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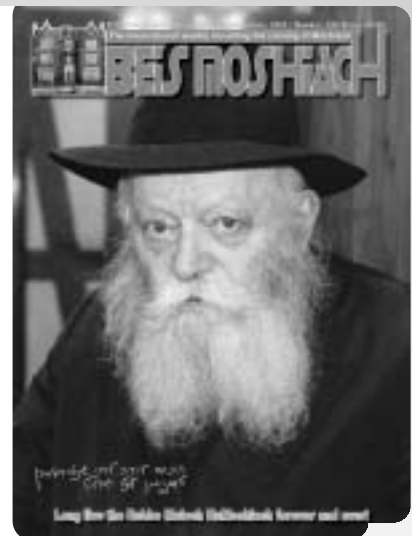
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WISHING ALL OUR READERS A KASIVA VA'CHASIMA TOVA,  
L'SHANA TOVA U'M'SUKA!



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# IF EXILE IS NO GOOD, WHO NEEDS IT?

LIKKUTEI SICHOS VOL. 24, PG. 167-176  
TRANSLATED BY BORUCH MERKUR



(Continued from last week.)

3. The following question, however, can be asked regarding this very principle:

The Gemara in Tractate Taanis says: “R. Yochanan said: ‘Three keys are in the hand of the Holy One Blessed Be He which He did not entrust to the hand of a messenger. These are they: the key of rain, the key of life, and the key of the resurrection of the dead.’” And “In the West [i.e., Eretz Yisroel] they say: also the key of livelihood.”

We see here that, on the contrary, in the West, in Eretz Yisroel, they [add further] detail, including a fourth item (livelihood), whereas the Bavli is more general and concise, considering livelihood not as a separate item but merely as an outcome that results from rain. As the Gemara concludes there, “And with regard to R. Yochanan, why didn’t he enumerate this? He would tell you, ‘rain is livelihood.’” That is, livelihood is an outgrowth of rain, “for seeds and fruits grow from it to sustain the world” [Rashi. See Footnote 27 original].

The explanation [of this seeming inconsistency] is simple: The aforementioned principle (in Section 2) concerning the Talmud Bavli and the Talmud Yerushalmi is premised by the notion that the Bavli is a later text (chronologically) with respect to the Yerushalmi. The opinion (in Tractate Taanis) of “the West,” cited above, was, however, not said prior to the time when “R. Yochanan said, etc.” **On the contrary**, “they say: also” means (in the same time period or) later.

In fact, the author of the statement in Bavli who said, “Three keys etc.,” is R. Yochanan, who, “compiled the Gemara Yerushalmis.” Accordingly, the discussion appears chronologically: The saying of R. Yochanan (following the principle as it applies to the Talmud Yerushalmi) is earlier (concise and general), and thereafter in the West “**they say:**

**also,**” meaning later with respect to [the statement of] R. Yochanan, and therefore, more in detail and etc.

4. We must, however, understand with regard to the topic at hand:

Since there is regret and the negation of the principle and the cause (the Evil Inclination), there is apparently, no room to enumerate the result (Exile), which is already negated as a consequence of the regret for the cause. [Thus, this difficulty applies to the approach of the Talmud Bavli, which enumerates Exile separately.]

At first glance, this can be brought to light through preempting another question, something that is at least somewhat awkward: How is it appropriate to enumerate Exile among the things which the Holy One Blessed Be He “regrets **having created**”? Exile is not a creation which G-d created as an existent unto itself, as is the Evil Inclination and the others. Rather, its entire existence is dependent and connected with the conduct of man (when the Evil Inclination persuades the person to transgress and he does not repent thereafter). It comes out that the entire existence of Exile is dependent upon the conduct of Jews.

For this reason we must say, at first glance, that the regret for the creation of Exile does not mean simply [regret] for the creation of punishment for their sins, but for the fact that G-d **created** Exile (a new thing) as a punishment. Indeed, “there are many means available to the Omnipresent” how to punish for transgressions and sins, and we find in the Rebuke itself numerous punishments and afflictions, may G-d have mercy upon us, which come for neglecting to fulfill the Torah and commandments.

5. Accordingly we could say that this is the meaning of, “There are four things which the Holy One Blessed Be He

regrets having created” (in Bavli), where Exile is enumerated separately: Notwithstanding the fact that Exile is a result of the Evil Inclination (it comes as a punishment for transgressions which result from the Evil Inclination), Exile is not a thing that is a necessary consequence of the (persuasion of) the Evil Inclination, but a creation and innovation unto itself, which G-d created as **an additional** punishment, and thus it is regretted unto itself.

This also comes to answer the fact that the Bavli (according to the text of the Talmud) precedes Exile to the Evil Inclination in its enumeration, notwithstanding the fact that in actuality, Exile comes after the deed accomplished by the Evil Inclination. [The reason for this order is] to emphasize that the fact that the Holy One Blessed Be He regrets the Exile does not (only) mean [that He regrets] the Exile in actuality (as a punishment for transgressions, after the domination of the Evil Inclination), but (primarily) the very creation of Exile (as a punishment), as mentioned above.

6. However, it would, therefore, seem that the distinction between the Bavli and the Yerushalmi is (not only with regard to the style of learning, whether in general or specific terms, but) a matter of a dispute. Namely, according to the opinion of the Yerushalmi, the regret is only with regard to Exile **in actuality** – since it is included in the regret (“*taha*”) for the Evil Inclination – but it is not for the very creation of Exile (for the Yerushalmi does not cite Exile in its enumeration). Whereas this is not so with regard to the opinion of the Bavli, as mentioned above.

Moreover, the order of the items enumerated in the Bavli remains unclear: There is a reason, as mentioned above, why it precedes Exile to the Evil Inclination, however, it is not understood why Exile is placed **first** of **all** the four things (and similarly with regard to the proofs from the verses).

7. The proposed explanation of the entire matter:

The distinction between the Bavli and the Yerushalmi is expressed not only in the number of items (in Bavli four things are enumerated, whereas the Yerushalmi [cites only] three). Rather, there is also a distinction in the **terminology**, and of consequence, also in the meaning:

The terminology of the Bavli is, “There are four things which the Holy One Blessed Be He regrets having created, etc.,” whereas the Yerushalmi reads, “There are three things the Holy One Blessed Be He created and He regrets that He created them.”

That is, the Bavli expresses the matter as a **single** concept, namely, G-d “regrets” (having created them). Whereas the Yerushalmi emphasizes **two** concepts: 1) the fact that “the Holy One Blessed Be He created [three things]” and 2) the fact that “He regrets that He created them.”

And this is the distinction in meaning: It is understood and obvious that regret On High is not to be understood in the simple sense of the term, G-d forbid – that He changes his mind and regrets, G-d forbid, a thing that He had made. Rather, this expresses that there is a concept of negativity associated with it. On the other hand, it is understood that since we say that this is a thing which “the Holy One Blessed Be He created,” it emphasizes the positive element it entails.

It comes out that the Bavli speaks only of the negative quality, of the opposite of good, which exists in the four things, whereas the Yerushalmi, in addition, emphasizes their positive quality.

This subject (as is true with regard to every subject), which is discussed in Torah (whether in the Written Torah or in the Oral Torah), is not (only) related in order to describe G-d’s conduct and relationship (and how much more so if it is negative) with regard to the creations which **He has** created. Rather, it is (relevant to know the nature of the creations in order to derive from them) an instruction in man’s service of his Master.

And this comprises the distinction whether it is only mentioned that “There are four things which the Holy One Blessed Be He regrets having created” or if is prefaced with, “There

are three things the Holy One Blessed Be He **created**”:

In saying “regrets” and nothing more, this expresses the notion that the four things are not true existents; they will eventually be nullified, since “He regrets having created them.” That is, their [being] is not the inner will of G-d.

But when we speak **prefatorily** to the concept, saying that “the Holy One Blessed Be He **created**,” this emphasizes that **they comprise** the creation – and of consequence, the will – of G-d. Thus, they contain an element of eternality (on account of the spark of G-dliness within them), as is the case with all things that “the Holy One Blessed Be He created.” However, together with this, it adds that they likewise possess an aspect of negativity.

But on the contrary: **this** aspect does not possess true existence, and it will [eventually] be nullified.

(To be continued.)

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*It is understood and obvious that regret On High is not to be understood in the simple sense of the term – that He changes his mind and regrets, G-d forbid, a thing that He made...*

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# THERE'S NO ESCAPING TISHREI WITH THE REBBE

BY RABBI LEVI YITZCHAK GINSBERG, MASHPIA, YESHIVAS TOMCHEI T'MIMIM - LUBAVITCH, K FAR CHABAD  
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

*Chassidim always say “If he comes in by himself” – someone who comes to the Rebbe empty-handed, then “he goes out by himself” – when he comes home from the Rebbe, he also may go home empty-handed. However, “if he is married” (baal isha) – if he has prepared himself appropriately and comes to the Rebbe with “fire” (“isha” comes from the root “eish”), with the fervor of holiness and G-dliness, then “his wife will go out with him,” he will bring back from the Rebbe the “fire” that penetrates his most inner levels, influencing his entire metzius and his very life. A chassidic farbrengen in preparations for the thousands soon to arrive at Beis Chayeinu – 770, in honor of Rosh HaShana 5766.*

HaRav Shmuel HaLevi Gurevitch, the Rebbe MH”M’s shliach in Lyon, France, tells the following story about the great influence that comes from traveling to the Rebbe, even without all the stringent preparations:

“One day, one of the regular participants in Chabad House activities in Lyon, a young fellow who frequently came to classes and farbrengens, came in to my office and told me that congratulations were in order: he is about to get engaged. When I asked who the bride was, I was surprised to hear the young man say, without skipping a beat, that the girl is not Jewish. She has some very fine personal qualities, they found each other quite suitable, and they are preparing (ר”ל) to get married.

“I tried to explain to him that what he is planning to do is a grave injustice to the Jewish People and the Torah. It is forbidden for a Jew to marry a Gentile, and even if the Jew is presently not Torah observant, such a step is considered a betrayal of the Jewish People. His children will not be Jewish, and no good will come out of such a union for either side.

“But all my explanations fell on deaf ears; he was simply not prepared

to listen. 'I don't believe that the Torah should get involved in a person's private life and interfere with his happiness,' he claimed. 'I have found the right woman for me. We want to be happy together, and no one has the right to come between us and our happiness.'

"When I saw that none of my explanations and convincing were doing any good, I suddenly got an interesting idea. 'You know that the time before a person's wedding is extremely precious,' I told him. 'It's a time when there is a special need for G-d's blessings far more than usual. Among Lubavitcher chassidim, the groom customarily travels to the Rebbe before the wedding, spends time in his holy courtyard, and receives blessings for the new stage of life that awaits him. Perhaps you should also travel to the Rebbe and receive his blessing prior to your wedding...'. Naturally, I hoped that the trip would have an effect upon him, and even though I didn't know how, the very fact that he was going to be in 770 would certainly bring about some change for the good, to the point that he even might give up the idea of marrying this non-Jewish girl altogether.

"My suggestion appealed to him, and since he came from a wealthy family and had the necessary funds for the travel expenses, he agreed to go together with me to the Rebbe.

"This was at a time when the Rebbe had already stopped receiving people in personal yechidus. On the other hand, his custom of distributing dollars on Sunday had not yet begun, and thus, there was virtually no opportunity to meet the Rebbe personally, except for public events, such as farbrengens.

"Traveling to the Rebbe at this time was not done quite as frequently. So when people heard that someone was going to the Rebbe, it was a cause for community celebration. Such was the case here. Everyone came to wish their

friend a bon voyage, and gave him letters for the Rebbe, asking that he bring them answers to their requests.

"When we arrived at 770, we went into the secretariat and gave in the letters that we had brought. But when the man heard that it would be impossible to meet the Rebbe personally, he was unmoved, stating categorically that he wanted to approach the Rebbe, either before or after davening, and give him his letter

***There's no escaping;  
we must come close to  
him and stand before  
him with all the filth  
we have on us and  
with a fervent desire  
to change our ways for  
the better. We must  
plead and request with  
joy and gladness of  
heart that he accept us  
and help us to be as  
we should, and as he  
wants us to be.***

directly. The secretaries tried to convince him not to do so, and even tried to speak to me about it, but the man would hear nothing of it. For my part, I did not try to dissuade him; if I haven't been able to talk him out of marrying a non-Jew, how can I possibly prevent him from meeting the Rebbe?! Maybe this is the very thing that will influence him away from his wayward plan.

"And so it was that on one occasion

when the Rebbe came out after davening, he went up to the Rebbe and said that he wanted to give him his letter personally. The Rebbe smiled, and placed the letter in his coat pocket.

"In his letter, he wrote that he wants to marry someone who is not Jewish, however, Rabbi Gurevitch told him that it is forbidden to do so according to Torah. For his part, he does not believe that the Torah should get involved in a person's private life and prevent him from being happy, and therefore, he has decided to get married and asks for the Rebbe's blessing. At the conclusion of the letter, he added that since several members of the Jewish community sent letters with him to request the Rebbe's bracha, if the Rebbe thinks as does Rabbi Gurevitch that the marriage would be inappropriate, he requests that it should have no effect upon the other requests for the Rebbe's blessing, since his plans are final and nothing whatsoever will change them.

"The Rebbe responded that he has nothing to worry about in connection with the other requests for blessings, as it is quite certain that no one can prevent a Jew from receiving a bracha if he is in need and deserving of one. With regard to his own request, the Rebbe wrote that if he really loves this non-Jewish woman, it is for her own good that he save her from any harm or misery, and nothing good will come out of a marriage between a Jew and a non-Jew. The man received the letter and was most impressed with the gentlemanly manner of the Rebbe's explanation, but his decision remained firm.

"We returned to France, and the wedding preparations went into high gear. The non-Jewish girl was also from a wealthy family, and the young couple prepared to celebrate the wedding in great pomp and splendor at one of the finest venues in the city.

"According to the prevailing

custom, a number of idolatrous ceremonies would be held in the local church. Afterwards, the couple would go before a judge, who would ask the bride and groom if they will take each other in marriage. When each responds 'I do,' the judge stamps the marriage certificate, and from that moment, they are considered legally married.

"The protagonist of our story arrived at the church and went through all the ceremonies without a hitch, and not even the slightest indication of an inner conflict of conscience. Then the moment arrived to come before the judge. The judge asked the bride if she takes this man to be her lawfully wedded husband, and she responded, 'I do.' He then turned to the groom and asked him if he takes this woman to be his lawfully wedded wife. The young man was silent for a moment, and then suddenly said in a clear voice, 'NO!'

"The judge was astounded. Here a couple is about to get married, and this is how the groom responds? 'Apparently, you didn't understand me,' the judge said. 'You are here to get married. Do you take this woman to be your wife?'

"Again silence, and then he called out even more firmly, 'NO!'

"Pandemonium broke out. The bride's family became furious. They had spent thousands of dollars planning an expensive wedding for countless family members and guests, and suddenly, the groom ruins everything! In the ensuing confusion, the groom managed to escape with his life. He didn't even return to his house, out of a genuine fear over what the bride's family might do to him. Afterwards, it turned out that his concern for his safety was well founded. The girl's family came to his house, and when they found no one home, they angrily broke down the door and destroyed the furniture and everything else in sight. The story hit

the national headlines, and the young man quickly understood that he could no longer remain in France. He stayed in hiding for a few more days, and then fled the country for several years until passions had cooled and the matter had been forgotten.

"Many years passed," R. Shmuel recalled, "and then one day, I met him in the street. I was delighted to see him, and hugged and kissed him. I then asked him what had happened. It had appeared that nothing had had an effect upon him. He went to his wedding with a seemingly clear conscience, did all the pre-wedding church ceremonies without the slightest problem, and then suddenly at the last possible moment, he breaks all rules of protocol and proclaims before everyone that he won't marry the bride.

"To tell you the truth," he replied, "from my point of view, nothing had changed. I was totally ready and willing to complete the ceremony and marry her. Then suddenly, as I was standing before the judge, I saw the Rebbe's image before me. The vision gave me such an overpowering feeling of fear and dread, I simply couldn't go through with it, and you already know the rest of the story..."

Rabbi Gurevitch told this story at one of the farbrengens he conducted in Lyon. When he finished, he surprised the participants and said, "This Jew eventually married a Jewish woman, and his children learn in the local Chabad schools. He is here now, and he can stand up if he wants and tell the story himself!"

A moment of tense excitement prevailed as everyone waited for the man to identify himself, but no one stood up.

Rabbi Gurevitch realized that he had not acted properly. Perhaps the young man was simply not ready to be exposed in front of everyone. Immediately after the farbrengen, Rabbi Gurevitch approached him and

apologized profusely if he embarrassed him in any way.

"There is no need to apologize," he replied. "You didn't embarrass me at all, and I'm very happy that the story has been publicized."

"If that be the case," I asked him, "then why didn't you stand up and identify yourself when I told the story?"

"Very simple," he replied. "The trauma that I endured at that moment when I saw the image of the Rebbe shlita standing before me was so intense, I was literally terrified and I just couldn't go back and experience that moment again."

\* \* \*

"I heard this story last year from a chassid who was having various doubts about whether he should travel to the Rebbe, when 'by chance' he heard this story. 'I immediately realized,' this chassid told me, 'how much a trip to the Rebbe can have an effect, even upon someone who did not make appropriate preparations. This person was not ready to listen to the Rebbe and was preparing to *r"l* marry a non-Jew. Nevertheless, the trip had a tremendous effect upon him. I understood that the Rebbe was sending me a clear message to make the trip, and so I did.'

Of course, this doesn't mean that there is no need to make appropriate preparations for a trip to the Rebbe. The exact opposite is true. Chassidim always repeat the saying "If he comes in by himself" – someone who comes to the Rebbe empty-handed, then "he goes out by himself" – when he comes home from the Rebbe, he also may go home empty-handed. However, "if he is married" (*baal isha*) – if he has prepared himself appropriately and comes to the Rebbe with "fire" (*"isha"* comes from the root *"eish"*), with the fervor of holiness and G-dliness, then "his wife will go out with him," he will bring from the Rebbe the "fire" that

penetrates his most inner levels, influencing his entire metzius and his very life.

Therefore, it is vitally important among the other preparations to emphasize a very significant point, particularly to parents who are now sending their children to the Rebbe. Make certain to stick to the schedules at Hachnasas Orchim for young men and Beis Midrash LNashim for women, even if you think that you can manage materially without them. This is one of the most appropriate and vital tools to receive properly what the Rebbe MH”M shlita gives to each and every one of us. Needless to say, a chassid should be vigilant in keeping to the timetable and not miss a single t’filla or farbrengen with the Rebbe without any discussion or debate.

Even though the preparations are critically important, the actual trip must be made. If you haven’t completed your preparations beforehand, you can still continue preparing during the journey and even during the time you spend in Beis Chayeinu – with the help and strength of the king himself – and not *ch”v* postpone the trip until you’re “ready,” because who knows when a Jew is ever really ready.

Once there was a farbrengen with the mashpia, R. Mendel Futerfas, and someone tried to explain that it is appropriate to put off a trip to the Rebbe until the person is ready. This chassid then brought the story about the two goats that waited in the Rebbe Rashab’s courtyard. Whenever the Rebbe went out and came in, they got up on their hind legs and looked at him intensely until he left or went inside. They did this for many years, yet they (obviously) remained goats – because from the very outset, they came as goats!

R. Mendel’s response: “Better to be a goat – as long as you’re with the Rebbe!”

Again, traveling to the Rebbe

neither starts nor ends from the moment you apply for your passport, get your visa, buy your airline ticket, or do all the other arrangements for your trip. Naturally, all these things are absolutely necessary, but we mustn’t forget that we’re talking about a trip to the Rebbe, and we have to get our “passport,” “visa,” and “stay permit” not just from the United States Government or our country of origin, but primarily from the real *baal bayis* over everything: the Rebbe MH”M.

It is impossible to evade, run away, or whitewash over anything, because the Rebbe knows all too well the true

***“If he really loves this non-Jewish woman, it is for her own good that he save her from any harm or misery, for nothing good will come out of a marriage between a Jew and a non-Jew...”***

face of each and every one of us (even when we’re quite far away, in every sense of the word). Therefore, there’s no escaping; we must come close to him and stand before him with all the filth we have on us and with a fervent desire to change our ways for the better. We must plead and request with joy and gladness of heart that he accept us and help us to be as we should, and as he wants us to be. But most importantly, we should carry out the only thing remaining in the avoda of shlichus, and bring his hisgalus in actual deed.

There is a story about one of the

more prominent students of the Mezritcher Maggid, who would not go to the mikveh prior to coming to the Rebbe. His colleagues were perplexed by this behavior and asked him: How is this possible? Don’t you think that there is a need to be pure and holy before you go to the Rebbe?

“I want the Rebbe to see me as I am, with all the filth still on me,” the chassid replied. “Not pure and holy, as I am after going to the mikveh. Only then is there some chance that the Rebbe will pull me out of the mud.”

Of course, we should go to the mikveh, especially before we come to the Rebbe. Chassidim are very stringent not to enter 770 before going to the mikveh first (except for unique circumstances). However, we can learn from this story that we can neither run nor hide from the Rebbe, and we shouldn’t try to conceal our dirt from him. On the contrary, we should approach the king with all that we have on us with the desire, request, and our repeated efforts to mend our ways and act in a befitting manner.

Thus, “anyone who wants (someone who at least wants and tries again and again) to go and greet him is permitted (and able) to do so, and he receives everyone with a shining and cheerful expression for all.”

Then afterwards, when he comes to the city through the avoda of advance preparation, each and every Jew turns into “*y’chidei segula*,” the fortunate ones who come towards the king to accept his sovereignty willingly and request, “reign over the whole world in Your glory...and everything that has been made will know that You have made it, and everything that has been created will understand that You have created it, and everything that has the breath [of life] in his nostrils will say that Hashem, G-d of Yisroel, is King and His kingship rules over all.”

*Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V’Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach L’olam Va’ed!*

# THE PRAYERS OF CHASSIDIM ON THE YOMIM NORAIM

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN BERGER

*My father would take his time with the Shmoneh Esrei on the first day of Rosh HaShana, davening for hours with sweetness and chayus, until the others finished davening and went home to eat the Yom Tov meal. They returned after the meal to wish my father a shana tova, and my father was still standing there and davening Shmoneh Esrei ... after the davening his face was red, and his yiras Shamayim was apparent on his face. \* Stories about the prayers of Chassidim on the Yomim Noraim.*

Davening with “avoda” was a central component in the chinuch of the T'mimim in Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Lubavitch. The davening of the ovdim was a meditative outpouring of the soul, and was preceded by the study of Chassidus.

If this was the case on weekdays, and more so on Shabbos, then it was certainly the case on the Yomim

Noraim, when we coronate the King, something which requires much preparation and contemplation.

Many of the T'mimim in Lubavitch merited to hear the prayers of the Rebbe Rashab on Yomim Noraim. These t'fillos were saturated with tears and copious crying, and whose heart wouldn't tremble when the Rebbe cried?

They tell about the Tamim, Shimshon Milner of Vitebsk, who was considered one of the great ovdim in Lubavitch, that one time, Erev Yom Kippur, he began davening Mincha as is customary, together with Vidui. His davening was with enormous d'veikus and lasted for hours. When his friends were up to Kol Nidrei after the Seudas Mafsekes, they found him still davening Mincha with d'veikus. When he finished davening, he realized it was nightfall and so he continued to daven Kol Nidrei and Maariv without eating.

Even after the yeshiva in Lubavitch was exiled because of the war, the T'mimim continued in the ways they had been taught. Even those who did not daven in this manner would reminisce with yearning about the special t'fillos of the Rebbe Rashab. Both types “drew in” more Chassidim with their prayers.

Ah! Yom Kippur in the spirit of Lubavitch...

## A QUIET PRAYER AND A PUDDLE OF TEARS

R' Mulle Pruss related:

I has the privilege of being close



with the Chassid, R' Chonye Morozov (may Hashem avenge his blood). He was a maskil, tremendously intellectual. Furthermore, he was a baal nefesh (a man of spirit). On two occasions, I spent the Yomim Noraim with him. His davening entailed great contemplation and was immersed in maamarei Chassidus. He seemed to hover in the upper worlds.



Although his davening was quiet, occasionally he sang quietly, I saw an actual puddle gathering at his feet, as a result of his tears.

This was a p'nimiyusdike Chassid.

### SHACHARIS AT EIGHT IN THE EVENING

A group of Chassidim settled in Ditzky Silo, a suburb of Leningrad, before World War II, including some T'mimim who had learned in Lubavitch. The latter stood on their feet throughout the Yomim Noraim prayers, wrapped in their specially thick talleisim, and tears streamed from their eyes.

Occasionally you heard a quiet niggun, a broken cry, and the t'filla continued.

After Musaf on Rosh HaShana was over, the people would go home for the Yom Tov meal. But the



Chassid, Rav Avrohom Eliyahu Plotkin remained in his place without noticing that the others had left the shul.

Mincha time, when the first people arrived back at shul, they were astounded to see R' Avrohom Eliyahu sitting in his place and still davening Shacharis with an outpouring of his soul.

### COMPLETELY AFIRE

Starting with Rosh Chodesh Elul, the famous Chassid, Rav Yisroel Neveler (Levin) became a different person: somber, ominous, *Eluldiker*.



The rest of the year you could hear from him his trademark sharp and humorous comments, but in Elul “his seriousness was downright scary,” as those who knew him testified.



Sometimes, during Elul, he sat in shul, his tallis over his head, his eyes closed, as he contemplated some inyan in Chassidus in preparation for the davening. Chassidim would watch him and would relate that he would suddenly open his eyes and streams of tears would flow, “as though two faucets were opened,” and this was done

silently.

On Rosh HaShana, he was the shofar-blower. His seriousness at that time was doubly severe. By dawn, he was sitting in shul and learning. Then he would daven at length. Sometimes they had to wait for him to finish davening Shacharis in order to hear the t’kios from him.

When he approached the bima with the shofars in hand, he was completely afire. His face was red and his eyes were teary. He would grasp his tallis forcefully and cover his head down to his chin and suddenly there was a bang. R’ Yisroel dropped his hands on to the bima, bent his head, and a wail came forth from the tallis. This lasted for some time until he straightened up and with the tallis

still covering his face, he would shout, “*Laminatzei’ach livnei Korach mizmor.*”

“It was literally a roar,” remembers R’ Mulle Pruss, “and the entire congregation was terrified of the Yom HaDin.

## KOL NIDREI AFTER THE FARBRENGEN

Rav Zushe Gross relates:

Erev Yom Kippur 5702 (1941) in Tashkent was special. Many Chassidim lived there after fleeing the terrors of the Nazi



## A KOL NIDREI THAT MOVED OFFICERS IN THE RED ARMY

BY MENACHEM ZIEGELBOIM

In the assembly hall they all prepared for the grand performance. Hundreds of military doctors, as well as the leading intelligentsia in the Russian army, awaited the concert with the main event being the performance of the Jewish chazan. The cultural committee set the date for the concert for Yom Kippur. The Jewish chazan, the Chassid R’ Zalman Bronstein, worried about what he could do. Could he, Heaven forbid, profane this holy day?

The soldiers did their final rehearsals and R’ Zalman joined in the rehearsals but in his heart he knew that he would not sing on Yom Kippur, no matter what! But how would he get out of it? He didn’t know but he knew that he would be absent, despite the expected protests of the senior military figures.

Yom Kippur arrived. The morning of that day R’ Zalman lay in bed and informed the musical director that he had a headache and his throat hurt and there was no way he could perform. All attempts on the part of the director to pressure him to make the attempt in any case failed. R’ Zalman said he just could not perform.

The choirs were in their place and sang military songs beautifully, the chazanim’s voices thundered, and

the music of the orchestra filled the hall.

R’ Zalman the Chassid was lying down in a side room and quietly praying what he remembered by heart. When he finished, he began saying chapters of T’hillim in a sad, quiet tone. It was Yom Kippur, the holy and awesome day.

When he finished praying, R’ Zalman, weak from the fast, tried to rest a bit, when he suddenly heard a knock at the door. Three senior officers in the Russian army were there.

“Are you the singer Bronstein?” they asked.

“Yes,” replied R’ Zalman, and his heart fluttered in fear of what was to come.

The most senior of the men turned to R’ Zalman and said, “Bronstein, do you know what day it is today?”

R’ Zalman realized he was done for and he decided to stand by his decision with pride and strength.

“Of course I know, it’s Yom Kippur!”

The men’s faces lit up.

“Right,” they said, “and that’s why we’re here. We are Jews and we want to hear you sing something,

conquerors who invaded Russia. After Shacharis of Erev Yom Kippur, the Chassid Rav Nissan Nemenov asked my father, R' Mulle Gross, if there was any mashke in the house.

My father said there was, and R' Nissan came to our house and began farbrenging with my father. Word got around and slowly, many Chassidim began to join this farbrengen on the eve of the holy day. The many Chassidim farbrenged in our house and the mashke flowed like water.

It was only as the sun was starting to set that they all ran to a nearby pond, quickly immersed, and rushed to daven in the house set aside as a shul, because there was no time for the Seuda Mafsekas.

The usual "baal t'filla" for Kol

*When he finished  
davening, he realized  
it was nightfall and so  
he continued to daven  
Kol Nidrei and  
Maariv without  
eating the Seudas  
Mafsekas.*

Nidrei was the Chassid, R' Peretz Mochkin, but he had drunk many l'chaims... The Chassidim feared he would not be able to lead the davening but that t'filla of R' Peretz with the outpouring of the soul, was something the Chassidim hadn't

heard in years. He seemed to give out his entire being in a powerful eruption of the soul.

**THE BODY TREMBLES  
WHILE SAYING T'HILLIM**

The davening of the mashpia R' Nissan Nemenov was extraordinary throughout the year, all the more so on the Yomim Noraim. For all the t'fillos of the holy day he stood in a corner, his face aflame, and he davened with a Chassidic niggun that was an outpouring of the soul.

Rabbi  
Sholom Ber  
Butman  
remembers R'



something from Yom Kippur so we can remember this holy day, and feel its holiness."

R' Zalman blanched and he said, "How can I sing here when I didn't participate in the concert because I'm sick. If I start to sing they'll all come in!"

The officers nodded in understanding and said, "If so, let us go out to the forest that is behind the camp, where you can sing something for us without fear of anybody hearing you."

R' Zalman followed the officers and they silently walked among the trees until they arrived at a tree with broad branches.

Apparently, these high officers had come from observant Jewish families, had been drafted, and had risen in rank to general. Now, after a long break, they yearned for the warm Jewish life they had abandoned.

R' Zalman began the Kol Nidrei t'filla. Softly, he began with the traditional tune to the words, "With the consent of the Alm-ghty and the consent of the congregation, in the yeshiva up above and in the yeshiva down below, we permit the praying alongside the transgressors." How significant these words were...

The moist eyes of the officers spoke of the feelings of their hearts filled with longing for their pasts. R' Zalman's voice rose and overflowed with emotion.

He finished Kol Nidrei and immediately continued

with the heartbreaking tune for "U'nesaneh tokef k'dushas ha'yom." The officers shuddered as he recited, "And all people of this world pass before You like sheep ... and You count and record the soul of every living person."

His sweet tones took on a pleading quality, "Who will live and who will die, who a timely death and who in an untimely death; who will have peace and who will suffer; who will be lowered and who will be raised up." The heart felt a twinge and the tears flowed. "And T'shuva, T'filla, and Tz'daka avert the evil decree!"

R' Zalman opened his eyes and saw the three tough officers, whose appearance made every soldier quake, standing there bent over, crying like little children. It was the uncovering of the Jewish neshama in its purity.

R' Zalman felt that these were rare moments of inspiration and he ended with a portion of the t'filla from the Musaf K'dusha of Yom Kippur. "Shma Yisroel ... Hu Elokeinu Hu Avinu, Hu Malkeinu Hu Moshi'einu..."

"I put all my heart and soul into those awesome words," said R' Zalman Bronstein of Kfar Chabad years later. "At that moment, as the tears coursed down their faces, I saw how beautiful and elevated is the Jewish soul."

Nissan Nemenov's recitation of T'hillim on Rosh HaShana: R' Nissan would say T'hillim before davening, saying that he did so in order to arouse the heart before the davening.

Aside from that, he would say T'hillim every free moment he had on the two days of Rosh HaShana.

I remember seeing him saying T'hillim in the afternoon of one of the days of Rosh HaShana. He recited it while vigorously shuckling right and left, his voice very low, and he grasped his right ear so that he could hear what his lips were whispering.

As I watched him, I saw that his body suddenly began to tremble in an unusual way...

### T'FILLOS WITH LOUD CRIES AND INTENSE EMOTION

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Pevsner, shliach in France, relates:

I remember the Chassid, Rav Yisroel Noach Blinitzky, who came to the zal of Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Brunoy on Erev Yom Kippur, holding numerous handkerchiefs to wipe his tears. He sat at a table near the wall, his tallis covering his head, and remained that way throughout the day of Yom Kippur. His t'fillos were with loud cries and intense emotion, which gave the yeshiva a special atmosphere.

I will never forget his t'fillos on Yom Kippur.

### RECITING THE SHMA FOR HALF AN HOUR

The Judge Mr. Tzvi Tal relates: Rabbi Menachem Mendel



Kupershtoch (a Chassidic rav and dayan, one of the leaders of Aguch in Eretz Yisroel, who was a witness to the Rebbe's k'suba) was a shliach tzibbur and he melted hearts with his t'fillos.

I remember something about his davening from one Rosh HaShana. Each year, the night of Rosh HaShana, he would appear to daven with the tzibbur, but after everyone else left, he would remain alone in shul and only then begin to daven.

Some of the people, myself included, would stand behind the shutters and watch him. He davened with d'veikus and at length. His recitation of the Shma alone took over half an hour.

### THE LONGEST T'FILLA – ROSH HA'SHANA NIGHT

Rabbi Yeshaya

Horowitz (a distinguished Chabad rabbi who served 15 years as rav of the Chabad community in Tzfas and 30 years as rav in Canada) said all the t'fillos, the brachos and T'hillim with unusual fervor. His enthusiasm intensified in Elul when he learned Zohar with unimaginable spiritual arousal and chayus.

His longest t'filla was on Rosh HaShana night, as his son Rav Shmuel relates:

"At the Shmoneh Esrei prayer of the first day of Rosh HaShana, my father would take many hours with his davening with sweetness and chayus. There were people who



finished davening and went home and ate the Yom Tov meal, who returned later to shul to be blessed by him with a shana tova, but he was still standing and davening Shmoneh Esrei..."

### RIVER OF TEARS

On the Yomim Noraim, Rabbi Chaim Mendel Rosenberg (a distinguished Chassid in Yerushalayim who served as a maggid shiur in Yeshivas Toras Emes) was transformed into a model of d'veikus. On the three days of Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur he did not speak any mundane talk. During this time, his t'fillos were a unique avoda.

For many hours, he stood in his place with utter humility and purified himself before his Maker with an outpouring of the heart and with kabbalas ol malchus Shamayim, with rivers of tears pouring from his eyes. The holy fire, which was normally hidden within him, broke out unrestrainedly.

### FROM TEARS TO JOY

On Rosh HaShana, the Chassid R' Berish Rosenberg would serve as the "reader" for the shofar-blower, R' Aryeh Leib Lipsker. During the t'kios R' Berish wailed, until the women in the Ezras Nashim burst into tears.

Yet on Motzaei Yom Kippur, when he was certain that the Jewish people were sealed for good, he didn't stop dancing even when the others rushed to go and eat.



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## Mivtza: HELPING THE NEEDY

To every member of the Lubavitcher community:

During this month of preparation for Rosh Hashonoh, the "head" of the New Year, we fondly recall our Rebbe's words that this is an especially auspicious time for strengthening our deep bond of Hiskashrus with the "Rosh Bnei Yisroel," the "head" of the Jewish people and leader of the generation.

Our Rebbeim explain that **an important way to strengthen Hiskashrus is by participating in the Rebbe's activities and concerns, consequently, by supporting an organization that brings together a number of these activities, the Hiskashrus is greater and stronger.** Such an organization is Kupas Rabbeinu, which seeks to continue many of the Rebbe's activities and concerns without change from the way he would conduct them himself.

Every year at this time, the Rebbe would call upon us to contribute generously to help needy families with their extra expenses for the coming month's many Yomim Tovim. This also coincides with the special emphasis during this month of giving extra Tzedokah, (indicated in the Hebrew letters of the word "Elul," as explained in many Sichos etc.), as a vital way of preparing ourselves for the new year and arousing Divine mercy upon us.

**We therefore appeal to every individual man and woman to contribute generously to Kupas Rabbeinu, enabling us to fulfill the Rebbe's desire to help all those who anxiously await our help. The greater your contribution, the more we can accomplish.**

Your generous contribution to Kupas Rabbeinu will be the appropriate vessel for receiving the abundant blessings of the Rebbe, who is its Nasi, that you may be blessed with a Ksiva Vachasima Tova for a good and sweet year, materially and spiritually. May it help to bring the full revelation of Moshiach - our Rebbe - immediately now!

Wishing a Ksiva Vachasima Tova for a good and sweet year,

**In the name of Vaad Kupas Rabbeinu**

**Rabbi Sholom Mendel Simpson**

**Rabbi Yehuda Leib Groner**

P.S. Of course, you may send to Kupas Rabbeinu all contributions that you would send to the Rebbe; all will be devoted to the activities to which the Rebbe would devote them.

You may also send Maimad, **Keren-Hashono** (this coming year 5766 - 354 days), Vov Tishrei, Yud Gimmel Tishrei Magbis etc. to Kupas Rabbeinu.

P.S. Please send all correspondence only to the following address.

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# SHLICHUS IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

BY CHANIE NUSSBAUM

*Last year's news reads like this year's news. One year ago, four hurricanes hit states on the Eastern seaboard. There were winds clocked at 300 kilometers an hour, which destroyed homes and cars. Hundreds of people were killed and cities were bereft of water and electricity. The damage done was in the tens of billions of dollars. \* Shluchos Shulamit Konikov of Satellite Beach, Florida and Rachel Bercovits of Miami Beach, Florida told Beis Moshiach about how they contended with the storm and about the new insights they had Erev Rosh HaShana.*

The current rash of hurricanes may have made us forget that one year ago, the East Coast was struck by four hurricanes. Hurricane Ivan killed 33 people, 14 of them in Florida. In addition, another 70 people were killed on the Caribbean islands of Granada, Jamaica, and the Cayman Islands. Ivan was a mighty storm, which sent huge waves onto the shore and set off flooding which destroyed homes, cars, and people.

As of last year, Ivan was the storm with the most fatalities in the U.S. since Hurricane Floyd in 5759. But that was before Hurricane Katrina ...

In the face of Hurricane Ivan, over a million people, from New Orleans until northwestern Florida, evacuated their homes. The meteorologists assigned a rare category 5 to Hurricane Ivan and the winds were clocked at up to 300 kilometers an hour. No wonder

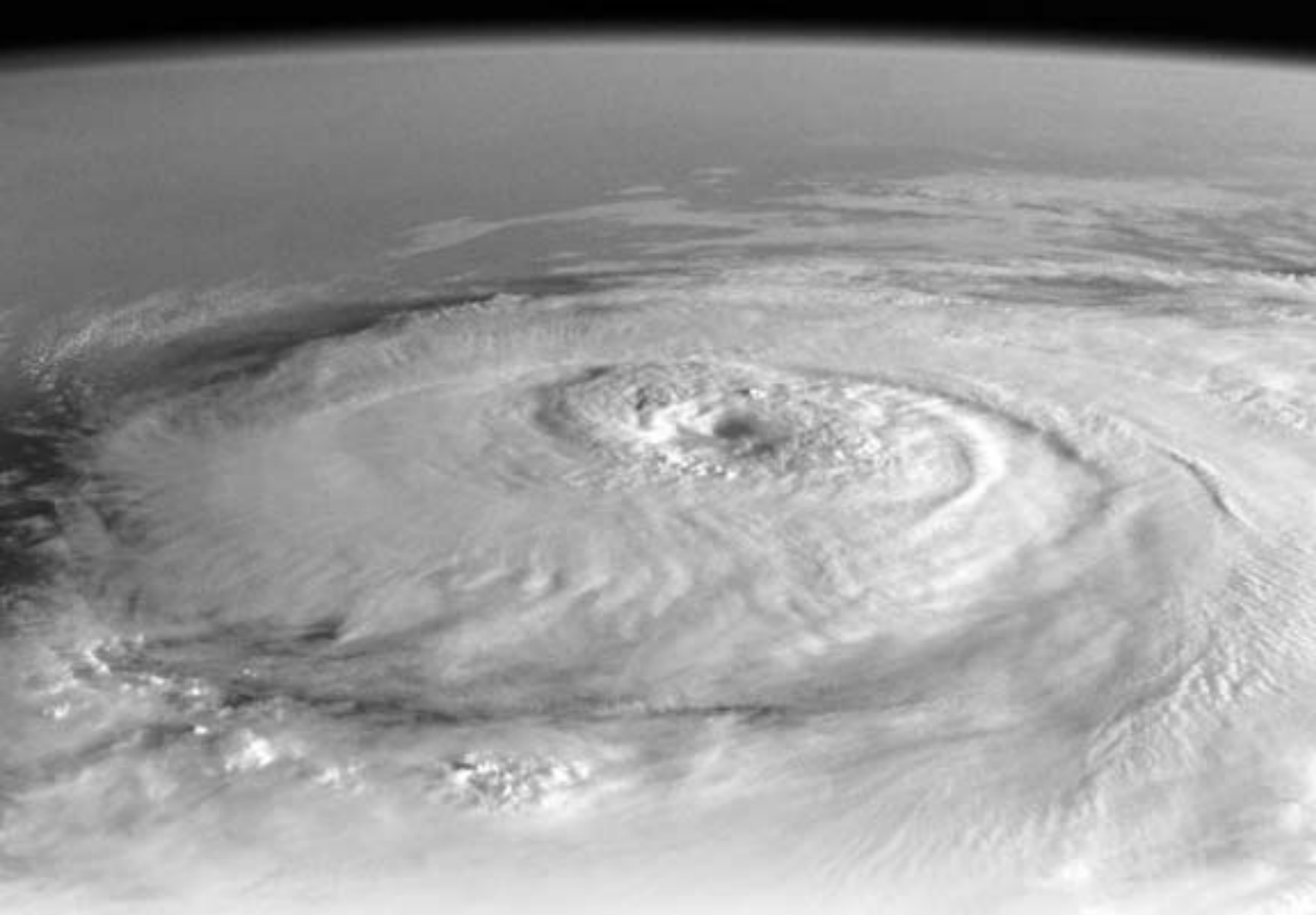
there was so much damage done.

This storm hit one month after Hurricane Charlie, which killed 40 people, and before that were Hurricanes Frances, Fabian, and Isabel. Three hurricanes hit Florida the summer of 2004, and one quarter of a million people were left without electricity and tremendous damage to their homes. 2004 was called the worst hurricane season since 1964.

Many residents of the coast of Florida left their homes while others stocked up on food and boarded their windows and doors. Among the millions of people living in that area are shluchim and their families. We spoke with two local shluchim to hear how they dealt with the disaster. Both Shulamit Konikov of Satellite Beach and Rachel Bercovits of Miami Beach said the hurricane actually strengthened them and their families.

They haven't forgotten what happened in 5752 when Hurricane Andrew threatened their area. The local authorities, the municipalities and the police began evacuating the residents. This was after the Rebbe's first stroke on 27 Adar and the shluchim reported the news of the hurricane to the Rebbe's secretaries.

Rabbi Groner reported this



information to the Rebbe, and on the shluchim's behalf, Rabbi Groner asked the Rebbe whether they should leave their homes for a safer area. The Rebbe shook his head in the negative. Rabbi Groner asked again to verify the answer and once again, the Rebbe shook his head indicating they should not leave.

Wanting to be absolutely sure, Rabbi Groner asked a third time, wording it: should the shluchim stay home. And the Rebbe smiled and motioned with his hand to indicate that nothing would happen.

"The slightest motion of the Rebbe's holy hands can convey important instructions, directions for us to live by," say the shluchos.

Shulamit Konikov: "Despite the panic, we saw miracles from the very start. The day before the last



Rabbi Konikov

hurricane (that began before Rosh HaShana), the radio news said that the power of the storm would abate and go down from a level 4 to a level 2. With all the hardships, we saw miracles every step of the way. It was amazing and touching to see the beautiful achdus among the people, expressing a deep concern for others.

"Around 18 Elul, when we had to leave the area for a few days because of the storm, the shluchim from the surrounding area called to invite us to stay with them. This moved me to tears. I take this opportunity to give a heartfelt thanks to the shluchim we stayed with.

"While leaving for a safer place, we met an Israeli who told my husband he wanted to put on t'fillin in order to thank Hashem

that he was escaping the hurricane. At that moment I thought, maybe it was only for this neshama that we had to leave our house. That was only the first encounter.

“Throughout the trip, both leaning and returning home, we met people, Jews and non-Jews, who asked how we were and asked how they could be of help. We asked Hashem, if only in the merit of this achdus that we personally witnessed, to bring the complete Redemption.”

\* \* \*

Shulamit went straight to discussing their sudden departure from their home, but I wanted to hear more of the technical details.

**How do you simply pack up and quickly leave home? How do you organize yourselves? What do you pack when you don't know how long you will be away and what the house will look like after the storm hits?**

“When we heard about the hurricane,” says Shulamit, going back to the beginning, “we began to pack those things which we had to have. We had to do this as quickly as possible. There was no time to go through our things. And we didn't know for sure where we were going, whether to Miami or to Georgia. We also were apprehensive about what would await us upon our return, if we would return. What would we find - if we would find anything?”

“During that difficult time, I felt that the hurricane was also coming to teach us about what is truly significant in life and what is extraneous. We were thinking about the house and our possessions, and decided we would take as much as we could with us. But the main thing was our family and our purpose was: life and shlichus. The cheshbon ha'nefesh I made with my family was a perfect preparation for Rosh HaShana. We learned from personal experience

rejoiced. Yes, we were tremendously happy, like on Simchas Torah. We experienced the joy of Simchas Torah even before Simchas Torah!

“We discovered that the roof of the shul in the Chabad house had a hole in it, but this wouldn't interfere with the davening there on Rosh HaShana. We did not forget to thank Hashem for this too, because we heard that other shuls had been destroyed and people were left without a place to daven on Rosh HaShana.

“Among the many people who came to our shul on Rosh HaShana, were also some “Conservative” Jews, who came to daven with us because of what they called, ‘their great appreciation for Chabad.’

“When we returned home after the storm we had to prepare for Shabbos. For three hours, I searched for eggs throughout the city and didn't find any. The city



The sign being put back up for Yom Kippur

what is important in life.

“Throughout our stay far away from home, there was tremendous tension,” Shulamit admits. “We wanted to know what was hit and what remained, if anything. When we returned home and found our house intact despite the hurricane, we thanked Hashem and



Removing the sign before the storm struck





Rabbi Konikov at a ceremony at the Kennedy Space Center

had been without electricity for a few days and many food items spoiled. Right after the storm it was really rough with three millions residents of Florida without electricity, the groceries empty, and very hot and humid weather. If there is no electricity, there is no air conditioning!

“But we did not forget to thank Hashem and the Rebbe, our meshaleiach, in whose merit we manage through every moment of shlichus. With the miracles we personally experienced, we felt the Rebbe close to us. We must carry on with our work for the Rebbe’s closeness and our avoda are interdependent.”

Although Rabbi Konikov’s picture appeared in all the media as he had the Chabad house sign removed so it wouldn’t be destroyed, the shluchim are back at work (and the sign was put back up).

\* \* \*

“When we heard about the approaching hurricane,” says Rachel Bercovits, “we didn’t forget how the Rebbe changed the course of the storm back in 5752 with a wave of his hand. When you live with the Rebbe, it’s a whole lot

*When we returned home and found our house intact despite the hurricane, we thanked Hashem and rejoiced. Yes, we were tremendously happy, like on Simchas Torah. We experienced the joy of Simchas Torah even before Simchas Torah!*

easier!

“Up until a few hours before the hurricane hit, we didn’t know whether it would reach us or not. Slow and steady pressure from changing winds could have veered the storm towards the north or the south. In the end, the storm did not come, but we had moments of fear and tension. The only thing

that helped us was the thought of the Rebbe’s smile and the wave of his hand.

“My husband bought a plane ticket for New York for 18 Elul. It was right at the beginning of the storm and we didn’t think my husband would make it. But he decided to fly and believed in the power of the meshaleiach. Indeed, he was one of the last people to board the plane. Right after that, the airport was closed because of the impending storm.

“When my husband was asked in New York, ‘What?! You ran away from the storm?’ he answered, ‘What do you mean? The best proof that I didn’t run away is that my wife and children are still in Miami!’

“As the Rebbe’s shluchim, we made a number of spiritual preparations like checking our mezuzos. When I went to the store and there was an atmosphere of confusion and upheaval like before a war, I smiled to myself because I remembered the Rebbe’s smile and knew that nothing bad would happen, with Hashem’s help.

“Even when my son wanted to put sandbags in front of my husband’s office, my husband told him it was unnecessary, and that with Hashem’s help nothing bad would happen. However, my son was nervous and he went to get some sand. A police officer was standing there and didn’t let him take any. We saw Divine providence in this and trusted that nothing bad would happen.”

I was amazed by the strength of this bitachon and asked Rachel what went through her mind during those days of uncertainty.

“I’ll tell you what I was thinking. I asked myself: Why is Hashem sending storms right before Rosh HaShana?



“The answer I thought of was that Hashem loves us so much and wants us to make our preparations properly, to take things more seriously. When there is uncertainty, you suddenly think more about the purpose of life.

“Even when you take the very real possibility into account that your house and car may be under water in a few hours, you are aware of the purpose of life. I think there is no greater t’shuva than this as a preparation for Rosh HaShana. It is only after a preparation like this that you know what to daven for on Rosh HaShana.

“Before Rosh HaShana we saw how G-d is omnipotent: unleashing the forces of nature, 2.8 million people are forced to flee from their homes. And a hurricane teaches us that the most advanced technology

***“I asked myself: Why is Hashem sending storms right before Rosh HaShana? Hashem...wants us to make our preparations properly, to take things more seriously. When there is uncertainty, you suddenly think more about the purpose of life.”***

is in Hashem’s hands, and we must use the time given to us, every minute, every second.

“We get swept up in our daily occupations but we have to keep focused on the truth and increase our avoda and not allow a wind to uproot us.

“It’s hard to absorb the magnitude of the miracles. On the news, they reported that forty huge yachts sank, and we weren’t harmed in any way. The hurricane taught us the meaning of eternal life. The hurricane gave us spiritual work and showed us how everything is ready. We must prepare a kabbalas panim, because we are going to re-conquer the city, we just have to prepare the party. The hurricane gave us a point of focus and the answer to the important questions in life.”

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# THE SHOFAR OF MOSHIACH

BY RABBI NECHEMIA SCHMERLING, SHLIACH IN K FAR YONA

*Already back on Yud-Alef Nissan 5751 the Rebbe wrote, “and the time is a contributing factor, Yemos HaMoshiach” or as the Rebbe said in a yechidus of 20 Kislev 5752, “the preparation for this is in ‘Yemos HaMoshiach,’ which we are now in, literally.” \* A Chassid who hears this, is actually hearing the Shofar of Moshiach. Especially when in recent years, the Shofar of the Rebbe is heard from one end of the world to the other, particularly with the singing of “Yechi.” \* An essay on the Shofar of Moshiach in our days and the ways of Chassidim.*

Mivtza Shofar is one of the special campaigns that the Rebbe innovated. The Rebbe said that the shofar should be blown wherever there are Jews.

If we think a bit about this Shofar Campaign, we might wonder about it, for according to *Shulchan Aruch*, there are various qualifications that a chazan, ideally, should have, and there are many laws about the blowing of the shofar and the qualities of the one who

blows it. Yet, the Rebbe wanted all his Chassidim to go out on Rosh HaShana and blow the shofar, saying this was the job of every person. This is something that we never saw any other gadol b'Yisroel do.

Furthermore, on Yom Tov there is an inyan of rejoicing with one's wife and children, yet the Rebbe wants his Chassidim to travel to him or to be busy with his mivtzaim, such as Mivtza Shofar. So too, with regard to other Yomim Tovim. This conduct

seems to be the opposite of what it says in *Shulchan Aruch*, which we've always been accustomed to follow.

I think that there are groups that say or think: Look at how those Lubavitchers tire themselves out on Yom Tov, running around in the attempt to (maybe) find some forsaken Jew so they can blow the shofar for him. It's definitely not accepted as something logical or reasonable.

If you examine the Rebbe's amazing hanhaga, you sense that beyond the *Shulchan Aruch* (which consists of four sections), there's what Chassidim call the “Fifth *Shulchan Aruch*.” This is not anything that ch"v goes against *Shulchan Aruch*, for we know that everything the Rebbe does is according to *Shulchan Aruch*.

The *Shulchan Aruch* is the foundation, of course, but there are numerous additions that are meant to “increase light in the world.”

Someone asked the Rebbe in yechidus why he keeps on devising new campaigns, things that were never done before. The Rebbe said: What can I do when the “opposing side” increases the darkness? I have no choice but to increase the light and holiness.

Someone wrote to the Rebbe that it wasn't customary in his home for

girls to light Shabbos candles. The Rebbe wrote him back, asking, "Did your grandfather read newspapers?"

In other words, the greater the descent into undesirable areas, the more we must increase the light and k'dusha. Years ago, there were also complaints about Chassidim who added things that are not in *Shulchan Aruch*. There's the story that people complained to Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzinsky (d. 1940) that Chassidim added Yud-Tes Kislev as a "Rosh HaShana." R' Chaim Ozer lamented: They add, while we subtract...

The Rebbe constantly added, for this is the remedy for the last generation of Galus, which is also the first generation of Geula. The Rebbe added in k'dusha in inyanim that perhaps didn't exist in previous generations, but we do not see that

the Rebbe retreated in inyanim of Torah, Yahadus, and Mitzvos.

\* \* \*

The Rebbe's Mivtza Shofar, perhaps symbolizes, more than anything else, the inyan of "Shofar shel Moshiach." It's an inyan that was revealed specifically in our generation. Jews go all over in search of another Jew to blow the shofar for him or her. There was never anything like this before in our history. But if you examine how the Rebbe does things, and have the ability to discern the way the Rebbe refined the "last generation," you discern and hear the footsteps of Moshiach, the Shofar of Moshiach.

This is the goal, to bring about the hisgalus of Moshiach, in these final moments of Galus. The Rebbe demands that, in this final period of Galus, we go beyond the *Shulchan*

*Aruch*. Where there are instances when people do less than it says in *Shulchan Aruch*, as well as facing challenges, Heaven forbid, to diminish Torah and Yiddishkait, the "soldiers of the house of Dovid" lead the way and increase k'dusha, even when at first glance it seems these are things which have no source in halacha. Those with a sixth sense know what it says in the "*Fifth Shulchan Aruch*," and they know that it contains it all.

There's no question that this is the chiddush of our generation. The Rebbe began the process of "blow the great shofar for our liberation," that includes all of the mivtzaim and all the activities and additions in Torah and mitzvos. Let's not close our eyes and try to forget that every chiddush of the Rebbe was opposed and fought against. Rabbanim



Painting: Zalman Kleinman

opposed the Rebbe and there were complaints about every mitvza that the Rebbe initiated. Not one of them gave any credit to Chabad, regarding those holy mitvzaim, many of which are copied by other groups today.

When the Rebbe announced Mitvza T'fillin and there wasn't immediate opposition, the Rebbe said the lack of opposition made him nervous! Since this was such a holy endeavor, one would expect mighty opposition to it... Bottom line: you cannot point at a single thing the Rebbe initiated that didn't engender opposition, even from groups that ostensibly liked Chabad, claiming they were concerned about Chabad appearing "normal."

The complaint that Chabad doesn't follow *Shulchan Aruch* didn't start today. A good friend of mine told me at a farbrengen that his father was in jail in Russia with a Misnaged. When Shabbos came, the learned Misnaged had a ready excuse for everything, why he was allowed to do various forbidden acts on Shabbos. There was *shvus*, *oneg Shabbos*, not to mention *pikuach nefesh*. He was an expert in *Shulchan Aruch*.

Meanwhile, his father the Chassid did nothing. They both kept Shabbos, but what kind of Shabbos did the Litvak observe and what kind of Shabbos did the simple Lubavitcher observe?

The Rebbe in his sichos says that there were complaints about the Rebbe Rayatz too – that according to halacha it was forbidden for him to be *moser nefesh* against the communists. They even said that this went against the *Shulchan Aruch*.

Look at what resulted from those who "kept" the *Shulchan Aruch* in Russia: nothing remains of them. And look at what happened with the Chabad Chassidim who went to war against the communists and were *moser nefesh*, even at times when

seemingly they were not required or allowed to be *moser nefesh*.

There's a vort from the Kotzker Rebbe about the difference between a Misnaged and a Chassid: A Misnaged fears the *Shulchan Aruch*; a Chassid fears G-d.

The same holds true when we talk about bringing Moshiach. There is the well-known sicha of the Rebbe about the talmidim of the Arizal whom he asked to accompany him to Yerushalayim. They replied that they would first go and consult with their wives, which is proper according to Torah and *Shulchan Aruch*. But because they delayed, the Geula was delayed by hundreds of years.

***What can I do when the "opposing side" increases the darkness? I have no choice but to increase the light and holiness.***

The lesson the Rebbe derives from this story is that you cannot bring Moshiach with the *Shulchan Aruch* alone. There should have been bittul to their Rebbe even if it seemed that the Arizal was going against *Shulchan Aruch* by not instructing them to consult with their wives first.

In order to bring Moshiach, an altogether different type of avoda is required, to go beyond the *Shulchan Aruch*, with total bittul and constant adding in holiness and light. This innovation, and the drawing down of this lofty avoda, was accomplished by the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach, and as such represents the Shofar of Moshiach.

This is the chiddush of Moshiach, when Jews in this last generation, stand ready with the utmost bittul and add in k'dusha and inyanim of Moshiach and Torah, the likes of which were never seen before in earlier generations. The Shofar of Moshiach teaches us that only in the way the Rebbe leads us can we march towards Moshiach without being embarrassed, G-d forbid.

The concept of a shofar in Chassidus is that the sound of the shofar is simple, and this represents kabbalas ol and adding in ways of k'dusha that go beyond reason. The approach is based on the principle that the more you add in Torah and mitzvos, the less you will detract from Torah and yiras Shamayim.

There are things in Chassidus that are definitely in the category of hergesh-feelings, because you cannot explain them rationally to someone who wants to understand everything according to *Shulchan Aruch*. This is especially true for the main chiddush of the Rebbe in our generation, the eternal connection between Rebbe and Chassid and Hashem.

The inyan of the Rebbe not being an "interrupting intermediary" G-d forbid, but a "connecting intermediary," goes beyond what we can understand. In a sicha of Acharon shel Pesach 5710, the Rebbe himself said, "I haven't seen this said explicitly in Toras HaChassidus, for it is a hergesh, and therefore, whoever wants to feel it, will feel it, and whoever doesn't, I don't want to argue with him; he can have it his way."

These are not things that you can argue about. Those who want to be involved in this can thereby receive the hashpaos and inyanim according to the concepts that the Rebbe innovated and brought down to the world, and those who don't want it,

can have it their way.

The same applies to “blow the great shofar for our liberation,” the shofar of Moshiach. There are things that pertain to the Yemos HaMoshiach, but since we are still within certain limitations of Galus, you cannot force them on people. However, those who want to live this way can be said to live with Moshiach.

Years have passed since the Rebbe shlita MH”M announced that the only avoda that remains is kabbalas p’nei Moshiach. Additionally, we have an abundance of amazing sichos in which the Rebbe said things we never heard before, namely, that we are in the Yemos HaMoshiach. As the Rebbe wrote on 11 Nissan 5751 to Rabbi Sholom Dovber Wolpo, “and the time is a contributing factor, Yemos

HaMoshiach,” or as he said on 20 Kislev, 5752, “Yemos HaMoshiach, which we find ourselves in now, literally.”

A Chassid, who hears this and listens, is actually hearing the Shofar of Moshiach. Especially when in recent years, the Shofar of the Rebbe is heard from one end of the world to the other, particularly with the singing of “Yechi.” Chassidim know that this is the only thing “to live with,” and not G-d forbid in a way that dismisses the *Shulchan Aruch*, but to **increase** in Torah and mitzvos! So that everything is an inseparable part of the chayus of a Chassid that the Rebbe MH”M is coming and redeeming us immediately.

The chayus of Chassidim today, who don’t want to be separated from the Rebbe for even a second, is to

live with the emuna that the Rebbe is Moshiach and to publicize this with the singing of “Yechi.” Simply put, whoever lives with the inyan that the Rebbe is Moshiach, lives with the inyan of Moshiach. And among those who prefer to keep the fact of the Rebbe’s being Moshiach under wraps, the tendency is to actually keep the whole topic of Moshiach undercover.

\* \* \*

As Rosh HaShana approaches, and we hope to hear the shofar in the Beis HaMikdash from the Shofar of Moshiach, may we see the fulfillment of the prayer we daven daily, “Blow the great shofar for our liberation and raise up a banner to gather our exiles and join us together from the four corners of the world to our land...”

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# IN THE CELLARS OF THE N.K.V.D. AND THE PALACE OF THE KING

BY RABBI SCHNEUR ZALMAN CHANIN

*Part 2 in the biography of R' Shmuel Nimotin, father-in-law of R' Chaikel Chanin. \* His life was comprised of terrible suffering and persecution as well as spiritual delights. \* Between one incarceration and the next, there were three occasions when R' Shmuel took part in the preparations and was present at the meeting of the Rogatchover Gaon and the Rebbe Rayatz.*

## CHAPTER 8

### THE WOODEN SUITCASE AND THE GENERAL

My grandfather, Rav Shmuel Nimotin, was known as a distinguished Jew and a man who could keep a secret. He had a fine reputation among gentiles too. Even government ministers and leaders of renegade groups like the communists and the Yevsektzia who hated him as a religious person, respected him as a

reliable person. They nicknamed him *sviyetoi* (holy). When there was a secret they were afraid to relate, even to their wives, or when they wanted to hide something expensive, they went to R' Shmuel Nimotin.

But it was his righteousness, his reliability, his honesty, and his innocence, which included some measure of naiveté, that nearly cost him his life.

In the year 5679 (1918), during World War I, many generals came to

Petersburg, each for reasons of his own. The common denominator among them was that they were all thieves who had been involved in looting during the war. Instead of giving the loot to the government, they hid it.

A famous general by the name of Abainik came to Petersburg for military consultation. Before he left, he looked for a place to hide his valuables until he returned from the front. He was ready to pay good money for the favor and asked friends to recommend a reliable person who would be willing to guard his precious package until he returned.

Whoever he asked recommended Shmuel Nimotin. Even at the inn, as they drank and celebrated, when he asked his friends about an honest man, they all said: in Leningrad is a Jew, a holy man, by the name of Shmuel Nimotin and you can trust him completely. The general was thrilled that they all recommended the same individual and he took his adjutant along and went to my grandfather's house.

When he arrived at the house, he



asked to speak privately with my grandfather. They went into a room and closed the door. The general said that since had heard that my grandfather could keep a secret and was honest, he was going to ask him a big favor, for payment of course.

He had a small suitcase that contained a valuable treasure and secret military documents. Since he was going to be traveling for a few days and was afraid to take his treasure with him, he wanted to deposit it with my grandfather. He would return, he said, in a short time and would take his belongings. He asked that this remain an absolute secret.

My grandfather innocently agreed to guard the general's suitcase. It was made of wood and was locked, and it had a royal seal on it. The general kept the key.

But the general did not return and did not send anyone to take the suitcase. Time passed and the communists took part of my grandfather's apartment from him. The crowding was terrible. My grandfather took the suitcase and hid it outside the house, underground, in a shed.

## POWDER OF REBELLION

Wartime was a time of distress and



R' Shmuel Nimotin

starvation. The hunger and cold were overwhelming and people walked the streets in search of firewood.

One day, when the children went in search of wood to put into the stove, they decided to break a small wooden, tumbledown structure in the yard. This would provide them with firewood and nobody was using the hut anyway. So they broke the hut and the household rejoiced over the large quantity of fuel.

When my grandfather noticed the

wood, he asked where they had gotten it from and they told him. Not only had they broken apart the hut, they had found a wooden suitcase, rotting in parts, which they had also broken apart. They had thrown out the contents.

My grandfather was understandably horrified for he realized immediately that this was the suitcase he had hidden. What could he do? He was responsible for it and if the general were to return, he would have to pay him, perhaps with his life. With the children's help, they found what they had discarded from the suitcase and to his surprise it was powder.

Naturally, R' Shmuel didn't know what this dust was but he realized that if the general had given it to him to guard that it was precious powder that the army needed. He showed it to some people but nobody could help him. Then he remembered that he had a friend who was in the Navy and perhaps he could solve the riddle. The sailor took a sample of the dust and gave it to a pharmacist to analyze.

On Shabbos, a unit of soldiers surrounded the house. Some of them entered the house to do a search and interrogate the occupants, including R' Shmuel. His answer to all the questions they asked was, I am a Jew and today is the holy Shabbos, and I do not speak of mundane matters on Shabbos. If you want an answer, wait until Shabbos is over.

The soldiers didn't care about Shabbos, nor did they care about the tears and pleading of the family. They placed R' Shmuel's hands and feet in chains and threw him into a vehicle that was designated for dangerous prisoners. They brought him to the secret police NKVD station and beat and tortured him so he would answer their questions, but he insisted: It is Shabbos! I do not speak of mundane matters on Shabbos!

After Shabbos, he answered all



their questions and innocently told them the truth and the name of the general who gave him the suitcase. However, they in their wickedness did not believe him and threw him into jail.

### FROM DEATH TO LIFE

You can well imagine the atmosphere in my grandmother's home. They went about like mourners. They were enormously worried about my grandfather for this was wartime and the Bolshevik Revolution was in full force and people's lives were worthless. Not only did the family not know where R' Shmuel had been taken, but neither did they know what he was being accused of and how he was.

After some research and searching, they located the sailor and asked him to find out what was going on. A few days later, he returned and told them that the powder was medical grade opium (morphine). The police did not believe my grandfather's story about the suitcase and that someone had given it to him to hold. They said that not only was he a thief but a traitor. That is, during the war, opium was extremely precious because they used it as an anesthetic for soldiers who "fought for the dear motherland, Mother Russia." Stealing opium, a scarce commodity, was considered traitorous.

The accusation against R' Shmuel was severe and the NKVD did not want to wait for the usual process in a court of law which could take time. They wanted to judge him quickly. So they formed a troika of three judges, who sentenced my grandfather to death by firing squad.

The Nimotin family was beside themselves. And when news of the troika's decision got out, R' Shmuel's friends were devastated. However, they did not give up but pleaded for his life. They spoke to various government figures, until, with Hashem's help, they were successful.

After six months in jail, my grandfather was released, a broken man, sick and weak. This was his first arrest.

### YET ANOTHER SUITCASE

In 5680 (1920) when the news came of the passing of the Rebbe Rashab, my grandfather decided to travel to Rostov immediately in order to be with the Rebbe Rayatz. This was during the Revolution, but he did not think about the dangers of traveling. He tore kria as a talmid does for his teacher, especially a teacher he is close to, and took his stick and bag and secretly left before the members of the

*The police did not believe my grandfather's story about the suitcase and that someone had given it to him to hold. They said that not only was he a thief but a traitor.*

house would dissuade him from going.

On the train, he got a place on the upper berth and under him slept a famous actor from the Machat theater in Moscow. In the middle of the night, someone stole the actor's suitcase and so he complained to the authorities. They called in the police and their first suspicion fell upon poor R' Shmuel, who slept on the upper bunk.

They brought him in chains to the GPU office for an interrogation. He was released after a few hours due to lack of evidence.

### THE SUN SET AND THE SUN ROSE

After the passing of the Rebbe Rashab, my grandfather went to Rostov to the Rebbe Rayatz at every opportunity. He did not wait for a special day in the calendar but just packed his belongings and picked up and went.

The following is a letter from 13 Tishrei 5684 written by Zev Wolf Savashinsky who was the son of my grandfather's sister, Chana Feiga, to his grandfather, Rav Yehoshua Nimotin:

**Shmuel came for Yom Kippur from Rostov for he was there for Rosh HaShana at the Rebbe and came with amazement over the giluyim ... There's no other news. His restaurant feeds people and my father's store sells kosher slaughtered meat [his father, Rav Moshe Isaac was a shochet and had kabbala from the Rogatchover Gaon] ... and I haven't seen your son Avrohom for a few months ...**

My uncle, my mother's brother, Refael, told me that in 5684 Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim opened in Nevel and my grandfather wanted to send him and his brother Yosef to learn there.

Before they went to Nevel, their father took them to the Rebbe to ask for a bracha. At the yechidus, my grandfather said, "My sons are going to Nevel to learn in Tomchei T'mimim and I request a bracha that the Rebbe bless them to be G-d-fearing Jews."

The Rebbe said to the boys, "Try to daven from a siddur and try to serve as baal korei. If you cannot read from the Torah then at least look into the Torah while it is being read." And the Rebbe added with a smile, "Don't wander around in the beis midrash 'among the straps,'" i.e., referring to the straps of t'fillin. That is how they used to refer to wandering around among those who were davening.

R' Avrohom Maiyor (Drizin) was the rosh yeshiva in Nevel. He was still

a bachur himself but despite his young age delivered deep shiurim in Gemara to 18-19-year-old bachurim. The talmidim were thrilled when their rosh yeshiva became engaged to the daughter of the local shochet, the mashpia Rav Zalman Moshe HaYitzchaki. Their joy was double as they rejoiced with him in his joy and looked forward to a bit of vacation.

According to my uncle Refael's testimony, they did not end up having a break. On the day of the wedding R' Avrohom Maiyor gave a shiur and stayed in yeshiva until the learning session was over at seven in the evening. Then he went to his own wedding. The next morning he supervised the T'mimim early in the morning, as usual, as they learned Chassidus.

When my uncle told me this he added: As talmidim, this made an enormous impression on us and our admiration for him grew tremendously because we appreciated his qualities as rosh yeshiva. We saw how to him the yeshiva came first and only after that came his personal needs.

## THE REBBE AND THE GAON

I already mentioned about the friendship between Yehoshua Nimotin and the Rogatchover Gaon. This connection extended to his son Shmuel, who accompanied the Rebbe Rayatz on his visit to the Gaon.

The Rebbe highly esteemed the Gaon. When the Rebbe Rayatz went to Leningrad in 5684, he visited the Rogatchover at his home. Since the Gaon was older than the Rebbe, therefore, apparently, the Rebbe felt he should be the first to visit him in his home and after that, the Rogatchover visited the Rebbe.

The Rebbe took R' Shmuel on the visit. My father related, quoting his father that the Rebbe prepared for the visit and considered it very important, like a meeting of kings. The Rebbe asked my father if his clothes looked appropriate. And he said with a smile, "Tell me Shmuel, are the ends even?" The Rebbe was referring to cuffs at the ends of the sleeves (as was customary in those days that the collar and the ends of the sleeves were not sewn to the shirt, and only those who could afford it bought and wore them). Before leaving the house, the Rebbe stood tall and his holy face shone like

that of an angel.

When R' Shmuel went in to tell the Gaon that the Rebbe had arrived, the Gaon immediately went out to greet him. He brought the Rebbe into his room and they sat together for two hours.

Some time later, the Rebbe called R' Shmuel and said, "Shmuel, go take a buggy to greet the Rogatchover Gaon." And R' Shmuel went and brought the Gaon to visit the Rebbe.

R' Shmuel saw how the Rogatchover acted with the greatest respect. When he told the Gaon he had come from the Rebbe to bring him there, the Gaon said, "Ah right, that is what we agreed upon. The Nasi is calling!" and the Gaon asked for his coat and was ready to go.

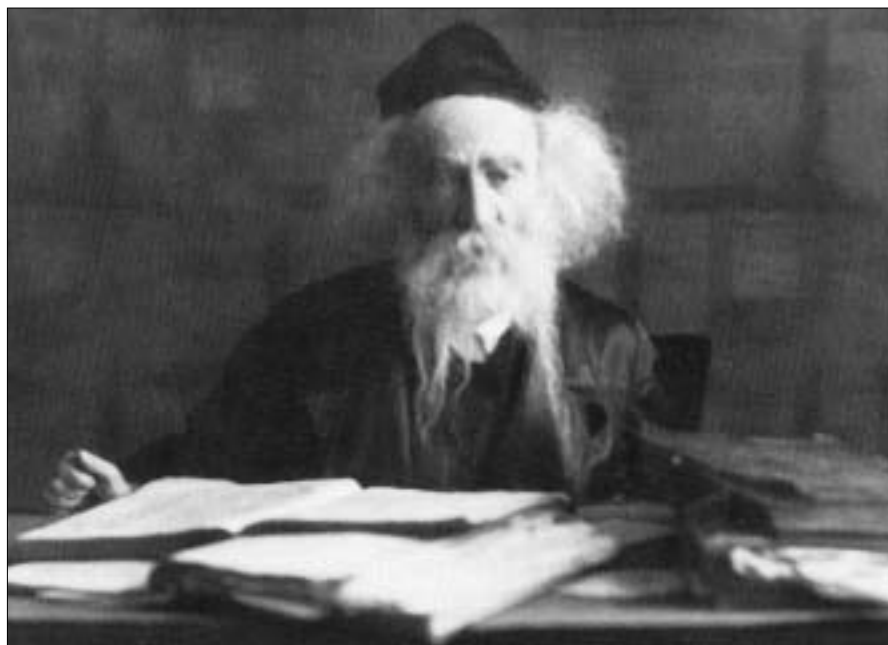
His Rebbetzin said the Gaon still hadn't eaten and the Gaon replied, "She is right." The Rebbetzin served a light meal of sprats (small fish like sardines), a cup of milk and a cookie. The Gaon took a fork, ate the eye of the fish and took a sip of the milk. Then he said, "We must hurry. The Nasi is waiting."

When my grandfather arrived back at the Rebbe with the buggy that brought the Gaon, the Rebbe came out to greet him and they sat together for some time and then the Rebbe accompanied the Gaon and they parted.

My father said that to the best of his memory, his father said that he was present on three occasions at meetings between the Rebbe and the Rogatchover Gaon.

## PREPARING FOR THE SANHEDRIN

The following is an interesting letter R' Shmuel sent his father about the Rogatchover Gaon, which describes the meeting of the Gaon and the Rebbe Rayatz. It's interesting how even then, the Rebbe and the Gaon



The Rogatchover Gaon

prepared the world for the coming of Moshiach.

B"H 8 Teives

To my dear parents yichyu, dear father,

Yesterday the delight of our eyes, the Gaon yichyeh, traveled from our midst. Our hearts were pained, and all of his acquaintances came to his home. Even more people came to the train station. The Rebbe also came to his home to inquire after his well-

being and to see him off. He (the Gaon) received him (the Rebbe) with love, and he sat there for about half an hour. They spoke together about our righteous Moshiach, how the order of events will be.

Nobody was with them, just the Gaon's son-in-law, Rav [Abba Dovid] of Moscow. Then the Gaon accompanied the Rebbe until the stairwell, and told his grandson to light a candle until he [the Rebbe Rayatz] sat in his wagon.

Then the Gaon spoke with us and told me that the conversation was aimed at him, and that he had told the Rebbe that the Sanhedrin need to be in their place before Moshiach and from there [they will gather] in Teveria, and therefore he had to

travel to Dvinsk, as he intends to be part of the Sanhedrin.

He blessed each one, and there was a large crowd and it was all very interesting.

[After he left] we remained behind with Lazerov.

Please write, your son who loves you,

Shmuel

The Gaon explained to my grandfather that he was leaving Leningrad because he had to be in his city [Dvinsk] when he is informed from Heaven that he has to be ready to travel to Tveria to be on the Sanhedrin.

This wasn't just talk, of course. The Gaon actually went to Dvinsk, and did a physical act as a preparation for the coming of Moshiach. If that was the case, then all the more so must we be ready and do all we can, taking physical action, to greet Moshiach!

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# FROM A MOTHER'S PERSPECTIVE

BY ESTHER MEIZLICH

*The shluchim are “big boys,” who work far from their parents’ homes. Their shlichus work does not allow them time off to visit their parents on Shabbos and Yom Tov, so the parents visit their children and see just what their children are busy with \* A mother who visited her son and daughter-in-law for Rosh HaShana last year, describes her experience.*

I spent Rosh HaShana at the Chabad house in Mexico with my son, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Meizlich, and his wife Tova. Two days before Yom Tov the place was extremely busy. There was a sense of urgency, of “everything must be done, and the sooner the better”; it was like a well-oiled machine with many gears, engines humming. I thought to myself: *My son is not a machine; how can he manage with all this? I hope and pray for his success.*



Men and women (and young girls) from various places around the world, wanted to stay near the shul at the Chabad house for the two days of Rosh HaShana and the Shabbos that follows it. Living quarters had to be found quickly.

Israeli backpackers count on Chabad and call until the last minute. T'mimim have to be sent to other locations in Mexico to provide minyanim and to run all the holiday programming. This means that meals and places for sleeping have to be arranged.

In the midst of all of this, it was realized that the shul wouldn't be big enough for the t'fillos and the meals. They have to put up a tent and something for a floor. There aren't enough chairs and so they have to buy more. That this will cost money doesn't faze them since their debts are astronomical anyway.

All this is in addition to running the regular shiurim at the Chabad house and the daily t'fillos. My son thinks that the eastern wall, which is connected to the tent, doesn't look good and it must be painted. Paint is bought, but there is no painter. Two people volunteer to paint it.

The bachurim who are going out to distant places for Yom Tov need to be given instructions. The local people have problems that need attention and they want to consult with the rabbi. They must contact the people at the embassy before Yom Tov and visit Jewish prisoners in jail. And there is the constant nagging thought of perhaps they have forgotten to invite someone. The phones ring constantly. Everything is urgent and nothing can be postponed.

The shliach, my son, has bags under his eyes and looks as though he hasn't eaten and slept enough. I see this and I feel a twinge in my heart. Others don't seem to notice it.

As for my daughter-in-law, there's the house and the children. The youngest one has a fever, maybe an earache. She has to be checked by a doctor. They are waiting for fish to arrive. What color should the tablecloths be so that the room looks attractive? Menus are needed for each meal for three days in a row. More food definitely needs to be ordered.

There is an urgent call for the shliach and he tries to take care of it. How? I still don't understand and haven't figured out the secret. I always knew that the Rebbe has immeasurable kochos, but this is my son, and I know that he's not all that strong physically. One can truly see how the strength goes from the great meshaleiach to the shliach; otherwise, there is no explanation.

What else could move a couple, busy with a large family, to work at such a feverish pace and to rise above all the difficulties?

Some people help out. In this regard, I would like to mention the Chassid, R' Shlomo Markowitz, and his family, who do so much to help. I am grateful for his help because I feel that my son is not alone — there is a group of people who help things along. There are supporters, like David, who covered the entire Chabad house with flowers and prepared a dessert.

And there's Malka, a woman who is always there when you need someone to keep the children occupied. Her kindness towards the family warms my heart. There are other supporters whom I do not know, and there are many others who just offer their blessings, from far and near, brachos, brachos and more brachos; if only it could all be exchanged for money....

The cook has to be shown what to do. Gifts have to be sent to supporters. Nobody can be forgotten!



Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Meizlich

*What else could move a couple, busy with a large family, to work at such a feverish pace and to rise above all the difficulties?*

An Israeli girl shows up at the house, famished and exhausted. She has to be taken care of, and the children are enlisted to help out. The salads, the fish heads, the honey and the *SheHechyanu* have to be prepared. Every table has to have each of the items on it. More phone calls and more brachos. A hot meal has to be prepared for the tmimim in

yeshiva, something they like. They deserve it.

## ALL UNEXPECTED

The day before Rosh HaShana: They have to find an alternate for meat because they cannot bring meat into the kitchen. The shlucha thinks about it but doesn't seem upset. When I ask why she's getting this message now, at the last minute, she says, "I learned not to ask if it won't be productive." That's that. I think about how shlichus entails daily lessons and how it refines, uplifts and makes you grow.

Tova took the baby and left for the doctor and the shopping center in order to find an alternate for meat. The half an hour trip gave her time to think and when she got to the store, she had already thought of an idea. She would serve large mushrooms, fried and spiced in a special sauce on a bed of vegetables. That should taste like meat, and with vegetable soup, would be fine. She buys what they need and has it delivered.

Now for the doctor. In the meantime, she sees how the other children are doing, and once again, has to handle all sorts of requests, some of which I think are odd for Erev Yom Tov, but everybody is treated with respect.

Finally, some time late at night, she packs their suitcases for the three-day stay at the Chabad house.

Time is rushing onwards and there is no way that the shliach can get home and change his clothes and maybe have a haircut too. At the last minute, we take Yom Tov clothes for him. This is done with understanding and acceptance, as priorities are different here. The long view is taken. Whatever needs to be done is done in the quickest, most efficient way. I get a different perspective on life here. The word "hard" is not in their dictionary.

Who has time for it? Onward and onward, everything is done in order to plant seeds and to bring Moshiach.

An Israeli couple that was there said to me, "What's appealing here is that everything is done without any artifice. You truly feel the genuineness and find yourself being won over. We've been over half the globe but this Jewish experience is the most impressive."

It's not enough to just maintain the status quo; new projects are constantly dreamed up. Everything is done simply and with devotion, until the end. You really feel that the shliach is fully dedicated to an ideal.

*Where does he get the strength? It could only be the Rebbe's ko'ach, real mesirus nefesh. I look at my son and my pity changes to pride.*

And this is the ko'ach of the Rebbe.

## FROM WHERE DOES HE GET THE STRENGTH?

The women and girls light candles. The shlucha is in the kitchen and the children are running around in Yom Tov clothes. My son, the shliach, is still in the midst of an intense conversation with T'mimim who were sent to other parts of the city. They are reporting difficulties and asking for guidance.

The children give out machzorim. The group of Israelis who are dressed as they would be at home, stand out. If Rabbi Levi Yitzchok of Berdichev was here, he

would certainly highlight the positive and would say something like, "Master of the universe, Your children came to daven just as they are, just to absorb a bit of Yiddishkeit. Have mercy on them and bring the Redeemer!"

This is also how the shluchim look at them, but I wasn't so charitable. I thought that perhaps they should have made an effort to put on a "front" of a bit more k'dusha and a bit less of Israeli informality.

The davening is inspiring, a combination of song and pleading. It's almost as though he hadn't put in all the exhausting work. Where does he get the strength? It could only be the Rebbe's ko'ach, real mesirus nefesh. I look at my son and my pity changes to pride — fortunate am I that I have merited...and I cry.

The atmosphere is one of simcha and k'dusha, and the congregation is a stunning mix of different types.

The two oldest boys, my grandsons, follow their Abba. You can easily see their special pride. I hear their voices in the midst of the voices singing and davening and I say to myself – the tradition continues.

## NOT FORGETTING THE CHILDREN

In the tent, the tables are nicely set up for dozens of people. Tova makes her rounds while holding her machzor. Every so often, she manages to say a portion of the t'filla. She goes back and forth from the shul to the kitchen and from the kitchen to the people; saying "shalom aleichem" to one, a kind word to another, listening to yet another, then returning to check and see that everything is as it should be. Beforehand, I saw a woman who was exhausted and over her head with work; now she glows as though she just had a nap.





A farbrengen at the Meizlich home

The t'fillos end with singing and people head for the tables. Kiddush is recited. My son hasn't gone to the family table yet. The oldest boy wants to hear kiddush "only from Abba," and he waits patiently. A royal feast is served. The shlucha finds it necessary to apologize for the lack of meat even though the mushrooms are a delectable alternative.

One of the Israelis says, "You hear that?! They're apologizing to us! They owe us even more! Did you ever hear anything like it?" And I

could see how people open up. Apparently, the truth is uplifting.

The shliach sits with his family for a while, talking and singing with the children. He asks one of them to tell a Rosh HaShana story. He circulates among the tables with l'chaim.

Standing near one of the tables, he explains the significance of the holiday to the crowd. At another table, he encourages the singing. He tries to suggest a repertoire of popular songs of k'dusha but they only remember "Dovid Melech



A shiur at the Chabad house

Yisrael" and "Heveinu Sholom Aleichem." What can you do...the main thing is that Jews are b'simcha.

The shlucha takes the opportunity to invite more and more women to the weekly shiur. She also sits with the children and they sing together and talk about Rosh HaShana.

Surprise: In the middle of the meal, two Israelis walk in holding backpacks and pulling suitcases on wheels. They had obviously just come from the airport straight to the Chabad house. The shluchim immediately give them their attention; giving them kippot, bringing them kiddush, showing them how to hold the Siddur, and explaining what Rosh HaShana is about.

They are invited to join the davening and shofar blowing. They left only after they raised little cups and said - may there be more Chabad houses in the world!

## SHOFAR BLOWING ON THE STREETS OF MEXICO

At eight o'clock the following morning, I listened through the window of the Ezras Nashim to an interesting Chassidus shiur that my son gave in English and Hebrew on the topic of Rosh HaShana, comparing it to a person's head and brain.

We daven Shacharis with a chayus and then there is t'kias shofar. The shliach says the p'sukim. Actually, he doesn't just say them but pleads and silently cries. The atmosphere in shul is electric.

At the end of the davening, they go out on mitvtzaim, dividing into groups. Some take a three-hour walk, to hospitals and other places, the shliach among them. I wonder why he doesn't have other people do it when he is so tired. But again, it seems the Rebbe lives, and gives of his immeasurable kochos.

On the second day of Yom Tov, it turns out that the number of people eating is greater than what was initially estimated, and stocks have to be replenished: challa, fruit, vegetables etc. In the end, nothing is lacking.

In the evening, Friday night, one of the Israelis said that he had joined one of the groups out of curiosity and he was simply amazed. Two bachurim stood in front of a large store and asked passersby whether they were Jewish. If they said they were, they recited the bracha and blew the shofar. You could see tears in the eyes of those listening to the shofar.

The area was hustling and bustling with people and everybody watched the spectacle, "including some Jews who looked like goyim," he thought.

Shabbos arrives. On the side is an urn with boiling water, coffee, tea, milk, and cake for whoever wants it. The Shabbos candles are lit and everything is done with a smile. After the candle lighting there is another scene, common at Chabad houses, but one that moved me greatly:

An English-speaking fellow with long hair came in. One of the T'mimim asked him if he heard the shofar and he said no. He wasn't sure what the T'mimim wanted from him. They immediately put a kippa on his head, recited the bracha with him word by word like a child, and

*He wasn't sure what the T'mimim wanted from him. They immediately put a kippa on his head, recited the bracha with him word by word like a child, and then blew the shofar.*

then blew the shofar. He was very moved. It was the first time he experienced this in his life. I whispered: "Oy, Master of the universe, You do not forsake anyone! Bring Moshiach and reveal Your majesty throughout the world. Give the strength and the means to all those who sacrifice their souls, bodies, and money *al kiddush Hashem*."

### I GOT PERSONAL ATTENTION HERE

On Shabbos, the shliach repeated a sicha on Parshas Haazinu and explained it to the crowd. They sang the ten niggunim of the Rebbeim and I felt myself hovering over time and space. There was something magical in the atmosphere.

Havdala was recited and the

tourists asked the shliach for the addresses of other Chabad houses they could visit on their travels. One of them told me, "I was at a few Chabad houses. The shluchim were terrific people, but here I received special personal attention. This shliach managed to touch my neshama; I hadn't planned on this, but now that it happened to me, I don't know just what I'm going to do with it...."

I davened for him, and now, with Hashem's help, he is going on a journey to another world, a difficult journey to the True Light.

### SPECIAL PEOPLE

I'm finally going home. My son is driving and I pray there shouldn't be an accident, since he is so wiped out. More phone calls, more requests. Why doesn't he say, "Call me back tomorrow?" It can wait! And how come people don't realize that after all, he is only human and not an angel!

That is what I am thinking, but *they* remind themselves that one of the mekuravim, "a special man" (and who do they not consider special?) hadn't shown up on Yom Tov. They immediately call him to see how he is doing.

The children fall asleep, exhausted, some of them still dressed in Yom Tov clothes. My son and daughter-in-law the shluchim are beginning to plan for the upcoming days.



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# ‘I WAS SHOCKED TO READ THIS’

BY SHAI GEFEN

*Thousands of people have seen miracles when connecting to the Nasi and Moshiach HaDor through writing to the Rebbe and reading answers in the Igros Kodesh. The following story, which took place in Yishuv Even Yehuda made waves after an answer in the Igros Kodesh led to the fixing of a serious problem in the yishuv’s mikva.*

The incredible phenomenon of thousands of Jews around the world writing to the Rebbe and receiving answers in the *Igros Kodesh* is growing daily. The following story took place in a settlement called Even Yehuda, which is near Netanya. Once the story became known, many people approached the local shliach, Rabbi Menachem Neuman, and asked to write to the Rebbe.

I contacted the protagonist of the story, Rami Suchayik, who was once far from religious observance. He told me that he became involved with Chabad when he was in South Africa while working for the Herbalife company. He stayed at a resort town located at the southernmost point of South Africa. Little did he dream that it would be there, of all places, that he would begin his journey towards

Judaism.

“On my trip there I met the shliach, Rabbi Shlomo Weiner and through him, I began to strengthen my connection to Judaism. It was there that I first learned about the Rebbe and that you can write to him and ask for his bracha. Because of uncertainty on our part, we asked the Rebbe whether we should move to Eretz Yisroel. The letter, which was written in Yiddish, was about Eretz Yisroel. I didn’t understand Yiddish and since I was just starting out, it didn’t seem genuine to me. I asked the Rebbe again.

“I opened to another letter, this time in Hebrew, and it contained a clear directive to move to Eretz Yisroel. So since 5757 we are living in Eretz Yisroel and my wife and I have continued to grow spiritually.”

## THE BEIS DIN PASKENED – BUY A HOUSE

After a few trips to various cities, we moved to Even Yehuda, where we became friendly with the shliach, Rabbi Neuman. I bought a house there through a bracha I received from the Rebbe in the *Igros Kodesh*. This was three years ago when I went to the Rebbe.

At that time, we were looking for an apartment but even after searching, didn’t find anything. While I visited 770, I heard an amazing story at a farbrengen about how the Rebbe told Rabbi Mendelsohn, the rav of Komemiyut, to pasken that the yeshiva in Kiryat Gat needed to pay up its debts.

I decided to adopt this approach, and we made a beis din with three shluchim and rabbanim: Rabbi Menachem Volpe, Rabbi Neuman, and Rabbi Garelik. They paskened that I needed to find an apartment. One week after I returned to Eretz Yisroel, we bought a house we liked, in a way that we didn’t dream we could do from the outset.

## CHECKING THE MIKVA

When Rami tells the story of the mikva, he gets very excited. Not only did he get a bracha from the Rebbe, but it was through him that an instruction of the Rebbe was conveyed that affected the purity of the Jewish

people and the fixing of the only mikva in Even Yehuda.

When I asked Rami to tell me the story he refused and it was only after he asked the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh* whether he should publicize the story that he agreed to tell us what happened.

"In our building is a woman who works from home. She is traditionally observant. One day, she asked us to help her write a letter to the Rebbe about some personal problems she had. She opened to an answer that was addressed to Esther, which is her name. The letter contained fantastic brachos and the woman was very happy.

"A few days later, the woman's sister said she also wanted to write to the Rebbe and ask for his bracha, for she had been married for many years and did not have children. I explained to her that writing to the Rebbe entails many things and she had to make a positive resolution and be mekasher to the Nasi HaDor.

"The letter she opened to was in volume 11, p. 177, letter #3568. The letter was addressed to R' Saadya Lieberov and the Rebbe wrote:

**Regarding the mikva, although one word is not clear in your letter, apparently you are saying that the water from the mikva goes out and is blocked by an iron stopper, which stops up a hole in the floor of the mikva. I was shocked to read this and maybe this is not what you meant. The heter for this has already been decried and certainly you have a copy of the letter from the Rebbe Rashab who did not want the stopping up of a hole even with rubber because some say this is mekabel tuma. And he advised that in a number of places they should use blocks of wood, which are made very smooth. Since it is difficult to get an exact fit between wood and stone, the solution is that the corner of the floor should be made of wood and in it the hole that is sealed with the wooden**

**stopper. Fitting wood into wood is much easier, but even better, and this is the custom wherever my influence reaches – that there should not be a hole in the floor altogether. And the water should be removed by way of a pump, and preferably the type that is called a siphon, and is known by those involved in these matters.**

"When I read the letter, I realized that the Rebbe was pointing out a problem with the mikva, which is connected of course with a bracha for children. I felt that the Rebbe was referring to a problem with **our** mikva in Even Yehuda, and that if this problem was solved, then the bracha would be fulfilled.

"This was only my feeling, and

***He called his friend the Tzanzer Chassid back and expressed his indignation over being asked to speak to a nut like me.***

therefore, great care had to be taken not to cast aspersions on the kashrus of the mikva. I asked the woman who had written the letter not to talk about the answer.

"In the meantime, in order to make a 'vessel' for the Rebbe's bracha, I asked her to bring me their t'fillin and mezuzos to be checked, and I took them to a friend of mine in Netanya, a Tzanzer Chassid. As he opened the t'fillin, I told him the answer in the *Igros Kodesh* in which the Rebbe warns about a problem with the mikva. I said that this weighed on my mind and that I felt that the Rebbe wanted me to have the mikva in Even Yehuda checked.

"The Tzanzer Chassid said that

after such an answer, I shouldn't wait but should have the mikva checked to make sure it was 100% fine. He said that by Divine providence, his good friend was responsible for the kashrus of mikvaos in the Netanya area and he said he would call him immediately.

"He called his friend, then and there, and then gave me the phone so I could tell him the story. I told him that it seemed from the Rebbe's answer that there was a problem with the pipe that connected the water in the mikva with the rainwater pit.

"He asked me how I knew there was a problem and I told him the whole story about the woman who asked the Rebbe for a bracha and opened to a letter about a problem with a mikva. Instead of responding, the man angrily hung up the phone on me.

"A few minutes later, feeling somewhat contrite, he called his friend the Tzanzer Chassid back and expressed his indignation over being asked to speak to a nut like me. The Tzanzer Chassid explained that answers from the Rebbe in the *Igros Kodesh* ought to be regarded with respect, and that the mikva really needed to be checked. He concluded by saying, 'Even if you don't think there's a problem, please check it out so we know that everything is all right.'

"The man asked to speak to me again. We arranged a time for him to come to Even Yehuda. Since I didn't want word about this to get out, I asked him to be discreet. I should point out that this was a new mikva built two years before.

"In order not to involve official people in Even Yehuda, I spoke with the manager and the mikva lady and asked them to be ready for the mikva examiner's visit. After a few meetings that were postponed at the last minute, the man finally came on the Thursday before Shavuos.



The Rebbe giving coins to children as he leaves the mikva

“He wanted the official people in charge of mikvaos to be present but I

said that we could not wait and postpone things any longer. ‘If we need

to call them, it will get postponed time and again.’ He finally agreed to check things out.

“As he was examining the mikva, the mikva lady called and said they should wait for her because she wanted to empty the mikva and ask a number of questions. In the meantime, until she came, we began to empty the water.

“He examined the mikva thoroughly and everything was fine. I asked him to check the line that connects the rainwater pit with the mikva as the Rebbe had written in the letter. He stuck a broomstick inside and at first everything seemed fine but then he felt something blocking the pipe all the way inside. It seemed that the blockage had gotten there during the construction and had remained there ever since. It wasn’t clear whether the blockage was complete or partial, but it was serious either way and was fixed on the spot.

“We were all shaken up when we finally left the mikva building. Even the mikva examiner was all keyed up. We were all in shock over this problem not being discovered sooner and it was only thanks to the Rebbe’s letter that the problem was solved.

“The story got out and everybody spoke about the Rebbe’s letter that led to the fixing of the mikva. Some people committed to extra care in the laws of family purity and now we await the fulfillment of the brachos in the merit of fixing the mikva.”

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# STOPPING THE EROSION

BY SHAI GEFEN

## LIQUIDATOR OF THE JEWISH YISHUV IN ERETZ YISROEL

Whoever heard Sharon's speech at the United Nations, heard a speech delivered by the "Liquidation General." The political commentators defined it as Sharon's parting speech from the Likud. Actually, it was a speech that could be better defined as Sharon's parting speech from Eretz Yisroel.

This defeatist speech, which was replete with verses from Tanach, references to Avrohom, Har Sinai and Moshe, and various clichés, made it clear that this is a man endangering the very existence of the Jewish nation in Eretz Yisroel. His goal is to eradicate the Jewish yishuv in Eretz Yisroel.

The elimination of the settlements in Gush Katif (and Yamit) was only a preview for what Sharon really plans on doing. On the day Rechavam Zeevi was murdered he said that Sharon is the "Hertzel of the Palestinian State." Indeed, Sharon said in his speech, "We have no desire to rule over the Palestinians, who also desire freedom and who deserve their own state."

If we analyze Sharon's speech at the U.N., with everything he said and everything he did not say, it is clear that Sharon plans to concede

on the entire Yehuda, Shomron, Jordan Valley, and the Golan Heights, on most of Yerushalayim and on the rights of the Jewish people to all of Eretz Yisroel.

This explains why the Leftist leaders all rejoiced at this speech and called Sharon, "the courageous leader for peace." He spoke about the Palestinians as his peace partners, and neglected to mention their behavior just a few days before in vandalizing shuls and in smuggling weapons to the Gaza Strip along with Al Qaeda terrorists. These are the people he's making peace with, and to whom he is conceding the heart of our country, as part of the Palestinian plan to wipe out Israel.

Sharon was a lauded general, but his leadership since he entered politics proves that he is dangerous to the Jewish people! Since the Camp David Accords, when Sharon served as defense minister, he has been the man responsible for all capitulatory agreements and withdrawals up until the recent withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the expulsion of the Jews there.

(A friend pointed out to me that in the letter that the Rebbe sent Sharon 35 years ago, the Rebbe said: **Based on the above, my opinion is that there is no reasoning, Heaven forbid, for you to leave to do something else, all the more so [to**

**enter] the political arena, including a position as minister and the like. It is not your role and this is not the way for you to use your talents and knowledge, on the contrary...)**

## WHY DID I COME AND NOBODY IS HERE, I CALLED AND NOBODY ANSWERED?

A few hours went by since Sharon gave the Philadelphi Corridor to the Egyptians, a major change in the Camp David agreement, and contrary to Egyptian commitments, the border between Gaza and Egypt was wide open for two days, with unmonitored movement of personnel and weapons between the two areas. And this was something which was done openly, in front of the whole world.

Everybody knew ahead of time that this would happen. It's no secret that Egypt has been collaborating with the terrorists, funding them and supplying them with weapons. And Sharon, contrary to the opinions of all the security figures, gave the Philadelphi Corridor to the Egyptians and a few days later Israel said it would present a complaint against Egypt and the P.A.

There's really no reason why Egypt shouldn't break their commitment when the other side is a debased partner like Israel. If the



other side stretches out its neck for the hangman's noose, there's no reason not to hang him.

In a sicha of Parshas Eikev 5730 (1970), when the ceasefire with Egypt was broken, the Rebbe cried out about how they were endangering the security of the Jewish people. Things have only gotten worse since then.

Hashem made a miracle that during the first breaking of the ceasefire, when Egypt brought its military equipment to the Suez Canal, they did so openly, with no pretensions, even though they could have easily disguised the equipment and maintained afterwards that the vehicles contained building materials in order to repair the cities destroyed on the Suez Canal ...

And those who ought to have known of this fortification, knew, but instead of immediately blowing up these fortifications, they sent a protest to Washington, at the same time that the Egyptians continued to bring in more weapons and continued fortifying. If they continue with these fortifications, Heaven forbid, then even Phantom jets will be unable to destroy these fortifications!

Nasser maintains: You knew we broke the ceasefire for six days and kept quiet, so why are you suddenly starting to scream? And there's no answer for him.

And when military people ask: If you announced a ceasefire which the other side obviously used to fortify themselves and to bring missiles closer, then what was the purpose of the korbanos that fell, the blood that was spilled, and the tremendous expenses?

They are answered: Since you want peace, there first has to be a ceasefire as a first step towards peace.

What did they need this ceasefire for? Over time, there have been dozens of wars in the world and when the warring sides wanted to live in peace, they did so without first making a ceasefire. And in general, there has been a ceasefire for three years now that was signed by all the countries!

It's well-known that during World War II (and in wars prior to that), the vanquished side asked that before peace negotiations were made, they should call for a ceasefire. All the military opposed this, explaining that they would use the ceasefire to fortify themselves, and that a ceasefire would *decrease* the chances for peace!

My melamed was happy when he found a verse connected to current events. Today, when I read the Haftora, I saw there an allusion to the difficult situation we are in now. It says, "Why did I come and nobody is here, I called out and nobody answered, is My hand short, i.e., unable to redeem?"

#### FROM CAMP DAVID TO DISENGAGEMENT

On 15 Elul 5738, Israel signed the unfortunate Camp David Accords. Most Jews rejoiced over this agreement, including religious Zionists and chareidim. Back then, 27 years ago, the Rebbe said that this agreement meant giving everything away in exchange for nothing.

The Rebbe explained that even a theoretical concession was serious and was a slap to the gift Hashem had given the Jewish people, but here, with this agreement, it was clear that Israel was conceding **everything**, including Yehuda and Shomron!

This certainly sounded quite strange. People asked what Egypt had to do with Yehuda and

*From the beginning of his nesius, the Rebbe stated that the belief in the State as the "is'chalta d'Geula" distances Moshiach, and like the other false messiahs, the belief in the State brings tragedies and korbanos!*

Shomron and ignored the problem. The Nasi HaDor was the only one to cry out and say that the Jewish people faced one of the greatest dangers.

"You have begun to fall before them" – the Camp David Accords was the first step and from then until today, we see how the Rebbe's words were prophetic. Sharon was the "father of the settlement movement" and now he is the liberator of Palestinian land and the biggest enemy of Israel's security.

This fact explains an important point that needs to be clarified, especially now. The tiniest veering away from the d'var Hashem means it's all over, even when something seems like a marginal detail (and even something that must be done). For what could be better than

making peace? But when the Torah says that this approach is dangerous, we end up seeing how this is so.

The question is: when will we wake up? How much blood needs to be spilled before we get it?

## THE DARKNESS TRANSFORMED TO LIGHT

The darkness of the Galus in our generation is seen in the fact that darkness itself is considered light. Agreements in which we make concessions are called “peace accords.” Fleeing and fear mongering is called bravery. The general in charge of the expulsion wasn’t ashamed to say, “We are leaving Gaza with heads held high,” when everybody knows that Israel withdrew under fire and thousands of Kassam missile attacks.

The same applies to calling the State of Israel the “beginning of Geula,” when large numbers of the settlers and their rabbis continue to idolize the State while the State slaps them in the face.

The Rebbe told the story of people who were in a dark pit for a long time and after a few years someone came and discovered them. He was shocked to see them sitting in the dark, and when he asked them, “Why are you sitting in the dark,” they answered that it wasn’t dark but light, since they had sat in darkness so long they thought it was light.

Our situation is like that of the people sitting in the dark and calling it light. The Left says that giving away vital land to goyim is light; to allow Arabs to establish a state whose goal it is to destroy Jews is the source of light itself. And there are still good Jews who continue to believe that the State is the “is’chalta d’Geula,” which is like saying that the doubled darkness of Galus is light itself. It’s incredible

that although we see how dark it is that we still *don’t get it!*

The time has come to tell the G-dly truth loud and clear: Remove the foreign gods from amongst you! Stop believing that the State is the Geula or the beginning of it! From the beginning of his nesius, the Rebbe stated that the belief in the State as the “is’chalta d’Geula” distances Moshiach, and like the other false messiahs, the belief in the State brings tragedies and korbanos!

Fortunately we are seeing a bit of regret and a cheshbon ha’nefesh taking place in the religious-nationalist camp which has wrought this destruction, but as Chabad

*People ask why these terrible things are happening now if the Rebbe said “behold, Moshiach is coming.” I found an answer...*

Chassidim we must show them the alternative, the real thing! In order to stop tragedies and hasten the hisgalus of the Rebbe MH”M with chesed and rachamim, we must go out and explain about the Geula, about how it comes only through a king from the house of Dovid, as the Rambam paskens. We have been promised by Moshiach that when they know that darkness is darkness and light is light, then naturally, “an end is placed to darkness.”

## WHY IS THIS HAPPENING NOW?

People ask why these terrible things are happening now if the

Rebbe said “behold, Moshiach is coming.” I found an answer in something the Rebbe himself said in a sicha delivered on Shabbos Parshas Bo 5736. The Rebbe spoke about rabbanim outside of Eretz Yisroel who are quiet and don’t protest about the plan to give away land. The Rebbe also explains the situation we are in:

**The rabbanim outside Eretz Yisroel are not doing anything and are not protesting about the plan to give away land. When you ask them why, they answer that they cannot do anything without instructions from Eretz Yisroel!**

When it’s about something negative, they don’t say that, but when it’s about taking positive action, protesting about shleimus ha’Aretz, they say they cannot get involved with matters concerning Eretz Yisroel because there are many rabbanim over there!

Their point is not understandable, for there is a prohibition of not standing by your friend’s blood, even when your “friend” is (not in your house but) far away and in danger. It’s your obligation to save him!

And they hear that they want to return land, which is a matter of danger to life! But they keep quiet and do nothing, and the consequences of such behavior are very serious, as it says in the Gemara.

We already had behavior like this in Egypt. Although Moshe said that the Geula was coming, there were Jews who allowed the goyim to enter their homes. So too now, Moshe says Moshiach is coming and they are still impressed by the goy, and they run after him and bring him in among Jews, Heaven forefend.

May we merit the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu very soon!



# A PAINFUL LOOK AT WHAT IS UNFOLDING BEFORE US

BY CHANA KATZ

We weren't left hanging very long.

A few weeks ago we wrote about a very emotional experience two Chassidim had when they succeeded, with the Rebbe's ko'ach, to reenter the evacuated and desecrated northern Shomron settlement Sa-Nur.

The Chassidim gave a very moving account of what now appears to have been the very last t'fillos at the newly built synagogue at Sa-Nur, which had been one of three remaining structures. For the government decided not to tear down the synagogue, but rather to bury it. That was the solution to the "problem." And that is what our Jewish soldiers were told to do. And that is what they indeed carried out.

They poured concrete over the shul to seal it and then piled heaps of dirt upon it. They mamash gave it a burial. And that is the state of Eretz Yisroel in Elul 5765 – destroying houses, leaving thousands of Jews homeless and helpless while lying to the public that these abandoned families had proper alternatives and burying the houses of prayer.

We also weren't left hanging very long about what the future holds in store, r"l, for the remaining settlements in the Shomron and Judea...

The very same general who drew up the Aza (Gush Katif)-Shomron disengagement plan, has penned another work – this time calling for the eradication of another 32 settlements including Shavei Shomron, which we've often written about on these pages.

Like a major storm that is born as

*We also weren't left hanging very long about what the future holds in store, r"l, for the remaining settlements in the Shomron and Judea...*

a "mere" tropical disturbance – only to later gain strength – this latest plan of destruction is only first being revealed to the public eye as a seemingly innocuous plan brewing somewhere out at sea.

\* \* \*

But being this is Elul, a time of true cheshbon nefesh, we have to take

a painful look at what is unfolding before us and examine where we stand in its midst.

We saw in America how much more quickly the government and public reacted to Hurricane Rita, in the face of the devastating losses of Hurricane Katrina.

Perhaps the most painful question of all right now is: what can we do to avoid future repeats of evacuations and destruction. And perhaps the toughest answer to reckon with is that none of us really has the answer.

Many have proposals. And stickers and banners and bumper stickers and flags and meetings and strategy sessions abound.

Is what's happening in Eretz Yisroel today like a powerful Category 5 hurricane which cannot be stopped? Can we, as Lubavitchers, unite on a course of action, or are our divisions on other issues too deep to draw us together at this critical time?

Is one united approach necessary? Or does each individual act of k'dusha add to the general merit of Am Yisroel?

In the meantime, many are simply asking what can be done. The uncertainty adds to the darkness.

\* \* \*

I do know that when we were deciding to go to our very first Shabbaton at Shavei Shomron, there was much disagreement between me and my husband and questions that came up regarding the safety of bringing our children there. In our case, the Rebbe MH"M, gave us a very clear answer and the Rebbe even began the letter by addressing a husband and wife who were having a difference of opinion on a very important issue.

The Rebbe continued by talking about the wife being supportive of the husband's plans, and continued by explaining that the more difficult a path one pursues, the more the ultimate reward. And when the Rebbe concluded with a blessing for future Chassidishe success from our children, I know longer had the fear

of making this particular journey into the Shomron.

\* \* \*

I hope our relationship with the Shomron will continue. Although my husband said from the outset that the children would continue their Chabad schooling in northern Israel, we still – for now – are also maintaining our apartment in the Shomron. There is something very sobering about living in a settlement where you are completely surrounded by Arab villages in every direction. It tunes you in much more powerfully than does hearing about these areas from afar.

Hopefully we will be able to have Shabbatons there and farbrengens with the holy words of our Rebbeim making their own spiritual hurricane on our land. Also on the settlement

where we were located, there are strong reports that the noted lecturer and author Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh, is planning to open a yeshiva there after the chaggim, similar to the Od Yosef Chai yeshiva he founded not to far down the road at Sh'chem.

\* \* \*

Still, all in all, is trying to stop future disengagements a little like trying to stand in the middle of the ocean and holding back a hurricane, which is impossible? A hurricane comes in the form of nature, and yet we know that nature has the same gematria as the holy name Elokim, as we say in Shma every day – nature and the Infinite holy name are one.

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## R' TZVI MEIR STEINMETZ A"H

Rabbi Tzvi Meir Steinmetz, known by his penname, Tzvi Yair, passed away on Friday, Erev Shabbos Parshas Ki Seitzei at the age of 90. Rabbi Tzvi Meir was born in 5675 (1915) in the village of Brister in Carpathian Russia, on the border of Galicia. His father was Shlomo Dov, and Tzvi Meir was an only son among seven daughters. Being the only son, his father exerted himself to give him the best chinuch. He hired the best teachers to teach Tzvi Meir Torah.

By the tender age of eight, Tzvi Meir had discovered the beauty of poetry. He especially loved the book of Rabbi Moshe Roth called *Sfas Ameinu*, which contains many poems written long ago. Tzvi Meir wrote his own composition at the age of eight about the month of Nissan, the month he was born, in which he enumerates the special qualities of the month. Then he wrote another article about t'filla.

Even though his father was so attached to him, he sent Tzvi Meir to learn in yeshiva far away. Tzvi Meir did well and was regarded fondly by his rosh yeshiva. When he grew older, he began to follow Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch's approach to Judaism, which combines Torah and derech erez, a more worldly approach to life than devoting oneself exclusively to Torah study.

His literary abilities developed and he wrote more and more. Articles of his were published in the Aguda paper called *Di Yiddische Blatt*. He became more involved in literary pursuits and wrote on topical issues. Throughout this time, he observed the traditions of his fathers and Chassidic customs, while mastering

the sciences and German culture. In order to protect himself from being drawn towards an alien world, he did not touch his beard, which was a chiddush in those days among the youth.

After the second world war, he lived for a time in Vienna, but in 5712 (1952) he emigrated to the United States. At first, he had a difficult time adjusting and finding work, but he was determined to make it and provide his children with a proper Jewish chinuch.



Shortly after he arrived in the U.S., the Chassid, Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson offered him a teaching and administrative position in the school that he ran in Crown Heights. Before beginning his new job, R' Tzvi Meir had a yechidus with the Rebbe. His job at Beis Rivka exposed him to Chabad educational materials, which he found very interesting.

This is how R' Tzvi Meir described his first yechidus:

“My first impression of the Rebbe

was awakened in me because of the chiddush I saw in his davening. I had seen tzaddikim in Europe, and all of them davened with fervor that was apparent to the observer. The Rebbe's davening was unusual for there was nothing apparent to the observer, yet the very first time I saw him I could see that the man davening in front of me is an Ish Elokim.”

R' Tzvi Meir got up his courage to tell the Rebbe that he wrote poetry and that he also wrote poetry on non-Chassidic topics. To his surprise, the Rebbe asked to see his poetry saying, “You can show it to me; it won't harm me.”

When he shared his concerns with the Rebbe about whether writing poetry was bittul Torah, the Rebbe said, “Those people who will learn Torah under the influence of your poetry – the merit of their learning will be credited to you.”

Over the years, the Rebbe encouraged him repeatedly to publish his poetry. One time, the Rebbe even said, “Many sichos are incorporated into these poems.”

“Since that yechidus,” said R' Tzvi Meir, “I was drawn to Lubavitch as though with a magic wand.”

R' Tzvi Meir began attending the Rebbe's farbrengens. He said that when he had been in Europe and had attended lectures of rabbanim, he had become bored after a few minutes, but to his amazement, his interest grew as the Rebbe delivered a sicha. “The wellspring continuously grew from moment to moment.”

Whenever some topic in hashkafa and emuna bothered him, he would tell the Rebbe in yechidus and the Rebbe would graciously and patiently

respond, guiding him in the proper pathways. R' Tzvi Meir was won over by the fact that in his conversations with the Rebbe, the Rebbe would quote a lot from non-Chabad works on emuna and Musar.

Even when he left teaching in Chabad, he continued to regularly visit the Rebbe and would bring along many talmidim, being mekarev them to Torah, Chassidus, and the Rebbe.

R' Tzvi Meir's poetry became famous and his poems were warmly received even among religious circles for they are written with a Jewish flavor. Even the supervisors at the Ministry of Education were impressed and included his poetry in the curriculum. Additionally, an entire analytical thesis was published on his poetry.

The Rebbe gave him constructive criticism on his poetry and continued to encourage him. For example, in one poem he expressed the fact that the Jewish people are like a lame man who uses a stick, and we ask Hashem, "give, give," using Hashem, as it were, to fulfill our needs. The poem was a protest over this approach but the Rebbe told him it wasn't right to express himself thus, because the bottom line is that asking Hashem for our needs is a halachic obligation.

The Rebbe didn't tell him to forget about this poem but gently said, "I am sure you can rescue this poem. Write it differently..."

Even before he became involved with Chabad, R' Tzvi Meir wrote a poem about Elul and the Yomim Noraim in which he describes a Jew trying to hide his sack of sins from his Creator, like a housewife who rushes to hide a bag of garbage before a guest comes. When he presented the poem to the Rebbe, he apologized and said he had written it forty years earlier, before he became aware of Toras HaChassidus.

The Rebbe read the poem and



**R' Tzvi Meir receiving lekach from the Rebbe**

said he had better hurry and write a poem in the defense of the Jewish people. The Rebbe said this poem should be written before Rosh HaShana, "and since my name is Tzvi, certainly I would do it quickly; and since my name was Yair, it would be done in an illuminating fashion."

R' Tzvi Meir, as a disciplined Chassid, did as the Rebbe told him. He wrote a poem in defense of the Jewish people and submitted it to the Rebbe. The secretary called him back and told him, in the Rebbe's name, "many thanks for the speed, measure

for measure."

Among R' Tzvi Meir's poems are many poems about the Rebbe as Nasi Yisroel.

\* \* \*

A beloved figure in the Chabad world was taken from us, a man of spirit who was able to express deep Chassidic feelings in writing. Rabbi Steinmetz is survived by his daughters Mrs. Yehudis Lazar, Mrs. Rochel Yaffe and Mrs. Esther Tauber, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren serving as the Rebbe's shluchim around the world.



**R' Tzvi Meir at his grandson, R' Berel Lazar's bar mitzva, with his son-in-law R' Moshe Lazar**

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