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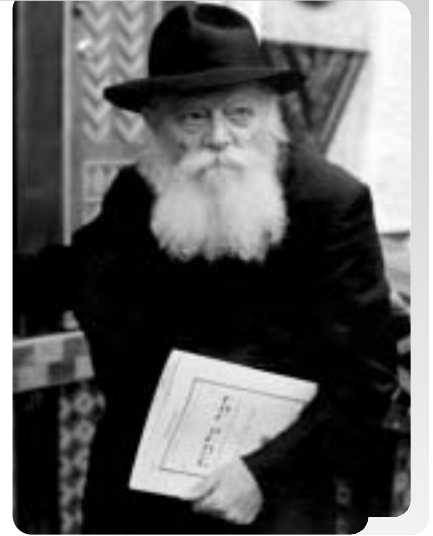
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WHY DO BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO WICKED PEOPLE?

SICHA OF THE REBBE MH" M. FROM BIURIM B'IGERES HA'T'SHUVA
TRANSLATED BY BORUCH MERKUR



(Continued from last week.)

7. The explanation is that with the words, “And that is [the meaning of] what the Sages said, etc.,” the Alter Rebbe comes mainly (not to elucidate the Mishna in Avos, but) to negate the difficult that would otherwise be inferred from that which he said earlier in *Igeres HaT’shuva*:

The Exile comes about “on account of our sins,” and the entire duration before the Redemption arrives testifies to the fact that we have yet to correct these sins. According to what was explained earlier – that in the time of Exile, the sinners and transgressors among the Jewish people receive vitality from the palaces of the Other Side with greater strength and greater might, “he takes a portion at the head” – it follows logically that “on account of our sins” should bring about tremendous material prosperity. Why then do we see in actuality that in the time of Exile the material prosperity is much less than in the time of the Temple?

On this [quandary] the Alter Rebbe says, “And that is [the meaning of] what the Sages said, etc.” – that “in our hands,” “meaning in the time of Exile, after the destruction [of the Holy Temple],” there is not the tranquility of the wicked. The reason for this, however, we are not privy to. (Accordingly we can connect both meanings [brought in Rabbeinu Ovadya Bart’nura]: It is not known to us why we don’t have the tranquility of the wicked.) Nevertheless, thus say the Sages – that presently there is not the concept of the tranquility of the wicked. And with regard to the apparent contradiction to what is explained in *Igeres HaT’shuva* from the fact that we see in actuality that in these times there is not tremendous material prosperity, this fact has already been noted by the Sages – that we don’t have the tranquility of the wicked.

Previously the Alter Rebbe mentioned that, after they

[i.e., the wicked] caused through their deeds the esoteric principle of the Exile of the Divine presence, a wicked person would in fact take a portion at the head (which means (as mentioned above in Section 4) that so it is **in actuality**, and as he previously mentioned (in Chapter 4 [of *Igeres HaT’shuva*]), “they experience longevity in their days and years with pleasantness”). This, however, contradicts the saying of the Mishna, as well as that which we plainly see – that in present times there is not the tranquility of the wicked. A possible resolution (similar to the explanation of Rabbeinu Ovadya Bart’nura) is that nowadays people are not so wicked, and man has free will, etc., and therefore, on account of the good deeds that exist even in the wicked, he receives **also** from the palaces of holiness, etc. Thus, “[a wicked person] does not have, etc., tranquility, etc.” (and this is a possible explanation for the precise choice of words, “[he does not have] **tranquility**” (just good, as in, “Yaakov wished to settle in tranquility”), but he does have some good). And this fact [that the wicked person does not have tranquility] is as mentioned above – that, also according to the explanation of *Igeres HaT’shuva*, “We don’t have [it] in our hands,” meaning that it is not understood.

[At this point, the remainder of this section (7) in the original is *bilti muga*.]

It is, however, not understood: What occurred the moment after the destruction [of the Holy Temple, when there were still truly wicked people]? Why would there not then have been the concept of “he takes a portion at the head”?

We cannot answer that literally at the time of the destruction there were no truly wicked people, since then there would not have been the destruction; the measure of evil in the world would not have reached the measure that

would validate such intense retribution.

We can answer this with two explanations:

1) From the fact that there was **“Pour out Your wrath upon the wood, etc.”** [i.e., upon the structure of the Holy Temple], this removed one from being considered wicked, as in, “once he is lashed, he is [again considered] your brother” (Makos 23a); the lashes removes the wickedness. So too, at the time of the destruction, which entailed **“Pour out Your wrath upon the wood and upon the stone,”** this removed the concept of wickedness in people. And consequentially, from that point, there could not be the concept of the tranquility of the wicked.

The latter point is reflected in what is stated in “A song to Asaf” [T’hillim Ch. 79], which should have been stated, “A lament of Asaf,” for it is not a [n ostensibly joyous] song. But on account of the fact that then there was an impetus to remove the concept of wickedness [which inspired Asaf to compose the song], we must, therefore, say that also with regard to spiritual matters it is a song, since Asaf certainly was speaking from the perspective of the spiritual state of the Jews. In this sense it is a song: on account of the fact that it expresses the removal of the concept of wickedness from the Jews.

Accordingly it is also understood that which is stated in Midrash (Eicha Rabba; Chapter 1:57) – that the first time the cow mooed immediately after the destruction, one who understood the language of the animals said that the destruction had occurred. And once the cow mooed a second time, he said that “the savior and redeemer of the Jewish people has been born.” For on account of the fact that the concept of destruction removes the concept of wickedness, precisely at that moment there was the advent of “the savior and redeemer of the Jewish people.”

Thus there was not the concept of the tranquility of the wicked even immediately following the destruction, since there were no wicked people then.

2) When is it possible to say that the concept of “he takes a portion at the head” applies? Only with respect to an individual. But with regard to world Jewry, it is not possible to say that “he takes a portion at the head,” that we should receive from the forces of evil. Indeed, “to exchange

them for another nation is impossible.” Regarding the Jewish body at large, rather, we say (Yeshayahu 60:21), “Your nation is entirely [composed of] the righteous,” and the collective influence must [therefore] be received from holiness. Only with regard to individuals is influence directed to each person according to his deeds. Whereas with regard to the entire Jewish body there cannot be “he takes a portion at the head,” and thus there is no concept of the tranquility of the wicked.

8. In light of the above we can also understand how the saying of the Sages is elucidated specifically according to what is explained here in *Igeres HaT’shuva* (see above Section 4):

At the time of the destruction, which entailed “Pour out Your wrath upon the wood and upon the stone,” this removed the concept of wickedness in people. And consequentially, from that point, there could not be the tranquility of the wicked.

According to the (second) approach of Rabbeinu Ovadya Bart’nura – that “we do not have the tranquility which G-d commonly bestows upon the wicked in order to expel them from the World to Come” – there is the following difficulty (as the Tos’fos Yom Tov points out there): “It is an obvious fact that ‘we do not have in our hands the tranquility’; we are the downtrodden ones of the Exile!” So “what is Rebbi Yanai coming to teach us and what does he mean by it?” However, according to that which is explained in *Igeres HaT’shuva*, it is understood what he means by it. For if not for that saying [of the Sages] it could be considered by the Jews as a book [to be accepted merely by] faith:

Since one knows that in the time of Exile we can receive vitality from the palaces of the Other Side, which is the only explanation why in the time of Exile there can also be those who are punishable by soul excision and death yet still live long days, and on account

of that fact it should follow that a sinner must receive his influence with greater strength and greater might – this begs the question: Why is that he sees in actuality that it is not so? To preempt this quandary, Rebbi Yanai informs us that “We don’t have in our hands, not the tranquility of the wicked and etc.,” as mentioned above.

“In the time of Exile, after the destruction”: A possible explanation for the apparent redundancy is that it comes to negate the notion that this would apply to the exile of the Ten Tribes, the exile of Y’chanya, and the like. For the entire time that the Holy Temple exists, the influence is emitted from the Holy of Holies, etc. See *Tanya*, end of the first book.



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November 17, 1949

סוכר דאסי :
 יוסף א. מינטז

Mr. Sam Kramer
 122 East 42 St.
 New York, N.Y.

My dear Mr. Kramer :

By special messenger I returned to you the films which you kindly sent us for the purpose of having it copied. I hope you received it meanwhile, and I want to thank you again for having given us this opportunity.

I assumed that you would be interested in having a copy of the film of the naturalization proceedings, and I ordered a copy for you. However since it may take some time till it will be ready, I added our own copy to the other films sent to you by messenger. I hope you will enjoy seeing it meanwhile.

May I again take this opportunity to thank you for your generous efforts in carrying out the naturalization of my venerable father in law, Rabbi Joseph I. Schneerschn, shelitoh, on behalf of the entire family and in my own behalf.

With best personal regards and in the hope that all that you are doing will be rewarded manifold in terms of inner satisfaction and blessing, I am

Sincerely yours,

M. Schneerson
 Rabbi Mendel Schneerson

MS:g

P.S. I just heard from the photographer that in order to finish the copy of the film of the naturalization proceedings, he needs our own copy. I therefore shall take the liberty to send a messenger to you for it a few days after the Melaveh Malkeh.

SPREADING TORAH TO JEWS OF ALL AGES

BY SHAI GEFEN

*25 years ago the Rebbe announced the establishment of a network of kollels to be named Tiferes Z'keinim Levi Yitzchok. Since that time, hundreds of kollels for seniors have been established around the world. * In honor of the yahrtzait of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneersohn on 20 Av, we present this article about the network of kollelim established in his memory.*

THE REBBE HONORED HIS FATHER

Twenty-five years have passed since the founding of the network of kollels called Tiferes Z'keinim – Levi Yitzchok, named after the Rebbe's father, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneersohn. The Rebbe suggested the founding of these kollelim, in honor of the memory of the Rebbe's father, at the Chaf Av farbrengen 5740 (1980). The Rebbe said that since the kollelim would be named after his father, he had the obligation and privilege of personally participating in their founding and would contribute 100

shekel from a special fund. The Rebbe devoted sichos and gave detailed answers in regard to this project.

THE MAN WHO CAME TO HIS SENSES

The kollel network was officially started in 5740 (1980), but the idea of a network of kollelim for retirees was mentioned by the Rebbe back in 5729 (1969). In 5729, Rabbi Yisroel Leibov a"h, chairman of Tzach, received a letter from Rabbi Chadakov, saying:

"I remind you of what was said when you were here regarding the

project of founding shiurim during the daytime for those who are unemployed (receiving a pension, etc.). Please let me know if anything was done in this regard, and [if yes] what was done."

Four days after the Rebbe suggested the establishment of the kollelim, the Rebbe wrote, "I emphasized that my suggestion is only general, since it has to be done in a way that the **participants** would want it. 2) And my intention is that the elderly who until now have not been learning regularly, shall have regular times to study every day (the intent is not to add





mosdos whose purpose is only a means to the end). 3) Do you know how many seniors, and in this neighborhood too, ...wander about for hours and don't know how to fill their time?"

In the first sicha that the Rebbe said about founding a kollel, the Rebbe gave a wonderful explanation about how the name "Tiferes Z'keinim - Levi Yitzchok" is particularly connected with the inyan of Torah study. In addition,



the Rebbe offered a way of learning in this kollel and asked to connect this with the inyan of tz'daka, since, "In our times, the world is shaking in a way that in the past they did not imagine."

The Rebbe even gave three suggestions about how to run the kollel: First, to connect the learning with one of the three t'fillos. Namely, to learn before or after davening. Second, to put a pushka on the table where they learn, to remind the people to give tz'daka every day. Third, to establish a gemach by the participants of the kollel.

In this sicha, the Rebbe asked that a kollel like this be founded for women, for they are also obligated to learn Torah.

The Rebbe not only wanted to honor his father's memory by naming the kollelim after his father, but felt it his obligation and privilege to participate monetarily. Thus, the Rebbe said on Chaf Av 5740:

"...to those who will (only) give the name "Tiferes Z'keinim" I will give 18 shekel (because this is the least amount of money I think each participant should give). As for those who add "Levi Yitzchok" – I personally have the obligation (and privilege) in this, and will give from a special fund, the sum of 100 shekel."

The Rebbe added that the contributions towards all the kollelim would come from the "Levi Yitzchok Fund," which the Rebbe had established in 5724 (1964).

At the farbrengen on Shabbos Parshas Toldos, Shabbos Mevarchim Kislev 5741 (1981), a few months after the kollelim were founded, the Rebbe asked for more kollelim and referred to the complaint that some of the elderly are not "all there."

The Rebbe said that shluchim visited a senior citizens home on Sukkos and a bachur entered the room holding a lulav and esrog. He innocently went over to one of the seniors not knowing that this man was considered senile. However, the man woke up out of his stupor and instantly recognized everything going on around him. He himself recited the bracha without any help.

The Rebbe added and explained that as soon as the bachur entered the room with the lulav and esrog, the man's memories of his youth were aroused and this enabled him to get out of his stupor!

The doctors standing there were astounded to see this in an old man who for months hadn't shown any awareness of his surroundings. Everything they had tried had failed. Without the bachur saying anything, just entering with the lulav and esrog, he roused the man to recognize his surroundings!

Incredibly, a bachur from Australia related afterwards that this story happened to him just that year but he hadn't written to the Rebbe about it!

As soon as the bachur entered the room with the lulav and esrog, the man's memories of his youth were aroused and this enabled him to get out of his stupor!

THE AMAZING STORY BEHIND THE LEVI YITZCHOK FUND

One of the mosdos that the Rebbe founded in his father's name was "Keren Levi Yitzchok." It was founded in 5724 (1964), twenty years after his father's passing. At the 20 Av farbrengen the Rebbe explained why he had started the fund:

I received a letter from a woman who was in great financial straits. She was owed a large sum of money, which she suddenly received after many years. The woman sent me the money, stating that since it had been some years that she managed without this money, and the money had arrived unexpectedly, she wanted it to go to tz'daka. This was with her husband's consent.

The Rebbe said: The check was for \$5000 and this is from an American woman, and her husband is also American (a country where money is considered important and the dollar is supreme). This family, bli ayin ha'ra, has sons and daughters who work hard for their parnasa, and she was sure, without any doubt, that the reason why she was suddenly paid this debt of \$5000 was only for her to dedicate it completely to Hashem, leaving nothing for herself. She did not want to keep half for herself and give half away. She didn't even want to take off some money for the chinuch of her sons and daughters for their Jewish studies but happily gave it all to Hashem.

The woman insisted that it be done anonymously and said that a receipt should not be sent to her so the one signing it would not know who gave the money, and that it should not be publicized. At this farbrengen, the Rebbe said people should learn from this righteous woman.

One of the purposes of the fund, as the Rebbe explained, is to support limudei kodesh teachers, since the secular studies teachers receive higher salaries and are paid on time. The limudei kodesh teachers' salaries are often delayed. A situation is created, says the Rebbe, in which the students feel that the secular studies teachers are more important and the consequences in the limudei kodesh department are serious. Therefore, the first thing to do is create parity, and the fund includes a gemach to help limudei kodesh teachers to sustain their parnasa.

Since the founding of the fund, the Rebbe spoke about it every year. In 5740, when the Rebbe founded the Kollelim Tiferes Z'keinim, he added that the fund would support those who opened a new kollel.

In 5733, the Rebbe spoke fervently about opening a special kollel for five men who were very sharp in Nigleh and five men who were possessed of great knowledge, and the same number in Chassidus. A total of twenty men, who would sit and learn, and not have to rely on anyone, being paid from the fund three times more than the usual pay, in the hopes of building up the kollel.

On Shabbos Parshas Yisro 5741, the Rebbe complained that despite the commotion he had made about opening kollelim, it hadn't happened. The Rebbe said he was not referring to the pain he felt over this but wanted practical results, i.e., that the idea of "Tiferes Z'keinim" and "Tiferes Nashim" had to be spread, and all those who were going to travel should spread the word.

In a special announcement that was published by Aguch in Eretz Yisroel following the Rebbe's sicha, all of Anash were asked, "to establish Tiferes Z'keinim and Tiferes Nashim in places where they were not yet established, and reports should be sent to the Rebbe to inform him of their establishment."

SURPRISE YECHIDUS

Since then, hundreds of kollelim have been founded for seniors around the world and this has gone beyond Chabad. There is hardly a shliach today who doesn't have a Kollel Tiferes Z'keinim Levi Yitzchok, thus fulfilling the Rebbe's directive and giving the Rebbe nachas.



Rabbi Levi Yitzchok, the Rebbe's father

The Rebbe delivered sichos to students of the Kollel Tiferes Z'keinim Levi Yitzchok in New York. Twice a year, there were gatherings, with the Rebbe's participation, for those who learned in the kollelim. Often, the seniors heard a special sicha from the Rebbe.

Rabbi Menachem Gerlitzky, director of this kollel, relates, "The kollel stepped into high gear in

5743 (1983), when I received the Rebbe's bracha for the idea of my running the kollel. The first massive project was the establishment of shiurim for the elderly throughout New York. We organized about fifty shiurim all over, in senior citizen homes and community centers for the elderly, hospitals, etc.

"We also organized mitvzaim for senior citizen homes all around New York, such as shofar blowing on Rosh HaShana, the four minim on Sukkos, as well as Mivtza Chanuka and Purim."

From what age can someone join the Kollel Tiferes Z'keinim?

"The Rebbe said in a sicha that it begins from age 40!"

Since the founding of the kollel, the Rebbe often participated in the kinusim. What can you tell us about that?

"It was always exciting when the Rebbe himself participated in these kinusim, which took place twice a year, on Chanuka and around 20 Av. Most times the Rebbe said a sicha to the kollel members, sichos that you can find in the sifrei Hisvaaduyos.



She was sure, without any doubt, that the reason why she was suddenly paid this debt of \$5000 was only for her to dedicate it completely to Hashem, leaving nothing for herself.

“There were times that the Rebbe went to the Ohel the day we made the kinus, and the Rebbe would either give me dollars directly or have the secretaries give me the dollars for me to distribute, in the Rebbe’s name, to the kollel members.”

Did you know when the Rebbe planned on speaking to the kollel members?

“I always gave the Rebbe the wording of the flyer and the Rebbe would respond through the secretaries or would write on the flyer if he planned on saying a sicha. I would, therefore, write the flyer ambiguously. I would write 3:15 Mincha – the Rebbe shlita. Either that could mean Mincha with the Rebbe or that after Mincha the Rebbe would say a sicha. There were times that the Rebbe responded to this nusach, but there was also a time when the Rebbe circled his name and wrote next to it, “I will not necessarily speak.” In other words, even if the Rebbe was there for Mincha, he would not necessarily say a sicha.

“On another occasion, for a kinus that was going to take place before Shavuos, the Rebbe wrote, **“As is widely known from previous years, before Shavuos we visit the gravesite, and you should invite appropriate speakers. Contained herein to distribute to the aforementioned, to each one sh’yichyu, shlichus mitzva – for Tz’daka.**

Rabbi Gerlitzky tells a special story that took place 17 years ago in 5747 (1987):

“For the kinus that took place on 16 Av 5747, we knew the Rebbe wouldn’t participate, since the Rebbe would be going to the Ohel that day. That day, I sat in the office of the kollel, and at 10:30, I got an urgent call from Rabbi Groner to come to 770



Rabbi Menachem Gerlitzky helping seniors put on t’fillin

immediately. When I arrived there, Rabbi Groner told me that the Rebbe wanted to see me.

“After about five minutes, which I used to prepare to the best of my ability, I got permission to enter the Lower Gan Eden. All the secretaries left and I remained alone facing the Rebbe. The Rebbe stood in the doorway of his room and said:

Give each of the elderly men and women (separately) a dollar in my name. Tell them that I am going today to the gravesite of the Rebbe, my father-in-law, and I will mention them and their households for great and outstanding success. And that from the kinus, they should have long days and good years and should go from strength to strength until, “We shall be seen before Elokim in Tziyon,” with the true and complete Redemption.

“The Rebbe entered his room and took out a bundle of dollars and said to me:

You will surely give a report of

the kinus.

“When the Rebbe spoke to me I stood stock still in fear and barely managed to absorb anything the Rebbe said. Fortunately, Rabbi Groner could hear what was said and he helped me write it up afterwards. Later on I gave it in to the Rebbe who edited it.”

JOINT KINUS FOR CHILDREN OF TZIVOS HASHEM AND THE KOLLEL MEMBERS

Can you tell us about the sichos that were said to the seniors?

“It was amazing to see how the Rebbe spoke to them in their language and explained how aging is not only not a deficiency but something advantageous. For example, at the kinus that took place on Chanuka 5749 (1989), the Rebbe said, **‘As far as those gathered here – Jews who have reached the age of zikna – maturity of years does not have to bring on**

THE LEVI YITZCHOK LIBRARY

One of the important Torah libraries in Crown Heights is the Levi Yitzchok Library founded by Tzach of New York in 5733 (1973). The Rebbe was asked for his permission to name it after his father.

In Rabbi Sossover's diary he wrote that at the farbrengen of 20 Av 5732 (1972), Rabbi Dovid Raskin approached the Rebbe with the philanthropist who donated the library and gave a note to the Rebbe. The Rebbe read it and told them something.

This library received special attention from the Rebbe, who constantly inquired about many details and even gave advice concerning it. Among the Rebbe's instructions was to open a special section for teachers so that teachers and counselors could avail themselves of books on chinuch.

As far as the location of the library and its layout, the Rebbe wrote in a note to Rabbi Raskin that the place "should be clean and organized, suited for pleasant reading."

Many don't know that the library catalog was periodically submitted to the Rebbe and the Rebbe reviewed it and expressed his opinion about the books, which were lacking and which ought to be obtained and which didn't belong in the library. The Rebbe asked that they get a computer to catalog the books. Remember, this was at a time when computers were not a regular feature at libraries.

This is the only library in the world that the Rebbe agreed to have named after his father. The Rebbe even donated his personal Shas to the library, which had been in his room and which he had learned from for decades.

The Rebbe told a certain prominent individual whom he spoke to about the library that the Levi Yitzchok Library is one of the places he could go to without prior invitation.

weakness, G-d forbid. On the contrary, since there was another year of mitzvos and a plethora of Jewish activities and all good things, the strength of the previous year and two years ago and many years ago does not attain the strength you have now. You have accumulated numerous good and holy things, spiritual strength, and then also physical strength, which causes you to increase even more in matters of Judaism, Torah study and mitzva fulfillment, whether in regard to yourself or in regard to your influence over others."

In 5746 (1986), there was a joint and unusual kinus for the children of Tzivos Hashem and the seniors in 770. The Rebbe addressed both groups in the audience in a manner appropriate for each of them, with a practical lesson for each group. The Rebbe spoke about the significance of the special encounter and explained that the children had the opportunity to fulfill a mitzva of the Torah to honor the elderly.

The Rebbe told the seniors that they had the opportunity to impart their wisdom and personal experience to the children for although their physical strength wasn't what it was ten years previously, they had more chayus, chochma, and a deeper understanding because they had aged ten years.

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HE ALONE DOES GREAT WONDERS

BY MENDEL TZFASMAN

Following “Didan Natzach” of the s’farim on 5 Teives 5747 there were seven days of rejoicing. Chassidim called these seven days “the seven days of feasting.” Throughout that week, the Rebbe said a sicha every night, after which there was dancing and farbrenging.

Among those farbrenging was Rabbi J.J. Hecht a”h. This is the marvelous story he told:

It was 1942 when World War II entered a critical stage. The American government realized they couldn’t remain aloof any longer and they decided to enter the war. The American army numbered millions of soldiers at the time but they called up hundreds of thousands more young men.

I was a talmid in Tomchei T’mimim-770. The impending war didn’t interest me or my friends. We lived in heaven on earth, in the Rebbe’s yeshiva. Then one fine day, a letter arrived at my parents’ house in an official envelope from the United States government. I was drafted.

I was at the end of my teen years, healthy and strong and there was no way the army would reject me. Fleeing or trying to offer excuses were out of the question. The tough American laws gave no way out.

I went to the Rebbe Rayatz and told him the problem. The Rebbe

looked at me soothingly, smiled broadly, and said I had to go to the draft office. He armed me with wonderful brachos.

When I got to the draft office, I was told to enter the examining room and get undressed. A battery of doctors sat at tables placed one behind the other. Their job was to determine whether a boy was eligible for the army or not.

I went from doctor to doctor. One examined my eyes, another my hearing, a third my pulse, etc. All of them declared I was fit for the U.S. army.

My heart skipped a beat. The last doctor I had to see was a psychiatrist. I didn’t know how to

lie and so there I sat, facing a stern doctor. I thought to myself, nu, being clever is not always an advantage!

The psychiatrist nodded in satisfaction at the boy sitting opposite him. It seemed there was no hope of avoiding the army.

The psychiatrist’s questions brought me back to attention.

“Where are you studying?”

“In Yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim Lubavitch, 770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, New York,” I answered proudly.

“What do you study there in yeshiva?”

“Talmud, Bible, Jewish



Rabbi J.J. Hecht standing near the Rebbe during the Lag B'Omer parade of 5726

Orthodox Rules (Halacha),
Chassidic Philosophy.”

“What are your hours?”

“7:30 a.m. until 9:30 p.m.,” I
answered.

“How are you socially? Do you
have friends? Do people listen to
you?”

“Yes.”

The doctor looked pleased.

“Do you have girlfriends?”

“What? Girlfriends? Who me? A
yeshiva student? Of course not!”

The doctor looked at me
compassionately and asked, “Do
you go to the movies with your
friends?”

“Feh! Movies?! A yeshiva
bachur? Is that what you suspect
me of?”

*The doctor looked at
me compassionately
and asked, “Do you
go to the movies with
your friends?”
“Feh! Movies?! A
yeshiva bachur? Is
that what you suspect
me of?”*

“Really? Are you serious? A nice
looking fellow like you, in the
prime of your life has no
girlfriends? And you don’t go to the

movies with your friends?”

“You are insulting me, doctor,
by suggesting that I, a bachur in
Tomchei T’mimim would do such
things?”

The doctor’s look changed.

“You know what? You are
crazy!” he screamed. “Go home!”

I was thrilled. I quickly went
back “home” to 770 before he
would change his mind. The first
thing I did was inform the Rebbe
Rayatz of the good news.

When I finished telling the
Rebbe what had happened, the
Rebbe smiled and said, “To the
One Who does wonders’ – Hashem
does many wonders, but ‘great
wonders – only He alone’ – the
greatness of the wonders is known
only to Him.”

ב"ה

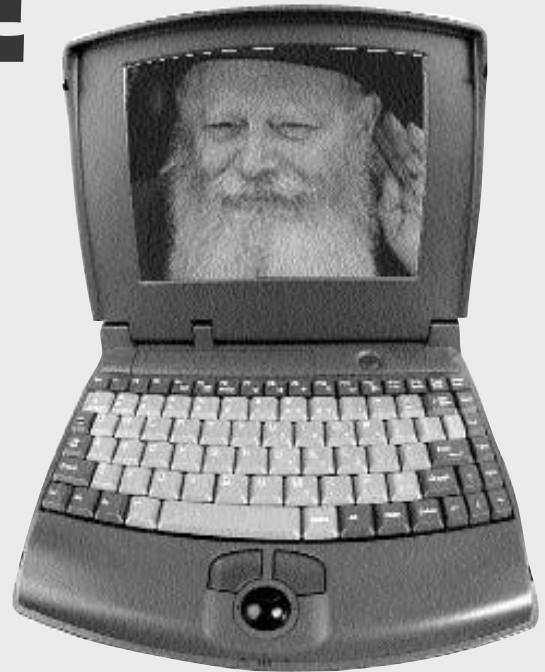
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GENEVA ACCORDING TO CHABAD

BY CHANIE NUSSBAUM

*When a certain Lubavitcher wanted to go on shlichus to Geneva, Switzerland, the Rebbe wrote him, “a difficult country...why get involved?” * Mrs. Peshy Pevsner and her husband Rabbi Menachem Mendel went on shlichus to Geneva and have accomplished a lot in sixteen years. * It’s fascinating to hear about their work in a city that has become synonymous with international summits, and in which every project must be planned six months in advance.*

A DIFFICULT COUNTRY

Geneva. An international city whose name has become synonymous with summits, meetings, and worldwide initiatives reported in the news. In Geneva, agreements are signed and deals closed.

However, Geneva in everyday life is a valley in Switzerland in which you rarely see snow, as opposed to most European cities and towns. The predominant language is French and not German, as in Zurich, which is about three hours away.

Despite Geneva’s popularity, it’s

interesting to learn that years ago, when a Lubavitcher asked for the Rebbe’s *haskama* and *bracha* to go on shlichus there, the Rebbe answered, “A difficult country...why get involved?”

When the Rebbe said a “difficult country,” the challenge is probably enormous and in order to work there you need special *kochos*. Rabbi Pevsner and his wife Peshy got these *kochos* 16 years ago, when they asked about going on shlichus to Geneva. On the note that Rabbi Chadakov gave in to the Rebbe, it said that they asked for a *bracha*. The Rebbe added

to this, “*g’dola, etc.*” (i.e., a *great* blessing) underlining it three times.

Although the Pevsners come from completely different backgrounds – she is American, from the Bogomilsky family in New Jersey, and her husband is from Paris – they have managed to do tremendous work. Today in Geneva there are many more religious *shomer Shabbos* families, more than one would expect and definitely beyond nature!

“In Geneva,” explains Mrs. Pevsner, “there are 5000 Jews, but most of them are liberal-Reform. There is rampant assimilation.” At the beginning of our conversation, Mrs. Pevsner said that we would have to suffice with general stories because the character of the place and the people does not allow for the disclosure of personal stories.

HASHGACHA PRATIS EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

“Geneva is a hard place for *hafatza*,” begins Mrs. Pevsner. “Although the mentality is identical to that in France – people are warm – people are very fearful of looking Jewish. They need to get used to the idea of every new project we do. When then get used to it things go smoothly, but you need lots of *siyata d’Shmaya* to get to that point.

“The paradox is that in Zurich you

also have to announce things six months in advance, to suit the “Yekke” nature of the people, but more religious Jews live there, which makes it a lot easier to accomplish things. This is not the case in Geneva. Due to the differences in language and mentality, we don’t work together with the Chabad house in Zurich.”

How did you start out?

“We began with very focused work out of a little Chabad house, with the emphasis on shiurim. When we arrived here, there was one shiur and we expanded on that. Many others copied us after that. We also did holiday programs on as large a scale as possible.

“In 5753, we moved to a spacious Chabad house that houses the shul. In honor of this, we made a Yom Moshiach on Yud-Tes Kislev. It was a day of activities around the theme of Moshiach. The police closed off the street near the Chabad house and we put up many tents. There were activities for all ages. There were many lectures on Moshiach and Geula. We brought bachurim from the



Rabbi Pevsner in the early days of shlichus

Chabad yeshiva in Brunoy to help us out. There was even a robot that announced Moshiach messages!

“Over the years, the work has expanded and we had to move to a bigger place. We looked for a long time but didn’t find anything suitable. Four years ago, we found a large villa

that seemed just right for us and we made an offer.

“We wrote to the Rebbe and got an answer in the *Igros Kodesh* that said, ‘blessing for buying the place.’ When I came with an offer to buy it, the owner said that the place was already sold to someone who was willing to pay more.

“We couldn’t understand it. After all, we had gotten the Rebbe’s bracha to buy it! But then, as Chassidim and shluchim of the Rebbe, we wrote to the Rebbe about the latest development and asked for a bracha. To tell you the truth, we were pained by the loss because it was really perfect for us.

“A short while later we got a call and were told the building was ours! It turned out that the man who wanted to buy it at a higher price had paid some of it but couldn’t pay the rest. We saw this as the fulfillment of the Rebbe’s bracha times two, for not only did we get the place we wanted, but it was even cheaper than before because the original price was lowered by the amount the other man had



paid! So we profited in all ways and we moved on to a new stage in our hafatza.

“In our new place we started a preschool and a youth club that includes a learning center. When we opened the preschool six years ago, we started with four children. Today, baruch Hashem, we have dozens of children aged a year and a half till six. One of the families that became observant did so thanks to their young son who attended our school. The child changed the entire house!”

What about a school for older children?

“That’s a story unto itself. We opened a school a year and a half ago. Most schools add a class every year, but we opened a school for all the grades, from first to ninth. We did this because we had to.”

What happened?

“There was one Jewish school in the city that was more Zionistic than religious. After much discussion, the hanhala decided to put a greater emphasis on the secular studies at the expense of the Jewish studies in the hopes that this would increase registration. Then the religious principal was changed for someone else who wasn’t religious.

“The results were the opposite of what they hoped for and they lost students but the hanhala ignored that and went so far as to hire a gentile principal. There was an uproar in the Jewish community. For half a year meetings were held about the appropriate character of the school. When we saw this, we realized that for the future of the youth there had to be a different kind of school.

“Each time we wrote to the Rebbe, we got an answer about chinuch of children. We did our best to improve the Jewish chinuch in the school but had minimal influence. That’s when we decided to open another school that would provide a proper chinuch



The new school

for grades 1-9.

“This year we added grade ten and it wasn’t at all simple but we had the Rebbe’s brachos every step of the way.”

It’s not easy to start a school with all the grades!

“Definitely not! Within three months, we had put together a complete school. It wasn’t easy! As expected, opening the school created a furor in the official community. There were many difficulties, but after writing to the Rebbe, things began to move quickly and even government permits came more easily than anticipated.

“By hashgacha pratis, the same man from whom we bought the building for the Chai Center, was previously a principal of a large school and he came to us like an angel from heaven. He helped my husband - and continues to do so even now - in developing the secular curriculum of the school and availing us of his vast experience.

“Baruch Hashem we see miracles at the school every day. In the school’s second year, the number of students doubled.

“The staff is comprised partially of

Lubavitcher girls from Paris who come to teach, but they change every year. This year we brought girls from Eretz Yisroel who speak French (we would really like to bring another family, among other things, because it is hard to have the staff change every year).”

WHEN A JEW IN GENEVA GETS USED TO IT

I wondered how hafatza is done in a city that is so proper that everything has to be arranged ahead of time and people are set in their ways. I asked Mrs. Pevsner about this, about what they did about a public menorah, for example.

“We have seen amazing hashgacha pratis in this. The greatest opposition was from the official community. The issue of a public menorah reached the Minister of Justice, whom my husband met. The minister approved the public menorah on the basis of a federal law, which states that a citizen cannot be prevented from fulfilling the dictates of his religion.

“We had a regular donor who covered most of our expenses. The first year that we put up a public menorah, he told my husband that he wouldn’t be donating any more

money because he wasn't accustomed to such activities and did not accept such public displays.

"Of course, my husband wrote to the Rebbe about this. The night of the menora lighting a Jew from London was present and he was very impressed. The next day the secretary told my husband there was a Jew outside the office waiting to meet him. When he came in, he said he was greatly impressed by the lighting, which he was experiencing for the first time in his life. He decided to contribute a very large sum of money to the Chabad house.

"We were amazed to see that the amount he decided to give was the same amount of money that the previous donor had given, and so our work was not adversely affected for

even a month."

Just as public menora lightings were a shock for the Jewish residents of Geneva, Sukkos was just as surprising to them.

"People here were unfamiliar with the concept of the mobile sukka or a public sukka. At the same time though, they were afraid to build a sukka near their house because it would announce the fact that they were Jewish. When we first arrived in Geneva, there was one sukka in the center of the city and people would go there to recite a bracha and would continue the meal at home. In order to eat there, my husband had to walk half an hour each way. If it was raining, he had to eat quickly. Today, baruch Hashem, there are three public sukkos and dozens more near people's

homes."

The same thing happened when a club was started for Jewish youth.

"When we started shiurim at the Chabad house for young people, other communities tried copying us but after half a year they stopped due to the lack of interest.

"With us, baruch Hashem, with the Rebbe's brachos, the club is always busy. We see clearly how every Jewish program peters out until Chabad comes and is successful with the Rebbe's kochos.

"In general, when the Jews of Geneva get used to something, it's on a large scale..."

What do you mean?

"I am speaking relative to the



The Chabad house in Geneva

situation when we first arrived in Geneva. At that time, there was only one shiur in the city. One of the first things we did was to start a series of classes. Today, everybody can see the enormous difference between the Jewish Geneva of old, and what we have now.

“This is also true as far as life here as Chassidim. When we came, it was very hard to obtain kosher food. We knew there had been a small store that sold kosher food but it had closed due to lack of demand.

“Today, not far from us, on the border with France (we live ten minutes away from the French border), two kosher food stores opened and they are both busy. The Jews here are not only interested in kosher meat but have also begun asking for chalav Yisroel, a concept that was completely foreign in the past.”

YEMOS HA'MOSHIACH IN GENEVA

“There is a Jew here who has lived here for many years. We tried to be mekarev him but he did not want to put on t'fillin. He claimed that in his town they didn't follow this 'custom,'



Moshiach Day in Geneva

and that his father didn't do it. All our explanations about t'fillin not being a custom but an obligation for every male Jew fell on deaf ears.

“Hashem helped, and my husband managed to find a Jew from the same town who explained to the man that indeed, t'fillin were worn in that town. The reason he never saw it was

because his father had only gone to shul on Shabbos and Yom Tov, when t'fillin are not worn! The man accepted this, rolled up his sleeve and began putting on t'fillin.”

* * *

“Times have changed and whereas once we had to fight to get a public menora, today we are called from the municipality long before Chanuka to verify the exact date and to arrange the permits, security, etc. This event is considered one of the important events in the city, even to gentiles.”

Moshiach tzaiten!

“Definitely! Each time we were unsure about a particular project, we wrote to the Rebbe and were always answered with a bracha that we saw fulfilled. There were times we did not have money for certain projects and we wrote to the Rebbe and the answer was: begin doing and the money will follow. And that's what happened.

“Many people come to the Chabad house and write to the Rebbe about their problems in health, parnasa, and for children, and have seen open miracles. The Chabad house is a



Kibbutz galuyos in the preschool



Jewish chinuch in the preschool



Rabbi Shear Yashuv Cohen visits.



Rabbi Yisroel Meir Lau visits.



Rabbi Shlomo Amar visits.



Rabbi Hillel Pevsner visits.

center for Jews who want to turn to the Rebbe and they see miracles through the *Igros Kodesh*. In Geneva, this is even more of a miracle!

“Just yesterday, my husband found an old paper that had written on it how many mezuzos the Jews here bought in the last decade. The number was 8000! That is quite an impressive number for a community that numbers 5000 Jews, most of whom are liberal and Reform. Many Jews have even bought t’fillin in recent years.”

THE SHLUCHA’S WORK

I asked Mrs. Pevsner to tell us about the activities she herself organizes.

“I often give shiurim to women, especially to kallos. There are couples who were not halachically married and after I learn with the wife, they decide to have a chuppa.”

Is there a mikva?

“There is a mikva in the Sefardi shul, but it is very old. We recently built a new, beautiful mikva according to Chabad custom. At first, it was designated for men because, as I said, there was a women’s mikva already. However, women asked that this

mikva be available to them.

“Baruch Hashem, mikva usage has increased and I only recently learned that a certain family did not use the mikva since their wedding, but since the new mikva opened they decided to use it regularly.”

In the last six years, Mrs. Pevsner has been running a preschool.

“It’s growing. As I already told you, we started with six children and now we have dozens of children in four classes, from the age of a year and a half to the age of six. Thanks to the preschool, many families have become religious.

“But my top priority is to help my husband whether in running the school, or the Chabad house programs, which include both the regular and seasonal activities. Our children, of course, are top of the list.”

The Pevsners have, *kein ayin ha’ra*, eight children. My question is, what sort of chinuch do they get in Geneva?

“Our oldest daughter attends the Sinai school in Paris. The other children attend the schools we opened here. Boruch Hashem, we have Yiddishe, Chassidishe nachas.”

LEARNING THE LOCAL LANGUAGE

“There are still difficulties. I had to learn the local language from my children (at home we spoke only in Yiddish). French was completely foreign to me. Today though, after sixteen years, I am fluent.

“Baruch Hashem and with the Rebbe’s brachos, we look only at the positive. In an international place like Geneva, there is a lot of positive feedback. Jews come here from all over the world and it is always moving to hear them praise their local shliach, and what’s most important – hearing their deep admiration for the Rebbe who did not forget them and sent them his shluchim.”

IN THE SHADOW OF FOUR NESIIM

BY RABBI SCHNEUR ZALMAN CHANIN

*He was born with the blessing of the Tzemach Tzedek, was ShaDaR of the Rebbe Maharash, received ordination from the Rogatchover Gaon, and served as rav by instruction of the Rebbe Rashab and the Rebbe Rayatz. * A chapter about the Gaon and Chassid, Rabbi Yehoshua Nimotin, who would become the father-in-law of R' Chaikel Chanin.*

CHAPTER 4 (CONT.):

A MITIGATED DECREE

The communists sought to extinguish Judaism. Aware of the tremendous influence of the rabbanim on their communities, they began expelling them from their towns. They knew that R' Yehoshua was very influential and that he wasn't afraid of them at all. So they ordered him to leave for Siberia.

Naturally, the community was in shock and they feared for their rav, who was beloved to all. The city of Vitebsk was in turmoil. The heads of the community tried various means to get the decree annulled, but they failed.

When they told my great-grandfather about the decree, that there was no way out, he suggested

that he himself go to the head of the NKVD, a Jew who had left Yiddishkeit and hated Torah scholars. My great-grandfather trusted that Hashem would help him, and he would convince the man not to send him to Siberia but to allow him to travel to his children in Leningrad.

Amazingly, R' Yehoshua was able to meet with the head NKVD man. As soon as R' Yehoshua entered the office, the man stood up and asked him to sit down. Apparently, the fear of G-d had fallen upon him and he was completely self-effacing to R' Yehoshua.

R' Yehoshua, who was gifted with the ability to convince others, spoke movingly to him and said that at his advanced age he was no danger to the government. He melted the heart of stone of the NKVD head, who gave

him permission to move to Leningrad. He lived there for the rest of his days.

In those days, the communists were powerful and there was a real danger in having holy writings. Since R' Yehoshua was greatly esteemed by the Jews of the place, and they figured that the government agents would not search him because of his advanced age and his position, someone gave him some letters from the Charson g'niza.

Knowing how the Rebbe Rayatz valued these writings, my great-grandfather, as a loyal Chassid, decided to send the letters to him. He somehow managed to send them to the Rebbe, who was in Poland.

In a letter of thanks dated 19 Nissan 5695, the Rebbe wrote:

Many thanks for the good gift, and a request [that you do likewise in the] future. May Hashem lengthen your years and days with goodness and pleasantness, and may you have nachas from your descendents.

SAVING THE MANUSCRIPTS

My great-grandfather's primary occupation was Torah study. When he studied, he made notes in the margins of the s'farim he was learning.

When his son, my grandfather, R' Shmuel (may Hashem avenge his blood), was imprisoned and his family had to leave Leningrad, once again there was danger hovering over his

household. R' Yehoshua feared that the Yevsektzia would do a search of his house and when they would find his s'farim, they would confiscate them or burn them. He was afraid to leave the s'farim in his house, so he took the s'farim, including a Shas and Rambam whose margins were full of notes, and brought them to the central shul in Leningrad. There, in a corner of the cellar, he hid all the s'farim, hoping that one day he would find them and bring them back home.

In the final years of the Bolshevik reign, when the Bolsheviks were no longer as mighty as they used to be, his grandson, R' Refael — son of R' Shmuel — who knew the hiding place, went to speak to the hanhala of the shul. He was given permission to enter and he found nearly the entire Shas Bavli and Yerushalmi. In a number of Gemaras, he also found letters from the Rogatchover Gaon. Somehow managed to take it all to the United States.

Years later, with the fall of the Iron Curtain, I traveled to Russia in 5752 on shlichus from the Rebbe to print the Tanya. When I traveled to Leningrad, I found my great-grandfather's Rambam, Shulchan Aruch Beis Yosef, Shulchan Aruch Admur HaZakein, Zohar, and Tanya in the shul. They had notes written in

Knowing how the Rebbe Rayatz valued these writings, my great-grandfather, as a loyal Chassid, decided to send the letters to him.

them and some of the thoughts that the Rogatchover Gaon had sent him.

Over the years, booksellers have brought me a number of s'farim found in Leningrad, with handwritten notes in them by R' Yehoshua. The booksellers had these s'farim for a long time because they had seen the notes in the margins and knew that the author was a genius, but they didn't know who he was. Who would be interested in these writings? Then one of them saw a periodical that had in it a letter printed from the Rogatchover to my great-grandfather, and the editor's note thanking me for giving them the manuscript.

That's how it was discovered that I was a great-grandson of the genius who wrote the notes, and they brought me some s'farim and

manuscripts they had had for years, including a response from the Rebbe Rashab.

They also brought me a Rambam with notes on the margin. With Hashem's help, I plan to publish the writings that I have.

IN TRYING TIMES

R' Yehoshua died of starvation along with his wife on the 23rd, or 24th of Shevat 1942, during the Nazi siege on Leningrad. Although it was a time of crisis and many bodies were left in the street, since my great-grandfather was a man of stature, Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dvorkin a"h made efforts to bring him to Jewish burial.

Rabbi Dvorkin was sent by the Rebbe Rayatz to Vitebsk in 5682 to learn sh'chita and b'dika from R' Yehoshua. As Rabbi Dvorkin told me, at the time he didn't understand why the Rebbe had sent him to study sh'chita and b'dika from Rabbi Yehoshua Nimotin. However, after World War II, when he was in France, the Rebbe sent him to Ireland to be the rav ha'machshir over the sh'chita there. There were questions about the lungs, because the cows had many lesions and an expert was needed who knew the pertinent laws. Since Rabbi Dvorkin had studied with an expert, he was able to handle all the questions that arose.

The shochet and bodek, R' Boruch Shifrin, and his brother-in-law, R' Michoel Lipsker, are remembered in gratitude for helping Rabbi Dvorkin bury my great-grandfather in his own grave in the Jewish cemetery of Leningrad. Even during those terrible times, he merited to be buried in his own grave next to his wife. Unfortunately, we do not know precisely where they are buried, as the signs have disappeared.

Thus ended the rich life of a great Chassid, a man who served G-d and was a remnant of earlier generations.



WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE HE HAD TO DEAL WITH

During the famous dispute in connection with the disbursement of funds of Kollel Chabad in Yerushalayim and Chevron, the Rebbe Rashab asked my great-grandfather, who was a distinguished rav and a wise person in worldly matters, to travel to Eretz Yisroel to investigate the situation and to try to work things out.

The Rebbe told him that one of the reasons that he wanted him to go was because, “the people of Yerushalayim never saw light in their days.” They never saw a Rebbe, and they don’t understand what a Rebbe is and what it means to be a Chassid, and since R’ Yehoshua had merited to see the Tzemach Tzedek and the Rebbe Maharash, perhaps he would be able to straighten things out there.

R’ Yehoshua told my father that under the conditions of those days, a trip from Russia to Eretz Yisroel was very long, difficult, and dangerous. However, when he saw how the Rebbe was suffering from the whole business, and that the dispute was affecting his health (he was weak already in any case), he immediately agreed to go. (He referred to those appointed to head the Kollel in Yerushalayim as “a difficult land with a difficult king”).

In the end, things didn’t work out. The Rebbe told him that considering the situation and his estimation that nothing could be changed, it was a waste of his energy and time and the trip was canceled. But after some time, the Rebbe sent one of the leaders of the community in Vitebsk, a Lubavitcher Chassid, a balabus and a man of means, and in the end, after staying there for some months, he returned having accomplished nothing. He told R’ Yehoshua all his travails and from this my great-grandfather understood what the people involved in the dispute were like.

Since there were no hotels in Yerushalayim, the shliach had stayed with a Lubavitcher Chassid who lived there. After a few days, he noticed that his host was busy writing letters all day. The host was an important person and it wasn’t fitting for the shliach to ask his host what he was involved with and what he was writing day and night, but the shliach was very

curious.

After a few weeks, when he returned to his host’s home one day, after an extremely difficult day’s work with Kollel matters, he saw some letters on the table. He took one letter and read it and his hair stood on end.

“To my dear brothers who live in Petersburg etc. We who dwell in Yerushalayim are in the King’s city and we protect the place of our sanctuary..but we suffer from starvation and it gives us no rest. It has reached the point where we are swollen from hunger and suffer from various ailments...please have mercy on us, have compassion on our babies and children that they should not die of starvation etc.

He just couldn’t believe it. He could not restrain

himself and when his host came home he shouted: How do you dare write these letters to the Jews of Russia who are themselves suffering from actual starvation, who have nothing to eat aside from a piece of bread and a little water. And from them you ask for money to sustain those who are starving – who is starving here? I am here for a few weeks, and I see that you eat white bread every day! Even I, who make a good living, eat white bread and chicken only on Shabbos, while you have bountiful fruit and meat every day and throughout all the seasons of the year! Where was such a thing heard or seen where

we come from? And you have the chutzpa to write, “swollen from hunger” – you thief!

His host replied: Ai, ai, ai, I thought the Lubavitcher Rebbe was a smart man and that when he sent someone to straighten things out at the Kollel Chabad that he chose a wise Chassid to do so. Now I see that you don’t understand what is going on here at all. If I had not written these letters, would I have white bread and meat every day? It is only thanks to the letters and the contributions that I get, thanks to them from abroad that I have what to live on and I can allow myself all this.

No more need be said. My great-grandfather would conclude, “From here we can see what a pity it was on the Rebbe. Go and see what kind of people he had to deal with...”

“It is only thanks to the letters and the contributions that I get, thanks to them from abroad that I have what to live on and I can allow myself all this...”

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THE OBLIGATION AND THE PRIVILEGE: ACCEPTING A SPECIAL NEEDS CHILD

BY RABBI YOSEF YITZCHOK FEIGELSTOCK, RAV AND POSEIK IN BUENOS AIRES
(FREE TRANSLATION)

*When speaking of the place of a special needs child within the family, community, and shul, we ought to remember that we all have special needs. We all have limitations along with our abilities. How should we be thinking so that we can truly accept those who are different? * A moving speech delivered at a Yom Iyun for Lubavitcher parents of special needs children established by Aguch in Eretz Yisroel.*

First, I will tell you a bit about my family and myself. It's no secret that we have a special needs child, born a few years ago. When we decided to send him to regular school we encountered difficulties, but since I'm a rav of a k'hilla, it wasn't pleasant for them to say no to me. I conveyed the message that I stand by my son no matter what. I exerted pressure while the hanhala sent me various psychologists who also did not succeed in convincing me not to send him to regular school.

After all the discussions, when my son was accepted in the school, his teachers said, "He is a normal child. What's the commotion about? At most, he acts two years less than children his age, but he's a normal person."

You have to understand that if even a perfectly normal child is persecuted in his class, or if everyone points at him because he's unusually dirty or he didn't make it to the bathroom on time, so that everybody looks askance at him and talks about him – he'll go crazy. He can't take that. If it happens only one day he is shattered; all the more so if it's a month.

We adults have to feel strong and protected. If a community would excommunicate one of us and people would keep their distance and wouldn't talk to us, we'd go crazy.

So how do we expect a child with special needs to grow up to be more or less normal when put into situations that a normal child could not tolerate? We must ensure that he is accepted by his family and community as he is. He should not be viewed as he presents himself **now** because this won't give him a chance to develop. He has to be viewed as **he can be** if we **invest in him** and are **patient** with him. Then he can grow and develop.

How do you change public opinion? How do you change the opinions of brothers and sisters and friends?

What I am about to tell you is what you should be telling siblings, neighbors, the community, and the shul he goes to on Shabbos, the society in which the child lives. It was much easier for me since I am a rav and it's an accepted practice for a rav to give a sermon in shul. The following is what I said at my son's upsheren and it made a change for the better not only for my son, but for the entire community, and for other children in the community with special needs.

This is what I said. Hashem created the world. It says, "*olam*

The world was built in such a way that it cannot not exist without chesed being done among people.

chesed yibaneh" (it is a world built on chesed), which means that the world was built in such a way that it cannot not exist without chesed being done among people.

If a person wants to live in a desert, he cannot, since he can't manage on his own. A person needs bread to eat, and he has to bake it, and he has to know how to grow wheat and how to transform it into flour. This means that in order to attain bread, which is only one item, he has to know many types of work.

In order to eat cheese, before the cheese-making process can take place, he has to know how to raise cows, how to feed them, etc. The same holds true for countless other

foods. With regard to clothing, he has to know how to sew and even how to spin threads. For a home, he has to know architecture, plumbing, electrical work, and other aspects of building a house.

If he gets sick, he will have to acquire medical knowledge in all areas of medicine, because many doctors specialize in only one area. If he quarrels with someone, he will have to study law.

Man has so many needs so that even if he were to live for ten times his allotted life span, it would not be enough time for him to learn how to provide for all of his needs. It takes a lion, eagle, in fact all animals, only a few days to learn everything they need to know, even though they only have animal intelligence. But Man has far more complicated needs. If one of his needs isn't met, he becomes very disturbed.

Take a blackout for example. If everything is going fine – his health is fine, he has food to eat, the house is erect, etc. – and the only thing lacking is the electricity in house, it becomes impossible and intolerable.

The same is true for one's person. If one's finger would go on strike and not want to function anymore, the person would be completely unnerved by this. If a person is missing one sock, even if he has all his other clothes, he'll go nuts without a sock and won't leave the house.

Even if he has everything but his two socks are two different colors, he will be frustrated. Even one tiny detail that a person lacks of his normal needs can completely ruin his day.

The world operates best when we work together. Money is the means by which we make exchanges. When I work and serve the community with my abilities, I

get in exchange money with which I buy food, health needs, a home, and my other needs.

This is the human kindness, the chesed, upon which the world is built. Thousands of people live in one place with each one servicing the others with the gifts he was given, and in exchange, receiving services of the gifts everybody else has.

If a doctor would say he's on strike – "I don't want to provide medical services any longer" – we'd all be in trouble. The same is true for even a shoemaker. We are dependent on the services that everybody provides. Each of us gives to each of us. This is what *olam chesed yibaneh* means, in the here and now. This is not meant to be an abstract concept found in maamarei Chassidus, but the reality on the ground.

Although this is the way of the world, Hashem demands a bit more of a Jew. It's not enough that in exchange for every chesed that I do I get something in return. Hashem wants me to do **tzedaka** too. This is harder because why should I give someone what I worked so hard to obtain? How can we overcome the yeitzer and give away money that we earned through hard work?

In Tehillim, there is a reference to the prayer of the pauper. What is this prayer?

The pauper says as follows: Hashem, I know that You want the world to be comprised of poor and rich so that chesed will be done. However, why did you make me poor and Shlomo rich? You made a mistake (as it were). If I were rich, I would know how to distribute tzedaka, while rich Shlomo doesn't give a dime!

The rich man figures as follows: I have a lot of money now. What if Hashem decides not to give me any

more money because I am not a good gabbai tzedaka?

As soon as the rich man realizes that his wealth is not the result of his being a special person, and he is nothing more than a Gabbai, who received a gift, then his giving becomes much easier. If, however, the wealthy man thinks he deserves the money because he worked hard to obtain it, and why should he give what he rightfully earned to a good-for-nothing who doesn't work – seemingly, a good point – then he has a hard time giving tzedaka.

There are other types of wealth. Every morning we wake up and say, *Modeh ani ... You open the eyes ... You make me upright ... you release the bound*. We get up and thank Hashem for eyes that see, for feet that walk, and for clothes we wear. We ask that we not become entangled with wicked people and that we have good friends.

What is the meaning of this prayer?

We go to work and earn money. In order to work, we need eyes that see, hands and feet that work, a head that thinks and understands, etc. How much did I pay for all this? Nothing. This immense gift, which no money in the world can buy, I got for free!

Another person did not receive this gift, not because he's bad or did something wrong, but because Hashem founded the world on a foundation of chesed. There are people who are rich and poor financially, and those who are rich and poor in vision. One person wears glasses with a high prescription, another is blind, yet another has perfect vision.

The one with perfect vision received that as a gift. The one who is blind, who did nothing wrong, still did not get the gift of sight. The same is true of hearing, speech, and

our other senses. We are all rich or poor.

The rich person asks: I have intelligence, eyes, and ears – did Hashem pick the right person for the gift? Is the person rich in senses doing tzedaka with the gift he got for free? Will he explain the Gemara repeatedly to a child who is not smart until he understands it? Or will he refuse to do so and say the child is stupid and I don't have the time for him.

If he says the latter, then Hashem, as it were, made a mistake by giving the gift to the wrong gabbai. He got it for free in order to give to others, for the world is built on chesed, and he is not building the world!

Every morning we ought to ask ourselves: Hashem chose us and gave us the natural abilities that we have. Are we the right people? We don't want Hashem to be disappointed with His choice. Let us share what we have with those who received half the gift, or a third, or less.

Within G-d's creation, every single one of us is limited. There is no perfect man. We are all incomplete. Some people can't walk and are in wheelchairs. This is a more obvious handicap. Other people can't see. This is also an obvious handicap.

Then there are handicaps that are not that obvious, that can be hidden. Some people cannot sing. It's not just that they lack the talent; they are completely off tune. They are limited but this limitation can be hidden. When everybody sings, they make believe they are singing along. It's harder to notice this handicap.

Some people cannot draw. They might even have problems with their handwriting. They even have problems reading their own handwriting! But this flaw can be

hidden until it's time to write.

If we think about it, we know that every person is somewhat limited. Nobody has *every* talents. Contrariwise, each person has a special ability and this can be in the realm of good character, love, and so on. This is where he shines.

Every creation has its function in the world of the Creator, and as parents, we must help children discover the talents hidden within them. We must also conceal their handicaps. Parents refrain from bringing their children to places where they will fail. They know that that is not their mission in this world. In these areas, they must receive help from others who are talented in that particular field.

We certainly wouldn't tell a child or adult that he is an utter failure because he can't perform an operation or heal the sick, even though this is truly a limitation he has. This is because we all have limitations and abilities.

Therefore, it's important to highlight people's successes and talents and to avoid gaining honor at the expense of another person's shame. Chazal say, "He who gains honor through his fellow's shame, has no share in the World to Come."

There are very few things about which the Sages describes such a severe punishment – that the person does not have a share in the World to Come. What does it mean to gain honor through your fellow's shame?

Up until now, the person's shame was hidden. Nobody noticed it. Now however, someone wants to elevate his own honor by highlighting his fellow's deficiency, by contrasting his wisdom with his fellow's foolishness. For this, he loses his share in the World to Come.

The fact that someone isn't smart and is limited in some way is known

to all, but that doesn't mean you can shine a spotlight on him. If you do, the person is humiliated and defenseless, because what you highlighted is real. If it was false, the person could prove that it's false. However, when it's true, he has no way of defending himself; this is why the person who shames him has no share in the World to Come.

Along these lines, very severe things are said about lashon ha'ra. Chazal say, "Lashon ha'ra kills three." What is meant by lashon ha'ra? I'll give you an example that I was witness to:

A certain bachur went off the

*The reason he broke
is because the evil
within him was
revealed, exposed.
Revealing a fellow's
shortcomings is
utterly evil.*

derech, but continued wearing his hat and jacket, and kept his beard. Outwardly, he looked fine, but I know that he found it hard to refrain from smoking on Shabbos. He would hide somewhere and smoke on Shabbos. There were other things like this that he did, but as far as the community knew, he was a good bachur.

One time, another bachur caught him smoking on Shabbos. The next Shabbos, the bachur who found him banged on the table and announced, "So-and-so should not get an aliya because he smokes on Shabbos. I saw him with my own eyes."

The humiliated bachur removed his beard, hat, and yarmulke the next day, got himself a gentile girlfriend, and left everything.

What happened here? Until the public announcement, his faults were hidden. He thought and hoped he could maintain the respect of those who thought well of him, and so it was worth it for him to keep Shabbos 90 percent. He didn't keep it 100 percent because he smoked for half an hour, but he did keep Shabbos for 23 and a half hours.

However, once his secret was out and his shame publicly revealed, why should he have continued to make the effort for those 23 and a half hours? This is why he left Yiddishkeit completely.

The reason he broke is because **the evil within him was revealed, exposed**. If it was hidden, maybe he would have managed to maintain a positive self-image and could have eventually overcome his problems. But once the evil was revealed to all, he went all the way. Revealing a fellow Jew's shortcomings is utterly evil and this is why one loses one's share in the World to Come.

This is the reason why when a child with handicaps enters a shul or community, and people look at him differently, and whisper or point at him, they are arousing strict judgment upon themselves. It's as though Hashem is saying to them: This person who is handicapped didn't do anything to deserve it. I made him this way because I want you to give him tzedaka with the abilities that you have and he lacks. Instead, not only aren't you giving him tzedaka, and not only are you not properly utilizing the abilities I gave you, you are also exposing his limitations!

This can arouse judgment that Hashem should, as it were, regret having given us our abilities and

talents.

We see people who excel in the giving of tzedaka but have difficulty when it comes to personally relating to people. (This is hard to understand, because when one gives away money, one lacks that which he gave away, but when one relates nicely to someone by saying good morning and smiling, he doesn't lose anything – it's like lighting one candle from another. Nevertheless, we see that many people find it easier to give money to tzedaka than to treat the handicapped nicely).

It's very important that every single one of us acknowledges that he has limitations and should therefore know how to accept everybody else with their limitations and contribute where they are lacking.

As soon as we convey this idea to the siblings of a handicapped child, we can overcome a serious problem. The siblings generally see that we, the parents, devote more time and have more patience for special needs children. Sometimes, the normal siblings feel jealous.

We can convey the message that Hashem created him as a larger vessel so that we can give him more, and that the 'regular' siblings get less attention because they are rich in comparison with their handicapped brother. We can thus make them appreciate that they are doing tzedaka by helping their brother.

[When parents provide for their children in general they are performing tzedaka because, in reality, all the siblings are poor: children don't have a home, food, education, etc.; it's the parents who provide for all their needs. Hashem sends the parents parnasa to provide for all the children. As the Rebbe says, every child is born with his bread in hand.

I see this in my own life. We had a daughter, a girl named Bracha. I was in a very difficult financial state at the time. I was broken by this, until I decided to trust in Hashem. That's when things improved.

Today, I look at things in a completely different way. I spend a fortune on my special needs child. Since I am not a citizen there, we don't have governmental assistance like one gets in Eretz Yisroel. We have to pay for everything ourselves – i.e., for therapy, traveling for treatment, etc. I estimate my expenses for this child to be \$50,000 a year, while my salary is only \$20,000 a year!

Nevertheless, I make a good living, baruch Hashem, and I get

Worrying shortens our lives, our heart and our nerves. We must live with bitachon.

various jobs here and there. I don't owe anyone anything. I cover all the expenses to visit Eretz Yisrael for the summer with the entire family, to rent an apartment and rent a car. It's not cheap! Yet I say that it's on Hashem's cheshbon and not my cheshbon. I don't earn money in a natural way anyway, so why be cheap? Let me be expansive! Should I drive a small car? I'll take a big car! I am not cheap with expenses because it's not my cheshbon. Hashem covers it – it really works. Hashem does not leave me without money.

Just recently, I paid about \$5000 for eight weeks of treatment for my son in Yerushalayim. This is a fortune, aside from the apartment,

the car, etc. And I'm paying for two homes – one here, and one in Argentina, where I still live.

Boruch Hashem, I manage it all and Hashem sends provisions along with every child he gives us. We don't need to be frugal, and we don't need to fear jumping into the sea. You just have to make sure not to worry, because worrying shortens our lives, our heart and our nerves. We must live with bitachon. Bitachon means relying on Hashem to take care of our accounts.]

Getting back to our main point, let me sum up summing up what I have said: This important message has to be made clear to the community, to groups, and to families. Articles can be written and speeches made, because as soon as a community accepts the child, everything will look completely different.

I delivered this speech, as I said earlier, at my son's upsheren, which was attended by a large crowd. A week later, when my son went to shul, everybody greeted him with a smile and shook his hand. Today he is beloved despite his handicaps. He is also greatly beloved by his brothers and sisters, who are very involved, and who make efforts to help him. The way of thinking changed completely.

We must instill these ideas in the people around us so they will accept them naturally. As I explained previously, even a normal child would be unable to live in isolation from the community. The child who is different has to be accepted as he is, and if we ourselves couldn't live under those circumstances then we have to change public opinion so the child is accepted. You don't have to be a rav or genius in order to understand that this is correct.

(Thanks to R' M.M. Blinitzky for his help in preparing this article)

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Pendant - Reproduction of "Tetradrachm" coin minted by Bar Kochba leader of the rebellion against Roman rule in 132-135 ce. The facade of the Temple Sanctuary appears on the coin face with the Arc of the covenant between the pillars.

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IT MAY BE MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN WE THINK, SINCE WE DON'T SEE THE WHOLE PICTURE

BY CHANA KATZ

The army and police have surrounded the Shomron with layers and layers of barbed wire and massive forces are being brought in...

It is beyond words to explain how the military and police commanders have spent weeks "desensitizing" their young Jewish charges – actually teaching them how to ignore the soul-shaking cries from Jews as they are forcibly grabbed from homes laboriously built from desolate sand dunes into flourishing gardens and villas.

Anash are breaking through this klipa by Mivtza T'fillin and quoting strongly, b'tokef, the Rebbe's words, trying to awaken them to the fact that they are a part of this terrible crime. And they have the power – by refusing to be part of it – to cause that it should be stopped.

Everything we learn in Chassidus teaches us to arouse the hearts and souls of Jews – not to desensitize them.

* * *

There is much confusion. And at the same time there is much strength.

Individual stories that have come out of the past months – of courage, strength, and heartbreak – are very powerful. Shabbosim these past few weeks have brought many together. There are those who farbrenged from the beginning until the end of Shabbos.

Determined Anash are coming and going at a dizzying pace. Some huddle around maps figuring how to navigate the hilly, mountainous terrain. One Chassid who attempted the hike from Avnei Chefetz said that he had only journeyed about two hours of the five or so hour hike, and that – which was considered to be the easy part of the hike – was most difficult in itself. The paths, many of which lead very close to – if not through – Arab villages, consist of rocky climbs up and down the mountains and valleys. They have taken place at nighttime with dark clothing to avoid detection.

*A woman from Yerushalayim took a bus out to the northern Shomron the other day just in order to make a farbrengen with the women gathered here. Immediately afterwards, she ran to catch another bus back to Yerushalayim, having made the four-

or-so hour round-trip via bus just to share what she could.

*Almost a minyan of avreichim from Tzfas arrived at Avnei Chefetz last Erev Shabbos with their wives and infants. At one point during the Shabbos day seuda at the home of shluchim Uriel and Esther Gorfinkle, a powerful farbrengen broke out in the spirit of the Rebbe's amazing sicha from 50 years ago.

In that sicha, the Rebbe prophetically talked about a very destructive event looming over Am Yisroel following Shabbos Chazon (the Shabbos before Tisha B'Av).

More couples had arrived that Shabbos than originally planned and it was amazing how neighbors opened up their homes to the overflow of guests without advance notice.

One neighbor told us she had a dream of the Rebbe two weeks earlier. Two weeks later she opened her house for the Rebbe's chayalei beis Dovid.

* * *

A soldier of Moshiach, a true devoted Chassid, Reb Y.K., gave us

* * *

Rabbi M.K., Anash, was one of the group going through the woods and mountains, trying to reach Sa-Nur. There he experienced the flares. The next night, on his way to Shavei Shomron, he and the group were stopped at the roadblock. The whole group pulled off to the side of the road, unfurled the Moshiach flags, grabbed bags full of posters and mitzvaim material, danced, davened Maariv and gave over the Rebbe's words to the soldiers.

Said Rabbi MK:

*First: The soldiers are brainwashed that this (the disengagement) is the best thing for the safety of Israel.

*Second: If they (the soldiers) are not going to listen to the command, the army will fall apart and this will endanger Jews.

* Third: The concept of a soldier is to do what he's told, not what he thinks – a form of kabbalas ol. But there is an escape valve: If someone tells him to do something that is against the law, (meaning) if he would understand that giving away the land is endangering the people and they are helping (our enemies) – in such a situation he doesn't have to listen!

*“The battle here is over who is the authoritative power – the government

or the Torah? When a soldier comes to the conclusion that the Torah is the authoritative power and he refuses to take any part in disengagement, it is a big kiddush Hashem.

The Rebbe, MH"M, says there are three stages of Geula. Rabbi MK explains this as follows:

First: Makas Mitzrayim B'v'choreihem. We celebrate every Shabbos HaGadol, the miracle of the Egyptian first born making war against Pharaoh.

The Rebbe compared this to the American army attack of the Jewish enemy in Iraq.

Second: Standing at Krias Yam Suf. The clouds of glory protected the Jews from the Egyptian spears and ammunition.

We can see the comparison to the protective clouds of glory in Gush Katif alone, more than 6,000 missiles besides rockets and bullets were fired at the Jewish communities.

Among the many, many miracles that have been told regarding this, is the recent attempt to shell a massive anti-disengagement rally in Sderot. On that day, there were actually clouds and bits of rain in Eretz Yisroel, which is highly unusual for Tammuz. The same day, during the rally, terrorists fired a missile towards the crowds of

50-60,000. It fell short of its destination and instead landed on an Arab home killing two terrorists and wounding more.

One interviewer even asked the Hamas terrorist group how it could shoot so many missiles and not “succeed.” They responded, “We try, but the G-d of the Jews protects them.”

Third: Krias Yam Suf itself. Am Yisroel was split into four groups: those who said let's fight the Egyptians, those who said let's go back to Egypt, those who said let's jump into the sea (and not get involved) and those who wanted to daven to Hashem. Moshe Rabbeinu said in the name of Hashem that none of these groups were right; they should go further.

The Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, said if they didn't have any doubts they would have merited to walk straight on top of the sea.

We are now standing at the Yam Suf. Straight across the other side is the Geula!

By listening to the Rebbe MH"M's directives with total kabbalas ol we are now meriting the Geula Shleima.

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THE CHAYAL IN THE STREET IS NOT YOUR ENEMY

As you are well aware the matzav in eretz Yisroel is as bad as it has ever been. The tzaros that we face today, are made more severe being that they come from within. It really is a time of “*korim la’ohr choshech, v’la’choshech korim ohr.*”

At times like this, it is very important to keep sight, of whom exactly we are fighting against. It is quite clear that Ariel Sharon has decided (for whatever reason, though I find it hard to believe that he really thinks this will bring about peace) to go through with his disengagement plan no matter what, and he has many followers who are determined to carry it out for him.

At the same time, we must remember that those who will actually be carrying out his plan, are doing so against their will! And knowing that the soldiers want no part in it, the government has already let it be known, how they will “convince” people to do their job, by taking people from courses, and elite units, people who have put their whole future in the army, and stand to lose all their dreams if they refuse.

We must remember that even if Tzahal as an organization is investing its whole *ko’ach* in an *inyan* which contradicts its job (of protecting Yidden and Eretz Yisroel). At the same time, it is still an organization which we need, and will continue to need till Moshiach come (*bi’m’heira b’yameinu, ha’yom mamash*). And so, when you see a *chayal* in the street, remember that **he is not your enemy**. He is the same *chayal* who fought and whose brothers have died protecting Eretz Yisroel. And remember that the day (*rachmana litzlan, haya lo sihiyeh*) after the disengagement, he will once again have to go to war, to fight and risk his life, for Eretz Yisroel and all the Yidden living therein.

In Eretz Yisroel today, there are many groups all fighting against the disengagement. Each group has its *shita*, how exactly to go about, and what route to take in the war against the *hitnatkut*.

The Rebbe started *Mitzva T’fillin* before the Six Day War he explained that *Mitzva T’fillin* will protect our soldiers. I think all will agree that this is one path which without a doubt accomplishes only good. And so I send to you, two letters I received which I feel can be *m’orer* a new *chayos* in *Mitzva T’fillin*.

Last year after I joined the Israeli army, my mother took it upon herself to speak to people about *Mitzva T’fillin*. And so she did in the coming year, speak both publicly when she lectured, and privately to people online (at www.askmoses.com), about the importance of *Mitzva*

T’fillin, and how (as the Rebbe explains) this *Mitzva* specifically, protects our soldiers in Eretz Yisroel. She would then make a personal appeal, explaining how them donning *T’fillin* would protect *her own son* serving in the IDF. She sometimes would give them my email address, and I received a few emails from people that my mother had spoken to.

I would like to share with you two of these emails, one from a bar mitzva boy and one from his father. They had come online to seek help for a bar mitzva speech, and had been inspired by my mother to speak about *Mitzva T’fillin*, and how it protects our soldiers standing guard in Eretz Yisroel.

* * *

Shalom chaver. I had my bar mitzva last week. Your mom really helped me for my speech. We had a long discussion on the chat in askmoses.com when I told your mom about my bar mitzva and she told me about putting on the t’fillin. Wow, I never knew about this. My dad spoke with your mom also and in the speech he told everyone about an American boy named Y. and how he is a soldier in our land and country. And my dad said that the best gift that anyone could give me the bar mitzva boy, was to put on t’fillin and to protect this Jewish soldier Y. and his friends. You know what, my mom was crying and lots of people said they wanted to do this. And my dad and mom bought me t’fillin at our orthodox Judaica store. Your mom said you would like to know this.

My dad said when I’m through with school and ready for college maybe I should go first to the Israeli army and then go to college. He thinks your way is cool.

This Shabbat in shul when I get the aliya I’m going to talk again with everyone about putting on t’fillin.

Thank you for helping me in my bar mitzva. Shabbat shalom.

* * *

Dear Y.

My name is I. S. the proud father of a new Bar Mitzva boy. Your mother on Ask Moses inspired my family in a way that will carry through to my son and his younger sister. I just wanted to let you know that you and your brethren in the IDF were in the prayers offered at my shul. In addition, I conveyed your mother’s request to all our male guests to don t’fillin in order to protect our holy land and to protect all those who protect our holy land. I wish you all the success and my prayer for you is that you may never see combat or war. Come home safely. G-d bless you. Shabbat shalom.

I.S.