

# CONTENTS



The international weekly heralding the coming of Mashiach  
**BEIS MOSHIACH**

## **4 | CONSTANT ASCENT**

D'var Malchus / Sichos in English

## **8 | SIGNING THE P'SAK DIN ON MOSHIACH (CONT.)**

Moshiach / Shlomo Rokeach

## **14 | FOR KLAL YISROEL**

Chaf-Hei Adar

## **20 | THE GAON RABBI YEHOSHUA MENACHEM MENDEL AHRONBERG**

Feature / Rabbi Shalom Dover Wolpo

## **22 | REACHING OUT IN BROOKLYN**

Shlichus / Nosson Avrohom

## **30 | MY ROLE IS TO HEAL AND BLESS**

Miracle Story / Shneur Zalman Berger

## **34 | LESSONS FROM THE SHOW-TRIAL AT THE HAGUE**

Shleimus HaAretz / Shai Gefen

## **37 | REMINDING PRESIDENT KATZAV**

News

## **41 | RABBI MEIR LIEBER KELLER, A"H**

Obituary

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# CONSTANT ASCENT

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



## SHABBOS PARSHAS KI SISSA, PARSHAS PARA; 20<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF ADAR, 5750

1. This week, we read two Torah portions from two different Torah scrolls: Parshas Ki Sisa, in keeping with the ongoing pattern of weekly Torah portions and Parshas Para, the third of the four special Torah portions read beginning from the Shabbos on which the month of Adar is blessed.

Each of these two readings has an important lesson of its own. Their relationship to each other can be described with the expression, “the continuous offerings according to their order and the additional offerings according to their rules.” Thus, Ki Sisa, as one of the Torah portions read in the order of weekly portions, takes precedence as evident from the halachic rule, “When there is a conflict between something which is constant and something which is not constant, the entity which is constant takes precedence.” The reading of Para, however, is also significant. Indeed, the expression “additional

offerings,” implies that it adds a dimension that is not contributed by the regular order.

Although these two readings represent different concepts, the fact that they are read on a single Shabbos and follow in continuation, one after the other, indicates that they share a connection. To explain:

Parshas Para, which describes the offering of the Red Heifer (the para aduma), begins, “This is the decree of the Torah.” This indicates that its significance extends beyond the laws of the Red Heifer and relates to the Torah in its entirety. It reveals two tendencies, ratzo (a yearning to cling to G-d) and shuv (the willingness to return to this world to carry out G-d's will) which are fundamental thrusts in Torah and mitzvos. The burning of the Red Heifer refers to the service of ratzo and the use of “living water in a vessel” refers to the service of shuv.

The burning of the heifer with fire represents the thrust of ascending upward, ratzo. Fire, were it not held below by the wick, would ascend to

its source in the spiritual realms. Water, on the other hand, naturally descends from above to below.[141] The purification process of the Red Heifer is accomplished by joining both qualities.

Similarly, the fusion of these two qualities, ratzo, elevating of the world from its material state and bringing it close to G-d,[142] and shuv, drawing holiness and G-dliness into the world through Torah and mitzvos, represent the “decree of the Torah,” the general thrust of the Torah as a whole.

The union of these two tendencies is also reflected within a Jew. “The candle of G-d is the soul of man.” Our souls have a natural tendency to surge upward to cling to their source in G-dliness. In contrast, our bodies come from the element of dust, and therefore, are characterized by the tendency to descend.

Similarly, we bring about a twofold change in the world, causing it to be referred to as eretz and reflect the quality of ratzo, desiring (ratzta) to fulfill the will of its Creator.

141. Furthermore, when found on a flat surface, water remains in its place, reflecting the quality of tranquility. In contrast, fire is characterized by activity

and a constant upward thrust.  
142. This is reflected in the service of bringing sacrifices which were

consumed by the fire of the altar. In our own personal lives this alludes to the service of prayer in which a person offers himself as a sacrifice to G-d.

Simultaneously, we draw down holiness within the context of this world. These two thrusts bring out a complete unity between the world and G-d, a unity that is only possible through the influence of G-d's essence which unites opposites.

Ratzo and shuv are fundamental thrusts in Torah, not merely because of the unity they can bring about within the world, but because these two tendencies reflect positive qualities which must be emulated in our service of G-d.[143] A Jew must possess the quality of ratzo. He must not be content with remaining at his present level, but must always seek to advance further.[144] He must always be "running to fulfill a mitzvah." Even though he has reached a high level, he must always seek to attain higher peaks.

In contrast, ratzo alone is insufficient and it is necessary to internalize all the new levels reached, making sure that they become part of his nature. This is reflected in an approach of tranquility and settledness (shuv). It does not, however, imply complacency. Rather, the internalization of one level produces the desire to reach higher peaks. After reaching those new peaks, one must work to internalize them, which, in turn produces a desire to reach even higher peaks.

These two thrusts of ratzo and shuv are expressed in the study of Torah (as emphasized by the expression, "This is the decree of the

Torah"). Indeed, the existence of these thrusts within Torah is the source for their existence on all other planes. These two thrusts are revealed in the process of pilpul, the give and take of Torah debate. One begins by questioning, searching for a deeper insight. The resolution of the question allows the idea to be internalized. This, in turn, provokes a deeper and more revealing question.

*The pattern of "one mitzvah draws another after it," reflects that there is a constant process of ascent through the movements of ratzo and shuv in the fulfillment of mitzvos.*

There is an approach to Torah study which searches for halachic decisions directly without questions and answers. This approach, reflected in the Jerusalem Talmud, has many advantages. Nevertheless, the approach of give and take, of questioning and searching for

answers, struggling to penetrate to the depths of the matter, brings out a clearer and broader understanding. This approach is revealed in the Babylonian Talmud and, therefore, when there is a difference in opinion between the two, the halacha follows the Babylonian Talmud.

Based on the above, we can understand why the Babylonian Talmud was composed "approximately 100 years after the Jerusalem Talmud." In study, one must proceed step by step, accomplishing the easier objectives before undertaking the more difficult ones. Therefore, at first, the Talmud was presented in a direct, clearly outlined approach (the Jerusalem Talmud), and afterwards, through the process of the give and take of questions and answers.[145]

The ratzo and shuv in Torah produces a series of other similar movements in other spheres of behavior. Firstly, in regard to the fulfillment of mitzvos: The positive and negative commandments are themselves reflections of the thrusts of ratzo and shuv. More particularly, the pattern of "one mitzvah draws another after it," reflects that there is a constant process of ascent through the movements of ratzo and shuv in the fulfillment of mitzvos. Fulfilling one mitzvah leads him to seek the fulfillment of other mitzvos (ratzo). At the same time, the higher levels he reaches become internalized and settled within his personality (shuv).[146]

143. This reflects the service of the angels who are described by the prophet Yechezkel (chapter 1) as moving according to these two thrusts. Similarly, these two movements are reflected in our heartbeats, which involve the contraction and expansion of the heart muscles.

144. This reflects one of the basic tendencies of life, movement.

145. Similarly, we see this pattern reflected in the Talmud's instructions regarding

the order of study, "First, acquire knowledge. Afterwards, penetrate to the reasons for the laws."

Significantly, in the present age, it is customary to teach students from the Babylonian Talmud (where the process of Talmudic give and take is expressed) at a young age, even before they have been taught many Mishnayos (which reflects the approach of straightforward Torah law). Since the expression of the qualities of ratzo and shuv brings a person to the highest levels of

understanding, as we approach the Messianic age, we have been granted the revelation of this concept together with that of many other principles which are, "tastes," reflections in microcosm, of the Messianic revelations.

146. There is another dimension in mitzvos which reflects these two thrusts. A person fulfills mitzvos out of a desire to cling to G-dliness (ratzo). Yet through his fulfillment of mitzvos, he draws G-dliness down within the world (shuv).

Below the level of mitzvos, even when a Jew is involved in the day to day routines of mundane reality, he has a desire to relate to G-d (ratzo) and fulfills that desire by carrying out "all his deeds for the sake of Heaven," and "knowing G-d in all your ways" (shuv).

Furthermore, even when a Jew is sunk in the material affairs of the world and does not live "for the sake of Heaven," the service of para aduma generates the power for him to ascend, in a manner of ratzo and shuv, from his present state. This is alluded to by the fact that the para aduma purified people who contracted impurity from contact with a human corpse, the most serious level of impurity.

As a reflection of the depths this purification process reaches, the rites connected with the para aduma were performed outside the Sanctuary. Nevertheless, the priest had to be "facing the Tent of Meeting," opposite the Beis HaMikdash. This alludes to the service of t'shuva. This is reflected in ratzo, a tremendous desire to cling to G-d, the power of that desire intensified by the fact that previously, one had been separated from Him, and shuv, an expression of that desire in an increased commitment to the service of Torah and mitzvos.

The intensity of one's desire to cling to G-d is reflected in the burning of the Red Heifer. Indeed, we see a difference between the service of the Red Heifer and all the other sacrifices. In regard to all the other sacrifices, a portion of the animal, its hide and in certain cases, parts of its meat, remained after it was offered on the altar.[147] In contrast, the Red Heifer was burnt completely, totally

consumed by fire, "its hide, its flesh, its, blood, and its excrement." All that was left was ashes.[148]

This refers to an all-encompassing fire of desire for G-d, one which consumes every aspect of the person's being, negating entirely the unproductive desires of the animal soul. All that remains is "ash," i.e., the basic power of desire. That desire then becomes directed to holiness as our sages commented on the verse, "And you shall love the L-rd, your G-d, with all your heart," "with both your desires."

Similarly, this approach requires an emphasis on shuv, on internalizing all one's achievements in a complete manner. Our Sages say that a person should say, "From my perspective, there is no difference whether I eat kosher or treif, I eat kosher only because G-d commanded me to do so." Chassidic thought explains, however, that this refers only to a tzaddik. A baal t'shuva must feel that there is no way that he could possibly transgress G-d's will. Similarly, the service of the para aduma involves internalizing one's commitment in an absolute manner.

Parshas Para gives a Jew the potential to carry out the services of ratzo and shuv on all levels. This means that he should not remain on his previous level, but must seek to ascend upward (ratzo). Nevertheless, these efforts should not cause him to break his previous nature. Instead, they must become internalized and settled within his personality (shuv).

Each individual's service of ratzo and shuv differs according to the particular thrust of his individual

personality. There is, however, a common denominator to all of these efforts. A person must go beyond his nature. A person whose nature involves a settled approach to Torah, prayer, and mitzvos, must feel a desire to reach a much higher level (ratzo). Similarly, he must desire to reach out to another Jew and help him proceed further in Torah and mitzvos.

Similarly, a person who is constantly striving to ascend higher must also realize the need to change his nature and understand the importance of internalizing his spiritual achievements (shuv). This must also be reflected in one's service of refining and elevating the material elements of one's environment. Charging another person with this responsibility is not enough. Since each person has his own portion of the world, everyone has the responsibility of elevating his individual portion.

These two services of ratzo and shuv must always follow one another, thus, place a person on a continuous pattern of growth and development.

2. The above concepts also share a connection with this week's Torah reading, Parshas Ki Sisa. The literal translation of the opening verse of the portion is, "When you elevate the heads of the children of Israel." This refers to the service of ratzo for it implies that even the head, which is by nature higher than all the other limbs of the human body,[149] must be uplifted and seek to reach a higher rung.[150]

This reading also places an emphasis on the approach of shuv, as evident from the verse, "a person shall

147. Accordingly, the other sacrifices atone only for accidental sins. In contrast, the Red Heifer atones for even the lowest levels of behavior.

148. Furthermore, the halacha relates how strenuous efforts were taken to reduce every element of the Red Heifer, even

its bones, to ash.

149. This indeed is one of the differences between the structure of the bodies of humans and animals. In an animal body, the head is on the same level as the other limbs including even the tail.

150. This is accomplished through an

increase in Torah study, and in particular, through the approach of pilpul as explained above.

151. This complete state of unity is alluded to in the word in Hebrew meaning, "he shall give," which has the same meaning whether it is read from right

give atonement for his soul,” indicating that this process of development will effect the totality of the person's being and establish complete unity with G-d.[151] This is also drawn down into the world at large as indicated by the fact that the half-shekel was used for the sockets for the Sanctuary, i.e., the foundation of G-d's dwelling within the world.

This service has an effect, not only on “the heads of the children of Israel,” but even on those on the lowest levels. Thus, our Sages related that through the giving of the half-shekel, atonement was made for the sin of the Golden Calf.

Based on the above, we can appreciate the pattern of the readings, Zachor, Para, and HaChodesh. The remembrance of Amalek on Shabbos Zachor (and subsequently, Amalek's obliteration on Purim) nullify the coldness which a Jew might feel in the service of G-d.[152] Shabbos Para describes the kindling of a huge fire which will encompass every aspect of a person's being. These levels are afterwards drawn down into this world through the service of shuv.

This service prepares a person for Parshas HaChodesh, a renewal of his being, and a “month of redemption,” as our Sages declared, “In Nissan, our ancestors were redeemed, and in Nissan, we will be redeemed in the future.”

A similar pattern can be seen in the Torah portions, Ki Sisa and VaYakhel-P'kudei (which are combined this year). Ki Sisa reflects the services of ratzo and shuv by the

entire Jewish people, both “the heads of the children of Israel” and those who require “atonement for their souls.” After this level has been reached, we read Parshas VaYakhel which emphasizes the necessity of Jewish unity, joining each and every member of our people into a single collective entity.

This portion, however, is read together with Parshas P'kudei,

***Charging another person with this responsibility is not enough. Since each person has his own portion of the world, everyone has the responsibility of elevating his individual portion.***

indicating that joining together with others will not minimize one's individual importance. Each person is counted individually and thus, attains the level of a d'var sh'b'minyan (“an entity which is counted”). Our Sages declared, “A d'var sh'b'minyan can never be nullified.”

Both Parshas Para and Parshas Ki Sisa are unique, and are read once a

year.[153] This implies that they have the power to teach a lesson that is applicable throughout the entire year. Surely, this applies to these lessons which describe the services of ratzo and shuv which, as explained above, are relevant to the totality of our service of Torah and mitzvos.

This is particularly true at present when every individual knows his limitations and does not need extensive meditation to discover the areas in which he needs to advance in the manner of ratzo and shuv. In particular, these efforts must be expressed in a matter of present concern, providing every individual with his needs for the Pesach holiday. For this purpose, each person should give generously, beyond the limits of a tenth or a fifth of his income.[154] Furthermore, these gifts should be given in a manner of ratzo, i.e., one should search after the person collecting tz'daka and give him the money without waiting for him to ask for it.

May these efforts of ratzo, hurrying to complete all the service dependent upon us, cause Moshiach to hurry, and come in the immediate future. We have already completed all the service dependent upon us, including the service of “the soldiers of the House of David,” who must nullify the influence of “those who disgraced the footsteps of Your Moshiach.”[155] We have already “polished the buttons” and have nothing more to do than wait for Moshiach.[156] Then, “G-d will be blessed forever. Amen and Amen,” i.e., G-dly light will be drawn down into the world.

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to left or from left to right.

152. See the sichos of Shabbos Zachor which elaborate on this concept.

153. Though the first portion of Parshas Ki Sisa is also read as Parshas Sh'kalim and Parshas Para is also read during the weekly reading of Parshas Chukas, the intent is that these portions are read

only once a year in the form that they are read today.

154. Although our Sages explain that a person should not give away more than a fifth of his income to tz'daka, in Igeres HaKodesh, the Alter Rebbe explains that, in the present era, one should not limit one's gifts to that

figure. Surely, this applies today, after several generations have passed after the Alter Rebbe made that statement.

155. [Trans. note:] This and the subsequent verse quoted are from Psalm 89.

156. Then, we will bring the tenth para aduma.

# SIGNING THE P'SAK DIN ON MOSHIACH

BY SHLOMO ROKEACH  
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY, TZFAS

*On Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim, 5752, the Rebbe MH"M spoke about the signing by rabbanim and other religious authorities of the p'sak din about the revelation of Melech HaMoshiach. Since then, HaRav Yitzchak Lipsh, Lubavitch Youth Organization Director of Tzfas, has visited the homes of Admurim, rabbanim, roshei yeshivos, and kollelim, and leading Torah giants throughout the world to encourage them to sign this historic p'sak din, which today bears nearly three hundred signatures. In a special interview with Beis Moshiach, Rabbi Lipsh provides revealing information about his meetings with the world's leading Torah figures and their reactions to this momentous effort... \* Part 2 of 2*

*(Continued from last week.)*

It sounds as if you received immediate positive results from every rav that you visited?

Things haven't quite worked out that way. I have met with many rabbanim, and I have been privileged to receive responses across the ideological spectrum. Some agreed to sign immediately, some signed only after a lengthy debate, others didn't sign at all.

So, in effect, the work did not always bear fruit?

In my opinion, this is not a correct assessment. First of all, there were many rabbanim that agreed to sign, but not on an official p'sak din, rather in other forms. For example, one rav told me that he wants to sign together with the entire House of Israel on a general form of acceptance of the Rebbe's sovereignty. There were rabbanim that asked us to leave the p'sak with them so they could sign it privately, without publicity. Some of them even explained why they are afraid to have their signatures publicized. There was a well known rebbe who signed but did not agree to have his signature appear publicly on the p'sak. There were also several rabbanim from Williamsburg who signed, but asked for the page to be left with them. Naturally, these signatures bear considerable importance even without their

publicity, since the main point of the campaign is the spiritual influence that comes from such a rabbinical decision.

The campaign results in three levels of effect. First, the signatures cause the Heavenly Court to accept the p'sak din. Secondly, there is the essential fact that every rav that adds his signature to the p'sak din adds special vitality and enthusiasm to the subject of Moshiach. Third, great importance is attributed to every new signature, not just by people in general, but by other rabbanim, as well.

For example, one of the rabbanim whose signature appears on the p'sak din is HaRav Shaul Katzin, a prominent rabbi among the Syrian Jewish community in the United States. This rav visited the Rebbe together with HaRav Mordechai Eliyahu, and was well aware of the work of the Rebbe MH"M. Thus, there was no need for lengthy debate with him. In the merit of his influence, many other rabbanim also signed.

I remember when I visited with another rabbi in the Syrian Jewish community. When he saw that Rabbi

Katzin had signed the p'sak din, this immediately changed his outlook. An hour later, he also signed...

I can tell you that even among the rabbanim themselves, there is revealed benefit. I know about a number of rabbanim who were most hesitant about whether to sign the p'sak or not. Yet, once they did sign, there received prestigious appointments shortly thereafter.

It is important to note here that even if the rav does not sign, our visit with him carries great importance. We all know that the subject of the Rebbe's sovereignty as



Melech HaMoshiach is a central issue, not just in Chabad circles. Many people come to their admurim and rabbanim with questions on this issue – and they want answers.

Many of these rabbanim have a strong connection with Lubavitch and the Rebbe. However, they are most unfamiliar with this issue. After our visit with them, they know much more. They learn the halachic sources, including the Rebbe's sichos on the subject, and this changes their entire approach to the matter. Even if they are reluctant to sign the p'sak for their own personal reasons, the fact that they have warmed up to the issue is very significant. They express their opinion in internal forums – private conversations, tishim, etc. – and their supportive position is most beneficial.

One of the T'mimim from Ramat Aviv framed the p'sak din, and presented it as a gift to the President of the State of Israel, Mr. Moshe Katzav. The president accepted the p'sak and mentioned that HaRav Mordechai Eliyahu was supposed to be at the meeting, and that he will base his decision on how to relate to the whole matter according to what HaRav Eliyahu says. By Divine providence, HaRav Mordechai Eliyahu spoke at that meeting about Chabad with words of tremendous praise for all their wonderful activities. Naturally, this proved to be beneficial, and thus, we must strive in every way possible that people should speak in such a manner, even in private forums when we are not present.

I met once with a prominent rebbe from Yerushalayim, who had great respect for the Rebbe MH"M and his sichos. However, he heard that there are "different interpretations" of the sichos of 5751-5752. We suggested that he check things out for himself, and we brought the seifer "Z'man HaGeula,"

which contains numerous sichos from 5751-5752, for that very purpose. When we spoke with him the following year, he stated that there is no other way to interpret the sichos.

During our conversation with him, he heard that the Pinsk-Karliner Rebbe had signed the p'sak din, and he immediately expressed his wonderment that he had not known this before. He said that in

***We suggested that he check things out for himself, and we brought the seifer "Z'man HaGeula," which contains numerous sichos from 5751-5752, for that very purpose. When we spoke with him the following year, he stated that there is no other way to interpret the sichos.***

his list of signatories on the p'sak din, the Pinsk-Karliner Rebbe's name does not appear. I was very satisfied from this meeting, in spite of the fact that this rebbe did not sign.

**Why?**

First of all, I was simply delighted to hear how rabbanim are following events in connection with

new signatures on the p'sak din. Secondly, this rebbe now knows that the Rebbe clearly said that he is Moshiach, and this knowledge will be expressed in actual deed in a variety of ways.

This is not an isolated incident. Once I visited a certain rav and showed him the long list of signatures to his utter disbelief. "Are there actual sources to prove that the Rebbe is Moshiach today, after Gimmel Tammuz?" he asked quietly. I showed him a litany of sources, including the *Yotzer* on Parshas HaChodesh, "And he will conceal himself from them, return, and reveal himself," and Tractate Sanhedrin. The rav was most impressed. While he didn't sign for personal reasons, his position changed completely, and this is also an important development.

Any position of this type carries great significance. For example, when the Chief Rabbi of Tzfas, HaRav Shmuel Eliyahu, was asked if the Rebbe was Melech HaMoshiach, he responded that he is a fitting candidate, halevai, etc. Not long ago, a Chabad rav and a well known rebbe from Yerushalayim who had recently been approached in connection with the campaign for Kabbalas HaMalchus were together in a vacation city in Switzerland. The two chatted, and before departing, the Chabad rav said, "May we merit the coming of Moshiach." This rebbe replied, "You're a Lubavitcher, aren't you? Then he's already here..."

Of course, this doesn't always happen. We once sent a delegation of representatives to a very prominent rebbe, who said that he didn't understand why the Rebbe is making so much tumult about the coming of Moshiach. We presented him with portions of the more relevant sichos on this point, and I believe that it had some positive



effect. There are numerous examples of this type.

There have also been some very encouraging instances. I once visited HaRav Yoel Suissa, who complained why we are only coming to him now.

### **“I WON’T SIGN, BUT I WANT TO STUDY THE MATTER FURTHER!”**

One of the more active participants in the p’sak din signature campaign is HaRav **Uri Lipsh**, head of the evening chassidus kollel in B’nei Brak, who frequently accompanies his brother on visits to leading rabbinical figures. In



**Rabbi Uri Lipsh**

preparing this article, we spoke with him as well, and asked him about his feelings on these visits:

**When you approach a non-Lubavitcher rabbi is there some concern that he will not agree to sign?**

Obviously, prior to every meeting, there is a certain degree of tension. However, once the meeting begins, we get a clear indication as to which direction the wind is blowing. If the rav starts asking relevant questions, he receives appropriate answers. Thus, we can say with virtual certainty that the end results will be positive, even though not every rav necessarily

signs the p’sak.

I recall that once we went to a certain *dayan* who represents a large community in the hope that he would agree to sign. We waited for him near his home at the time that he was due to return. When he arrived, we asked to come in. (It is important to note that we never agree to speak by the door. We always ask to come in and speak on the matter in an honorable and respectful manner, a method that has proven most effective.)

This *dayan* said that he is extremely pressed for time, however he agreed to speak with us for a few minutes. The conversation



**Rabbi Yitzchak Lipsh**

eventually lasted for three-quarters of an hour.

At the start of the discussion, the *dayan* immediately emphasized that regardless of what we say he will not sign, as it would be totally unrealistic for a person who holds such an official position to do so. Nevertheless, he said that he was interesting in hearing something on the subject. He asked pertinent questions, and was pleased with the answers he received. Yet, as he mentioned at the outset, he did not agree to sign. He concluded the conversation by stating that he has been involved in rabbinical court decisions for forty years, many of

which have been most difficult and complicated. However, he is not an expert on this subject, and he would be happy to hear more about it. Clearly, he was influenced to some extent by our presentation – a very positive development. In fact, on another occasion shortly thereafter, we met at a certain function, where he was scheduled to speak after me. As he began his speech, he told the audience that what he was about to say was nothing compared to what they had just heard. Those in attendance could feel his deep appreciation for the Rebbe, and that is no small achievement.

On the other hand, there are cases where side matters interfere with the main issue. Once we visited with a certain rebbe, who showed much enthusiasm for the subject, to the point that he even began to suggest the names of other rebbes for us to approach on the matter. Suddenly, a member of the household realized what we were discussing, and started to express his disapproval. He was soon joined by someone else, and together they made a tremendous raucous. They demanded that we leave the house immediately.

I tried my best to calm them down, while my brother continued speaking with the rebbe, who smiled and said, “When I was younger, I had much more strength to fight over such things, but today I’m simply not willing to fight...”

There is definitely nothing to fear. No rav ever suggested that what we said was against halacha, despite the fact, as I mentioned previously, that not all of them agreed to sign.

For example, I remember our visit to HaRav Shmuel Unsderfer, who spoke with us with great warmth. He said that prior to Gimmel Tammuz, he was certain that the Rebbe is Moshiach.

However, today, after Gimmel Tammuz, where are the sources for suggesting such a thing? I gave over the *Maharsha* on Tractate Sanhedrin (38b), which explains that the kings of the House of Dovid are renewed, as is the moon. Just as prior to the rebirth of the moon, there must be an absolute state of concealment, and we make *Birchas HaChodesh* only after its renewal, similarly we find in connection with the kingdom of the House of Dovid.

Rabbi Unsorfer listened, and then said that according to *Shulchan Aruch*, he can't take my word for it, and he must see the sources for himself... He opened the Gemara and learned the *sugya* for close to half an hour. Afterwards, he lifted his head with a smile and said, "How did you come across this?"

He added that when he comes to the Yud-Alef Nissan farbrengens in Kfar Chabad he does so in order to strengthen the proclamation of "Yechi Adoneinu." He noted further that he knows that the Sanzer Rebbe also supported this position. Still, he didn't agree to sign, explaining that he has stopped signing declarations of all types for ten to fifteen years.

I suggested that he take the p'sak din and sign it privately. He took the p'sak, and although he didn't sign, his words served as a tremendous source of strength for us.

## **WE MUST CHECK THE SOURCES, AND BE EXPERT IN THEM**

**What material should a person know in order to approach a rav and ask him to sign the p'sak?**

HaRav **Yitzchak Lipsh**: It can be said without exaggeration that on the subject of Moshiach and the Redemption, a simple Lubavitcher yeshiva bachur usually knows more

than most big rabbanim. Naturally, a person should acquaint himself properly with all the sources in order to give over the subject matter in an accurate fashion, especially those portions that explain how the Rebbe can be Moshiach after Gimmel Tammuz, e.g., Tractate Sanhedrin and the aforementioned quote from the *Yotzer* on Parshas HaChodesh, "And he will conceal himself from them, return, and reveal himself," which according to Tosafos, was written by Rabbi Eliezer, son of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.

**I understand that you also deal with publicizing the p'sak din?**

We haven't actually dealt with this on a national scale yet, but this is also on the horizon. I am aware of numerous shuls that have hung the p'sak din in a prominent place, which has considerable influence on their respective membership.

**You haven't mentioned the opposition you've encountered...**

There are those who know about the p'sak din due to all the negative propaganda that has been publicized against it.

There's a young man with a Litvisher background, who studied for a period of time in Chabad. It turns out that his interest in Chabad has not diminished. Among other things, he is deeply involved in activities pertaining to the p'sak din. He has approached many rabbanim and other leading Torah scholars to show them the p'sak and ask them various questions on the laws of Moshiach and the Redemption, e.g., does Moshiach have to bring documentation verifying that he is a descendant of Dovid HaMelech before he is considered "b'chezkas Moshiach"? He visits all prominent Torah leaders to make certain that they know about the p'sak din and learn about Moshiach and the Redemption. He even opened a

website, where he publicizes all his many questions to rabbanim and the answers he has received. In short, when the Rebbe wants the p'sak to be publicized, it's publicized.

**You alluded to the letter that was publicized against your activities. What has your reaction been?**

As always, "as they afflicted them, so did they increase and so did they spread forth." Immediately after the issuance of this letter, we naturally increased in our p'sak din activities and added more signatures. The following day, we met HaRav Broida of Givatayim, and asked him to sign the p'sak. He signed without hesitation, and I clearly felt that his prompt consent to our request was in response to the negative publicity of the day before.

**A few words in summation?**

First of all, I request that all shluchim and Anash rabbanim take the p'sak din to rabbanim with whom they are acquainted and ask them to sign. If they make the effort, they will see that it is not that difficult. In addition, I make the same request to all your readers – try and you'll see for yourself. Even if a particular rav does not agree to sign the first time, he may sign after a little persistence on your part. Furthermore, the very fact that this rav now fully understands the subject is no less important.

Let me conclude with an expression of hope and faith in the words of the Rebbe MH"M shlita from the sicha on the p'sak din of "b'chezkas Moshiach": "reaching the state of 'he is definitely Moshiach (*vadai*).'" May we immediately witness the results of our activities, the revelation of the Rebbe MH"M before our very eyes, and may we proclaim before him: *Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach l'olam va'ed!*

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Throughout the years, during the Rebbe's Purim Farbrengen ("Thirty days before the Chag (Pesach)"), the Rebbe would customarily remind and urge everyone concerning the importance of contributing Tzedakah for "Mo'os Chitim."

It is well known that "Kupas Rabbeinu" endeavors to continue implementing all of the holy projects and activities which the Rebbe has established. Amongst these activities is the Rebbe's practice to extend financial aid to those families in need of their various Pesach necessities.

Accordingly, we are at this time urging and requesting each and every Anash member and Tomim שיחי to **contribute generously** to "Kupas Rabbeinu," in order to enable the administration to provide for these families and thus afford them with the opportunity to celebrate Pesach with contentment and joy.

Regarding this Mitzvah it is stated: "Whoever increases (in giving) is praiseworthy."

Unfortunately, the amount of families in need of this financial assistance **is more than generally assumed**. As such, the more generous your contribution to "Kupas Rabbeinu," the greater the number of families receiving assistance will be.

And since, with regard to all Mitzvahs we are instructed to act with Simcha and zest, it is all the more pertinent with regard to the aforementioned, as it is of paramount importance that the funds be received and distributed as soon as possible.

In the merit of Tzedakah which hastens the Geula, may we merit the true Geula Shlaimah, with the revelation of Melech HaMashiach - The Rebbe Nasi Doreinu, immediately, Mamash.

Chag HaPesach Kosher V'Sameach

*Vaad Kupas Rabbeinu*

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# FOR KLAL YISROEL

*A compilation of stories about Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, a”h. \* Presented in honor of her birthday, 25 Adar. \* From a speech given by Rabbi Shmuel Lew to the girls of Ohr Chaya and prepared as an article by M.M. Ashkenazi.*

## SHE DID NOT TAKE THE ROLE OF “LUBAVITCHER REBBETZIN”

On the eve of my flight to Eretz Yisroel, I sat and wrote to the Rebbe about my trip in general and especially about this event. I asked for a bracha that I would emphasize the right things and that my speech would inspire myself and the audience in our personal lives and conduct.

I arrived in Yerushalayim on Friday. I was supposed to daven in a different shul, but in the end I davened at the shul in the hotel where I was staying. While I got ready to daven, I overheard a non-Lubavitcher rav mention the name Chaya Mushka. I thought I may not have heard right, and I went over to him and asked, “Did you say Chaya Mushka?”

“Yes,” he said.

“What made you mention that name?” I inquired.

He said, “I said that I have a yahrtzeit for my mother, who passed away on 22 Shevat and that this is

also the yahrtzeit of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka of Lubavitch.”

“Did you know the Rebbetzin?” I asked.

“I knew her well.”

He then introduced himself. I recognized his name; he is a well known rav in the U.S.

After the davening, I told him that I had come to Eretz Yisroel to speak about the Rebbetzin, and I asked him to tell me a story or an idea related to the Rebbetzin. He told me that many years ago, in the 50’s or 60’s, a couple who didn’t have children, who wanted to get a bracha from the Rebbe but could not, for various reasons, consulted with him. He told them that he could call the Rebbetzin.

He did so and he told the Rebbetzin about the couple and gave her their names. She said, “I will give it over to my husband.” Shortly thereafter, the woman had a child.

## THE REBBETZIN’S BRACHA

There’s a couple on shlichus in

Riverdale. The wife is the daughter of Dr. Feldman, one of the Rebbe’s doctors. Since she was the doctor’s daughter, she and her husband, R’ Levi Shemtov, had the z’chus of receiving a bracha from the Rebbetzin before their marriage.

The Rebbetzin asked the chassan, “Are you the grandson of the chassid, R’ Benzion Shemtov?”

When he said that he was, the Rebbetzin said, “Very good, because now I’m sure that your children will speak Yiddish.”

They got married but years went by without their having any children. I heard this story from Levi Shemtov himself a few months ago. “But,” Levi said, “we weren’t at all worried because the Rebbetzin had said that we would speak Yiddish to our children, and in order to do so we had to have children! We were also sure that we would have more than one child, because the Rebbetzin had said ‘children.’”

Two years ago, after fourteen years of marriage, the Shemtovs had twins, a boy and a girl. They are named Menachem Mendel and Chaya Mushka. Levi concludes the story by saying, “We didn’t lose hope for a moment, since we had the Rebbetzin’s bracha.”

The entry in the *HaYom Yom* for 21 Shevat is about the obligation that chassidic women and girls have to lead the way. The entry for 23 Shevat is about the Alter Rebbe and his Rebbetzin and her greatness.

How interesting it is that, sandwiched in between, 22 Shevat has no reference to the greatness of women or Rebbetzins.

I heard chassidim say that this is similar to 7 Adar, the date marking the birth and passing of Moshe Rabbeinu, which falls out around Parshas Tetzaveh. This parsha is remarkable in that it is the only one since the birth of Moshe is related in the Torah that does not mention Moshe's name. So too, the *HaYom Yom* for 22 Shevat does not mention Jewish women.

### THE REBBETZIN'S GIFT TO US

The Rebbetzin was the mainstay of the home. As the Rebbe said numerous times, the physical foundation of the home is not visible, yet on the foundation rests

*“I cannot allow thirty years of my father’s self-sacrifice to go to waste.” This is what convinced the Rebbe. She knew very well what this would mean to her private life, but she gave her husband and her life for Klal Yisroel.*

the entire building. The outward appearance of the foundation is not

important. What is important is its strength.

So too with the Rebbetzin. We don't know much about her. She kept very much to herself. When she went to 770 in order to visit her mother or her sister, she went in only when she saw that nobody was around. Everything about her was expressed through modesty.

Yet the Rebbetzin is truly the foundation of Chabad, for after Yud Shevat 5710, when the Rebbe refused to take over the Chabad leadership, she prevailed upon the Rebbe to accept it. She said, “I cannot allow thirty years of my father's self-sacrifice to go to waste.” This is what convinced the Rebbe. She knew very well what this would mean to her private life, but she gave her husband and her life for Klal Yisroel.



## THE POWER OF CHINUCH

The Rebbetzin said that she remembers not only how her grandfather, the Rebbe Rashab, looked, but also the niggunim that accompanied his davening and the words of Torah he would say. These are things that a woman saw and understood, as a result of her exceedingly deep chinuch.

## LIKE THE REBBETZIN

My father-in-law, R' Zalman Jaffe, a"h, was born in Manchester 90 years ago. He was of Lubavitch descent, and he and his wife, my mother-in-law, were privileged to have many kiruvim from the Rebbe.

On Shavuos 5728, almost 36 years ago, my father-in-law was invited to a Yom Tov meal with the Rebbe at the home of the Rebbe Rayatz. After Yom Tov they had a yechidus, and the Rebbe asked my mother-in-law, "Mrs. Jaffe, did you give your husband permission to have the meal with me and not with you?"

She said that she had.

Then the Rebbe asked, "You didn't mind?"

And she answered, "When I saw that the Rebbetzin forwent a meal with the Rebbe, I also agreed – and happily, too."

The Rebbe said, "The Rebbetzin has been agreeing for forty years now!"

## SENSITIVE TO OTHERS' FEELINGS

The Rebbetzin was a genius when it came to understanding the feelings of the people she met, whether it was a chassid, a housewife, or a child. When we were bachurim, we didn't walk on the side of the street where the Rebbe lived. That was the Rebbe's private space. When bachurim accompanied the Rebbe home, they would walk behind, at a

distance, until they came to President Street, the Rebbe's block. When the Rebbe turned onto President St., the bachurim would stay across the street and wait until the Rebbe entered his home. Then they left.

Before my wedding, my father-in-law had a yechidus. He asked the Rebbe whether we could invite the Rebbetzin to the wedding. The Rebbe said three things: 1) you should know that she does not participate in any public affair. 2) You are welcome to invite her and she will participate spiritually, and I think she will be happy that you invited her, but you should know that she will not attend a public event. 3) She already knows you (because my in-laws sent flowers to the Rebbe's house every Erev Yom Tov).

The day came when my kalla and I, as well as my in-laws and some other family members, went to the Rebbetzin. I remember how my heart pounded. As I walked down the street where the Rebbe's house is I was frightened! My fear increased as we went up the steps. We knocked on the door and the Rebbetzin herself opened it. I thought I would faint.

We entered and sat near the table, which had a tablecloth on it and drinks in luxurious glasses that had the initials of the Rebbetzin's sister Shaindel Schneersohn on them. There were tiny, gold forks and each glass had a glass straw. At first, the Rebbetzin told us that she knows the kalla. She went on to say, "When I was near 770 with the car, I saw a girl standing there and I asked the driver who it was." Then she went on to praise the kalla.

The Rebbetzin asked me to serve the drinks, and I took the bottle and began to pour. You can well imagine how nervous I was. I didn't want to break the glasses but I forgot that

each glass had a glass straw. I suddenly put my hand down and banged a glass straw, which tipped over the glass and the liquid that was in it. I blushed and wondered where I might find a hole that I could hide myself in.

The Rebbetzin immediately said that it was a sign of blessing.

She understood others and gave people a good feeling.

## FAMILY TIES

When my oldest daughter attended Beis Rivka in New York twenty years ago, my in-laws visited the Rebbetzin in Tishrei, with other family members as well as my daughter, their granddaughter. My father-in-law told the Rebbetzin that my daughter stayed in Crown Heights even though she had no relatives there. She was happy to be there and to learn in the Rebbe's mosad.

The Rebbetzin said, "I'll try to keep in touch with her." We thought that the Rebbetzin said that merely to be polite, and we didn't expect her to actually call.

A few weeks later, my father-in-law called the Rebbetzin, as he did each year to wish her mazal tov on her anniversary. The Rebbetzin told him, "I've tried to contact your granddaughter, but I haven't been successful."

He asked her how she had tried and she said, "I called Beis Rivka and asked for Chaya Lew." The Rebbetzin hadn't said that it was she who was calling, and they told her that they don't call students to the phone. "So I don't know how to contact her," she said.

My father-in-law gave the Rebbetzin the phone number at the apartment where my daughter stayed with two friends. The Rebbetzin called and asked for my daughter, but she wasn't in at the time. Her



friend said that Chaya was out shopping, and asked if she could take a message. The Rebbetzin asked her to tell Chaya that Mrs. Schneersohn from President Street had called and asked that she call her back. That is how my daughter began to visit the Rebbetzin.

She brought mishloach manos to the Rebbetzin on Purim, and the Rebbetzin offered her something to eat. She said she had already eaten. The Rebbetzin asked, "Are you going to the Rebbe's farbrengen?"

My daughter said she was, and the Rebbetzin said that you need a lot of strength to be able to withstand the crush at the Rebbe's farbrengen, so she should eat more...

Once, the entire family visited the Rebbetzin, including this daughter. The Rebbetzin said that since my daughter lived locally, she

should cut the cake. My daughter took the knife and cut a thin slice. The Rebbetzin took her hand and taught her how to cut a nice, thick piece and said, "I'll teach you how to be a balabusta."

#### "AUNTIE"

Bli ayin ha'ra, I have a large family, and whenever my wife and I went to see the Rebbe, we took some of the children with us (I once went to the Rebbe with my sons and the Rebbe praised me for bringing them).

My wife visited the Rebbetzin on Zos Chanuka 5748, a few weeks before the Rebbetzin's passing. The Rebbetzin invited my wife to come by after the Rebbe lit the menorah and after he left the house.

Afterwards, I asked my wife how the Rebbetzin had interacted with

our little daughter. My wife said that the Rebbetzin had said to the girl, "Come to Tante (Auntie)." This was how she related to her – as an aunt.

In general, all of our visits were timed so as not to interfere with the Rebbe's presence in the house. This was very important to the Rebbetzin, not to disturb the Rebbe.

#### THE REBBE'S PREFERENCE

On that visit, my wife saw the Rebbe's menorah. There was a beautiful, large menorah in the house, but the Rebbe lit a small, simple menorah. In connection with this, I'll tell you another story.

In the Rebbe's 80<sup>th</sup> year, on 11 Nissan 5742, my father-in-law wanted to give the Rebbe a beautiful silver wine decanter as a gift. He explained that it wasn't fitting for the Rebbe to be given a plain bottle

in a paper bag at farbrengens. But he was afraid that the Rebbe wouldn't use it, so he first wrote a letter to the Rebbetzin, saying that the Manchester community wanted to buy the Rebbe a silver wine decanter, but he didn't want to do something that the Rebbe didn't want. He asked the Rebbetzin to ask the Rebbe about it, and said he would call a week later to hear what the Rebbe had said.

My father-in-law was courageous, and so a week later he called up the Rebbetzin. The Rebbetzin said that the Rebbe had not reacted. A day or two later, my father-in-law received a letter from the Rebbe at the end of which the Rebbe responded. "P.S. Mrs. Schneersohn told me about the request about the bottle and the paper bag, and forgive me, but we will have to accept the thought as though it actually happened, but I prefer a bottle with a paper bag more than a beautiful, silver bottle."

The Rebbe added, "There are many reasons, but I'll tell you one of them that I hope you will understand. I do not want to make a barrier between my way of life and the way of life of those around me."

The Rebbe added an example, "I have many silver esrog boxes, but I prefer to use a cardboard box."

### **DO YOU KNOW THE FAMOUS REBBE IN BROOKLYN?**

The Rebbetzin often visited a library in Manhattan. Many years ago, she went to the library and presented her card. The librarian saw the name on it and asked, "Are you related to the famous rebbe in Brooklyn?" The Rebbetzin said she was.

"How are you related?"

"He is my husband," said the Rebbetzin.

The librarian began to complain to her about the Rebbe. She said that she had no children and "with great effort, I went to the Rebbe two years ago and asked him for a bracha for a child. The Rebbe blessed me and said I needed to commit to some mitzva, since a blessing is like rain and it needs a vessel to hold it. I told the Rebbe I would light candles Friday night. Two years have gone by and I still haven't had a child!"

The Rebbetzin calmed her down and said, "I don't have children either."

The librarian burst into tears and said, "I'm sorry, but I'm a Holocaust survivor and I was in concentration camps, and I am the sole survivor of my family. That's why it's so

## ***The Rebbetzin calmed her down and said, "I don't have children either..."***

important to me to have children, so that the family will live on."

The Rebbetzin asked, "What exactly did my husband say to you?"

The librarian answered, "He said I should light Shabbos candles."

"Are you doing so?"

"Yes!"

"How do you do it?" inquired the Rebbetzin.

"Every Friday I light candles when my husband comes home from work, around seven-eight o'clock."

The Rebbetzin explained that Shabbos candles must be lit before sunset. "Commit to lighting the Shabbos candles properly," she suggested.

The librarian agreed to do so and ten months later she had a son. She stayed in touch with the Rebbetzin and even visited her.

### **FINAL MOMENTS**

Our oldest daughter visited the Rebbetzin as a kalla and after her wedding, which took place on 14 Kislev 5748. A month later, in Teives, she returned to Crown Heights and called the Rebbetzin. The Rebbetzin said that she would like them to visit her. She told my daughter to call on Sunday, "And when you call, we'll talk and arrange a time for you to come."

Sunday was 19 Shevat, and she called the Rebbetzin that evening. The Rebbetzin said, "I don't feel that well lately."

My daughter reacted with, "Oy vei." The Rebbetzin jokingly said, "Where did you get that expression from – London or Brooklyn?"

Before leaving to the hospital, the Rebbetzin went outside with the Rebbe, and they stood and spoke for a few minutes. Then the Rebbetzin got into the car, accompanied by Dr. Moshe Feldman. The Rebbetzin lost a lot of blood and was very weak.

Dr. Feldman says that the Rebbetzin didn't complain about her pain and weakness. On the contrary, throughout the trip she asked Dr. Feldman about the vort he was making for his daughter, asking if it was going to be large or small.

He said they had thought of doing something small, and the Rebbetzin said it should be larger scale.

Then she asked about what dress she would buy, etc. Until her final moment, she inquired about others.

Right before the Rebbetzin passed away, the doctor asked her, "Are you with us?" and the Rebbetzin said, "Yes." That was her final word.



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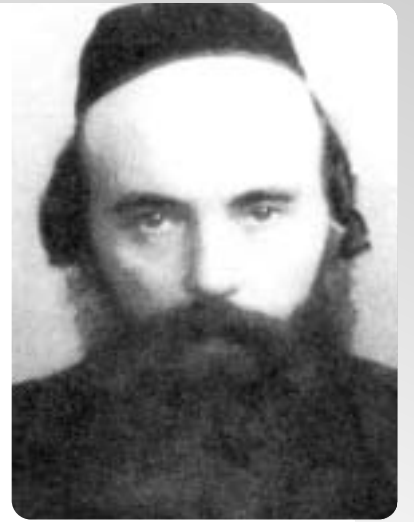
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ב"ה

# THE GAON RABBI YEHOShUA MENACHEM MENDEL AHRONBERG

*From Shemen Sasson Meichaveirecha*

BY RABBI SHALOM DOVER WOLPO  
TRANSLATED BY ALEXANDER ZUSHE KOHN



Rabbi Yehoshua Menachem Mendel Ahronberg was born on the 12<sup>th</sup> of Teives, 5665 (December 20, 1904), in the town of Kemetch in Hungary, to his father Rabbi Yitzchak Aryeh Leib of Gurlitz, a very wealthy man, who was also known to invest great energy in his prayers. As a child, Rabbi Ahronberg displayed exceptional intellectual abilities, and was way ahead of his peers in his studies, requiring his father to hire a special teacher to learn with him (and with Yekusiel Yehuda Halbershtam, who later became the Klozenberger Rebbe). Later, he became a disciple of the mighty *gaon* Rabbi Meir Arik *zatzal*, who also bestowed rabbinic ordination upon him.

In 5685 (1924-25), Rabbi Ahronberg married and moved to Krakow. As a young man, he wrote his *sefer Roshi BaShamayim* (on Rabbi Elazar of Garmeisa's *Sefer HaRokei'ach*), but decided not to publicize it until he reached the age of forty. When the war broke out, all the copies of the *sefer* were lost, except for one copy of the title page. During the Holocaust he endured forced labor, and he suffered bitterly, but miraculously, he survived.

In Elul 5705 (1945), the *gaon* moved to Eretz Yisroel, and settled in Jerusalem. The Torah leaders there immediately recognized his great mind and incredible proficiency in all areas of Torah, and they placed upon him the great responsibility of serving as *rav* of the refugee camps in Cyprus. In Cyprus, he set up many rabbinical courts, applied himself to freeing *agunos*, founded a yeshiva, and taught Torah to the masses.

Upon returning to Israel, he was appointed as a *rav* and head of rabbinical court in Tel Aviv-Yaffo, a position he filled for the next 28 years. In addition to being a Torah giant, Rabbi Ahronberg was also a modest and humble person. When it came to matters relating to his rabbinical authority, however, he was unyielding, in the spirit of the *pasuk* "You shall fear no man!"

He was very close to the holy *Admur* Rabbi Aharon of Belz *zatzal*. The *Admur* held him in great esteem, and would speak very highly of his diligence. Many Torah leaders would rush their most urgent queries to Rabbi Ahronberg. His responses appear in the 4 volumes of his work *Dvar*

*Yehoshua*, which received the approbations of Rabbi Tzvi Pesach Frank *zatzal*, and the *gaon* of Tchebin *zatzal*.

He passed away on 24 Adar II, 5736 (March 26, 1976), and is interred on *Har HaZeisim*.

## DEFENDING THE BAAL SHEM TOV'S DISCIPLES

Rabbi Ahronberg's attachment to the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov and his holy disciples expressed itself in his halachic writings, in which he defends the honor of chassidism, the chassidic Masters, and chassidic custom. In these writings, he presents many halachic bases for the customs of the chassidic Masters.

In the first volume of *D'var Yehoshua*,<sup>1</sup> Rabbi Ahronberg defends the halachic rulings of the holy *gaon* of Sanz *zatzal* against the skeptics. He concludes his response with the following statement:

"Thus says the one who writes to help strengthen a bit the customs of our holy teachers — may their merit protect us and all the Jewish people — and to stifle the accusers, the small

<sup>1</sup> Volume 1, end of Siman 88.

foxes who destroy the vineyards. They deem themselves sages, [but in truth], haughtiness of spirit has taken hold of them, causing them to entertain doubt about the [the words] of the leader of all the exiles, the *gaon* of our strength and the holy one of G-d, our master, the holy Sanzer *gaon zatzal*. They do not know that whoever is doubtful about [the truth of his words] are as though they are doubtful of the Sh'china."

In a comment<sup>2</sup> directed at a certain modern-day halachic authority, Rabbi Ahronberg writes:

"You have cast aspersions on the chassidic giants, making them look as though they are lenient, G-d forbid, in matters where one may not be lenient, despite the fact that by now even the *misnagdim* have come to recognize that the chassidic giants were as immense in Torah and fear of G-d as the [Torah] giants that your honor relies on... If you would listen to me, I would counsel you to disseminate a public retraction of your words ... lest you get

burnt by the heat [of the chassidic Masters], G-d forbid, for you have touched the fire of the holy flame of the chassidic giants, and whoso questions their ways, questions in effect, the ways of the Sh'china."

In volume 3 of *D'var Yehoshua*,<sup>3</sup> Rabbi Ahronberg concludes a response with the following words: "Thus says the one who writes with love for those who study Torah with the chassidic spirit."

### HALACHIC SUPPORT FOR THE REBBE'S RULINGS AND CAMPAIGNS

Rabbi Ahronberg was also a great admirer of the Rebbe, and respected his halachic rulings. Thus, in a response (to Rabbi Yaakov Yosef Raskin *zal*)<sup>4</sup> regarding the reciting of the *SheHechyanu* blessing at circumcisions, he writes: "It would appear from the letter of the holy *Admur shlita* of Lubavitch, that he too favors not reciting it. Another one of his responses<sup>5</sup> he directs at "the young man

who is destined to become a great tree, the *bachur*, wondrous and distinguished in Torah and fear [of G-d] ... who sits in the company of wise ones, in the shadow of the holy *Admur* of Lubavitch *shlita*."

When the Rebbe launched the T'fillin Campaign, the *gaon* was one of the signatories on the proclamation encouraging people to participate. It is noteworthy that this was one of the only times his signature appeared on a public proclamation. During the last year of his life, he was asked about whether little girls who light Shabbos candles should recite a blessing. He responded that they should, and actually began to write a halachic dissertation on the matter, but unfortunately, his soul departed this world before he managed to complete it.

### GOING FORTH AGAINST THEM WITH WEAPONS

Interestingly, in his *D'var Yehoshua*, the *gaon* already applies law 309 of the *Shulchan Aruch* to Israel's security situation and the question of relinquishing parts of Israel to the gentiles. (As is known, the Rebbe builds his case against giving away parts of Israel to gentiles on this halacha.) He writes as follows:

"Situations such as the one under discussion — where returning sections of land that were conquered would bring our enemies closer to the areas of our land that have been acquired and settled by Jewish populations — are similar to the [situation] of cities that are near the border, where [the halacha is that] even if the gentiles come only to take hay, we go forth against them with weapons, even if it means transgressing Shabbos ... all the more so must we not give them these lands of our own accord, lest they make war against us."



Right to left Rabbi Ahronberg, the Vizhnitzer Rebbe, Rabbi Kaheneman, the Gerrer Rebbe (Lev Simcha), the Leleiver Rebbe

<sup>2</sup> Volume 2, Siman 42.

<sup>3</sup> Siman 19.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, end of Siman 64.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Siman 27.

# REACHING OUT IN BROOKLYN

BY NOSSON AVROHOM

*From their Chabad house in Mill Basin, Rabbi Yehuda and Mrs. Yehudis Friedman reach out to Jews in five Brooklyn neighborhoods: Mill Basin, Canarsie, Georgetown, Bergen Beach, and Starrett City. \* Yiddishkeit, chassidus, and the Besuras HaGeula. \* A Shlichus success story.*

Rabbi Friedman operates in five neighborhoods in eastern Brooklyn: Mill Basin, Canarsie, Georgetown, Bergen Beach, and Starrett City. These neighborhoods are connected so that they're like one large neighborhood. The Chabad house is in Mill Basin, where most of the area's Jews reside. The Chabad house used to be located in Canarsie, where it was founded seventeen years ago, but when the area deteriorated, the Jews moved out.

It seems as though nobody, neither a Jew nor, l'havdil, a gentile, is unfamiliar with the work of the Chabad house, in some way or another. Rabbi and Mrs. Friedman are constantly on the job, whether with the local Jewish residents or with raising Sheva Mitzvos awareness among the local gentiles.

How aware are people of the work of the Chabad house does? I learned the answer to this question from the bachurim on K'vutza, who told me

what happened this past Chanuka when some bachurim went on mitzvaim there. Their job was to drive around in a car with a menorah on top and to announce over the loudspeaker the Chanuka event taking place in a few hours.

When they had finished driving through all the neighborhoods, they began going door to door to personally invite people to the event. They quickly realized that this was unnecessary. At the first house, they met the family in their coats, ready to leave for the Chanuka event. At the second house, the maid told them that the family had left for the Chanuka party at the Chabad house. And at the third house, and the fourth ...

Up until two years ago, the Chabad house was located in Canarsie. After fifteen years in Canarsie, as the Jews left the neighborhood, the Friedmans had to relocate to the area where most of their work was being done in any

case, in Mill Basin.

## THE EARLY DAYS

"The story of how the Chabad house first began, begins on Lag B'Omer 5747," says Rabbi Friedman. A few days before the parade, New York was divided into sections, and each group of T'mimim was responsible for bringing as many children to the big parade in Crown Heights as possible. R' Chami Neuman (today, a shliach in Even Yehuda) was in charge of bringing kids from Starrett City. He brought two busloads of kids, which was considered unbelievably successful.

"A few days after the parade, he told me that there's a large Israeli community living there, but no shliach to remind them of their Jewish identity. He considered it a place with great potential.

"I took him up on his idea and began working there. By that Shavuot, a few weeks later, we had organized children's rallies in Mill Basin, Canarsie, Georgetown, and Starrett City, with the focus on Starrett City. The level of Jewish observance there was minimal. Although many Israelis with a traditional background lived there, many of them ignored basic mitzvos like mezuzah, taharas ha'mishpacha, and Jewish holidays.

"The next phase of our work focused on house calls. Twice a week, I made house calls with T'mimim along to help me. On one of these visits, a

woman wanted to know more about Judaism, and that's how the first shiur for women began. The shiur was, and still is, given by Mrs. Miryam Swerdlov. When she brought the shiur's participants for "dollars," the Rebbe told her to continue with the shiur until the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu.

"A few weeks later is when the shiur for men started, also as a result of a house call. Every week I brought speakers from Crown Heights. I continued with the house calls and the number of regular shiur participants grew. One of the lecturers who acquired many mushpaim was Rabbi Mordechai Levin, a"n"n. The Chabad house is named after him, Beis Mordechai.

"The work expanded and for the next Pesach, my family and the Swerdlov family went to Starrett City,

***"When I went over to wish the mother mazal tov, she was very moved and she said, 'It's all thanks to you and thanks to the Lubavitcher Rebbe.'"***

where we made a public Seder for the Jews of the neighborhood. This enabled us to connect with many families.

"We've had many successes in this neighborhood. One of them is Rami Tzion, who now lives in Crown Heights and is a Lubavitcher chassid.

We first met him after his grandmother passed away and he began taking an interest in Judaism. He came to shiurim, took part in Hakhel gatherings that were taking place at that time, and progressed step-by-step until he became a chassid.

"When we came to the neighborhood, the shul was empty except for some elderly Jews. They were happy when our outreach, especially the house visits and shiurim, resulted in more and more Jews attending shul. I remember how at one of the shiurim, two ladies were arguing amongst themselves about whose husband had started putting on t'fillin first!

"Our weekly Melaveh Malka is one of the things that attracted, and still attracts, many people."

In 5748, the Friedmans decided to



Rabbi Yehuda Friedman giving the Rebbe a Tanya printed in Canarsie

move to where their shlichus was, despite the difficulties that entailed. It just had to be done since people needed the shluchim to be right there for them. The Rebbe's answer about this was: "May it be with blessings and success. I'll mention it at the tziyun."

The first project they took on was the opening of a nursery school. They had nine children the first year, and over forty children the second year, with many children who could not be accepted due to lack of space. Bar and bas mitzva groups were started, as well as shiurim, rallies, Mivtza Mezuzah, etc.

The school did wonders with the parents as well as the children. Parents requested longer hours so that their children would get an authentic Jewish education. Parents talk with the teachers and consult with them often, even about personal and family matters. Many children were mekarev their families to Yiddishkeit.

"A child comes home and asks his mother to light Shabbos candles, because he learned about it in school. The mother of a child who attends the school once told us that the boy always asked her what bracha to say on various foods.

"One day a non-kosher fish was on the table and he asked her what bracha you say on it. This affected her so deeply that she resolved, from that day on, not to bring non-kosher food into the house."

### THE CHABAD K'HILLA IN CANARSIE

Over the years, the Friedmans' Chabad house has grown and has enjoyed much success. Aside from the number of baalei t'shuva that have become part of the k'hilla, there are many mekuravim who regularly attend the davening and shiurim. Rabbi and Mrs. Friedman's friendly manner help many make the challenging commitment to a full Jewish life. This is also thanks to the warm atmosphere at the Chabad shul.



State Senator Charles Schumer speaking at the opening of the Chabad House in Canarsie



House calls in Brooklyn neighborhoods

I became a baal t'shuva because I became close with Rabbi Friedman," one mekurav told me.

Rabbi Friedman doesn't allow anybody to remain apathetic. Old-time mekuravim as well as new mekuravim, roll up their sleeves and pitch in to help him.

They truly love Rabbi Friedman. In the course of the interview with him, which took place at the Chabad house,

one of his mekuravim came over to me and introduced himself as a former faculty member of the department for Communications and Journalism at Hebrew University. He offered his help in preparing this article. Then he immediately took back his offer, saying that he couldn't be objective since he has nothing bad to say about Rabbi Friedman.

The thing that most characterizes



At a bris mila the Chabad house arranged

the work of the Chabad house is the work with mekuravim. Rabbi Friedman told me about what prompted him to put most of his efforts into bringing back as many Jews to Yiddishkeit as possible.

It was Simchas Torah in one of the early years of his shlichus when the mashpia, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Segal from Migdal HaEmek, came to the Chabad house and asked how many baalei t'shuva the Chabad house had made thus far. Rabbi Segal explained that the success of a Chabad house is measured by how many baalei t'shuva, Lubavitcher chassidim, were made.

Shortly after the Chabad house was founded, Rabbi Friedman opened the Chabad shul.

“At first we didn't open a shul since there were a number of faltering shuls in the neighborhood, and we wanted to see to it that people attended the existing shuls. About a year after we arrived in the neighborhood, we went to Eretz Yisroel for Pesach, and upon our return, we were amazed to hear that some of the mekuravim wanted a Nusach Chabad shul. They had managed to arrange for a seifer Torah, siddurim, and the other things we needed.

“The one who really pushed for this to happen was Hertzel Borochov, who is a mekurav of Rabbi Shraga Zalmanov in Queens. After he moved to Canarsie, he became an active member of our Chabad house. Till this day, the shul has three t'fillos a day.”

Rabbi Friedman tells about a mekurav, Shmuel Zisso, whose path to Yiddishkeit wasn't an easy one. For weeks, Rabbi Friedman would call him and invite him to join a shiur. Zisso's wife would answer the phone and offer various excuses why he wouldn't come.

Time went by and then, surprisingly, Zisso started attending shiurim. He quickly became enamored

## SLAKING HIS THIRST FOR YIDDISHKEIT

Dovid and Orit Kohen live in Canarsie and run a chassidic home. Their children attend schools in Crown Heights. Not too many of their friends and acquaintances know that twenty years ago, Dovid was as far as one could be from Yiddishkeit.

“I was born in Cholon. My knowledge of Judaism consisted of knowing there were traditional people who observed an Orthodox way of life, but what this life consisted of, I had no idea.

“After high school, I was drafted and served as a border guard, and upon my release I was a partner in a firm that imported and marketed textiles. After some time, I wasn't happy with the partnership and I left with my family for the United States where I hoped to make a living. I quickly became involved in a textile business and sold clothing.

“The change in my life began after my daughter was born, when for no apparent reason, I decided to keep Shabbos. My minimal knowledge did not allow me to keep Shabbos as I should have, until one day I met someone by the name of Uri Nazrian. He heard of my interest in Judaism and connected me with Rabbi Friedman, and advised me to attend the davening at the Chabad house on Shabbos.

“My first meeting with Rabbi Friedman aroused in me a tremendous desire to do t'shuva. There I was, in a sea of falsehood and I had discovered Truth. As I became more religious, I got to know various types of religious Jews but there was nothing like chassidus Chabad, which I learned from Rabbi Friedman.

“Rabbi Friedman connected me to the Rebbe MH”M, and from then on, I decided I was dropping everything and doing t'shuva.”

Today, Dovid continues to work in textiles and in his free time, he helps tremendously in spreading the besuras ha'Geula and chassidus in Canarsie. Dovid is a Lubavitcher chassid in every way.

by the Chabad house. At the annual Yud Shvat Shabbaton, his wife made the commitment to wear a sheitel. Even after they left Canarsie for Flatbush, an hour's walk from the Chabad house, Shmuel continued walking to the Chabad house, even though there's another Chabad house and many shuls in his new neighborhood.

All holidays are celebrated in grand style and many people attend, even from outside the neighborhood. Rabbi Friedman recalls:

"Although we don't always see the results of our work immediately, I recently attended the wedding of a wonderful family I met back when we worked in Starrett City. The family was completely non-religious, but after they attended some shiurim and we made a number of house calls, they began taking an interest in Yiddishkeit. They ended up choosing a different path in Yiddishkeit and recently made a wedding for their oldest son.

"When I met the chassan who was wearing a hat and suit, I was very moved. I remembered his bar mitzva when he looked completely different. When I went over to wish the mother mazal tov, she was very moved and she said, 'It's all thanks to you and thanks to the Lubavitcher Rebbe.'

"Another story – at the beginning of our shlichus, we once had a large shiur with many participants. At the end of the shiur, the people left and we had no connection with them. Four years later, I visited Eretz Yisroel, and a woman came over to me who had attended that shiur, and she said that thanks to that shiur she redid her kitchen and made it kosher.

"There's another Jew who lives in Queens today. He was our guest a few years ago for a few Shabbasos in a row, but it seemed to us that we hadn't impacted on him at all. A long time went by in which we didn't hear from him, and a few weeks ago I met him

and he looked completely different. He is frum and he sends his children to Chabad schools. He thanked me for being the one who paved the way to Yiddishkeit for him."

Here is an interesting anecdote that tells us something about the impact made by their shul and Chabad house, as told by Mrs. Friedman:

"There's a girl from Crown Heights

who teaches fourth grade in the Jewish school in Canarsie. One day, when they learned about the crowning of Shaul HaMelech and how the entire nation cried out, "Yechi HaMelech," some children got up and began dancing and singing 'Yechi Adoneinu.' When the teacher asked where they knew it from, they said, 'from Rabbi Friedman's shul.'"

## THE ATHEIST WHO BECAME AN ARDENT CHASSID

Motti Miron is representative of the great success the Friedmans have had in their shlichus. When Motti talks about Rabbi Friedman, he cannot hide the tremendous love he feels for him. "I just love him. He's my whole life. He made me into a mentch.

"Over twenty years ago, my parents left Israel for the U.S. I remained in Israel and was drafted into the Transport Division. I endured many hardships in the army, and was in Refidim in Sinai and in the war in Lebanon.

"After I finished my army service, I joined my parents in the U.S. and like other guys my age, I worked at various jobs. Later on, I worked with my parents in running a chain of shoe stores they owned.

"I was completely against religion in general and religious Jews in particular. I was an atheist and didn't believe in anything. I remember that there were times when my friends suggested that I join them in visiting the Lubavitcher Rebbe, but I turned them down. My feelings were so strong that I simply could not tolerate religious Jews.

"One day my mother became sick and after suffering terribly for years, she passed away. I was very down.

"That same day, out of nowhere, appeared Rabbi Friedman, who had heard about my mother's passing. He patiently explained the customs and laws I needed to follow during the Shiva. He organized a minyan in my house every day.

"He was the only person who supported me and helped me at that difficult time. Whatever words I choose to describe his help at that time would be just a drop in the bucket and would not give you an inkling of the warmth and love he showered on me.

"From that day on I was hooked on him. His care for me didn't stop throughout that time, nor after a year's time; it has continued till this very day. Slowly, and with great patience, he taught me how to read the davening and about basic mitzvos with which I was unfamiliar. One day he surprised me with a pair of t'fillin that he had bought for me."

Today, Motti lives in Mill Basin and the friends who knew him in the past can't get over the drastic change in him. For Motti, the symbol of anti-religion, has become religious.





**Rabbi Yehuda Friedman (third from left) with a group of mekuravim**

## INTENSIVE OUTREACH

Rabbi Friedman is always interested in expanding his work. This past year the Chabad house began a Mezuzah Campaign. Twice a week, T'mimim from 770 go to all four neighborhoods and go door to door, putting up mezuzos where they're needed or checking existing mezuzos. The goal is to ensure that not one Jewish home should lack a kosher mezuzah.

The Chabad house has a broad array of shiurim. Every day there are shiurim for men and women on various topics, which are all well attended. Talmidim of the K'vutza come on Thursday night and give a shiur in the weekly D'var Malchus. Each participant reads an os [section] so that everybody feels a part of the shiur.

At the end of a recent shiur for women, one of the ladies needed advice and guidance in her waning shalom bayis. Mrs. Friedman explained how to write to the Rebbe, and the woman described her situation and put her letter into a volume of



**Thousands encounter Jewish messages at the Chanukah display in Kings Plaza**

## HE GOT THE SIGN

When Boaz Aharon, today a resident of Elad, speaks of Rabbi Friedman, his love for him is undisguised.

"Rabbi Friedman and his wife are our spiritual parents. Their stubbornness and determination amazed us and got us to see Chabad from up close until we became baalei t'shuva."

Today, Boaz works actively in spreading chassidus and the besuras ha'Geula. He gives a number of shiurim in chassidus every week, in addition to serving as gabbai at the Chabad shul and being a member of the board.

When Boaz and his wife were first becoming religious, they had an amazing story with the Rebbe. Shortly after their wedding, they went to New York for an extended stay and rented an apartment in Canarsie. They thoroughly enjoyed their stay in New York and settled there.

They first met the Friedmans on Sukkos when they wanted to celebrate the holiday at the Chabad House sukka. Little by little, they learned more about Judaism

and became an inseparable part of the Chabad house.

At the end of one of the Melaveh Malka meals, every participant took turns sharing their thoughts. When it was Boaz's turn, he complained about not having children after being married for a number of years. He added that everybody got signs from the Rebbe, but he hadn't.

The next day, Boaz went to the shopping center near his house, where he sold dolls. Shortly thereafter, a man showed up at his stand who asked the prices of his merchandise. Boaz told him the prices, but the man said he wanted to buy all the dolls at a good price. They closed the deal and the man took the dolls and left.

That's when Boaz noticed that on one of the dollar bills the man had given him it said in Hebrew, "Received on 22 Shevat from the Lubavitcher Rebbe." He was flabbergasted, since just the night before he had asked for a sign from the Rebbe, and not a day had passed before he got a clear sign.

Less than a year later, the couple had twins.

*Igros Kodesh*. She was amazed to open the volume to read a letter about shalom bayis problems with practical advice on how to solve them.

Stories like these, says Rabbi Friedman, are daily fare. The answers people get in the *Igros Kodesh* are priceless. There's a generation of mekuravim that are mekushar to the "tree of life" through writing in this way.

One of the battles Rabbi Friedman wages is against assimilation. There are many intermarried families in the area. Rabbi Friedman relates:

"There was a woman here who left her gentile boyfriend and lived with her Israeli boyfriend for a while. When we heard about this, we convinced them to have a kosher chuppa. The wedding took place, and the couple began to get more involved in Yiddishkeit. The father began growing a beard and regularly joined the davening and shiurim. They are on their way to a full Jewish life.

"A few weeks ago we had an Israeli boy here who was friends with a gentile woman. Through him, she became impressed with Judaism and decided she wanted to convert to Judaism. After some time, she began persuading her Israeli boyfriend to come with her to learn Torah because he knew less than her..."

### **KOLLEL TIFERES Z'KEINIM**

Over a minyan of elderly Jews come to the Chabad house every morning where they daven, get a hot meal, and then sit down to learn.

"When we decided to open a Kollel Z'keinim, it wasn't easy. At times, it was impossible. But with concerted effort we met them one by one and convinced them to join the program."

The participants in this Kollel recently made a celebration when the Chabad house bought a pair of t'fillin for them. It was a sort of bar mitzva celebration, and the men were very

### **"GIVE THE DOLLAR TO TZ'DAKA IN LOS ANGELES"**

As they became more involved in Yiddishkeit, Hertzal and Chagit Borochov became very involved in the Chabad house. Rabbi Borochov became gabbai of the shul and his wife was the Chabad house secretary. They absolutely loved the Chabad house.

In the early days of the shul, they didn't have a seifer Torah of their own and borrowing one was always a problem. It often happened that borrowed sifrei Torah were old and in the middle of the Torah reading it was discovered that they were pasul. This bothered R' Borochov tremendously and he tried to ask various wealthy people to donate a Torah but nothing worked out.

One Sunday, R' Borochov and his wife decided to ask the Rebbe for a bracha for success in obtaining a Seifer Torah. But when it came his turn, he was too overcome with emotion to utter a word. The same thing happened with his wife. The Rebbe gave her a dollar and said, "bracha v'hatzlacha," and then told her to give the dollar to tz'daka in Los Angeles!

She went out trembling. She had no idea what connection she had with Los Angeles, since she didn't know a soul there. She decided to send the dollar to a Chabad house in L.A. Afterwards, she asked Rabbi Friedman if she did the right thing. He said, "If the Rebbe told me that, I'd buy a ticket and fly to L.A.!"

The next Sunday, she went to the Rebbe with her little girl, and when she passed by the Rebbe she said she was going to L.A. as the Rebbe had told her to do. The Rebbe's face lit up, and he asked whether her daughter would be joining her. When she said yes, the Rebbe looked pleased.

Preparations for the trip were almost complete, and Mrs. Borochov still had no idea where she would stay in L.A. She suddenly reminded herself that her former kindergarten teacher, Bilha Alon, lived in L.A. When she was already on the plane, R' Borochov found the phone number of her teacher. He called her and said that his wife was about to land in L.A., and asked if she could pick up his wife from the airport. The teacher was thrilled with the idea of meeting her former student and happily agreed to host her.

After reminiscing for some time, Chagit told her teacher the reason for her trip to L.A. Her teacher began to cry and said, "I'll tell you something amazing. Eleven years ago, my two-year-old son drowned in a pool. Following this tragedy, we became baalei t'shuva. At that time, I said that I would donate a Seifer Torah eleven years later *l'ilui nishmaso*, when Roy would have been bar mitzva. In another few days we would have celebrated his bar mitzva and it's time for me to fulfill my promise."

With the help of Mrs. Bilha Alon of L.A. the Chabad house of Canarsie got its own Seifer Torah.



Rabbi Friedman at yechidus for the members of the Machne Israel fund



Some of the children from the gan



Printing the Tanya at the Chabad house in Canarsie

excited about it.

There was also great excitement when the *Tanya* was recently printed in Mill Basin, after it had been printed in the other neighborhoods. Rabbi Friedman explained to his mekuravim that the Rebbe said that printing the *Tanya* helps “conquer” the place.

As for plans for the future:

“We are working on a multi-storey building that will serve as the base for all our activities, and will enable us to expand them significantly. We just signed a contract to buy a lot which will eventually contain a shul, classrooms, auditoriums, and a mikva.”



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# MY ROLE IS TO HEAL AND BLESS

“It’s a severe flu,” said the doctor, but the parents didn’t believe it. The mother said, “How can you say that? Leah’le is already five years old and she’s been in bed since last night, suffering from terrible pains, and barely eating!”

“It’s only the flu, believe me,” repeated the doctor.

The couple left the clinic carrying Leah’le and feeling very concerned about her condition. “When another two days went by and she stopped eating, cried non-stop, and was very despondent, my husband and I decided to take her to the emergency room at the Ziv hospital in Tzfas.”

This was a Tuesday night, 15 Av 5756.

As Rabbi Gershowitz and his wife waited in the emergency room for a doctor, a doctor passing by exclaimed, “She’s unconscious.” Within a minute, a team of doctors and nurses had surrounded them and tried to revive Leah while simultaneously trying to diagnose the reason for her loss of consciousness.

The mother grew hysterical. “I didn’t know what to think. Up until then, my Leah’le had been a happy, lively girl whom everybody loved, and then she was suddenly unconscious and the doctors didn’t know what was going on.”

That same night, the girl was taken from test to test. The doctors

wanted to rule out all possibilities. They considered cancer, meningitis, and other dangerous illnesses. The couple spent a long night in prayer.

## AMAZING ANSWERS FROM THE REBBE

“The doctors ruled out tumors and meningitis,” relates Mrs. Gershowitz, “and found nothing else to account for her symptoms. The not-knowing made me a wreck. We

*But despite the pessimistic prognosis, I was confident in what the Rebbe had said. I thanked the professionals for their desire to help, and tried to keep positive.*

went through a terrible night, in the course of which I called my mother in Yerushalayim. She immediately called top doctors in the hospitals in Yerushalayim. She then reported back to the doctors in Tzfas. It wasn’t possible to transfer my daughter to another hospital.

“One day passed and the second and Leah’le was still unconscious. Occasionally she stirred but was

barely conscious, and then she cried. She didn’t eat nor did she relate to her surroundings. A few days passed and we were going out of our minds with worry.

“The doctors finally concluded that she had an inflammation in her brain called encephalitis. They explained that there are two types of inflammation, one being the result of a bacteria, which can be treated with strong antibiotics. The other type of inflammation is viral and there is no medicinal cure. You just have to wait it out. It would take time until we would get the final results of the tests.

“In the meantime, we said lots of T’hillim and davened for her good health. The people in Kiryat Chabad in Tzfas gathered periodically to say T’hillim for her. Two of our friends, Mrs. Chani Lifsh and Mrs. Etti Ochyan, organized a special t’filla every day at the graves of tzaddikim in the area, as well as children’s rallies to say the p’sukim and T’hillim.

“We wrote to the Rebbe when she first became sick, and the answer was “refua shleima.” A few days later, we wrote again, and my husband put the letter into volume 6 of the *Igros Kodesh*. It was the only volume in the hospital’s shul. The answer he opened to on page 91 gave me much chizuk:

**In answer to your letter in which you ask my opinion whether to continue consulting with doctors or**

**to trust in Hashem: obviously one needs to be strong in their trust in Hashem Who is the Healer of all flesh and does wonders, and along with this, to also make a vessel in nature and to follow the doctor's orders.**

“The Rebbe’s instruction to be strong in trust in Hashem encouraged me even in the worst times, for the situation was difficult. But I always remembered that the Rebbe had blessed us with a refua shleima and told us to trust in Hashem.”

### COUNT ON THE WORST

During the next two weeks, Leah’le continued to lie there motionless. These two weeks were unbearable. Each day, Dr. Anthony Lauder, the director of the pediatric ward, reported to the parents about her condition, and told them about the progress being made on various tests. At a certain point, they had the parents meet with a social worker and psychologist. The doctors figured that after such a long period of unconsciousness, the brain must have been adversely affected, and the girl would not recover.

“The psychologist and social worker wanted to help me make peace with the fact that Leah’le would not be the same girl she was, and that she’d have serious intellectual and physical problems, r”l. But despite the pessimistic prognosis, I was confident in what the Rebbe had said. I thanked the professionals for their desire to help, and tried to keep positive.

“Two weeks later, on 30 Av, Leah suddenly began to convulse. She had numerous seizures, which was a ghastly sight, and the doctors thought her end was near. Dr. Lauder tried to stabilize her. He told us sadly, ‘We’ve done what we could these past two weeks. These convulsions mean something is

going on in her brain. I think you have to consider the worst possibility of all...’

“Throughout her hospitalization, relatives and friends suggested that we transfer Leah’le to a more sophisticated hospital, but we were afraid to move her. In addition, we had seen the great devotion on the part of Dr. Lauder and his assistant, Dr. Dora Segal, along with the medical team, and we didn’t know what would happen somewhere else.

“At this point, when we saw that the doctors at Ziv had lost hope, we inquired as to where we could transfer Leah’le, if at all. Maybe, somewhere else she would be able to



get the treatment that would save her?

“I went home to call Rabbi Elimelech Firer in B’nei Brak. He immediately called the doctors we were dealing with to gain a thorough grasp of the situation. Her condition was so bad that I kept calling my husband at the hospital to make sure that no change for the worse had happened in the interim.

“After numerous phone calls, Rabbi Firer told us that in order to move her to Yerushalayim, we’d have to pay for a private ambulance that had resuscitation equipment. The route would have to pass near Chaifa

and Tel HaShomer, in the event that her medical condition took a sudden turn for the worse. This way they could go immediately to the nearest hospital.

“The next morning we decided to move her to Shaarei Tzedek hospital in Yerushalayim. Professor Shapiro, director of the pediatric ward at Shaarei Tzedek, said that circumventing all the rules, he would prepare a room in the ICU. He promised to give her the best of care.

“In the meantime, we passed along the medical situation to our friends in Kiryat Chabad in Tzfas. Many of them said T’hillim and

many women came to say goodbye to Leah’le and to provide us with support.

“That day we were called to Dr. Lauder’s office and he made it clear that it wasn’t in the child’s best interests to move her to Yerushalayim. It didn’t seem as though they could do anything more for her there. ‘Even if you take her to the ends of the world, you won’t find any help,’ he concluded.

### INDECISION

“Although doctors often speak out of pride, we thought Dr. Lauder was sincere in what he told us. We

felt that he really wanted what was best for our daughter, and so we found ourselves in a grave dilemma. On the one hand we were afraid to move her, but on the other hand, we had ordered an ambulance and a room had been prepared for her in the ICU.

“My husband said he had to write to the Rebbe. He quickly went down to the hospital’s shul and brought volume 6 of the *Igros Kodesh*. He put his letter in the volume and nervously opened it to where he had put the letter. He began to read and smiled. He read out loud and all my friends who came to say goodbye heard the following answer:

**I don’t understand why you conclude that my answer contributed to the weakening of your health. Either you rely on me or you don’t – this is not about weakening at all. My role is to make healthy and to bless, and obviously not the opposite, G-d forbid.**

“The Rebbe said quite clearly that his job is ‘to make healthy and to bless, and obviously not the opposite, G-d forbid.’ My husband continued to read:

**Regarding your question, once again, about the move, that you are told that there is danger, G-d forbid, in not moving – my father-in-law really didn’t like such exaggerations!**

“What should be done? My husband continued reading:

**You should present all the details to three good friends and Hashem**

**will give them the right counsel to advise you properly both materially and spiritually.**

**With blessings for peace of mind and body, and for avodas Hashem with true expansiveness.**

“My husband immediately consulted with two friends in Tzfas and with my mother. The two friends agreed that in light of the Rebbe’s answer, the child should remain in Ziv. My mother immediately called Dr. Lauder and asked him whether he would agree to participate in a conference call with Dr. Shapiro in Shaarei Tzedek. He agreed and within minutes, the three of them were talking.

“The doctors discussed the situation and concluded that there was no point in moving Leah’le to Yerushalayim. They knew that if she was moved to Shaarei Tzedek she would have to undergo all the tests again, and even then, who says they would find a cure for her? Leah’le remained in Ziv and we could only hope and pray.

“On 3 Elul, three days after her convulsions, Leah’le suddenly woke up. She began to eat, and a few hours later, she spoke. The doctors explained that convulsions mean there’s a lot of activity going on in the brain, and generally, this is bad news, but in her case it was a result of the brain ‘waking up.’ It would take time to fully check this out. In any case, she would have to relearn everything, and would gradually

recover.

“The next day she was sent for tests, which came back saying her brain was like that of a one-and-a-half-year to two-year-old. The doctors said her recovery period would take six months.

“We saw the fulfillment of the Rebbe’s bracha much faster than that. One day later, she was walking on her own. New tests were done and this time they said her brain was like that of a four-and-a-half-year old.

“On 7 Elul she was released from the hospital. We were asked to bring her once every two weeks for tests at a neurologist. When we went the second time, the neurologist yelled at us and said, ‘Don’t you see that everything is fine and the child is healthy. Don’t bring her back here again!’

“I was thrilled. How many tears had we shed these past three weeks. How many times had I faced the breaking point and only the Rebbe’s answers continued to encourage me to continue to believe and hope. How many times had my mother, doctors, and friends told us to prepare for the worst, or at least for a situation in which I would have a daughter with serious problems. And now, Leah’le was perfectly fine.

One month ago, Leah’le celebrated her 13<sup>th</sup> birthday. She’s as happy and healthy as she always was, thanks to the Rebbe’s brachos.



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# LESSONS FROM THE SHOW-TRIAL AT THE HAGUE

BY SHAI GEFEN

If the international court at The Hague didn't address the Partition Fence, then we'd have to come up with it ourselves. Why? Because it provided a terrific lesson on the position of the halacha brought in Hilchos Shabbos in siman 329; that not only do fleeing and capitulating instead of fighting back, not placate the enemy, but it arouses world ire against us.

The display of the charred remains of the bus, and the presence of hundreds of family members of terror victims, didn't reflect well on us at all. Did they think that the judges at The Hague don't know what's going on in the Middle East?

Ever since we decided to forgo our security in exchange for the world's positive opinion of us, we have brought tragedies upon ourselves. Who cares about the skeleton of a burnt bus? If you claim you're being butchered, then let's see you do something about it! Logic dictates that you react by annihilating those who seek to murder you. Playing the victim doesn't help anybody.

As for those who thought that the Fence would make the world love us and understand us, well, it turns out they were mistaken. The world wants to see us react

forcefully, and although they might not applaud us for doing so, they'll respect us far more than when we capitulate. Today every fool understands that the victim mentality isn't effective.

It's amazing to see how the Rebbe explained this to Mr. Elyakim Rubinstein, in Cheshvan 5750, when the latter was secretary in the Israeli government. The Rebbe told him that when it comes to security, the U.S. doesn't take England and France's position into account, even when the entire world was against it. This is why America always won and achieved what it did.

The Foreign Ministry expressed its satisfaction by the publicity at The Hague. The Israeli newspapers interviewed the families of the slain. It might be touching to read but it just shows us again, live, in front of the world, that the victim who flees gets it over the head too. He eats the rotten fish, gets hit for it, pays the fine, and is ultimately chased out of the city.

Our "heroes of democracy" calculated that the political significance of the Fence would be something the world would hail, for the Fence outlines the borders of a Palestinian state. But G-d has the last laugh because the thing that

they screamed was "war crimes," i.e., the settling of Yesha, was not discussed at The Hague. It is the Fence, which was supposed to win us international approval, which became the issue of the day.

## TALKING ABOUT WITHDRAWAL BRINGS ON MURDER

Each week we quote the Rebbe about how merely **speaking** about concessions to Arabs, immediately brings on attacks and the death of Jews r"l. The Rebbe said this to Rabbi Elimelech Naiman, Gerrer representative:

**Since that party met with representatives of the Arabs and negotiated with them...this results in – according to nature and to logic – Arabs in every area continuing their activities and harming some of our brethren, the Jewish people, to the point of murder, r"l, and not only in Eretz Yisroel but in other countries, too.**

*(Chol HaMoed Pesach 5750, muga)*

Until this day, we haven't heard these people admitting their errors because they're preoccupied with giving away land.

Last Sunday, hours after the massacre on the streets of Yerushalayim, senior officials





announced, “talking about evacuations encouraged the terrorist.”

We know this from the Nasi HaDor and we knew about it years before these officials announced it. Our battle, the battle of Chabad chassidim is not only about giving away land, which is terrible in itself, but about the very negotiations with Arabs about giving away land. The concessions are serious, to the point that the Rebbe said that supporting this party is forbidden according to Torah, whether at elections or in establishing a government.

It's yet another lesson in how the Rebbe's words are precise...

### CONSEQUENCES OF THE FENCE ARE KNOWN IN ADVANCE

In recent weeks, we have discussed the dangers of the Partition Fence, in that it contradicts halacha. Instead of attacking our enemies, we run and hide behind a fence. The consequences are known in advance. Israel is sinking billions of dollars into it, is facing worldwide criticism, is put on trial at The Hague, and there is worse to come.

After all that, the head of Shin Beit says that terrorists are manufacturing mortars to circumvent the Fence. Avi Dichter, head of Shabak, said as follows, “The Palestinians are putting in great effort to develop weapons to circumvent the Fence,” at a meeting of the Committee on Foreign Relations and Security. According to Dichter, this threat will be realized with the unilateral withdrawal or without it. Dichter gave as an example the attempts of the Palestinians to develop improved long-range mortars. He added that Palestinians in Gaza are trying to convey the information that they are the gateway to the areas of Yehuda

and Shomron.

Do you see how absurd this is? They're putting billions into a fence when they know that it's pointless. They're ruining the economy, hundreds of thousands are under the poverty line, Security is complaining about the investment in the Fence when it has real security needs, and so it goes. And in the meantime, our leaders soothe us and tell us that everything is fine, and the incredible thing is that we buy it! It's like the guy who jumped from the fiftieth floor of a building and as he passed the twentieth floor he said, “for now, everything's okay!”

### “THEY ONLY CARE ABOUT THEIR SEATS”

Earlier, we mentioned the Rebbe's position, that supporting a party and a government that talks to Arabs about withdrawals is forbidden, and whoever collaborates with them is a collaborator with acts of murder.

The Rebbe's position was presented clearly to Rabbi Elimelech Naiman, and the situation today is ten times worse. The craziness that has gotten hold of Sharon's government has reached new heights that Israeli politicians (even from the Left) never reached before. Despite it all, those who are supposed to worry about Eretz Yisroel have grabbed on to their seats and refuse to leave their warm, ministerial office. This is despite requests from the Yesha Council to immediately leave the government.

Minister Benny Alon had a terrific explanation this week, as to why he doesn't leave the government: “I prefer political action which will stop the downhill slide to the abyss.” We didn't know whether to laugh or to cry over this clown. In the past he urged Rechavam Zeevi to leave the government for far less, and today he innocently presents

*It's not merely “a mitzva that comes about through an aveira,” but “an aveira that comes about through an aveira,” since this constitutes a public desecration of G-d's name. Even a “desecrator of G-d's name in secret” his punishment is, etc. All the more so for “one who publicly desecrates G-d's name.”*

himself as the man who'll manage to stop Sharon.

In the sicha of parsha R'ei 5735, the Rebbe referred to a few religious ministers who said they were remaining in the government in order to prevent the downhill slide into the abyss. History is repeating itself.

As far as their maintaining that they must remain in the government because of the security situation, they have no opinion when it comes to security; they don't care about it at all. They conceded on weapons in order to have a budget for their ministry, and they say they will fight not to give away Yehuda and Shomron. We know that there is already full agreement to give away Yehuda and Shomron. They must vote as they are told (they can say what they want, but then they have to vote as they're told). The only thing they care about is sitting on their seat. As long as they're not thrown out. The main thing is: nobody says a word since they give x amount to yeshivos to keep them quiet and so they don't make noise about autopsies, work on Shabbos, and MiHu Yehudi.

It's not merely "a mitzva that comes about through an aveira," but

*Their sitting in the government doesn't help at all: not with regard to autopsies, not with regard to work on Shabbos, not with regard to MiHu Yehudi, not with regard to allowing Reform into Eretz Yisroel, not with regard to mixed swimming etc.*

"an aveira that comes about through an aveira," since this constitutes a public desecration of G-d's name. Even a "desecrator of G-d's name in secret" his punishment is, etc. All the more so for "one who publicly desecrates G-d's name." Since they know with whom they spoke, and how much money they gave and how much they promised to give –

it's a public desecration of G-d's name, which is the most serious of sins.

Their sitting in the government doesn't help at all: not with regard to autopsies, not with regard to work on Shabbos, not with regard to MiHu Yehudi, not with regard to allowing Reform into Eretz Yisroel, not with regard to mixed swimming etc. On the contrary, when they are outside the government, they have the power to make demands, whereas when they are in the government they lack for nothing and only need the seat ...

And then they say that this is "the beginning of the Geula," and we already have the ingathering of the exiles, and the only thing lacking is the building of the Beis HaMikdash, which is the opposite of the order brought in the Rambam – that "a king will arise from the house of Dovid ... and he will compel all Israel to follow it [Torah] and to strengthen its breaches," and only then, "he will wage the wars of Hashem and be victorious," and "he will build the Beis HaMikdash in its place," and only after that, "and gather the outcast of Israel," and then the Geula comes.

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## REMINDING PRESIDENT KATZAV

A kiddush Hashem took place at the official reception for Israeli President Moshe Katzav

At the Champs Elysee Palace with French President Jacques Chirac. Katzav's visit thrilled French Jewry, and crowds attended the reception ceremony and the special prayer at the central synagogue.

Many distinguished people were invited to the meal and reception, including shliach Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Pevsner. President Chirac introduced Rabbi Pevsner to President

Katzav and told him about the tremendous work that Chabad does for all segments of the community in France with their beautiful network of schools. President Chirac also prided himself on his personal friendship with his father, Rabbi Hillel Pevsner.



Rabbi Pevsner reminded President Katzav about the sicha he heard from the Rebbe on 10 Shevat, about the necessity of protecting the shleimus of Eretz Yisroel, and standing strong against giving any part of it away. This sicha took place as the Rebbe held Katzav's hand.

In response to Rabbi Pevsner,

President Katzav said, "Indeed, it was a historic moment."

Rabbi Pevsner: "It's not only about history, but is quite relevant, now more than ever."

Rabbi Pevsner quoted points from the sicha and read the first paragraph together with him. President Katzav took the paper and promised to study it.

At the conclusion of their conversation, President Chirac turned to Rabbi Pevsner and asked him, "Can you bless us together for the furtherance of our ties for the good of both countries and both nations?"

Rabbi Pevsner placed his hands on both their heads and recited the priestly blessing, and translated it. He added that by helping the Jewish people, France would also be blessed.

## FIRE DESTROYS MOST OF BORUCH NACHSHON'S PAINTINGS

"The collection was burnt," said Boruch Nachshon sadly to *Beis Moshiach*, after a fire destroyed most of his original paintings, along with many copies.

A few hours after the joyous Hachnasas Seifer Torah in Chevron, a fire broke out in his home, a result of an electrical short. Works of art he had painted over thirty years were stored in an apartment above his apartment. A family member was sleeping upstairs when he suddenly smelled smoke. He miraculously escaped, and immediately called for the fire department, but it was too late. The flames destroyed the rest of the paintings.



Boruch is in shock and has still not estimated the extent of the damage. He speaks with great restraint, but in his voice you can hear the pain he feels over the tremendous loss.

"The Rebbe told me to paint, and encouraged me time and again. You know that the Rebbe personally visited my art exhibit, which shows how important he thought it was. I put my entire life into these paintings and now most of them are ashes."

Boruch refuses to accept any help, despite the great financial loss he suffered. He would like to sell his remaining paintings and can be contacted at 02-9961032.

# SHLUCHIM PUT T'FILLIN ON DEMONSTRATORS AT THE HAGUE

Thousands of Jews from Israel, Europe, and the U.S. went to The Hague in Holland to protest the show-trial targeting Israel. Terror victims attended too, as well as members of the Foreign Ministry, students from France and Germany, and a group of students from Y.U. and Stern College in New York.

Lubavitcher chassidim were on the scene to take advantage of the situation and to promote a message about Judaism and the Geula. In between the charred remains of the bus and a Palestinian demonstration, they set up a t'fillin stand under a sign that said, "Support Jewish Pride."

Chabad shliach to The Hague, Rabbi Shmuel Katzman, with the help of talmidim of the smicha program in Antwerp, offered passersby a "segula for victory and security." This was a great photo-op for the media, which took pictures of a chassidic young man putting t'fillin on a man wrapped in an Israeli flag, with the clock tower of the court in the background.

Many emotions were felt at The Hague that week. Outside the "Peace Palace," stood victims of terror and their families in silent pain, holding pictures of the 927 murdered. Some cried and many put on t'fillin.

Chabad shluchim were the ones who obtained the permits that allowed Israel to display the recently



Shliach Rabbi Katzman (on the right) and Rabbi Yehoshua Naftalin, a Lubavitcher who is a member of Zaka, talking to a Jew by the charred remains of the bus



Mivtza T'fillin near the exploded bus

destroyed #19 bus. In addition to putting on t'fillin with Jews, Chabad also helped Jewish delegations find places to sleep, kosher food, and anything else they needed.

On Monday, the first day of deliberations, the shluchim arranged lunch for hundreds of Jews from around the world. During the meal

they watched a video in which the Rebbe spoke about the obligation to insist on shleimus ha'Aretz. Rabbi Katzman spoke about the Rebbe's firm view on the prohibition of giving away any parts of Eretz Yisroel.

Throughout the days of deliberation, the shluchim organized minyanim and meals for all the Jews who came to The Hague to demonstrate. Many bereaved family members attended the minyanim in order to say Kaddish for their loved ones.

Representatives of various organizations thanked the shluchim. Among the organizations that were helped were representatives of Magen Dovid Edom, B'nei Brith, Zaka, the Foreign Ministry, Almagor, and hundreds of students.

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## RABBI MEIR LIEBER KELLER, A”H

The funeral of Rabbi Meir Lieber Keller passed by 770 on Monday morning. Rabbi

Keller was the first secretary of the Rebbe. Rabbi Keller was born in 5674 (1914) in New York. He learned in Yeshivas Torah Vodaas until he married.

Rabbi Keller was well acquainted with the Kapishnitzer Rebbe, z”l, who lived near him in Williamsburg. When the Admur heard from his son-in-law, Rabbi Zalman Gurary, a”h, that the son-in-law of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, who had recently arrived in the U.S., was looking for a secretary, he recommended Rabbi Keller.

Rabbi Gurary presented the idea to the Rebbe and a few days later, Rabbi Keller was accepted for the job and began working in 770. It was a part-time job at first, from seven until ten o’clock in the evening. He sat in the Rebbe’s room where the Rebbe’s desk was exactly where it is today. In the center of the room, facing the door, was a tiny desk with a typewriter where Rabbi Keller did his work.

At that time, Rabbi Keller was the Rebbe’s only secretary. Rabbi Nissin Mindell did

secretarial work for the Rebbe but it was not his primary job. With Rabbi Keller worked exclusively for the Rebbe. He was officially considered an employee of Machne Israel (and he received a check from Rabbi Chadakov), but the Rebbe gave him work connected with all the mosdos he ran.

Rabbi Keller’s job was to type the letters that the Rebbe wrote. The letters were generally in Lashon HaKodesh, but there were also letters that needed to be translated into English. The Rebbe wrote them in Lashon HaKodesh, Rabbi Mindell translated them, and Rabbi Keller typed them up. On those occasions when Rabbi Mindell couldn’t do the translating, Rabbi Keller did it.

The Rebbe later expanded his job so that it became a full time position. He then worked from 9 to 5. Rabbi Keller described working with the Rebbe:

“While the Rebbe sat in his room, I always saw him in hat and jacket. He generally read or wrote letters. His modesty was unbelievable.

“There were no s’farim on the table. The only thing on the table on a regular basis was a bottle of vodka and small cups, and these were put to use. Often people would come to consult with the Rebbe. They were usually Lubavitchers. The “world” didn’t know the Rebbe yet. The Rebbe had a connection with some g’dolim (as I knew from the letters),

but ordinary people didn’t know of the Rebbe’s greatness. Lubavitchers knew though, and they often came to ask the Rebbe questions, and the Rebbe Rayatz would also refer people to the Rebbe.

“In the course of conversation with them, the Rebbe would sometimes pour some mashkeh and say l’chaim with them.

“On many occasions, I said l’chaim with the Rebbe from that bottle. The Rebbe was very particular about work hours. Just as he was particular about my coming on time and not leaving in the middle of work (the only break was for lunch), so too, as soon as it was five o’clock, he would remind me that the work day was over. I could be in the middle of a sentence, and even in the middle of a word, but I had to stop what I was doing and continue the next day.

“However, when someone was in the room, the Rebbe didn’t tell me explicitly to leave but he would say, ‘R’ Meir, come say l’chaim...’ and this was a hint that I had to leave the room, after saying l’chaim, of course.

“Often, the Rebbe would leave the room and go upstairs to the Rebbe Rayatz. I never heard him say what he heard there. I had one yechidus with the Rebbe Rayatz. I had a certain personal problem, and I asked the Rebbe about it. He told me I should ask the Rebbe Rayatz, and he arranged a meeting for me.

“Aside from those breaks when the Rebbe went up to the Rebbe Rayatz, I don’t remember the Rebbe leaving or stopping his work for any reason, aside from the hours when he went to work outside of 770, and the break for Mincha with the minyan of the yeshiva, at about three o’clock.

“I mentioned earlier about people who would come and consult with the Rebbe. I was supposed to ignore them and continue my work, and there was quite a bit of work ... but one time I couldn’t restrain myself, and I listened to what sounded like a very interesting conversation. My fingers automatically slowed down on my typewriter when suddenly, I saw the Rebbe turn to me and say, ‘But don’t type this in the letter...’”

Rabbi Keller’s children were niskarev to Chabad and merited kiruvim from the Rebbe. On Friday he was rushed to the hospital and on Shabbos he had a heart attack. He passed away on Sunday. He is survived by children and grandchildren, who are mekusharim to the Rebbe.

