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Shlichus

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THE POSITIVE IN NEGATIVE COMMANDMENTS

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



1. On the verse, “And G-d spoke all these words,” our Sages commented:

This teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, recited the Ten Commandments in a single statement, something which is impossible for a human being to do. If so, what is meant by [the statement] of the commandments individually, “I am the L-rd,...” “You shall have no other gods...”? He returned and explicitly mentioned each commandment in its own right.

We find the concept that G-d recited two commandments simultaneously mentioned in two other instances in connection with the Ten Commandments: a) Our Sages relate that the first two commandments: “I am the L-rd, Your G-d” and “You shall have no other gods” were recited as a single commandment. b) In the first account of the Ten Commandments, it is written, “Remember the Shabbos,” and in the second account, it is written, “Observe the Shabbos.” Our Sages explain that both these commands were given as one.

The above concepts raise several questions. Firstly, since G-d ultimately repeated each of the Ten

Commandments individually, of what value was it to mention them all together? Also, every narrative in the Torah is intended to be a lesson in the service of G-d. What lesson can we learn from G-d’s mention of all the commandments together, something which is obviously beyond our human capacity?

Furthermore, it is necessary to understand: Why after the entire Ten Commandments were recited together was this phenomenon repeated in regard to the first two commandments and then repeated again in regard to the commandments for the Shabbos?

These questions can be resolved on the basis of our Rabbis’ interpretation of the verse: “And G-d spoke all these words, saying.” Generally, the word “saying,” leimor in Hebrew, implies a charge to relay a commandment to someone else. In this instance, however, that interpretation is not appropriate for the entire Jewish people were present. Hence, leimor is interpreted to mean “to repeat,” to repeat the words of Torah, in a manner that the words of Torah spoken by a Jew will be “G-d’s word.” Our mouths will be merely intermediaries to communicate G-d’s

Torah.

Since the concept of G-d’s relating all the Ten Commandments in a single statement and the concept that our Torah study is a reflection of G-d’s word are derived from the same verse, we can assume that they are interconnected. Although it is impossible for man, with human power, to make two statements at the same time, since our study of Torah is not human speech, but G-d’s word, we can also emulate this transcendent level.

To explain this concept in terms of our service, we must examine our Sages’ statements in regard to the Shabbos commandments: Our Sages taught:

“Remember” and “Observe” were recited in one statement. Similarly, the commandments “Those who transgress it (the Shabbos) will surely die,” and “On the Shabbos day, [offer] two lambs (whose sacrifice transgresses the Shabbos laws)” were recited in one statement. This is what is meant by the expression, “G-d made a single statement. I heard two things.”

This quote reflects how the positive commandments --

“Remember” and the offering of the Shabbos sacrifices -- and the negative commandments -- “Observe” and the prohibition against work -- are in a essence a single matter. Both together express the holiness of the Shabbos. The fulfillment of the positive commandment and the observance of the prohibition have a single intent, increasing the holiness of the Shabbos. Therefore, the fulfillment of the positive commandment of offering the Shabbos sacrifices does not merely supersede the Shabbos prohibitions. In this instance, offering the Shabbos sacrifices -- which involves performing forbidden labors -- is an expression of the negative commandment as well for the goal of both the positive and negative commandments are the same.

To explain the above concept: The difference between positive commandments and negative commandments is that positive commandments involve “doing good,” performing a positive activity which draws down G-dly light within a person’s soul and within the world at large. In contrast, the negative commandments involve “turning away from evil,” separating oneself from activities and elements which are against G-d’s will. Our negation of these elements and activities nullifies and removes the spirit of impurity in the world at large.

Nevertheless, although the negative commandments appear to involve merely refraining from undesirable activity, they also possess a positive dimension. This can be inferred from the Maharsha’s interpretation of our Sages’ statement that Chabakuk established all the 613 commandments on a single base, “A righteous man will live by his faith.” The Maharsha explains that the multitude of mitzvos is only from the perspective of man, from G-d’s perspective, all mitzvos share a single thrust.

The Maharsha continues, associating this concept with G-d’s statement of the Ten Commandments in a single utterance, explaining that this reflects how He and His mitzvos are one, and that there is no multiplicity. Similarly, by coupling the mitzvah of believing in G-d with the prohibition against other gods, all the positive and negative commandments are coupled together. This is impossible, however, for a human being limited by the constraints of material and temporal existence to emulate. Nevertheless, Chabakuk’s directive again included all the mitzvos in one single command, reflecting how even after

What lesson can we learn from G-d’s mention of all the commandments together, something which is obviously beyond our human capacity?

the mitzvos are separated into positive and negative commandments, they can be unified in a single thrust.

To focus on this concept: All the commandments, even the negative commandments, are intended for a single purpose: to reveal G-d. The manner in which the negative commandments perform this positive function does not involve carrying out a particular activity, but rather, refraining from action.

This is because their source is a higher dimension of G-dliness which transcends the means of expression we have available. There cannot be an

act which draws down this source within the world -- as is the case in regard to the positive commandments -- because this level cannot be comprehended. All we can do is ensure that we do not prevent the expression of these levels by transgressing these commandments and thus, creating obstacles.

Within this context, we can understand the function of the negative commandments in the Era of Redemption. All the mitzvos, both the positive and the negative commandments will still be in effect in that era for, “This Torah will never be rejected.” Yet one might ask: In that era, after “the spirit of impurity has been removed from the world,” what will be the function of the negative commandments? However, on the basis of the above, this question can be resolved. Then, we will realize the true purpose of the negative commandments, i.e., that it is not the negation of evil as at present, but rather drawing down those transcendent dimensions of G-dliness of which we can have no positive appreciation.

At present, the negative commandments involve the nullification of undesirable elements because we live in a world where such negative elements exist. Thus, we are given commandments that involve refraining from activities so that we will not grant strength to these undesirable entities and thus hinder the revelation of G-dliness.

After the negation of the evil, however, when “I will cause the spirit of impurity to depart from the earth,” the negative commandments will perform a higher function. Man and the world at large are capable of receiving only a limited measure of G-dly revelation, that which is appropriate for them. A G-dly revelation which transcends their existence can be appreciated only through the approach of negation,

and this will be the role of the negative commandments in the Era of Redemption.

Thus from G-d's perspective, all the mitzvos both the positive and the negative commandments, have a single goal -- "G-d made a single statement" -- the revelation of G-dliness.[319] However, since the intent is revelation within a world of division and this intent is accomplished through the service of man whose personality is similarly diversified, "I heard two things," i.e., as the mitzvos are applied by man, there are differences.

With the giving of the Torah to the Jewish people, G-d nullified the decree separating the spiritual realms from the physical. This allowed for the potential for man to realize and express the oneness of the mitzvos as they exist from G-d's perspective through his own service. Although by nature, man is limited and diversified, the giving of the Torah extended the opportunity of reflecting G-d's transcendent oneness in our approach to mitzvos.[320]

Man must begin by approaching the mitzvos with a recognition of the differences between the positive and the negative commandments and the differences in their intent, drawing down holiness and the negation of evil. The ultimate purpose, however, is to appreciate the Torah and mitzvos as they exist within G-d's perspective, that they are mediums for the revelation of G-d's will within the world. Thus, even the negative commandments have a positive purpose. They afford man a chance to develop a connection with G-d, for they are also mitzvos and thus are a means of tzavsa, connection with G-d. Indeed, they establish a connection with the higher levels of G-dliness to which we can relate to only in this manner.

In this context, we can understand Rabbi Akiva's statement

that, when responding to the Ten Commandments, the Jews answered "Yes" to both the positive and negative commandments. At that time, the Jews saw all the commandments of having the same goal, drawing G-dliness into the world.[321]

On a deeper level, although as explained above, the existence of negative commandments reflects a recognition of the limitations of the world, it can be explained that it is the negative commandments in particular that go beyond those limitations. As explained above, it is through the negative commandments that we can relate to the higher, transcendent aspects of G-dliness. Also, the negative commandments extend a connection to Torah even to places and situations which are not fit to serve as vessels for G-dliness. In contrast, the positive commandments are limited according to the nature of man and the world and they are capable of drawing G-dliness only into places fit for positive activity.[322]

The significance of the negative commandments can be explained further through an analysis of our Sages' statement in regard to kiddushin, the establishment of the marriage bond.[323] They explain that this act "causes [a woman to be] forbidden to the entire world, as a consecrated article (hekdesh)."

The act of kiddushin is two dimensional: a) It establishes a positive connection between the groom and his bride; he acquires her as his wife; b) it causes relations between the women and other men to be forbidden.

These two dimensions are reflected in the ultimate marriage bond, the connection between G-d and the Jewish people. There is a positive dimension, the unity between the Jews and G-d. (This is expressed by the performance of the

positive commandments.) There is also a dimension that involves prohibition. As a woman must set herself apart from other men, so too, the Jews must separate themselves from the undesirable elements in the world. (This is expressed through the observance of the negative commandments.)

The definition of kiddushin as causing a woman to be "forbidden to the entire world, as a consecrated article (hekdesh)" implies, however, that there is a positive dimension to the establishment of these prohibitions. This is reflected in the comparison to hekdesh, articles on which holiness above the nature of the world[324] has been conveyed. It also implies that a bond with this holiness has been established[325] and that this holiness is drawn down into the world.

It was explained above that the negative commandments draw down a level of G-dliness that transcends the limitations of the world. For that reason, this level cannot be drawn down by a positive act, only through refraining an activity, i.e., negating our potential for action. This, however, is also a limitation.

Thus, the true infinite dimension of the Torah and its mitzvos is expressed in the fusion of the positive and negative in a single act performed by man. This is reflected in our Sages' statement that the commandments "Those who transgress it (the Shabbos) will surely die," and "On the Shabbos day, [offer] two lambs (whose sacrifice transgresses the Shabbos laws)" were recited in one statement. In such an instance, the fulfillment of the negative commandment is combined with a positive activity, bringing the sacrifices. Although offering the sacrifices involves the performance of activities which are otherwise forbidden on the Shabbos,[326] this positive activity contributes to the

holiness of the Shabbos, thus fulfilling the same purpose as the negative commandments.[327]

There is another positive activity which expresses the aspect of the mitzvos which transcends all limits. Our Sages declared, "Whoever studies the laws of a burnt offering (or any other mitzvah) is considered as if he brought a burnt offering (or fulfilled the mitzvah in question)." Although a person is not a priest, is not in the Beis HaMikdash (indeed, this applies even when the Beis HaMikdash is destroyed), through his study of the Torah, he can be considered as if he offered a sacrifice.

This concept also applies in regard to the negative commandments. By studying the laws of the negative commandments, one is considered to have fulfilled them; i.e., the influence produced by the negative commandments is drawn down through a positive activity, Torah study.

Indeed, the fullest expression of the unity of the mitzvos and their fundamental oneness -- "G-d made a single statement" -- comes through the study of the Torah. Here, it is through the same activity, laboring in the study of the Torah, that one draws down the influence produced by both the positive and the negative commandments.[328]

2. There is a point of connection to the above concepts in this week's parsha, Parshas Yisro. At the outset, in the narrative of Yisro's joining the Jewish people, a concept is communicated which parallels the ideas explained above regarding the positive nature of the negative commandments.

The Torah relates that Yisro was "the priest of Midian," a priest for idol worship, and quotes him as saying "Now I know that G-d is greater than all the gods" on which our Sages commented, "There was

not a single deity that Yisro had not served." His conversion thus reflected "a transformation of darkness into light" which brought about "a revelation of G-d in His glory in the higher realms and in the lower realms" and served as a preparation for the giving of the Torah.

The Torah was given to draw down an aspect of G-dliness that transcends the world within the world -- to use Kabbalistic terminology -- to reveal the fiftieth gate of understanding. The transformation of darkness into light draws down this level, for such efforts reveal a level of light that is too great to be enfolded within this

Even though the service of "turning away from evil" has not been completed, through the study of Torah, G-d's blessings can be drawn down.

world.[329]

The conclusion of the parsha, the verse, "In every place where you will mention My name, I will come and bless you," relates to the great levels attained through the study of the Torah. By using the expression "in every place," the verse indicates that because of Torah study, "mentioning My name," G-d "will come and bless" even places that by nature are not fit for blessing. Even though the service of "turning away from evil" has not been completed, through the study of Torah, G-d's blessings can be drawn down. This is a result of the fact that when a Jew studies Torah, he is reciting "G-d's word," and thus, there

are no limits to its effects.

The above concepts can also be related to the parsha of the coming week, Parshas Mishpatim which we begin reading in the afternoon service. That parsha begins "And these are the judgments that you shall place before them."

Our Sages emphasize that with the words "And these are," the Torah connects the laws which are described in Parshas Mishpatim with the revelation at Mount Sinai. These laws are a continuation of the giving of the Torah. Although they represent the aspect of Torah that can be grasped by our intellect, it is obvious that their source is the transcendent revelation at Mount Sinai.

Also, our Sages interpret the phrase "that you shall place before them" as a charge to arrange one's presentation of Torah concepts "as a set table, with everything prepared for a person to eat." Although generally, a room should be cleaned before food is served, i.e., in the analog, a person should refine his conduct before attempting to advance further; nevertheless, the nature of Torah study is that, even when a person has not refined himself, he still is presented with "a set table." Torah study gives him the potential to elevate his conduct, fusing the negation of evil and drawing down positive influence into a single activity.

This produces a directive for action. In general, Shabbos is a time when Jews should gather together for Torah study. In particular, this applies on Shabbos Parshas Yisro when we read the narrative of the giving of the Torah. Similarly, at this time, we should resolve to increase our study of the Torah and our involvement in communal study sessions. These sessions should also involve the study of P'nimius HaTorah as emphasized by the connection with Maaseh Merkava (the mystic secrets of G-d's

being) with the giving of the Torah.[330]

Study sessions of this nature should be established for every Jew, man, woman, and child, even those who are just beginning their connection with the Torah. Nevertheless, even at the beginning of one's study, one shares a connection to the totality of the Torah. This is reflected in our Rabbis' teaching that the kametz Alef aw which a young child first learning the alphabet studies reflects the kametz Alef aw which begins the word Anochi, the first word of the Ten Commandments and which includes within it, the entire Torah.

May our increase in the study of the Torah hasten the coming of the era when, "A new Torah will emerge from Me" in the Era of Redemption.[331] Even before the Era of Redemption, the Jews will live in security. They need not fear despite the fact that the nations of the world challenge one another and the entire world is seized with panic and consternation. On the contrary, they must realize that "All that I have wrought, I have performed only for your sake" and that Moshiach will soon "stand on the roof of the Beis HaMikdash and proclaim, 'Humble ones, the time for your redemption has come.'"

NOTES:

319. I.e., not only are the mitzvos one from G-d's perspective -- i.e., as they are prescribed by the Torah which transcends the limitations of the world -- even as they are mitzvos, directives for man's behavior within the world, their intent is one.

320. As mentioned above, this is reflected in Chabakuk's statement that all the mitzvos should be fulfilled in the spirit of a single command, "A righteous man shall live by his faith."

321. Rabbi Yishmael's perspective, that they answered "No" to the negative commandment, can be explained as an emphasis on the connection to the higher

realms of G-dliness to which one can relate only through negation.

322. Another dimension of the unlimited nature of the negative commandments can be derived from the Zohar's association of the 248 positive commandments with the 248 limbs and the 365 negative commandments with the 365 giddim. In the Kuntres Acharon to Tanya and in other Chassidic texts, the giddim are identified with the vessels of the circulatory system that bring blood throughout the body.

The limbs are individual in nature, each one identified with its own particular function. In contrast, the blood relates to the person's life-force in general, "the blood is the soul."

Similarly, we see that in regard to the positive commandments, there are differences between the obligations of men and women. In contrast, the negative commandments are universally applicable.

323. The relation of this concept to the Torah and mitzvos can be explained as follows: The giving of the Torah can be considered as the establishment of the marriage bond between G-d and the Jewish people. This is reflected in the blessings we recite before the performance of the mitzvos which praise G-d "Who kidashanu b'mitzvosav," literally "sanctified us with His commandments." These words also contain a deeper meaning, reflecting how G-d has consecrated us "as a man consecrates a wife to be bound to Him in complete unity."

324. There are two categories of hekdesch, a) entities upon which man has conveyed holiness through his actions, and b) entities whose holiness is essential in nature, e.g., the holiness of a firstborn animal, that exists independent of man's activity. Our service of Torah and mitzvos can draw down both these levels of holiness.

325. The establishment of a bond is alluded to by the use of the word assur which in addition to "forbidden" also means "bound."

326. And therefore, it is forbidden to offer individual sacrifices on the Shabbos.

327. This contributes an additional dimension to the performance of the positive commandment as well. It becomes obvious that what is expressed is

not the light of one single mitzvah, but rather, the dimension of the Torah and its mitzvos which transcends all boundaries and limits.

328. This relates to the expression, "G-d made a single statement" for man's ability to draw down these influences through Torah study stems from the fact that when a person studies Torah, he is speaking "G-d's word." It is as if G-d is speaking through him, using his mouth as a medium of expression as explained above.

329. Here we see a point of connection to the negative commandments which as mentioned above, a) establish a connection between the Torah and the aspects of the world which are unfit for Divine revelation and b) draw down a transcendent light.

This concept also relates to the meaning of the name Yisro which relates to the concept of "increase." It is through the transformation of darkness into light that an increase is made, a higher level of Divine light is revealed.

330. There is also a connection between the study of P'nimiyus HaTorah and Parshas Mishpatim. The word tasim used for "place" in the directive to place the Torah before the Jews is tasim which our Sages associate with the word simah, "treasure," an allusion to P'nimiyus HaTorah.

The fact that this allusion is made in the verse that teaches us to present the Torah as "a set table" is significant. Presenting the Torah "as a set table" is associated with teaching the "reasons for mitzvos" (particularly as expressed by the Alter Rebbe in his Shulchan Aruch). P'nimiyus HaTorah must also be presented in such a manner, explaining it in a manner in which it can be understood, and furthermore, that understanding will evoke an emotional response and ultimately, be expressed in deed.

331. The era of Redemption will also be followed by the Resurrection of the Dead and the fulfillment of the prophecy, "Those that lie in the dust will arise and sing." In particular, this relates to the Alter Rebbe and the Previous Rebbe whose yearzeits were commemorated recently and the Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka A"E whose yearzeit will be commemorated in the coming week.

MADE IN HIS IMAGE: REFLECTING ON 'BASI L'GANI'

BY BORUCH MERKUR

The king is at war. He is prepared to do anything to win. For the sake of victory, the royal coffers are opened up, their most precious treasures, handed down from his fathers and his father's fathers, and kept hidden, concealed from view, are squandered, entrusted to the officers in his army and intended to fuel the war machine, arming and empowering the simple foot soldiers to overcome the enemy.

The king's wealth and grandeur is vast. Much of it is intended for public consumption, serving to glorify his kingship, establishing the presence of the king in his empire; it is the identity by which he is known, a superficial but pervasive connection with his subjects.

The king's most precious treasure, however, is his hidden treasure, yet even this he squanders for the sake of victory, a goal more vital than his most precious treasure. Victory reigns supreme as it is rooted in the very essence of the king, surpassing the most exalted kingly delights and pleasures.

By fighting on the frontlines to achieve victory, struggling against those who stand in the way of the king's will, we, the simple foot soldiers, connect with the essence of the king. But we must remember that the treasure is intended for us *as foot soldiers*. If we lose sight of our role, who we are and what our purpose is, we relinquish this secret weapon and lose our strength to wage the king's war.

* * *

What is concealed in the king's hidden treasury is the concept of concealment itself: "Indeed, You are a G-d Who hides." Throughout all His creation, G-d is present. But there is, on the one hand, an aspect of G-d that is revealed, openly reflected in Creation, and then there is G-d's essence, which cannot be signified in any manner; omnipresent in every dimension of Creation, yet utterly beyond grasp, elusive of our ability to fathom. It is this unfathomable G-dliness that is given over to us to succeed in our mission.

However, G-d does not conceal Himself as an end unto itself, but as a means that we should come to truly know Him. A master may at times appear to be distant

and removed, beyond the disciple's grasp. But this distance is only temporary. The master retreats within himself to give of himself, disseminating his wisdom in a way that is appropriate for the disciple's capacity, thus enabling the disciple to develop and advance, and to ultimately approach the greatness of the master. In the same way, G-d conceals Himself, allowing there to be room for the other (G-d's creations) to exist, and sews a seed of light within Creation so that it can take root and grow, emulating the Creator. Thus, the separation itself, the concealment, is only for the sake of ultimately establishing a wondrous unity and revelation. The intent is for Creation itself to approach the Infinite, as a sapling emerges in the image of the tree from which it came.

Ironically, the means by which we can attain this connection, truly reflecting the Infinite, allows the possibility for the greatest error, the greatest concealment and separation. By granting life to His creation in a way that conceals its source, G-d allows the recipient to maintain an identity, to exist as a discreet entity, but only at the risk of that identity inflating and denying its true origin. Though we can all determine that our life-force is what is essential - not our bodies, which of themselves are inanimate and lifeless - we may be mistaken as to its origin, to the extent that we may even attribute it to ourselves: "Mine is the Nile and I created myself."

Entrusted with the king's hidden treasures, we must seize the opportunity, utilizing this power to connect with the king himself and gain victory. But we must not fool ourselves, thinking: I am the king!

The truth is, however, that "a servant of the king is a king." If we truly want to extend the King's glory, broadening His borders, annexing even the most foreign and lowly realm to His majesty, including our own boundaries and limitations, we must be His servants, His foot soldiers. This approach will bring about the true victory. "And G-d will be king over the entire land."



WHEN YOU HIT THE BOTTOM...

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הנהגות מיוחדות
למחלקה
770 אסטון פארקווי
ב' אדר א' תשמ"ב

By the Grace of G-d
18th of Sivan, 5719
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Greeting and Blessing:

I received your letter, in which you write about your anxiety in regard to the question of Parnosso.

Needless to say, I am much surprised at you, that you should allow yourself to be so affected by this. For you surely know how often our Sages have impressed on us the importance of trust and confidence in G-d, in order that we realize that all difficulties encountered in life are only trials and tests of a passing nature. To be sure, the question of Parnosso is one of the most difficult tests - nevertheless, G-d does not subject one to a greater test than he can withstand, as our Rabbis expressed it, "According to the camel, so is its load." The very trust in G-d is a vessel and channel to receive G-d's blessings, apart from the fact that such confidence is good for one's health, disposition, and therefore is also a natural means to ~~the~~ desired end. "All the more so, since, as you write, you have noticed an improvement in recent weeks. This should serve as an encouraging sign and greatly strengthen your trust in G-d. No doubt you also remember the commentary of my father-in-law of saintly memory, in regard to the saying of our Sages that "Life is like a turning wheel," at which my father-in-law remarked that "When a point on the wheel reaches the lowest degree, it is bound to turn upwards again."

As for your request for advice, in my opinion you ought to set a period of time for the study of Pnisius of the Torah, namely, Chassidus, concerning which it is written in the Zohar (part 3, page 124b) "In the area of Pnisius ha-Yorah there is no place for negative things and evil," and as further explained in Iggeres ha-Kodesh, chapter 26.

In addition, I suggest that you should set aside a couple of pennies for Yedekho every weekday morning before prayer, and also before Minchah. Also to recite at least one Kapitel Tillin after the morning prayers every day, including Shabbos and Yom Tov.

All the above should be Bli Neder, ^{and} at least until Hosh Hashannah. It would also be very good for you to know by heart several Prokim Mishnayos, and at least one Perek Tanya.

I am confident that the above, together with an increased measure of Hitochshu will soon bring an improvement in your Parnosso.

Readers and collectors of the Rebbe's letters: We urge you to send in the Rebbe's English correspondence which was not yet published in the 7 English existing volumes and which pertain to issues of general relevance. Please send them in so that the letters can be published for everybody's benefit and thereby preserved forever.

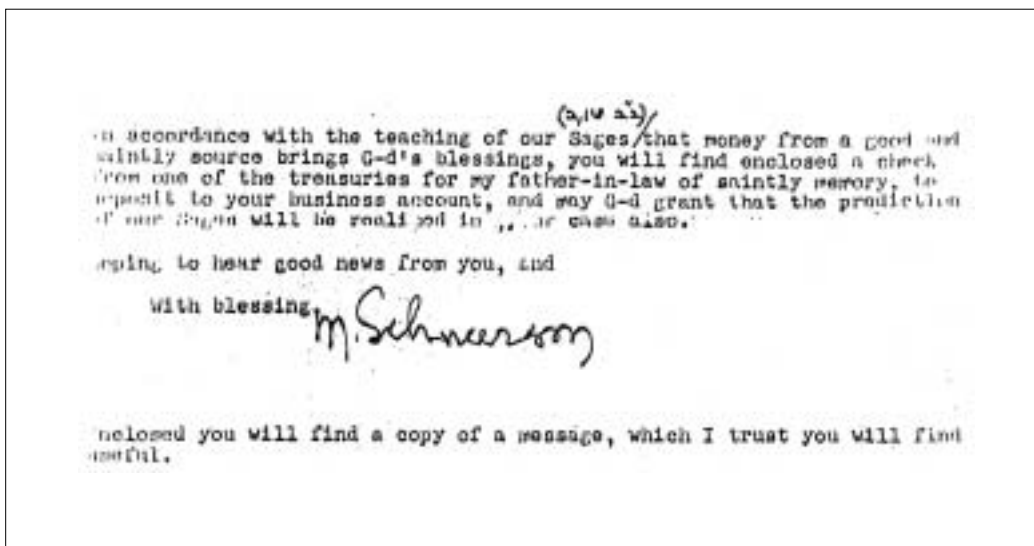
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THE GENERATION OF REDEMPTION

BY RABBI SHLOMO YITZCHOK FRANK
HEAD OF RABBINICAL SERVICES — ACCO, ERETZ YISROEL

TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

If we would tell someone from the previous generation about the plenty that exists in our lives today and the technological inventions that have been developed in these times, he would undoubtedly say that we are in the days of Moshiach. This very fact must awaken within us a feeling of joy and happiness, as we have been privileged to live in the generation of Moshiach, the generation of the Redemption. Excerpts from a chassidic farbrengen.

During the course of our daily lives, we frequently come across events which bear testimony to the fact that we are actually in the days of Moshiach, and that the words of the prophet of our generation, the Rebbe MH"M shlita, are being fulfilled right down to the letter. While we don't always grasp the depth of such matters, we often merit to see the achievement of yet another objective towards the Redemption in this world, as indicated by the Rebbe MH"M. All we have to do is open our eyes, learn what the Rebbe says, and we will understand that our days are "the days of Moshiach."

Thus, for example, if we would tell

someone from the previous generation about the plenty that exists in our lives today and the technological inventions that have been developed in these times, he would undoubtedly say that we are in the days of Moshiach. This very fact must awaken within us a feeling of joy and happiness, as we have been privileged to live in the generation of Moshiach, the generation of the Redemption.

Furthermore, when we learn the Rebbe MH"M's sichos, we realize how close the complete Redemption really is. The Rebbe says that **everything** has been prepared for the Redemption, including the *Leviyan*, the *Shor HaBar*, and the *Yayin HaMeshumar*,

and all that remains is for us to open our eyes and see that we are already in the Redemption.

Yet, we have been so privileged for one reason only — because our generation is the seventh generation. Not because of our avoda and actions, but those of the previous generations. However, it is specifically this fact that gives us the strength to demand the Redemption. But if we were to merit the Redemption on the basis of our actions, it would sound utterly ridiculous for us to demand that the Redemption come now. After all, who are we to make such demands? Have we made enough of an effort to be worthy of such a wondrous revelation?

Nevertheless, since we will merit the true and complete Redemption, because we are the seventh generation, we possess the strength to demand the Redemption that we have been promised. Specifically through the strength of the generations that preceded us, we can request and demand from the Master of the Universe to send us the Redemption *mamash* now.

Not long ago, I was privileged to be involved in a case that shows clearly the fulfillment of the Rebbe's words in connection with the Redemption — that all Jews have done t'shuvah and we have merited to be the generation worthy of the Redemption:

There lived a Jew in our city who everyone knew in most negative terms. All the people of the town would keep their distance from him, and the very mention of his name aroused bad feelings.

Recently, this Jew became terminally ill with *yene machala, r"l*, and everyone knew that his demise was approaching. No one bothered to help him, and he was forced to do everything on his own. Only his ex-wife, who saw his distress, was prepared to come to his aid, and took care of him as best she could.

After a while, his sons came to me with a request: Since their parents were now living together, it would be proper for them to remarry in accordance with Jewish law. They asked me to arrange a chuppa for them, and naturally, I agreed to do so.

The chuppa took place on a Motzaei Shabbos, immediately after Havdala, in the shul where I serve as rav. Despite the fact that this Jew was very weak, he girded every ounce of strength he possessed for the duration of the wedding ceremony. At the conclusion of the chuppa, we held a festive meal in the positive atmosphere of a chassidic farbrengen for all those assembled.

The next day, his sons informed me that he had passed away during the wee hours of the morning.

Even before the levaya, I told the person with the Chevra Kaddisha in charge of funeral arrangements that I wanted to deliver the first eulogy. I knew that if the city's chief rabbis would speak before me, they would use the opportunity to exhort the participants in a style reminiscent of the "maggidim" in the days of the Baal Shem Tov.

When I approached the rostrum to address those in attendance, I began by saying that in these times, all Jews have already done t'shuva and they are complete tzaddikim. I continued to say that based on my acquaintance with this man, I could testify that he

had passed away as a complete tzaddik in every sense of the word.

As I finished my speech, I could already see that there were those in the crowd who didn't like what I had said.

At the conclusion of the levaya, a number of people came up to me and asked for an explanation of my strange eulogy, which they had found most difficult to comprehend. I explained that according to Torah, all of a person's sins are forgiven on the day that he gets married, and therefore, this Jew had the merit of leaving this world as a complete tzaddik, as all his transgressions had been wiped away on the night of his passing.

***When the Rebbe says
that our entire
generation has done
t'shuva, it is the
ultimate truth, even if
we don't always have
the merit of seeing it.***

Only afterwards did I begin to realize how privileged we are to go according to the sichos of the Rebbe MH"M, whose every word is true.

Anyone who learns the Rebbe's sichos sees clearly how the Rebbe speaks positively about the Jewish people and tries to reveal the good within every Jew, even if we aren't always privileged to see it. Furthermore, anyone who walks in the light of the leader of the generation merits special "siyata d'Shmaya" (Divine assistance) not to speak disparagingly about any Jew.

But more than this, I was privileged to see from this story how something that the Rebbe says is

absolutely true. When the Rebbe says that our entire generation has done t'shuva, it is the ultimate truth, even if we don't always have the merit of seeing it. But sometimes we do have the merit, and we even see how the Rebbe's words have a tangible effect upon the world, according to its simplest interpretation.

Afterwards, I recalled another story where I was privileged to see how the Rebbe MH"M's words are materializing in the fullest sense as a preparation for the true and complete Redemption:

One year, the Rebbe spoke about the purification of "Amalek" as a preparation for the Redemption, and added that this process would happen on its own.

A few years ago, I was in Germany on rabbinical matters, and prior to my return to Eretz Yisroel, I went to the city center in search of a toy store to buy gifts for the children of Eretz HaKodesh. To my utter astonishment, I discovered that there was only one toy store in the whole town, and it was empty of customers.

When I tried to get an explanation, I was surprised to learn that for a variety of reasons, the German people had set an objective of decreasing the national birth rate, and therefore, it was no longer worthwhile for the local storekeepers to sell children's toys.

I immediately remembered what the Rebbe said about the process of purification of Amalek happening on its own.

During this visit, I was privileged to see a wondrous example of the Rebbe's words coming to fruition, when the Germans themselves, the seed of Amalek, were bringing about the destruction of their own people.

May it be G-d's will that just as we have seen the fulfillment of the Rebbe's words in these matters, we shall immediately merit the revelation of the great light of his hisgalus, *mamash*, now!

*Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V'Rabbeinu
Melech HaMoshiach l'olam va'ed!*

VISITING WITH THE REBBETZIN

BY R. KAMINKER

*Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka a”h, was a model of modesty and humility. Few merited to visit her in her home, and only singular individuals merited to really know her and become friends of hers. * In honor of her yahrtzait on Chaf-Beis Shvat, we present a few stories about this great woman.*

Few knew Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka a”h. With outstanding modesty, she hid herself from the public. It is difficult to describe such a noble woman.

We spoke with a few people who visited with the Rebbetzin.

THIS IS THE PRESENT!

R’ Reuven Galperin: “When the Rebbetzin was a girl, she sometimes accompanied her father, the Rebbe Rayatz, on his trips throughout Russia. The Rebbe once went with his daughter to the home of a Chassid in the town of Oryol. The Rebbe sat down to talk and to take care of whatever he had come to accomplish, and he sent his young daughter to play in the other room with the Chassid’s daughter.

The adults closed the door and the two children played. In the middle of their game, the Rebbetzin said to her new friend, ‘Should I give you a present?’

What child would refuse a gift? The Chassid’s daughter readily agreed and little Chaya Mushka opened the door a crack and let her friend peek into the next room. She pointed at the man sitting there and said, ‘Do you see him? That’s the present! That’s my father.’”

THE PRESENTS THE REBBETZIN RECEIVED

“It’s difficult for me to describe the Rebbetzin,” says Rebbetzin Sima Ralbag. “She shunned the limelight and despised praise, and maybe I shouldn’t publicize personal things about her.

“Some people brought the Rebbetzin gifts, and when they came from Eretz Yisroel the Rebbetzin only accepted gifts made in Eretz Yisroel. So every time we visited the Rebbetzin, we made sure that our gifts were products made in Eretz Yisroel.

“In the beginning of the 60’s, the chief rabbi of Turkey, a country which

was Israel’s enemy at the time, received permission to visit Eretz Yisroel. It was unexpected, and my husband a”h welcomed him and was responsible for hosting him. We arranged trips for him throughout the length and breadth of the country, and even got permission to enter places that were off-limits to ordinary tourists.

“We visited Masada, where there is a huge edifice that Herod built. Our distinguished guest was allowed to take a few small stones that fell off this historic building. We decided to make a gift for the Rebbetzin out of these stones. We brought them to a craftsman and he set them in a medallion on a chain.

“The Rebbetzin was very moved by this gift and thanked us warmly for it.”

NOBILITY

Rabbi Sholom Dovber Butman visited the Rebbe and Rebbetzin many times. He relates:

“The Rebbe’s grandfather and my grandfather were brothers, and I was invited many times to the home of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin. In the 50’s, the Rebbe lived in a large apartment building on New York Avenue, on the third floor, and I was one of the bachurim who built their sukka.

“The Rebbetzin always made sure to open the door for me herself, even though one of her assistants, who were always present, could have done it instead of her. She never forwent this

gesture of opening the door or accompanying her guests out.

“When she didn’t feel well, and was too weak to do it herself, she sat in the living room and lifted herself up slightly when people came in. Our conversations generally revolved around our family, or on other events that happened within the family.

“One of the amazing things that characterized the Rebbetzin was her ability to listen. Whoever spoke to her remembers the good feeling she gave her visitors, and the interest she took in each one.

“The Rebbetzin’s uniqueness was seen in every expression on her noble face, in her hand motions, in her manner of speaking. She spoke for hours with people, inquiring, taking an interest, but mostly listening. The Rebbetzin never cut anyone off in the middle of a sentence. She always listened with her full attention and patience until the person finished speaking. Only then, did she say something or express her opinion.

“Her special relationship with children is also well-known. Whenever I

She put herself aside and put her energies into worrying about the welfare of others.

visited her, there were refreshments on the nicely set table, and when I visited her with my children, I could see that she made the effort to prepare snacks for them.

“In 5740, I flew to the Rebbe for Tishrei along with my oldest daughter and my twin sons, and I visited the Rebbetzin on Chol HaMoed Sukkos. She served ice cream and cookies to the children and invited them to go eat in the sukka.

“The last time I visited the Rebbetzin was 11 Nissan 5747, a year before she passed away. I visited the Rebbe on his birthday, 11 Nissan, for a number of years, and on that occasion, I visited the Rebbetzin too.

“I called

her beforehand to find out when a visit would be convenient for her. However, the Rebbetzin didn’t feel well and I didn’t want to bother her. I said that I realized it wasn’t a good time for visiting.

“The Rebbetzin seemed not to understand what I was talking about and graciously invited me to come.

“When I entered the house, I was immediately struck by the aroma of Pesach cooking. We spoke about the family, as always, and the Rebbetzin inquired about how everyone was doing. I told her that my wife, Devorah, sent Pesach food along with me to my daughter who lives in Crown Heights, and the Rebbetzin said we probably provided her with all her holiday needs.

“I responded by saying that I smelled that the Rebbetzin was also already prepared for Pesach. She enjoyed this comment.”



The Rebbe standing by the Rebbetzin’s grave at her funeral

“MY HUSBAND IS AN INTELLECTUAL”

The Rebbe's most devoted Chassid was the Rebbetzin. She devoted her entire life to his needs and desires and always spoke of him with the utmost bittul and esteem.

Mrs. Mira Raskin was a friend of the Rebbetzin, and she relates:

“One day I went for a routine visit to the Rebbetzin. We sat at the table and spoke, as we always did. My son refused to enter the house and he waited for me outside. His biggest fear was that the Rebbe would suddenly enter the house.

“The Rebbetzin, with her famous sensitivity, went outside and asked him to come in. He couldn't refuse the Rebbetzin, and he came in and sat down next to me. The Rebbetzin and I continued our conversation, but my son was a nervous wreck. It was late evening and the Rebbe was likely to walk in at any moment.

“Indeed, the Rebbe arrived and we could hear the car being parked and the approaching footsteps. My son pushed my elbow under the table, indicating we should flee.

“The Rebbetzin had sharp eyes and missed nothing, and she noticed the imperceptible movement of my son's hand. She understood his fears and she smiled and said, ‘My husband is an intellectual and doesn't mix into my conversations.’

The Rebbe entered the house and as though he didn't see us, he went up to his office with nary a glance at us.”

THE REBBE'S CHILDREN

A child once innocently asked, “Why do the Rebbe and Rebbetzin need such a big house? There are no children here?” And then, without waiting for an answer, he added, “Aha, there must have been children here and they grew up and married, and now the house is just for you alone.”

The Rebbetzin smiled and said

something he will remember forever: “You're right, you're right. All the Chassidim are the Rebbe's children.”

I WANTED TO WISH

“I would find myself amazed by the Rebbetzin's profound nobility,” says Mira Raskin. “From the following story you can learn another important detail about the Rebbetzin's many qualities.

“On one of the occasions that the Rebbetzin called my house, my son, who had just come home from yeshiva, answered the phone. The Rebbetzin told him it was ‘Mussia Schneersohn,’ and she politely asked how he was.

The Rebbetzin never cut anyone off in the middle of a sentence. She always listened with her full attention and patience until the person finished speaking. Only then, did she say something or express her opinion.

She said that although she wanted to speak to me, since she imagined how my son had just come home from yeshiva hungry and tired, it would be better if she called another time.

“My son decided to fudge the truth a bit and said it was fine, his mother was available and he had already eaten.

“This was at seven in the evening, and when we finished talking it was very late. Seconds after we hung up, the phone rang again and once again, my son picked up the phone.

“It was the Rebbetzin again. He quickly said that surely she wanted to speak to me and he was about to give

me the phone when the Rebbetzin said she wanted to speak to him. She called especially for him and said, ‘Since I don't know whether we will be able to speak again before Purim, and Purim is approaching, I wanted to wish you a happy Purim.’”

CARING ABOUT A FRIEND

Mrs. Raskin: “The Rebbetzin and I were in touch for many years. We spoke on the phone several times a week. I never called her because I always feared that the Rebbe was home and he would answer the phone. The Rebbetzin was punctual and she had a daily routine, and I usually knew when she would call me.

“On 21 Shvat 5748, the Rebbetzin didn't call me all day. The morning hours passed and then the afternoon, and it was evening but the Rebbetzin still hadn't called. I was very worried but I didn't want to call because I was even more afraid that the Rebbe might answer the phone.

“At eleven o'clock at night, after having gone to sleep, the Rebbetzin called and apologized for calling at that late hour. She told me she had gone out to take care of some things with a friend, and when she returned home, she didn't feel well. In her great concern for others, she didn't want to worry anyone and so she didn't tell anyone, not even her husband, the Rebbe.

“The Rebbe noticed something was amiss and wanted to call the doctor. The Rebbetzin refused but the Rebbe insisted. The Rebbetzin agreed on one condition — that the doctor check the Rebbe first. In the midst of all this, the Rebbetzin didn't forget to call to report to me what was happening, so I wouldn't worry. She put herself aside and put her energies into worrying about the welfare of others.

“That night, the Rebbetzin's condition worsened, and she was taken to the hospital, where she passed away. May her merit protect us.”

A SECRET MISSION AMONGST THE GRAVESTONES

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN BERGER

*It's hard to believe, but for decades the Ohel in Lubavitch over the tziyun of the Tzemach Tzedek and the Rebbe Maharash was neglected, and nearly invisible amidst the wild growth. * Rabbi Dovid Abba Gurewitz and his nine-year-old son undertook the project of restoring the Ohel. * He met with elderly men who had seen Lubavitch in all its glory nearly drowned in a river, and met the last Jew in Lubavitch. * Rabbi Gurewitz relates all his adventures of 37 years ago, when "Father Stalin and Mother Russia" spied on every corner of the vast Soviet Union.*

Thousands of people visit the Ohel in Lubavitch each year, the famous Ohel where the Tzemach Tzedek and the Rebbe Maharash, father and son, are buried. This place was sanctified back when Lubavitch was in its glory, when thousands of Chassidim went to Lubavitch each year, to take shelter under the wings of our Rebbeim, the Rebbe Maharash and the Rebbe

Rashab. Many thousands yearned to see this place.

After our sanctuary in Lubavitch was destroyed, and the glory exiled from Beis Chayeinu, many people are unaware that there were times when this place nearly vanished within the abyss of neglect. The two gravestones were broken and hidden under tall, wild growth, and

hardly anybody knew where they were located.

The fact that today there is a large building for a Ohel, new gravestones, pathways, and even a nearby guesthouse are to a great extent thanks to the resourcefulness and courage of Rabbi Dovid Abba Gurewitz.

Rabbi Gurewitz is, today, shliach and chief rabbi of Uzbekistan and Middle Asia, but back then he was simply a Chassid, gifted with resourcefulness and courage.

This is the first time that Rabbi Gurewitz is relating, in great detail, what happened back then, 37 years ago. It was an era when "Father Stalin and Mother Russia" spied on every corner of the vast Soviet Union, yet under their noses the place was cleaned up and marked properly, as is fitting for our Rebbeim, may their merit protect us.

* * *

Lubavitch, the capitol Lubavitch, was abandoned during World War I, when the Rebbe Rashab left, followed by the students of Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim. They left behind the glorious Lubavitch with the courtyard of our Rebbeim and the



Ohel of the Tzemach Tzedek and the Rebbe Maharash, that same Ohel where the Rebbe Maharash, the Rebbe Rashab, and the Rebbe Rayatz prayed for mercy for the Jewish people, and shed copious tears.

During World War II, when the Nazis murdered all the Jews of Lubavitch, they also destroyed the holy Ohel.

Two Jews who remained in Russia, decided that they couldn't allow the place to remain neglected in such a dishonorable way. On a sunny morning in Tammuz 5728 (1968), Rabbi Mottel Kozliner a"h and Rabbi Dovid Abba Gurewitz decided to find the holy place that was neglected for fifty years, to clean it up, to remove the garbage, and to mark it off with a fence. This was both to give the place the honor it was due, as well as to enable any Chassid who went to

Lubavitch, to locate the holy graves.

A project like this, under the Soviet regime, was a fantasy, but that didn't stop Rabbi Gurewitz. He knew that the work had to be done, no matter what.

"The truth is that we were very scared, but we pushed aside our fear, knowing that in another few years, nobody would know where the graves of our Rebbeim were.

"After we obtained a sizeable sum of money for the project, I began gathering information on the presumed location of the Ohel (in addition to many other details that I had amassed a few years earlier from Rabbi Avrohom Zaltzman, who learned in the original Tomchei T'mimim). I spoke to some elder Chassidim and asked them for details about the location of the Ohel, and about the appearance of the gravestones, so I would be able

to identify the place.

"I learned that the reason for the neglect is because hardly anybody had visited it in years. They explained that as long as the Rebbe Rayatz was in the Soviet Union, there was someone to travel to, to the Rebbe. Afterwards, they began to feel the heavy hand of the Communists. This, together with World War II, when Lubavitch was captured by the Nazis, are reasons why Chassidim rarely went to Lubavitch.

"My nine-year-old son, Boruch, and I set off in Tammuz 5728. I took vacation from my official job in Yosef Mochkin's factory (where I worked only three hours a day, for my real job was secretly teaching Torah and Chassidus to children). We told our neighbors and acquaintances that we were going to Lvov, where our son was staying with my parents, which was not

true.

“The truth was that Boruch lived with us, but for school registration purposes, he was registered as living with his grandparents in Lvov, so he wouldn’t have to attend the Communist school.

“We had worked out this plan a number of years earlier. It was right after the huge earthquake that destroyed large parts of Tashkent. The city was in chaos and many left or at least sent their children to relatives in distant cities, since many remained without a roof over their heads. We announced that we had sent our son to my parents in Lvov, which is what we told the school too. The truth was that my parents had left for Eretz Yisroel a few years before.

“Boruch remained with us, and this was very hard on him. He had to stay indoors, and even if he went out to the yard, he knew he couldn’t raise his voice lest one of the neighbors hear him.

“No wonder he was mature beyond his years and he understood what the adults understood — that secrets had to be kept from others. This is why I decided to take him along on the trip to Lubavitch. Another reason was in order to minimize the suspicion I would arouse when I went to different places. Having a child along would make me appear less suspicious.

“Together with my wife Malka and my three youngest children, we flew to Lvov. When the plane stopped over in Rostov, on a Thursday night, Boruch and I got off the plane in order to visit the Ohel of the Rebbe Rashab, while the rest of the family continued to Lvov.

“Today I can relate what happened as an interesting experience, but the fear we experienced during the trip is

indescribable.

“We entered the airport and I passed a friend, Rabbi Hillel Zaltzman, who was also going to the Ohel of the Rebbe Rashab. In great fear, we passed one another by as though we didn’t know each other.

“When we got to the cemetery, we met a guard, but he didn’t have the key to the gate of the Ohel. The tziyun is in a yard surrounded by a wall, one grave among many others, with no gravestones. Only mounds of dirt mark the location of the graves. We had to climb the rickety gate and jump inside.

Boruch remained with us, and this was very hard on him. He had to stay indoors, and even if he went out to the yard, he knew he couldn’t raise his voice lest one of the neighbors hear him.

“When I planned this dangerous trip, I thought of having a former student of Tomchei T’mimim join me. I was thinking of Rabbi Shneur Zalman Skoblo, who lived in Charkov at the time.

“The next day we went to Charkov and directly to the home of Rabbi Eliezer Felzenstein a”h, whom I knew from his visits to Tashkent to his son-in-law, Rabbi Shneur Zalman Klein.

“The visit in that city was an experience in itself. On Shabbos, we walked to shul and had to be exceedingly careful. Aside from

‘shalom aleichem,’ we acted like strangers to one another.

“After the Shabbos meal, we went with Eliezer Felzenstein to the home of Rabbi Skoblo. The elderly man sat at a table deeply immersed in the volume in front of him. Eliezer hastened to tell him, ‘He’s one of ours,’ and pointed at me in order to dispel the unpleasant feeling people had when a stranger came to their home.

“I knew I had a difficult task ahead of me. Rabbi Skoblo was an old and patient Chassid. He sat in jail for years and was also sent to Siberia for being a Lubavitcher Chassid. When he finally received his exit visa to leave Russia, he had a heart attack. When he recovered and was able to travel, it was after the Six Day War, and the Soviet Union had broken off diplomatic ties with Israel. He was told it was dangerous to travel there, and they canceled his visa.

“After I was introduced to him, he began talking about mutual friends we had in Tashkent and nearby Samarkand. He began to reminisce about the good old days in Lubavitch. He told wonderful stories about the mashpia R’ Grunem. When I told him that the Rebbe Rayatz’s *Likkutei Dibburim* had been published and it told about Chai Elul, the birthday of the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe, he was overcome with emotion. He said, ‘We never heard about this in Lubavitch. Much of the history of the Rebbeim is being revealed lately, and a little bit reaches us, like maamarim of the Rebbe, the *T’hillas Hashem Siddur*, and the *Tanya*.’

“As he said this, he showed us a *Tanya* that had been printed in Vilna and had the signature of the Rebbe Rayatz on it. We trembled as we held this *Tanya*.

“We finally got to talking about

the trip. On account of his poor health he couldn't join us, but I could see his yearning for Lubavitch and his strong desire to join us, to go back to where he basked in the presence of the Rebbe Rashab, along with the other T'mimim. You can imagine how pained this Chassid was to hear the purpose in my visiting him.

"He said, 'You can see that merely walking to shul on Shabbos, two blocks away, is a big problem for me, so how could I make the trip to Lubavitch?'

"He began to cry, then he said, 'Near us in the courtyard lives Mrs. Sara Pessia, a Jew originally from Rudnia (a town near Lubavitch). She might agree to join you.'

"After Shabbos I went to Sara Pessia and asked her if she would join us, but she didn't have the strength for it. However, she was helpful in that she drew a map of the place for us. I also got the address of a gentile woman named Elizabeth Gransky, who knew the location of the Ohel, and if we needed to we could speak with her. Sara Pessia gave us another address, that of a relative who lived in Rudnia, Nachum Labkowski. 'He will certainly help you,' she said.

"I warmly thanked her and left with a prayer that I would find the Ohel and complete my mission. Nearly all of them sent panim with us, to be read at the Ohel.

"We arrived at the train station in Rudnia in the morning. We were told beforehand that R' Nachum lived at the end of the town. My son and I began walking. On both sides of the main street were little houses, huts, surrounded by gardens. The sound of a rooster signaling the dawn. I thought about how this place was once suffused with Yiddishkait, and where had it disappeared to?

"While still looking for R' Nachum's house, I noticed someone with a Jewish face. I greeted him and quickly discovered that it was R' Nachum. Due to his illness, he would go out early in the morning in order to breathe the fresh air. When he saw us, he was overcome with emotion. He happily invited us to his house.

"It's not every day that we find Jewish guests here, especially young



Rabbi Dovid Abba Gurewitz

ones,' he said excitedly.

"R' Nachum's hut was low and the ceiling was made of clay. You really got the sense of village life. The lady of the house came from the barn with a pail of fresh milk in one hand, and a basket of cucumbers, tomatoes, and other vegetables in her other hand. She also had green apples that she had just cut from the tree, whose

branches poked their way in through the window.

"Boruch and I davened Shacharis. R' Nachum sat on the side with tears in his eyes.

"I thought Yiddishkait was forgotten already, Heaven forbid, but when I see you, especially the young boy who learns a chapter of *Tanya* before the davening, and davens properly, there's hope for Yiddishkait in the Soviet Union.'

"He told us they were no longer able to organize a minyan every Shabbos, but only on Yom Tov. 'The old die off and the young folk stay away from shul,' he sighed.

"We told him that we came to daven at the gravesites of our fathers in Lubavitch. He immediately understood which "fathers" I was referring to. I told him that I wanted to build a fence around the Ohel, and I asked him for details — who could help us? Where would I find an artisan to build the fence? Where could I find a car to bring the fence to Lubavitch?

"Obviously, it all had to be top-secret and done by reliable people. R' Nachum told me that his friend, Shmuel the shoemaker, had a gentile acquaintance who did work of this sort. In order to bring the fence to Lubavitch, we should go to the truck shipping depot, which was run by a Jew named Skoblo.

"R' Nachum said that Shmuel the shoemaker was the last Jew living in Lubavitch after the Nazis murdered all the Jews there. Shmuel was saved because he had to flee when gentiles slandered him.

"When I went to Shmuel, he was thrilled to meet a Chassid and he reminisced about Lubavitch. 'I learned my craft from my father,' he said in undisguised pride. 'My

father was the cobbler of Lubavitch and Admurim used to order their boots from him.’

“Shmuel brought us to a coal factory where they also did metal work. They agreed to do all the work I asked for as long as I paid.

“The bus from Rudnia to Lubavitch travels twice a day at set times, but before going to the Ohel in Lubavitch you must immerse, and there is no mikva in the town. On the way to the bus station, we saw something like a river. Nachum realized what we wanted and he warned us, ‘A week ago, two children who came to vacation with their relatives drowned here. The mud at the bottom of the river sucked them in, and it was impossible to save them.’

“Despite this, we decided to go in. Boruch went first, with me holding his hand. When I went in, I could feel that if I stood in one place for one more second, I would be sucked in. I immersed hurriedly and jumped out.

“We boarded the bus. Aside from us, the other people were gentiles who looked at us in amazement but not with hatred. After a brief trip, we arrived! I was tremendously excited. At this point, some of the passengers asked us who we were looking for. I explained that we had come to visit our ancestors’ graves.

“Excitement. We stood facing the courtyard. Here, we figured, is where the courtyard used to be in the glory days. Town elders began to show us which area used to contain the courtyard of the Admurim. According to the description of Shneur Zalman Skoblo, the area was empty ten years ago, and now it was full of new houses.

“An old drunk emerged out of a nearby bar. He couldn’t walk even

two straight steps. He came over to us, and when he heard who we were associated with, he seemed to shake himself of his drunkenness and said, ‘Ah! I still remember Rabbi Schneersohn!’

“More and more people gathered round. They explained to us that we faced the post office and that the building next to it contained the dormitory for the police school... As soon as we heard the word ‘police,’ we ended the warm reception and left.

“As we walked, a man left a store and came right over to us. I guessed right: it was the husband of Elizabeth Gransky, whom we had heard about from Sara Pessia in Charkov. He immediately offered to show us the cemetery.

“We walked and hardly said anything. We arrived at the forest and before us was an area covered with trees and brambles that were hard to pass through. The branches

were very thick and we used our hands and feet to force a path.

“We searched for the Ohel but couldn’t find it. The goy called for his wife and she approached some brambles, parted them, and before our eyes appeared two gravestones, that of the Tzemach Tzedek and the Rebbe Maharash. It was such a sudden sight that my son Boruch, who had lately heard so much about the holiness of the resting places of the Rebbeim, fainted from the excitement. After a few tense moments, he regained consciousness.

“It was sad to see how neglected the area was. The gravestones stood among the thick foliage in the old cemetery that hadn’t been used in decades. I could see that the Tzemach Tzedek’s gravestone was a white, slanted stone, shattered by a bomb that had fallen during World War II. The Rebbe Maharash’s gravestone was whole. Nearby we

“THOSE SENT TO DO A MITZVA ARE NOT HARMED”

The checking of documents, being followed, finding the Ohel, putting up the fence — all these were real concerns of Rabbi Gurewitz. The other “little” problems were no big deal.

For a week and a half, he and his young son traveled here and there.

What did you eat?

“My wife prepared a lot of food but the trip was longer than we thought it would be, and when the food she had sent was used up, we subsisted on vegetables we bought in the market. My son acted as an adult and made his peace with the situation.

How did you put on t’fillin without being caught?

(Smiling) “I solved the problem a different way each time. One time stands out in my mind. When we were near Moscow, it was Shacharis time and we went into a covered yard that was in a grove of trees. I put on t’fillin while Boruch stood and davened. Suddenly I saw the gate open and a military vehicle exiting. My heart began to pound. I realized we were near an army camp.

“The car drew near us and I thought we were done for. I was afraid that they would suspect that the t’fillin were cameras, which we were using to photograph the base. But the car just continued on its way, without the passengers noticing us.”



Avi Taub and Rabbi Dovid Nachshon, renovators of the new Ohel
*At the bottom of the picture, you can see the old gravestones
 that survived the Nazi bombing.*

could see a pit covered with tall branches.

“If you want,’ said the goy, ‘you can enter the pit. There are many holy books there and the Jews’ Torah scrolls.’ (It was the sheimos pit, as the Chassid R’ Yehuda Chitrik told me years later.)

“At that point, we politely suggested that our guides go back home. ‘It’s noontime and it’s hot,’ I told them. ‘We’ll remain here to spend time with the gravesites of our ancestors.’

“They left and we began davening. We read chapter 67, the Rebbe’s chapter of T’hilim at that time. Then we read the *panim* we had brought with us, following which we began cleaning the engraved letters on the headstones. We wrote down what they said. We cleaned all the vegetation around the graves so they could be readily seen.

“After all this work, I began taking measurements around the tziyun. I had brought along a ruler a meter and a half long. The trees planted near the graves were in the way of a future fence, but despite the obstacles, I managed to design a fence.

“After I finished measuring, we went to the Gransky house. The woman said we looked different than the Jews who used to come visit Lubavitch. She said that she remembered the Rebbetzin’s funeral (it must have been Rebbetzin Rivka, the wife of the Rebbe Maharash). Many people were in attendance at the funeral and afterwards, they put up a polished black stone that was so shiny that the ladies of the town would go to look at themselves in it, instead of a mirror.

“During a time of trouble, she would go to the cemetery and ask for blessings from the holy men

buried there. She also ordered the gentiles of the town to be sure not to touch the headstones (despite the fact that these stones, so she said, were good for sharpening knives...).

“Lubavitch is a little town and it didn’t have a place that manufactures fences. We went back to Rudnia (which is also a small town, but bigger than Lubavitch), where we met the manager of the factory who Nachum Labkowski had recommended. The manager said he would make the fence as per my specifications, but he would finish it only by the end of the week.

“He said this on a Sunday, and it was out of the question to remain in Rudnia for a week. In a little town like that, you can’t remain unidentified for a week.

“So we went to Moscow, where I left Boruch with my friend and Chassid, Rabbi Naftali Kravitzky a”h, who learned with me underground during the war.

“After Shabbos, I returned to Rudnia, and to my surprise I discovered that the workers had still not completed the job. I stood over them for a few hours until they finished the fence.

“Now I had to deal with getting the fence to Lubavitch. I met with the man in charge of the shipping depot, Skoblo, in the attempt to persuade him to take the fence to Lubavitch (at that meeting, his uncle, an older man, was there, who said that near the Ohel, his uncle, the Chassid R’ Yaakov Lazer Skoblo, was buried. He had been a rosh yeshiva in Lubavitch. He was a great scholar and a talmid in the Tzemach Tzedek’s yeshiva, as is related in *Seifer HaSichos* 5705, p. 20).

“The man responsible for deliveries at first agreed to go with me to Lubavitch, but when he

realized that I was putting up an Ohel over the graves of the Rebbeim, he refused to go with me. He was simply afraid. Despite my importuning, he remained adamant. He was familiar with the secret police's persecution of many good people. In the end, he agreed to ask his nephew to arrange the delivery, but the nephew refused too.

"I finally came to an agreement with one of the workers, who took me in his car to Lubavitch. Things went well, and we arrived in Lubavitch without any untoward incidents.

"I began digging myself, feeling it a great z'chus to actively participate in erecting the fence.

"Right after we finished the job, I went to Rudnia and from there I took a train to Moscow. I wanted to leave as quickly as possible so they wouldn't get on to my trail.

"Thus, despite the obstacles and many difficulties, I was able, with the help of Hashem, to put up a fence.

"When I arrived in Tashkent, I told R' Mottel Kozliner that the mission has been successfully completed. Together we thanked Hashem for the great miracles I

AN ENCOUNTER WITH HISTORY

Rabbi Gurewitz: "In those days I experienced a unique feeling. I had gone back several generations at once. I had encountered history and met relatives of Chassidim of yesteryear; I met a man whose father made boots for the Rebbeim, and people who had actually seen the Rebbe Maharash and the Rebbe Rashab."

"The Rebbe reacted to this story with great surprise since some years previously, a reliable person — so said the Rebbe — had said he had been in the old cemetery in Lubavitch and he did not find the gravestones."

experienced.

"Only the two of us knew this secret. Until I left the Soviet Union in 5731 (1971), I didn't tell a soul. Even my son Boruch kept his lips sealed, and didn't tell his younger brothers and sisters. The others heard about it when we were in Eretz Yisroel.

"In 5731, I left for Eretz Yisroel. For Tishrei 5732, I went to the Rebbe in 770. As soon as I arrived, I wrote a report about everything that had happened regarding the fence in Lubavitch. I gave the report to the secretary.

"On 4 Tishrei, I had my first yechidus with the Rebbe. The Rebbe asked me many questions about Russia, but didn't say a word about the Ohel in Lubavitch.

"After that Tishrei, I went on shlichus to cities in the U.S. along with Rabbi Shimon Lazarov in order to relate to Jewish communities what it was like for Chabad Chassidim in the Soviet Union. This shlichus took a long time. I received

a letter from Mottel Kozliner, which said that the Chassid Leibel Chatzarnov had a yechidus with the Rebbe and he told the Rebbe that he had recently been in Lubavitch and was amazed to find a fence around the graves. He quizzed the gentiles who told him that a man and his son had come to Lubavitch, and they had erected the fence.

"The Rebbe reacted to this story with great surprise since some years previously, a reliable person — so said the Rebbe — had said he had been in the old cemetery in Lubavitch and he did not find the gravestones.

"I realized that my report had never gotten to the Rebbe and I immediately wrote another one and added that that man had visited the old cemetery, whereas the Ohel of the Rebbeim was in the even older cemetery, which hadn't been used in years. The Rebbe responded to this letter with, 't'shuos chein' (a term of thanks)."

* * *

Over twenty years went by and the Soviet Union was dismantled following unbelievable reforms. Rabbi Gurewitz returned to Tashkent, this time on shlichus from the Rebbe, in order to spread Yiddishkait.

In the summer of 5751, he took talmidim from the yeshiva and a group of children from the Chabad camp in Tashkent to the Ohel in Lubavitch. Rabbi Gurewitz didn't see the iron fence anymore. In its place, Rabbi Dovid Nachshon and Avi Taub had built a spacious Ohel made of stone, fitting for the tziyunim of the Rebbeim.

That visit closed a circle for Rabbi Gurewitz: he had once had to visit clandestinely, and now he could publicly lead a group of Jewish youth!

THE GAON REB DOVID HA'KOHEN Z"l

From Shemen Sasson Meichaveirecha

BY REB SHALOM BER WOLPO
TRANSLATED BY ALEXANDER ZUSHE KOHN



(Continued from last week.)

ONCE IN A FEW GENERATIONS

In an interview with Kfar Chabad Magazine,¹ the Nazir's son (see last week's article), Rav Shor Yashuv said as follows:

"One need not be a Chabad chassid in order to be a big chassid of the Rebbe *shlita*. [One need only reflect on the Rebbe's] dazzling persona, his greatness in halacha, agaddah, chassidus and kabbala — indeed, in all areas of Torah — his great charisma, and his luminous countenance. A personality like the Rebbe appears on the scene only once in a few generations...he is the most venerated individual of the Torah community.

"As for my personal connection with the Rebbe, and the special affection he has shown me — this is the result of a relationship between our families that has continued for some time. The relationship between my family and the Rebbe began when, as a *bachur*, the Rebbe fled from the Bolsheviks, and hid in the home of my holy grandfather, Reb Henich Atkin *zatzal*, *rav* of Luga (next to Leningrad). Gratitude has always occupied a very prominent place in the tradition of the Chabad leaders in general, and of the Rebbe *shlita* in particular. In one of the private

audiences I was fortunate enough to have with the Rebbe, he spoke very passionately and with great affection about my grandfather.

THANKS TO THE REBBE

"That's how the connection began. As a result, I make sure to visit the Rebbe, either at a *farbrengen* or in a private audience, every time I come to the United States. This time, I was fortunate enough to be [in the Rebbe's court] for Shabbos, and to participate in the *farbrengen*. Time and time again, I am impressed anew by the superhuman abilities that G-d has granted the Rebbe. It is easy to forget his very advanced age, because his power and intensity have not diminished. On the contrary — each time, he appears more vigorous and

more dynamic. This, of course, is because Heaven assists him. We all pray that G-d should give him the strength to overcome all opposition.

"If not for the Rebbe, their would be no Jewish nation today; there is no faction, organization, or circle among the Jewish people today that has accomplished as much [as Chabad] in bringing Jews closer to their faith, to Judaism, and to the observance of Torah and *mitzvahs*. And all their accomplishments were attained through the Rebbe's holy inspiration. I feel fortunate and very privileged to have been shown such affection by the Rebbe."

In a letter to me dated 12 Teives, 5755 (December 15, 1994) Rav Shor Yashuv records some very interesting details from his discussions with the Rebbe. I have chosen to present the full text of the letter:

The chief Rabbinate of Chaifa and district

12 Teives, 5755,

To my honorable friend, the rabbi and chassid, Rav Shalom Dover HaLevi Wolpo *shlita*,

Kiryat Gat

...There is much to tell with regard to the special closeness the Rebbe showed me:



The Nazir's son, Rav Shor Yashuv HaKohen

1. Once, during a private audience, the Rebbe spoke somewhat at length about the time when, as a *bachur*, he remained in hiding at the home of my maternal grandfather, the tzaddik, Reb Henschel Atkin *zatzal*, rav of Luga, a town next to Leningrad. He stayed there from before his wedding — he was already engaged to the Rebbetzin — until he was able to travel to Warsaw, where the famous wedding was held.

2. It was the year 5731 (1970-71) when Rav Yaakov *zatzal*, Rav Gur Aryeh *zatzal*, and myself escorted President Zalman Shazar, o.b.m., to *Beis Chayeinu* to hear the reading of the *Megilla*. Pointing to me, the President asked the Rebbe: “You know this young man?” (I was quite young at the time — this was before I became chief rabbi of Chaifa.) The Rebbe said, “What do you mean — we’re old, good friends.”

3. In many of our conversations during the private audiences, the Rebbe truly showed me special affection. Some of these discussions are already well known, but two of them, in particular, deserve to be written down for posterity.

Once, when I was deputy-mayor of Yerushalayim, I had a private audience with the Rebbe in the middle of the night. The Rebbe turned to me and said, “When we meet, it is the crack of dawn² in Jerusalem.” The Rebbe’s face was literally shining. In the course of our conversation, the Rebbe enquired quite a bit about the various holy practices of my father, the Nazir. With regard to the writings of Rav Kook, the Rebbe wanted to know why Rav Kook substituted terminology traditionally found in the works of Kabbala — on which he founded his *Oros HaKodesh* series, which my father was very fond of, as

is well known — with academic terminology. I answered that my father told me in the name of Rav Kook that, in his view, ‘everything follows the branches’ — i.e., his main goal was to attract those who were not yet familiar with the terminology of the Torah’s inner dimension.

At the end of the conversation, the Rebbe asked me to bless him. I was very much taken aback by this request, and I said, “I am too small to bless the teacher of all of Israel.” Very firmly, the Rebbe replied, ‘You are a Kohen, and a Kohen blesses.’ At that moment a surprising thing happened: Heaven put into my



In Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim, Moscow.

mouth the verse, “*For they will add to you length of days and peace.*” To my surprise, the Rebbe answered ‘amen’ in a loud voice.

4. “On a different occasion, I was bold enough to ask the Rebbe why he did not come to Israel. I added, “I beg your pardon for asking this question, but it is the question of the entire House of Israel — there is not the slightest doubt that the Rebbe’s arrival in Israel would cause an immense spiritual awakening throughout the world, and it would hasten the Redemption.”

“The Rebbe answered, ‘There are

two reasons for this: (1) I know the way [to Israel], but there is no way back (the Rebbe was apparently referring to the prohibition against leaving the land of Israel), and I have not yet finished my mission here. (2) I accepted upon myself never to go anywhere where I cannot reach the gravesite³ of the Nasi HaDor (the Rebbe Rayatz) that very day.’

“Again, I said boldly, ‘But there is a solution to this!’ The Rebbe asked, ‘What are you referring to?’ And I replied, ‘*And Moses took the bones of Yosef with him.*’ (I was alluding to the Rebbe, who is the embodiment of Moshe, taking with him the Rebbe Rayatz, whose has the same first name as Yosef HaTzaddik.) The Rebbe was silent.

“Then, suddenly, his eyes filled with tears, and a terrible dread fell upon me. I immediately asked the Rebbe for forgiveness if I had caused him any kind of pain, G-d forbid, for my intentions were solely for the sake of Heaven, and I was certainly unworthy of telling the Rebbe what to do. The Rebbe smiled, and we immediately changed topics. The matter was a great wonder to me.

I have many more stories that have already been printed and publicized, but this is not the proper format for them.

With blessings for imminent repentance and imminent Redemption, speedily in our days, *amen!*

NOTES:

1 Issue 362.

2 Lit., Alos Hashachar.

3 Lit., the Ohel.

For all your chassidic writing needs in English, call the Chassidic Writing Center: 718-771-7290.

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY

BY SHULAMIS YEHUDIS GUTFREUND

The baseball-birthday party was scheduled to be held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Sunday, June 17, 2001. That morning at 9 a.m., I got a phone call from Jason.

Jason, a volunteer for Jewish Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Boston, had taken on the sizable task of organizing a blow-out pizza-cake-and-ice-cream-baseball party for David, a sweet and lively boy who lives with us for Shabbos and Yomim Tovim. David had just turned 9.

Jason's voice sounded nervous. No one had more invested in this party than he. He'd already spent long hours and large sums of money setting up the party, but now, the weather forecasters were predicting a wild summer storm to hit Boston in the early part of the day. This was to be no mere rain, but a deluge. Already at 9 a.m. when the phone rang, the skies were an ominous gray.

"Should I cancel, Shulamit?" Jason asked. "If we're going to cancel, I have to do it now so I can let the parents know not to bring their kids to the park. They might be harder to reach later."

I thought a minute about David and how very much this party meant to him. Jason had designed the event to fill David's every dream. David's father had flown in from California for a few days just to attend. I was scheduled to bring David's 79-year-old grandmother from senior housing nearby, and every boy from his grade at Maimonides Day School had been invited. Even as the clouds grew

blackier, I couldn't believe the party wouldn't happen.

"You know, Jason, I just can't believe G-d is going to rain on David's party," I said. "I don't think we should cancel. I think we should be optimistic. Who knows? Maybe it won't rain."

"Shulamit, you don't understand — it's going to rain," Jason said. "The forecast said so. This is not a 'maybe'

I'd known David for nearly two years at that point, and it was obvious to me how precious he was to Hashem. It just didn't compute that his hopes for his big day would be wrecked...

situation." A kind soul, Jason was trying hard to conceal his impatience.

I was oblivious, even so. I'd known David for nearly two years at that point, and it was obvious to me how precious he was to Hashem. It just didn't compute that his hopes for his big day would be wrecked.

"I just can't believe that G-d is going to rain on David's party," I

repeated stubbornly. "I think we should hope for the best and go ahead."

Jason started to waver. It was clearly an irrational idea to go ahead, judging by the skies and the weather forecast, but he was catching the fever. "Okay!" he said.

I turned to David. "What do you say, David? Do you think we should cancel today and go for the rain-date next Sunday, or risk everything and go for today?"

Kids are always optimistic. "Don't cancel!" he said. The deal was sealed.

Immediately after hanging up, I turned to David again.

"If we're going through with this and we're going to have the party despite the terrible weather forecast, we have to write to the Rebbe right away. We can't do this just on our own, you know. We need a blessing."

It was 9:30 a.m. by then, and the skies were getting darker. David wrote a brief letter, to the point.

"Dear Rebbe," he wrote. "I'm David. Today is my birthday party. The forecast said rain. Can you please bless us that there's no rain and we have a great birthday party?"

We had heard from Jason that only seven boys out of the 19 invited had responded that they would come, which would indicate a tiny turnout. David added a final line to his letter about that.

"And *all* my friends should come. Sincerely, David."

After he finished the letter, David suggested he insert it into one of the English collections of letters from the Rebbe. He said “Yechi” and put it in Volume 3 of *Letters from the Rebbe* published by Otsar Sifrei Lubavitch.

We opened it up. The letter on page 81 was, to our great delight, addressed to children. More intriguing than that, it was addressed to children from Boston! Even more interesting, it was addressed to children from Boston who attended Rabbi Chaim Ciment’s yeshiva, which David had attended for several years. The letter said that the giving of *tz’daka* would stand the children in good stead. After reading the letter, David followed the advice and gave *tz’daka* promptly.

I personally found the Rebbe’s closing words the most fascinating of all. For anyone else, they would probably pass unnoticed. The Rebbe wrote: “you will always be a source of true *Yiddische nachas* to parents and teachers, and a source of blessing to your near and dear ones.”

The Rebbe’s purposeful reference to “near and dear ones,” a category the Rebbe distinguished from both parents and teachers — went straight to my heart. My husband and I are not David’s relatives, nor are we his teachers. We have no official relationship to him. For lack of a better way to put it, we refer to him as our “Shabbos child.” With those few but penetrating words, I felt the Rebbe was assuring us that we too would see lasting joy from this child.

At 10:30 a.m., David’s father came to our house to pick David up and bring him to the party. I had some time to myself then, because I was scheduled to arrive with the ice cream at noon, after the party was well underway.

After David left, I sat on my couch, taking a few precious minutes to finish my *Chitas*. At one point, I happened to glance out the living room window and saw colossal, deep gray clouds

rolling in. Oddly enough, they didn’t impress me at all. My faith in Hashem’s kindness to this little boy was so absolute that I watched the clouds with an almost academic and amused curiosity.

“Shulamis Yehudis,” I told myself, “I want you to study these clouds. They look terrible! They’re so threatening! But you know fully well that they’re only stage props rolled in to challenge our trust in Hashem, and that everything today is going to be

“Shulamis Yehudis,” I told myself, “I want you to study these clouds. They look terrible! They’re so threatening! But you know fully well that they’re only stage props rolled in to challenge our trust in Hashem, and that everything today is going to be just fine.”

just fine.

“But I want you to remember this picture for the future. Memorize it. So many times in life, G-d sends in awful looking clouds, but in the overwhelming majority of cases, that’s all they are — gray, threatening clouds. They’re there for one purpose only: to push them away and trust in G-d’s kindness.”

When I arrived at the party at

Schick Park at noon, I was shocked. Before me on the grassy diamond, 19 kids were playing baseball and obviously having a great time. Sixteen more guests — adult friends and relatives of David’s — were chatting on the sidelines. The skies were still overcast, but not a drop had fallen.

At 12:30 p.m., the pizza was gobbled up. The ice cream was devoured. Not a scrap of cake remained. All the kids were thrilled — especially David.

Signs of Hashem’s kindness were everywhere. But of all these many signs, perhaps the clearest signature of Hashem’s love for this boy and his total Mastery of events were those two absolutely glorious, knock-the-skins-off-the-ball-homeruns that the birthday boy made. A kid simply couldn’t have had a better day.

At exactly 1 p.m., the moment the party was officially over and the parents arrived to collect their children, the first small raindrops began to fall. I glanced up at the skies, awed at the precise timing, but also a little worried. I still had to get David’s elderly grandmother home. And I had a personal concern: I was wearing my best *sheitel*.

Not only did I manage to get David’s grandmother to her home perfectly dry, but I also got back to my own home dry and in style as well. Then, almost immediately after I closed my front door and walked into my home, the heavens simply opened up. In my seven years in Boston, I had never witnessed such a deluge. As the weathercasters predicted, it was massive, almost torrential.

As the rain beat with fury against my windows, I grabbed the phone to call David’s mother, Inna, who wasn’t well and hadn’t been able to attend the party.

Overcome by excitement, I almost shouted into the phone, “Inna! Do you hear that rain? Please listen to it,

because it may be the closest you and I ever come to directly *hearing* G-d's love and the Rebbe's blessing. We can actually *hear* it!" And I filled her in briefly about David's letter and the rain holding off until precisely 1 o'clock.

It's easy to see how G-d loves others, particularly a child like David. But as I listened to that rain, I realized its message was much broader than simply G-d's love for one boy. It dawned on me that of course G-d loves every Jew with the same unfathomable intensity. And, if G-d cares so deeply about the fulfillment of a 9-year-old's dreams for his birthday party, it's certainly a message for the rest of us that He is guarding each of our most precious dreams and is planning their fulfillment in the same precise and wondrous detail. And no cloud — no matter how big, no matter how impressive — should ever make us think differently.

* * *

EPILOGUE

G-d runs the world. Two years later to the day (June 17, 2003), it was David's turn at bat again. This time, he was playing in the Majors division of the Youth Baseball League of Brookline, a town adjacent to Boston.

His team was heavily Jewish — a great group of kids — but unfortunately their record was miserable, by far the worst in the league. They'd finished the season with 10 losses and one win. But according to the rules of the league, all teams, no

matter what their record, make it to the playoffs, and it's a clean slate; anyone can win.

Although I didn't attend any of the season games, I made it to most of the playoffs. I said "Yechi" for the boys' sake and used the time to catch up on my *T'hillim*.

To the utter shock of the boys and their coach, David's team, the "Cubbies," won game after game in the playoffs. They clinched the pennant and, on June 17th, the eve of David's 11th birthday, they found themselves in the World Series, a one-game competition against the best team in the league.

Just before the game, the coach, laughing and a bit dazed, told the boys that whatever happens, win or lose, they should enjoy the experience because it was a miracle they were even there.

They were trailing for the first half of the game and, as usual, I used the time to catch up on my *T'hillim*. When I got to the Rebbe's *perek*, I had a feeling something good would happen. Indeed, David's team scored three runs in the 70-or-so seconds it took to say the *perek*. By the end of the last inning, the score was tied and the teams were compelled to go into an extra inning.

The other team quickly scored two runs and their players were grinning and laughing in exultation. David's team was grim, but they weren't giving up. The drama was so intense at this

point, parents on the sidelines were grabbing their cell phones to urge spouses to come quickly to witness the exciting finale. By this point, I was saying *T'hillim* while hopping up and down, suddenly transformed into an avid baseball fan. I too called my husband and told him to come without delay. He had just arrived at the Boston airport from an out-of-town trip and was in a cab heading home.

Glancing up from my *T'hillim* a few minutes later, I noticed David was up at bat. The Cubbies were just one run behind now, and there were two outs. The game was literally hanging on David's next move. In a beautiful instance of *hashgacha pratis*, precisely when my husband arrived at the ballfield, David hit the ball into center field, over the shortstop's head, and ran to first while a team member who had been on third base ran home, tying the score. Everyone was exultant. A second later, David stole second. Everyone was roaring.

Five minutes before David's Hebrew birthday, as the sun was setting on the 17th of Sivan, I was fervently saying the Rebbe's *perek* when his Isaac, a batter from Brookline, whacked a high fly into left field and David ran all the way home, scoring the winning run and capturing the World Series for the team with hands-down the worst record in the league.

G-d runs the world. And a *yasher ko'ach* to our Rebbe, who helps us with everything, even baseball.



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SALVATION WILL APPEAR FROM ELSEWHERE

BY SHAI GEFEN

The political scene is bleak. There's no one left. No party has refrained from raising a hand against Eretz Yisroel, thus declaring open war on Hashem and His Torah. All failed the test. They all preferred their personal honor, their narrow and momentary interests, over the battle to save the Holy Land.

It began with Ichud HaLeumi, continued with Mafdal, and ended with Yahadus Ha'Torah. Each one was tested in turn, and each failed. Each of them thrust a sword in the heart of Eretz Yisroel and wrote on the horn of the ox, "I have no share and portion in the G-d of Israel."

It makes no difference how large their yarmulke is, or what type they wear. The Rebbe said long ago, the Hellenizers of our generation daven three times a day.

Anybody we relied on turned on us. This began with the one who was "good for the Jews," and continued with the Foreign Minister of Peace and the Minister of Education. They all cooperated.

But it's just in this kind of situation that we can be encouraged, because when we see the political scene in a shambles, and we know there is no one left to rely on, then

we fulfill the verse "and they cried out to Hashem." We are assured that the Guardian of Israel will protect the remnant of Israel and will nullify this unprecedented decree, as the Rebbe described the Camp David Accords.

As for all those who stand off to the side and wait to see how things will work out, including rabbanim who reserve the "right to remain silent," they won't be able to say, "our hands did not spill this blood." No excuses will help them on Judgment Day. Those who elected, at a time when a sword rested on our throats, to collaborate, whether by remaining silent or by helping in some form or another, should know that, "relief and salvation will stand up for the Jews from somewhere else, and you and your father's house ...". In the time of Mordechai and Esther, everybody was quiet then too, including the rabbanim and askanim. All preferred not to see or hear. Only Mordechai HaTzaddik sat in the king's gate and cried a great and terrible cry.

We Chassidim who are mekusharim to the "tree of life," can't possibly sit with hands folded! The Rebbe, Mordechai HaYehudi of our generation, sits in the king's gate and

cries out, "Help!"

The news reports constant mortar attacks on Jewish settlements, and this gives us a preview of what we can expect if they give land away to our enemies. This is literal pikuach nefesh!

As the town burns, we must run and extinguish the flames! At a time when we can fulfill the mitzva of "do not stand by your fellow's blood," we offer excuses and say we aren't able to, who are we, it's not realistic, etc.

Let each of us think about how the Rebbe would look at every one of us and ask, "What did you do?" Let each of us think about how our grandchildren will ask us, "What did you do so this wouldn't happen?"

WHY DIDN'T THE REBBE REMAIN SILENT?

The following questions are asked: What's the point in crying out? It's possible that the head of the Finance Committee will hold back the money that is rightfully ours; that one ministry or another will hold back vital funds that support our mosdos. Maybe we should just cooperate.

Let us think about why the Rebbe cried out in similar circumstances,



even when he assumed that it wouldn't help, and even when he thought money would be lost. The Rebbe addressed this at length, and even said that he knew that because of what he said, so-and-so would take out their anger on those things that were important to the Rebbe. Yet, the Rebbe would cry out anyway.

In a sicha of Zos Chanuka 5746, the Rebbe said he knew what would result but he explained why he did it anyway:

What is the purpose in saying all this. On the contrary, since they will get angry about this, they will take out their anger by not giving for those things which are associated with the one [i.e., the Rebbe] who is making a commotion about them!

First of all, when it's something to do with bloodshed, there's a mitzva "don't stand by your fellow's blood." (That so-and-so is quiet — I don't know the reason for it, you'll have to ask them.) In addition, when something truly affects you and hurts, you don't think about whether crying out will help or not. The crying out is because it affects you!

Most importantly, a Jew, by nature, is a dreamer. As it says about Yosef that he was a dreamer, and the verse says, "You who leads Yosef like a flock," all Israel is called by the name "Yosef." So every Jew is like Yosef, a dreamer.

This nature gives a Jew the strength to bear the sorrow and pain of Galus, especially the sorrow and suffering that Jews cause themselves, "those who destroy and ruin you will go forth from you."

THEY WOULD BE BETTER OFF HAVING A GENTILE GOVERNMENT

13 years ago, the night of Yud Shvat 5752, the Nasi HaDor and its Prophet stood in 770 with then Minister Moshe Katzav. It was just

like in the days of yore, when the king went to the prophet and heard his rebuke, and after the prophet left, the king and his ministers denied the prophecy and continued in their evil ways.

That moment was unforgettable, when the Rebbe stood there after an especially busy day, and after a brief sicha, he spent twenty minutes holding Katzav's hand and telling him words of rebuke and open prophecy, warning him what could happen and telling him exactly what to do.

In that sicha, the likes of which we never heard before, the Rebbe acted just as the prophets of old did, and warned that he would topple the prime minister if he continued talking to the Arabs about giving away land to them. I witnessed this exchange and I'll never forget it!

Last week, a new government was formed based on the votes of two Arabs. Without their votes, the government couldn't exist. This detail is the fulfillment of a shocking statement that the Rebbe told Katzav. Namely, that it would be preferable to have a government of gentiles. It's the first time in history (even in Rabin's time, this didn't happen) that the Arab vote kept a minority government going. This is what the Rebbe said to Katzav:

It is not possible that a Jew who believes in Hashem and in His Torah would, G-d forbid, cooperate with things like these and sign to it. Based on this, it would be preferable if the government collapsed and there would not be a Jewish government. They only speak of these plans because of gentile pressure (as they themselves say), so if this is the case, then it would be preferable if — G-d forbid — they had a government of gentiles in Eretz Yisroel, and they decide, up front, what should be done with Eretz Yisroel. At least then

That moment was unforgettable, when the Rebbe stood there after an especially busy day, and after a brief sicha, he spent twenty minutes holding Katzav's hand and telling him words of rebuke and open prophecy, warning him what could happen and telling him exactly what to do.

it won't be Jews who sign on things like these!

It sounded fantastical at the time, but they became the sad reality. Sharon established a new government based on the votes of our enemies with whom he collaborates, knowingly and deliberately. Many people didn't

understand why the Rebbe spoke back then about a government of gentiles.

The explanation seems simple, as the Rebbe always said: only Jews have free will and the ability to do the opposite of what G-d wants. Gentiles cannot do anything against G-d's will. We can only hope that the Rebbe will fight the Sharon government and abolish it immediately.

SDEROT AND ABU MAZEN

Does anybody remember how many military operations the IDF carried out last year in order to eradicate the bomb factories in Gaza?

This is how it works: the army enters for a limited operation to the edge of some refugee camp. Then the spokesman announces how many armed men were killed and how the goal was almost attained. Two days go by and the army announces that it has completed the operation. A few hours later, the whole thing turns out to be a sad joke.

After the tragedy in Sderot last week, Sharon announced that he would allow the IDF to operate freely. Yet we all know the open secret and the bitter truth — that the government deliberately ignores the dangers for the sake of political considerations. They are capable of calling a halt to all the attacks if they want to. Sadly, the Israeli government prefers to play politics with Jewish lives.

We all know the open secret and the bitter truth — that the government deliberately ignores the dangers for the sake of political considerations. They are capable of calling a halt to all the attacks if they want to. Sadly, the Israeli government prefers to play politics with Jewish lives.

Sharon knows that if he wants something, he has ways of achieving it. When they wanted to assassinate Yassin, he was assassinated. But when it interfered with their suicidal policies, they didn't stop him from blowing up women and children. That's how our leaders operate.

Now, after Arafat's death, they found a new leader by the name of Abu Mazen. Jews have crowned this Holocaust-denier and arch-terrorist, who is pledged to the destruction of Eretz Yisroel. We thought the

redeemer had come but now the tune has changed and lo and behold, it turns out Mazen is not the moderate, peace-seeking leader he was made out to be.

What a pity that we fall for every stupidity our government cynically feeds us.

"I DID THIS BECAUSE OF THE REBBE!"

The soldier Yossi Pilent was released when the Supreme Court said the legal process was flawed. It just shows that when you go with the truth, the Rebbe doesn't remain a debtor.

Pilent's release surprised all the legal pundits and journalists. This is what Pilent said when he left jail, "What I did was only because of the Rebbe." This ordinary soldier didn't consider what people would think. He thought of what the Torah says to do. Is it permissible to take part in this crime or not? His healthy instincts led him to conclude that the order should not be carried out and should be opposed. And that's what he did.

Those who are familiar with the military justice system know that what happened with Pilent is quite unusual, because the Supreme Court has never forced a military justice entity to change its verdict.

We are assured that whoever sanctifies G-d's name in public is repaid with much good.



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'YOU'RE HOLDING BACK THE GEULA!'

BY MENDEL TZFASMAN
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

The mashpia, R. Mendel Futerfas, of blessed memory, often remarked that R. Zushe of Anipoli learned only seven things from thieves because he never sat with them in prison. "If only he would have sat with them," he said, "he would have learned much more than seven things."

I heard the following story in R. Mendel's name at a chassidic farbrengen. Since then, I have retold the story many times, and when to my surprise, I discovered that most people have never heard it before, I decided to bring it here to our loyal readers.

R. Mendel's story begins as follows:

"When I was in Soviet prison, I sat in a cell with thieves who majored in the field of stealing. During those times, one of the ironclad prison rules was an absolute restriction against card playing. If a prisoner was caught playing cards in his cell, he and all his cellmates could expect to receive severe punishment.

"One day, there was a group of prisoners sitting in my cell in the midst of a furious card game. The fact that what they were doing was 'illegal' didn't seem to bother them very much, as they were all in prison for a variety of reasons...

"When the guard heard the noise as he passed by the prison cell, he clearly realized that the prisoners were involved in the forbidden activity. He burst into the cell, and asked for the cards. In an instant, the cards had disappeared. 'What cards?' the prisoners inquired. 'Are you accusing us of playing cards? That's against prison rules...' The guard thought that he might have imagined it all due to exhaustion and fatigue, and turned and left the cell.

"As soon as the guard departed, I watched with disbelief as the prisoners took their cards and resumed the game as if nothing had happened!

"The guard, who had continued patrolling the halls, entered the room in a rage, and ordered everyone to stand against the wall. He frisked them all in a desperate attempt to find the cards, but to no avail. (NOTE: The cell's 'furniture' consisted of nothing more than a toilet in the corner, with nowhere else to hide the cards.) The guard angrily exited the cell, slamming the door as he left.

"When the guard was gone, the same thing happened. The cards reappeared, and the game immediately

We have become quite adept at checking the other person's tzitzis...

started up again as usual.

"The guard entered the cell a third time, but this time, he would not relent. He ordered everyone to take off their clothes, and hand them over for a thorough check. He shook out everything like a maniac, but to his utter shock, not one card turned up.

"After the guard left, I approached the leader of the prisoners, and asked him to explain to me what had just transpired before my very eyes. 'You can't lie to me. I saw with my own eyes that you were playing cards. How did they suddenly disappear when the guard came in? Are you magicians? What's your secret?'

"Why should I reveal anything to you?' the leader replied. 'You'll just run and tell the guard, and that will put an end to our game!'

"I wouldn't give in, and I convinced him that 'we're all in this together' and he has nothing to worry about. Still, he wasn't in a rush to 'show his hand.' I remained firm, and I pressured him as I know how, until he finally agreed to reveal the secret, but not before he made me swear not to reveal anything to the guards.

"We're not sitting in jail because we stole bread from the local store,' he began. 'We have years of experience in pick pocketing and thievery behind us, to the point that we've earned the title of 'thieves with diplomas.' When we heard the guard place the key in the lock, we gathered up all the playing cards with lightning speed, and when he entered the cell, we quickly and carefully put the cards — in the guard's pocket...

"While he checked all of us from head to foot, he couldn't find the cards, because he didn't check himself!"

* * *

"So it is with us," R. Mendel concluded. "We customarily try to determine the frightful reason why the Redemption continues to be delayed. We have become quite adept at checking the other person's tzitzis, explaining why his terrible conduct is 'the source of all that is bad.'

"However, in similarity with the fool who searches for the coin he lost on a well-lit street as opposed to the darkened road where he dropped it, we tend to forget that in order to find the 'cards,' we first have to check our own pockets..."

BEACON OF CHASSIDIC LIGHT IN BEITAR

*Two months ago, the Torah-observant town of Beitar Illit experienced a “revolution,” with the establishment of the senior level Yeshiva “Beis Moshiach 770” * It will spread the light of Chassidus and the Rebbe’s tidings of the Geula on a broad scale * Shai Gefen, who spent a day with the students and faculty, was deeply impressed by the experience.*



The Yeshiva building

Beitar Illit, a growing development town near Jerusalem, has tens of thousands of residents, all of them Torah-observant Jews. They include a significant Chabad community that has a full range of schools, including pre-schools and elementary schools for boys and girls, and Mesivta (high school-level Yeshiva) for boys.

This year, a senior-level Yeshiva has been added to the list. Although Israel already has many Chabad Yeshivos, this is not just another Yeshiva. Reb D’niel Goldberg, who moved there a year and a half ago, decided that Beitar Illit, which then had only one senior-level Yeshiva, a non-Chassidic one, needed a high quality Chassidic Yeshiva. Last summer, after receiving several Brochos of the Rebbe MHM, shlita, to establish the new Yeshiva, he spent a few months assembling an outstanding faculty.

This Yeshiva aims to disseminate the wellsprings of Chabad Chassidus in the region, especially the tidings of the Rebbe MHM, shlita, about the imminent Geula. Of particular interest to students and parents is that the Yeshiva creates an atmosphere that can resolve many problems prevalent in today’s institutionalized Yeshiva system. Its approach to these educational issues, says Reb D’niel, the Yeshiva’s founder and executive



The Mashpia, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Ginsberg, lecturing on Chassidus to the students

director, will become the model for other Yeshivos throughout the country to emulate.

The first group of students started their studies several months ago. Right from the start, they have been inculcated with the spirit of Shlichus, a sense of mission that they are accomplishing an essential function on behalf of the Rebbe MHM, shlita, to spread Chassidus and tidings of the Geula. Any visitor entering the study hall experiences the resultant intensive atmosphere of enthusiastic study, both in Talmudic learning and in Chassidus.

INFLUENCE ON THE TOWN

Reb D'niel Goldberg explains that this Yeshiva was established in Beitar Illit, a Torah-observant town, to create

When Farbrengens are held at the Yeshiva, they are publicized around the town. As a result, they are attended by learned residents of the town eager to discover the treasures of Chabad Chassidus.

a powerful environment where Chassidus and Talmudic learning are combined in a serious atmosphere, along with Hiskashrus to the Rebbe MHM, shlita. Such a senior-level Yeshiva should give the town a Chassidic impetus, not just as a Yeshiva, but as a focal point of Chassidus for the whole town.

This is accomplished in several ways. When Farbrengens are held at the Yeshiva, they are publicized around the town. As a result, they are attended by learned residents of the town eager to discover the treasures of Chabad Chassidus. Among them are even sons of distinguished Chassidic Rebbes. In addition, a special time is designated at the Yeshiva every evening for residents to come and study Chassidus with a study-partner

from among the students or the members of the town's Chabad community.

Yet the new Yeshiva is not just another place to learn Torah and Chassidus, Reb D'niel emphasizes. Its goal is become a place that attracts Jews to Chabad and to Hiskashrus to the Rebbe MHM, shlita, to participate in Chassidic activities, and to study subjects of Moshiach and Geula.

"Despite the short time since the Yeshiva has opened," says Reb D'niel, "we are enjoying tremendous success. We know it's not our own accomplishment at all. It's all thanks only to the Rebbe MHM, shlita."

MOSHIACH EMPHASIS

The name chosen for the new Yeshiva is very special: "Beis Moshiach 770." This name is fundamental to the Yeshiva's essence. "We aim to create a warm Chassidische Yeshiva in the Moshiach spirit. Students of Chabad Yeshivos, Tomchei Tmimim, are called 'soldiers of the royal house of David,' whose task is to battle against 'those who mock the footsteps of Your Moshiach,' as the Rebbe RaShaB said in his prophetic Sicha, and to instill Jewish and Chassidische warmth."

As the nucleus for the new Yeshiva, students were chosen from the Chabad Yeshiva of Tzfas. The students, of course, are the basis of the Yeshiva. But they would be the first to agree that it is the outstanding faculty that creates its special Chassidic atmosphere and intensive learning environment. The faculty includes members who are fluent in Hebrew, Yiddish, English and French, who can therefore communicate with students from all backgrounds and understand their native mindset (which can be very different to what native Israeli faculty members understand).

Rabbi Gershon M.M. Avtzon of Jerusalem gives the main Talmud lecture to the students. Rabbi Avtzon

is devoted heart and soul to the Yeshiva, which he considers a vital component of the Tomchei Tmimim system during these final moments before the ultimate Geula.

Rabbi Refael Tzikvashvili, who serves as a Rabbinic authority in Yerushalayim and also as lecturer at a Kollel (graduate school) for Halachic law in Lud, is the Yeshiva's dean. His Shiurim, accompanied by broad explanations of the subjects, greatly

enrich the students' enthusiasm for their Talmudic studies.

"We place great emphasis on success in Talmud studies," he notes, "as the Rebbe has always demanded." This success is illustrated by a collection of Torah insights and explanations that the students are already preparing for publication to mark 11 Nissan, the birthday of the Rebbe MHM. The Mashgiach (dean of students) for Talmudic subjects is



The Yeshiva students at their 19 Kislev Farbrengen



Children's Chanuka rally organized by our students



The original group of Shluchim students with Reb D'niel Goldberg and Rabbi Tzikhvashvili

Rabbi Michel Dubruskin.

Mashpiyim at the Yeshiva are **Rabbi Mordechai Ben Yaakov and Rabbi Yaron Daniel**, who serves as Mashpiya at the local Moshiach Shul, "Sifria Chassidit." **Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Ginsberg** of Kfar Chabad comes to give a weekly shiur on Igeres HaTeshuva (the third section of Tanya), and also leads a monthly Farbrengen. Both of these attract many of the town's residents.

The new Yeshiva's approach to educational problems is unusual, especially in Israel. Reb D'niel Goldberg explains: "Our Yeshiva is small enough that every student feels at home. We want every student to feel that the Yeshiva cares for him like his own parents. A large Yeshiva is likely to be missing that home atmosphere. Only at a smaller Yeshiva with a large faculty-student ratio, can a student truly feel that Tomchei Tmimim is his natural home. Here, every student can feel part of the Yeshiva and blossom at his own pace."

To advance this feeling, the Yeshiva has introduced an interesting innovation. Young married Torah

scholars study there as an integral part of the Yeshiva. One of them, Rabbi Shimon Cohen, an outstanding scholar, remarked: "This is truly revolutionary. When students study together with mature scholars, it creates a more serious atmosphere. It's a great help for students, who can discuss their learning with them in an

"Our role in this battle, which is a spiritual one, is to bring Moshiach. Today we see how the Tmimim conduct themselves with utter devotion to the Rebbe MHM, shlita, and this is most encouraging to witness."

atmosphere more relaxed than is possible with faculty members. Even at this early stage in the Yeshiva's development, I see how advantageous this is not only for the students but for the married men, too."

Disseminating Chassidus and Yiddishkeit is considered integral to Yeshiva life. But students know that it is never at the expense of the official study schedule, which is scrupulously followed.

As noted, Farbrengens at the Yeshiva are not just for its own students but are advertised in the local papers, and everyone curious to learn more about Chabad Chassidus is welcome. Many local residents also visit the Yeshiva regularly to learn Chassidus.

Every Shabbos, Bais Moshiach 770 students organize Mesibos Shabbos afternoon groups for local children. In collaboration with students of the Chabad high-school level Yeshiva, they organized Chanuka rallies for the local children. On Fridays afternoons, the students visit military units for Mivtzaim. A new monthly program is hosting various groups from out of

town who come to experience the Shabbos atmosphere at Tomchei Tmimim.

Every two weeks, students are tested on the subjects they have studied. Based on the results and on their careful attendance record, they can receive monthly awards. These prizes are part of the Yeshiva's approach of emphasizing positive encouragement for those who fulfill their obligations conscientiously. "This approach proves its efficacy above and beyond even our own expectations," says Rabbi Tzikhvashvili. "Our goal is that a student comes to feel at home in the Yeshiva's Torah atmosphere, without any compulsion."

Another innovation here is that there are no official weekend vacations every month or so, as at other Israeli Yeshivos (which actually close down once a month!). At Beis Moshiach 770 of Beitar Illit, groups of students take turns for visits home for Shabbos, so that the Yeshiva always stays open even for Shabbos. This has the advantage of added flexibility for the students if they need to go away for a specific Shabbos. But the main advantage is that the Yeshiva always stays open, Shabbos and weekdays, so that local residents can always come in for inspiration.

Why was the name "Beis Moshiach 770" selected for this special Yeshiva? Reb D'niel Goldberg explains: "The Yeshiva's goal is to mold a generation of Tmimim who are ready to greet Moshiach. The education they receive here is in the spirit of Geula and Moshiach, as the Rebbe said on Simchas Torah, 5752, that Chinuch today should be based on the subject of Moshiach. The Tmimim set the tone on this subject. The education here is to instill Yiras Shomayim, to study Torah with enthusiasm, with particular interest in Moshiach and Geula. Eventually this spirit should radiate to the entire environment."

"This Moshiach emphasis starts



**Yud Shevat Farbrengen with Rav Gershon M. M. Avtzon (middle right).
Rav Yaron Daniel (middle left).**

right after Shacharis (as also after Mincha and Maariv), when a Torah passage is studied on subjects of Moshiach and Geula. In the evening, the students study these subjects more intensively. As a Tomchei Tmimim Yeshiva, we must focus on the goal of 'greeting Moshiach,' as the Rebbe MHM, shlita, demands."

Every Thursday evening, Rabbi Mordechai Ben Yaakov gives an in-depth lecture on the weekly Dvar Malchus, which attracts a large crowd. He comments: "The Mashpiya, Reb Mendel Futerfas, once explained the difference between Tomchei Tmimim today and the original Tomchei Tmimim in Lubavitch: From a certain perspective, it higher today because everything is done in a spirit of Hiskashrus and submission to the Rebbe. We are now at the end of the task the Rebbe RaShaB gave the 'soldiers of the royal house of Dovid,' who go out to battle. The credit goes to those who finish the job. Our role in this battle, which is a spiritual one, is to bring Moshiach. Today we see

how the Tmimim conduct themselves with utter devotion to the Rebbe MHM, shlita, and this is most encouraging to witness."

Rabbi Avtzon sees the Yeshiva as a revolutionary innovation within the Tomchei Tmimim system: "The Yeshiva was established to be a warm home for the students, where they can get individual attention in their Chassidic advancement and their studies. In larger Yeshivos, that's difficult to do. Here we aim to take care of every student as if he's an only child, not just another number!"

Reb D'niel Goldberg emphasizes the Yeshiva's Shlichus format, which encourages the students to welcome local residents to participate in the Yeshiva's studies and Farbrengens. "That helps our students realize their need to become role models, which engenders a deep sense of responsibility."

Originally, he considered starting the Yeshiva as a Semicha program, which has lately become very popular. After much discussion, however, he decided to establish a senior-level

Yeshiva, and is gratified by its great success. "We're confident that, with the energy of the Rebbe MHM, shlita, our Yeshiva will grow and become a beacon of holy light not only for Beitar but for all Yeshivos."

Rabbi L.Y. Ginsberg, who gives a weekly Shiur at the Yeshiva, noted: "There's a wonderful sense of personal connection here and a sense of Shlichus. We conduct special Farbrengens with the local residents, too. This is a Yeshiva that aims to disseminate the wellsprings of Chassidus. As the Rebbe says, intensive and enthusiastic study of Talmud at Tomchei Tmimim is itself integral to spreading Chassidus. The students here are utterly devoted to the Rebbe MHM, shlita, and they give Chabad an excellent reputation. The way this Yeshiva is organized is a recipe for great success. After all, the Rebbe has asked that every town have its own Yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim. Surely, Beitar, too, deserves a Chabad Yeshiva of its own."

For next school year, starting Rosh Chodesh Ellul, says Reb D'niel Goldberg, the Yeshiva plans to have all three levels of lectures customary at senior Yeshivos. Although that will expand the Yeshiva's size, its special Shlichus flavor and warm personal touch will be retained unchanged.

For Reb D'niel, this yeshiva provides a sense of completion. Over 30 years ago, as a young American

"The education here is to instill Yiras Shomayim, to study Torah with enthusiasm, with particular interest in Moshiach and Geula. Eventually this spirit should radiate to the entire environment."

students at Yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim in Kfar Chabad, he imbibed the Chassidic spirit. Now he feels privileged to participate in launching a new an innovative Tomchei Tmimim Yeshiva.

"We came to Beitar Illit a year and a half ago, after getting a special answer in the Igros Kodesh about moving here. The Rebbe's letter emphasized the need to focus on education, which is why we decided to open the Yeshiva. One of the Rebbe's personal letters to me in the past defined my role as being 'to influence the environment.' By establishing this Yeshiva with such an outstanding faculty, I feel I'm fulfilling

the Rebbe's directive."

Reb D'niel notes the Yeshiva's extraordinary investment in its high quality faculty. Most senior-level Yeshivos don't have such a large faculty. He also notes the special emphasis on excellent material conditions for the students, which contributes greatly to enhancing the Yeshiva's academic and religious standards and atmosphere. For example, the dormitory is probably the best of any Chabad Yeshiva in Israel. The delicious and varied menus are cooked by professional cooks, with healthy food and careful attention to any special dietary needs of individual students. "Every student here is treated like an individual," he is proud to say.

Soon, says Reb D'niel, will be the first Yahrtzeit of his father, Reb Shlomo Zalman ben Eliyahu Halevi, on 7 Adar I. "One of the last things he told me was that complaining about problems is never constructive. Rather, he said, do something about it!"

Indeed, that is exactly what Reb D'niel is doing. "I believe the Yeshiva will inevitably expand and become the vanguard for all Chabad Yeshivos. Locally, it will enhance the reputation of Chabad and draw many Jews in Beitar closer to the light of Chassidus, thus preparing our town to greet Moshiach."

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