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DON'T BE AFRAID - COME WITH ME TO PHARAOH

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



SHABBOS PARSHAS BO; 4TH DAY OF SHVAT, 5751

1. Parshas Bo possesses a unique dimension. The parshiyos which precede it, Shmos and VaEira, describe the preparations for the exodus from Egypt. Parshas B'Shalach which comes afterwards describes the aftermath of the exodus. The redemption itself, however, is discussed in only one parsha, Parshas Bo.

Indeed, the entire parsha revolves around the redemption. Even the beginning of the parsha (which describes the final phase of preparation for the exodus, the last three plagues) shares a direct connection to the exodus as evidenced by the demand voiced by Pharaoh's servants that he allow the Jews to leave Egypt.

Similarly, the conclusion of the parsha is connected with the redemption as reflected in the mitzvah of t'fillin which states, "And it will be a sign on your hand and a remembrance between your eyes... that G-d took you out of Egypt with a strong hand."

There is, however, a problematic dimension to this point. Although

the entire parsha is connected with the redemption, the very name of the parsha, Bo and the verse with which it is connected, "And G-d said to Moshe, come to Pharaoh," point to the fact that Pharaoh still maintained his power and therefore, Moshe had to approach him. Despite the seven plagues which were inflicted upon him, Pharaoh remained unbroken. The question arises: Why is the parsha which centers on the redemption given a name which indicates Pharaoh's power?

There is also a question regarding the mention of the mitzvah of t'fillin at the conclusion of this parsha: The passage describing the mitzvah of t'fillin states, "And when it will come to pass that G-d will bring you into the land of the Canaanites." Based on this verse, there are some authorities who maintain that the Jews were not obligated to wear t'fillin during the forty years that they journeyed through the desert. Even according to the opinions which maintain that the Jews did wear t'fillin throughout their journey, there is still a connection between t'fillin and Eretz Yisroel as our Sages declared, "Fulfill this mitzvah so that you will enter the

land." Thus, t'fillin are related to the ultimate and final phase in the exodus from Egypt, the entry into Eretz Yisroel.[276]

Since t'fillin are associated with the ultimate and final phase of the redemption, the question arises: Why is this mitzvah mentioned in a parsha which describes only the preliminary stages of the redemption? Indeed, as related in Parshas B'Shalach, until the miracle of the Red Sea, the Jews still considered returning to Egypt and for that reason, "G-d did not lead them through the land of the Philistines... lest the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt." Furthermore, it is difficult to understand why t'fillin are mentioned in a parsha which begins with an indication of Pharaoh's power.

These questions can be resolved within the context of the Zohar's statements at the beginning of Parshas Bo. The Zohar states:

Why is it written, "Come to Pharaoh"? It should say, "Go to Pharaoh." The word "come" indicates that since G-d caused Moshe to enter room after room until he confronted a sublime and powerful

crocodile [the symbol of Pharaoh]... Moshe was afraid of it... When the Holy One, blessed be He, saw that Moshe was afraid... He declared, "Behold, I will confront you Pharaoh King of Egypt..." G-d, Himself, was forced to combat him. He and no one else.

The Zohar implies that Pharaoh is the source of the forces of evil, and therefore, Moshe feared him. Accordingly, G-d did not tell him to go to Pharaoh (i.e., to go by himself). Rather, He told him "Come," i.e., come with Me, for G-d Himself had to negate Pharaoh's power.[277]

Moshe was sent to confront Pharaoh "so that I will be able to demonstrate these miraculous signs in his midst." The intent of the confrontation was the nullification of Pharaoh and the negation of his power. In this context, we can understand why Moshe was forced to proceed room after room inside Pharaoh's palace. Since the intent was to break Pharaoh's power entirely, this had to be done in the inner rooms of his palace, the place where his power was manifest in the most open manner. When his power was broken there, its expression throughout his kingdom was also nullified.[278]

Thus, the command to Moshe to "Come to Pharaoh" was not intended only as an intermediary phase in bringing the Jews out of Egypt. Instead, it had a purpose of its own, to break and nullify Pharaoh's power.

The importance of the destruction of Pharaoh's power can be understood within the context of the connection between the exile and redemption from Egypt and the acquisition of Eretz Yisroel. In the covenant Bein HaB'sarim, G-d promised Avrohom that his descendants would inherit Eretz Yisroel. At the same time, however,

He also told him that the Jews would undergo exile and slavery.

The rationale for the association between the two is that G-d desires the Jewish people to earn Eretz Yisroel through their own efforts, so that it will not be given to them as "bread of shame." The Jews are charged with the task of transforming a material land into Eretz Yisroel, making it "a land which desires to fulfill the will of its Creator," and which shares a unique connection to the Jewish people, who are "the pupil of G-d's eye," as it were.[279] Therefore, "the

Since the intent was to break Pharaoh's power entirely, this had to be done in the inner rooms of his palace, the place where his power was manifest in the most open manner.

eyes[280] of G-d are always upon it from the beginning of the year until its end."

This generates the potential for Eretz Yisroel to "spread throughout the entire world," and for there to be an open revelation of G-dliness, "the glory of G-d will be revealed and all flesh will see." In the Era of Redemption when these prophecies will be fulfilled, it will be openly manifest how our material existence is one with G-d's true existence.

This was made possible by the fulfillment of the decree, "Your

descendants will be strangers in a land that is not their own;" i.e., forcing the Jews to confront a material existence that has no connection with them. Furthermore, this land, the land of Egypt, will oppose the Jewish people and cause them difficulty,[281] for it is "the nakedness of the land," "the most depraved of all lands," the lowest possible level.

This descent, however, brought out the potential for: a) the Jewish people themselves to reach an elevated level. On the verse, "And Yaakov lived in the land of Egypt," it is explained that it was in the land of Egypt that Yaakov — and his descendants, the Jewish people — experienced true life. b) The Jews to elevate the Divine sparks encloded in the material substance of the world. This is reflected in the Jews spoiling the Egyptians, taking from them, "golden and silver utensils and garments," and similarly, in the eruv rav, the multitude of gentiles who left Egypt with them. c) The destruction and nullification of those aspects of worldliness which cannot be elevated. Concerning these elements of existence, it is said, "their destruction represents their purification." Furthermore, their destruction adds power to the realm of holiness. This is reflected in our Sages' statement, "Tzur was built only through the destruction of Jerusalem." Conversely, the destruction of Tzur, and similarly, other centers which stand in opposition to holiness, lead to the strengthening and rebuilding of Jerusalem. This reveals the power of holiness in a manner where no opposition is possible for all opposing forces have been totally negated.[282]

Only after these negative factors were nullified did the Jews leave Egypt. Indeed, the destruction of these forces which opposed to holiness made it possible — had not

other factors interfered — for them to proceed directly to Eretz Yisroel, the land in which the service of establishing a dwelling for G-d in this lowly world is carried out.

Based on the above it is possible to explain why Bo was chosen as the name for the parsha which deals with the exodus from Egypt, including the ultimate stage of that exodus, the entry into Eretz Yisroel as explained in regard to the mitzvah of t'fillin.

The most prominent dimension of the exodus from Egypt is, as the very name “exodus” implies, the departure from a situation that opposes holiness. This is reflected, in the most complete sense, not in the elevation of the sparks of holiness encloded within Egypt, but in the nullification of Egypt's power. The elevation of the sparks of holiness reveals the good which was hidden within Egypt; it does not, however, effect the very nature of Egypt itself, that dimension which stands in opposition to holiness and “causes difficulty to Israel.” For the exodus from Egypt to be complete, this negative dimension must be nullified and destroyed.

This is the intent of “Coming to Pharaoh,” to enter the innermost rooms of his palace, to confront the source of evil at its very root and to nullify it utterly. As explained above, the nullification of these negative factors grants the potential to proceed into Eretz Yisroel. Furthermore, this leads to the possibility of a positive conception of Pharaoh, the source for “the revelation of all lights,” an unbounded revelation which transcends even the limitations of holiness.

The exile in Egypt is the source of all exiles and the redemption from Egypt, the source of all redemptions. In particular, the exodus is related to the future redemption as reflected in

the verse, “As in the days of your exodus from Egypt, I will show you wonders.”

Indeed, the parallel between the two is further emphasized by our Sages' explanation that, ideally, the redemption from Egypt should have been the ultimate redemption. Directly after leaving Egypt and receiving the Torah, the Jews should have entered Eretz Yisroel, never to be exiled again. For certain reasons, however, G-d brought about a series of events that led to further exiles beginning with the exile in Babylon and concluding with the fourth and present exile, the exile of Edom, so that the Jews' inheritance of Eretz Yisroel will come about as a result of their own efforts.[283]

As explained above, the emergence from exile is associated with two factors: a) the elevation of the sparks of holiness that have fallen into exile. This is accomplished through our observance of Torah and mitzvos and our service of “May all your deeds be for the sake of Heaven” in which we use the material substance of the world for a spiritual intent. b) The destruction and nullification of those negative factors which cannot be elevated to holiness. For this reason, we find many prophecies describing the fall of the nations which ruled over the Jews, e.g., “Babylon has fallen and she will be broken,” “There will be a slaughter for G-d in Batzra,” “And saviors will ascend on Mount Zion to judge the Mount of Eisav.” The only nations which will remain will be those which help and support the Jewish people, as it is written, “I will send refugees from them... and they shall bring their brethren from among the nations an offering to G-d... upon My holy mountain Jerusalem.” At that time, “I will transform all the nations to a pure tongue, so that they will all call upon the name of G-d, to form a single block.”[284]

Then, after the ultimate redemption, the service of the Jewish people will be fulfilled in a complete manner, “as the mitzvos of Your will.” Indeed, the observance of the mitzvos will be on such a high level that our present observance will be considered merely as “signs” for those mitzvos.

For this reason, the Torah associates the mitzvah of t'fillin with the entry into Eretz Yisroel. Here, the intent is on the ultimate fulfillment of the mitzvah, its fulfillment in the Era of Redemption, therefore, it is associated with the entry into Eretz Yisroel, i.e., the ultimate entry into Eretz Yisroel. There, in “the palace of the king,” the Jews will establish a complete connection with G-d through the observance of the mitzvos.[285]

2. It is written, “He placed the world in their hearts;” i.e., everything that transpires in the world at large depends on, and has its source, in the service performed by a Jew in his heart. A person is called “a world in microcosm” and is instructed by our Sages to realize that the world at large was created “for him.”

Thus, the above concepts relating to the redemption from exile, the destruction of the forces of exile, and the entry into Eretz Yisroel, all have parallels within our personal service of G-d. Eretz Yisroel refers to the realm of holiness, the observance of Torah and mitzvos where G-dliness is openly revealed. In contrast, the Diaspora refers to mundane affairs, activities which share no intrinsic connection to holiness. On the contrary, they cause difficulty (meitzarim in Hebrew which relates to Mitzrayim, Egypt) and confusion (bilbul in Hebrew which relates to Bavel, Babylon).

Ultimately, “Eretz Yisroel will spread out to all other lands;” i.e., our service of holiness will permeate

even our mundane activities and they will be performed in a manner of “May all your deeds be for the sake of Heaven” and “Know Him in all your ways.”

For this to be possible, however, there are certain aspects regarding our involvement in the world at large, e.g. the aspects of Egypt and Babylon mentioned above, that cannot be elevated and which must be broken and destroyed.

In Chassidic thought, a similar concept is described in regard to our power of desire and the selfish and materialistic orientation which characterizes it. The power of desire itself is positive and can be directed toward holiness. In contrast, its selfish and materialistic orientation is bad and must be destroyed entirely.[286]

We can learn how to carry out the service of nullifying evil from the command, “Come to Pharaoh.” It is necessary to confront and break the evil in its place of power. Once this process is completed, it is possible to nullify all its peripheral expressions.

Since confronting evil in its place of power may cause a Jew to become afraid, G-d tells the spark of Moshe that exists within every Jew, not to be afraid, to come with Him to Pharaoh, that He Himself will wage war against him and negate the power of evil.

Each person has a different conception of Egypt and Babylon, i.e., the aspects of material existence which cause him difficulty and confuse him. There are some who are disturbed and confused because of a deficiency in their service of G-d, while others are disturbed and confused because of a lack in their material affairs.[287]

We can be assured that these hindrances will also be nullified. The Jews are considered as G-d’s children

as it is written, “My son, My firstborn, Israel.” Parents eagerly try to fulfill their children’s desires although they recognize that what their children want is really unimportant and the child desires it only because of his limited understanding. Although he knows this to be true, a parent does not make such calculations. As soon as he sees that his child wants something, he does not try to teach him that it is not worth wanting, he

Since confronting evil in its place of power may cause a Jew to become afraid, G-d tells the spark of Moshe that exists within every Jew, not to be afraid, to come with Him to Pharaoh, that He Himself will wage war against him and negate the power of evil.

tries to obtain it for his child.

Similarly, when G-d sees that a Jew — His small child, as it were — wants something, even though the matter is of petty concern, merely a material lack, He tries to provide His child with it. Before the Jew feels a real need, G-d “satisfies the desire of every living being.”[288]

Furthermore, if the above applies when a child wants something of no real consequence, surely it holds

true when the child, the Jews, want something of genuine worth, indeed, of the most ultimate importance, that the Jews and the Divine Presence[289] leave exile. Even if the Jews are still lacking in their service, G-d “will redeem Israel from all his afflictions,” including the greatest affliction, the exile, and only afterwards, will “He redeem Israel from all His sins.”[290]

3. The above concepts are particularly relevant in our generation because Parshas Bo, is always read in connection with the Previous Rebbe’s yahrtzeit.[291] The Previous Rebbe’s service was, as his name Yosef implies, associated with the verse, “May G-d add on to me another son;” transforming one who is “another,” estranged from his Jewish roots, into a “son.” Thus, the Previous Rebbe was involved in spreading Yiddishkeit and Chassidus to those Jews who (through no fault of their own, merely because they were tinokos sh’nishb’u) were distant from Jewish practice. These efforts included the translation of Jewish texts (including works of P’nimius HaTorah) into other languages for those who could not understand Lashon HaKodesh (“the holy tongue”).[292]

Furthermore, the Previous Rebbe was also involved with gentiles — those who are “another” in a real sense — and sought to spread justice and righteousness in the world at large, strengthening peoples’ faith in the Creator, and thus motivating them to fulfill the seven universal commandments given to Noah and his descendants.

These efforts — both among the Jews and among the gentiles — were enhanced when the Previous Rebbe came to America.[293] This gave a greater potential to elevate even the lowest aspects of existence and for these efforts to spread.

Significantly, the Previous Rebbe’s

activities were carried out with the emphasis that they were preparations for the ultimate redemption. His drawing close those Jews far from Jewish practice was a preparation for the fulfillment of the prophecy, “And the L-rd will stretch forth His hand... to His people.. [in] the islands of the sea... and gather the dispersed of Israel.” Similarly, his efforts with the gentiles were a preparation for the fulfillment of the prophecy, “Then I will transform the nations to a clear speech...”

Thus, it is appropriate to prepare for the commemoration of the Previous Rebbe’s yahrtzait by: a) increasing the study of his teachings; b) giving tz’daka to those institutions which carry out his directives and those which are named after him; c) holding farbrengens at which resolutions will be made to continue following in the path of service he outlined.

In particular, an emphasis should be made on the closeness of the ultimate redemption. To quote the Previous Rebbe, “All of you, stand prepared to greet Moshiach.” This is particularly in the present year, a year when “I will show you wonders,” and indeed, in the last weeks, we have seen open signs of the coming of the redemption.

The Yalkut Shimoni states that in the year when Moshiach will come:

Nations will challenge each other... The King of Persia[294] will challenge an Arab king... All the nations of the world will panic and be seized by consternation... [G-d will tell the Jews:] “My children. Do not fear. Everything which I have wrought, I have performed only for your sake. The time for your redemption has come.”

Surely, these events will bring no harm to the Jewish people, particularly those living in Eretz Yisroel, “the land where the eyes of G-d, your L-rd, are always upon it,

from the beginning of the year until its end.” On the contrary, Eretz Yisroel is the safest place in the world.

The gentiles will not be able to harm the Jews. Those who have suffered harm will surely be healed immediately.[295] And even before the imminent coming of the redemption, “All the children of Israel will enjoy light in their dwellings.”

The knowledge of the imminence of Moshiach’s coming should inspire an increase in our observance of the Torah and its mitzvos for, as the Rambam writes, “one mitzvah can

***An emphasis should
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greet Moshiach.”***

tip one’s individual balance... and that of the world at large and bring deliverance and salvation.”

May we soon no longer need any signs for Moshiach’s coming because, in the closest and most immediate future — he will come.

NOTES:

276. The connection between the exodus from Egypt and the entry into Eretz Yisroel is reflected in the verse, “These are the journeys of the children of Israel who departed from the land of Egypt.” Although they had left Egypt after the first journey, since they had not entered Eretz Yisroel as of yet, all 42 journeys are considered to be phases in the process of departing from the

land of Egypt.

277. Although Parshas VaEira also records that G-d told Moshe to come to Pharaoh, the Zohar makes its statements in connection with Parshas Bo. This can be explained as follows: Parshas VaEira relates how G-d told Moshe: “Come to Pharaoh and speak to him.” In contrast, in Parshas Bo, the confrontation with Pharaoh was not merely for the purpose of communication, but was itself a phase in the process of breaking his power.

278. In fact, after Pharaoh’s power was broken through the plague of the slaying of the firstborn, his entire structure of authority broke down. He rose in the middle of the night, before his servants, and went out to the Jews’ homes, running from place to place, calling “Where does Moshe live? Where does Aharon live?” He realized that his very existence depended on his leaving his palace and searching to and fro for Moshe and Aharon.

279. Similarly, the land is used as a metaphor for the Jewish people themselves as it is written, “You shall be a cherished land for Me.”

280. This expression also implies that, in Eretz Yisroel, there is a potential to see G-dliness as it is manifest in mundane, worldly matters.

281. Our Sages note the connection between the word matziros, “cause difficulty,” and the name Mitzrayim, “Egypt.”

282. A parallel to the latter two levels can be seen within the ten plagues which can be divided into two categories: a) plagues which were sent to influence Pharaoh to let the Jews leave Egypt (i.e., a parallel to the elevation of material things); b) plagues which were instituted “because I have hardened his heart... so that I will be able to demonstrate these miraculous signs in his midst and so that you will relate to your children and grandchildren what I wrought in Egypt” (i.e., to nullify the power of Egypt and, in doing so, increase the power of holiness and lead to, as the latter verse continues, “you will know that I am G-d”).

283. Enduring the exile in Egypt also endowed the Jews with the virtue of service through their own efforts. Nevertheless, the exile in Egypt was general in nature. In contrast, the four subsequent exiles reflected four particular levels in our service. Because they sustained their

commitment through these different phases, the Jews' virtue of service through their own efforts is more complete.

284. The nullification of the gentile powers and the positive transformation of those who remain is reflected in the Zohar's statements at the conclusion of Parshas VaEira:

There will come a time when the descendants of Yishmoel will stir up great battles in the world... At that time, a nation from the ends of the world will be aroused... and will wage war with them ... and at that time, "I will transform all the nations to a pure tongue, so that they will all call upon the name of G-d, to form a single block."

285. The concept of connection to G-d is the core of our observance of the mitzvos. Indeed, the very word mitzvah is related to the word tzavva which means "connection." In the most complete sense, this connection will be established in Eretz Yisroel in the Era of Redemption. In contrast, while in exile, the Jews are compared to "children who have been sent away from their Father's table." As such, a complete connection is impossible (and for that reason, the mitzvos fulfilled in the time

of exile are merely "signs" as stated above).

286. We see a parallel to this in the para aduma (the red cow). The cow must be burnt entirely. After this process is completed, its ashes — i.e., the fundamental matter — may then be used for a holy purpose. (Note the Pesikta D'Rabbi Kahana which associates the burning of the para aduma with the nullification of the gentile powers who have exiled the Jews and its slaughter with "the slaughter for G-d in Batzra.")

287. Were their material needs to be met in a full sense, they would be able to devote themselves to the study of Torah as the Rambam writes in regard to the Torah's promises of material blessing.

288. The Hebrew for "living being," chai, also means "animal." This implies that even if a person's desires reflect those of an animal rather than a human, G-d will fulfill them.

289. For He has promised us, "I am with you in distress" and "In all of their difficulties, He feels distress."

290. A similar pattern can be seen in regard to the exodus from Egypt. Although the Jews were still underdeveloped, so

much so that G-d could not lead them through the land of the Philistines, "lest the people change their mind... and return to Egypt," nevertheless, G-d did not hesitate to redeem them.

291. Indeed, the Previous Rebbe passed away on Shabbos Parshas Bo, itself.

292. The Previous Rebbe began these efforts under the direction of his father, translating Chassidic texts into Yiddish. Afterwards, he expanded these efforts into other languages. (Significantly, from the Baal Shem Tov on, the Rebbeim had verbally communicated their teachings in Yiddish.)

293. The transfer of the center of Chassidic activity to America, "the lower half of the world," was itself characteristic of this thrust to elevate even the lowest dimensions of material existence.

294. Trans. Note: Persia can be identified with Iraq. See the sichos of the second night of Sukkos, 5751.

295. Our Sages said that one who strikes a Jew is like one who strikes G-d in the eye, as it were. The eye is a very sensitive organ and even a slight blow is significant.

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WHY BOTHER ABOUT THE SUPERNAL WORLDS?

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הגאון מליובאוויטש
המפורסם
בתיבת הדואר
בניו יורק

By the Grace of G-d
12th of Shevat, 5721
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Greeting and Blessing:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your recent letters. As requested, I will remember you all in prayer when visiting the holy resting place of my father-in-law of saintly memory. Especially that the wedding of your daughter take place in a happy and auspicious hour, and that she and her chosen partner in life should build their home on the foundations of the Torah and Mitzvoth.

G-d grant that you will have good news to report also about an improvement in Parnasso.

With regard to your sister, I am enclosing herewith a copy of my letter to her, which I am sending to you confidentially. From this letter you will gather my views on the subject.

Hoping to hear good news from you in all above, and

With the blessing of Hazel Tov, Hazel Tov, *l. l.*

It is sometimes difficult to help a person who acts in a way which is contrary to what we would call cooperation. I refer to the matter of learning Chassidus, about which you wrote to me once, saying, why should we bother about the Supernal worlds when there are so many things connected with this world? *(למה צריך ללמוד חסידות כשיש כל כך הרבה דברים הקשורים עם העולם הזה?)*

Actually, the situation is the reverse, since everything in this world is derived from the Supernal Worlds, for, as is explained at length in Chassidus, all things in this world, even the most material and corporeal, are directly related to their spiritual sources in the higher order of things, and derive their existence and their being through a series of channels and vessels of purity and holiness.

Thus, while the Old Rebbe wrote in the Tanya (chapter 6), quoting the Fifth Chain *כל קשר עולמי קיים ורעים ורשעים וזכרים בו* yet the Torah says *אם תמקומו מלפני ה' אלהיכם תהיו ברוכים* how is this to be reconciled? The answer is that through the Torah and Mitzvoth the Jew elevates himself above this physical world and *עולה*

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Again, any correspondence you may have please send in, and please encourage your friends neighbors and family to do so as well. Please inquire also your non-Lubavitch acquaintances, as many who received these letters were not necessarily Lubavitcher Chassidim.

B'ezras Hashem, there are plans under way to, bli neider, **reward** those who send in letters. So please include a return address and other contact information.

cends its boundaries, so that, instead of being subject to its laws and limitations, he can become master and ruler of the world, the reason being that the Torah and Mitzvot are connected with the Supernal World which are completely good, and this world is only the last in the chain of transformations from the spiritual to the material, beginning with the world of Atzilus, of which it is written לא יגורק יע or as our religious philosophers call it "The World of Souls," descending from the World of the Angels to the World of the Spheres, which is our physical world.

On the other hand, if a Jew is reckless enough to cut himself off from the Supernal Worlds, he is left only with this physical world, which has been described by the Old Rebbe as above, where "the affairs of this world are difficult and evil, and where the wicked ones have supremacy," etc. And although he is a believing Jew, and consequently prays to G-d, the Creator and Master of the world, whose Providence extends to everyone individually, there are ways whereby G-d's blessings descent even to those who are ignorant of the ways of Providence, and who know nothing about the relationship of this world to the Supernal Worlds. However, one to whose greater measure of knowledge has been revealed about G-d and G-d's ways, yet refuses to acknowledge the channels and vessels through which G-d's blessings necessarily come down, but insists on receiving G-d's blessings directly from G-d, it means that he wants to receive such blessings by way of an open miracle, not through a miracle which is clothed in natural garments. And it is well-known that in order to receive the benefit of an open miracle, one must have extraordinary merits, and even in such a case, the miracle is debited to the account, and as our Sages have taught "One should not rely on a miracle."

I trust that for a person of your background it is not necessary to elaborate at greater length, what should be quite obvious.

It should also be self-evident that my intention in writing the above lines is not in order to admonish you or to cause you any pain, G-d forbid. I only wanted to throw some light on the subject, for, apart from the knowledge itself that this subject contains, it also has a direct bearing upon the daily affairs of one's life. In a similar sense our Sages explained "He who is engaged in the study of a Burnt Offering is decreed as though he has actually offered it." Similarly, when one is engaged in the study of the process of Creation and Divine Providence, it has a direct bearing on the benefits to be derived thereby, both material and spiritual. See also

May G-d grant that you learn with vitality and for their own sake, both Migleh and Chassidus, and may G-d channel His blessings to you and yours in all your needs, materially and spiritually, from His full, open and ample Hand.

[Hebrew text at the bottom of the page]

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS SONG?

BY A. AVROHOM
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

Sing and give praise in preparation for the great and holy day of Yud-Alef Shvat, the eleventh day of the eleventh month, when the Moshe of our generation began to explain this Torah to you.

“*HaYom Yom*, the calendar that is ‘a light sown’ for Lubavitcher Chassidim” that gathers and unites (the sayings of the Rebbe Rayatz and the Rebbe shlita MH”M (who set and arranged the sayings), is the daily bread for anyone who calls himself a Lubavitcher Chassid. It is indeed “sewn” into their tallis and t’fillin bags, right next to the *Chitas*, and reading it serves as the opening salvo for another Chassidic day of shlichus.

It is less well know, however, that even before the printing of the Chabad *HaYom Yom*, which encompasses the entire Chassidic year, from Yud-Tes Kislev until the following Erev Yud-Tes Kislev, the Rebbe organized and published a “pocket calendar” for children. This calendar, which was also made at the instructions of the Rebbe Rayatz, includes daily sayings for each day of the “regular” calendar year, from Rosh HaShana until the 29th of Elul.

The calendar was originally translated and published in English, designated specifically for children with little knowledge of Yiddishkai. As the Rebbe himself explains in *Igros*

Kodesh, the sayings are quite simple and comprehensible, even for “beginners”: a pasuk or short midrash from the weekly Torah portion; basic halachos in t’filla and the like; occasional brief questions to arouse the child’s curiosity.

We can learn about this calendar’s unique brevity from the “weekly sheets,” comprising of two pages, most of which provides space to write about the good things that the child achieved during the week. The sheets also include a weekly reminder about the time of sundown on Friday and nightfall on Saturday evening, when it is forbidden to write...

“*Ha’maggid m’reishis acharis*.” Just as the children’s calendar preceded the *HaYom Yom* (indeed the former led to the Rebbe Rayatz’s instructions to publish the latter), it also continued after it. That is, while the adults were privileged to get their calendar for only one year, the children got theirs also in 5704. During the second year, it adopted some of the unique style of its younger yet more mature “brother,” with the name *From Day to Day*. Even

the name and content of the Hebrew version – *Yalkut Yomi: Pocket Encyclopedia* – was expanded, including a brief lexicon of Chassidic concepts as an appendix.

These expanded versions of the children’s calendar give an indication of their importance in the eyes of their compiler, who invested in it tremendous care, specifically for children, in need of education in the “*Alef-Beis*” of Yiddishkai. It can be said that this calendar is on the level of “From the day I went to *cheider* – **and even before then,**” the leader of the generation, as he brings himself down to the level of “before *cheider*,” i.e., children who still learn in public school. This is the “*Tzivos Hashem*” that we must bring to the true and complete Redemption.

We have become accustomed to such wondrous accuracy in the *HaYom Yom*, to the point that this calendar from 5703-5704 has become truly eternal, suitable in all times, in any year, regardless of when the Chassidic holidays fall, as its author has frequently noted. Thus, we can do nothing less than adopt the very same approach for the *Yalkut Yomi*, as it is also “suitable in all times” in a most wondrous manner.

Furthermore, if you want to say: Miracles even on the level of the *HaYom Yom* calendar, “for a youngster is Israel, and He loves him.” Indeed their Rebbe never let his love depart –

the “*Siddur LYeladim*,” children’s rallies, the singing and proclaiming of children – since “all are as fools before Him,” we shall wish upon ourselves the famous saying, “*Halevai* as children...”

So let’s open the “children’s” pocket calendar from 5703 and see how it concentrates upon the great and holy day of the 11th of Shvat, the day when our Rebbe and *nasi* accepted the crown of the leadership of Chabad.

During that year, Yud-Alef Shvat came out on the Sunday of the week of Parshas B’Shalach (as with the regular *HaYom Yom*), and the Rebbe brings a short midrash that deals with the beginning of this parsha:

“The Midrash says, ‘The wise of heart will take mitzvos’ – this is Moshe. When the entire Jewish people were involved with gathering up more and more of the ‘great wealth’ of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, Moshe was busy looking for the bones of Yosef HaTzaddik in order to fulfill the promise to bring them out of Egypt.”

Does this express something specific in connection with the Rebbe’s acceptance of the leadership?

Let’s try and remember during what time period this calendar came out: The entire Jewish people were confused and bewildered after the frightful Holocaust. Some were involved with great fervor in the establishment of their new state, while others were submerged in the American “land of Ashur.” “Ultra-Orthodox Jewry” was busy with certain matters. In the best set of circumstances, they were working toward the survival of yeshivos and communities, keeping their heads above water, without looking an inch beyond the horizon.

And what were the “*groise Chassidim*” doing at this time? It didn’t matter. Even the highest echelon among them did not include “shlichus” as a top priority profession for themselves or their children. The

“visionaries” were hoping at best that there would be some “substitute” who would say Chassidus and strengthen the cherished Lubavitch folklore remembered by those who came from across the sea (niggunim, *shvartze kasha* on Yud-Tes Kislev, a little *mashkeh* on Simchas Torah, etc.) This was the most that Chassidim could expect at this time.

In such a sad state of affairs, when everyone is trying to fill their pockets with material wealth, the leader of the generation goes out in search of “*atzmos Yosef*.” As the Rebbe himself explains, this refers to “*atzmus Yosef*”

Have you noticed that this is not just another maamer, not just another Chassidic courtyard? Have you made the effort to see and distinguish the greatness and power of the song and joy that bursts forth from this historic event?

(the essence of Yosef), the challenge and shlichus that the Yosef of the sixth generation placed upon the seventh generation. He simply establishes worldwide objectives in “spreading the wellsprings outward,” and Chassidim must begin to accustom themselves to the start of a new (world) order.

As a Chassid who was privileged to see the Rebbe Rayatz once said, “*Ahber mit dem Rebbin ken men zich nisht dingen*” (but with **this** Rebbe (shlita), there are no arguments...)

Thus, anything that is said in the name of “my revered teacher and

father-in-law, the Rebbe” means to say there is no commanding force that declares that there is an unprecedented revolution occurring in the Jewish world today. If we use our imagination a little, we can reveal that this saying “for children” can essentially be translated into the Chassidic expression: “I don’t want Your Gan Eden, I don’t want Your World to Come (“wealth,” revelation), I want only You (“*atzmus Yosef*!”)”

What do we find hidden in this saying from the 5704 “*Yalkut Yomi*,” or as is customarily said, “Today sixty years ago”?

On this day, the Rebbe turns the child’s attention to the fact that the “song” in Parshas B’Shalach, as with the one in Parshas Haazinu, is written differently than all other sections of the Torah – like a song. The Rebbe concludes with a question: Have you ever seen them on parchment in a seifer Torah?

Again, it is difficult not to distinguish the remarkable connection (unless you are inclined to ridicule anything related to “children,” e.g., Moshiach Now!) between the nature of the day and the meaning of the saying:

This Torah, which is written in such a precise and strict manner – so “square” and lacking attractive visual aids – yet when it comes to an exceptional event such as *Krias Yam Suf*, the Torah seems to let loose and break out in “song.”

(It is interesting to note the clear common denominator in how specifically these songs speak so explicitly about the Future to Come (“*Az Yashir Moshe*” – an allusion in the Torah to *T’chiyas HaMeisim*), to the point that even the Torah parchment begins to sing.)

What is all this coming to tell you? There’s something unusual going on here. This is not just another pasuk; this is a song! The scrolls are singing! And as for you, little child, don’t stand on the side; don’t miss a thing. Get up



close, and see what's happening! Have you ever seen such a marvelous sight? Have you ever seen a song in a seifer Torah?

The Rebbe accepted the leadership, and he announced that in our generation, the *Sh'china* will be drawn down to this world – the day itself gives song and praise. And as for you, have you noticed that this is not just another *maamer*, not just another Chassidic courtyard? Have you made the effort to see and distinguish the greatness and power of the song and joy that bursts forth from this historic event?

How can one possibly not break out in song on such a day? Just open up any *maamer* or *sicha* you want, look at the wondrous explanation, the depth, the precision, and straightforwardness, and you will understand that this is not just another section in Torah; this is something completely different, a song that has

never been heard before.

Listen to one of the Rebbe's tapes or watch a film of the Rebbe, and even you will start singing. For example, look at the *sicha* from Chamisha-Asar B'Shvat 5752 and see how sweet and pleasant the Rebbe appears standing at his *shtender*, his hand wrapped in the kerchief that the Rebbeim customarily held when they said *maamarim*: eyes closed, lips uttering the *geshmak* words of "a land of wheat and barley, vines, fig-trees, and pomegranates, a land of olive-oil and honey." What Divine order, what a feeling of sweetness and pleasure from the study of Torah, what majestic holiness flowing from every word – **have you seen this song?!**

Just look at a video from Sunday dollars: how the Rebbe stands for hours upon hours as the whole Jewish people passes before him – from "the first son" to "the fifth son," and sometimes even lower – and for each one, there's a good word, a *bracha*,

encouragement, and advice.

We have seen with our own eyes where a woman passes before the Rebbe, and tells him that she had a dream in which the Rebbe is holding a seifer Torah, and tells her, "*Egozim, egozim...*" (nuts, nuts...). "Rebbe, what did you mean?" the woman asked.

Nu, ask yourselves: What would **you** answer such a person? If you're a goodhearted person, you would gently explain that "there's no need to pay attention to dreams" and suggest that she find more suitable channels for her *hiskashrus*. And if you're not quite that genteel, you would simply keep the line moving, *Vaad HaM'sader* style, and try to push this hallucinating lady outside...

The Rebbe, however, acted as if he was waiting just for this woman and her dream with calm and tranquility, concentrating fully on her and the question she posed without the slightest hint of impatience. He

explains that every Jew is like a nut – he has his content, his fruit, with a hard shell concealing it from the outside – and he then gives her another dollar. **Have you seen this song?!**

Then comes another Jew. (Ignoring his outward appearance for the moment, we'll just present the question that has been deeply troubling him.) He comes to the Rebbe on Sunday regarding an issue for which he has found neither remedy nor respite: How can he break his habit of biting his nails?

Again, as if the Lubavitcher Rebbe doesn't have a worry in the world except for the one troubling the Jew who stands before him, he tells him, "Put on gloves. It helps. Once, people used to put mustard on their hands in order that it would repel them, but this costs money, so gloves are preferable." You could see how the Jew's expression relaxed, as the Lubavitcher Rebbe, who rumor says is Melech HaMoshiach, even gave him practical advice that replaced the bitterness with the important feeling that he'll soon break the habit! **Have you seen this song?!**

In a third episode, an "intelligent" Jew, an orchestra conductor, comes to the Rebbe, accompanied by his Lubavitcher friend who urged him to go for Sunday dollars. Why not, he thought, give the Rebbe the privilege of meeting him. (Perhaps this sounds a bit exaggerated, but who knows? Everyone has their "m'natzeiach"...) Skipping the warm-up conversation, the Rebbe gets straight to the hot issue: Moshiach. "Point with your baton toward the west to remind people about the Beis HaMikdash that will soon be built, as the Sh'china is in the west." The Rebbe then smiled and added, "Naturally, you can't do this the entire time, so as not to confuse the musicians, but once during the concert." **This is not just your average everyday song; this is a complete orchestra with a conductor. Have you ever seen this?!**

To those depressed groaners out

there who can't look at a song unless it's a sad lamentation, the Rebbe even clarified this point – and in the very same Chassidic saying!

This is not just said in reference to the song at *Krias Yam Suf*; there is also the song from Parshas Haazinu. In this song, Moshe Rabbeinu tells the Jewish people what will happen to them in the end of days, when as a result of "I will hide My face from them," there will be "many troubles and evils" from every direction, to the point that the nations will say, "Where is their G-d?"

A woman passed before the Rebbe, and tells him that she had a dream in which the Rebbe is holding a seifer Torah, and tells her, "Nuts, nuts..." "Rebbe, what did you mean?" the woman asked. Nu, ask yourselves: What would you answer such a person? ...

Even this is a song! **A s-o-n-g!** Throughout the generations, Jews wrote down this song and learned it well, to the point that even a Jewish child in Brooklyn, who with the advice of the *Yalkut Yomi* approaches the uplifting moment when he sees "what's happening over there" – he too has seen that this is a song.

This is a song – not because people are "ignoring reality," not because of the many troubles that already exist "ad d'lo yada," both revealed and concealed, but – because this song

provides the tremendous strengths we need that even when it appears that "the power prevails and there is none remaining or left," we still believe, we are still certain, and we still know that the day will come that "it is stored with Me, sealed up in My treasures."

Regarding that day, G-d has sworn, "for I lift up My hand to heaven (an oath, according to Rashi) and say, (as) I live forever," promising with His holy right hand, "See now that I, even I, am He." And when the tears well in your eyes, to the point that you can no longer see the columns of the song, a thunderous voice reverberates with the Divine prophecy and promise, "The time of their misfortune is **at hand!**"

And we, precious children, when they read this song in the Torah on Shabbos Shira, and the *baal koreh* prolongs the melody on those p'sukim where G-d's Name appears, in accordance with longstanding Chabad custom for generations, we'll stand on the tips of our toes and try to see how the Torah sings. We'll hear how the first redeemer, Moshe Rabbeinu, "will sing," in the same week as the acceptance of the leadership by "the final redeemer."

So, if the adults can't understand why we're being so "pushy," what's all the tumult and why's everyone smiling, when they heard explicitly from the neighbor who heard on the radio or read in the papers that such-and-such a thing happened (the neighbor probably lives in his house...), and especially when he makes the connection to that eight-word song that everyone sang for a year in the presence of the Rebbe, who "merely" gave it extremely strong encouragement, which only intensifies their puzzlement as to why this "craziness" is continuing...

This is exactly as it was then – "They – the children – recognized [h]im first," and so it will be at this Redemption, and we will answer all the questions, in the way of a Jewish child, with a question, "**Have you seen this song yet?!**"

BEFORE YOU ASK...

Alex walked slowly down the street. He wasn't heading anywhere in particular, as he had nothing in particular to do. Nobody was waiting for him. He had time. More than enough time.

Trudging along, downhearted, he realized he was approaching the center of town. Though what difference did that make? The twelve hours of the day, more or less, gave him plenty of time to do nothing. Nothing at all.

Alex is a young Jew who was married not long ago. He had studied in yeshivos and was considered a chareidi young man. Every morning he davened and learned Torah, but then what? Alex held that an ordinary Jew ought to support his household, which is why you won't find him sitting in the local kollel. Thus, Alex was out looking for a job.

Alex ended up in the center of town, near the business district. It had everything the residents needed so they wouldn't have to travel to the big city: groceries, a shoemaker, barber, haberdashery, stationery, dentist, a bank.

A bank! That was the problem. Despite all Alex's efforts, his bank statement didn't look too rosy. How could it be that since his wedding he hadn't earned a single shekel?

The parents on both sides tried to give the young couple a good start in life, with everything they might need, but that was all. They couldn't provide ongoing financial

support. No father-in-law had promised to support him.

This is why Alex was downcast, contrary to his usual cheerful self, especially when he saw the bank. This was the place he did not want to see right now. His debts were growing daily and depression threatened to overtake him. What would happen? How long would this last? If this was the beginning, what hope was there for the future?

Alex continued dragging himself

Manny consoled Alex with many Chassidic sayings and made it clear that Alex wasn't alone. Manny too was suffering from financial woes..

along and without paying attention, he found himself two steps away from the bank. Right there, near the entrance, was a t'fillin stand manned by a Lubavitcher by the name of Manny. He wasn't an official shliach but as a Lubavitcher Chassid, he knew that when he had free time he had to look out for the Jews in his area, materially and certainly spiritually. This is why Manny went daily to the business district, in the development town he lived in,

order to help Jews put on t'fillin.

Manny was a familiar figure to all the residents. He didn't suffice with putting t'fillin on people but also listened to people's problems, and there are many of those in development towns. He helps by checking mezuzos, distributing material, and mainly by giving warm smiles to passersby. Virtually everyone in the center of town has been helped in some way by Manny in the area of Judaism.

When Manny saw Alex, Alex was lost in thought and didn't notice anybody. Manny realized there was a problem and he approached Alex and offered him a hand. Manny's smile seemed to wake Alex up out of his protracted nightmare.

Manny soon learned what the problem was. Alex described his situation without leaving out even one painful detail. He painted the situation in bleak colors, telling Manny how he had been searching for a job that paid at least minimum wage. He enumerated all the visits he had made to the local businesses in the area with no positive results. How he stood in line despondently at the Labor office with no results, and then how depressed he was from a situation that seemed hopeless.

Manny consoled Alex with many Chassidic sayings and made it clear that Alex wasn't alone. Manny too was suffering from financial woes. Life is full of challenges and you just need to know how we are supposed to relate to them. If we don't make



them into a *metzius* (reality), they disappear. The key is *simcha* and *bitachon*.

Alex, having learned in yeshivos, was no stranger to all the sayings of Chazal. In yeshiva, he had no problem relating to these aphorisms. He had food in the pantry as well as other creature comforts, with no effort on his part. But now, all the sayings and all the fine ideas seemed unrealistic. What seemed real to him was his overdraft at the bank.

Manny still tried to get a smile out of Alex. Suddenly Alex sheepishly said to Manny, “Tell me, do you have a volume of the *Igros*

Kodesh? I want to write to the Rebbe and ask for a *bracha* for a job.”

Manny wasn’t surprised by the question. Alex, like every child in that area, had been a soldier in *Tzivos Hashem*, and he had excelled in that role. There was no program, gathering, or parade that he and his brothers hadn’t attended. Alex had always been an enthusiastic participant. When he grew older, he attended a yeshiva that wasn’t exactly Chassidic, but in his heart there was still a warm spot for the Rebbe and his *shluchim*.

But all that is not what motivated Alex to want to write to the Rebbe.

Something deeper spurred him on.

When he was in *shidduchim* a certain difficulty cropped up with a particular *shidduch*. Things got stuck and it didn’t look as though there was a way out. A relative, seeing his plight, volunteered to write to the Rebbe to ask for advice and a *bracha*.

The Rebbe’s answer was clear, though it didn’t look as though the advice in it was doable. In the end, everybody saw how the Rebbe was right and what he said was fulfilled.

When it came to the *shidduch*, Alex didn’t agree to write on his own. He found it hard to believe that such a detailed answer had been gotten from a book with letters that had been written many years ago. So he visited Manny’s house to see the wonder with his own eyes. And this is how another believer in the Rebbe and his *brachos* – after *Gimmel Tammuz* – came to be. Now, Alex wanted to write his own letter to the Rebbe.

Although Manny had lots of pamphlets and pairs of *t’fillin* on his stand, he didn’t have a volume of *Igros Kodesh*. He didn’t want to leave the stand to go home and get one. After all, the stores and bank were open and there were so many passersby, potential *t’fillin* customers.

Then Manny remembered about a gift he had bought for the owner of the store that let him put his stand there, a volume of *Igros Kodesh*. Manny left the stand with Alex and dashed into the store. He asked the owner for the volume for a few minutes, as well as a paper and pen.

Alex sat down on a stone bench and wrote to the Rebbe. He vented all his frustrations and told of all his efforts and disappointment in trying to find a job. He ended the letter with a request for a *bracha*, and gave the folded paper to Manny, who was

in the middle of putting t'fillin on someone.

Many asked, "Do you want to say 'Yechi'?"

Alex, who had already learned that the Rebbe is *chai v'kayam*, was happy to proclaim his acceptance of the Rebbe's *Malchus*. Manny put the letter into volume 26 of the *Igros Kodesh*, and as he did so, Alex's cell phone rang. Here they were, in the middle of what could be called a sort of *yechidus* with the Rebbe, and the ringing phone was disturbing them.

Alex looked at the screen. If it was a family member, he wouldn't answer the phone and would call them back later. But no, he didn't recognize the number, so maybe he should answer the phone?

Manny wouldn't have answered the phone under the circumstances. He might even have shut the phone in order not to be disturbed, but he wouldn't tell Alex not to answer it. He stood off to the side, holding the volume and letter and Alex answered the phone.

Suddenly he saw Alex's face change colors. What on earth did the caller say? Alex looked like he was going to faint.

"Hello, is this Alex? We're calling from the...factory in..., and we'd like to inform you that you were accepted for a position here."

A few minutes went by before Manny and Alex recovered. All the



Putting on t'fillin on a busy street (illustration)

stories that Manny knew about Chassidim being answered while writing to the Rebbe, flew through his thoughts. Now this story could be added to the list.

When Manny and Alex came back to reality, Alex wanted to see the Rebbe's answer anyway. He also wondered whether it was superfluous to write again since Alex had gotten a clear answer, much

faster than they had anticipated.

Alex asked Manny, "I want to ask for another *bracha*, can I write again?"

Manny brought another paper and the next request was for a child. According to the Rebbe's answer they opened to, about *banei, chayei, u'm'zonei rivichei* (children, life, and ample sustenance), we can certainly expect to hear good news.

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ACCEPTING THE CROWN OF NESIUS

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN BERGER



**THE ALTER REBBE:
“IN WHOSE TRUST WILL I
BE ABLE TO LEAVE ANASH?”**

The Alter Rebbe, despite being head and shoulders above others from a young age, did not accept the crown of leadership in an official manner. Rather, it was a process that took fifteen years.

18 Kislev 5533 (1772). The Maggid of Mezritch asked his disciple, Zalman, to do all he could to appoint his (the Maggid's) son, Rabbi Avrohom the Malach, as his successor. However, if he would not accept the position, they should then appoint Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk (also known as Rabbi Menachem Mendel Horodoker).

The next day, on Yud-Tes Kislev, the Maggid passed away. The Alter Rebbe, like many disciples of the Maggid, gave a writ of *hiskashrus* to



the Maggid's son, Rabbi Avrohom the Malach, a few days after the Maggid's passing.

After the Maggid's passing, his great disciples dispersed to different countries, where they disseminated *Toras HaChassidus*. R' Avrohom the Malach lived in Vohlin, and R' Mendele Vitebsker lived in Russia, where he disseminated *Chassidus* with the help of his great disciples.

The war between the *Chassidim*

and the *Misnagdim* was in full force. Thus, it was vital for the *Chassidim* to be led by someone who had the strength to contend with this unique challenge. At a meeting led by Rabbi Avrohom the Malach, it was decided that a committee would be formed, led by someone who had the authority to give orders to all the *Chassidic* centers, as he saw fit, to spread and strengthen the *Chassidic* movement. The Alter Rebbe was chosen as *Mesader HaKlali* (General

Organizer), and for the next three years, he traveled to the various disciples of the Maggid in order to strengthen and support them in their efforts.

At the end of these three years, Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk left for Eretz Yisroel with 300 followers. Shortly before this, the Alter Rebbe founded a Torah center in Liozna, known as the *chadarim*. Young men, from throughout that area, converged on Liozna and sat

The letter goes on to mention what the Maggid said about the Baal Shem Tov not being able to make it to Eretz Yisroel:

“There are souls that need Eretz Yisroel and there are souls that need to be outside Eretz Yisroel” (*Igros Kodesh Admur HaZakein*, vol. 1, p. 202).

Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk had already left when the Alter Rebbe decided to join him. He

Alter Rebbe’s teacher, the Maggid, came to him in a dream and told him to stay. For hours a day, for an entire week, the Alter Rebbe conferred with Rabbi Menachem Mendel, in his room. At the end of that fateful week, the Alter Rebbe decided to remain in Russia.

The Alter Rebbe remained in Mohilev, while his beloved colleagues left for Eretz Yisroel. It was at the beginning of Elul of that year that the Alter Rebbe left Mohilev on his return trip to Liozna. This was after the leaders of the community, simple but G-d-fearing people who loved b’nei Torah, promised to support the Alter Rebbe, his three brothers and their families, along with all the young men learning in the *chadarim*. They also committed to graciously host the Chassidim who came as guests from all over Russia and Lithuania every month and every Shabbos.

The return trip took a month, and it was in the middle of Shvat 5538 (1778) that the Alter Rebbe arrived back in Liozna. At first, R’ Mendele Vitebsker led the Chassidim long-distance from Eretz Yisroel via letters and emissaries who often visited Russia from Eretz Yisroel.

In those days, the Alter Rebbe was an honored leader, and thousands of Chassidim flocked to him. Nevertheless, their desire for a Rebbe in physical proximity grew. They did not hide this yearning from Rabbi Mendele. He told them that although they were *mekushar* to him, they were permitted to seek wisdom and strength “from the *tzaddikim* and Chassidim, the *rabbanim* and the complete ones, whose words are like fiery coals, counsels and knowledge of G-d,” “great of counsel, famous for Torah and fear of Heaven, who are with you, where you live.”

These *tzaddikim* that Rabbi Mendele was referring to were Rabbi

*What condition did the Alter Rebbe make for accepting the nesius? How many times did the Mittlerer Rebbe say Chassidus on Shavuos? Who told the Tzemach Tzedek which maamer to say when he accepted the nesius? How did R’ Yekusiel Leipler pick the Rebbe Maharash as his Rebbe? * A brief survey of the process of instating a new Chabad Rebbe. * Presented for Yud Shvat, the day the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach, 7th Nasi of Chabad, accepted the leadership of the Chabad Lubavitch movement. * Part 1 of 2*

and studied Torah under the Alter Rebbe’s tutelage.

For a long time, the Alter Rebbe was uncertain as to whether he should join Rabbi Mendele Vitebsker on his trip to Eretz Yisroel. At first, the Alter Rebbe considered not joining him, and even wrote as much to Rabbi Yisroel of Polotzk: “The main reason being: in whose trust will I be able to leave our fellow Anash?”

took his disciples and traveled to Mohilev, where Rabbi Menachem Mendel’s entourage was, and he informed Rabbi Menachem Mendel that he was joining him.

R’ Mendele and the greatest of his disciples, colleagues of the Alter Rebbe, strongly urged the Alter Rebbe to remain in White Russia and take on the leadership of the Chassidim.

It wasn’t an easy decision. The

Yisroel of Polotzk (who remained in their country as a *shadar*), Rabbi Yisachar Ber of Lubavitch, “and the honored rav, our teacher Shneur Zalman, may Hashem protect him, and may their names be forever. ‘The three-fold cord [is not easily severed].’ With Hashem’s help, they hold goodness in their hands, from the great hidden goodness, to illuminate their eyes and to give life, the essence of faith, and their works of truth.”

Thus, Rabbi Mendele gave permission to Anash in Russia to rely on the great tzaddikim of the area, to consult with them and to listen to them.

This situation went on for a while, as Rabbi Mendele continued to be the uncontested leader, while these three tzaddikim were on-the-spot counselors, who guided the Chassidim in spiritual matters.

At some point, Rabbi Mendele felt that despite his efforts to lead the Chassidim from a distance through correspondence, some of his Chassidim had wandered off to seek Torah from various tzaddikim in Eastern Europe. Some of them wanted to bring the Chozeh from Lublin in Poland and to crown him as leader of the Chassidim in Russia.

When Rabbi Mendele realized that this phenomenon was spreading, he sent a letter, in 5546 (1886) to his colleague-disciple Rabbi Shneur Zalman. This letter began with extraordinary words of praise, the likes of which are not to be found in his other letters.

In this letter, R’ Mendele tells the Alter Rebbe that the time had come for him to take on the leadership of the Chassidim as their Rebbe and Nasi. Rabbi Mendele implored him to take on this position, to be the shepherd of the flock of Chassidim, for “Hashem has made you a shepherd.” Rabbi Mendele promised him success, “Go with this strength

of yours, and you will redeem the Jewish people to make the yoke of Torah and mitzvos heavy on them, and as a result, it will be fulfilled, whoever accepts the yoke of Torah, will have the yoke of the government and the yoke of worldly matters removed from him.”

At this time, the Alter Rebbe was already a respected leader, with thousands of Chassidim as his followers, and with hundreds of gaonim, holy men and great scholars, in the chadarim, each one a special individual in his own right.

Yet, the Alter Rebbe was not happy about taking on the title of

***Rabbi Mendele
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“Rebbe” or “Nasi,” with all that entailed. The Alter Rebbe responded with a letter of his own, dated 5548 (1888), saying he could not take on this role unless Rabbi Mendele remembered him daily and sent his blessings. This letter was sent about four months before Rabbi Mendel passed away.

Rabbi Mendele sent additional letters in which he encouraged his Chassidim in Russia to accept Rabbi Shneur Zalman’s leadership. In his final letter before his passing, he wrote that he crowned R’ Shneur Zalman as exclusive and uncontested

leader of the Chassidim in Russia.

The Chassidim of Russia accepted the Alter Rebbe’s leadership, and the light that had already begun to spread from Liozna to all the Jews in Russia, began to illuminate the country in even greater measure.

Fifteen years after the passing of the Maggid, the Alter Rebbe fully accepted the leadership of the Chassidim.

(sources: Beis Rebbi vol. 1, Toldos Admur HaZakein vol. 2, intro. To Toldos Chabad in Eretz HaKodesh, Igros Kodesh Admur HaZakein vol. 1, HaTamim (Warsaw) Choveres Beis)



THE MITTELER REBBE: HOW HE CAME TO ACCEPT THE NESIUS

After the passing of the Alter Rebbe on 24 Teives 5573 (1813), it was only natural that his oldest son, the Mitteler Rebbe, be his successor. Most of the Chassidim agreed that the Mitteler Rebbe was the next Rebbe. We have no written mention of any refusal on his part.

In the period after the histalkus, the Mitteler Rebbe stayed in Kremenchug, in White Russia (today it’s in the Ukraine) for a while, since the houses of the Alter Rebbe’s family in Liozna had been burned during the war.

In the first three months after the

histalkus, there was a great spiritual arousal among the Chabad Chassidim throughout Russia. Chassidim, in some central cities in Russia, sent a delegation to the Mitteler Rebbe and asked him to settle in a city in Russia. Chassidim in White Russia also sent a delegation to ask the Mitteler Rebbe to return to White Russia and settle there.

The delegation from White Russia had its way, and after Shavuos 5573, the Mitteler Rebbe left Kremenchug and began a special journey to White Russia, a journey that was actually an acceptance of the nesius, a sort of "coronation journey."

The trip took about three months, as the Mitteler Rebbe went from city to city, until he arrived in Vitebsk. Many Chassidim joined the Rebbe, accompanying him throughout the long journey. Wherever he went, the Rebbe said deep maamarei Chassidus and received Chassidim in yechidus.

The Rebbe was welcomed with great honor at every stop, not only by Jews but also by government figures and police officers, who had received orders from the Ministry of the Interior to give honor to the Rebbe. This was because he was the son of the Alter Rebbe, who did a great deal for the benefit of his homeland in helping in the war efforts against Napoleon.

The Mitteler Rebbe chose to settle in the town of Lubavitch, where he arrived with thousands of Chassidim on Chai Elul 5573, the birthday of his father and the Baal Shem Tov.

From Lubavitch, his teachings began spreading throughout White Russia and Lithuania, and the number of pilgrims to Lubavitch grew. The joy of the Chassidim was boundless.

A year passed since the Mitteler Rebbe settled in Lubavitch, and many of the elder Chassidim who

had basked in the light of his father, the Alter Rebbe, began coming to him to hear Chassidus. All were amazed by the conduct of the new Rebbe, for the Mitteler Rebbe would say Chassidus in great abundance. Sometimes he would say Chassidus a few times on a Shabbos, each time for a few hours.

One Shavuos, the Mitteler Rebbe said Chassidus 11 times in one day! His uncle, Rabbi Yehuda Leib [also known as Maharil] said, "Not every mind can take it!"

The Mitteler Rebbe was welcomed with great honor at every stop, not only by Jews but also by government figures and police officers, who had received orders from the Ministry of the Interior to give honor to the Rebbe.

The number of Chassidim grew under the Mitteler Rebbe's leadership, doubling and tripling as compared to the Alter Rebbe's time. The elder Chassidim related that in the first year of his nesius, 15,000 Chassidim joined in White Russia alone, and in the second year, 5575, the entire Tchernigov district became a center of Chabad Chassidus.

(sources: Toldos Admur HaEmtza'i; Beis Rebbi, vol. 2, chapter 1)



**THE TZEMACH TZEDEK:
HE INHERITED HIS WHITE
CLOTHING FROM THE
ALTER REBBE**

The Mitteler Rebbe passed away on 9 Kislev 5588 (1827). Shortly after his passing, at a gathering of elder Chassidim, it was decided that Rabbi Menachem Mendel, the Rebbe's son-in-law, and the Alter Rebbe's grandson, would be appointed as Rebbe. Rabbi Menachem Mendel's mother, Devorah Leah, had given up her life for her father, the Alter Rebbe, and had left her young son in her grandfather's care. He was considered the Alter Rebbe's adopted son.

The Chassidim were given a number of hints about the Tzemach Tzedek's future nesius, but on one occasion, the Mitteler Rebbe spoke about it openly. This was in Tishrei 5588, when the Mitteler Rebbe went to Haditch and prayed a number of times at the gravesite of his father, the Alter Rebbe.

One of these times, he spent a great deal of time there, and when he came out he was joyful and he said, "I accomplished by my father, the Rebbe, that I be discharged from the rabbanus."

The Chassidim thought he meant that he would move to Eretz Yisroel, for his father had also wanted to give

up the leadership of the Chassidim in order to go to Eretz Yisroel.

“How can our Rebbe leave us like sheep without a shepherd?” asked the Chassidim.

The Rebbe answered, “You have my son-in-law, Rabbi Menachem Mendel. He will be your faithful shepherd.”

Said the Chassidim, “Certainly it will not be like this,” hoping that he would not go to Eretz Yisroel. None of them thought of the bitter future, a few months away.

On his way back from Haditch, the Mittlerer Rebbe passed through Niezin, where he fell ill. Shortly thereafter, he passed away, having just conveyed his wishes that the Tzemach Tzedek succeed him.

It was for this reason and others that the Chassidim asked the Tzemach Tzedek to take over after his father-in-law passed away. The decision made at this meeting was publicized throughout the Chabad centers in Russia. A delegation comprised of the great and senior Chassidim, including Rabbi Hillel of Paritch, Rabbi Yitzchok Isaac of Vitebsk, Rabbi Yitzchok Moshe of Yassi, Rabbi Peretz Chein of Tchernigov, and others, presented the Tzemach Tzedek with the resolution of the meeting, but the Tzemach Tzedek refused to accept the nesius.

Delegations of Chassidim came and went, but Rabbi Menachem Mendel refused, saying that the nesius rightfully belonged to his uncle, Rabbi Chaim Avrohom, the son of the Alter Rebbe and the brother of the Mittlerer Rebbe. When Rabbi Chaim Avrohom heard this, he himself joined one of the delegations and begged Rabbi Menachem Mendel to accept the nesius, but he still refused.

It was Nissan when it was decided that all the senior Chassidim would go to Lubavitch for Shavuos and

come up with a plan as to how to proceed.

The Rebbe Rayatz writes, “About two weeks before Shavuos, some of the senior Chassidim came to Lubavitch: Rabbi Yitzchok Isaac of Homil, Rabbi Hillel of Paritch, Rabbi Yitzchok Isaac of Vitebsk, and others. They held a meeting and sent a delegation to the Tzemach Tzedek. But he continued to refuse, saying they should pick Rabbi Chaim Avrohom, son of the Alter Rebbe, or

As he thought this, the Tzemach Tzedek stopped saying the maamer, turned to Rabbi Yitzchok Isaac and said, ‘Are you suspecting me of something that I don’t have? What shall I do when my grandfather, the Alter Rebbe, told me to say this maamer?’

Rabbi Menachem Nachum, son of the Mittlerer Rebbe, or Rabbi Aharon of Kremenchug, son-in-law of the Mittlerer Rebbe. The Chassidim were very upset.

“On Tuesday, the first of the Shloshes Yemei Hagbala, three Chassidim, Rabbi Peretz Chein, Rabbi Hillel of Paritch, and Rabbi Yitzchok Isaac of Vitebsk, came to the Tzemach Tzedek and begged him to accept the nesius. He finally agreed, on condition that they wouldn’t bother

him with questions about material matters.

“Rabbi Hillel of Paritch said, ‘Chassidim want to hear Chassidus.’

“Shortly thereafter, they announced that the Tzemach Tzedek was going out to shul to say Chassidus. The Tzemach Tzedek entered the shul packed with Chassidim, wearing the white garments he had inherited from his grandfather, the Alter Rebbe, and began saying the maamer, ‘*Al Shlosha D’varim HaOlam Omeid.*’

“When he started saying the maamer, Rabbi Yitzchok Isaac of Homil remembered that in his youth, he had once heard the Alter Rebbe say this maamer. At that time, the Tzemach Tzedek was a little boy whose playing disturbed the Chassidim. Rabbi Yitzchok Isaac was concerned about the disturbance, but the Alter Rebbe suddenly interrupted the maamer to say, ‘Leave him alone, leave him alone, he wants to listen. He is listening, and he will yet prove that he is listening!’

“He recalled that scene and thought, ‘Indeed, this is a Divine power, and the Tzemach Tzedek is showing his hidden powers that Hashem granted him.’

“As he thought this, the Tzemach Tzedek stopped saying the maamer, turned to Rabbi Yitzchok Isaac and said, ‘Are you suspecting me of something that I don’t have? What shall I do when my grandfather, the Alter Rebbe, told me to say this maamer?’”

Thus, the Tzemach Tzedek revealed his ruach ha’kodesh in public, and he immediately continued saying the maamer.

After the Tzemach Tzedek finished the maamer, all those present sang, and when he went home, he was accompanied by a throng of dancing Chassidim.

(sources: Seifer HaToldos HaTzemach Tzedek; Beis Rebbi vol. 2 and vol. 3, chapter 1)



THE REBBE MAHARASH: “LISTEN TO HIM AS YOU LISTENED TO ME”

The Tzemach Tzedek had six righteous, learned sons. After his passing, the Chassidim did not know whom to pick as Rebbe and successor, and there were differing opinions. Ultimately, the Rebbe Maharash led the Chassidim in Lubavitch, while his brothers started Chassidic centers of their own in towns like Liadi and Kopust, and said Chassidus.

It was Rabbi Shmuel, the youngest of the sons, who continued the Chabad dynasty. His father, the Tzemach Tzedek had alluded on a number of occasions that he considered Rabbi Shmuel his successor.

The Rebbe Rayatz related that the Tzemach Tzedek would say special maamarim for his son, Rabbi Shmuel. The Tzemach Tzedek also referred to his sons with different titles such as, “my balabus,” “my lamdan,” “my Chassid,” etc. Regarding Rabbi Shmuel, the Tzemach Tzedek said, “He has all the maalos.”

At the beginning of 5626 (1855), Rabbi Shmuel began saying Chassidus in public at the behest of his father. Saying Chassidus in public was an act of leadership and nesius, and was regarded with great

astonishment. As though to strengthen the matter, the Tzemach Tzedek sent a note to the Chassidic congregation that said: “Listen to him as you listened to me.”

The Tzemach Tzedek wrote along these lines in a letter to his son:

“To my dear, beloved son, Rabbi Shmuel,

I saw your *divrei Elokim chaim* [i.e., words of Chassidus] and I like it very much. May Hashem strengthen your heart and mind with added strength in His Torah and His avoda, and be strong and be a man. Open your mouth and your words will shine forth...be strong to write and relate, and I ordain you with great ordination. Do not fear any man. Hashem will give you success materially and spiritually to study and teach, to observe and do.

“Your father who seeks your welfare and the good of Anash,

“Menachem Mendel ben Devorah Leah.”

On another occasion, the Tzemach Tzedek told his son, Maharash, “The spiritual jug of oil that the Baal Shem Tov gave his disciple, the Maggid of Mezritch, with which to anoint the Alter Rebbe to the nesius for all his generations – with that my father-in-law, the Mitteler Rebbe, was anointed, and with this power I anointed you.”

In addition to all the hints his father gave him, the Chassidim recognized his great qualities and rare talents. “Aside from his G-dly wisdom in the revealed and hidden parts of Torah, he was complete in all worldly knowledge, especially medicine, and he was skilled in all crafts, and he was also expert in a number of languages.”

In the period after the passing of the Tzemach Tzedek, all his sons began saying Chassidus, and some of them even wrote it down. Chassidim went from one son to another, and

each Chassid chose the Admur that he felt was right for him.

One Friday night, the Rebbe Maharash said a maamer, “Az Yashir...Ali Be’er.” The next day, Shabbos morning, his brother, Rabbi Yehuda Leib, repeated the maamer with an addition of his own. On Motzaei Shabbos, the Rebbe Maharash repeated the maamer with an addition of his own. This repeated itself a number of times, until Tuesday evening, the Rebbe Maharash said the maamer for the fifth time, each time adding something new. His brother said, “This time, Father said it, and I don’t want to stand up against Father.”

Rabbi Yekusiel Liepler, a senior Chassid and one of the distinguished Chassidim of the Alter Rebbe, also chose the Rebbe Maharash, based on a maamer Chassidus he said.

When the Tzemach Tzedek passed away, they didn’t inform R’ Yekusiel Liepler (who was in his nineties at the time and apparently they were afraid to tell him because of his health). When he found out about it, he began to yell, “Fools! Why did you let the Rebbe pass away? Bury the Sifrei Torah, bury yourselves.” He broke all the windows and left, on foot, for Lubavitch.

Upon his arrival in Lubavitch he said, “I will not do a thing, I won’t daven, etc. First, I want to hear what the Rebbe will tell me.” He went to the gravesite of the Tzemach Tzedek and prayed on the grave throughout the day. They finally took him away after he fainted. When he woke up from his faint, he said, “We must dance.”

When he returned to the town proper, he wanted to pick a Rebbe from among the Tzemach Tzedek’s sons. He went to each of the six men and asked them to say Chassidus. When he went to the youngest son, he found him sitting, his head

covered with only a yarmulke. R' Yekusiel said to him, "Put on your hat and say Chassidus."

R' Yekusiel was an old man and a distinguished Chassid, and he couldn't be refused. Rabbi Shmuel said a maamer Chassidus. When he finished, R' Yekusiel said, "You are my Rebbe."

Other Chassidim also picked Rabbi Shmuel and became mekushar to him with "ropes of love."

After the Tzemach Tzedek's passing, one of the young Chassidim went to Rabbi Shmuel Dovber of Borisov, a distinguished Chassid, and asked him which of the Rebbe's sons he should go to. R' Shmuel Dovber answered, "We cannot distinguish between the Rebbe's sons, since they are all tzaddikim, and so I cannot tell you. What I can say is I am going to the youngest son [the Rebbe Maharash]."

Rabbi Shmuel Dovber explained why. "I was recently in Lubavitch. The Tzemach Tzedek said Chassidus, and among other things, he referred to something that seemed to me to be just the opposite in the book *Eitz Chaim*."

"I thought about this and found no solution. On Motzaei Shabbos, I went to one of the Tzemach Tzedek's sons and presented this question. He began to explain it to me, but I didn't accept his answer. I went to a different son and presented my question on the maamer, and he said it was a strong question and began to resolve it, but for some reason his

The Tzemach Tzedek told his son, Maharash, "The spiritual jug of oil that the Baal Shem Tov gave his disciple, the Maggid of Mezritch, with which to anoint the Alter Rebbe to the nesius for all his generations – with that my father-in-law, the Mitteler Rebbe, was anointed, and with this power I anointed you."

explanation didn't sit well with me.

"I went for a walk in the courtyard and began thinking – as far as the question – when I will have a yechidus with the Rebbe, he will certainly explain it to me. However, I thought, the Rebbe is already old; to whom will I attach myself. I walked about, lost in thought, until dawn.

Suddenly, I saw that the house of the youngest son was illuminated. I said to myself, I will go to him and ask him my question. I went to the outer door and saw that it wasn't

closed. I entered the hallway and saw, through the small window in the inner door that he was sitting at the table with a large book, like a Gemara or poskim, in front of him. I touched the door and it was locked. I knocked lightly on the door and he asked who it was. When I said my name, he asked me to wait a minute. I waited and the door opened. When I entered the room, I saw a newspaper on the table, and no s'farim at all.

"I told him that I had a question on the maamer that had been said on Shabbos. He immediately said, 'No doubt on this topic (and he mentioned the topic) that in *Eitz Chaim* it says just the opposite.'

"I said yes and he began to explain the inyan clearly, and I saw that the wellsprings of wisdom were open for him. He spoke for a long time until it was all clarified and there was no longer any question.

"When I had the yechidus, I didn't mention the question, but since I had been thinking about which son to be mekushar to, I accepted this as an answer to my question. This is why I will be going, with Hashem's help, to the youngest son of the Tzemach Tzedek, the Maharash."

When the young Chassid heard this story, he immediately went to Lubavitch and became mekushar to the Rebbe Maharash.

(sources: Toldos Admur HaMaharash; Beis Rebbi vol. 3; Seifer HaSichos 5702 p. 95-96; Likutei Sippurim of Rav Perlov, p. 86 and p. 215)

(To be continued.)

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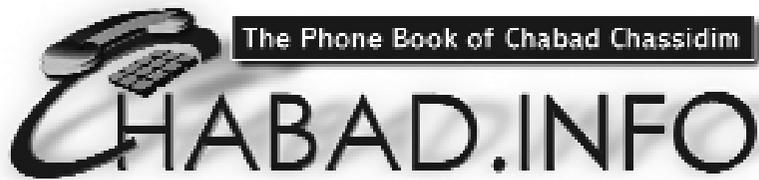


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WHAT WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR

BY MENDEL TZFASMAN

*In the previous installment we told the remarkable story of how Tzvi a”h and Tzippy Shpindler from Eretz Yisroel-Canada became baalei t’shuva. In the following article you will read the story of their four children, and how they followed in their parents’ footsteps. * A story of an extended family’s t’shuva. * Part 2 of 2*

Tzvi and Tzippy Shpindler were Israelis who were completely unobservant. They emigrated to Canada and were followed by their grown children with families of their own: Moti, Chaviva, and Gili. Only Rami, the oldest, remained in Eretz Yisroel.

Eventually, Tzvi and Tzippy became baalei t’shuva and became Chassidim of the Rebbe MH”M. Their children, however, who lived nearby, continued their lives as usual, unaffected by their parents changes. However, this didn’t last for long.

SHOCK!

Rami Shpindler went up the stairs to his apartment in Natzeret Ilit, holding an envelope that had arrived by airmail from his parents in Canada. He really missed the family! He wondered how his

siblings were doing as well as his parents. Something was bothering him and he couldn’t put his finger on what it was.



Tzvi Shpindler

He suddenly remembered a fax he had received a few months before, in which his mother had written that they had begun becoming religious. “Maybe that’s what’s bothering me,” Rami thought. But he calmed down when he figured that it must be because they were surrounded by goyim. “Imma has gotten excited and she’s calling it ‘chazara b’t’shuva,’” he thought as he opened the door to his apartment.

The children, who noticed the Canadian stamps, jumped up and down and yelled, “Ima, a letter came from Saba and Savta!” They all gathered round Rami in anticipation.

Rami removed a picture from the envelope, took one look, and yelled, “No! I can’t believe it!”

His wife and children grabbed the picture out of his hands. All were shocked to see Saba with a hat like the religious men wear, and Savta wearing a skirt and a head covering, and a large picture of the Lubavitcher Rebbe behind them. “What happened to them?”

Rami went everywhere with that picture. “My parents went crazy,” he told his friends, as he took the picture out of his pocket.

Rami wasn’t the only who was shocked. When Tzvi and Tzippy became religious, all their children were shocked. They never dreamed



Gili Shpindler farbrenging with Rabbi Chaim Shlomo Cohen

that their parents could do something like this. And to go so far as to buy a wig and a hat like the Chassidim wear?

Little did they imagine that the Rebbe's net, which is spread throughout the world, would bring them too, with their spouses and children, to become loyal Chassidim and mekusharim of the Rebbe.

RAMI IS ANGRY

The first breaches in the wall of the extended family's views about Judaism began when Chaviva married Avi Avraham, a traditional boy who kept Shabbos and kashrus. He didn't interfere with them but it was strange how the concept of "forbidden" suddenly became part of the Shpindler family's lexicon. They consoled themselves by saying that at least Avi wasn't a *dos* (a derogatory word for religious).

One day, Moti called his brother Rami in Eretz Yisroel and suggested that Rami also emigrate to Canada, so the entire family would be together. Moti wasn't prepared for his brother's tirade in which he vented his frustrations over their parents having become religious.

"I'll come only if you promise

"I was surprised at myself, at how my empathizing with the mother and daughter had broken my heart to the point of tears. Today, I understand it as the essence of my neshama waking up."

me that you won't do t'shuva! I am not going to Canada in order to see you become religious!" yelled Rami across the Atlantic.

He didn't have to convince Moti, since ostensibly Moti hadn't given a thought to doing t'shuva, not even jokingly.

Moti went to Eretz Yisroel in order to help Rami arrange his emigration papers, since he already had the experience. Things progressed nicely, and one morning the brothers went to the bank in order to take out money for the expenses at the consulate and to

purchase their tickets.

They met a Lubavitcher at the entrance to the bank who asked them to put on t'fillin. Moti refused, but Rami suddenly felt like he wanted to do a mitzva. He asked Moti to wait for him, but Moti urged him to hurry up because it was late and they would be late for the consulate. Rami gave in and promised himself that when he left the bank he would put on t'fillin.

To his great disappointment, the Lubavitcher wasn't there when they left, and they returned to Rami's office. A sigh escaped Rami, for something bothered him but he didn't know what it was.

Then, there in the doorway to the office, appeared a Lubavitcher bachur with a pair of t'fillin. "Would you like to put on t'fillin?" he asked. Rami jumped out of his chair and exclaimed, "I can't believe it! What an amazing coincidence."

He rolled up his sleeve quickly as though fearful something would stop him again. "How did you come here just now? What made you come?" he asked.

The bachur smiled and pointed to the picture of the Rebbe on the wall, put up by their father, Tzvi Shpindler, who had worked there. "He brought me here."

Nevertheless, when Rami arrived in Montreal, it was strange for him to be in his parents' house. Their new way of life didn't suit him at all. He felt estranged. It was hard for him to accept that they weren't the same parents he knew. He even fought with his father one time. It was a Friday night when Rami asked his father for the car. When Tzvi refused, Rami yelled, "The datiyim ruined you! You have nothing to do in life but be like them?"

Tzvi kept quiet.

"You could be traditional and leave it at that," continued Rami,

“but why these clothes and the beard?”

Tzvi refused to be drawn into a debate.

GILI'S STORY

Mrs. Shpindler prayed constantly that their youngest child, Gili, would also do t'shuva. Unlike her older children, Gili was still single and lived at home.

“My parents never tried to convince me to keep Torah and mitzvos,” says Gili. “They simply tried to show us that they were very happy with the fact that they were observant Jews and Chassidim of the Rebbe.”

His parents didn't throw out his TV and stereo. They put it in Gili's room and allowed him to do as he pleased there. This approach is what worked with him and brothers.

Gili doesn't like talking about his past, even though he has amazing stories to tell. Gili “lives with the times,” which is why he's not interested in rehashing the past. He defines himself as “a baby born eleven years and two months ago.” Yes, he even counts the months.

It was Tishrei 5754. Rabbi Chaim Shlomo Cohen, shliach in Montreal and director of MaDA (Merkaz Dovrei Ivrit), who had become the spiritual father of Gili's parents, organized a trip to the Rebbe for Sukkos. Tzippy Shpindler was in charge of registration for the trip, and she suggested that Gili go.

Gili hadn't even thought about it. “Why should I go to the Rebbe?” In addition, just at that time there were going to be rehearsals for a big party with gentile friends. There was no way that Gili was going to go, except somehow, Gili was in one of the cars that Chol HaMoed, heading southward, to 770.

There is no logical reason to explain how that happened. There

was no reason then, and there's no reason now either.

On one of the days of Sukkos, the Rebbe went out on the porch twice. “The first time, I enjoyed it very much,” says Gili. “I was studying photography at the time, and the scene of thousands of Chassidim gazing hypnotically at the Rebbe, provided me with great photo ops.

“The second time the Rebbe came out, I had a strange feeling that the Rebbe was looking at me. It seemed a foolish feeling to me, because the Rebbe didn't seem to be focused on any one person. But I felt it, and it moved something inside of me, though at the time I didn't understand what it was. I sang ‘Yechi’ along with everyone else. I thought he has to be Moshiach so we must encourage him so he can successfully utilize his inner powers.

“Afterwards, I met my brother-in-law Avi, who held my hand in excitement. ‘Gili, they're letting people walk past the Rebbe. Come join the line.’ It turned out it was a line of women, but since we had to return to Montreal that day, we were allowed to pass through during a break between one group of women and another. I remember, that before getting in line, someone told me it was very worthwhile to think of one's requests when passing before the Rebbe.

“A short time later, I returned to New York and began working selling beepers and cellular phones, which were just catching on then.

“On 3 Tammuz 5754 I went to work and a friend told me the news being broadcast over the radio and TV. I thought, ‘what a pity,’ and that was that. I didn't feel anything beyond that. But when I left work that day and saw a mother and daughter on the subway crying, I felt bad for them. I didn't know

what bothered them so much, but then I saw a picture of the Rebbe hanging in the subway car [at that time, there were posters of the Rebbe all over with the prophecy of Geula] and I got it. I realized why they were crying. Suddenly, I began crying like a child. I sat there on the train, with my torn jeans and long hair, and cried.

“I was surprised at myself, at how my empathizing with the mother and daughter had broken my heart to the point of tears. Today, I understand it as the essence of my neshama waking up. Nevertheless, this spiritual arousal did not enter the proper ‘vessels,’ and my life continued as usual.”

Gili went to Montreal to visit his family. On his way back to New York, he was stopped by the United States border police. They suspected that the purpose of his visit wasn't that innocent and that he was traveling to work without a work permit. Gili's bad luck: they found a business card of the office he worked in with his name on it, in his pocket. This certainly clinched matters. They sent him back to Montreal, warning him not to try entering the U.S. for another five years!

“During a crisis, you suddenly begin to think. The entire way back, my thoughts gave me no rest. I always thought that some day I would check out Judaism to see whether it really is the truth or was nothing but a fantasy. At that moment of crisis, I decided to devote an entire year to study Judaism.

“I began learning with Rabbi Cohen. I was particularly enthralled by the Rebbe's Rashi sichos. I was amazed by the depth, as well as the fact that the Rebbe learns an entire inyan from one detail in something that Rashi does **not** explain. I saw that nothing is written for nothing.



Avi Avraham enjoying Chassidishe nachas from his bar mitzva boy



Moti Shpindler and his children at the beginning of the road back



Rami Shpindler, gabbai in shul, at Shacharis

Along with my studies, I began living a religious life, step by step.”

On Yud-Tes Kislev 5755, on a trip to the Rebbe, Gili cut his long hair. On that visit, he asked the Rebbe for a bracha to remove all the obstacles that hindered him from progressing in his avodas Hashem.

“It’s interesting,” comments Gili, “that despite the warning of the border police, I went to the Rebbe many times and never had any problems.”

The bracha Gili asked for was fulfilled, and since then, Gili has taken giant steps in his observance and attainment of knowledge. He passes along to other Jews the strength and encouragement he gets from the Rebbe. Many baalei t’shuva with beards and sirtuks have become mekushar to the Rebbe thanks to Gili.

CHAVIVA AND AVI’S STORY

Tzvi and Tzippy’s daughter, Chaviva, and her husband, Avi Avraham, also became Chabad Chassidim. The Avraham couple made a Shabbaton for Jewish girls who left home. The Avraham’s own observance was minimal at that point, and they invited religious girls to the Shabbaton to give it a real Shabbos atmosphere. These were Bais Rivka girls from the local school.

In the middle of the Shabbos meal, Chaviva made a startling and dramatic announcement to her husband. “Tomorrow I am going to register our daughter in Bais Rivka!”

Avi was taken aback. “Bais Rivka? Are you crazy? Do you want a chareidi daughter?”

Chaviva retorted, “In another few years, which side of the table do you want to see our daughter sitting at?”

The next day, they registered their son Tzur and their daughter

Tzofit in Chabad schools in Montreal. Chaviva went to Rabbi Shputz's office and asked him to register her son. Seeing that Chaviva wasn't outwardly observant, Rabbi Shputz gently explained that it was a religious school and that the curriculum revolved around the Jewish subjects. Chaviva knew exactly what she wanted. "My goal is to see my son as a talmid in yeshiva!"

She left Rabbi Shputz's office and went directly to the clothing stores. She changed her wardrobe to skirts and modest clothing and even covered her hair. That's how the entire family changed, virtually overnight, to a religious family, thanks to the children.

Some time later, Tzur recited the bar mitzva maamer by heart – and in Yiddish! His parents and his teacher, Rabbi Berel Mochkin, were thrilled. What a bar mitzva that was!

MOTI'S STORY

Every Shabbos, Moti and his wife and son went to his parents for the Shabbos meals, by car, of course. Tzvi and Tzippy didn't comment, but greeted their children and grandchildren graciously. The family Shabbos meals became a weekly experience nobody wanted to miss.

One Shabbos morning, Moti's son, ten-year-old Robby, woke up with a crazy idea: "I don't want to go to Savta by car. I want to keep Shabbos the way they do. Let's walk."

"What can we do with him," sighed his mother to Moti, as she dressed the kids in warm coats. "Let's walk. Do we have a choice?"

So the family walked together to Saba and Savta's house: young Robby, his mother, and his father on roller blades, on a walk that took an hour and a half! From then on, the



From left to right: Mattan Avraham, Efraim Menachem Shpindler, and Lior Shpindler – at Machane Moshiaich

walk became a weekly ritual. A year later, after schlepping every Shabbos in the heat and cold, wind and snow (which made the neighbors

JUST AS HIS CHILDREN ARE ALIVE...

Since the Shpindlers' t'shuva process took place around the period of 3 Tammuz 5754, when many old time Lubavitchers felt confused, the obvious question is:

Didn't the proclamation of "Yechi" and the belief that the Rebbe is Moshiaich and is chai v'kayam turn you off to Lubavitch?

Rami: "No, not at all. At that time, we were participating in shiurim on the topic of Moshiaich and his identity, from the sources. It was important for us to learn it since now we are teaching others, in turn."

Gili: "There were times I thought the Lubavitchers sounded like another religion, G-d forbid. But when I asked the shliach and got clear answers, I relaxed. (Smiling) I didn't know why we spit in Aleinu or why it's forbidden to tear toilet paper on Shabbos, or why I can't carry a tissue on Shabbos to blow my nose... The difference is that these halachos I accepted with kabbalas ol, while the belief that the Rebbe is chai v'kayam and that he is Moshiaich, I accepted after rational examination.

"Those who are bothered by it don't hesitate to ask questions, and then you have to provide them with the right answer, show them the s'farim, and explain how this is based on Torah. There is no need to hide. There's no difference between this emuna and the emuna in Hashem and the kabbalas ol that follows in the wake of that belief. I say this from experience with many mekuravim."

Chaviva: "We accepted it just the way a baby nurses from day one. It was clear to us that if that's what our spiritual father believes and how he acts, then that's what his children do."



Gili Shpindler (center) at his l'chaim. To his left is his father-in-law, Moshe Cadaner

raise their eyebrows in surprise), Moti and his wife decided to keep Shabbos themselves.

After a while, Ahuva his wife announced, "From now on, I'm covering my hair!" Moti didn't have a choice this time either, and despite his opposition, he finally joined this new way of life, breaking his promise to his brother.

One thing led to another, and the family became mekusharim to the Rebbe. Moti's children join their cousins on their way to yeshiva and Bais Rivka, and they bring back home with them, the warmth and Chassidic spirit they absorb there.

RAMI'S STORY

The only one who remained on the outside was Rami, the oldest Shpindler son. The many times that the Rebbe's shluchim were sent to him didn't convince him, and he remained committed to his secular way of life. Even when he served in Lebanon in 5740 along with R' Dovber Friedman, a Lubavitcher from Yerushalayim, and they went on many dangerous missions together, he was not inclined to put on t'fillin, or to learn *Tanya*, or even hear a story about the Rebbe! Even

Rabbi Groner told them that the Rebbe had put his hand on the letter and there would certainly be good news...

when Lubavitchers came on the holidays to the lion's den that was Lebanon, just to cheer the soldiers up, Rami's heart was not swayed. So what happened to finally change Rami's mind?

Rami's daughter Bat-El was born with weak muscle tone. She lay in her crib unable to move or turn over, and of course, she couldn't crawl. Even after many months in which there was slight improvement in her condition, she still couldn't sit by herself. When she tried to sit, she fell back down. The doctors were pessimistic. "If she walks by age three, it will be a miracle."

Her parents were, understandably, saddened by her condition and this prognosis. When a year had gone by with no real

improvement, they spoke to Rabbi Shlomo Cohen and asked him to bless their daughter. Rabbi Cohen told them to write to the Rebbe and explain her condition, what the doctors said, and to include her name and her mother's name.

Rami and his wife didn't understand why all this was necessary, and why Rabbi Cohen couldn't bless her himself. But they did as he said, and sent the fax to the Rebbe. This was just two weeks before 3 Tammuz 5754. Rabbi Groner told them that the Rebbe had put his hand on the letter and there would certainly be good news.

Another six months went by and Bat-El was two years old and still hadn't made any significant improvement. On Chanuka 5755, there was a Shabbaton organized by MaDA in the mountains outside the city. Rami and his family went, and this was the first Shabbos in their lives that they kept properly. During Shabbos, a family friend, Yossi Lasry told them that he planned on going to the Rebbe the following Shabbos. He invited them to join him. Rami said, "We'll talk about it. I'll give you an answer during the week."

On Tuesday, the extended Shpindler family was at the grandparents' house when suddenly, before their very eyes, Bat-El picked herself up from her seat, held on to the table legs, and stood up!

The family was in shock over this miracle. Cries of joy, "Bat-El is standing!" resounded. Neighbors and friends came running to see the miracle for themselves.

Rami immediately called Yossi Lasry and told him he would join him on the trip to the Rebbe for Shabbos.

On Friday, minutes before Shabbos, Rami called home to wish the family a good Shabbos. His younger brother, Gili, answered the

phone.

“Rami, did you go to the Rebbe to ask that Bat-El walk?” asked Gili.

“Yes. Why?” asked Rami.

“Because she’s been running back and forth all day,” exclaimed Gili.

At that moment, Rami decided that from then on, he would begin keeping Shabbos. He didn’t tell his wife though, and on Shabbos he began having doubts. “Maybe I made that commitment too rashly, before speaking it over with my wife,” he wondered.

He decided to ask Hashem if he did the right thing. He took a Chumash and put his finger at random on a verse. The verse said, “Keep my Sabbaths, I am G-d.”

When he arrived home, his wife greeted him happily and told him that she had committed to keeping Shabbos!

That same day, they called Rabbi Levi Perlstein to kasher their kitchen. A few days later, they sent their daughters to Bais Rivka. The girls, who were already older, were not opposed to the idea at all. On the contrary, they were happy with their parents’ decision because they remembered that when they had arrived in Montreal in the middle of the school year and no school except for Bais Rivka would accept them, they had spent two weeks there. They had such a good experience that they jumped at the opportunity to go back there.

THE REBBE SENDS DOLLARS

On Rosh Chodesh Kislev 5756, just one year after his “upsheren,” Gili married Chana Cadaner. When the couple left the yichud room and passed the Rebbe’s room, his mashpia, Rabbi Cohen, said that sometimes the Rebbe would give a dollar to the chassan and kalla.

“I felt awful for having missed this opportunity,” says Gili



Shpindler grandchildren at Krias Shma the night before the bris of another grandson

describing his feelings at the time.

When he arrived at the Oholei Torah ballroom, the first person he

thus preparing the world to greet Moshiach in the endless cycle of “shliach oseh shliach.”



Rami with his daughter who began walking thanks to the Rebbe’s bracha



Rami during army service in Lebanon

met gave him two dollars from the Rebbe. “This is my wedding gift for you and your kalla!” he said.

* * *

That is the saga of the Shpindler family and how Tzvi and Tzippy, their sons and daughter, their daughters-in-law and son-in-law, all became religious. And that’s not all, for they have become the Rebbe’s shluchim in being mekarev other families to Torah and Chassidus,



Rami in front of 770

THE GAON: RABBI PINCHAS HERSCHPRUNG Z”L

From Shemen Sasson Meichaveirecha

BY REB SHALOM BER WOLPO
TRANSLATED BY ALEXANDER ZUSHE KOHN



(Continued from last week.)

During his visit to Israel in Sivan of 5743 (May-June, 1983), Rav Herschprung told of the activities of the Rebbe’s emissaries in Montreal (see last week’s issue of *Beis Moshiach Magazine*):

THE REBBE’S GREATNESS IN TORAH

“I must point out that the [weekly] *Likkutei Sichos* pamphlets have greatly enhanced people’s method of analyzing Torah, and the depth of their understanding. I heard from many Torah sages, including some who are not chassidim, that the method of learning one finds in *Likkutei Sichos*, especially the Rashi *sichos*, is absolutely extraordinary, and that it is hard to find an equally clear, lucid and precise method.

“Years ago, I would go in to the Rebbe for a private audience, and we would discuss Torah. It was an indescribable spiritual experience – not only does the Rebbe possess an unequalled memory, but also, every subject in the Talmud and halachic commentaries that was mentioned in the course of our discussion was alive and fresh to him, as though he were presently in the midst of studying that

very subject. Keep in mind that the Rebbe has to devote a lot of time to matters of public concern; the problems of the entire Jewish people lie on his shoulders. One might aptly describe the Rebbe as ‘a person of many trades,’ to borrow the Rambam’s words.

“Because [the Rebbe is so busy], I try not to disturb the him at all nowadays, and not to deprive him of even a moment of his precious time. I also explained my approach to a number of Torah leaders who wanted very much to speak with the Rebbe. I appreciate their desire [to speak with the Rebbe], of course, but I told them that, in my opinion, nowadays, when tens of thousands of Jews from around the world turn to the Rebbe with their questions and concerns, one must not afford oneself the luxury of depriving the Rebbe of his precious time. The world gives him no respite. And besides, everyone knows how diligently the Rebbe [studies Torah] – he has neither night nor day....

“The Rebbe once turned to me during a farbrengen, and with a hint of a smile, he said, “I am about to deliver a talk on something you wrote, and I will totally repudiate it.... And that was exactly what he did!

“I told the Torah sages who wanted to have a private audience with the Rebbe that one could also bask in the radiance of his Torah at a farbrengen. The spiritual pleasure of listening to him move from tractate to tractate, touring the entire Talmud with brilliance, erudition, and depth, is difficult to describe. The many volumes of *Likkutei Sichos*, and the *hadranim* (scholarly addresses honoring the completion of a Talmudic tractate) he delivered on all tractates of the Talmud are unparalleled works of Torah. And he has accomplished all of this despite the fact that all the concerns of the masses are upon his shoulders. This is something that has no logical explanation. When I had the good fortune of discussing Torah with him, he had an immediate answer for every single Talmudic and halachic query I raised, and he always quoted the teaching precisely as it appears in the *s’farim*. His memory is extraordinary.

“I HAVE NEVER RETRACTED ANYTHING I SAID”

“There is yet another thing about the Rebbe that is unparalleled: he is the only one in the generation who can say, ‘I have never retracted anything I said.’ This is a supernatural quality,

which no one else possesses. Every Torah sage says something once in a while that he later retracts, realizing that he made a mistake. This concept does not exist by the Rebbe. Not when it comes to his learning, not when it comes to his personal matters, and not when it comes to his public concerns. Whatever he says is the clear and unmitigated truth, which is not subject to change.”

The Rebbe’s views on contemporary issues affecting the Jewish nation have always, always, proven to be correct in the end. Thus, a certain renowned Torah sage said to me recently: “I must tell you that the Lubavitcher Rebbe’s view – which I disagreed with – on the ‘peace’ agreements, has proven absolutely correct.”

The *gaon* expressed his great admiration for the Rebbe on many other occasions:

“IF NOT FOR HIM...”

Siyum HaRambam, 5750 (1989-90): “I want to speak, briefly, about the great things the Rebbe’s has accomplished on behalf of the Jewish people. The [Talmudic] declaration, ‘If not for him the Torah would be forgotten (G-d forbid)¹ can well be applied to the Rebbe.’ People think Lubavitch has had an easy time bringing Jews back to their roots. When I arrived in Canada in 5701 (1940-41), the Jewish community was very small, and without proper Jewish facilities. One day, nine Lubavitcher *bachurim* – European refugees – arrived.... When a certain important and wealthy Jew of our community saw them, he said, ‘They must be taken to the barber immediately....’ That’s how it was back then – very difficult for Judaism to take root. Yet Lubavitch did it...with the Rebbe’s power, of course. Let us bless the Rebbe, therefore, that the source of life grant him a long and good life. May the Rebbe be healthy, and may he

derive *nachas* from us. May he merit the salvation, and the true Redemption, speedily in our days, *amen*.

NO SLEEP

11 Nissan celebration, 5751 (March 26, 1991): “We must be thankful to G-d for placing in our midst the *gaon* and leader of the Jewish people, the *Admur* of Lubavitch *shlita*, who, like our teacher Moses, works tirelessly on behalf of the Jewish people. I have already said many times that the Rebbe *shlita* neither sleeps nor



allows others to sleep. Indeed, his father-in-law, the Rebbe Rayatz, noted that his son-in-law was always awake at 4:00 am – either he had not gone to sleep yet, or he had already woken up. The Rebbe is the one who established the yoke of Torah and *t’shuva*, and who brings the great merit of Torah and holiness to thousands and tens of thousands of Jews.

“Praise G-d, we have been fortunate enough that our teacher, the true *gaon* and prince of Torah... the holy *Admur* of Lubavitch has entered

his ninetieth year. May the source of life grant him a long and good life, and may he merit to continue leading the Jewish people in health for many more years. In his day, and in our day, may we merit the fulfillment of G-d’s promise, ‘As in the days of your exodus from Egypt, I will show you wonders,’ with the revelation of the light of Moshiach and the eternal Redemption.”

POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Siyum HaRambam, 5745 (1984-85), New York: Rav Herschprung thoroughly supported the Rebbe’s position on retaining all of the Land of Israel. In a letter published in the *HaPardes* Torah journal (Shvat-Adar, 5739 edition), he proves at length that the Rebbe is correct in basing his view on *Shulchan Aruch*, *siman* 329. According to the *gaon* “the Yom Kippur War proves this; it is has already been well publicized, including by the Prime Minister of that era, that political considerations – i.e., trying to find favor in the eyes of the U.S. – were the sole reason why thousands of soldiers died.” After a lengthy discussion encompassing ten pages, the *gaon* concludes with the following note: “All that I have written above was shown to the outstanding *gaon*, Rav Moshe Feinstein *shlita*, and he praised it very much.”

A G-DLY PRACTICE

“Our generation has merited the Resurrection of the Dead – i.e., G-d sent the great soul of the Rebbe *shlita*, the *tzaddik* of our generation, to our world, to revive the ‘dry bones’ (borrowed from Ezekiel’s vision of the resurrection, this term is sometimes used as a euphemism for people devoid of spiritual warmth). We are taught that ‘a generous person shall be blessed’ – this refers to the Rebbe, who



With students of the the yeshiva in Sydney, Australia

has united the Jewish people in Torah study through the G-dly practice he has initiated – i.e., the daily study of Rambam.

Siyum HaRambam, 5745 (1984-85), Montreal: "... In the name of all the inhabitants of our city, I would like to express my thanks and deep appreciation to the Rebbe...the holy *Admur* of Lubavitch *shlita*, for this wonderful initiative, which has expanded and deepened the minds of Torah students, in areas of Torah that they never learnt before.

Siyum HaRambam, 5746 (1985-86), New York: "In our generation, the soul of Moses is embodied by the Lubavitcher Rebbe *shlita*, may G-d grant him long life, until the coming of the Redeemer. [He is] the *tzaddik* of the generation. He has brought merit to the Jewish people.... Who would have thought that tens of thousands of Jews would learn Rambam everyday and complete the entire cycle a number of times, as they have done! I myself have

seen how this practice has spread among the Jewish people. When I was on the plane, I saw young men sitting and learning Rambam. Ten years ago, no one would have dreamed of this.... Everyone should regard the daily study of Rambam as a religious obligation.

SOLD OUT

Interview with *Kfar Chabad Magazine*, issue 147: "With regard to the study of Rambam, one might say that the Rebbe ignited within the Jewish people a Heavenly fire, a G-dly, infinite fire. Now it is our turn to contribute the earthly fire by studying Rambam every day.

"Perhaps, the following can serve as yet another example of the Rebbe's great power and enormous influence on all circles of Torah students: The Rebbe launched his daily Rambam initiative just this Pesach, and already, there are no sets of Rambam left in any of the city's *s'farim* stores; all the *s'farim* publishers are hurrying to print additional sets.

"Right now, the study of Rambam is popular primarily among chassidim. Judging by the way it is spreading, however, it will eventually be adopted by everyone. The *daf-yomi* also took a while to spread among the entire Jewish people. At first only chassidim welcomed the practice of studying a leaf a day of the Bavli, and then the Yerushalmi, and now the Rambam. In the end, however, everyone adopts these practices.

"When I encounter *misnagdim* who still think that the Torah was given only to them...I tell them that even among *misnagdim* there are some who can learn."

After *Gimmel Tammuz*: "Every time I would go in to the Rebbe for a private audience, I would be impressed anew by his greatness and immense brilliance. Nothing escaped his knowledge. You cannot imagine the astounding brilliance reflected in even the marginal footnotes of his holy *sichos*. This type of brilliance is unmatched.

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IN A POSITIVE WAY

BY SHAI GEFEN

IT'S NEITHER YAHADUS NOR TORAH

The chilul Hashem being made the past few months by the party that calls itself Yahadus HaTorah is enormous. It makes no difference whether in the end they enter the coalition of Sharon's wicked government or not. The very fact that five men with beards and pei'os, are ready to endanger the lives of Jews, their security, and their possessions in exchange for money cannot be ignored.

We are fearfully watching as Sharon maniacally pursues his goal of destroying Jewish settlements in Gush Katif and northern Shomron, endangering us all, and the burning issue of the day for Yahadus HaTorah is who will get the finance committee and who will be deputy minister of Labor and Welfare.

Neither religion, nor Torah, nor pikuach nefesh of millions of Jews interests them; the only thing on their agenda is \$\$\$, and they're open about it too. This *shita* didn't start yesterday. For decades now, the chareidi parties have ripped parts out of the Torah, each time with another excuse.

When Mihi Yehudi was the issue of the day, they said the law didn't affect them and they focused on the oh-so-serious problem of daylight savings and when the clock should be changed. Now when shleimus ha'Aretz is the critical issue of the day, the g'dolim are preoccupied with the problem of shmutz on cell phones.

Why don't the same g'dolim convene to discuss the problem of millions of Jews being put in danger? Do they and their followers think they

are immune to this danger?

When the Israeli government, with the signatures of representatives of Yahadus HaTorah, are about to destroy yeshivos and shuls, they tell us that they are going to save yeshivos and mosdos Torah. As Sharon plans to exhume the bones of children, women, and rabbanim from their graves in Gush Katif, digging up the graves of sixty Jews, some of them martyrs who died al kiddush Hashem, Yahadus HaTorah tells us that they are fighting the digging up of graves in Acco.

Last week they publicized the draft of a coalition agreement between Sharon and Yahadus HaTorah, which has a paragraph that forbids digging up graves. Yet, simultaneously, their votes enable the destruction of a cemetery where Jews are definitely buried, many of them martyrs. What hypocrisy, what wickedness!

The focus here is specifically on Yahadus HaTorah because they act as though they represent Torah, and make

their decisions according to Torah. The Rebbe said to Moshe Katzav:

It's one thing if people who didn't believe in G-d did this, for that would be understandable, but when people who believe in G-d sign to give away parts of Eretz Yisroel – this is a chilul Hashem.

COVER UP!

As always, we learn what's going on in 2005 by reading *Karati V'Ein Oneh*, where the Rebbe's sichos are as relevant as ever. Twenty-six years ago, at the time of the unfortunate Camp David agreement, the Rebbe said a sicha on Shabbos Parshas Mattos-Massei 5739 about what interests the chareidi parties. Every word of the sicha comes alive today:

The chareidi representatives do not disclose how many liros they get for the shocking things that are going on. Even when there were datiyim who were not chareidim like those now, although they covered up certain things, they didn't have the ability to



Never Again!



hide the things going on now.

Now however, no sooner do they seek a hechsher for something – they get it immediately, excluding when they don't ask or when it's something that nobody could tolerate – and even then, they don't protest, but keep absolutely quiet. They make believe they have no idea that things are going on that “stab at the eyes,” may Heaven protect us.

When it's printed and publicized in the newspapers, and they can't ignore it anymore, they begin to excuse themselves with various pretexts. We know from the Rishonim that the word *amasla* (excuse) is comprised of two words: *emes lo* (no truth)!

Aside from this being the opposite of Torah, the opposite of humanity, and the opposite of logic – even according to their own calculations they'll lose, since at some point the public will catch on to what's going on and then there's election day ...

The only thing that can influence these people is when you tell them that Judgment Day is coming. And this is not a reference to the Judgment Day On High, because they'll say they have enough merits for that *beis din* in heaven. They are not afraid of that Judgment Day. But when it comes to judgment down below, the situation changes. The fact that on election day they might not be elected frightens them!

Until the elections, nobody has the courage to remove them from their seats and to replace them with someone else. Even if someone isn't the strongest person, when they show him that he's doing something prohibited by the Torah, one of the three things about which it says, 'be killed but do not transgress' – the giving away of land which these representatives agreed to, causes the murder of Jews, regarding which it says 'be killed and do not transgress' – at least he'll have the strength to do that which it says in the Torah about

the one who is scared: 'he should go and return home.' He shouldn't use his position to do nothing and not to protest. That sort of conduct leads to shocking results.

Yashar ko'ach to the leaders of HaMatteh HaOlami to Save the Nation and the Land, who don't rest for a moment, for putting up flyers in chareidi neighborhoods against joining the government. Let us hope they are successful.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE

A sit-down strike began in front of the prime minister's office in Yerushalayim. This is the opening salvo in the great fight against the dangerous Disengagement Plan. Although it's too little too late, nevertheless it's very important to take part and to give your support. In the end, we will succeed, with Hashem's mercy, to rent the heavens and to annul the terrible decree.

This battle has only one possible outcome for us: Victory. Period. We cannot even consider losing. This battle is about our very existence. If we have to sit in jail, we'll sit. Jews have sat in jail in many exiles, under powerful governments. Nothing will happen. The leaders need to lead the way in breaking through the roadblock of fear.

Sad to say, the Israeli mentality is similar to the communists. Fear of the government reigns here, and people don't dare to fight for their views and for matters that are truly important.

Zero hour has arrived and the slogan, “The Transfer Won't Happen” has to be implemented. Jews must act with *mesirus nefesh* in order to stop this crime. This isn't the fight of the people of Gush Katif, and it's not a real estate problem, as those on the Left would like to put it; the problem here is our very existence and our security in this land of ours. Our battle is to prevent the destruction of Eretz Yisroel, and it's within our power to succeed.

We are fearfully watching as Sharon maniacally pursues his goal of destroying Jewish settlements in Gush Katif and northern Shomron, endangering us all, and the burning issue of the day for Yahadus HaTorah is who will get the finance committee and who will be deputy minister of Labor and Welfare.

THE CATTLE CARS TO AUSCHWITZ AND THE LESSON FOR US

The other week an ad appeared showing Jews boarding the cattle cars that took them to Auschwitz, with a caption that read “NEVER AGAIN.” The ad doesn't reference what's going on now in Gush Katif, but the media picked this up gleefully, going on the attack. The public at large feels there is a connection between what's about to happen and the cattle cars that brought Jews to their deaths.

In amazing Divine providence, I found an incredible sicha said on Shabbos parsha B'Chukosai 5738 on the topic of cattle cars to Auschwitz and the lessons for us. Let us examine this sicha and see what a serious situation we are facing:

This is not the first time that tzaros were caused because of Jews who are afraid to 'start up' with the goy. During the terrible Holocaust, the United States could have bombed the railroad tracks and stopped (or diminished) the trains from going to the death camps.

There were Jews then who knew about this, and they pressured the president of the United States at that time, Roosevelt, to give the order for this to be done. However, certain Jews came and shushed the matter up, claiming that it was forbidden to pressure the president of the United States because of the din of 'do not start up with the little goy.' Among them were also rabbanim who received a distorted report of the situation, and therefore they said that according to the din it was forbidden to get into an altercation with Washington!

This pressure prevented the rescue of numerous Jews who could have been saved from terrible destruction if the United States had bombed the railroad tracks.

Those rabbanim have talmidim who, today, have influence on the conduct in the United States and Eretz Yisroel, they are not ashamed, and they use their influence in the same way it was used then. When you come to them with the complaint, 'See what you accomplished in the past with this approach. All the fasts that you may fast will not be enough to atone for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Jews who were murdered because of your influence of not saying a word to Washington. At least now, just stay home. Not only do they not listen to this at all, but they continue in the way of 'your destroyers and those who ruin you will emerge from you.'

CARRYING OUT ORDERS

The time has come to change the campaign that calls on soldiers to refuse orders. We are not refusing orders but fulfilling orders and carrying them out properly. Those who refuse orders are those who agree to raise a hand against Hashem and His children.

The various groups that work on saving Jews need to reach out to soldiers in a positive way, as loyal to Hashem and carrying out G-dly orders. Those who refuse the orders of their conscience and of G-d are the ones who will bring tragedy upon us, themselves and their families if they help, even indirectly, carry out this plan.

The various groups that work on saving Jews need to reach out to soldiers in a positive way, as loyal to Hashem and carrying out G-dly orders.

True fear of Heaven is measured in the difficult times. Every soldier that goes into the Reserves today, must inform his commander: I will not carry out this crime. I will not go against the Torah.

At an exclusive Yom Iyun for professors and judges that took place three weeks ago, all the participants agreed that a religious command supersedes a military order. Dr. Elyakim Rubinstein, the former government's legal advisor and judge on the Supreme Court, also agreed. We must proclaim that we live and abide by that conclusion, and will not carry out orders that are contrary to Torah. The

message will reach the upper echelons and will certainly have an effect.

A few weeks ago, I was in the Reserves as part of an IDF Yom Iyun. The commander there raised the issue of the Disengagement from the perspective of the chaplaincy. I got up and said, in front of dozens of soldiers, that an order to carry out the Disengagement plan would not be carried out because it goes against our holy Torah, and we do not follow the military chaplain in such a case. Many soldiers expressed similar sentiments.

Just last week, we heard the chief military chaplain, Rabbi Yisroel Weiss, begin to stammer to the media. He himself is beginning to realize how with his position, he is a collaborator to the destruction.

We must push onward!

I TOOK AN OATH

The Matteh HaOlami to Save the Nation and the Land printed half a million flyers for Israeli soldiers, with the heading, "Nishbati!" (I took an oath). The flyers say:

"Dear Soldier,

"The moment you accept the illegal order to destroy Eretz Yisroel and enable, by your own hands, the establishment of the largest center of terror in the world, the moment you accept the order of transfer, which will only be the beginning of the uprooting of Jews from all the cities and settlements of Yesha and returning to 'Auschwitz borders' (as Abba Eben put it) –

"The moment you accept the cruel order to endanger millions of Jews, remember your oath! You swore upon a Tanach at the Kosel HaMaaravi that during your enlistment in the Israeli Defense Forces, **to protect your homeland** – and not to destroy it, **protect the citizens of Israel** – not to fight them, **to strike at the enemy** – not to aid it. Dear soldier, don't dare break your oath!"

All of us must participate in getting this message out.

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WHERE WAS MAN?

The world has just witnessed one of the greatest natural disasters in our times. Over 150,000 people dead. Not only this but the destruction was spread across the world over thousands of miles. It took hours for the silent killer wave to reach many distant parts of the globe. Upon witnessing the extent of pain caused by this disaster many people ask: why? Why did G-d do this? Did these people deserve this?

It interesting to note, why is it that this particular event brings out these feelings. Every year, one million people die in traffic accidents. Aids will kill three million in the next two years. Starvation has killed millions of people. Disease and preventable illnesses kills additional millions every year. Why is it that when in comparison, a small number of lives have been taken, that people become upset with G-d?

Maybe if we understand how G-d runs the world we can better understand why these things happen. To understand how G-d runs the world we need to look at the Torah teachings that deal with this subject: Chassidus, as explained by the Rebbeim of Lubavitch.

There are different stages in the world's existence. The present stage is called Galus. After exile ends we enter a stage called Geula. In Galus, G-d allows free-choice to reign. During this time G-d allows man to make decisions that effect his destiny. The choices can vary from the most kind and beneficial, to the most cruel, and everything in between. G-d made the world in an imperfect manner, allowing man to perfect it. This engenders great responsibility, but also man can merit great reward for making the right choice.

This means that G-d allows evil to exist so that man can decide whether to fight evil, or allow it to continue to

exist. When man sees terrible events happen in the world he can sit back as say, "Where is G-d?" or "Why did G-d do this?" But G-d looks and says, "Where was man? Why did man allow this to occur?"

This tragedy could have been avoided by simply installing a warning system that already exists in others parts of the world. When man decided that this part of the world does not merit such a system, man allowed thousands of deaths to occur. Man decided not to allocate food to starving countries, and as a result a million people die. Man decided that traffic accidents are not a high priority, allowing thousands of accidents to occur every year.

It is taught in Chasidic teachings that in order for a person to determine if his philosophy is based on truth or not, is if it comes into action. If it just remains in theory it is just a self-serving idea amongst many ideas. But if it comes into action then this shows that the person really believes in it, and really means it.

The Rambam describes in *Mishneh Torah* how one determines who is a real Talmud Chochom? He does not answer: someone who has a lot of Torah knowledge, or is very studious. He answers that we determine it by the way the person eats, drinks, and even walks. If his holy knowledge has permeated his being, and he is one with what he believes, then if will even effect his actions making them more refined.

Man can have a great outpouring of emotion and cry thousand of tears, but if man's feelings do not come into action then they have not improved the world one iota, and even worse they allow another tragedy to occur .

This then is the question: Where was man December 26, 2004?

--Shlomo Grossman and Rabbi Eliezer Gold

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MAZEL TOV! MAZEL TOV!

To our talented translator

Michoel Leib

and his dear wife Chaya Leya Dobry, sh'y
on the birth of their new daughter,

BAILA ITKA sh't

May G-d bless her to grow up to be a true soldier
in His army to do everything she can to hasten
the final Redemption.

--The Beis Moshich Family

REDEMPTION MUSIC FESTIVAL

MOTZAEI SHABBOS SHIRA, PARSHAS B'SHALACH,
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To Feature Top Female Talent * Women-only Concert to Be Held in Grand Ballroom of
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"...And Miriam took the timbrel in her hand and all the women went out with timbrels and with instruments, and Miriam responded to them, 'Sing unto the Eternal, for He is gloriously sublime.'"

(Exodus 15:20-21)

"The specialty of the feminine 'song' and yearning for Redemption lies in the woman's depth of feeling, in the emotive intensity unique to womankind... This is the deeper significance to the name 'Miriam,' which means 'bitterness.' It was Miriam with her immense well of feminine feeling, who truly felt the bitterness of exile, so it was she who could transform the depths of her pain to joyous redemption, sublimate (in the words of the Zohar) darkness into light and bitterness into sweetness."

- The Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach

Brooklyn, NY, January 3, 2005... Top singing stars are flying in to participate in the 2nd Annual Redemption Music Festival for women Motzaei Shabbos, 12 Shevat, January 22, in the Grand Ballroom of Oholei Menachem in Crown Heights, 667 Eastern Parkway, starting at 8:30 PM.

Devorah, the singing sensation originally from Australia, is coming from Israel, and Sharon Lovitch, known as the nightingale of Long Beach, will arrive from California.

The Torah portion B'Shalach, which speaks about Miriam and the women who left Egypt with tambourines, is an auspicious time for Jewish women to gather for a concert. Music can express feelings higher than words, and the yearning to see the Rebbe's prophecy of Redemption fulfilled will find full expression in the melodies of the evening.

Of Devorah's songs, which she composes herself, one fan says, "A concert with her is like a *farbrengen*" (Chassidic gathering). Her works are inspired by the Rebbe's many talks on

Moshiach and Geula, and the announcement of his prophecy, "The time of your Redemption has arrived."

Sharon Lovitch, gifted with a beautiful, clear soprano voice, will enchant the crowd with traditional Jewish songs and melodies, accompanied by the superb Mirele Rosenberger on keyboard.

These outstanding talents will be joined by some of the "hidden stars" of Crown Heights. For example, Orna ben Zvi will play Chassidic harmonica, and Orly Sperlin will demonstrate her expertise on the accordion.

Admission to the Redemption Music Festival is a suggested donation of \$36. Students and seniors will be admitted at half price, \$18, and girls age 12 and under, \$11.

For more information, please call: (718) 771-8820 (Tziporah) or (718) 771-0884 (Bluma).

Jewish Women United for the Redemption, established in 1994, is an organization dedicated to spreading the Rebbe's message about Geula and Moshiach. It embraces women from

every background, and every level of Jewish education. The common bond uniting everyone is the desire to learn the Rebbe's words, to be uplifted to a Redemption frame of mind, and to add in goodness and kindness, as per the Rebbe's directive.

The Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach sends a direct message to Jewish women regarding this concert through the *Igros Kodesh* (volume Alef, Page ayin vov).

His words are as follows (free translation): It says in Rashi that the *Oibershter* first approached the ladies before the men because they have *tzrizus* (alacrity) for mitzvahs in order that they should lead their sons to Torah. Also, regarding their reward, our sages said great is the reward that the *Oibershter* presents to the women more than to the men. And especially in our time before Moshiach comes, the work is *tz'daka* (charity) and the Yidden are being redeemed through *tz'daka*. And through this we see a *maala* (advantage) to the women... Women bring bread, while men are bringing money.

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