasp the infinite. This contrast is expressed in the following famous entry in Melech HaMoshiach's first book, the *HaYom Yom*, which is a compilation of chassidic sayings:

"When Moshiach comes, we will see the advantage of faith and sincerity – that everyone believes in G-d, His Torah, and mitzvos with pure faith. Regarding learning – understanding – the greatest understanding has a limit. But faith is a feeling with no limit. Melech HaMoshiach will give us the ability to understand the advantage of sincerity – heartfelt earnest service of G-d." Faith is infinite but knowledge is finite.

Thus, when one attains an understanding of something about G-d, as it were, he must not deceive himself and think that he has seen the entire picture. This is expressed by a beautiful analogy in a *maamer* that Melech HaMoshiach wrote for his father's birthday, the 18th of Nissan. In the *maamer* the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach discusses the concept of a yard as it applies to the laws of Shabbos. There are two kinds of yards designed to contain animals. One is a yard that has a fence around it but no roof; the other is a yard that has both a fence around it and a roof on top. The difference between them is a very practical one. The yard with the fence around it alone is good enough to keep an animal in it, say a cow or a bull, but it is not good enough to contain a bird. The bird will fly out. To contain a bird the yard must have not only a fence but also a roof.

It may seem paradoxical that a bird, which is such a flimsy and weak animal, needs such a strong protection, while the bull, such a powerful animal, needs only four walls without a roof. In the *maamer* the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach explains that this has a parallel in the soul of a Jew. The animal corresponds to the animal soul, which is interested

only in physical pleasure, in what is down below. Therefore it needs to be watched and confined, but a regular confinement – a fence – is adequate. The bird, however, corresponds to the intellectual soul. The intellectual soul is the intermediary between the G-dly soul and the animal soul. Its function is to communicate and explain the concepts of G-dliness known to G-dly soul to the animal soul. The intellectual soul by its nature is not interested in the lower, animalistic things, but rather in high level intellect. This is simply the nature of

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human intellect: it always wants to know something higher, and when it attains that it wants to go higher again, like a bird that always strives to fly higher and higher.

Thus, the Rambam, whose towering intellect was universally recognized as transcending that of the scholars of his generation as well as generations before him, was known as "The Great Eagle." It was said of him, "From Moshe (Rabbeinu) to Moshe (the Rambam) there arose none like Moshe (the Rambam)."

Because of this tendency of the intellectual soul to go higher and higher, it needs to be watched very carefully, because when it starts to understand matters of G-dliness it will run into the error of thinking that what it understands is the whole story. It doesn't realize that it only understands a finite subset of the infinite knowledge of G-d. Therefore the intellectual soul needs a special confinement – a roof over it – to tell it, "You are only finite, and what you see is only a finite view of something that is infinite, so your knowledge is not a true and complete knowledge." As an example of this, recall the arrogance of Aristotle in his intellectual achievement as contrasted with the humility of Rambam, as we mentioned above.

Thus, Melech HaMoshiach explains in the *maamer* that even in those matters where we have a very clear understanding, it is not sufficient to rely on our intellect alone; we must have faith in those areas as well. The point of this third level is that we need faith not only to pick up where intellect leaves off, since we do not yet have an understanding of the higher concepts (as at the second level), but even in those areas where we already have knowledge and understanding, we still need to have faith.

And here the parallel to the observance of the *mitzvos* is that even those *mitzvos* which we can understand intellectually – such as not to kill, not to steal, etc. – must be observed primarily with an attitude of commitment to fulfill G-d's super-rational will rather than merely with the intention of doing what is rational. The *mitzvos*, which are the expressions of G-d's will, are infinite in scope. What we understand of them is only a finite view of something infinite. Even when the *mitzva* makes perfect sense to us, it's not the whole story.

THE ULTIMATE UNITY

Based on all this, our original question becomes stronger. How is it when Rambam talks about awareness of Hashem, he only mentions knowledge but he doesn't mention faith? It may be reasonable to omit mention of the faith that precedes the observance of the *mitzvos* (Level 1) in a book devoted to the laws of the observance of the *mitzvos*. But we have seen that faith goes hand in hand with knowledge at all levels. Shouldn't this faith be mentioned along with the knowledge of G-d?

The Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach answers this question. Faith transcends the definitions and limitations of the world. It is infinite, as we mentioned above. But this very advantage is also its disadvantage. The goal of the *mitzvos* is to affect the world as it exists and the Jew as he exists in this world. Intellect and knowledge are part of the definition and the nature of the world, so they are the objects of the *mitzva* of the awareness of G-d. Faith forever remains the crown upon intellect and continuously influences it.

In the Era of Moshiach, however, faith and intellect become one. In general, the Era of Moshiach is characterized by the paradoxical combinations of opposites, made possible by the revelation of Atzmus, the essence of Hashem, which is above and beyond all definition and description. Relative to Atzmus all opposites are equal. (Just as one would say that relative to a point in distant space, the top and the bottom of a tall building here on earth are equal.) In the Era of Moshiach the natural order and the miraculous order combine to become one world order. While this is logically

impossible, it comes about as a result of the revelation of Atzmus. The same thing happens with faith and intellect. All those concepts that are higher than intellect and which we now have to rely on faith for, will be understood within the definition and confines of human intellect.

The correct path for us to follow lies in combining faith and intellect, but faith must be the foundation. The father of Melech HaMoshiach, the great Kabbalist Rabbi Levi Yitzchok



Schneerson, discusses this issue in a letter he wrote to the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach and Rebbitzin Chaya Mushka. He says that the *Etz HaChaim* (Tree of Life) and *Etz HaDa'as* (Tree of Knowledge) refer to faith and intellect. Faith is life, as the Prophet Habakuk says, 'The *tzaddik* lives through his faith.' "If faith precedes the knowledge," Rabbi Levi Yitzchok writes, "then the knowledge is also life... These two trees must be joined together... This is what it says [in the

prophecy of Yeshayahu] about the Era of Moshiach – that 'faith will be the belt of his body.' Only at the end [of the prophecy] does it mention knowledge – 'The earth will be filled with the knowledge of Hashem.'"

The major issue in faith in our time is the faith in Moshiach, faith in the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach himself and his statements concerning the presence of the *Geula*. The correct path to follow is the same as in all matters of faith and understanding:

We must start with the foundation of faith in the *sichos* of Melech HaMoshiach in which he stated that we are in the Era of Moshiach and that the *Geula* is already here. All we have to do is open our eyes and see it. Based on this foundation we must develop a new intellectual outlook – a *Geula*-mentality – to look at and analyze the world differently. Based on the faith that everything that is happening in the world and in our personal lives is part of the unfolding of the *Geula*, we come to understand the world and ourselves differently.

Indeed, there are the major, obvious *Geula* events that the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach himself has already discussed, such as the revelation of Melech HaMoshiach, the Jews leaving

Russia peacefully to go to Eretz Yisroel, the "Swords Into Plowshares" transformation, etc. In this way we truly live a *Geula* life and our "knowledge is also life."

References:

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2) *Seifer HaMaamarim Meluket vol. 5*, pp. 233-234, 325

3) *Likkutei Levi Yitzchok, Igros Kodesh*, pp. 413-414

BIRTHDAY BRACHOS

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN BERGER

Time: Motzaei Shabbos Parshas VaYeitzei, 12 Kislev 5764. Place: The American Hospital in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

A somber group of doctors stood around the bed of Rabbi Abba Dovid Gurevitz, *shliach* and chief rabbi of Uzbekistan and Middle Asia, explaining to him that his condition was very serious since his intestines had gotten twisted. They told him that this generally occurred when one was sick with cancer. "Very few people at your age and in your condition make it," they told him straightforwardly.

R' Gurevitz was suffering terribly. He was getting morphine through his IV, but he was still in pain. His wife, Malka, reported the news to their daughter, Bracha Gansburg, in Eretz Yisroel. Her daughter begged her to do all in her power to fly her father to Eretz Yisroel or the U.S. as soon as possible. Medical know-how in Uzbekistan, like in many nations of the C.I.S., lags behind more modern countries and they wouldn't be able to treat R' Gurevitz properly.

It was suggested that philanthropist Lev Leviev's private plane be flown to Tashkent in order to fly R' Gurevitz to Eretz Yisroel, but the plane was in the U.S. and it would take too long for the plane to arrive in Uzbekistan.

They finally decided to fly R' Gurevitz out on a regular flight on Sunday night, to Eretz Yisroel.

He was taken on the plane on a stretcher, accompanied by his wife and a doctor who served as assistant director of the American

Hospital in Tashkent. R' Gurevitz was in terrible shape and was attached to numerous machines. He was on oxygen throughout the flight.

The plane landed at Ben Gurion hospital on Monday, and R' Gurevitz was taken by ambulance to a hospital in Tel HaShomer, where doctors were waiting for him. They had been informed by fax of his



Rabbi Abba Dovid Gurevitz

medical diagnosis and they knew his condition was very serious.

After thoroughly examining him, the doctors thought it might be an intestinal blockage and they decided to try various treatments in the hopes that the intestines would move back to their normal place.

R' Gurevitz's daughter arrived at the hospital and she said that on

Sunday morning she and her daughter, Chaya Mushka, had gotten *brachos* on his behalf. The day before, on 12 Kislev, they both celebrated their birthdays. When Chaya Mushka heard of her grandfather's illness, she had written to the Rebbe and asked for a *bracha* for her birthday and another *bracha* that her grandfather be well. She put the letter in a volume of *Igros Kodesh* (vol. 14, p. 289), and when she read what the Rebbe had written, she saw an answer to her request. The Rebbe said to give *tz'daka* and that this would hasten the *refua*:

May it be Hashem's will that he succeed, gradually progressing in the *mitzva* of *tz'daka*, going from strength to strength – *tz'daka* in the literal sense, materially... And as it's explained in *Igeres HaKodesh* in a number of places this will hasten the *refua* of ____ *shlita*, an actual *refua* below ten handbreadths...With blessings for good news in all the abovementioned.

Meanwhile, the daughter, Mrs. Gansburg, was beside herself, especially since the doctors in Uzbekistan had referred to the dreaded illness. She also wrote to the Rebbe and asked for a *bracha*, and she also received an amazing answer. In the beginning of the letter, the Rebbe writes that someone who supports good *mosdos* becomes a partner with Hashem:

I was concerned upon reading your letter about your being dissatisfied and feeling down, which greatly amazed me, because when you are charitable and

support proper *mosdos* of Hashem and the like, you become a partner with Hashem, and what could bring more joy than connecting to Hashem?

She understood that the letter related to her worrying and her father's downheartedness over his serious condition. The Rebbe was telling them not to be depressed for they were partners with Hashem in His *mosdos*, and her father was the *shliach* and the director of *mosdos*, as well as a teacher in the Chabad school.

The Rebbe went on to write an explanation about health:

My father-in-law, the Rebbe, once said that the sign that a person is healthy is that he doesn't feel his limbs. When he begins feeling his head or heart, it's a sign that something is amiss... Obviously, one needs to be careful and listen to doctors' instructions, but he mustn't become preoccupied by it. He must, rather, be confident that Hashem Who runs the vast world will certainly take care of your world, the world of Man, for the good. He will ensure that everything is fine with regard to



Rabbi Gurevitz recounting the miracle at a Yud-Tes Kislev *farbrengen* in Kfar Chabad

health. What is demanded of man is that he "cleaves to G-d, your G-d," i.e., Torah and *mitzvos*. You must focus on health and dispel worries. May you merit great success not only in spiritual matters but also in material things, like business, etc.

I hope to hear good news from you and that you placed your health worries on the Master of the world, and that you take upon yourself worries for Torah and *mitzvos* for yourself and your surroundings.

The Rebbe had instructed him to stop worrying about health, and to fulfill his *shlichus* of worrying about the Torah and *mitzvos* of himself

and those around him!

The letter concludes:

I bless you with proper and good health, materially and spiritually. I await good news. (vol. 5 p. 165)

The Rebbe's answers encouraged the entire family, especially R' Gurevitz. "After an explicit answer like that, I realized a miracle would occur," he told *Beis Moshiach*.

In the meantime, the doctors continued working on him. They made two attempts to move his intestines but were unsuccessful. Professor Rosen came to R' Gurevitz's aid. He had been in constant contact by phone with the doctors at Tel HaShomer, and he urged them to fix the problem without operating. Even after the two failed attempts, when the doctors were pessimistic, he encouraged them to try again.

These were critical hours. R' Gurevitz was growing more and more pale. His daughter kept reminding him of the Rebbe's *brachos* and wished him a *refua shleima*.

Finally, the third attempt was successful and the intestines moved back into place. Monday afternoon, the doctors said they were pleased with what they saw, but they told R' Gurevitz to remain in the hospital another day for observation.

The original guess about cancer was mistaken. The problem was only a severe intestinal blockage.

At the *farbrengen* in 770 in Kfar Chabad on Motzaei Shabbos Yud-Tes Kislev, R' Gurevitz told his story and celebrated his recovery with the Rebbe's *brachos*. A week after landing in Eretz Yisroel in terrible shape, he flew back to his *shlichus* in Tashkent in order to prepare his city for Chanuka and to greet Moshiach.



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יחי אדונו פורנו ורבינו
פלך הפשיח לעולם ועד

CHASED OUT OF EXILE?!

BY SHAI GEFEN

(Thursday, January 29, 2004, within minutes of the prisoner exchange – 400+ Arabs for one Jew and the bodies of 3 Jews – a suicide bomber blew himself up on a bus meters away from Sharon's home in Rechavia, Yerushalayim, killing ten and injuring dozens, 10 critically. The Rebbe said capitulating to our enemies leads to our deaths, r"l.)

INVESTIGATIONS AND WITHDRAWALS

We've been noticing an interesting correlation between the politics of our prime minister and the criminal investigations that accompany them. They think that if they take a step forward towards the Left and agree to concessions on strategic areas, this is what will save them from the clutches of the prosecution. That's what happened with Netanyahu. He thought that if he moves towards the Left, and goes to Wye and makes the Chevron Accords, he'd stay in power with recognition plus a seal of approval from the Left.

That's precisely what Sharon is thinking – that only a policy of unilateral withdrawal and fleeing will save him from indictment and investigations. Senior journalists report Sharon's willingness to begin taking "serious" steps, as they put it, thus preventing the Leftist investigators from interfering with his politics.

Incredibly, it's working out just the opposite way. The government leaders haven't learned from what happened to their predecessors: the more they were willing to concede,

the tighter the investigative noose around them became.

Sharon's playing with the lives of his citizens because of investigations and personal indictments is simply criminal. It should be a red light to us all. We all know that the prime minister is preoccupied with saving his skin, which is why he is galloping down the political slope from which there is no return. But maybe he'll change his mind when he figures out that all those investigations that landed on his head are linked to the concessions he makes, and the games he plays with our land and our people.

How did it happen that someone who was a close friend and advisor publicized tapes of personal conversations with him? It's unprecedented. How much longer will the prime minister ignore the fact that there's Somebody running the show? Does the prime minister not understand that a person who decided to gamble with the security of millions of Jews will ultimately be forced to leave his position in ignominy? That's what happened to Menachem Begin, Yitzchok Shamir, Rabin, Peres, Netanyahu, and Barak, as well as Defense Ministers Yitzchok Mordechai and Puad Ben Eliezer. Has he still not learned the lesson?!

If Ariel Sharon thinks that destroying another outpost will gain him prestige and that is how he'll manage to avoid or mitigate the trouble he's in, he's seriously mistaken.

Sharon got the world's approval to eradicate Palestinian terror. The

Jewish people, depressed by the Oslo Accords, were ready for the consequences – the main thing being to eradicate terror. Instead, Sharon adopted a policy of restraint and told us stories about how restraint is strength. With incrediblechutzpa, he announced, two years ago, that he was ready to give them a state. Since then, we've been inundated with blood and bodies blown to bits, while he and his sons engage in corruption.

Exactly twelve years ago, on Yud Shvat, when there was a government in which Sharon served as a senior minister, the Rebbe warned P.M. Shamir that if he continues with talks about giving up land, he won't succeed. Sharon would do well to heed this warning that was conveyed through Moshe Katzav:

"As to my opinion, you must see to it that Shamir immediately cancels the decision and talks about autonomy. I constantly fought for a government led by Shamir. Just as I did all I could to see to it that the government should be led by Shamir, if they continue this way about talks like these, then I, Menachem Mendel, will be the first to fight, with all my strength and powers, against Shamir, so that the government falls apart!"

if they continue this way about talks like these, then I, Menachem Mendel, will be the first to fight, with all my strength and powers...so that the government falls apart!

"Until now, only Shimon Peres was against Shamir's government, but if Shamir continues in this



direction about autonomy talks, then I too will be against the Shamir government. If Shamir can't take the pressure of the nations of the world, then he should openly announce that he cannot face the pressure, and can no longer be prime minister!"

PROTEST!

The Israeli government, under orders from P.M. Sharon and the defense minister, had a *shul* in Tapuach destroyed. The Tapuach outpost had been approved by Israeli governments in the past, but as part of the plan to show the *goyim* that we are carrying out the plan to destroy outposts, they chose to destroy a *shul* and beat Jews.

Sharon's plan of destruction got under way, but we didn't see anybody on the Right who had promised us that the minute they destroy the first outpost they'll leave the government do anything. Shame on them!

The shocking thing is that this same defense minister, who is directly responsible for the transfer of Jews, was received **the next day with great honor at the national Kinus HaShluchim**. There's a lot more here than "because they were silent, they must agree." It wasn't only silence here, but an invitation!

In order that nobody should say, G-d forbid, that bringing him (and Netanyahu and Lieberman) to this special occasion expressed any kind of approval for what he did, **we hereby loudly proclaim our protest against the terrible things Mofaz did, which endangers the lives of millions of Jews**. As the Rebbe said, we need to protest and cry out against actions that endanger the Jews of Eretz Yisroel.

BLOOD MONEY

"They make light into darkness and darkness into light." This perfectly fits our situation today.

Two weeks ago, Yossi Ginosar, one of the Oslo architects, died. A man, who in the midst of the terrible war, which is sucking our blood daily, made deals with the murderer Arafat, knowing that the money was going to finance terrorist acts against his fellow Jews. Until his last day, he made sure to present himself as a peacemaker, and to convey the image of one who has done his utmost on behalf of the State. This was done in collusion with the Israeli media. If that was not enough, even though they had incriminating documents on him, the Legal Advisor decided to close the file against him.

It's hard to believe what kind of nation we are, when a person acted openly against his people, collaborated with the enemy, our murderers, and made money on the mangled and burnt bodies on buses that were blown up, and he was praised for his work on behalf of his nation! In a normal country, a quarter of the things Ginosar did would put him on trial for treason, but in Israel he's made into a hero.

We can learn from the Ginosar debacle what is really going on behind the scenes with our "peace activists." They're not thinking of what's good for us. What interests them is \$\$\$, as was the case with the Geneva characters who made nice money from the E.U.

HISTORY HAS SHOWN WE CANNOT MAKE CONCESSIONS!

On Shabbos Parshas Bo 5740, exactly twenty years ago, the Rebbe said an amazing *sicha* about giving away land, a *sicha* that is most appropriate nowadays. What follows are some excerpts from that *sicha*:

From this we understand the opposite how absolutely out of the question it is to act in a conciliatory fashion to the goy, to concede and

*It seems surprising:
Why should Pharaoh
have to chase the
Jewish people out of
Egypt when the Jews
were in exile in Egypt
and did slave labor?
Certainly they wanted
to leave the Egyptian
exile!*

return various things to him. Including those things upon which depends – in the natural order of things – the security of the Jewish people, as they have been doing lately. They returned strategic land to Egypt, oil fields, etc., matters connected with actual danger to life, and in the end they delude themselves by thinking this expresses Jewish pride, *r"l*!

Unfortunately, the Jewish people have been tested under all circumstances, and this experience ought to give them knowledge as to how to behave in any future *tzara* (may it not happen). In fact, during the Middle Ages – "a *tzara* shouldn't

happen again” – two approaches were tried, the approach of capitulation and concessions to *goyim* in exchange for promises, and the approach of standing strong with Jewish pride.

There were dozens of incidents in a number of places in which the nations of the world turned to the Jews and merrily promised them that no evil would befall them, not one hair of their head would be hurt, and this on condition that they give up their weapons. This was, ostensibly, in order to demonstrate that they don't have any negative intentions and to express their full faith in the promises and guarantees that the nations of the world were giving them.

Practically speaking, in those instances where they gave in and gave up their weapons, relying on promises, not only were the promises not kept at all, by giving in they lost all the weapons with which – in the natural order of things – to protect themselves.

In those cases where they stood strong with Jewish pride, even when it didn't end with victory, there were a number who managed to be saved. And in general, standing strong was “revenge on the *goyim*,” not because Jews are eager for revenge against the *goyim*, but in order that it help Jews who are somewhere else. For when they see that we stand strong and bear weapons, it scares them from then on.

As was said, these two approaches were tried in the past, and not only once, but many times, and in all instances the results were as I said. After this bitter experience they continue to pursue the approach of capitulation and concessions, and as was said, they returned oil fields and strategic areas to Egypt, and this was in exchange for promises. We now see what these promises are worth!

Why aren't they willing to learn from past experience? Why do they continue with the same approach that has already proven how much danger it entails. And this is even after they've seen that this approach has caused hundreds of deaths (may Hashem avenge their blood), and even one Jewish soul is an entire world!

Why aren't they willing to learn from past experience? Why do they continue with the same approach that has already proven how much danger it entails. And this is even after they've seen that this approach has caused hundreds of deaths (may Hashem avenge their blood), and even one Jewish soul is an entire world!

For the sake of stubbornness of not admitting to past mistakes – namely, the approach of capitulation and concessions – must we endanger the lives of the Jewish people? We don't find behavior like this among the “corrupt of the nations”! Even the nations themselves are shocked to see Jews behave this way! They never considered this possibility, that they'd give Egypt the most vital things for their security! And that they'd do it amidst celebrations and wishes of *mazal tov*. ...

There's a lesson about this from the story of the going out of Egypt: regarding the exodus from Egypt it says, “for with a strong hand he will send them out and with a strong hand he'll chase them from his land.” It seems surprising: Why should Pharaoh have to chase the Jewish people out of Egypt when the Jews were in exile in Egypt and did slave labor? Certainly they wanted to leave the Egyptian exile!

But there were Jews who were sunk deep in *galus* and *goyishkeit*, until they thought that *galus* is good. That's why Pharaoh had to chase them out of the *galus* of Egypt.

So too with us: There are Jews whose feelings of inferiority towards

the *goyim* and *goyishkeit* are such that they cannot free themselves of the feelings of humility and lowliness before the *goy*! They even think that this is good and that it expresses their Jewish pride, *r"l*.

In holiness, there is the concept of “transforming darkness to light and bitterness to sweetness.” That is, not only something that was light and sweet to begin with, but greater still – that the darkness itself is transformed into light, and the bitterness itself is transformed into sweetness.

Since this is the case, the “other side” maintains that it should also be given something like that, so that there will be free choice. Thus, not only is there a situation of darkness and bitterness, but more than that – “they make darkness into light and bitterness into sweetness,” they call a situation of darkness light, and they call the most bitter thing sweet! They consider *Galus* something good!

We shouldn't go on at length about something painful and shocking, especially when in the end certainly, “He will pour over them a spirit from Above,” and they will repent.

May we soon merit true transformation, the transformation of darkness into light and bitterness into sweetness, simply put – the negation of all undesirable things and their transformation into holiness. Then we will merit *shleimus ha'Am*, along with *shleimus ha'Torah* and *shleimus ha'Aretz*.

And simply that very soon we will all go out of *Galus*. And together we will come to our holy land, “a land which ... always the eyes of Hashem, your G-d, are upon it, from the beginning of the year until the end of the year,” to Yerushalayim the holy city and the third *Beis HaMikdash*, soon in our days, *mamash*.

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A REMARKABLE CHASSID: RABBI SHMUEL DOVID BELINOW, O.B.M.

ARRANGED BY DANIEL GOLDBERG

The date of 14 Shvat marks the first *yahrtzeit* of a distinguished remnant of the previous generation of *chassidim*. Rabbi Shmuel Dovid Belinow was an outstanding example of a devout *chassid*, noted for his high level of *yiras Shamayim* and Torah knowledge, who served Hashem with sincere devotion.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Born in Klimovitch, White Russia, on 18 Kislev, 5670 (1909), he was a descendant of Rabbi Mordechai Posner, one of the Alter Rebbe's three brothers. Years later, in 1972, he was privileged to be received in *yechidus*, private audience, with our Rebbe MH"M, who noted: "*Mir zainen doch mishpocha*" – "We are, after all, related!"

Rabbi Mordechai, a prodigious *gaon* in his own right, served as Rav of Orsha and helped prepare the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch for publication. His son, Rabbi Moshe Dovber, was the father of Rabbi Boruch Tzodok, whose son-in-law, the first Rabbi Shmuel Dovid, was a *chassid* of the Tzemach Tzedek and a great Torah scholar. One example of his scholarship: every night before his sleep, he used to review by heart 18 chapters of Mishnayos (completing the entire Mishna monthly). This Rabbi Shmuel Dovid's son, Rabbi Avrohom Osher, was an outstanding *chassid* of exalted spiritual level, known for his great humility.

Rabbi Avrohom Osher named his own son Shmuel Dovid after his

father. In 5685 (1925), his son accompanied him for Shabbos Parshas VaYechi on a visit to the Rebbe Rayatz, in Leningrad. The Rebbe, when he entered his *shul* to recite a *maamer* to the assembled



chassidim, asked where Rabbi Avrohom Osher was. The Rebbe was told that he had gone to immerse himself in the *mikva* (as *chassidim* do, especially before coming into the Rebbe's presence). Aware of Rabbi Avrohom Osher's limp, which made it take him longer to get there, the Rebbe waited until he arrived before starting the *maamer*!

Years later, when his son, Rabbi Shmuel Dovid was in *yechidus*, the Rebbe MH"M mentioned this story and asked what was the *maamer's* opening words. In view of Rabbi Avrohom Osher's renowned humility,

the *maamer* had started, appropriately, with the saying of our Sages: "Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said, 'Come and see how great are the humble-spirited [considered] before G-d'!"

EDUCATION IN THE UNDERGROUND YESHIVOS

Shmuel Dovid received his early Torah education from his father in Klimovitch. When he was 13, he went to study in the underground Lubavitcher Yeshiva Tomchei T'mimim. In these *yeshivos* he studied for eleven years, from the beginning of 5684 until the end of 5694 (1923-1934), most of the time in Nevel. There he studied under the renowned *rosh yeshiva*, Rabbi Yehuda Eber, and learned *chassidus* from well-known *mashpiim* such as Rabbi Yechezkel ("Chatcha") Feigin, and later, Rabbi Nissan Nemanow. For a while, the elderly *chassid*, Rabbi Meir Simcha Chein of Nevel, taught his class *chassidus*. Later he studied in the senior Beis HaMidrash L'Rabbonim (Rabbinical Academy) in Nevel, headed by Rabbi Shmuel Levitin.

Before the Rebbe Rayatz left the Soviet Union in 5688 (1927), Shmuel Dovid was privileged to have *yechidus* with him three times. During his years in Nevel, both faculty and students were sometimes forced to flee to escape arrest. They started new underground *yeshivos* in their new locations, until forced to flee again. In 5688-5689 (1927-1929), Shmuel Dovid was sent with other students to start an

underground Yeshiva in Yekatrinoslav (Dnipropetrovsk), where the Rebbe MH”M’s father, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneerson, served as *rav*. His companions there included Rabbi Mendel Futerfas and Rabbi Nochum Labkowski, who both later became prominent *chassidim*.

At one point Shmuel Dovid studied the profound series of *maamerim* known as “Samech-Vav” (begun by the Rebbe Rashab in the year 5666) under the renowned *chassid*, Rabbi Elchonon Dov Marozov, with whom he became very close. Later he recalled how, when teaching certain points in the text, Reb Chonya became so moved that he suddenly burst into tears.

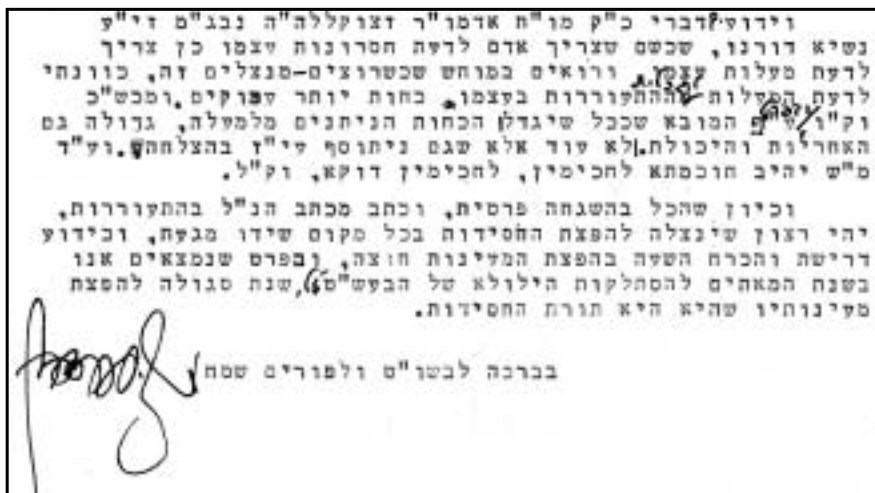
REFUGE IN SAMARKAND

In 5695 (1935), Rabbi Shmuel Dovid married Rebbetzin Chava (may she be well). Her father, Rabbi Yerachmiel Goldshmid, son of Rabbi Yisroel Dov, was a recognized Rabbinic authority, Rabbi of Vinograd, near Uman. His father-in-law was the well-known *gaon*, Rabbi Mordechai Barmashenko, “Reb Mottel the Dayan” (Rabbinic judge) of Zinigarodka, near Kiev. Her family were devoted *chassidim* of the Tchernobiler and Rachmastrivker Rebbes.

Soon after the wedding, the young couple settled in his home town of Klimovitch. They moved to Moscow before World War II, and later they evacuated to Samarkand, where a large community of Lubavitcher *chassidim* and other

Torah-observant refugees had settled. In that difficult time of famine and epidemic, Rabbi Shmuel Dovid was known for his compassionate hospitality, not hesitating to bring home even guests with contagious diseases. During those years, he used to organize weekly Melaveh Malka gatherings every Motzaei Shabbos, at which Rabbi Yehuda Chitrik used to recount *chassidic* stories, and Rabbi Shmuel Dovid would conclude with a melody that came to be known by his name, “Shmuel Dovid’s niggun.”

MESIRAS NEFESH FOR SHABBOS



After the war, in 1946, most Lubavitcher *chassidim* streamed to Lemberg (Lvov), where a possibility existed to leave the USSR using Polish passports. At the time, noted Rabbis ruled that since it was so dangerous for Torah-observant Jews to remain in the USSR, if an opportunity presented itself to leave the country, it was permitted to travel even on Shabbos. Nevertheless, when a group of *chassidim* succeeded in arranging tickets on a train leaving on Shabbos, Rabbi Shmuel Dovid refused to transgress the Shabbos. Immediately after Shabbos, he found

a taxi to go to the station where, miraculously, for reasons unknown, the train was still standing – as if it were waiting for him!

In 1947, the family settled in Paris. At first Rabbi Shmuel Dovid taught at the Lubavitcher Yeshiva there. That spring, he had the privilege of meeting our Rebbe MH”M, who came to Paris (before the start of his leadership) to greet his mother, Rebbetzin Chana, after she escaped from the USSR together with the hundreds of other *chassidim*. During the Rebbe’s stay there, while making arrangements to bring his mother to New York, he met and held *farbrengens* for the

recently arrived *chassidim*, and Rabbi Shmuel Dovid can be seen prominently in the pictures of those special events.

EXPERT SHOCHET

In 5711 (1951), Rabbi Shmuel Dovid learned the craft of *sh’chita* (ritual slaughtering).

His certificate of authorization (K’sav Kabbala), signed by the distinguished Rabbinic authorities, Rabbi Mendel Dubravsky, Rabbi Nochum Shmaryahu Sossonkin (“Batumer”), and Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dworkin, noted that Rabbi Shmuel Dovid was erudite in “T’vuos Shor,” the standard compendium on the laws of , “in its every letter, in depth and in breadth” – a rare compliment!

He became known for his expertise in sharpening the slaughtering knife – the basic precondition for valid *sh’chita* – and, like *chassidim* of previous

generations, prepared daily for *sh'chita* as a sacred pursuit. Such was his expertise and reputation for strict care in the laws of *sh'chita* and the subsequent checking of the carcass, that many prominent *chassidim* were particular to eat meat only from his *sh'chita*. He continued at this profession until he retired in 5744 (1984)

TORAH, PRAYER AND CHARITY

Rabbi Shmuel Dovid was a profound Torah scholar, who studied every subject fundamentally and in depth. He used to study slowly, saying the words aloud, even when studying alone; to someone outside it sounded as if he was giving a lesson. His daily study schedule included Gemara, Mishnayos (continuing the family tradition of his grandfather, after whom he was named), Halacha, and *chassidus*, and he was unusually expert in *Tanya*, *Torah Or* and *Likkutei Torah*. His main study time was very early in the morning. Indeed, his longtime neighbor, Rabbi Sholom Mendel Kalmanson, joked (at the Shiva) that he has never “forgiven” Rabbi Shmuel Dovid for awakening him so early every morning with his loud Torah study during the 30 years that they were neighbors!

His prayers, too, whether on Shabbos and weekdays, morning, afternoon or evening, were a delight to behold. He enunciated the words aloud, slowly and carefully as if counting jewels, concentrating on their meaning, accompanied by a Chabad melody, utterly withdrawn from everything around him. Rabbi Shmuel Dovid was also an outstanding *baal koreh*, who read the Torah publicly with meticulous accuracy, which was particularly pleasant to hear. He resided in the Paris suburb of Aubervilliers, investing great effort to maintain the Lubavitcher *shul* there, and ensuring

that there be a regular *minyan*.

Rabbi Shmuel Dovid was extraordinarily charitable, giving large sums unobtrusively. Regular fundraisers once visited his home while he was out, and his wife asked how much her husband usually gave. The large sum they named amazed her, but she knew them as reliable, so she gave what they asked – having learned yet another special virtue of her remarkable husband.

DEDICATED TO THE TRUTH

He had an amazing memory and was a treasure trove of *chassidic* stories. He used to narrate them with great precision, for he was expert in *chassidic* history, including the history of his own family. For many years, at Melaveh Malka gatherings in Paris on Motzaei Shabbos, together with the renowned *chassid* Rabbi Yisroel Noach Belinitsky, Rabbi Shmuel Dovid used to recount *chassidic* stories, which were recognized as being highly reliable.

Rabbi Shmuel Dovid's dedication to the truth was unwavering. It was the guiding principle of his life. Fearing no one, he always stood ready for self-sacrifice for every detail of *chassidic* custom and Halachic practice, refusing to compromise one iota of the *chassidic* lifestyle that characterized his life.

FINAL YEARS

During his last years, Rabbi Shmuel Dovid suffered from serious medical problems and was often hospitalized. He accepted his sufferings lovingly, and never complained. His devoted wife ministered faithfully to his needs. In 5759 (1999), they moved to Crown Heights, New York, to be close to their daughters. Despite his worsening health, he was a source of inspiration and encouragement to his children and grandchildren, who spent much time taking care of him.

Even in his final days in hospital, his devotion to the Rebbe was so strong that, despite his serious sickness, he became very excited when tapes of the Rebbe's Sichos were played for him.

Shortly before his passing, the doctors had to perform a medical procedure that might necessitate removing part of his beard. The family consulted with Rabbanim, who ruled that it was permitted in such a case. Eventually, however, his lifetime of *yiras Shamayim* stood him in good stead, and his doctors found a way to perform the procedure without removing his beard.

During his last moments, his family were able to put *t'fillin* on him and said with him Shma and “*Yechi*.” After eight years of suffering, he returned his soul to his Creator on 14 Shvat, 5763.

LOVING FAMILY

He is survived by his wife, Rebbetzin Chava, and three generations of *chassidim*, many of whom are *shluchim*, *rabbanim* and Torah educators. His older son, Rabbi Mordechai, is the Segan Av Beis Din of the Vaad Rabbanei Lubavitch of France, and his younger son, Rabbi Yitzchok, is a prominent Rav in Milan, Italy. His daughters are Baila Bronstein, a dedicated educator at Bais Chaya Mushka, Chana Marozov, who is very active in the Mitzva campaigns of the Rebbe MH”M, and Fruma Belinow, a dedicated educator at the Lubavitcher Yeshiva of Crown Heights.

Rabbi Shmuel Dovid Belinow's passing leaves a void in his family and the *chassidic* world. May he be an ardent advocate for his honored wife and family and the entire Jewish people, and may his memory be an inspiration to the younger generation striving to emulate his shining example.

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SOON: A PEACE MISSION FOR THE SHEVA MITZVOS B'NEI NOACH

Matteh Sheva Mitzvos B'nei Noach, which is directed by Rabbi Boaz Kali, is busy preparing a peace mission to spread awareness of the Sheva Mitzvos. There will be a caravan of vehicles, decorated with colorful signs explaining the Sheva Mitzvos, which will go to Arab villages around the country. The plan is for them to stop for ceremonies, which will include *chassidic* singers who will sing in Arabic! At the end of each ceremony, local council leaders and distinguished Arabs will sign on a pronouncement promoting the fulfillment of the Sheva Mitzvos.

Rabbi Kali said that in recent weeks that the Matteh had the head of the council in Shafraam and the head of the Druze sect, sign a special proclamation about the Sheva Mitzvos. This is the same proclamation that the council leader

in Abu Gush signed two months ago. This is all by way of preparing for the big event that is coming up shortly.

"I am sure that when their council leaders and dignitaries see these signatures, they will agree to add their own," says Rabbi Kali.

The recent signing in Shafraam was done at the home of Mr. Yassin Ursan, the mayor. Dozens of people gathered in front of his house, among them those with senior positions, and numerous dignitaries, who greeted the *rabbanim* with great respect.

R' Kali spoke about the



Sheik Mufak Tarif, head of the Druze sect in Eretz Yisroel, signs on the Sheva Mitzvos proclamation



Mayor of Shafraam with the special proclamation



Sheik Khamal Tarif, one of the Druze leaders, signs on the special proclamation

Sheva Mitzvos, whose goal is to foster peace and justice in the world. The mayor said that he was already trying to work on promoting justice and peace. He said, "The ancient synagogue in Shafraam was renovated by us, and we've appointed a special guard for it. We also renovated the grave of Rabbi Yehuda ben Bava which is within the municipality of Shafraam."

The mayor asked the *rabbanim* to bless him that he succeed in his job, as he was recently elected to his position. R' Kali told him that

he can write to the Rebbe MH" M and ask for his *bracha*. The council leader did so, in the name of the residents of Shafram. Then he signed the proclamation for the Sheva Mitzvos. He invited R' Kali to come and lecture at the schools and youth sports centers about the Sheva Mitzvos.

Another ceremony was held on 20 Teives in the home of Sheik Mufak Tarif, head of the Druze sect. His signature on the Sheva Mitzvos was thanks to Dr. Chavi Ashkenazi who has many contacts within the Arab sector in connection with her work for the government. She was recently asked to get involved in

“The peace mission will explain how we can live together in peace through the fulfillment of the Sheva Mitzvos.”

helping the Matteh Sheva Mitzvos in explaining the Sheva Mitzvos to local Arab leaders and dignitaries.

The modest ceremony in the Sheik's home was attended by Rabbi Kali, Dr. Ashkenazi, and Mr. Shlomo Chasun, who served as

translator. Sheik Khamal Tarif and a prominent businessman from Kfar Jolles, were also present.

After R' Kali explained about the Sheva Mitzvos, the Sheik Mufak Tarif suggested that they have a large ceremony for all the Druze leaders to sign on the proclamation. R' Kali told him about the peace mission that he's working on. “The peace mission will explain how we can live together in peace through the fulfillment of the Sheva Mitzvos.” The sheiks signed the proclamation and R' Kali gave them a beautiful picture of the Rebbe with the Sheva Mitzvos written in Arabic.

MEMORIAL FOR THE ELUL COUPLE

A tragedy took place a month ago in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn when an electrical fire broke out in the home of the Eluls. The young couple suffered from smoke inhalation and were taken to the hospital.

A week and a half after the fire, Mrs. Rochel Elul passed away. A week later, her husband Eliyahu passed away. Their six-month-old baby miraculously survived unharmed.

Mrs. Elul *a" h* was the daughter of Rabbi Michoel Nimni, *rav* of the Ner Menachem Chaim V'Chesed shul in Crown Heights. He and his sons are known for their work in being *mekarev* Jews to Torah and *chassidus*.

A Shloshim gathering was held in Crown Heights with 250 people in attendance on Tuesday evening, 14 Teives at the Ner Menachem shul on Empire Boulevard. Attendees included the Skolye



Rabbi Shweil speaking at the memorial gathering.

Rebbe and the Deizher Rebbe, Rabbi Boruch Chori – Tunisian senior rabbi, Rabbi Yeshaya, the son and representative of the Admur from Zidichov-Williamsburg.

The first speaker was Rabbi Shaul Katzin, *rav* of the Shaarei Tziyon congregation, and chief rabbi of the Sephardic community in New York. Then a family friend, Rabbi Dovid Eloz made a siyum on the entire Mishnayos.

Rabbi Eliyahu Ben-Chaim, *av beis din* in Queens, eulogized the couple. He called for a strengthening of the *mitzva* of family purity, which the Elul couple had encouraged others to keep.

Rabbi Mordechai Gurary, *rav* of the Chevras Shas shul in Crown Heights spoke next. He quoted the Alter Rebbe on the *pasuk*, “You know the secrets of the world.” There are secrets that are revealed to tzaddikim, and there are secrets

that are revealed to Hashem alone. "The reason that something so terrible happened to us, is known only to Hashem."

Rabbi Michoel Nimni, father of Mrs. Elul spoke very emotionally about his chavrusa with his son-in-law a"h. Rabbi Refael Nussbaum,

principal of Ohel Dovid in Flatbush, the school where Mrs. Elul taught for some time, spoke about her great devotion to her students.

Rabbi Yaakov Nimni spoke about his brother-in-law who was particularly careful about the

kedushas beis ha'knesses, and how the couple always contributed towards good causes. Rabbi Amram Klein, son and representative of gaon Rabbi Menasheh Klein, av beis din of Ungvar and rosh yeshivas Beis She'arim, spoke about tznius.

Member of the Crown Heights beis din of Crown Heights, Rabbi Aharon Yaakov Schwei, told stories and explanations from the Rebbe about consoling the bereaved.

The final speaker was Rabbi Rachamim Nimni, brother of Mrs. Elul. He spoke of his sister's *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe and how she and her husband said the daily *shiur* in T'hilim and would often visit 770.

Good resolutions were made and may we be zocheh to the greatest consolation of all with the hisgalus of the Rebbe MH"M.

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