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

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### **U.S.A**

744 Eastern Parkway  
Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409  
Tel: (718) 778-8000  
Fax: (718) 778-0800  
admin@beismoshiach.org  
www.beismoshiach.org

### **ERETZ HA'KODESH**

ת.ד. 102 כפר חב"ד 72915  
טלפון: (03) 9607-290  
פקס: (03) 9607-289

### **EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:**

M.M. Hendel

### **ENGLISH EDITOR:**

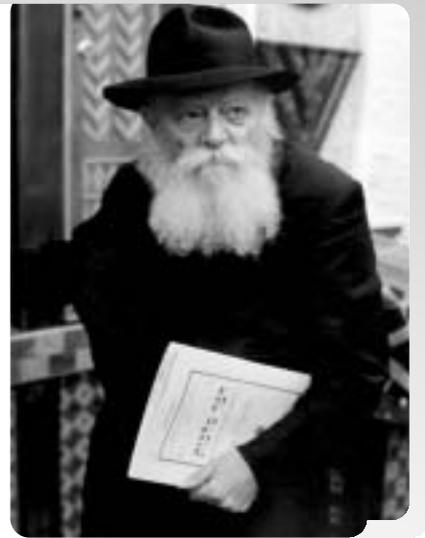
Boruch Merkur  
editor@beismoshiach.org

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# WHY THE RIGHTEOUS HAVE NO REST

LIKKUTEI SICHOS, VOL. 15, PG. 137-144  
TRANSLATED BY BORUCH MERKUR



There are two versions of the saying of the Sages that appears at the end of Tractate Brachos (as well as the conclusion of Tractate Moed Katan): a) “**Torah scholars** have no rest – not in this world and not in the World to Come, etc.” b) “**The righteous** have no rest, etc.” (The latter version is cited in several places. [Footnote 3 in the original: *Ohr HaTorah*, VaEschanan pg. 67; *Hemshech* 5666, pg. 12.])

We may postulate that the terminological difference in the respective versions underscores a difference in their meaning: According to the version that reads, “**Torah scholars** have no rest, etc.,” the saying of the Sages speaks of a virtue that is unique to Torah study (“**Torah scholars**”), as will be discussed. In contrast, the version that reads, “**The righteous** have no rest, etc.,” does not speak about Torah study’s distinctive virtue, because the term “righteous” includes masters of good deeds who are **not Torah scholars**.

We must understand the reason for the difference between the two approaches.

2. The Arizal explains the fact that “Torah scholars have no rest, etc.” in *Likkutei HaShas* as follows: “for in the world that follows death, Torah scholars are involved in Torah study, ascending from level to level and from yeshiva to yeshiva...for just as G-d, may He be blessed, has no end, likewise His Torah has no end.”

This explains the reason for the version that reads, “**Torah scholars** have no rest, etc.” Namely, it is specifically Torah (in the familiar manner of speech, the object (*cheftza*) of the Mitzva of Torah study) that is at the level of “it has no end.” Thus, there is

likewise no rest (no end) to the ascent of **Torah scholars** (the subject (*gavra*) of the Mitzva of Torah study), who delve into Torah study. However, with regard to the [other] Mitzvos, although they too are the Commandments of G-d (Who is infinite), they themselves (in terms of their being an object) are limited. In fact, they must be limited. That is, both with regard to the Mitzvos in general, of which it is said, “Do not add and do not detract” [D’varim 13:1; 4:2 – see Footnote 8] (Torah study, however, is different; it **must** be done in a manner of an increase in understanding and etc., as it is said in the Laws of Torah Study [of the Alter Rebbe, 2:2 – see Footnote 9]), and with regard to each Mitzva individually. [For example] t’fillin must be specifically four passages, not five, and etc.

Thus, also with regard to masters of good deeds (the subject of the other Mitzvos) there is an end and there is rest.

That is, the two alternatives (rest or no rest) correspond to the two levels: limited and limitless.

3. [The same principle accounts for] the difference between them (Torah and Mitzvos) with regard to the degree of obligation incumbent upon the person (the subject): The obligation of Torah study has no limitations. In the terminology of the Rambam [Laws of Torah Study 1:8 – see Footnote 11]: “**Every** Jewish person is obligated in Torah study, whether he is poor or rich, whether he is complete in his body [i.e., healthy] or one who suffers, etc.” Also (with regard to time), the obligation upon the person is **constant**. This is not so, however, with regard to the [other] Mitzvos;

every Mitzva has its limitations (in a designated time or place, and the like).

4. Accordingly, however, it is difficult to understand the reason of the version (approach), “**The righteous** have no rest, etc.,” which, as stated above, includes within it also masters of good deeds (the service of [the fulfillment of] the Mitzvos): How is it possible to attain “they have no rest,” which signifies a notion of limitlessness, (also) through this service (which is limited, as stated above)?

We must, therefore, say that also with regard to Mitzvos there is indeed a concept (and the virtue) of limitlessness, in light of which the reason for the version, “**The righteous** have no rest, etc.,” is also understood.

5. At first glance it is logical to say that the law of forsaking Torah study for [the fulfillment of] a Mitzva that cannot be done by others compels the notion that Mitzvos also possess the aspect of limitlessness. For if they are only at the level of limitation, how can they supplant Torah study, which is limitless?

But in truth this does not prove that also Mitzvos are at the level of limitlessness, for the fact that Torah study is forsaken for [the fulfillment of] a Mitzva that cannot be done by others is not on account of a virtue associated with the **Mitzvos**, but on account of the fact that neglecting to fulfill the Mitzvos results in a lack in

the study of **Torah**, as will be explained.

6. The Alter Rebbe says [in Laws of Torah study, *ibid*] (with regard to the reason for the aforementioned law): “He should interrupt his Torah study and do the Mitzva...for this is the entirety of man. As the Sages said [Brachos 17a], ‘The purpose of wisdom is repentance and good deeds.’ And if one does not do so, it comes out that he has **learned** not for the sake of doing, and ‘it would be better for him, etc.’ [i.e., ‘had he not been created’].”

---

*How is it possible to attain the level of “they have no rest,” which signifies a notion of limitlessness, through the service of good deeds, which is, at first glance, inherently limited?*

---

The Alter Rebbe states the reason (for “He should interrupt his Torah study and do the Mitzva”) in positive terms: “for this is the entirety of man,” [namely] to fulfill Mitzvos. Then [in negative terms] he adds, “And if one does not do so, it comes out that he has **learned** not for the sake of doing” (that is, without the fulfillment of the Mitzvos, Torah study is not as it must be). The implication [of this addition] is that the reason, “for this is the entirety of man,” is insufficient; this reason alone does not account for the fact that [the fulfillment of] a Mitzva can supplant Torah study. It is indeed true that the fulfillment of the

Mitzvos is “the entirety of man,” nevertheless, being that it is something that is limited, it cannot supplant something that is limitless (Torah). Thus, the Alter Rebbe adds: “And if one does not do so, it comes out that he has **learned not for the sake of doing.**”

That is, the fulfillment of the Mitzvos is “the **entirety** of man” (the person in his entirety – i.e., including his intellect, and) as the Sages said, “The purpose (*tachlis*, which also means: the completeness) of **wisdom** is repentance and good deeds. And (on account of the fact that the fulfillment of the Mitzvos is the purpose and completeness of wisdom (i.e., Torah)) if one does not do so, it comes out that he has **learned** (in an inappropriate manner, for it was done) not for the sake of doing.”

[To be continued be”H.]

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# LIVING AND LEARNING

TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

*“Do everything in your ability to bring Moshiach Tzidkeinu in actual deed” – this famous quote from the Rebbe MH”M’s sicha from the 28th of Nissan, 5751 served as the focal point of a recent symposium in Kfar Chabad on the subject of studying “D’var Malchus,” the Rebbe’s sichos from 5751-5752, attended by about one thousand people. The main event of the evening was a panel discussion with mashpiim and shluchim who have dealt with various aspects of the “D’var Malchus” sichos. \* Part 2 of 2*

Why is there such a need to emphasize the study of “D’var Malchus” at every opportunity? Who says that every “D’var Malchus” contains a new instruction or new teaching?

Rabbi Mordechai Gal: Anyone who has experienced the tremendous pleasure of regularly learning the “D’var Malchus” sichos from start to finish doesn’t ask this question. It’s similar to someone asking, “Why do we have to eat three times a day?” or “Why do we have to eat only healthy things?” It’s quite obvious that anyone who learns “D’var Malchus” lives with and internalizes the content of these sichos and simply can’t refrain from learning them on a regular basis, year after year. It instills the vitality of Moshiach into our entire week.

With such a “Geula’dike” radiance throughout the week, how can we get not just other Lubavitchers interested in learning “Dvar Malchus” but also Jews from all walks of life?

Rabbi Yosef Pizem: Several years ago, when I was a yeshiva student in Kfar Chabad, we would travel to yeshiva high schools in order to learn *Tanya* with the students, accompanied by Rabbi Aharon Dov Halperin. On one of these journeys, he told us that back in his yeshiva days, he helped to organize a shiur



at Yeshivas Kol Torah in Yerushalayim, where many of the students were raised as Gerer chassidim. When it was suggested that they participate in a *Tanya* class, they replied that they would first have to ask their rebbe. One of the organizers went in to the then-Gerer rebbe, the Beis Yisroel, and told him that he and others are organizing a *Tanya* shiur in the yeshiva and the students wanted to know if they were allowed to participate. The Beis Yisroel's reply: "They're organizing, they learn! It's very good that they should participate!" As a result, the Gerer students participated and were very impressed.

What does this tell us? It's clear that if we bring these Jews to learn "D'var Malchus," it will prove to be a big success. They see the sicha itself, the richness in its interpretation, its light, its brilliant innovations down to the last detail, the degree to which it adds to their previous knowledge, etc. – it absolutely grabs any learned Torah scholar. We see that when they learn, they understand – and this comes from within and is accepted in a totally different manner, and thus has influence.

Regarding the ability to give the sichos over in different places, it's quite obvious that you can't give over all the interpretations each sicha contains. You have to invest considerable effort to understand the sicha and to translate the words accurately. If a certain avreich goes to teach a class on the sicha, he should learn it thoroughly and consult the footnotes that the Rebbe brings. If he does so, he will succeed in properly conveying the sicha's message.

Naturally, one has to appropriately prepare before a shiur in "D'var Malchus," as does a schoolteacher, to know how to clarify the sicha's words and

expressions in a befitting manner so that the student can easily accept and grasp the material. If this is done properly, it is readily accepted by anyone. Even if we're talking about people who don't know yet who the Lubavitcher Rebbe is, it's possible to start the class with an authentic miracle story or some other amazing occurrence with the Rebbe. This arouses much greater interest and respect for the whole

#### **PANELISTS:**

##### **Rabbi Mordechai Gal**

*Director, Chabad House,  
Ramat Gan*

##### **Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Ginsberg**

*Mashpia, Yeshivas Tomchei  
T'mimim, Kfar Chabad*

##### **Rabbi Yosef Ginsburgh**

*Rosh Yeshiva and Chabad  
House Director, Ramat Aviv*

##### **Rabbi Zalman Notik**

*Mashpia, Yeshivas Toras Emes,  
Yerushalayim*

##### **Rabbi Yosef Pizem**

*Principal, Chabad Talmud  
Torah, Krayot*

#### **MODERATOR:**

##### **Rabbi Menachem Mendel HaKohen Friedman**

*Director, Chabad House,  
Ohr Yehuda*

subject, which is then absorbed much more successfully.

It's quite easy to talk about the need "to live with Moshiach and the Redemption," however, in practice, it's not so simple. This is a subject for which the yetzer ha'ra poses some very powerful roadblocks. How do we deal with this?

**Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Ginsberg:**  
I'm supposed to explain how you

deal with the goy? *L'chaim, L'chaim!*

As we know, Moshiach is both a king and a rav, and the Rebbe brings two things in his sichos. From the point of view of a king, this is a matter of accepting the yoke of his sovereignty, achieved specifically through "encompassing" matters. However, from the "inner" side, we have to place the lights into vessels. And as the Rebbe has repeatedly explained, the easiest and most direct way to achieve this is through learning about Moshiach and the Redemption, particularly the teachings of the leader of the generation. This "inner" approach proves effective even with those who are not Lubavitchers, even simple Jews who know that the Rebbe is a Torah giant, a wise man, and a tzaddik, even if they don't know about all his unique qualities: leader of the generation, Moshiach, etc. This is because the Rebbe says clearly that the easiest and most direct way to bring Moshiach in actual deed is to learn about Moshiach and the Redemption.

Through this method, we know how to "live" in our present-day situation. This is the main thing, and we must instill this everywhere. The emphasis is to learn the entire "Dvar Malchus," not just bits and pieces here and there. We must try and understand well what message the Rebbe is conveying to us. However, this goes together with the need for avoda on the encompassing level of "makif" and the *shturem* of "Yechi Adoneinu" and "chai v'kayam" from every possible direction – and it works.

We're talking here about "inner" avoda and "encompassing" avoda. Do the activities conducted in the street – e.g., stickers, flags, signs, billboards, etc. – have an opposing or a complementary influence upon the "inner" study of D'var Malchus?

**Rabbi Zalman Notik:** Without



**Rabbi Yosef Pizem:**  
*They see the sicha itself, the richness in its interpretation, its light, its brilliant innovations down to the last detail, the degree to which it adds to their previous knowledge, etc. – it absolutely grabs any learned Torah scholar.*

detracting from what was said earlier about the need for inner avoda, we first must state some basic facts:

Lubavitch's first sticker was produced in 5703 by the Rebbe shlita himself, when the Rebbe Rayatz started publicizing the concept of "*L'Alter LT'shuva, L'Alter L'Geula*" (Immediate Repentance, Immediate Redemption). Each day, when the Rebbe traveled to work in Manhattan, he would put stickers on the chairs. The Rebbe would sometimes remove the words "*L'Alter LT'shuva*" and leave only

*"L'Alter L'Geula."*

No one debates that there is a need for avoda "*p'nimius*" – this point is accepted without question. However, we have to remember that we must also do everything that we know possesses the strength to bring a Jew to live with Moshiach. There is no preferential order here – i.e., first do this, and only afterwards, do that. The main principle is that anything you know that the Rebbe wants and any method you can use to influence another Jew accordingly – you must carry out.

Permit me to tell you a little story: One day, back in 5752, a woman came to my house in Yerushalayim. When she entered, she asked me (as if to make sure), "Does a Lubavitcher family live here?" She simply saw the "Preparing for the Coming of Moshiach" sign outside, and said that she is very interested in Chabad.

Not long afterwards, there was a big farbrengen in Yerushalayim, and the decision was made to go out with the Moshiach Campaign, speaking to people about Moshiach. As a Lubavitcher resident of Yerushalayim, it was a little difficult for me to do this. I would knock on the doors of people's homes and say that I wanted to speak with them about Moshiach. They thought that I was either eccentric or crazy.

Suddenly, I remembered that woman who came to visit us and said that she was interested in Chabad. We made contact with one another, and I began to talk to her about Moshiach. Today, she is a full-fledged Lubavitcher and her children study in Chabad institutions.

The logical moral to this story is that while there is a clear need for *p'nimius*, *chassidishkait*, and "*avodas ha't'filla*," we still have to put the

sticker on the front door, because it has an influence. The bottom line is that anything that can instill the idea of Moshiach and the



**Rabbi Mordechai Gal:**  
*When you are called upon to say a d'var Torah, you must immediately give over something from "D'var Malchus." In this manner, "D'var Malchus" will be instilled in every home, every community, and every village. We must work to open new shiurim in "D'var Malchus," and the power emitting from these sichos will do the job*

Redemption in another Jew must be done without hesitation.

**Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Ginsberg:**

This conference has placed a considerable emphasis on *p'nimius* – learning the sichos of “D’var Malchus.” Be that as it may, there is also a strong place, now more than ever, for things from the *makif* (encompassing) aspect. While it’s true that we cannot settle for *makif* alone, there is no denying the fact that the *makif* has a powerful effect and influence.

I once heard from Rabbi Chaim Ashkenazi about election



**Rabbi Zalman Notik:** *The principle is: Never speak against, only for. This is an important rule. On the contrary, we must speak favorably about our fellow Jews, even if they don't exactly agree with our line of thinking...*

campaigns, past and present. In the old days, political party representatives would make election rallies in the city square, and people would come to listen to the party leaders. Similarly, party activists would go from house to house and try to convince you that their party is the best and deserves your vote. Today, in contrast, they hang huge billboards and put big posters on buses. In politics, there's no more “inner avoda” the way there once was.

It's obvious that if this form of campaigning did not influence people, they wouldn't bother using it. Yet, in our generation, the “makif” approach works the best, because ours is the lowest of all generations.

When all the buses are filled with Moshiach, the world cries out Moshiach (and a very big *yasher ko'ach* goes to Rabbi Yaron Bar-Zohar and all those involved in this project). A person hears about Moshiach here, “Yechi Adoneinu” there, sees a sticker, then a flag, and it eventually influences him. It's true that we're not allowed to settle for this alone, but when we say this, sometimes someone gets up and says, “First of all, you're not allowed” or “This is not appropriate now.”

While there is a clear need to learn about Moshiach and the Redemption *p'nimius*, we also have to work in every direction, including “makif,” and experience shows that public relations campaigns never come back empty-handed.

The subject of studying “D’var Malchus” (and at times, the very name “D’var Malchus” tends to stir people up in the chareidi communities) should unite Jews on the level of “as one man and with one heart,” similar to Mattan Torah. How do we do this?



**Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Ginsberg:** *It's obvious that if this form of campaigning did not influence people, they wouldn't bother using it. Yet, in our generation, the “makif” approach works the best, because ours is the lowest of all generations.*

**Rabbi Zalman Notik:** The principle is: Never speak *against*, only *for*. This is an important rule. On the contrary, we must speak favorably about our fellow Jews, even if they don't exactly agree with our line of thinking...

A fundamental plank in the platform of a Jew who is connected to Moshiach is not to speak against someone who doesn't think the way you do. This is one of the most innovative and defining lines of the

seventh generation (unlike the days of the Rebbe Rashab and the Rebbe Rayatz, who sometimes expressed themselves harshly regarding Jews who did not learn chassidus, etc.). The Rebbe never speaks against any Jew who does not learn chassidus, and there's no such thing as a Jew who's not a Lubavitcher – of course, they're all Lubavitchers, etc. The Rebbe uses this perspective: Speak only in praise of the Jewish People, in praise of Jews who learned in Tomchei T'mimim, those who are connected to the Rebbe and learn chassidus.

**Rabbi Mordechai Gal:** The central point of this evening is to increase the number of people who learn "D'var Malchus." "D'var Malchus" belongs to all Lubavitch, and is not the sole property of one over another. The suggestion that someone understands less and

belongs less to the study of "D'var Malchus" is totally unacceptable to me.

**Rabbi Zalman Notik:** This is exactly the approach that I was referring to earlier.

**Rabbi Mordechai Gal:** Another point: Involvement in "D'var Malchus" lets each person live with the Rebbe with every fiber of his being. *Tanya* and Chabad chassidus helps us understand that we are all rather complex: animal soul, self-sacrifice, ups and downs. Efforts to bring this mode of learning to certain communities only are contradictory to the whole open and broad purpose of "D'var Malchus."

Together with the Rebbe MH"M, we must conquer Eretz Yisroel and the world with all its fine people who are most relevant in this matter. If we don't bring it to them,

make room for them, and let them understand the concepts in an "inner" fashion, we achieve the exact opposite results. We can cover some limited ground, but we miss getting to the heart of the matter. "D'var Malchus" is *p'nimius*, and it can and must be expanded upon.

The main thing is the need for greater increase. I see that women are organizing their own "D'var Malchus" classes, and are even learning portions of the sichos by heart. When you are called upon to say a *d'var Torah*, you must immediately give over something from "D'var Malchus." In this manner, "D'var Malchus" will be instilled in every home, every community, and every village. We must work to open new shiurim in "D'var Malchus," and the power emitting from these sichos will do the job on its own.

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ב"ה

# A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN

BY A SHLUCHA

*This is a story of a shlucha who took the bus to give a shiur and got into an awkward conversation that led to surprising results. \*  
A wonderful story of hashgacha pratis.*

I went to give my weekly shiur, as usual, in a distant neighborhood. Actually, it wasn't as usual. That particular week I moved the shiur a day earlier so I could attend the bar mitzva of friends, fellow shluchim. After all, women shouldn't miss their weekly learning because I had a bar mitzva to go to!

Having no other recourse, I use public transportation to get to every shiur, farbrengen, or mitzva. The time wasted waiting for buses and the tiring trips with endless stops get to me sometimes. I could accomplish so much more if I had my own car or at least someone who could drive me back and forth to shiurim!

Hashem plans man's footsteps, all the more so the footsteps of a Chassid, and all the more so the steps of a shliach, but we only appreciate this in hindsight.

Although we were on summer time for a few months already, the street was dark and deserted. I was alone at the bus stop, enjoying a few moments of silence before the shiur, where I would meet happy and somewhat boisterous women. I

would make every effort to interest them for the next two hours with Chassidus, halacha, and stories.

I was lost in thought of distant places, i.e., 770 Beis Chayeinu. Ah, how wonderful it would be to be there now, to stand in the doorway of the women's section and gaze at the holy place...

I didn't have time for more musings. I was here, on shlichus. Far away physically but close spiritually, and it is this feeling of closeness that I have to convey to the group of women who are taking giant steps towards the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach.

The noise of the approaching bus roused me from my thoughts and I boarded the bus. Aside from a dim light over the bus driver, the bus was completely dark. I looked around for a place to sit.

Oy! Who did I notice in the dark, sitting behind the driver? A Chassid who came from distant parts who is completely devoted to the Rebbe's inyanim. He owns a car and is never seen on public transportation.

Why did I say oy? Because with

all respect for the speed of his becoming a baal t'shuva, he still hadn't absorbed all the nuances of life as a Chassid. In his great enthusiasm he sometimes stops me on the street for something or another... I didn't feel comfortable telling him that this is just not done, and I always found myself squirming uncomfortably when he stopped me in public.

And here we were on the bus. Why was he on the bus anyway? And why on this bus line and at this hour? I hoped he wouldn't notice me. It's quite dark and I don't stand out, but no such luck. The only available seat was diagonally opposite him. It didn't take more than a second until he turned his head around. At least nobody could see me blushing in the dark.

"Hello," he said. His voice was a bit too loud and he could be heard clearly in the silence. How do I get out of this encounter in a Chassidische and smooth way without offending him?

"Can you take on a group?"

A group of what? Ball players? I assume that half the passengers are listening avidly to this conversation, though so far it's only one-sided.

I had no choice. I had to respond. I took a deep breath and made a quick request of the Rebbe that I not be humiliated and said, "What sort of

group?”

“A group of girls in their twenties, who want to learn about Judaism from a Chassidic perspective. Real beginners.”

“Of course, with pleasure.” I answered briefly, hoping he would catch on that I was extremely uncomfortable and would continue the conversation on the phone.

“What evening do you have available?”

I told him that I was free on Monday nights and they could come to my house to get acquainted.

“But this Monday night you are not free?” he wondered.

At this point, I had to elaborate and explain to him and all my fellow passengers who were hanging on to every word of our conversation, that although I wasn't free *this* Monday, this was an exception because of a simcha.

After he digested this information, he promised to give the girls my phone number and leave the rest to me. With wishes for success the conversation ended, finally, thank G-d.

I sank back into my seat, hoping that my face was returning to its normal color. I tried to ignore my discomfort and before I could focus my thoughts again, I felt a gentle tap on my shoulder.

An unfamiliar voice said, “Excuse me, are you the rabbanit who gives shiurim in the X neighborhood? Are you on your way to give a shiur there now?”

I confessed that indeed this was the case. At least this time the conversation only required that I turn my head, rather than speaking loudly across a crowded bus, although I had no idea who I was talking to.

Her next question was, “Can I attend your shiur? I've wanted to

attend it for a while. I'm on my way home but if it's okay with you, I would join you.”

Would I agree? Of course! Asking a shlucha of the Rebbe whether she agreed to include someone in a shiur?! I want to have more and more women join my shiur! The Rebbe's new mitzva is to start more and more shiurim, to add new projects, to be mekarev more and more Jews. And believe me, sometimes the desire is strong but we are unsuccessful. Here the Rebbe was sending me a new, unfamiliar woman on a silver platter without the least

***“Hello,” he said. His voice was a bit too loud and he could be heard clearly in the silence. How do I get out of this encounter in a Chassidishe and smooth way without offending him?***

bit of effort on my part.

Without being able to turn around to face the anonymous woman or girl behind me, I told her to watch when I got off and to follow me.

A few stops later, we got off together and walked to the local shul where the weekly shiur has been taking place for a few years.

In the few minutes we had to walk together, I learned a few details about her background. Her name was Edna and she was from a traditionally observant family. She

was not married. She worked at a desirable profession and in the course of her work had become acquainted with the shlucha in her area. She was interested in Chabad Chassidus.

Her pure faith and innocence was outstanding. I didn't have to convince her of anything and I felt that I had the privilege of meeting a special person. I strongly felt that this would not be a one-time meeting.

We were in the doorway of the shul but the gate was locked. Something was amiss. Today, of all days, when I had a new pupil and I had to make a positive first impression, it was starting off on the left foot. I apologized for the unpleasantness and we waited for someone else to come.

We exchanged a few more remarks and then I saw two women heading in our direction. They happily informed me that the location of the shiur had been changed because of a simcha in the home of one of the participants. She wanted us to come to her house for the Chai Elul farbrengen as a continuation of the seudas mitzva that had begun a few hours before.

More apologies. Perhaps it wasn't comfortable for Edna, who didn't know any of the women, to go to a private home where they were celebrating a family simcha. But Edna had been looking for an opportunity to learn and she wasn't going to pass this one up.

I greatly admired her determination and was even envious of her. Halevai I had her enthusiasm and persistence.

We entered the house and sat down. Two minutes later a woman called me over to the side.

“Who's that woman who came with you?”

“I don't know her except for her

name and what she does.” I told Devorah how Edna had come along with me to the shiur.

“But why are you asking?”

It turns out that Devorah had a single brother-in-law, a bachur who had become a mekurav of the Rebbe and she was looking for a suitable shidduch for him. I said I would ask Edna, who I knew all of half an hour, if she was interested in a shidduch, and if she was, whether she would meet with someone who was making strides in his study of Chassidus.

Well, Edna was interested! I introduced Edna to Devorah and they conferred in a corner of the house while we continued with the farbrengen. Devorah was very

impressed and instinctively felt that Edna and her brother-in-law had a lot in common. This might work!

To make a long story short, Edna ended up engaged to Devorah’s brother-in-law. Today, their home is not only a Beis Chabad because of the sticker on the door but is truly a house of Torah, avoda, and chesed, a Moshiach center, Tzivos Hashem headquarters, etc.

The initial matchmaker got off the bus confident that the group of girls who were taking their first steps towards Yiddishkait would be a source of much Chassidic nachas. He didn’t dream that the girls might not exactly fulfill his expectations, but unknowingly he became the link in the chain that connected Edna and

the Rebbe, Moshiach of our generation, and then Edna and her bashert!

And I learned some lessons from this episode. Of course, there was the hashgacha pratis, that Hashem plans every detail of our lives. I also saw a clear demonstration of the role of a Chassid as a lamplighter, especially a shliach. I learned that the Rebbe selects the souls that belong to him like the Rebbe Rashab picked the students of Tomchei T’mimim, and that he ensures that they come to him.

And finally, the power of a Chassidische farbrengen which accomplishes what the Angel Michael cannot accomplish.

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# AMONG ELEVATED MEN

BY RABBI SCHNEUR ZALMAN CHANIN

*Just as R' Chaikel admired and honored the great and elder Chassidim, so too, they honored and esteemed him for his energy, his talents, and his devotion to the needs of individuals and the community. \* They all knew you could rely on R' Chaikel. You would never hear him say "impossible" or "I can't." \* In the following chapter we read about his connections and his work, while still a bachur, with the lions of Chabad in Russia, i.e., R' Chonye Morosov, R' Nissan Nemenov, and R' Dovid Horodoker.*

## CHAPTER 11 MAINTAINING TOMCHEI T'MIMIM

After the Rebbe left Leningrad for Riga, the administration of Tomchei T'mimim fell into the hands of the famous Chassid, R' Chonye (Elchonon Dov) Morosov (may Hashem avenge his blood). When my father arrived in Leningrad, he became very close with R' Chonye and helped a lot in his holy work of maintaining the yeshiva.

I heard from the Morosov brothers, R' Mendel, R' Moshe, and

R' Sholom, that their father would sit with my father for hours upon hours. They were still young and didn't quite follow the conversation, especially since the adults spoke in low tones and everything was top secret.

What they did understand was that the conversation was about Tomchei T'mimim, Lubavitch, and other communal matters that were important to the Chassidim of those days. And they knew this because as soon as my father would arrive at their home, R' Chonye would drop everything, sometimes even when in

the middle of davening, and sit with my father to arrange urgent matters.

Despite their young age, they knew that their father was one of the pillars of Chabad Chassidim, but they wondered about my father. How was a bachur in his twenties so involved in communal matters?

Mrs. Rivka Minkowitz (Chein) told me that she once visited her uncle, R' Yisroel Neveler, at his home in Tashkent, and she saw a young man come by, at five a.m., to learn with him. When she learned that the shiur took place daily, she asked her uncle who he learned with. He replied, "You don't know him? That's Chaikel Chanin." When she asked who Chaikel Chanin was, he answered, "Chaikel is 'intellect.'"

R' Yisroel Neveler was a sharp person and older than my father and he was generally terse when it came to praise, yet he flattered my father since he held him in such high esteem.

My father also worked closely with R' Yona Cohen (may Hashem avenge his blood), who was menahel of Tomchei T'mimim and one of the select T'mimim, in maintaining the chadarim and yeshivos. They were so close that when my father left Russia he gave R' Yona his apartment and all its contents. After the mass emigration of Chabad Chassidim, the N.K.V.D. arrested him and tortured

him.

I heard it said in the name of R' Shmuel Pruss that R' Yona once told him, "You have to reckon with Chaikel's opinion."

### SHLIACH TO MOSCOW

R' Shmuel Pruss was my father's dear friend. I remember their meeting when R' Shmuel came to Beis Chayeinu for the first time after leaving the Vale of Tears. This was an emotional meeting and words fail me in describing the meeting, the love and affection that they showered upon one another, and the conversations that lasted long into the night.

R' Shmuel told me how they collected money for maamud (to support the Rebbe's household) when the Rebbe had already left Russia. From his recounting, you learned what mesirus nefesh this entailed.

Anash in Leningrad were once told, by diplomatic mail from the Swiss embassy, that the money in Kupas Rabbeinu was depleted and the Rebbe was in dire straits. Because of the fear of the authorities and the N.K.V.D. they didn't know if this was true or not. Some Chassidim feared that the N.K.V.D.

***R' Nissan grabbed his hand and stopped him from drinking.***

***"Slow down," he said.***

***"Why are you grabbing? Drinking like that could cost you to lose both this world and the next."***

had spread this rumor to trap them and catch those who were in constant touch with the Rebbe and those who sent the money.

The Chassidim held a meeting and decided to send a special messenger to make contact with the shadar, R' Nissan Nemenov, who lived in Malachovka at the time, a suburb of Moscow. He was to verify whether R' Nissan knew about the Rebbe and whether the information they had received was accurate. The messenger they sent was R' Shmuel Pruss.

When he arrived in Moscow he found R' Nissan in shul davening. R'

Shmuel, who knew R' Nissan, knew that R' Nissan was a true oved and spent hours on his davening. He was afraid that the sun would set before he would have a chance to talk with R' Nissan. Every minute was precious to R' Shmuel because he didn't have a permit to stay overnight in Moscow, which was necessary in those days, and he wanted to settle the matter and return immediately.

So he hovered around R' Nissan until he managed to distract him and indicate to him that he had a private, urgent matter to discuss with him that could not be postponed and could not be discussed in shul.

R' Nissan quickly finished davening, took his tallis and t'fillin, and began walking in the direction of the street with R' Shmuel following him. It was a hot day and the sun shone fiercely. R' Shmuel longed for a drink of water. He would have stopped and bought a cup of water but then he was likely to lose sight of R' Nissan.

Thus an hour went by with R' Nissan walking and R' Shmuel following behind, via narrow streets, right and left, until they came to a certain house. R' Nissan entered with R' Shmuel right behind him.

The heat and his thirst were such that as soon as R' Shmuel entered the house he grabbed a cup and filled it with water and was about to gulp it down in order to slake his thirst. But R' Nissan grabbed his hand and stopped him from drinking.

"Slow down," he said. "Why are you grabbing? Drinking like that could cost you to lose both this world and the next."

R' Shmuel respected R' Nissan's guidance. This was the side benefit of this trip, receiving a lesson in behavior. R' Shmuel told me, "I



thought that this was, indeed, the way of a Chassid, a true servant of G-d. For R' Nissan had also walked in the heat of the day and certainly he too was thirsty, but he had worked on himself until he reached the level where he knew how to control his desires.”

After R' Nissan heard about the news from Beis Chayeinu and the fears of Anash in Leningrad, he said there was nothing to fear. He had received the same information from the Rebbe's secretary, R' Chatshe Feigin. He added that of course they must immediately raise money for the Rebbe.

We must remember that at this time in Russia, people had no say about their personal lives. “Mother Russia” told them where to sleep, where and when to travel, and where to work. It was forbidden for someone to remain overnight out of town without the proper papers. Every building manager was a spy who informed the authorities about suspicious people who came as guests. That is why R' Shmuel returned to Leningrad that same night.

### “ALL HE HAD” – TO THE REBBE

The next morning there was a secret emergency meeting of the g'dolei ha'Chassidim and some of Anash, in which they decided on a sum of maamud money that needed to be raised from each city that had a Lubavitch community. In Leningrad, the matter was arranged and the money was collected immediately.

The Chassid R' Leibel Mochkin told me that at that meeting they decided to send him to Moscow so he could bring the money they collected in order to send it to the Rebbe Rayatz, as well as to collect from the Chassidim in Moscow. They chose him because he was a young

bachur and it was unlikely that he would be suspected of being involved in such things. But when he arrived in Moscow he encountered many difficulties and it was only after much effort that he managed to receive the necessary sum.

R' Leibel compared the nice response in Leningrad to the difficulties he experienced in Moscow and wondered about it. When he returned home he asked his father, R' Peretz for an explanation. In Moscow, there were more Chassidim than in Leningrad and yet less money was raised with more effort!

R' Peretz answered: What don't you understand? In Moscow there are more Anash but in Leningrad there's R' Chaikel and he gave almost the entire amount!

Along similar lines, my father told me that once, R' Nissan Nemenov came to Leningrad to raise maamud money for the Rebbe. He held a large meeting of Anash and

told them, in the name of R' Chatshe, the Rebbe's secretary, that the financial situation was dire and a large amount of money was needed desperately.

His dear friend, R' Pinye Altheus, who was exceedingly poor, came to him and said: Chaikel, did you hear? Nissan came to collect money for maamud. What do we do?

My father said: What do you mean? We must give what we have.

R' Pinye, who didn't even have money for bread and water and wasn't working at that time, told my father: I know that, but what do you do if you have nothing to give and you have to give money for maamud? You know what, Chaikel? My wife bought me a pair of shoes. Buy them from me and I'll have money for maamud.

When my father told this story, he would conclude: This is a Chassid and good friend of the Rebbe. For him, this was mesirus nefesh because he walked in torn shoes.

### EXEMPT FROM THE MITZVA AND THE ARMY

My father told me more about the brother of R' Pinye Altheus, the Chassid, R' Shmuel Betzalel (Shmilik) Altheus. Once, when he was in Leningrad at the home of the Rebbe Rayatz, and he saw that the Rebbe was preparing to eat lunch, he thought of running to the kitchen in order to be able to aid the Rebbe with the washing.

He was next to the faucet and wanted to fill the cup and give it to the Rebbe, when Chana, the Rebbe's daughter, dashed in and grabbed the mitzva away. R' Shmuel Betzalel was upset for he wanted to serve the Rebbe but she had grabbed the opportunity away from him. She would be able to serve her father the next day or the day after, while this was an opportunity that was taken away from him.

The Rebbe smiled and said, “Shmilik, you're a bit lame. Ah, leave her alone.”

R' Shmuel Betzalel didn't understand what the Rebbe meant by this. It was only years later, during the war, when he was drafted and slightly wounded in the leg that he understood. As a wounded soldier he received an exemption and was sent home from the front and this saved his life. Apparently, the Rebbe's words were the “cure” before the “blow.”



R' Nissan Nemenov



R' Shmuel Pruss

## THE STRENGTH OF A CHASSID

I heard in the name of R' Shmuel Pruss that when his passport expired he went to R' Chonye to write to the Rebbe and ask for a bracha for him. The answer from the Rebbe came on a piece of cigarette paper and said: "Whoever accepts upon himself the yoke of Torah, etc., will not be a soldier." In other words, they would not draft him. In hindsight they saw that upon receiving that answer, R' Chonye received the ability to give brachos.

This is what happened:

At the beginning of the 30's, right after the answer for R' Shmuel Pruss, Tomchei T'mimim was in terrible financial shape and they needed a large sum of money for the yeshiva and for maamud. A large farbrengen took place on Shabbos and R' Chonye drank a lot of mashke and announced that whoever gave 200 rubles for the yeshiva would receive a "white paper" which meant a military exemption.

People responded eagerly, some of them doing so because they hoped they would receive an exemption and some of them doing

so because they understood the dire need. But one of the bachurim laughed at R' Chonye and said: How can you be so sure? And he did not give the requested sum.

Within a few days, all those who were eligible for the army and had given or promised to give 200 rubles, received a white paper. And that bachur received a draft notice and had to go to the army. When he saw he was in trouble, he went to R' Chonye to ask forgiveness and he brought the 200 rubles for Tomchei T'mimim. But R' Chonye said: Now it's too late. I can't do anything now.

After much pleading and crying that R' Chonye have mercy on him, R' Chonye rested his head on the table for a few minutes and then said: Give double and Hashem will help. And that's what happened.

When my father would conclude this story he would say that they recognized then that that R' Chonye was an extraordinary man. He had been the chavrusa of the Rebbe Rayatz when he was younger and then his personal secretary, "But apparently it wasn't just an ordinary thing. He was a Jew who worked on himself, who fasted a lot, davened all day and was careful in thought,

speech, and deed. He stood a handbreadth above the ground and was a spiritual man."

At that farbrengen there was Tamim who was cross-eyed, and when it was his turn to get a bracha from R' Chonye, R' Menasheh Altheus a"h got up and jokingly said to R' Chonye: Until now, you did miracles, and now I'll do a miracle. And he said to the Tamim: Do you have 200 rubles? Give it to your wife for household expenses. Go before the draft committee and look with one eye at the general and with the other eye at the door and I promise you that you will get a white paper.

Of course they all laughed but R' Menashe's miracle came to pass too.

## R' DOVID HORODOKER'S REQUEST

In 5692 (1932), a famous and distinguished Chassid, R' Dovid Horodoker (Kievman), came to Leningrad. R' Dovid was a great Chassid, a scholar, and a yerei Shamayim. My father told me that he heard from elder Chassidim that the Rebbe Rashab once said: It was worth the entire founding of Tomchei T'mimim solely for Dovid Horodoker.

One day, he came to my father's apartment and asked to speak to him about a private matter. Since "the walls have ears," they decided to go out to the street and talk as they walked. R' Dovid said that he had come to Leningrad because he was very sick. His leg was diseased with gangrene and the only thing the doctors advised him to do was amputate the leg.

The suffering from the amputation is not what bothered him, he said. What bothered him was that he did not want to leave this world maimed. He asked my father, who knew doctors and hospitals, whether he could find him

a doctor who could cure him.

My father, who was still a bachur at the time, promised to help him and considered it a great z'chus to help any Chassid, especially a genuine Chassid like R' Dovid who asked, from the depths of his heart to "leave this world whole; not maimed, G-d forbid."

My father made inquiries as to who were the top doctors in this field and after much effort and money under the table, he got an appointment with a famous doctor, the greatest in this field in Russia.

In Russia, at this bitter time, they limited citizens in every way. Nearly everything had to be done illegally and secretly. Even the appointment with the doctor had to be done secretly and took place at the doctor's house and not at his office.

R' Dovid Horodoker went to the doctor's house wearing old and torn clothes, as he was destitute. But his face was refined like an angel's and his shining appearance testified to who he was and made a great impression on the doctor, who gave him a great deal of attention.

The doctor checked him thoroughly but then said they had to return to his house when he would tell them the results of the tests and his decision. A few days later the doctor told them the gangrene had spread and couldn't be stopped. If they wanted to save R' Dovid's life there was no choice but to amputate.

The news devastated R' Dovid and he couldn't control himself but cried bitterly over his lot. He asked my father to keep looking for other doctors who might have a different opinion. Perhaps a doctor outside of Russia could somehow be consulted. Maybe a doctor with another approach would find a way to treat him, the main thing being that when it came time to bury him he should be whole.

## THERE'S NO QUESTION

My father remembered another story about R' Dovid Horodoker which shows his greatness and the great power of a genuine Chassid. When R' Dovid was in Leningrad he was hosted by poor Jews. A question came up regarding a chicken, and the lady of the house brought the chicken to the rav of the city. The p'sak din was that the chicken was not kosher.

The poor lady was distressed, for if the chicken was treif, what would they eat on Shabbos? She thought of asking her guest about the chicken, since he seemed like a rabbi. Perhaps he would declare the chicken kosher.

She gave the chicken to R' Dovid and asked him whether it was kosher, without telling him that she had already asked a rav. R' Dovid took a good look, examining the chicken from all sides, and then, as though a light bulb went off in his head, he said, "A rav already paskened..." And if a rav already paskened, why was she asking him?

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too late. I can't do  
anything now...*

## A NEW CURE

My father tried to calm R' Dovid down and to encourage him not to despair. He promised to do all he could to find other doctors and other approaches. A few days later someone told my father about a new method called homeopathy which was unknown by conventional medicine. The method had proved itself and there were good results for those who tried it but how would they find a doctor who practiced it?

After running around, a homeopathic doctor was found and my father took R' Dovid to him. This doctor checked R' Dovid thoroughly, furrowed his brow and then said that he thought he could help him, but the treatment would take a long time. He estimated that it would take at least a few months and perhaps even as long as six months. He advised R' Dovid to go to a place with a warm climate where he could take mineral baths.

R' Dovid had to sit for hours each day covered with sand from his waist down on the beach or in desert sand, under the direct rays of the sun. Then, with Hashem's help, the combination of sand, sun, and minerals would effect a cure.

R' Dovid was overjoyed. He said that through learning Chassidus and the avoda of t'filla he had accustomed himself not to be drawn after the animal soul, and so, what difference did it make; he would go to where it was sunny and there, under its rays, he would be able to learn properly.

My father gave R' Dovid money for the trip and the treatment, as well as money for daily expenses such as food and lodging. R' Dovid

went abroad alone because Mother Russia, in her great concern for her citizens, did not give any of his family members exit permits even in order to help R' Dovid in his illness.

After nearly six months the treatment was a success and the Healer of all flesh allowed R' Dovid to recover.

### AN AMAZING BRACHA THAT WAS FULFILLED

Before going home, R' Dovid went to Leningrad. My father got him an appointment with the top doctor who had examined him previously, so he could give his opinion about R' Dovid's leg and say whether he was cured or not. The doctor checked him and checked him again and could not believe that R' Dovid had recovered. He said about R' Dovid: He is a holy man, and therefore, G-d cured him. He said that according to medicine, there was no explanation for what had happened and it wasn't possible for the disease to disappear, leaving no trace.

Immediately after leaving the doctor, my father brought R' Dovid to his mother's house (this was before he married) and arranged a thanksgiving meal and goodbye party at which the Chassidim farbrenged till late at night.

When it came time to say goodbye to R' Dovid at the train station, R' Dovid asked my father:



R' Dovid Horodoker

Chaikel, how can I thank you?

My father said it should be a z'chus for him that he helped a Chassidic Jew like R' Dovid and this was a reward for his efforts. R' Dovid said that he knew that my father had paid a fortune for the treatments and the expenses of the trip and that he appreciated all the efforts he had made to get doctors and everything else he had done.

When my father dismissed these words of gratitude, R' Dovid placed his hands around my father's neck and hugged him tightly and kissed him. With tears in his eyes, he said that he felt he owed my father his life but he couldn't repay him. The

only thing he could give my father was a bracha that he never be bothered by the N.K.V.D. and they should never conduct a search of his home. And they parted.

My father testified that throughout all the years that he spent in Russia, during the war and after the war, until he left Russia, they did not conduct a single search of his home and he was never arrested. This was certainly a great miracle because the N.K.V.D. conducted thousands of searches in the homes of Anash, looking for gold or coins of gold or silver.

Suspicion fell on my father since he had a respected position and everybody knew that he gave a fortune to Tomchei T'mimim. And sad to say, there were numerous informers. Yet, my father wasn't bothered by the police.

As I related, my father lived in the same apartment as my grandfather (on my mother's side), Rabbi Shmuel Nimotin (may Hashem avenge his blood). They came every few weeks to conduct a search by my grandfather who was so poor, and he was arrested a number of times, saying that even if he didn't have gold, then he certainly knew who did, but they left my father alone.

My father saw how the Chassid R' Dovid Horodoker was a true Chassid and he had the ability to give brachos.

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# THE ‘BOTTOM LINE’ OF CHABAD CHASSIDUS

INTERVIEW BY AVROHOM RAYNITZ

*The Besuras HaGeula, like all the Rebbe's teachings, is built on the foundations of Chabad Chassidus. If you study the Rebbe's latter sichos, you realize that the Besuras HaGeula is an expression and revelation of all the foundations of Chassidus. You can also see how the reality of the world fits the details of the Besuras HaGeula. \* Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Meizlich, shliach in Mexico, together with a group of young scholars, published "HaT'kufa V'HaGeula," a compilation of the details of the Besuras HaGeula as they are built upon the foundations of Chabad Chassidus. \* Part 2 of 2*

Along with all these giluyim you can't deny the evil in the world, the terror?

True, because as I said earlier, the Geula shleima hasn't actually come. We have a situation in which, on the one hand, we still have remnants of Galus that

express themselves in acts of terrorism and all the other tzaros in the world, and on the other hand, there is a blossoming of goodness and kindness and the rallying of most of the nations of the world against terrorism.

(It should be noted that the

primary terror perpetrated against Jews takes place in Eretz Yisroel and this is a result of the free will of a few Jews who do everything to encourage terror.)

When you look at the general picture you see that for five thousand years klipa ruled without dissent, and the world was full of evil between nations in general and towards the Jewish people in particular. Since 5751, we are witness to a process of the breaking of the force of evil. Another klipa drops away and another drops away. The tremendous forces of the powers of evil no longer exist.

Today, if a Jew wants to grow spiritually, nobody will stop him aside from himself. You want to learn Torah? Today you cannot complain that there is no shiur appropriate for you in your location since you can dial a shiur on the phone or hear one over the Internet. You want beautiful t'fillin? Pick up the phone and the t'fillin are on the way. This is a fundamental change in the world, a change which, if you think about it a bit, demonstrates that we are in a new era of the time of the Geula.

What remains? Our free will. We can still choose between good

and evil. This will be true in the first era of Yemos HaMoshiach. There will be different eras and the prophecy of “and the spirit of evil I will remove from the earth” will not be fulfilled immediately at the beginning of the Messianic era (in a situation of “lo zachu” – they did not merit).

So too with what the Rebbe said about the avodas ha'birurim being finished. This doesn't mean that there is no more evil in the world but we have finished all the birurim that had to be completed before the coming of Moshiach.

Galus and Geula are compared to pregnancy and birth. There is the gestational period when the limbs of the fetus are not complete. There are no fingers, for example. At this point, birth is impossible. It would not be for the good of the child. But, then a time comes when all the limbs are complete, and then there's the birth. Let's say there's a problem with one of the limbs. This doesn't prevent the birth. Not only that, but it might be easier to treat the problem after the birth.

The Jewish people are presently complete in all its limbs and ready

for Geula. The body is ready. This doesn't mean that there aren't any small wounds here and there that need healing. But these are small blemishes on the surface of the skin, not something internal and fundamentally lacking. In general, everything about us compared to previous generations is like the heel of the foot, and a small wound in the heel will not hold up the Geula.

**The reality, as you mentioned earlier, is also built on halacha. Where do we see the time of Geula within halacha?**

From a halachic perspective, we are now in the stage of “a king will arise from the house of Dovid,” in the process of carrying out the activities to bring the Geula. The only posek who describes the stages of Geula is the Rambam and when we read his detailed description of what Moshiach does, we immediately see that this describes the Rebbe's activities in the world.

This situation of a king will arise to compel all the Jewish people [to keep the Torah], with all the *breitkait* that the Rambam describes, is something we never

had before. There were Jews who wanted to help the entire Jewish people, but practically speaking, they did not possess the means to reach all Jews.

When the Rambam writes, “he will compel all the Jewish people,” he means a Jew who can reach every Jew, literally. From the time of Moshe Rabbeinu, when all Jews were together in the desert, it was never possible for one Jew to reach every single Jew wherever Jews lived. Even in the time of Shlomo HaMelech, it is explained in Chassidus that goyim who wanted to receive his light had to go to him.

In our generation, a revolution has taken place. A Jew sits in Brooklyn and there is not a Jew in the world who has not been impacted by him in some way. One put on t'fillin thanks to him, another put up mezuzos, a third keeps kosher. Even the work of those religious groups that “do kiruv” these days, comes as a result of the revolution the Rebbe wrought. There was nothing like this in the history of the Jewish people that one Jew should have influence over every Jew in the world.

With the Rebbe, we also see how he influences even goyim, wherever they are, with the Seven Noachide Laws, whether through the shluchim or through technology that brings the Rebbe's message and influence to literally all corners of the world.

Suddenly, this halacha in the Rambam that describes the phenomenon of the revelation of Moshiach sounds very realistic. You learn the Rambam and read a living description of our times. I once showed these halachos to a Litvishe Jew and he asked me, in all innocence: Is it written this way in all editions? He simply saw in the



*Today, if a Jew wants to grow spiritually, nobody will stop him aside from himself. You want to learn Torah? Today you cannot complain that there is no shiur appropriate for you in your location since you can dial a shiur on the phone or hear one over the Internet. You want beautiful t'fillin? Pick up the phone and the t'fillin are on the way. This is a fundamental change in the world, a change which, if you think about it a bit, demonstrates that we are in a new era of the time of the Geula.*

Rambam a detailed description of the Rebbe's work!

If we're talking about the halachic perspective, I should mention that the Rebbe referred specifically to piskei dinim of rabbanim in connection to Geula. Back at the beginning of the 1990's the rabbanim paskened that the Jewish people already did t'shuva and the time for Geula has arrived. And there were those who already paskened then that the Rebbe is Moshiach.

Today, there are hundreds of rabbanim, morei halacha, Chassidim and Litvishe, from all backgrounds, who have signed to a p'sak din that according to Torah the time for Geula has arrived and that the Rebbe has the qualifications of Moshiach.

One of the chapters of your book is dedicated to the topic of prophecy, under the heading, "The B'suras HaGeula with the Force of Prophecy." What did the Rebbe say that is considered prophetic?

The inyan of nevua in connection with the Besuras HaGeula appears at length in the sicha of Shabbos Parshas Shoftim 5751. If you study this sicha you will discover that what the Rebbe said about nevua is not limited to a specific phrase which is prophetic, but that everything the Rebbe said in the latter sichos about the Besuras HaGeula has the force of nevua.

As the Rebbe says there, "All the more so as it has already come into speech ("niv s'fasayim" is the inyan of nevua), **as it has been customary lately** to bring things out in speech, including and especially that behold the Geula comes." The Rebbe is saying that all the things that were said in connection to the Besuras HaGeula have the force of prophecy.

What is the significance of



"divrei nevua" and how does it add to the impact of the Besuras HaGeula?

The Rebbe answers your question in a footnote in that sicha. On the words, "the nevua of 'l'Alter l'Geula' and immediately mamash 'hinei zeh (Moshiach) ba,'" the Rebbe writes, "not just as a chacham and judge but as a navi, which is with certainty – see the maamarim of the Alter Rebbe HaK'tzarim p. 355-6."

In the Maamarim HaK'tzarim the Alter Rebbe explains the advantage nevua has over the ruach ha'kodesh of chachamim and tzaddikim. With ruach ha'kodesh, you see things as they are in the supernal worlds, and it's possible that things will change before their time comes to descend to this physical world. The navi, on the other hand, sees what happens in this physical world and therefore there cannot be a change.

The Alter Rebbe goes on to

*Today, there are hundreds of rabbanim, morei halacha, Chassidim and Litvishe, from all backgrounds, who have signed to a p'sak din that according to Torah the time for Geula has arrived and that the Rebbe has the qualifications of Moshiach.*

discuss the topic of kitzin (end points for Geula) and says that when the Zohar says that the keitz ought to be in 5408 (1748), surely he saw the truth but this was the truth on a very high spiritual plane. Until this was drawn down into the physical world there were changes and obstacles, but if a navi would have said this, it certainly would take place without any changes.

In other words, when a chacham says that it will rain tomorrow, it's because he saw in the supernal worlds that this is the way it ought to be, and according to the usual way of things, what happens today in the spiritual world comes down tomorrow in the physical world, and therefore, it ought to rain tomorrow. However, since there is still a long way between the supernal world and our physical world, there can be changes.

If a navi says it will rain tomorrow, he didn't see rain in the

heavenly realm, but he sees tomorrow as it is in this physical world. If he sees rain here, it must rain. He sees the physical reality that is taking place in the world. It's just that he sees it before us and he tells us about it as a nevua.

This means that when the Rebbe refers to the Maamarim HaK'tzarim of the Alter Rebbe, he means to stress even more that his nevua about the Geula is not just another "keitz" that he sees in the supernal worlds, but a physical Geula that he already sees in this world. And as we discussed earlier, we too are already beginning to see the onset of Geula in this world.

A nevua means that this isn't something that can be changed. It's not like a "golden opportunity" that ends at a certain point, but a process that comes as a direct result of the fact that we are in the time of Geula, and nothing can change this.

In addition to the authority of that which is said as a nevua, from what the Alter Rebbe says it comes out that the very fact that the navi verbalizes his nevua, "niv s'fasayim," this itself confirms the nevua within the bounds of the world in a way that does not allow for change. In our case, we must say that when the Rebbe verbalized this, it was established and became the reality in the world in a way that does not allow for change.

An amazing thing happened right after this sicha was said. As we mentioned, one of the major events that demonstrated that the time for Geula has come is the fall of the Iron Curtain. Right after the sicha about nevua there was an attempted military coup in Russia for the purpose of reinstating communism. For a while, it looked as though all those wonderful changes were temporary and this wasn't Geula, G-d forbid.

At the very time this attempted revolution was taking place, on Shabbos Parshas Shoftim, the Rebbe expressed the Besuras HaGeula and emphasized that he was saying it as a nevua, and therefore, the clock could not be turned back. Within a few days and in a completely miraculous manner, the revolution failed, and amazingly, there were nearly no fatalities.

During those few days of uncertainty, some shluchim asked the Rebbe whether they should leave the former Soviet Union. They received a very sharp answer from the Rebbe: "**With the greatest surprise I received the question** – obviously, you should continue with all your plans."

Now wasn't the shluchim's question legitimate? Why was the Rebbe surprised by their question? Chassidim explained that this was connected with the sicha that was said on the previous Shabbos, and that once the Rebbe had said things as a nevua, it was clear that all the things the Rebbe had pointed to as being part of the Geula process were said as a nevua and were irreversible. Therefore, even if there was an attempted military coup to restore communism, it was to be ignored, and the Rebbe didn't have to be asked anything for it was clear that within a short time it would turn out to be nothing.

An interesting thing happened to my brother-in-law, Yehoshua Metzger. At that same time, he was producing ads for the newspapers about the coming of Moshiach. That week he was getting ready to put a big ad in the *New York Times* with the word "Moshiach" as a connect-the-dots. Underneath the word it said, "Draw Your Own Conclusion." The ad had a number of thoughts for people to think about, and if you put it all together, you would have to

conclude that the time for Geula has come. One of the first points was the fall of communism.

On Monday, after word of the coup got out, my brother-in-law thought he should postpone printing the ad since it would look ridiculous if the communists returned to power while we spoke about the fall of communism as an indication of the coming of Moshiach!

He asked the Rebbe and the Rebbe did not agree to postpone the printing of the ad, but wanted the ad in the paper that week. (By the way, the Rebbe really liked this ad and contributed his own money towards it.)

So at the height of the military coup, on Wednesday, the ad was sent to the paper and was printed the next day. That Thursday, when people read the paper they also heard the news of the failed coup! It turned out to be the best time for the ad, because whoever thought about it realized that the ad was prepared right in the middle of the coup and was prophetic in its wording.

This point, that the Geula process is irreversible, is something the Rebbe accomplished at that farbrengen on Shabbos Parshas Shoftim, when he verbalized it all and emphasized that everything he was saying at that time was being said prophetically.

Getting back to the book that is being published in its second edition, who is its target audience?

Our first target is every Chabad Chassid who needs to know all the details of the Rebbe's Besuras HaGeula in a way of understanding. When we know and understand things as they are explained at length in the Rebbe's sichos, we can also pass along the Besuras HaGeula not only as a proclamation and with billboards (which are important to start with), but with a deep understanding. And this is our main job in publicizing the Besuras HaGeula.

The book is written in a way that a non-Lubavitcher, interested in the topic, could understand. We recommend that the book be given to rabbanim and other influential people. When they learn it, they will see it's a whole "Torah" which is based on a foundation of Torah and Chassidus.

In order to encourage Anash to distribute the book, R' Menachem Mendel Shagalov enabled us to reprint the book in both a soft-covered and a hard-covered edition. It will be distributed in Eretz Yisroel and New York at a reasonable price to enable Anash to buy it and give it out.

If Anash distribute the book to yeshivos and kollelim of groups other than Chabad, we are assured that the efforts won't go to waste. The strengthening of emuna and bitachon in the Rebbe's prophecy of Geula will further hasten the realization of everything the Rebbe said with the true and complete Redemption now!



*This situation of a king will arise, etc., with all the breitzkeit that the Rambam describes, is something we never had before. There were Jews who wanted to help the entire Jewish people, but practically speaking, they did not possess the means to reach all Jews.*



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# HOW BARON DE ROTHSCHILD SAVED THE SINAI SCHOOLS

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN BERGER

*The Rebbe personally encouraged the founding of the magnificent Chabad school system in Paris and said a number of cryptic statements that weren't understood until more than a decade later. \* This is the miraculous story of how the Chabad schools in Paris were rescued after they had already declared bankruptcy and were about to be closed.*

The lawyers for the Chabad Sinai school system in Paris left the courthouse in shock. None of them, despite their years of experience, had expected such a harsh sentence: the foreclosing of three huge complexes in which thousands of boys and girls learned. A slim chance remained to prevent this from happening. If the administration could produce five million Euros for the creditors within a short period of time, they could avoid foreclosure.

**Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Pevsner, director of the Sinai schools, with all due respect, how did you get into such enormous debt (5 million Euros is about 6 million dollars)?**

Rabbi Pevsner, menahel for many

years, sighed deeply. "It's a long story... But it involves a chain of miracles and the Rebbe's ruach ha'kodesh."

\* \* \*

"Thousands of Parisian Jewish boys and girls attend the Chabad Sinai school system. These mosdos were founded by my father, Rabbi Hillel Pevsner. For many years, he worked on opening and maintaining these schools. In 5741, my wife and I joined the hanhala after we received the Rebbe's bracha. Some time after we joined the hanhala, we acquired a large building and the school expanded significantly.

"Remember, 5749 was Shnas

HaBinyan (the Year of Construction), in the course of which the Rebbe encouraged the building of new Chabad houses and private homes. It was apparently an auspicious time and the hanhala of the schools convened for a meeting. They resolved in the meeting to build a spacious complex that would include all our mosdos, in which thousands of children are educated. We quickly began working on our plans and then we sent a model to the Rebbe.

"The Rebbe's involvement in the building of the complex was amazing. We received many instructions and brachos. Furthermore, the Rebbe even donated a large sum towards the costs of the building. You might remember that that year the Rebbe said that whoever built a private or public building would receive a symbolic \$100 from the Machne Israel fund.

"When I was in New York during Tamuz 5749, I was surprised to hear from Rabbi Leibel Groner, the Rebbe's secretary that the Rebbe would give \$100 to anybody who contributed towards the building in Paris. The Rebbe put a time limit on this, saying that whoever made a donation by Rosh HaShana would get \$100 from him.

“I was stunned, and after some discussion we set an amount and said that whoever gave a minimum of \$5000 would get the money and bracha from the Rebbe. The news spread and the donations poured in. I remember that on Erev Rosh HaShana, the last day for donations, there was a long line at my father’s house. People wanted to give their donations because he was the one who distributed the checks the Rebbe sent.

“This special support of the Rebbe was a tremendous help and we raised a huge amount, beyond all our expectations, which paid for 80% of the expenses of the building! We received the rest through a bank

loan.

“In Elul 5749, I went to the Rebbe to submit a report about the tremendous success we had in fundraising and to announce the opening of the new school year. That day at “dollars,” my brother, Avrohom Boruch of Yerushalayim, gave the Rebbe a seifer. I arrived shortly after him and as I stood facing the Rebbe, the Rebbe turned to Rabbi Groner and said, ‘This is also a son of R’ Hillel!’ Rabbi Groner answered yes, and the Rebbe raised his hands and said, ‘He is building Sinai there...’

“I told the Rebbe that I came to announce that we were beginning a new school year and would soon

have a Hachnasas Seifer Torah. The Rebbe suddenly said, seemingly unrelated to anything, ‘Are there still debts?’

“I was taken aback. We had covered 80% of the costs (a rare achievement in those years when it came to building mosdos) and the remaining 20% was hardly considered serious debts. But if the Rebbe said so, I remained silent. Then the Rebbe said, ‘I am giving you another dollar for the debts.’

It was only years later, when the debts were astronomical, that I understood what the Rebbe was alluding to.

“In Tishrei 5752, we inaugurated

**The first complex in the Sinai empire.  
Inset: The third complex called Ki Tov.**



the magnificent school complex. This building contains the mosdos chinuch, which children attend from the age of two months until they marry. In addition, the complex contains a community center, mikvaos, a Chabad house, and much more.

“There was enormous publicity with the opening of the first educational complex. This was the first time in the history of France that a Jewish school, seven stories high, 8500 square meters large, was built. We used the space as best we could, and according to the Rebbe’s explicit instructions to use the space that we had gotten to maximum effect.

“The Rebbe considered it extremely important to build a beautiful building in France, and wanted it to be a model for other mosdos. The Rebbe even said we should organize official visits of important Jewish figures so they would see how much was being invested in Jewish education.

“We went to the Rebbe again for Shabbos Parshas VaYakhel 5752, heading a delegation of about a hundred people, including members of the board, donors, and those who worked on the plans and building the complex. My father, rav of the Lubavitch community and president of the Vaad Rabbanei Lubavitch in France, headed the delegation.

“We stood in line for dollars on Sunday, 26 Adar I. When it was our turn, we all approached the Rebbe, and my father, who founded the Sinai mosdos, gave the Rebbe the key to the building. The Rebbe took the key, blessed us, and said with a big smile, ‘Immediately begin building a new building.’

“I was astounded. We had just finished building a complex that incorporated all the mosdos and next to it were additional caravans ready to serve the mosdos at any time!

What did we need a new building for? But the Rebbe’s instruction is holy...

“A few days later we all returned to France, sorrowful and confused over news of the Rebbe’s stroke that took place the day after we saw the Rebbe at dollars. The Rebbe’s instruction prevailed over our confusion and I immediately called a senior figure in the municipality to come and tour our mosdos. The idea

***“The Rebbe suddenly said, ‘Are there still debts?’ I was taken aback. We had covered 80% of the costs and the remaining 20% was hardly considered serious debts. But if the Rebbe said so, I remained silent. Then the Rebbe said, ‘I am giving you another dollar for the debts.’”***

was for him to be impressed and hopefully, to get him to help us obtain a lot where we could build another building.

“After hearing the history of the mosdos and about the Rebbe’s leadership and his explicit instruction that we continue to build, he suddenly said, ‘Your Rebbe is a prophet!’

“I was utterly taken aback. Then he explained that the street where

the Chabad daycare center was located was designated for demolition by the municipality, but the building plans had not been publicized yet. According to the plans, those living on that street were to move to other areas and be compensated by the city. The plan was to sell the lots to private investors.

“When I realized that the time was ripe, I immediately presented a request for a permit to build an additional educational complex. I was easily given the permit since the city wanted to compensate us for forcing us to leave the street where the daycare center was. (After we had the permits, the city decided not to demolish the street after all, but the permits were still ours.)

“On 11 Nissan 5753, the Rebbe gave, through the secretaries, three bundles of dollars for the building. In one package were one hundred \$5 bills, in the second package were one hundred \$10 bills, and in the third package were one hundred \$20 bills. The Rebbe’s personal participation spurred us on to continue working on the plans for the new building.

“Shortly after Gimmel Tammuz 5754, we celebrated the groundbreaking for Heichal Menachem. The building proceeded quickly, and after a year and a few months, the building was completed. This time though, we owed half of the expenses of the building.

“With time, the mosdos grew and at a certain point we realized that it was hard for the little children to travel each day from one end of Paris to another. We decided to build another beautiful complex in the 17<sup>th</sup> arrondissement, an exclusive area of Paris.

“The groundbreaking took place on 6 Tishrei 5761, and two years later, this third complex, which was called Ki Tov, housed a daycare center, preschool, elementary school,



**Rabbi Pevsner with Baron David de Rothschild on the far right**

vocational school, kollel, a machon for smicha, etc. The wife of President Chirac attended the Chanukas HaBayis.

“As compared to the first complexes, the donations this time were much less. This was because of the open anti-Semitism that exploded around Pesach 5761. These events made wealthy Jews move their investments abroad and their financial situations were unstable. This translated into an immediate and significant drop in donations. The lower rate of donations showed up in the totals of fiscal year 2002.

“If that wasn’t enough, at that time there was a new decision made by the government to reduce the stipends to private religious schools. This was because of the upsurge of fundamentalist Moslems in France. This decision sorely affected the financial situations of the mosdos. From then on the avalanche continued to tumble quickly. We had to constantly fundraise to cover our growing debts.”

By Tamuz 5764, the enormous debt was unbearable, and the entire educational empire that had been built with the Rebbe’s brachos was about to collapse. The banks and other creditors pressured them unceasingly and Rabbi Pevsner was forced to sadly declare the

bankruptcy of the Sinai schools.

After Rabbi Pevsner officially declared bankruptcy, all the creditors were called to announce how much money was owed to them. The total was the unbelievable amount of over 10 million Euros! (It’s important to note that according to the law, as soon as bankruptcy is declared, bank loans that were to be repaid over a long period of time are due immediately).

In the presence of the creditors, Rabbi Pevsner’s lawyer explained to the court that the mosdos were not moneymakers, but the opposite. Indeed, many needy people sent their children to their school without paying tuition. In fact, they even received financial help from the institution.

In the end, the judges were convinced that for the good of the students it paid to try and help the Sinai schools before they fell apart. They gave an extension of 12 months for them to raise the money, and if they could not, the three complexes would be foreclosed on behalf of the banks and the other creditors.

The court also said that professional assessors should estimate the worth of the buildings. However, the court decided that since the buildings were built with

public money and they could not be sold on the private market, therefore a new non-profit entity should “redeem” the mosdos. As a result, the real market value of the buildings dove from 20 million Euro to only 5 million Euro. The court in concert with the banks announced that if a new non-profit entity would redeem the buildings for 5 million Euro then the rest of the debts would be erased!

Even under these circumstances, with a “sharp sword lying on the neck” of the mosdos, Rabbi Pevsner did not despair. He often wrote to the Rebbe and received answers through the *Igros Kodesh*, and with the Rebbe’s guidance, he began various projects in the attempt to extricate the mosdos from the abyss of debt.

As a first step, he started a committee of volunteers to brainstorm the problem and find donors. A few distinguished members of the Jewish community committed themselves, in front of the court, to raise money to cover the debts. But the court rejected their guarantees claiming that communal figures, as important as they are, don’t have the wherewithal to cover the debts.

The committee, together with Rabbi Pevsner, began to mobilize Jewish men of means who committed to raise the money they needed. After much effort, they found some important real estate dealers who came to the court and committed to covering all the debts. This time though, the court raised a different problem. They said, true that these people are buying the buildings for the benefit of the mosdos, but if tomorrow they want you to leave and they want the buildings for themselves, they have the right to do so. And the court said that if it was possible that the buildings designated for schools could be emptied of students, then the

commitment of these wealthy men would not be accepted.

In the following months, various ideas were proposed and shot down, and salvation was apparently out of reach. Time was pressing and Rabbi Pevsner began to envision the foreclosing of the buildings and the closing of the schools.

As though to pour salt on their wounds, at the end of last winter, the court made a dramatic announcement that it could no longer wait for commitments. Since the directors of the schools did not find the necessary money to the tune of 5 million Euros, the three campuses would be foreclosed and sold to the highest bidder.

The court told the hanhala to inform their teaching staff that there would be no new school year. The preschools and other schools would be closed and the parents had to look for alternative schooling for their children.

The parents and teachers were shocked by the news. All feared for the future.

That was at the beginning of this past Nissan. When Rabbi Pevsner wrote to the Rebbe about the critical situation, this time he did not receive an answer, not even a hint of an answer as to what he should do.

"I was very worried," admits Rabbi Y.Y. Pevsner. "I receive answers from the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh* somewhat frequently, and of all times, when the situation was so desperate and the schools about to disintegrate, I got no answer. I was devastated.

"On Chol HaMoed Pesach again I wrote to the Rebbe – this time, though, about an unrelated matter, about a woman having troubles giving birth. It was pikuach nefesh and I said so in my letter. The husband, who was with her in the hospital, called me and asked me to

write. I put the letter into volume ten of the *Igros* and opened to page 246. This is the answer that he received:

I was pleased to receive your letter ... of Monday of the sidra of "they caused the children to live," filled with the report of the great activity for the great project of collecting paper to print holy works ... may you take a large part in matters such as these for many more years ...

***"I was astounded. We had just finished building a complex that incorporated all the mosdos and next to it were additional caravans ready to serve the mosdos at any time! What did we need a new building for? But the Rebbe's instruction is holy..."***

"What could be better than a bracha of "they caused the children to live?" On the spot, the husband promised 1000 Euros.

"When we met later, he asked to see the letter and I began to read it to him and was amazed. I saw that on the pages I had opened to, p. 247, it spoke about the tough conditions and compared it to the situation in Russia. Compared to Russia, what were our difficulties?

What you wrote about the difficult conditions etc. etc., compare in your mind the conditions in this holy land to the way it was for a few hundred of our brethren in Russia, who raised a generation of those who learn Torah and fulfill mitzvos even though this entailed literal danger to life every step of the way. What comparison is there between the difficulties now compared to theirs? It is not necessary to go on at length about something obvious.

"I felt that this was directed at me. I saw that the Rebbe went on to write about finding an apartment where the situation seemed hopeless, and then the Rebbe writes about a mitzva one is particularly scrupulous about and for this person it was chinuch:

And this is also the answer to your question regarding the personal matter of the apartment, regarding which you don't see how the situation will improve. For it says that each person has a mitzva that he ought to be scrupulous about, for it is the gateway to all matters of Torah and mitzvos, in a way of ascendancy, and the gateway for drawing down everything you and your household need, in a way of bringing down. In your case it is the avoda of chinuch al taharas ha'kodesh in the mosad of the Rebbe, my father-in-law, Nasi Yisroel and its leader, who stands and serves in holiness and arouses much mercy for the blessing and success of all those who are involved in his mosdos.

"And then follows the main answer in which the Rebbe writes that you have to take action without making calculations and then one sees success even if it makes no logical sense:

And when you do what you have to do in your avoda without calculations then you will see success in your matters in general and also in this matter. Even if you do not see



French President Chirac with Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Pevsner and his father Rabbi Hillel Pevsner

the possibility for this according to calculation, for Hashem's midda is measure for measure. May Hashem grant you success that you begin in this way immediately and may it be without any obstacles or concealment.

*(Emphases in the original).*

"After reading this encouraging answer, I was sure that the Rebbe would help me 'without calculations' to save our mosdos."

\* \* \*

Indeed, at the final moment salvation came in the most wondrous way. The story begins in Teives 5764. Back then, Rabbi Pevsner invited a group of Israeli journalists to visit the Chabad mosdos in Paris. They were impressed by what they saw, and they met with President Chirac, the prime minister, and other distinguished public figures.

During their tour they had an important and rare meeting scheduled with David Rothschild, or as he is formally known, Baron David de Rothschild. Mr. Rothschild is the head of the French branch of the famous Rothschild family known for its wealth and philanthropy for hundreds of years. He runs the

Edmond de Rothschild investment company. His primary involvement focuses on a chain of international banks, which he heads. Aside from this, he serves as president of an organization which is the main social organization of French Jewry.

Mr. Rothschild is the friend and neighbor of President Chirac and he lives opposite the President's palace, the Champs Elysee. Rothschild is a private person and hardly ever appears in public, even at official events of the organization he heads. His family is far from observant Yiddishkait and his attitude towards religious Jews is poor. He doesn't want anything to do with ultra-Orthodox Jews and his relationship with them is cold and guarded. This is why everybody was surprised when he agreed to host the journalists who came to visit him together with Rabbi Pevsner.

During the meeting, Rothschild told the journalists that the organization that he headed had just contributed 10 million Euros to Israel and had even organized tours in Israel for about 60,000 French students.

For about an hour and a half

Rabbi Pevsner and Mr. Rothschild sat together. All the French people present were astonished. How did Rothschild agree to sit with a Lubavitcher rabbi with a beard?!

The two spoke briefly and politely. Rothschild told Rabbi Pevsner that he knew him from various events that took place at the Champs Elysee when both were present. At the end of this unusual meeting, Rabbi Pevsner asked to meet with Baron Rothschild saying, "I'd like to get to know you." Rothschild thought for a moment and then politely said he should make an appointment with his personal secretary.

The next day, Rabbi Pevsner asked his secretary to arrange a meeting with Rothschild's secretary but Rothschild's secretary kept avoiding setting a date until she finally said, "I'll tell you the truth. My boss doesn't want to meet with the rabbi."

It was six in the morning at the airport in Paris when a royal delegation, headed by President Chirac waited for a flight to Poland for an international ceremony to mark sixty years since the liberation of Auschwitz. Rabbi Pevsner stood in a corner of the lounge where the delegation waited. Numerous distinguished figures from the Jewish community in France were there. Suddenly, in walked a man wearing a warm, Russian fur hat.

"Rabbi Pevsner. You don't recognize me with this Russian hat?" laughed the man. "I am David Rothschild. How are you?"

Rabbi Pevsner was taken aback by Rothschild's friendly overture. In a split second he figured out that Rothschild had come to use him.

"My father taught me that Chabad is not supposed to stand like a beggar at the door but must present itself as an important organization. This is the only way to be successful.

I immediately realized that Rothschild was lording himself over me, as a representative of Chabad. On the one hand, he had displayed disinterest and even hostility, but now, in front of all the dignitaries, it was in his best interests to put on a front as though we were friends.

"I didn't hesitate but brazenly said, 'You're not willing to meet with me, yet now, in front of all these important people, you act warmly towards me?'"

"Rothschild responded gracefully, 'I agree to meet with you. Why do you say that?'"

"I replied that his own secretary had said that he did not want to meet with me. This was all in front of the people standing around us.

"He was embarrassed and he took me over to the side and said, 'Rabbi Pevsner, don't tell anybody what happened. Tomorrow morning, after I return from this trip, call my office and they'll give you an appointment immediately.'

"I called the next morning and arranged an appointment for a few weeks hence. The day of the meeting, I entered his office prepared only to get acquainted with him. I sat down and he immediately asked me, 'What do you want?'"

"I told him that I had only come to get acquainted. I told him the history of our mosdos and about the encouragement and brachos we had received from the Rebbe. After about fifteen minutes of talking, he cut me off and said, 'I am sure you are a busy man and I am also somewhat busy. If you have something you want to ask, why waste both our time?'"

"I explained to him our mosdos' financial predicament but refrained from asking for a donation. I merely spoke about the urgent need to get a law passed that donors would receive a tax credit for their donations, as is

the case in the United States.

"Then he understood what I wanted. 'I understand that you did not come to ask for a donation, but for a contribution that will help you get out of this mess. For that, you must prepare a file with detailed reports about the financial situation of the schools. Do you want me to ask someone to prepare it or do you want to prepare it yourself?'"

"I told him that I prefer that he prepare it so it would be more credible. I left the meeting with a good feeling although I knew there was a long road ahead of us."

A week went by and Mr. Moshe Levy called Rabbi Pevsner. Levy had been, up until recently, the owner of an important corporation in France and at a certain point he had even run a joint business venture with Rothschild. Rothschild had asked Levy to prepare the file.

Levy, who had recently retired, told Rothschild that he wanted to dedicate himself to Jewish-communal activities on a voluntary basis. So Rothschild thought he would be just the right person to undertake the complicated task of compiling the brief.

Levy went down to the mosdos and was greatly impressed. "I didn't know that the Jews of France have such beautiful schools," he said. Within a few days, he had prepared a substantial file with his warm recommendations that Chabad should be given as much help as possible.

After giving in the file, he told Rabbi Pevsner that he had spoken with Rothschild, who considered saving the Chabad mosdos an important mission. Rothschild said he would raise money from various funds he was affiliated with.

Rothschild asked for money from the Fund for the Memory of the Shoa, of which he was a member,

and other funds, but even the requests of an eminent personage such as he were turned down. Despite his efforts, Rothschild did not pledge any of his personal funds.

On Monday, 27 Sivan 5765, a fateful meeting took place with Rothschild. Present at the meeting were Moshe Levy, the court appointed executor of the mosdos, and a representative of the Holocaust fund. The executor explained that if help wasn't received quickly, the schools would close. Rothschild announced, "I will donate half of the money, 2.5 million Euros from the Rothschild family fund and the other 2.5 million I will try to get from the Holocaust fund."

Then and there, in front of everybody, Rothschild called Mrs. Simone Veil, who serves as president of the Foundation for the Memory of the Shoa. She is a famous woman, who in the past served as a minister in the French government and also served as president of the European Parliament. A meeting was arranged for the following day.

Tuesday morning, 28 Sivan, Rothschild met with Mrs. Veil and told her, "Within 24 hours you will ratify a decision to transfer 2.5 million Euros to the Sinai schools."

The way the fund operates is that the chairwoman decides on important matters while more trivial matters are decided upon by the fund's committee. A decision about a huge sum like this was up to the chairwoman. She acceded to Rothschild's request and the next day signed a certificate that the fund would transfer 2.5 million Euros over the next two months to the Chabad mosdos.

Her donation wasn't only thanks to Rothschild but includes a personal story that Rabbi Pevsner relates:

"Mrs. Veil's agreement to donate towards the Chabad schools is only thanks to the Rebbe. Mrs. Veil is a

war survivor who has avoided religious Jews and religion in general, to the point that in her will she wrote that she did not want Kaddish recited at her grave!

“Two years ago, her son was killed in a road accident, and because of this, President Chirac called my father and asked him to send her a telegram of condolence. My father did so and even asked to say Kaddish for her son but she chose not to respond to his telegram.

“Mrs. Veil was one of the people who went on that trip to Auschwitz as President Chirac’s guest of honor. Despite the moving occasion, someone whispered to me that during the day she had said that she did not like to see a rabbi with a beard with this French presidential delegation.

“I took the opportunity and towards the end of the trip I personally invited Mrs. Veil to visit our schools. She said I should arrange it with her secretary and after the arrangements were made, she came to visit and was very impressed. I had her meet with students who had recently visited Auschwitz and when she spoke to them, there were tears in her eyes.

“When Rothschild asked Mrs. Veil the first time for money from the fund, she was not opposed but asked that it first be discussed in committee, but as we said, after much pressure she agreed to transfer the huge sum.

“And that wasn’t all. She deleted the instruction about no Kaddish in her will and wrote: After my death I want Kaddish to be said for me.”

\* \* \*

Thursday, 30 Sivan was the deadline that the court had given the mosdos. This was the day that the buildings were going to be foreclosed. On that day, Rothschild gave the court an affidavit in which

he praised the Chabad schools and Rabbi Pevsner. In his letter, he explained that it was important for the Jews of France that the schools continue to run, and therefore, he committed to obtain five million Euros to save the schools. He asked for another extension to enable him to get the money.

Rothschild is known in French society, and his signature on a letter

***“His executives tried to interfere and asked for new guidelines in the running of the schools including the curriculum. ‘They should learn more secular studies and less Jewish studies,’ they said. When Rothschild heard about this he declared, ‘I came to help the schools and you want to weaken them?’”***

like this is like a bank check, i.e., as though the money is already there. The judges knew this, and they agreed to give an additional six-month extension.

“I cannot describe the great simcha that we Chabad Chassidim of France, the students, parents, and teachers, felt,” says Rabbi Pevsner, as he emotionally concludes this

miraculous story.

“Not only were the schools not closed but the very fact that Rothschild and Mrs. Veil, two very notable personalities, are on the side of the school, is a source of great honor and pride.

“After Rothschild gave this letter, it seemed that all had been resolved in the best possible way, but unfortunately his executives tried to interfere and asked for new guidelines in the running of the schools including the curriculum. ‘They should learn more secular studies and less Jewish studies,’ they said. They also wanted to put in a menahel to supervise the learning and the finances. When Rothschild heard about this he declared, ‘I came to help the schools and you want to weaken them?’”

And that one line ended all further talk along these lines.

Rabbi Pevsner: “When it was all over I remembered what the Rebbe had said to me in Elul 5749. It was after Rabbi Groner had told the Rebbe that I was the director of the Sinai schools in Paris, but the Rebbe did not react. When Rabbi Groner repeated this a few times, the Rebbe suddenly smiled and said, ‘He is the menahel? May he be well!’

“I personally feel that these few words ensured that non-Lubavitchers would have no say over the running of these schools.”

**How did you survive an entire year with the threat of the imminent collapse of your life’s work?**

“There was tremendous pressure from the court along with pressure from the parents and teachers. Nobody knew what would be the outcome. But when we are aware that the one who runs Chabad is the Rebbe, and only the Rebbe, then it is possible to be confident that everything will work out in the best possible way.”

# NOW IS THE TIME TO CRY OUT!

BY SHAI GEFEN

## WHAT NOW?

Many ask: Since the expulsion happened, let's sit tight and wait to see what happens, for what purpose is there in fighting when a new war hasn't been declared yet?

The answer is simple. G-d forbid we should wait until Sharon or Mr. Good-for-the-Jews presents another awful plan. Now is the time to cry out. All the Rebbe's cries were specifically in the calm times, when everybody was sure everything was all right, but behind the scenes wheeling and dealing were going on, which all ultimately led to the present churban.

The quiet we are experiencing now is deceptive, and we "soldiers of the house of Dovid" must get up and cry out, as it says, "And Mordechai knew what was taking place at the king's gate and he cried out with a great and bitter cry and went out to the city gate dressed in sackcloth and ashes." Now is the time to cry out!

## HOW DID THE ELDERS SIN?

In a cynical and disgusting article printed in the newspaper of the United Torah Judaism party (Yahadut HaTorah), it was explained how wise they were when they sat off to the side quietly during the expulsion and churban. The author of the article praises the wisdom of the "g'dolim" and their silence.

What a chutzpa and crime for a paper that is supposed to represent Yiddishkai! During the Holocaust too there were influential papers that were silent about what was going on, but they didn't dare justify their silence afterwards. As terrorism continues to rear its head, Jews are murdered, and Jewish cities are under rocket attack, how dare they continue to focus exclusively on their own interests while justifying this position of selfishness?

Aside from the vulgarity of an article like that, the truth of the matter is that this party did *not* sit by quietly but were active collaborators with the expulsion plan and the burning of shuls. This was in exchange for 290 million shekel. We won't forget the money that enabled Sharon to carry out his expulsion plan.

Some T'mimim pointed out to me a shocking Gemara in the tractate Shabbos, page 55 on the verse, "Hashem will come in judgment with the elders of His nation and its ministers." The Gemara asks: if the ministers sinned, how did the elders sin? The Gemara answers that the elders did not protest about what the ministers did. The Gemara goes on to say that the Attribute of Judgment said before Hashem: How are these different than those? Hashem answered: These are perfect tzaddikim and those are perfectly

wicked. The Attribute of Judgment said: Master of the universe, they had the power to protest and they did not!

Frightening words. We do not want to open our mouths for the Satan, but this terrible approach of remaining aloof while endangering the entire nation causes a terrible accusation. Even if we know for sure that protesting won't help, we must protest. As the Gemara goes on to say, Hashem answered the Attribute of Judgment saying that if the elders had protested, they would not have accepted it and the Attribute of Judgment said: You knew that, but they did not know that, and therefore, they should have protested.

Rabbi Osdoba, mara d'asra of Crown Heights said it well, at the shleimus ha'Aretz gathering in 770, about the group that started the shita of looking out only for itself while abandoning the rest of Klal Yisroel. He said this approach ought to be uprooted. Jews are responsible for one another and we are not allowed to sit by while Jewish blood is being spilled and danger hovers over Am Yisroel.

We Chassidei Chabad must follow the Rebbe's lead and protest. No harm ever came to someone who followed the Rebbe's directives. On the contrary, only bracha and hatzlacha and yeshuos are seen in these matters.

## TREMENDOUS DEBT TO THE SETTLERS

It's hard to believe that in the Palace of the King, Yerushalayim the Holy City, and in other cities of Eretz Yisroel, those expelled from Gush Katif are wandering around downtrodden and woebegone, crushed and tossed about, while the rest of the Jewish nation stands off to the side. This phenomenon is not taking place in a city somewhere in Europe or after the Expulsion from Spain 500 years ago, but in the Holy Land, where Jews were expelled by Jews in 5765.

As mercy for our killers increases and the government is so careful not to cause collateral damage to so-called innocents, they have succeeded in trampling the dignity of the settlers into the dust. Chazal say that whoever has no home is no man. The Israeli government did not only expel them from their homes but killed their spirit. Whoever took part in the expulsion is responsible for what is happening today to the settlers.

The Jewish people owe a tremendous debt to the settlers of Gush Katif and northern Shomron, and therefore, each of us must adopt at least one family, stand by them and help them. Those who can help them financially must do so.

Lately we've been hearing terrible stories about what is happening to entire families and precious youth who were expelled from Gush Katif. How can we sit by quietly? How can a Jew sit peacefully at home and eat serenely with his family while thousands of people are lost souls?

Those who bought into the government's PR campaign about compensation don't know what they're talking about. This unconscionable crime is not measured in money, and not even in dollars, aside from the fact that the "compensation" does not cover the direct financial damage, not to mention the indirect damages that can never be compensated for.

Therefore, in addition to all the protests, we must help the settlers!

## GETTING BACK TO SOURCES

The Rebbe turned Shabbos B'Reishis into Shabbos Shleimus HaAretz by highlighting the first Rashi in the Torah. The first Rashi says that if the nations come and claim that we are robbers for conquering the land of the seven nations, we must know to answer them that the entire land is Hashem's and He gave it to them and then took it and gave it to us.

That sums up the battle taking place here and in the **very first pasuk** of the Torah it emphasizes just how this battle ought to take form. It's a struggle that has taken on various forms over thousands of years, but the claims remain the same over the millennia, since the Jewish people became a nation. However, those who follow the Torah and tradition are not confused by the claims of the nations.

For those who believe in the eternity of the Jewish people and do not think that the Jewish people became a nation in 1948, nor that Eretz Yisroel was given to us at that time but at the Covenant of the Pieces, everything looks different.

Rabbi Dovid Drukman, one of the leading rabbis of the Pikuach Nefesh organization said he remembers when Chaim Herzog, who was the Israeli ambassador to the U.N., went to the Rebbe for Simchas Torah. The Rebbe asked Herzog to announce in the U.N. with Jewish pride that Eretz Yisroel belongs to the Jewish people because **that is what it says in the Bible.**

Herzog did as the Rebbe asked and did so with great Jewish pride. Rabbi Drukman said that he remembers that Herzog spoke on a radio program and said that when he announced in the U.N. that Eretz Yisroel belongs to the Jews because that's what it says in the Torah, all the representatives of the nations of the world were stunned and



*The answer is simple. G-d forbid we should wait until Sharon or Mr. Good-for-the-Jews presents another awful plan. Now is the time to cry out. All the Rebbe's cries were specifically in the calm times, when everybody was sure everything was all right, but behind the scenes wheeling and dealing were going on, which all ultimately led to the present churban.*

not one of them had a response!

There is no response to this claim. The goyim also believe in the Torah and if we based our policies on the Torah, we would save ourselves tremendous suffering. This is what ought to be our guiding light, not only with shleimus ha'Aretz, but in every area. We need to get back to the sources.

# BOTH A LEADER AND A PUPPET

BY ALIZA KARP

*It is not enough to blame the prime minister. He did not stand alone. And if he says he takes full responsibility, it is only so that we will overlook the sins of the accomplices and continue to give them our undeserved support. Just as the Oslo process did not stop when Rabin was murdered, so would the Disengagement continue, should Sharon decide to retire. Sharon is both a leader and a puppet.*

The Rebbe's answer must have come as a shock to his correspondent. In volume 18 of *Igros Kodesh*, in a letter dated the tenth of MarCheshvan, 1958, the Rebbe expresses his disapproval that his correspondent had ceased associating with Jews whom he refers to as "those who scoff at and rebuff the Torah."

Known for his inclusion of all Jews in the mitzva of ahavas Yisroel, the Commandment to love your fellow Jew, the Rebbe says that the Torah explicitly does not sanction separating yourself from such people, except for specifically defined cases. The Rebbe brings as a reference, the definitions by the Rambam in *Hilchos T'shuva*, Perek Gimmel, *Halachos Ches* and *Yud*.

In *Halacha Ches*, the Rambam gives the definition of those who are known as "apikorsim," whom we are justified in rejecting... not only justified, but whom it is a Mitzva to stay away from. *Halacha Yud* explains further who should be rejected: "Those who cause the multitude to sin... by tricking other people and causing them to stumble."

The Rebbe was clarifying that the people his correspondent was referring to, did not come close to qualifying for the definitions put forth by the Rambam. But, for myself, upon reading this letter, I found this teaching very relevant in helping me deal with the pain, disorientation, and confusion that I find myself experiencing since the

Disengagement.

I was one of those innocents who could not conceive of the Disengagement actually taking place. If I am involved in a project, and I invest my time, energy and money, I would be devastated if someone would come and delete all my work. To think that three generations, with all their hearts and souls, built not just a garden, not just a kitchen, not just a school – they built beautiful, industrious communities, and all of it was deleted... This is beyond my imaginative capacity. And to think the destroyers were Jews. The army that should be protecting Jews from deportation actually did the deporting. I am confused. And I am angry.

So I found that the words of the Rebbe and the Rambam helped me to focus. When we say, "We will not forgive and we will not forget," I am clear about what and whom I will not forget... but whom do I not forgive?

The soldiers were the ones to perform the evil deed. I know that it has been hard for some people to be as open and loving to soldiers as they used to be, especially soldiers who took part in the Disengagement.

I never thought I would be writing such words, "a Jewish soldier who took part in the Disengagement," it still seems

impossible. But in truth tens of thousands of soldiers did participate.

There are stories and pictures of soldiers who became emotional, but those were the minority. Most carried out their mission. Yet, the Rebbe says that every Jew is worthy of our companionship, and these soldiers neither fall into the category of apikoros nor of leading others to sin. Baruch Hashem, it is still a Mitzva to embrace our soldiers, bring them treats, and of course, offer to put t'fillin on them or give them Shabbos candles.

Before our soldiers were sent to extract Jews from their homes, they underwent vigorous brainwashing to convince them that the people they were dragging from their homes were nothing more than worthless trespassers, impediments to the security of the country. Those who engineered the psychological preparations for the soldiers, those people, do fall into the category of leading others to sin.

MK Arieh Eldad had become a resident in the Northern Shomron community of Sanur, and was present at the Disengagement battle. Together with other residents, he took up a position on the rooftop of the building which served as the last stronghold. From his vantage point, he reported that he observed the army commanders who were leading the operation. These were men he knew from his many years as a Brigadier-General in the army.

What Eldad saw, was not commanders who were pained to have to follow orders against their personal moral values. Eldad reports that they were slapping each other on the back, congratulating each other and joking around. These are the men who gave the orders for their soldiers to remove Jews from their homes in Eretz Yisroel, by force, if necessary. A process that not only caused personal loss to those

involved but also reduced the security in the area and increased the danger for Jews living in the surrounding areas.

From these commanders on upward, to all the members of Knesset and ministers in the cabinet, who voted for or abstained – even once – in support of the government, support of the budget or support of

***Representatives of Chabad are accustomed to inviting government and army dignitaries to their events, and to visit them each Yom Tov. The intention is to bring them closer to Yiddishkait. But this year, in the wake of the Disengagement, to bring them closer to Yiddishkait, they have to know they have gone to far.***

the Disengagement itself, all the way to the prime minister and court judges, here is where the yoke of responsibility lies, the ones who caused others to sin.

Included also are the influential media outlets, who manipulated their publications and presentations in favor of the Disengagement.

It is not enough to blame the

prime minister. He did not stand alone. And if he says he takes full responsibility, it is only so that we will overlook the sins of the accomplices and continue to give them our undeserved support. Just as the Oslo process did not stop when Rabin was murdered, so would the Disengagement continue, should Sharon decide to retire. Sharon is both a leader and a puppet.

The soldiers themselves do not carry the responsibility as the leaders do. Participating in the Disengagement caused seven soldiers to commit suicide, and six hundred to be committed to psychiatric confinement. It is heartbreaking to think of the psychological damage done to these young, and in most cases, innocent, young men and women. Meanwhile, has even one member of the Knesset collapsed from the pain of what they call painful concessions?

In D'varim 23, verses four and five, the Torah tells us "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the congregation of Hashem, even their tenth generation shall not enter the congregation of Hashem until eternity." Rashi explains, "Because of the advice that they advised you to cause you to sin." Even nations that tried to kill us were not given such an extreme status. But causing the multitude to sin, this is unforgivable.

Representatives of Chabad are accustomed to inviting government and army dignitaries to their events, and to visit them each Yom Tov. The intention is to bring them closer to Yiddishkait. But this year, in the wake of the Disengagement, to bring them closer to Yiddishkait, they have to know they have gone to far. They have to feel that they have fallen so low that even Chabad, with its all inclusive policies, is now rejecting them! And if they want to regain their status as being accepted in the 'congregation of Hashem,' they have to do t'shuva.

# OVADIA: RETURNING THE HEARTS OF CHILDREN TO THEIR FATHERS

*As the residents of Bareket worked hard for a living, their children attended public school without learning about Torah and halacha. This bothered R' Ovadia Matuf a"h, and he gathered the children in the evening, after he finished a backbreaking day's work in the field, and taught them about Torah and mitzvos. Thanks to him, dozens of children switched to Tomchei T'mimim and established beautiful Chassidische homes. \* Two of his talmidim who run Chabad schools today tell about R' Ovadia's educational endeavors. \* It is one year since R' Ovadia's passing.*

## A SMALL CHILD DRINKS FROM THE FOUNTAIN OF TORAH

R' Ovadia Saadia Matuf was born in Chaban, Yemen, around the year 5680 (1920). His father was

Rabbi Sa'id, who was Av Beis Din of the city.

From a young age, Ovadia was drawn to the study of Torah. He spent much time sitting and reading the small letters. Even

when his brother wanted to teach him how to be a silversmith, as was typical in Yemen of those days, Ovadia would avoid learning the craft and return to his books. When his brother would rebuke him, "You've learned enough already!" Ovadia would say it wasn't enough for him. Thus, he spent day and night on his studies.

In 1949, he made aliya with the Magic Carpet, along with numerous other Jews from Yemen. At first, he stayed with his family at the transit camp Zarnoga, which was near Rechovot. There he became mekurav to Chassidus through Lubavitchers who came to the camp in order to inform the olim about the religious institutions available to them.

His son Noach relates, "In those days, he was in touch with Yisroel Leibov (later director of Tzach) who was his primary connection with Chabad. R' Yisroel was mekarev my father to Chabad step by step, until he adopted all the Chabad customs and fulfilled the Rebbe's directives."

In the immigrants' early years in

the country, in the 50's, many of them attended Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Lud and joined the world of Chabad. They later established beautiful Chassidic homes. But the prevalent atmosphere in Eretz Yisroel at that time greatly influenced the parents who wanted their children to have a trade with which they could support their families.

When the immigrants from Chaban were moved from Zarnoga to Moshav Bareket and began independent lives, many of them sent their children to the public school established on the moshav. This school offered minimal Jewish studies and the classes were co-ed.

### FROM BAREKET TO TOMCHEI T'MIMIM

In those days, R' Ovadia was already a family man and he worked in farming like the rest of the people on the moshav. The difficult economy forced them to throw themselves into their work while mostly disregarding their

children's education. This bothered R' Ovadia tremendously. It was hard for him to see the children ignorant of Torah. He was brokenhearted when he asked a child the name of that week's sidra and the children didn't know the answer.

Rather than bemoaning the situation, R' Ovadia did something about it. He gathered groups of children in his home and taught them Torah each evening.

One of those children was Menachem Samayach, who is presently the menahel of a Chabad Talmud Torah in Lud. He describes the situation of those days:

"It was the end of the 50's and chinuch was abysmal. We children of Bareket were ignorant. This was the famous 'lean' period and most parents were preoccupied with parnasa problems and had no time to think about their children's chinuch.

"During the day we learned in school and when the official

learning was over, the older boys would learn a trade so they could support themselves. This is how things were until R' Ovadia came along. He did it all on a voluntary basis, after finishing a backbreaking day's work in the field.

"We went each day, a group of 9-11 year olds, to his house and he taught us to daven, the weekly sidra and Mishnayos; we weren't ready yet for Gemara. He helped us progress step by step, succeeding in drawing our hearts to the study of Torah.

"He took it upon himself to send us to yeshiva, where we could continue our Torah studies. This wasn't at all simple because in those days there was an anti-religious sentiment in the country which influenced our parents to some degree. They didn't like the idea of yeshiva, and that's an understatement.

"But R' Ovadia continued to work at it and his persistence paid off. He sent a number of groups of boys to learn in Tomchei T'mimim in Lud. And he didn't stop there but continued to help us, seeing to it that we acclimated to our new environment. He spent hours talking to our parents in order to encourage them and reassure them that their son would become a Torah scholar and that parnasa would come with time.

"And as time went by – and I can testify to this, because I was one of them – dozens of talmidim who switched from public school to Tomchei T'mimim, established beautiful Chassidische families. I and another person even run Chabad schools, and we all fondly remember R' Ovadia and what he did for us, till this day."

The first group to leave Bareket for yeshiva did so thanks to a halacha that R' Ovadia taught. His



R' Ovadia Matuf

nephew, R' Yosef Matuf, menahel of the Chabad school for girls in Nachalat Har Chabad, tells us what happened:

"In one of the classes, R' Ovadia taught us halachos from the book *Chok L'Yisroel*. He read a halacha which said it was forbidden to teach boys and girls together, even if there was a glass mechitza between them.

"When we heard this, we were shocked for we learned in a co-ed school. We asked him to repeat that halacha and he did. The next day, we told our teacher this halacha.

"Because of this, some of the talmidim decided that we couldn't learn in a mixed environment and that we would go to yeshiva. But we were young and we couldn't do this ourselves. R' Ovadia decided to help us. He spoke to the yeshiva in Lud, but the classes there were full. Having no choice, a group of talmidim went to learn in the yeshiva in Yahud but we didn't acclimate, and after much effort on R' Ovadia's part, we were accepted at Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Lud.

"We were the first group and other groups followed us. This shook things up at the public school. The number of students there shrank dramatically until the decision was made to combine the school in Bareket with another school in the area."

### SHARING THE WEALTH

The Yemenite bachurim who learned in Tomchei T'mimim didn't keep the spiritual bounty for themselves. With the encouragement of R' Ovadia, they began learning Torah with the even younger generation in Bareket. R' Ovadia spoke about this (in an interview with the Bareket newsletter) years later:

"At a later point we had bachurim from the yeshiva in Lud learning with the children in the evening in a program we called Yeshivat Erev. The bachurim wandered with their young students from place to place until we decided, with the approval of the rav of the moshav a"h, to purchase a house where their

*The difficult economy forced them to throw themselves into their work while mostly disregarding their children's education. This bothered R' Ovadia tremendously. It was hard for him to see the children ignorant of Torah. He was brokenhearted when he asked a child the name of that week's sidra and the children didn't know the answer.*

learning could take place."

### LEARNING DAY AND NIGHT

R' Ovadia didn't make do with the many hours of study that he established for himself but was always seen with a book in hand. He would be seen holding a book

at every event he was invited to and he made good use of the time to study. At each communal event, the residents of the moshav would honor him to say words of Torah, and he inspired his audiences with divrei Torah and timely matters.

In later years, R' Ovadia worked in diamond polishing. He used the travel time, there and back, to learn. And during work hours he would operate the machine and glance into whatever he was learning.

After he married off his three children, he decided he didn't need to work any more. He left his diamond polishing job to polish other diamonds... His day began early in the morning, as he organized the t'fillos and shiurim, and it ended late at night with regular shiurim that he had in Gemara, Tanach, Rambam, and Chassidus.

With his great diligence, he completed the study of Rambam in depth a number of times, as well as Tanach and all of Mishnayos. Four years ago, he surprised his family when he invited them to the Chabad shul at the yishuv to participate in his siyum of Shas!

### ATERES Z'KEINIM

In the summer of 5740 R' Ovadia started a kollel, Ateres Z'keinim, for the elderly of Bareket, when the Rebbe said kollelim of this kind should be established.

"It was after the Rebbe said that kollelim for the elderly be established," R' Ovadia explained. "R' Ovadia Meifai and I joined forces and we gathered a few older men together. Since then, each day, from three in the afternoon until after Maariv, we sit and learn: Mishnayos, Mishna Brura, and Rambam. Baruch Hashem, thanks to the kollel, not a day passes in our moshav without Torah study."

In his great modesty, R' Ovadia didn't describe what he did on behalf of the kollel. He put in much work to organize the senior talmidim and he got the building

and the furniture. From then, until his final days, he was the regular maggid shiur in the kollel.

## CHASSID AND MEKUSHAR



Summer 5750 – R' Ovadia receiving four dollars from the Rebbe, the first dollar for himself; the second dollar for the Kollel; the third dollar for Moshav Bareket; the fourth dollar for Klal Yisroel. And the Rebbe added, “*Bracha v'hatzlacha b'gashmius v'ruchnius.*”



Talmidim of the yeshivas erev that R' Ovadia started (the arrow points to Sadia Matuf, shliach and rav in Bareket)

R' Ovadia's hiskashrus to the Rebbe was unique. He made efforts to fulfill each directive of the Rebbe in its entirety. In fact, not only did he look out for himself; he influenced others too.

He went to the Rebbe for the first time when he approached the age of 70 and went other times despite his age. Each trip to the Rebbe was a tremendous spiritual experience for him. He shared his impressions of his first trip, which took place in the summer of 5748, with readers of the Bareket newsletter:

“I have never before seen a man who is completely devoted to Am Yisroel. He has no free time for himself and only he is fitting to be Rosh B'nei Yisroel. I saw how all submit to him and he submits to Hashem.

“I always felt close to him and always wondered anew where he had these incredible abilities from. It could only be because he is a G-dly man and the spirit of G-d beats within him.

“I stood next to the Rebbe the entire time and I watched how he davened, with such humility, chein, and simplicity that it is indescribable. His eyes were always in the Siddur, and the Siddur is so plain and old ... One time, when the Rebbe turned to leave after the davening, he nodded at me and said shalom. I answered with shalom. Then people asked me what I did to deserve that.”

At the end of that interview, R' Ovadia wished all the residents of Bareket that “they merit to travel to the Rebbe and listen to all his directives.”

Two years later, R' Ovadia won a raffle and a ticket to the Rebbe. When he went to the Rebbe this time, he went as the representative of all the residents of Bareket.

Many of them sent letters with him to the Rebbe. At “dollars” he received a dollar for all the residents of the moshav and for all those who learned in the kollel.

After he returned home, he was again interviewed by the local newsletter and he thrilled the readers with his description of the Lag B’Omer parade with the Rebbe and the privilege of being in the Rebbe’s presence. He called upon all the residents to prepare the “vessels” for the brachos that the Rebbe gave the residents of the moshav.

R’ Ovadia believed with complete faith in the Rebbe’s message of the imminent coming of Moshiach and spoke about it a lot.

Until his final days, he continued to give shiurim regularly.

He contracted a virus and after a few days, on 3 Cheshvan of last year, he passed away. His family, many talmidim and the residents of Bareket attended his funeral. Near his open grave Rabbi Saadia Matuf, shliach and rav of Bareket said:

“A short time ago I passed by the kollel building at two in the morning. I could see that a light was on. I thought someone had forgotten to shut the light and I went inside to do so. That’s when I saw R’ Ovadia lying on the floor near the aron kodesh and davening, apparently saying Tikkun Chatzos.”

He is survived by his wife and his sons: Noach, Tovi, and Achituv



R' Ovadia giving the dollar he had received from the Rebbe for Moshav Bareket to the chairman of the committee of the moshav, Avrohom Ben Shalom

## STANDING IN THE BREACH

Sometimes, R’ Ovadia Matuf a”h had to stand in the breach against those who tried to negatively influence Moshav Bareket. He himself told the following years later:

One day, a group of female soldiers came to the moshav’s center with clothing to distribute. I was very upset by this since the clothing was immodest. At that time, the old rav of the moshav was sick in the hospital, so I went over to the commander and asked her to stop distributing the clothes.

She told her soldiers to continue giving them out. I grabbed some of the clothes from her, threw them on the ground and yelled, “You’re lucky the rav isn’t here, otherwise your lot would be bad and bitter!”

When she saw who she was dealing with she told her soldiers to quickly gather up the clothes. Within minutes, the soldiers had boarded a military truck and had left.

It was a battle for tznius and our ancestors in Yemen excelled in tznius. That’s why I found this unbearable. Baruch Hashem, the will of Hashem prevailed through me and we protected our camp in holiness and purity.

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