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The international weekly heralding the coming of Mashiach
BEIS MOSHIACH

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THE SILENT PRAYER SAID OUT LOUD

LIKKUTEI SICHOS, VOL. 35, PG. 192-197
TRANSLATED BY BORUCH MERKUR



[Continued from last week]

5. In light of all the above we can explain the opinion of the Zohar – that praying in a whisper means that even the person himself should not hear his voice.

According to the inner dimension of the Torah, not only is the principal concept of prayer concentration and the thought of the heart, but more so – T'fillas HaAmida (the Standing Prayer) is the ultimate state of cleaving [to G-d attained] in prayer itself. It is known that there are four stages of prayer. T'fillas HaAmida corresponds to the World of Atzilus, which is the world of unity, where there is nothing in existence besides Him, may He be blessed.

Indeed, the inner meaning of T'fillas HaAmida, which is being as one who stands before the king [Brachos 33a – see Footnote 32], is not only that this describes the **state** of the person praying, rather, according to the mystical interpretation of the matter, this itself is the very meaning of the prayer. Namely, the fact that the person stands before the King in absolute [self-]nullification.

(We may assert that this is the inner explanation of the law that at the time of prayer one must be “as one who stands before the king,” and “even if a Jewish king greets him, he should not respond” [Tur Shulchan Aruch 104, beginning] (which is not so regarding Krias Shma, for which [the Sages] permitted greetings on account of fear and on account of honor [Ibid 66, beg.]). It is not only a law concerning practical action – that when the person who is praying is in the state and status that he hears them greet him and he recognizes who it is that greets him [i.e., he is not so immersed in prayer that he is unaware of his surroundings], but he does not actually respond to him on account of the fact that he stands before the King – rather, this describes the true state of the one who is praying. That

is, the fact that he does not respond is because his very existence is in a state of nullification.)

This is also the reason why prayer must specifically be in a whisper, as the Alter Rebbe explains in his discussion of the aspect of Yehuda: “He is at the level of submission (*hoda'a*). He represents the level of nullification and integration ... Thus, prayer is in a whisper and in silence...at the level of total existential nullification, literally. That is, at the level of literally pouring out [one's soul] to the bosom of his Father, being as naught, literally nothingness.”

In light of the above we will also understand the fact that according to the inner dimension of the Torah, prayer must be in a whisper, meaning that even the one who is praying should not hear his own voice. For specifically in this manner is the greatness of the nullification of the T'fillas HaAmida expressed. Indeed, the one who prays does not perceive his existence, to the extent that he himself cannot hear the sound of his prayer.

[Footnote 39: Accordingly, speech [in prayer] exists (solely) for the sake of refining the Animal Soul. (See *Kuntres HaAvoda*, end of Chapter 1, as well as *Tanya*, beginning of Chapter 38.) We may assert that this too underscores the concept of nullification, for the entire concept of speech in prayer is solely for the sake of fulfilling the Supernal Will, to make for Him, may He be blessed, a dwelling place in the lower realms through the refinement of the body and the Animal Soul (*Tanya*, *ibid.*.)]

6. Now, in *Torah Or* on our Torah portion it says: “So we will understand the concept of the Shmoneh Esrei, silent prayer – that this is so [i.e., it is silent] only in this time, when the Feminine Aspect has the role of being the

recipient (*mekabel*) and not the benefactor (*mashpia*). However, in the future, when it will ascend to assume the level of benefactor, just as the Masculine Aspect itself, then the Shmoneh Esrei will be in a loud voice, and it will be [described as] ‘a bride’s voice.’”

At first glance, this needs clarification. [As we have said] according to the inner dimension of the Torah (the opinion of the Zohar), the concept of praying in a whisper is on account of the definition and essential nature of prayer, being an expression of existential nullification in prayer, which is the true meaning of T’fillas HaAmida (corresponding to the World of Atzilus). Thus, how is it possible that in the Future to Come prayer will be in a loud voice, which is the opposite of nullification?

This can be explained according to what my revered father and teacher writes in his glosses on the Zohar on this section [*Likkutei Levi Yitzchok*, pg. 197], in his explanation of the terms used there: “The three terms [used in this passage of the Zohar to describe prayer that is acceptable On High] – namely, ‘will (*r’usa*), intent/concentration (*kavana*), and preparedness (*tikuna*)’ – [can be explained as follows]: Prayer is in Malchus (the Divine Emanation of Kingship); *r’usa*, will, is Kesser Malchus [i.e., Malchus at its lofty source, the transcendent Emanation of Kesser, Crown]; *kavana*, which occurs in the mind and the brain, is the brain of Malchus Chochma and Bina [i.e., Kingship as it is manifest in the Emanations of Wisdom and Understanding]; and *tikuna* is in the emotional attributes of Malchus, from its Daas [Knowledge] to its Hod [Splendor]. ‘For the sake of affirming the oneness of his Master’ [quoting the next phrase in the Zohar] – this occurs in the womb of Malchus, for there the unity takes place, as is understood.”

We may assert that the fact that my father is precise in analyzing the three terms, “*r’usa*, *kavana*, and *tikuna*,” which are connected with all the levels in Malchus, is

because on this basis it is clear that the concept of existential nullification in prayer exists in all the levels. That is, the existential nullification of prayer must be in a manner that not only do the intellectual faculties of one’s soul become nullified as if they were naught, but the nullification is reflected in all the faculties – the will, the intellect, and the emotional attributes, extending even to practical action. That is, the nullification must also affect their being. The submission and nullification in the realm of action is a result not only of the nullification of the essence of one’s soul to G-d, but from the nullification as it is manifest in all of one’s faculties.

Accordingly we can explain the fact that in the Future to Come the Shmoneh Esrei prayer will be in a loud voice:

It will then be revealed that their very existence is the Essence of G-d, as it were...for their very existence is the King.

The ultimate state of nullification that can be achieved in this time – including existential nullification, including when this occurs in a manner that permeates all of one’s faculties, from the power of will to the power of action – is in a manner that negates the existence of the person, the nullification of every power of the soul’s faculties. However, in the Future to Come, when the nullification will then be in the ultimate state of perfection – to the extent that “the glory of G-d will be

revealed and all flesh will together behold” [Yeshayahu 40:5], for the flesh itself will “behold” G-dliness – it will be revealed throughout the entirety of existence that “there is nothing else,” that nothing else exists. And with respect to the Jewish people, it will be revealed that “Yisroel and the Holy One Blessed Be He are entirely one” [see Zohar III 73a], in a manner that their very existence is the Essence [of G-d], as it were, and **in accordance with**, “Who are kings? The Torah scholars,” for their very existence is the King. Then the **advantage** of the concept of utter nullification in prayer will be revealed, and therefore, prayer will be in a loud voice, which is a concept that signifies the **revelation** of the advantage of nullification.

(From the address of Shabbos Parshas VaYigash 5746)



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‘AND HASTEN THE COMING OF HIS MOSHIACH’

ARRANGED BY RABBI CHAIM SASSON
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

*In connection with the Rebbe MH”M’s instruction, “Do everything in your ability to bring Moshiach Tzidkeinu in actual deed,” Rabbi Chaim Sasson has gathered a collection of all of the practical advice of Rosh B’nei Yisroel to the generation of the Redemption. * Selected pearls of wisdom from Rabbi Sasson’s new book ViKareiv Meshichei.*

“I DWELL IN THE LAND”

The coming of Moshiach depends upon the avoda of “*birurim*,” i.e., when every Jew “elevates” and purifies his body, his animal soul, his portion in the world, and utilizes them for holiness – he “draws down” the revelations of the future ...

A Jew must know that even if with respect to his surroundings and the world it is not yet fitting for the Redemption to come, as the process of elevation has not been completed – from **his** point of view, he must prepare **himself** and all his own matters...for the Complete Redemption.

And the preparation is – “I dwelled with Lavan” – the clear knowledge that the whole world and all its fullness is

merely on the level of “I dwelled,” “I dwell in the land.” All life...is on the level of “I dwelled,” and thus materialism does not constitute a disturbance to spirituality...and when the person prepares **himself** and all his own matters for the Redemption, he has influence over the entire world, for the world is evenly balanced, and one good deed can tip the scales to the side of merit and thus bring the Redemption.

(Likkutei Sichos [Heb.], Vol. 1, p. 60)

FROM A PERSONAL REDEMPTION TO A GENERAL REDEMPTION

Every Jew, even a single solitary Jew, when he concludes his entire avoda and completes his *birurim*, he

can come to G-d with a claim: *You have decreed in Your Torah that the world is evenly balanced, and each person can determine the fate of the entire world, and thus through my avoda, I have tipped the world’s scales to the side of merit.* He will then have a personal coming of Moshiach, and as a result, there will be the general coming of Moshiach, speedily in our days.

(Shabbos Parshas Matos-Masai 5713)

AN OBLIGATION TO COMPLETE THE BIRURIM

We and our generation have an obligation to complete the *birurim* of “the heels of the heels of Moshiach” and to draw down the revelation of Moshiach lower than ten handbreadths into this physical world. Even with a brief contemplation on these matters, we must fearfully grasp that all the amazing things stated in the sayings of our Sages on the subject of Moshiach and his revelation, particularly as explained in the words of the living G-d [i.e., the teachings of Chabad chassidus], all depend upon our avoda...

(Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 23, p. 458)

LONGING FOR MOSHIACH

Jews must absolutely know that the time for Moshiach to arrive has already come, as mentioned above at length.

There only needs to be “Stand ready all of you” with a longing for Moshiach, and this will certainly bring about and reveal his coming...and this must awaken within each and every one an intensification in his avoda to increase the “one mitzva” that will tip the scales for “himself and the entire world to the side of merit, and cause salvation and rescue for him and them” – the True and Complete Redemption.

(Shabbos Parshas D'varim, Shabbos Chazon 5748 – Toras Menachem, Vol. 4, p. 121)

IN THE NAME OF THE ONE WHO SAID IT

“Anyone who says something in the name of the one who said it brings redemption to the world, as is said (Ester 2:22), “And Ester told the king in the name of Mordechai” (Avos 6:6) – and the explanation of this in its inner meaning:

The interpretation of “who says something in the name of the one who said it” is that in everything in the world a Jew sees (and therefore, proclaims and says) “the one who said it,” i.e., he reveals that it was created by the speech of G-d, and this “brings redemption to the world” – he redeems it from its state of hiding and concealment in the world’s existence.

The proof of the matter is, “As is said (Ester 2:22), ‘And Ester told the king **in the name** of Mordechai’”:

Even when the world situation was complete hiding and concealment...nevertheless, when “Ester told the king in the name of Mordechai,” i.e., through the avoda of Mordechai, who revealed the G-dliness in everything, even the very lowest, this brought about the matter of redemption.

And this is the overall point of all the aforementioned...we must bring about a revelation of G-dliness in all worldly matters, even the most lowly. As a result, each and every Jew fulfills his portion in the revelation of G-dliness in everything in this world, which brings about each thing’s own redemption. Thus, when the

activities of all the Jewish People are combined, we merit the overall Redemption of the entire world, and we merit the building of the Third Beis HaMikdash *mamash*, through Moshiach Tzidkeinu.

(Shabbos Parshas Nitzavim-VaYeilech 5744 – Toras Menachem, Vol. 4, p. 2630)

TALKING MOSHIACH AND THE REDEMPTION

If the entire Jewish People will talk among themselves and cry out that they want Moshiach to come, then he will come immediately, “as in the blink of an eye,” without looking at the fact that it’s nighttime or the other matters mentioned in Gemara (Shvuos 15b, Eruvin 43b, etc.), rather as the halachic ruling of the Rambam (Hilchos T’shuva 7:5), that “Israel does



t’shuva and they are **immediately** redeemed,” and as is explained in s’farim (see *Shaar HaGilgulim*, Ch. 13), Moshiach is already here and all that is required is to illuminate his encompassing light of *Chaya-Yechida*, and when it will shine, there will immediately be the Complete Redemption, speedily in our days.

(Acharon Shel Pesach 5716)

PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTING THE TANYA HASTENS THE REDEMPTION

There has recently been “a heartfelt suggestion and request” to print the *Tanya* – **the written Torah** of (Chabad) chassidus – in every place where Jews live. Thus, they will bring the Torah to all these places.

This matter is even more relevant as we stand in the final days of Galus, since the *Tanya* is connected with “the coming of the Master” [i.e., the coming of Melech HaMoshiach], as the Moshiach said to the Baal Shem Tov, he will come “when your wellsprings will spread outward” (in the Baal Shem Tov’s well-known letter). The *Tanya* is thus connected with the spreading of the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov outward...and therefore, when the *Tanya* is distributed – this hastens even more “the coming of the Master – Melech HaMoshiach.”

And since the Future Redemption will be in such a way that not even one Jew will remain in Galus. As long as one Jew is in Galus, all Jews remain in Galus and the Sh’china is in Galus (Megilla 29a, Zohar I 103b). Therefore, the wellsprings of the Baal Shem Tov should now be distributed, including through the study (and printing) of the *Tanya*, which hastens the Redemption, in every location where Jews dwell – even a lone Jew – because this matter pertains to the Redemption of the **entire** Jewish People and to the Sh’china in Galus, so that every Jew in every place will go out of exile. Thus, we prepare every location and every Jew for “and the kingdom will be for G-d” with the Future Redemption.

(Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 26, p. 378)

In order that the “wellspring” itself will reach “outward” (and not just a spreading out of the **waters** of the wellspring), the *Tanya* (the written Torah of chassidus) should be printed everywhere, meaning that in a given place there should be the “wellspring” (the source of the waters) itself.

(Shabbos Parshas Truma 5744, unedited)

GOOD RESOLUTIONS

To hasten the redemption even more, each person should certainly make good resolutions to increase in matters of Torah, avoda, and *g’milus chassadim* (in addition to the regular study of Chitas, etc.) – and particularly the mitzva of tz’daka.

(Hisvaaduyos 5750, Toras Menachem, Vol. 1, p. 109)

YOUNG CHILDREN'S DAVENING

PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION BY RABBI LEVI GOLDSTEIN

*How do you teach children to daven? How do you ensure that children don't make mistakes in their davening? Should they daven with a tune? * A compilation of suggestions for teachers of young children with horaos from the Rebbe MH"M.*

AT WHAT AGE DO YOU BEGIN?

In the *HaYom Yom* for 4 Iyar, the Rebbe writes:

"From the day of the haircutting and the leaving of peios they were accustomed to be punctilious and to accustom the child to wear a tallis katan (i.e., tzitzis) and to say the morning brachos and Birkas HaMazon and Shma before going to sleep."

In the *Hisvaaduyos* 5742 vol. 2, p. 708, the Rebbe adds: Regarding what it says in the *HaYom Yom*, this doesn't mean that one shouldn't be punctilious before that [i.e., before the age of 3], but that from the age of three one ought to do this and before that it is worthwhile being punctilious.

And in a letter (Heichal Menachem vol. 2, p. 29): Obviously, only in regard to the haircut should it not be before age

3, unlike the tzitzis, etc.

So it is clear that t'filla begins before age 3.

In another sicha (*Hisvaaduyos* 5749, vol. 2, p. 37): **It is the custom of righteous women to say Modeh Ani for (and with) the baby who cannot speak.**

AND WHEN HE KNOWS HOW TO TALK...

At the beginning of the *T'hillas Hashem* siddur it says:

A katan, from when he knows how to speak – his father teaches him ... 1) Modeh Ani 2) Baruch ... al netilas yodayim 3) Torah tziva 4) and for boys Baruch ... al mitzvas tzitzis 5) Shma ... u'v'sh'orecha

(Additionally, based on the known sicha – there is reason to add, "Hareini mekabel alai ... v'ahavta l'reiacha kamocho," and "Ach Tzaddikim").

As far as the Birkas HaMazon

(after eating bread), the printed nusach in the Siddur is one line: "brich rachmana ... pita."

STEP BY STEP

Chabad places a strong emphasis on the avodas ha't'filla, from which we understand that the t'filla of young children is one of the foundations and pillars of a Jewish chinuch in general and a Chassidishe chinuch in particular.

For this reason, we need to approach this topic in the most suitable way and we need to start at a very young age, before the children have even learned to read from a siddur.

After consulting with expert mechanchim and rabbanim, we present the following:

1. It is enough to daven with children what it says at the beginning of the *T'hillas Hashem* siddur. Don't add more until they know how to read.

2. Based on what it says in *Shulchan Aruch* – that after the father teaches him Torah Tziva, etc., he goes on to teach him p'sukim p'sukim (verse by verse), after accustoming the child to say the morning blessings (mentioned above) and they are said nicely and clearly, without mistakes, other Torah p'sukim can be added, slowly.

For example: the 12 P'sukim and

sayings of Chazal, some p'sukim from their chapter of T'hillim and the Rebbe's chapter.

3. It is very important to explain to children the meaning of the t'fillos. That means, from time to time, and very slowly, according to the child's understanding (through examples and stories), to explain to them the reason for saying the t'fillos and their meaning; starting with Modeh Ani, and also the rest of the davening.

When the children understand the davening well, davening won't be a heavy burden to them and they won't get bored. On the contrary, they will look forward to adding another part and yet another part to the davening.

4. As far as the Birkas HaMazon: when it is age appropriate, you can switch from the short line of "brich

rachmana" for the first paragraph of the Birkas HaMazon (**ha'zan es ha'kol**), again, as mentioned earlier, word by word.

AVOIDING ERRORS

The Gemara in P'sachim (112a) says, "When you teach your son, teach him in a carefully edited book, because a mistake once it becomes habit is repeated" (meaning if your child learns to read incorrectly – once a mistake has become ingrained, who will correct it).

In other words, be very careful not to have the children get used to mispronouncing parts of the t'filla from the very beginning!

(For example, there are children who got used to saying the Krias Shma with a number of errors: 1) v'shinamtom livovecha ... b'shifiticha b'veisecha u'v'lefticha ba'derech

u'v'shaftecha u'v'kumecha, 2) they don't pause between words like: **b'chol levavcha**, and there are too many examples to cite.)

In order to prevent the problem, first of all: do not sing any t'filla or bracha until they know each word **clearly, the letters and vowels** (see further about niggunim in t'filla).

Second of all: you must say it **word by word with the children**. And I beg the pardon of many melamdim, but it would be very worthwhile for the teacher to look inside the siddur to ensure that he himself is not making any mistakes!

Even better, the teacher should show the children the movements of the lips, how to pronounce the words properly. And yes, to be particular (as much as possible) with the "m'l'eil" and the "m'l'ra," at least in the Krias Shma.



And yes, to be very careful with the **pronunciation of the name of Hashem**, for many err in this.

(They should also be taught that when the name YHVH is vowelized with the vowels of Elokim (**segol, cholam, chirik**) that it is pronounced **Elokim** and not **Ad-noi**.

There are children (even seven and older) who got used to putting their finger on their lips when saying, Baruch shem k'vod malchuso l'olam va'ed, in order to indicate that it is said quietly. They got used to this because they saw their teacher do it. The problem is that they think that you must put your finger on your lips every time you say Baruch shem!

Since we do not make up new customs, the teacher should just **tell** the children that Baruch shem is said quietly. They can even show them (with a finger) but only the first few times, and to make it clear that the children need not do this.

HOW TO ADD

After the children can read from the siddur, they can slowly add t'fillos. When a new section is added, the way it should be done is as follows:

1. The teacher picks the first boy in the first row to be the chazan to say the first t'filla (Modeh Ani) and he (the chazan) says it word by word, the chazan and the class, meaning that the chazan says "Modeh" and the class repeats "Modeh" after him. Then the chazan says, "Ani" and the class says "Ani."

The teacher ought to listen carefully to how the chazan pronounces the words, and if the chazan makes a mistake, the teacher (**and only the teacher**) ought to **point it out** to him and ask him (gently, of course) to repeat the word, until he says it correctly.

Under no circumstances should the teacher say the word **for him**,

for then he will not teach the child to say it correctly.

2. Then, the second child says the next t'filla, the bracha of Netilas Yodayim, as the chazan, as described above, word by word, and the class saying it after him. And then the third t'filla and so on, until the end of the davening.

3. The next day, the Modeh Ani should be recited by the **second** child, the next day with the third child, and so on, until all the children are chazan for every single part of the davening.

4. The davening should not take longer than half an hour. Obviously, the amount of time it takes depends on the age of the children and their

*Under no
circumstances should
the teacher say the
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the child to say it
correctly.*

level of development. If necessary, the davening can be divided into two parts and times.

5. Only after everybody knows all parts of the t'filla **well, without any mistakes**, can the students recite the davening all together. And then another and yet another section can be added, but with each additional section, start off as described in point #1, word by word, the chazan and then the class.

In order to be successful, introduce the new t'filla with a nice and understandable explanation about what it's about and the meaning of the words so the children will properly appreciate it

and will want to say it.

NIGGUNIM IN DAVENING

1. Despite the advantages to niggunim in davening and the enthusiasm it adds to the davening, at first refrain from using niggunim, **until they get used to saying all the words of the davening properly without any mistakes**. Those who know, know that some children who learned parts of the davening with a niggun, make many mistakes in pronunciation and they skip letters and change nekudos, etc. There is no reason to go on at length about something obvious and widespread.

2. Even after the children learned and know all the words well, without any mistakes, you must make sure that the niggun fits the words so that wherever there is a stop in the punctuation, the niggun stops too.

For example, the Chabad custom is to stop in **Modeh Ani** between the words **b'chemla** and **rabba emunasecha**. And in **Baruch Sh'amar** to stop between **yachid chei ha'olamim Melech** and **meshubach u'm'foar**, etc.

Unfortunately, though, many sing these t'fillos so that they are said incorrectly (connecting b'chemla and rabba together, and Melech and meshubach. The same is true for popular tunes, for example, the olam'she niggun for the words, "v'ani b'rov chasdecha ... aneini b'emes yish'echa." There is a stop **before** the word aneini, but with the tune, the stop is **after** aneini. And there are many other examples.

Therefore, the teacher must look **inside**, see where the stops are in the middle of a pasuk and sing it properly.

HORAA FOR YOUNG TALMIDIM

The following are notes from a yechidus that Rabbi Yisroel Engel

had with the Rebbe about t'filla for grade 3:

Rabbi Engel: After saying the morning blessings we skip till Hodu and continue until the end of Aleinu, but the children don't daven properly because it's too much and too fast.

The Rebbe: 1) Clarify with a rav which parts of the davening they must say every day and the rest can be divided over two days, 2) you should include that part before Hodu, especially the Akeida, for how could a talmid not say the Akeida? 3) The main thing is they should get accustomed to davening slowly, for the way they daven at this age will influence their davening for the rest of their lives!

HORAA L'HALACHA

Horaos l'halacha from Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dvorkin a"h:

The main parts of the davening for children (aside from the morning brachos) are: Baruch Sh'amar, Ashrei, from Yishtabach until after Shmoneh Esrei, and if possible – also Aleinu.

It is proper to point out to the talmidim the importance of davening **out loud** and not to whisper. As the Alter Rebbe writes in *Tanya* (Kuntres Acharon, "Hocheiach Tochiach") that davening should be in a **slightly raised voice, at least, and not**

whispered and not rushed.

Especially (and most importantly): we know that the five letters: **Beis, Veis, Gimmel, Dalet, Zayin** cannot be properly said quietly. Because when you say these letters only quietly then the letters sound like completely different letters: the letter **Beis** is like a **Pei** and **Veis** is like a **Fei** and the **Gimmel** is like a **Kuf** and the **Dalet** is like a **Tes** and the **Zayin** is like a **Samech** (try it and see!)

They should also be told about the Shmoneh Esrei. Many talmidim think that it is supposed to be silent, and therefore, they don't utter any sound at all, not even a whisper! It says in *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* (siman 101, s'if 102), "**His voice should not be heard (by someone standing outside his four cubits).** This does not negate davening **audibly**. It means that one's voice shouldn't be heard too loudly, in such a way that a person standing outside one's four cubits will hear him. But one definitely has to be audible!

PRESCHOOL

The following is an answer from the Rebbe regarding preschool:

In 5743, I wrote to the Rebbe as follows:

"On Lag B'Omer will be the upsheren of our twins Yechiel Alter Yehoshua and Menachem Mendel

b'ezras Hashem (their birthday is 18 Nissan). We want to ask the Rebbe's advice about the hachnasa l'cheider (arainfirenish).

Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dvorkin told me that it is not clear, for in Poland they did the hachnasa l'cheider as a continuation of the upsheren, but in Russia the hachnasa l'cheider was done at age 5 (or 4).

In Seifer HaSichos summer 5700 p. 67, it says that the day after Yom Kippur 5653 the Tzemach Tzedek had his hachnasa l'cheider [at age 4] (perhaps this was a private horaa for Beis Rebbi).

Furthermore, over here it is customary (for most people) to put their children in preschool at around age 3 (mostly to play), and so we ask the Rebbe's advice in this: 1) should we put the twins in preschool now? 2) When should we celebrate the hachnasa l'cheider?

I received the following answer from the Rebbe. The Rebbe crossed out the words "to play" and instead wrote: **to say brachos, etc.**, and to the words "preschool" (*gan yeladim*) the Rebbe added: **i.e., cheider.**

The Rebbe underlined the words **over here it is customary (for most people) to put their children in preschool at around age 3**, and the Rebbe concluded by writing: **and therefore, what is the question?!**

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LIFE IN VENEZUELA

BY CHANIE NUSSBAU

*Rabbi Chaim Raitport and Mrs. Milka have been on shlichus in Caracas, Venezuela for 12 years now. They have had a great impact on the city despite the difficulties of their location. It's dangerous to go out after 6:30 in the evening, it's dangerous to stop at a red light, and there's terrible poverty and a high crime rate. In addition, there's a president whose heroes are Saddam Hussein and Osama Bin Ladin, who declared war on the Jews. Nevertheless, they and their six children live here and see miracles. * Story of a shlichus.*

If you want to get an idea about what it's like in Venezuela, you can do so by learning some basic facts about the country. The president of Venezuela is an admirer of Islamic Jihad. He considers Saddam Hussein and Osama Bin Laden as heroes and sees Jews as his enemies. The Jewish community is nervously following recent developments in this country, where extreme poverty and crime are on the rise.

Shlucha Milka Raitport's friend wrote to the Rebbe about wanting to leave the country. The answer in the *Igros Kodesh* was, "The main thing is that you don't write what

you are doing about Judaism!"

When she committed to giving a shiur, she opened to another, even more surprising answer which said, "for now your work here is necessary." Are the words "for now" hinting that the Jewish community won't last in Venezuela much longer?

But Milka Raitport (nee Sudakowitz) and her husband Chaim, have been living in Venezuela for twelve years now and raising their six children. She doesn't have it easy but in the interview she sounds like a strong woman who has faith in the one who sent her there, i.e., the Rebbe.

* * *

Venezuela in South America is considered a third world country. There is a great deal of poverty and lots of crime. About 80% of the population is illiterate. Seven years ago, the government changed and became communist, and even worse. The Jewish community shrank by a third. Until then, there were 15,000 Jews and now there are about 10,000 Jews living there.

Venezuela only allows government imports and exports. The possession of foreign currency is illegal, which is a factor in the enormous crime levels. Mrs. Raitport says, "Driving when the light is red is legal and it's actually dangerous to stop at a red light! We have gotten used to going from our house to the car and from the car to the house. After six in the evening we don't go out, so our day ends early."

Milka adds, "All land in the country belongs to the president, so if he were to pass my yard and like it, he could legally build himself a house in my yard. Just a week ago, the president announced that Jews are the biggest enemy and he will fight them to annihilate them, and the Jewish community is nervously following developments. But we as Chassidim hope for the best, with Hashem's help."

After an introduction like that, it's very interesting to hear how Chabad operates under these

conditions.

“The Jewish community here is not religious and completely ignorant about anything connected with religion. Yet there is hardly any assimilation because the Jews here are from the upper class and they don't fraternize with the gentiles, who they see as primitive and members of the underworld. This is also the reason why all the Jews send their children to the Jewish school.

“For the most part, anti-Semitism is not felt much, but at the universities for example, anti-Semitism is more prevalent. Most of the important exams are given on Rosh HaShana, Yom Kippur, and Shabbos, and the students must attend classes. This is done to make it difficult on the Jews and to prevent them from taking top

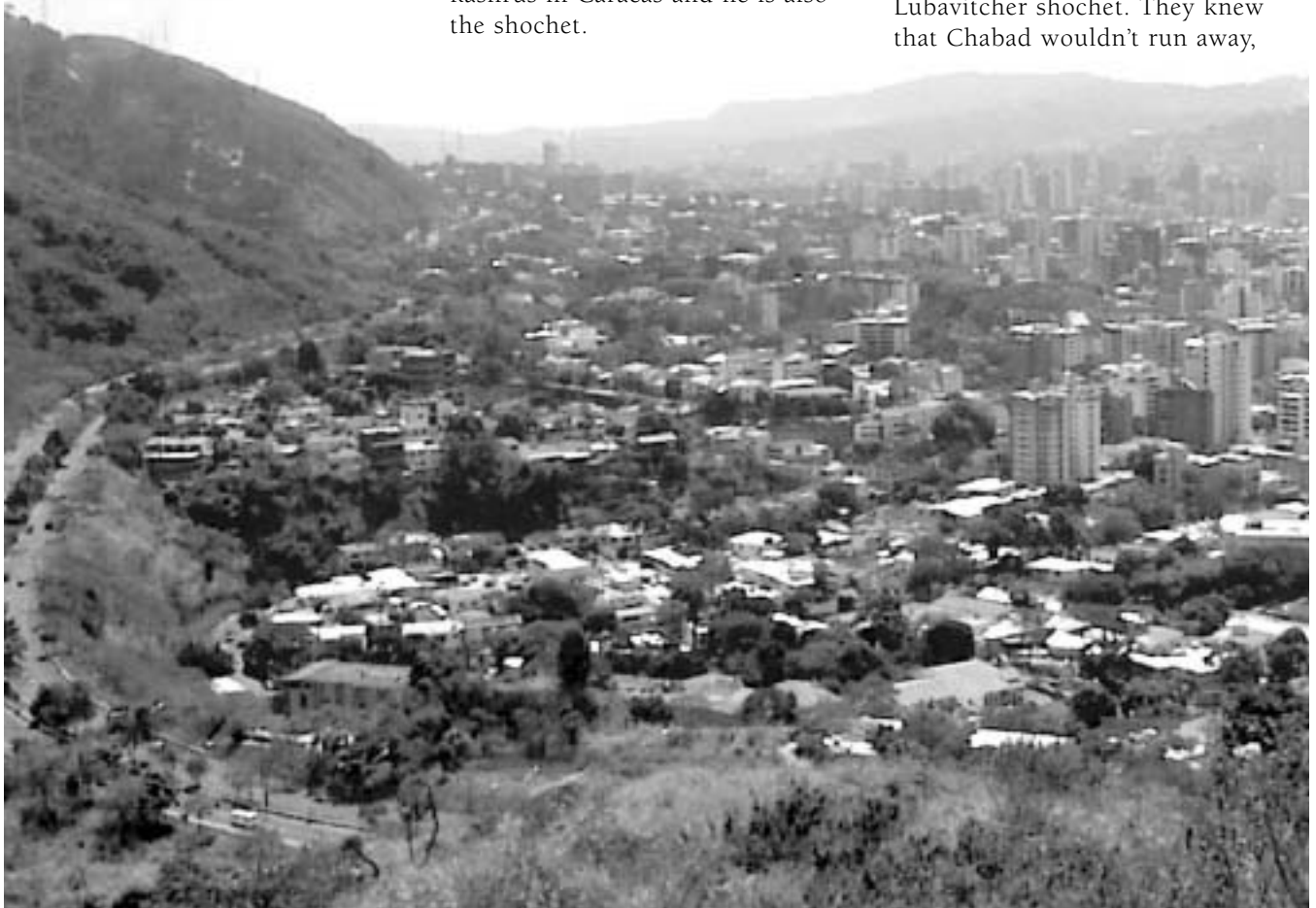


Rabbi Chaim Raitport with his children

positions.

“We work with the Ashkenazi community. My husband is officially responsible for the kashrus in Caracas and he is also the shochet.

“My husband only recently started shechting, when the former shochet of the community quit and the community leaders asked shliach Rabbi Moshe Perman for a Lubavitcher shochet. They knew that Chabad wouldn't run away,



that they could rely on us.

“We try to bring Chabad into the life of the community but unofficially. I can’t come and say, ‘The Rebbe says,’ but I can tell them that it’s a good idea to have a pushka in the kitchen.

“At the community shul the davening Friday night takes place with a microphone and no mechitza. Of course, my husband cannot daven there and some people said, ‘If it’s not good for Rabbi Raitport then it’s not good for us either,’ so they became closer to us.”

What about family purity?

“I am personally involved in strengthening this mitzva. There was an old mikva in a community building and over the years, I fought with the leadership of the community to get permission to build a new mikva that would attract more people. But every letter I sent was ignored. Even worse, when the rav saw me on the street he would cross to the other side, until one day he suddenly said to me (and this is a miracle that took place thanks to the Rebbe), ‘I will get you permits for a mikva but you have to get the money to build it.’ And that’s what happened.

“I was able to get the money and today we have one of the most beautiful mikvaos in the world befitting for a wealthy and modern community like this. The mikva is built according to the shita of Chabad.

“I give a ‘first aid’ kit for the Jewish home to every kalla who marries here. The kit contains basic Jewish items: candlesticks, a pushka, a challa cover, a Kiddush cup, a washing cup, a saltshaker, and a Havdala candle.

“I was recently in Eretz Yisroel



The beautiful mikva built by the shluchim

“Yes, we have miracles here. Family purity is the biggest thing happening in Venezuela. Wealthy women see that money doesn’t always provide them with what they want and that following Hashem’s mitzvos can help.”

and a kalla did not receive a kit from me. Upon my return, we met and I made sure to give her a kit. She was absolutely thrilled. She told me emotionally that this is the first thing she will bring into her house and I didn’t believe her because she had recently told me that she was not going to observe the laws of family purity. It was thanks to the kit that she changed her mind and she happily told me

that she would keep these laws after all.

“Families that have come to this mikva were blessed with children. One example is a good friend of mine here in the community. She tried many medical treatments and the doctors did not hold out much hope. When she saw that the treatments weren’t helping she agreed to keep the family purity laws and she had a baby.

“A similar thing happened with another woman. I managed to convince one of the wealthy women here to donate money towards the mikva and she did. Immediately afterwards she became pregnant after years of not having children and having undergone treatments.

“Yes, we have miracles here. Family purity is the biggest thing happening in Venezuela. Wealthy women see that money doesn’t always provide them with what they want and that following Hashem’s mitzvos can help.

“The Ashkenazi community has about forty weddings a year. Out of the forty, ten couples keep the laws of family purity at least minimally, even though they do not observe kashrus and Shabbos yet. But I

believe that one day they will be ashamed to eat meat and cheese together and they will take on more mitzvos.

“We also have a mikva for utensils and using it has become standard practice. Every engaged couple has to take a course in family purity with me and even though the chief rabbi is not chareidi, he will not marry a couple if they don’t attend the course.”

More stories about mitzvos:

“A couple came to us who do not have children and they wanted my husband to check their mezuzos. The mezuzos had been checked a few times and found to be kosher but they had undergone a number of treatments that had failed. When they asked the Rebbe again, once again they opened up to an answer in the *Igros Kodesh* about checking mezuzos.

“My husband took a magnifying glass and checked each mezuzah. They were all pasul except for one mezuzah. None of the pasul mezuzos could be fixed. Of course they decided to buy new, kosher mezuzos and now that they’ve put them up they are hoping for a miracle.”

What is the kashrus situation like in Venezuela?

“As I said, my husband is in charge of kashrus and sh’chita. We definitely manage with the basics, for there is no shortage of items like salt, flour, sugar, and pasta. However, rice (the most basic staple for Latin peoples), for example, is not easily obtainable, since the president recently enacted a law that says that rice has to be treated with a coating of vitamins and minerals (and we don’t know if it is kosher or not). This is so that the poor, who are the majority of the population, have something nutritious and cheap to eat.

“There was a time when we couldn’t get any kosher rice. Today you can buy rice that is not enriched though it’s not easy to get and not every store carries it. And the children have gotten used to not having candy and milk products.”

What about chinuch?

“The oldest of my six children will go to yeshiva in Eretz Yisroel next year.

In the meantime, they are all here in Venezuela. We brought out a couple, the Brill family, who teaches the Lubavitcher children, a group of eleven children who sit in the shul and learn. The boys sit together and the girls sit separately. I hired a local teacher for the girls, who teaches them Spanish and mathematics.

“In general, we’ve learned to live



A farbrengen at the Raitport home



Children of the shluchim with children of the community



R' Chaim Raitport and two bachurim who came to learn with the Lubavitcher children, celebrating a siyum of a masechta

with the difficulties and to look at the nice things about living here. Although the community has not become religious, the local money is worthless and for the smallest item you have to pay thousands of bolivar; and my children don't play on an outdoor playground because it's dangerous; and although you won't find signs on the highways for the simple reason that the poor will uproot them and use them for walls of their huts, there are some nice things here!"

Like what?

"In Venezuela it's always warm. It's a tropical country with lots of rain. Oil hardly costs anything. We are suppliers of oil, and gasoline is practically free too. There are lots of fruit, some of them are from other countries because fruits that grow in the winter don't grow here (like apricots, my children don't know what they are). The nicest thing of all is that 3000 Jews come to shul on Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, a nice percentage of the Jewish population."

This interview took place before Rosh HaShana and I asked about preparations for Yom Tov.

"Acquiring a pomegranate for Rosh HaShana requires considerable effort. According to law, no product or foreign merchandise can be imported. The same thing is true with the four minim. In order to have them for Sukkos you have to use extralegal means to get them.

As far as a sukka, you can build one but it's likely to be stolen by a poor person who wants to use it for his home. It hasn't happened to us yet but it happened to our neighbor. One day of Sukkos, he discovered that his sukka was gone.

"The largest sukka belongs to the community and it's guarded and open to the public at all times. In



R' Chaim Raitport and his son by a shipment of chalav Yisroel

general, throughout the year, you cannot come to shul without identification.

"To sum up, we end our day early here because after six in the evening you can't go out. So nine-thirty is the middle of the night for us."

I, the interviewer, benefited from this since Milka was able to grant me this interview at a time when shluchos in other countries are very busy. Before saying goodbye, I asked Milka to send me pictures for the article and I was shocked by her answer. She said, "There's no mail here."

I asked, "Do you have a computer so you can email the letters?"

Milka said she had a computer and I breathed a sigh of relief. I wished her a good Yom Tov while remembering that she would be managing on the basic food items one can buy in Venezuela and that's no simple task.

VENEZUELA

Venezuela has tropical weather, beaches, plains, huge rivers, forests, jungles, waterfalls and mountain chains. Venezuela is located on the northern coast of South America between Guyana and Colombia and is north of Brazil. Lake Maracaibo is 121 miles long and is connected with the Gulf of Mexico.

The temperature is steady year round. The difference in seasons is in the amount of precipitation. The dry season is between December and April and the rain pours the rest of the year.

In 1821, Simon Bolivar liberated South America from the Spanish and in 1830 Venezuela declared its independence. It experienced many upheavals since then, including military coups, revolutions and terrorist insurgencies. A series of military dictators have governed the country over the years and although petroleum was discovered in the beginning of the 20 century, Venezuela remains a poor country with numerous social problems. Although lately it has stabilized, there is still the ever-present danger of a military uprising and economic collapse and the atmosphere is tense.

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TEACHING CHASSIDUS

INTERVIEW BY MENDEL TZFASMAN

*An interview with four Chassidim who spread the teachings of Chassidus among yeshiva people, the knitted kippa crowd, those who learn in kollel, baalei t'shuva etc. * "When your wellsprings [of Chassidus] spread outward."*

Tell us a bit about what you do.

Rabbi Shaul Rosenblatt: The Chassidus library in Beitar, ten years after its founding, has become a full-fledged Chabad community. In addition to those who join us every Shabbos, there are fifty families who are regulars, many of whom are mekuravim.

We have a library where people can borrow s'farim, where we have a comfortable reading area, and we sell Chassidus s'farim too. During the week we have a kollel Chassidus at the library where ten men learn *Tanya*, maamarim of the Rebbe MH"m, and Hemshech 5672. Some of them are mekuravim while others are already full-fledged Lubavitchers.

I am responsible for the kollel in the morning. The rest of the day people learn *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* and the D'var Malchus, and there are shiurim in *Likkutei Sichos* and *Shaarei Ora*. There is also a women's division

called Ohr Shoshana, named after a girl who was murdered in a terrorist attack.

The library is open to all for shiurim, to learn b'chavrusa, farbrengens, etc., and people come from various Chassidic groups, as do Sefardim and even Litvishe.

Rabbi Yosef Hendel: The Chassidus kollel we started is located near the chareidi section of Beer Sheva, which is comprised mostly of Sefardi baalei t'shuva. At the moment, our work focuses on baalei t'shuva who are at various stages of hiskavus. Many of the baalei t'shuva still need a lot of guidance in avodas Hashem. Chassidus gives them answers to all their concerns. Our goal is to expand our work and to reach b'nei yeshivos and students too.

Rabbi Gershon Avtzon: I don't have an organization or a "mosad." I simply work with talmidim from the Litvishe and Chassidishe yeshivos. I've

brought more than 200 bachurim to Chabad from nearly every yeshiva in Eretz Yisroel: Mir, Slobodka, Lakewood, Slonim, Nezer Ha'Torah, Kol Yaakov, Chayei Moshe, Maalot HaTorah, etc., and they have become T'mimim in every sense of the word. I also work with bachurim from Chabad families who have gone off the path of observant Yiddishkeit.

I remember going to the Rebbe in 5748 after the passing of the Rebbetzin a"h. Rabbi Chadakov called me, as a shliach who spreads the wellsprings in Eretz Yisroel, so I would give a report to the Rebbe about my work. From then on, I went to Rabbi Chadakov every year to give in my report.

Later on I discovered that Rabbi Chadakov first spoke with R' Mendel Futerfas, who was in charge of sending shluchim to spread the wellsprings in Eretz Yisroel on behalf of Merkaz L'Inyanei Chinuch. He asked R' Mendel whether I could be called a shliach. R' Mendel told him: I (referring to himself) am **called** a shliach; he **does** shlichus.

Rabbi Moshe Dickstein: I work primarily with high school kids, those who attend Yeshivas B'nei Akiva in Beer Sheva, mostly those in eleventh and twelfth grades. We learn *Tanya*, but it can happen that we learn a line or two of *Tanya* over the course of two hours. In between, we learn points

from a maamer of the Rebbe or the Chassidishe parsha, *Likkutei Sichos*, etc.

There is a serious group which comes every week to intensive shiurim. Eventually we send them to a Chabad yeshiva. In other instances, we try to get them to go to a hesder yeshiva at least or to learn for a year in a hesder yeshiva so they go to the army better prepared in their knowledge and religion.

What do you do in order to attract bachurim and men to the kollel or to the Chabad house to learn Chassidus?

Rabbi Rosenblatt: The library has a good reputation and many men come to learn there. We also advertise occasionally in the local papers and put up flyers about shiurim and farbrengens for the general public. Some people, because they belong to a closed Chassidic group or due to social pressure, are embarrassed to come to shiurim. This is why the library is open for whoever wants to

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RABBI MOSHE DICKSTEIN –
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RABBI YOSEF HENDEL –
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CHASSIDUS IN BEER SHEVA
RABBI SHAUL ROSENBLATT –
RAV IN BEITAR

learn b'chavrusa and to sample the light of Chassidus on their own, and nobody disturbs them.

Rabbi Dickstein: One of the bachurim in yeshiva who is responsible for organizing shiurim organizes the group of bachurim and together they come on Thursday night for a *Tanya* shiur. The shiur is not suitable for everyone, so each week we have a small group of about ten serious fellows who know how to learn and who have many questions, tough questions too.

Having learned all of *Tanya* with R'

Mendel for an entire year b'chavrusa, I am able to give them deep and interesting shiurim with lots of stories and analogies.

Other times, when we have farbrengens, generally in the yeshiva itself and with permission from the hanhala, we get a much larger group. But it is these farbrengens that show us that sometimes talking is more influential than deep, persuasive shiurim.

Rabbi Hendel: We are first starting out. The kollel opened at the end of last year. We advertised in the religious paper of Beer Sheva about a nice stipend that those who attended the kollel would receive. People called up and we built up a core group of fifteen serious men. Since then, one friend has brought another. We also advertise farbrengens and guest speakers.

You've got to work hard in order to bring every Jew to learn Chassidus as well as invest in those who are already

From left to right: Rabbi Yosef Hendel, Rabbi Shaul Rosenblatt, Rabbi Gershon Avtzon, Rabbi Moshe Dickstein



there, i.e., to instill in them not only the study of Chassidus but also the ways of Chassidus.

Rabbi Avtzon: At first, when we had a Chassidus kollel near the Mirror yeshiva, bachurim would come to the kollel in order to learn Chassidus or to ask questions. There were years when I would literally walk into yeshivos and look for people who were suited to studying Chassidus.

I remember a group of bachurim from a Litvishe yeshiva who often came to Shikun Chabad in Yerushalayim. I noticed that one of the bachurim was especially refined. He had a certain t'mimus. I got into a conversation with him. I told him that I thought he should be a Chassid and I offered to learn Chassidus with him. He agreed and we learned together for a long time. Today he is a maggid shiur in a Chabad yeshiva.

The point is to relate to each one in his language, because truthfully, everybody has a connection to Chassidus, even one opposed to it.

I once met a young, clean-shaven man, who came to Shikun Chabad every day to learn Chassidus. He spoke against the Rebbe in very harsh terms. I would tell Anash in the Shikun that one day not only would this person be a Lubavitcher but he would even be a Meshichist, and that's what happened. It wasn't prophecy. I could simply see that something was driving him. He wasn't a simple fellow, but a person of much substance and his criticisms were the result of an inner battle that in the end won out.

How do you develop a personal connection and be mekarev someone to the "darkei ha'chassidus" when they only come to learn Chassidus?

Rabbi Rosenblatt: It's quite obvious that a warm and loving relationship along with shiurim and farbrengens forge a personal connection between you and the men. When you speak their language and take an interest

and are alert to even the simplest material needs of the person you're talking to, you create a personal connection that is tremendously effective.

When Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu met with the Rebbe, the Rebbe told him that in Chabad we work on helping our fellow Jews, to supply them with all their needs, even material needs, and not necessarily **on condition** that they learn Torah. We see that when we use this approach people want to become Chassidim.

At the moment, our work focuses on baalei t'shuva who are at various stages of hiskarvus. Many of the baalei t'shuva still need a lot of guidance in avodas Hashem. Chassidus gives them answers to all their concerns.

--Rabbi Yosef Hendel

Rabbi Dickstein: There's no doubt about it, the answer is: farbrengens. When you sit to farbreng in the yeshiva itself, with some food and l'chaim, hearts open up. More people show up and the connection becomes something real.

We once sat and farbrenged and I emphasized, in talking about the mitzva of Ahavas Yisroel, that it has to be also and especially in spiritual matters. I quoted the line from Pirkei Avos, "if you learned a lot of Torah, don't think well of yourself, etc."

What I said went deep into the hearts of the bachurim and the group that comes every week for a shiur decided to go on mivtzaim every Friday. You can see bachurim in jeans and knitted yarmulkes standing on the street and putting t'fillin on with people.

Rabbi Hendel: Every Motzaei Shabbos, we have a Melaveh Malka, at the home of a different mekurav each week. We sit together, sing niggunim, and teach niggunei Chabad, tell stories about the Rebbe and *Igros Kodesh*, etc., and we "earn" a double profit.

The relationship with the host and his family becomes closer and the mekuravim too become one big family, which naturally leads to a personal connection with the shliach. In addition, the light of Chassidus enters their homes and isn't merely something that pertains to certain hours of the week.

When you build trust, people open up and then you become their rav and they come to consult with you and ask advice in personal matters and in avodas Hashem.

You must work hard to create a personal connection. You can never relax. If one of the mekuravim doesn't show up to a shiur, you have to call him and ask how he is. That's the only way to get results, of course, with Hashem's help.

Rabbi Avtzon: I always start with a personal connection. I don't have large shiurim or lectures with lots of participants. I learn with small groups, aside from farbrengens, which in themselves are the biggest possible draw.

In 5749, the Rebbe spoke about the need to hold Chassidishe farbrengens every day of Kislev. At that time, my father lived with me and we organized many farbrengens throughout the month. I met a bachur that I heard had once had a connection to Chabad and I invited him to come to the farbrengens. He came and loved it, and he and two

brothers switched to Tomchei T'mimim.

When you initiate a connection with a bachur, you must take it seriously and not drop him even when he has gone off to Tomchei T'mimim.

It sounds surprising. Bachurim or men who are quite frum, looking to learn Chassidus. What are they lacking in their own circles that makes them come to you?

Rabbi Rosenblatt: They all feel something is missing. A Jew who seeks the truth and doesn't try to lie to himself, knows that learning Nigleh is not enough when you lack enthusiasm in fulfilling Torah and mitzvos.

I constantly tell people that this is p'nimius ha'Torah, which is an inseparable part of Torah, that Chassidus adds yiras Shamayim and chayus in the service of Hashem. Who doesn't think they need more chayus in avodas Hashem?

Rabbi Hendel: First of all, even when you speak with them about learning Chassidus and the ways of Chassidus, you have to do it with finesse so that it doesn't sound to them that you are negating their rabbanim.

As far as your question, when you learn Chassidus you can't help but be amazed by the depth and the perspective Chassidus offers. Take for example the D'var Malchus of Parshas VaYeitzei, where the Rebbe explains the question: how did Yaakov lie down to sleep in such a holy place, especially when you compare it to the 34 years he did *not* sleep. There are many explanations, but you can't find an answer as deep as the Rebbe's anywhere else.

The Rebbe explains that this was "sleeping in the positive sense" for he felt the level of holiness that illuminates the Beis HaMikdash, compared to which the highest and lowest levels are equal. I mentioned this in a shiur – that there are many explanations but the Rebbe explains

what Yaakov Avinu was really thinking.

Rabbi Avtzon: Most of the bachurim who come (and I'm speaking about bachurim from yeshivos gedolos (i.e., post high school), not bachurim of high school age who simply accept everything they are taught) feel that what they are told and what they are taught are not quite the whole story and they are seeking the truth.

Once there was truly a need to bring bachurim to farbreng with R' Shlomo Chaim so he could explain to them how lacking they were without

The Rebbe asked me to convey that Chabad does not want to take over their yeshiva. Chabad only wants to increase the yiras Shamayim of the bachurim.

--Rabbi Moshe Dickstein

Chassidus. Today, they all know that on their own and they are only looking to find the truth **within you**. You can't tell them stories about iskafia and avoda. They want to see it **in you!** If you practice what you preach, people are attracted to learn Chassidus and become Chassidim.

Rabbi Dickstein: There is certainly no problem with the bachurim because they know that something very fundamental is missing and if they are serious bachurim they are ready to make a serious investment.

When bachurim come to me, I try to get them to see how much they're

lacking. I toss out simple, basic questions like: How often has it happened that you've drifted off while davening? What does "Adon olam asher malach b'terem kol yitzur nivra" mean – how could Hashem be king before He created anything when there is no king without a people to rule?

I give them questions to grapple with. Sometimes they come with questions often asked on mitzvaim and I tell them that a non-observant Jew asked the same question. They immediately sense that it's simply impossible without Chassidus. This is the approach that I learned from Rabbi Zimroni Tzik and from Rabbi Meir Bostomsky and this is what I use with the bachurim.

The main problem is with the hanhala of the yeshiva. (By the way, I have the approval of Rabbi Lifshitz and the hanhala of the yeshiva.) I quote to them a yechidus I had with the Rebbe. The Rebbe asked me to convey that Chabad does not want to take over their yeshiva. Chabad only wants to increase the yiras Shamayim of the bachurim.

And the Rebbe specified: to prepare netilas yodayim at the bed, to wear a bigger yarmulke, etc. Even the fellows from Merkaz HaRav and those who don't love Chabad, as soon as you explain this with words that come from the heart, they enter the heart.

It's interesting to note that the bachurim and the hanhala are very proud of the bachurim who continued on to learn in "black" yeshivos and became stronger in their Torah and mitzva observance.

Are the shiurim and farbrengens always successful?

Rabbi Hendel: You can never know which word made a difference and how or when it will make a practical difference.

We had someone who came every day. I thought he didn't understand what we were talking about and that he certainly wasn't swayed by what

was said. One day he said, "I went to many shiurim with many rabbanim but nothing drew me as much as Chassidus. I enjoy the learning so much that every day I take the kuntreisim home with me and learn them with my wife."

On another occasion, someone said, "Now I understand why you say the Rebbe is Moshiach, because you can see that his Torah is something else entirely."

Rabbi Avtzon: Everything you do makes an impact. Sometimes you know about it and sometimes you don't. Here are two examples to illustrate:

I once went to a non-Chabad wedding and I saw a bachur from a Chassidische yeshiva who once learned Chassidus with me. I got into a conversation with him and to my surprise discovered that he was learning Chitas and Rambam every day. Despite his Poilische look, he called himself a Lubavitcher.

On another occasion I farbrenged with a chassan from the Tchebin yeshiva and we spoke about the importance of the time between the vort and the wedding and about its enormous influence on the rest of your life. The chassan listened the entire time and at the end of the farbrengen went to sleep on the couch in my house.

The next day he got up at seven in the morning, called a friend in yeshiva and asked him to bring him his t'fillin. When he got the t'fillin, he went straight to Tomchei T'mimim in Kfar Chabad until the wedding. He explained to me that he didn't want his friends to try and dissuade him from going and that is why he stayed and slept in my house.

Rabbi Rosenblatt: Sometimes, a Chassidus shiur given to a small group of men reaches – without you knowing it – dozens and hundreds of other people. One of the men here, a sharp and serious person, is a driver

When you initiate a connection with a bachur, you must take it seriously and not drop him even when he has gone off to Tomchei T'mimim.

--Rabbi Gershon Avtzon

in the afternoons. He takes rabbanim and Admurim to the airport, among other jobs.

On the way, he asks them questions from the Chassidus shiurim that he is learning and when they don't have answers he lectures them at

length on the explanation brought in Chassidus. When they ask him for the source of the wonderful things he says, he tells them it's from a maamer Chassidus of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

It would seem that one can also learn Chassidus and forget the "Nosein HaTorah," in other words, to learn Chassidus without mentioning the Rebbe and inyanei Moshiach. How do you convey the idea that the Rebbe and Moshiach are one and the same?

Rabbi Avtzon: I pity someone who learns Chassidus like that. You can see the direct consequences – **Chassidus without the Rebbe doesn't make anyone into a Chassid!**

Rabbi Dickstein: Whatever we learn, I say, "the Rebbe says." I introduce Rebbe-Moshiach at every opportunity, from the front door and the back door, from the window or the chimney. During a *Tanya* shiur, I

Can anybody be involved in kiruv of frum people to Chassidus?

Rabbi Rosenblatt: Of course. Any Tamim or member of Anash who learns Chassidus knows far more than any Chassid or bachur from any other place. Thus, every Lubavitcher has what to offer. A Lubavitcher Chassid has a responsibility to spread the Rebbe's Torah wherever he can.

In general, many people want to learn Chassidus and if not for the shame involved, many more would come. That is the reason for the tremendous success of shiurim on Chassidus on the telephone because it's done privately.

Rabbi Hendel: In the logo of our kollel it quotes the Rebbe, saying, "We have only the horaa of the Baal Shem Tov that spreading the wellsprings outward hastens the Geula." Certainly, as Chabad Chassidim who were told by the Rebbe to "do all you can," we have the obligation and privilege to bring the light of Chassidus wherever we go.

Whoever is capable, should give shiurim. Whoever is embarrassed to stand up in front of an audience should arrange a chavrusa and learn Chassidus with him. There is no end to the possible means for hafatza.

Rabbi Dickstein: As far as the B'nei Akiva crowd, it's not that simple. Giving over a sicha or vort from the Rebbe or to farbreng is something everyone can do. However, to start a *Tanya* shiur with talmidim of yeshiva high schools is not for everyone.

The bachurim who come and learn *Tanya* are very serious bachurim who know how to learn Nigleh. They learn *Chovos HaLevavos* and sifrei Musar, and if a bachur is not knowledgeable enough for them (even in his language skills), you can lose more than you gain.

also tell stories about the Rebbe and I see that what grabs them is when I talk about the Rebbe.

Rabbi Hendel: As soon as you walk into the kollel you see pictures of the Rebbe, a Yechi sign, etc., which immediately tells you where we stand. We tell whoever joins the kollel that the purpose of the kollel is to bring the hisgalus of the Rebbe.

In addition, Chassidus alone is not enough. Obviously, you cannot be mekarev Jews to the Rebbe without learning the D'var Malchus every week. When you learn the D'var Malchus with mekuravim, it's all so clear that there's nowhere to run and hide.

And during the learning I talk about the necessity of being mekasher to the Rebbe MH"M. For example, we learned a maamer of the Rebbe that explains the qualities of a son and a servant and that a Jew needs to serve Hashem with both love and kabbalas ol. I explained to them that when you serve like soldiers of the Rebbe – i.e., fulfilling his horaos – then the learning is altogether different and you understand the same maamer completely differently.

Today, after Gimmel Tamuz, when Lubavitcher Chassidim continue to believe that the Rebbe is Moshiach, do people continue coming to learn Chabad Chassidus or does the Moshiach issue turn them off?

Rabbi Rosenblatt: This is a fundamental problem. If we weren't embarrassed by the message, it wouldn't bother anyone. It's when you see Lubavitchers claiming that belief in Moshiach puts people off to Chassidus that it's no surprise that they're turned off.

It's interesting that despite everything, people know the truth and want to hear about it and read and learn about the sources for the Chabad Chassid's faith in the Rebbe being Moshiach, yes, even today after Gimmel Tamuz.

Rabbi Avtzon: It's a fact that people continue to come and learn Chassidus. I personally do not announce my beliefs upfront, but when I see that a bachur is already "in" and has tasted enough of the sweet taste of Chassidus, I ask him: What do you say? Am I normal?

When he says that I am, I say to him – but I believe that the Rebbe is Moshiach...

The world actually accepts the fact that we believe the Rebbe is Moshiach. The problem is with us.

If we weren't embarrassed by the message, it wouldn't bother anyone. It's when you see Lubavitchers claiming that belief in Moshiach puts people off to Chassidus that it's no surprise that they're turned off.

--Rabbi Shaul Rosenblatt

Rabbi Dickstein: I think that this emuna makes people curious and they come to ask questions. I ask them: When was the last time you said Kiddush Levana? Come, let's say it together again and we read it until we get to the part which says, "Dovid Melech Yisroel chai v'kayam" and then I ask them the question. This automatically leads into a discussion in which the sources are opened and we arrive at answers too.

Rabbi Hendel: "Yechi" has penetrated all strata. They are all

aware of it and many have no problem joining in singing "Yechi" with you. Yes, there are people who don't like Yechi, but this is not their only problem with Chabad.

Are people willing to connect to the Rebbe through writing to him and using the *Igros Kodesh*, or traveling to the Rebbe even though they don't see the Rebbe there?

Rabbi Rosenblatt: There are many Jews who come to the Chassidus library in order to ask the Rebbe for a bracha or advice through the *Igros Kodesh*. All of them, even the misnagdim, are aware of this means of hiskashrus to the Rebbe today and they come and ask how to write. We explain that we write to the Rebbe and not to a book, and that they should wash their hands and make a positive hachlata, say "Yechi," etc. Many are mekasher to the Rebbe this way.

Rabbi Dickstein: I don't urge them to write but they come on their own with questions like, "Is this al pi halacha?" and they get my answers and then the answers from the Rebbe.

I don't ask them what they want to write but guide them in how to write. If they ask for help in understanding the answer, I explain the Rebbe's answer.

Rabbi Hendel: Before last Tishrei we learned "Kuntres Beis Rabbeinu Sh'B'Bavel." All the answers to questions like, "Why go to 770?" are answered in this sicha. Following our learning the sicha, we organized a trip to the Rebbe and there was great interest in traveling to the Rebbe.

Rabbi Avtzon: As far as traveling to the Rebbe, nothing changed. The only thing that changed is how to approach the issue. In the past, the first thing we did was take bachurim to the Rebbe and afterwards we convinced them to learn Chassidus seriously. Today, first you get them interested in Chassidus and then you take them to the Rebbe.

A SMALL BOTTLE OF OIL TO BREAK THE SIEGE

BY RABBI CHAIM ASHKENAZI

*After Kislev, the month of light and Geula, comes Teives, which has certainly been influenced by the preceding month of Kislev, so that we can withstand the Galus-siege that began on the 10th of Teives and shine through with the light of Geula. * How can we use the Kislev jug of oil to illuminate the month of Teives? In order to do so we need to examine the inner meaning of both the Chanuka lights and the siege.*

KISLEV, TEIVES – MASHPIA AND MEKABEL

We see a recurring cycle in the Jewish calendar: mundane Cheshvan that follows festive Tishrei and dark Teives that follows the luminous month of Kislev. We can learn about the second pair of months from the first. After the month of Tishrei, which is replete with holidays and hashpaos (Divine effluence), comes Cheshvan, which derives its strength from the reservoir filled in the preceding month.

And after Kislev, a month of light

and Geula, comes Teives, which Hashem has certainly endowed with an abundance of hamshachos (Divine emanations) from Kislev that preceded it. This enables us to withstand the Galus-siege that begins on the 10th of Teives and to shine through with the light of Geula.

How can we use the Kislev jug of oil to illuminate the month of Teives? In order to do so we need to examine the inner meaning of both the Chanuka lights and the siege.

The Rebbe Rayatz said that we need to listen to what the Chanuka

lights are telling us, as they have a lot of say. This is certainly not so that we may have stories to tell the children, but that we will have what to “live” with. And not only *until* the Geula but also *during* the Geula, for the Midrash Tanchuma and Ramban (on Parshas B’Haalos’cha) say that the lights of Chanuka will never be nullified. This means that the spiritual significance of Chanuka, which affects the spirit and the world, will have an honored place even amidst the revelations of Moshiach.

Chassidus also emphasizes the connection between Chanuka and the Geula with respect to the number eight, which is integral to Chanuka. And there are numerous reasons given as to why Chanuka is eight days and not seven.

It says that the kinor instrument in the times of Moshiach will have eight strings. As the Rebbe puts it: the word “kinor” is comprised of two parts: **Chaf-Vav ner** (26 candle), referring to the candle that will illuminate with the four-letter name of Hashem, which is numerically equivalent to 26, will be eight. That is, referring to the name of Hashem as it is in essence, not as it is expressed in the order of *hishtalshelus*

(spiritual creation). The fact that there is a connection between them in number indicates that there is a deeper connection between them, alluded to in the number.

THE HOLIDAY OF MEHADRIN MIN HA'MEHADRIN

So let us listen to the story of the lights (among the numerous stories that they tell) as they relate to the **topic of Geula**. The Rebbe points out the following: halachically, one can light **one candle** each day **for all members of the household**. A finer way of doing the mitzva is to do it *l'mehadrin*, i.e., to light one candle **for every single member of the household**.

What do all Jews do? Those who light the menorah do the mitzva *mehadrin min ha'mehadrin*, i.e., **each member** of the household lights each day for himself, **and adds another candle** each day.

How surprising this is! There is no other mitzva which we do *mehadrin min ha'mehadrin*, for there is only *mehadrin*, and that's it! Furthermore, we generally fulfill a mitzva as we are required to do by halacha and only singular individuals on a high level are *mehader* more in mitzvos.

Yet when it comes to the Chanuka menorah, every Jew does the mitzva *mehadrin min ha'mehadrin* and it's not even viewed as an extra and nobody discusses whether or not they are going to be *mehader* or not. It's just what we all do on Chanuka, *mehadrin min ha'mehadrin*.

We can come up with technical reasons as to why we do so – that adding another candle is no big deal. It's easy and inexpensive. But answering *amen yihei shmei rabba* and the like doesn't take much effort either and does not entail any expense. And the mitzva of *sukka* is considered an easy mitzva because it

can be made out of cheap materials, yet there are numerous halachos in *Hilchos Sukka* about how to fulfill one's obligation even in a *sukka* that is not *mehadrin*.

But when it comes to the Chanuka menorah it's taken for granted that everybody will do it in the finest way possible. Therefore, we can conclude that there must be something about the Chanuka lights that makes it a given that we do them only in the finest possible way.

WHAT IS OUR "MEHADRIN"

We will understand this by first understanding why people are



Rabbi Chaim Ashkenazi

generally not *mehader* in mitzvos, and why they are not only not *mehader* but they will do things just to fulfill their obligation or even in a second-rate way, or by relying on a posek who is lenient – and still feel good about it! Yet, when it comes to material needs such as clothing, the same people are unwilling to make do with something second-rate. The same is true for furniture, a home, and food. And this is certainly true for health concerns. People look for the best doctors and treatments, and this approach is taken for granted. Whoever does *not* act this way

(regarding clothes, etc.) is not considered normal!

The reason is simple. It's because these material things comprise what a person feels very strongly that he needs in life. Whatever a person **thinks is life** is what he invests himself in.

One person may think **kavod** is life and so he will do anything and everything to increase his personal dignity and honor. Another person thinks **power** is life and that is what he'll be busy with. To another person it's about his appearance, his food and drink, or vacations. And if these people learned a bit of Torah and even learned some Chassidus, they use all their knowledge in order to prove how justified they are and will even express surprise if you don't agree with them.

So what we see from this is that if a person does not do something in the finest possible way, it's because he doesn't feel it's connected with his life and he thinks he can manage without it. In order for a person to do his *avodas Hashem* in the best possible way, even to the point of *hiddur* and *mehadrin min ha'mehadrin*, he must feel that this is part of his life and more, that this is his **entire life**. As it says, "I was not created except to serve my Maker," and if not for this, there is no purpose in my existence.

THE YECHIDA OF THE NESHAMA

In order to feel this, the G-dly soul, and the *yechida* in its very essence, must be illuminated. To be more precise, there are levels within the *neshama*, as the Midrash says, "the *neshama* is called by five names: *nefesh*, *ruach*, *neshama*, *chaya*, *yechida*." Why does it need five names? Because the *neshama* has five levels in its connection with Hashem, corresponding to the four worlds and the *Ein Sof*, which is beyond them. Or, corresponding to the four letters

of Hashem's name and the "thorn" on the letter Yud, as well as additional corresponding levels cited in Chassidus.

In simple language this means that each of the levels expresses the experience of the neshama in the depth of its connection to Hashem. Namely, to what degree does it feel that G-dliness is its entire life and existence.

Generally, Chassidus explains that within the levels of nefesh, ruach, neshama, and chaya there is the possibility of concealment on the part of the animal soul. In other words, there is room for debate even though ultimately the G-dly soul will somehow win. However, every victory is preceded by a war, meaning that there exists a view that is not coming from the side of holiness.

In such a struggle, there is a certain point he wins in a **b'dieved** kind of way and at another stage, he wins to **fulfill his obligation**. At another point, he will win **according to the din** and at an even higher level, he will win in a way of **l'chat'chilla and hiddur**. But all this is after the war. On the yechida level there is no war and no view that opposes the reality that Hashem is the only existence. On this level, there is no need to nullify another existence because no other existence exists! This is why it is called **yechida**, because the **yachid** ("only One") is illuminated in it. And by "yachid" we mean singular, like an "only child," and not "one child." For the animal soul has no ammunition against the revelation of this level. A person on this level can be mehader and all the lower levels of b'dieved and to be "yotzei" don't exist for him.

HOLY ANOINTING OIL

Now we can understand what happened on Chanuka when they found a jug of oil sealed with the seal of the Kohen Gadol. What's the seal

about?

It's explained that this oil is what is referred to as "**shemen mishchas kodesh**," oil of "**kodesh**" (the source of holiness), which does not mix with other liquids. It cannot be diluted like other liquids, for if you mix another liquid with oil, the oil rises to the top and remains the same in appearance and taste.

This represents the **yechida of the nefesh**, which is revealed by the Kohen Gadol, who is the **yechida klalis (the general soul of the Jewish people on the level of yechida)**. His special service is done **once** a year in the most special place, the Holy of Holies.

This is the jug of oil that was not contaminated, for it cannot possibly be contaminated, unlike the other jugs, which can be discovered by the "other side" and polluted. The significance in avodas Hashem is that it is obvious that every single person is mehader, and is mehader in the best possible way, without asking questions or discussing it, and no answers are needed. In *Tanya* chapter 18 it says, in connection with the revelation of chochma of the nefesh, that then the mesirus nefesh is without any **argument or response**. And this is why there are **eight** days, because this level is not in the realm of concealment and containment, which is associated with the number **seven**.

There is the revelation of **eight** strings, musical notes that elevate the listener through an eight-stringed kinor. As we said earlier about the kinor that the word is composed of "ner" and 26, the revelation of Atzmus revealed within the yechida of the soul.

This is the job of Moshiach. To bring the world to perfection, to a vision and understanding that is G-dly. It is only because of a revelation of seven in the world, concealment, that one is in a state where there can be

obstacles and war, meaning that there are arguments against k'dusha and answers are needed. And sometimes the argument remains even after an answer is given or at least an impression is left of the argument.

The arguments are the "siege" that the "other side" puts on the four lower levels of the soul. It tries to prevent it from doing G-d's will, and if it doesn't succeed in preventing it, then it settles for getting us to do things just to fulfill our obligation. It complains about having a full beard, against getting a Chassidische haircut, against a proper yarmulke, against men immersing in a mikva, against being careful to avoid inappropriate newspapers, against having only limudei kodesh in our chadarim, etc. It puts a siege on everything in our daily lives and tries to undermine our strong position on matters of holiness.

THE REVELATION OF "EIGHT" EVERY SINGLE YEAR

The siege that began on the 10th of Teives was the beginning of the exile, which is why this fast is so severe that even were it to fall on Shabbos, we would be obligated to fast. In order to nullify it, we need to reveal the revelation of eight, the yechida of the soul, where there is no room for arguments and no reality that can offer any opposition. This revelation is drawn down every single year on Chanuka.

This is also what the Gemara means when it says: the following year they established them [the days of Chanuka] as days of praise and thanks. What is meant by "the following year?"

Over the years, throughout Galus, numerous miracles took place, yet most of them were not established as holidays because the Sages waited until the following year. When the

same date came around and they saw that there wasn't the same revelation as the previous year, they knew that that particular revelation was a one-time occurrence. But the year following the miracle of Chanuka, the Sages saw that the **same revelation** had taken place again, that the same aspect of the **yechida of the soul** was illuminated, sealed with the seal of the Kohen Gadol, and therefore, these days are auspicious for mehadrin min ha'mehadrin. They saw that, at this time, we need to equip ourselves with the power of the **yechida**, which makes it possible to be moser nefesh to fulfill mitzvos in a way of mehadrin min ha'mehadrin.

* * *

Nowadays, with Geula on the threshold, hiddur is widespread, especially in chinuch. People are mehader about all sorts of things that in previous generations were only the province of great people.

Over the years, the Rebbe generated awareness of these things, until they became commonplace. Issues such as netilas yodayim for a baby before eating, covering the head of a baby, having a baby hear words of Torah and k'dusha, only having pictures of kosher animals, to say brachos with them, to wear tzitzis out, to accustom them to more mitzvos, and to learn Torah by heart, etc. There is a readiness in our generation to be mehader in all aspects of chinuch and this is highly praiseworthy. So let us continue with this in all our mitzva observances and not make do with just fulfilling our obligation or b'dieved, etc.

I heard from a mashpia of the previous generation that the mother of a certain talmid cried to him: Why isn't my son Chassidish? From when he was young I was particular about netilas yodayim with him, Modeh Ani, etc.

He said to her: And your son will

be particular with *his* children when they are young as you were with him. But in order for *him* to be Chassidish, *you* need to be an example of mehadrin in your own lives and not just on his account.

BREACHING THE WALL BY PLEASURE OF K'DUSHA

Based on this we can understand an amazing thing about Chanuka. Why don't we emphasize the victory of the Maccabees, which is seemingly the main thing? We say the bracha and the SheHechyanu only on the

*On the yechida level
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candles and the publicizing of the miracle is about the menorah, not the war, why? Seemingly, the miracle of the menorah was a side thing, especially when the menorah could have been lit with impure oil when the entire tzibbur was impure!

However, with our understanding of the significance of the light and the jug of oil we understand that this was the main chiddush of that time, that finding a jug of oil sealed with the seal of the Kohen Gadol, which lit for eight days, expressed the revelation of the yechida of the soul.

And this is why all Jews light in a way that is mehadrin min ha'mehadrin.

Furthermore, with the revelation of the yechida of the soul, **pleasure** in avodas Hashem is aroused.

As the Rebbe Rayatz explains in a maamer of 5701, in war, when you want to win, you try to attack the enemy's essential supplies, such as water. The Greeks too wanted to attack the pleasure a Jew has in Torah and mitzvos, so "they contaminated all the oil." Thus, the main miracle is that they found a jug of pure oil, i.e., **the power of taanug remains devoted to k'dusha**.

Thus, the revelation of the yechida of Chanuka arouses our pleasure in inyanei k'dusha, giving strength to every Jew and preventing the possibility of a "siege" by the "opposing side." The spiritual luggage a Jew acquires in the month of Kislev, when he lights mehadrin min ha'mehadrin, becomes "sustenance for the road," when he enters into the month of Teives, which is materially and spiritually cold.

We have experienced countless miracles of victory in war and withstanding other tribulations and evil decrees, like at the Splitting of the Sea and entering Eretz Yisroel. But something like this, the arousal of the yechida of a Jew, which is expressed in the punctilious fulfillment of mitzvos, happens only on Chanuka. It is something that is renewed every year as a "remedy" that Hashem provides before the "blow," the **galus** that begins in Teives.

Therefore, this is the introduction to the true and complete Redemption, when this revelation will be omnipresent, a time when a Jew will fulfill mitzvos in a way that shows that this is his very life. That is, until the era when **mitzvos will be nullified**, and as the Rebbe explains,

at that time we will fulfill mitzvos but won't need to be commanded to do so because it will be so obvious, just as it is unnecessary to order a person to breathe.

TO TAKE PLEASURE IN A CHASSIDIC ENVIRONMENT

In order to get there, right now we need to try to take pleasure in the mitzvos we do. As the Rebbe Rayatz said that a Chassid knows what it means to take pleasure in Hashem, to feel the great pleasure in approaching G-d, which comes through the fulfillment of a mitzva and to give this message to our children and families, to express the joy and pleasure in Chassidic brotherliness.

The Chassid R' Zalman of Yanovitz, who lived in Polotzk and moved with a group of men to live in Moscow, once sighed. The Chassidim asked him why he sighed and he said, "Oy, living in a

The arguments are the "siege" that the "other side" puts on the four lower levels of the soul. It tries to prevent it from doing G-d's will, and if it doesn't succeed in preventing it, then it settles for getting us to do things just to fulfill our obligation.

Redemption, now!

city is difficult."

They asked him, "What difference does it make to you where you live when all you do is go from shul to your house and from your house to shul?"

And R' Zalman said that to a horse it makes a difference whether the road is unpaved or paved, but for a neshama it's hard to live in a city because the Chassidic atmosphere is lacking.

If we merit to live and experience the pleasure that the yechida has from a Chassidic environment, no siege will frighten us and the Galus will give way to Geula. We won't be bothered by any arguments of the world or the street, because they won't exist for us. And then we will merit a month of Teives that is completely joyous, with the simcha of the true and complete

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‘AND HE WILL PROVIDE’

BY MENACHEM SHAKED

R' Yosef Yitzchok Sobel relates:

On Shabbos Chanuka, I went to a shul in Flatbush, where I go each Shabbos to review Chassidus. That Shabbos I decided to tell the people a miracle story of the Rebbe because of the Rebbe's horaa (VaYeishev 5752) to publicize miracles, which hastens the Geula. The people were amazed. When I finished, one of them told me that his relative needed the same bracha that the hero of my story had gotten, "But how can I get a bracha from the Lubavitcher Rebbe nowadays?" he wondered

I explained to him about the miracles taking place daily through the Rebbe's *Igros Kodesh*, and the person was excited by the idea and said, "Come and I'll tell you a story of the Lubavitcher Rebbe I'm sure you haven't heard before."

* * *

My friend, born in Odessa, came to New York in 5747 (1987). He knew nothing about Torah and mitzvos because in Russia he grew up among goyim and he wasn't raised with any Yiddishkeit. When he came to the U.S., he was in dire financial straits. He drove a taxi owned by the company he worked for.

One day, he heard from a good friend about the Lubavitcher Rebbe, who lives on Eastern Parkway and gives out dollars to everyone who

comes to him. Just like that – asking nothing in exchange.

Since every dollar mattered so much to him he went to the Rebbe the following Sunday with his son. The Rebbe said to him, "If you decide to keep Shabbos and Yom Tov, you will see blessing in your livelihood."

He was so amazed by the Rebbe

and what he said that despite the fact that Shabbos was his most profitable day he decided to keep Shabbos, which he had just heard about for the first time in his life. He went straight to Manhattan, his place of work, went to the manager and asked him to enable him to keep Shabbos.

The manager told him that he



was welcome to keep Shabbos but couldn't work for his company. He tried to convince the manager but the man refused to listen to him, and when he began to argue with him, he found himself outside the office.

As he left the building he turned back to look at the window, crushed. Not paying attention to where he was going, he bumped into a well-dressed man exiting a parked limousine and nearly knocked him over. The well-dressed man yelled at him in Russian, "Watch where you're going!"

My friend apologized and since both spoke Russian, they got into a friendly conversation.

"What did you do back in Russia," asked the well-to-do man.

"I worked in plumbing. I am an expert in planning the plumbing for construction projects," said my friend.

"You won't believe this. I'm also in that field. I own a company called American Plumbing, which deals with plumbing-related engineering. I just arrived from Russia today. I noticed there are many useful ideas not being implemented in New York. I decided that I need to work with Russians and those familiar with their infrastructure. I am looking for someone who can serve as a project liaison between my company and companies in Russia. Can you do this or are you otherwise employed?"

As he left the building he turned back to look at the window, crushed. Not paying attention to where he was going, he bumped into a well-dressed man exiting a parked limousine and nearly knocked him over...

My friend couldn't believe his ears. He had just been fired for his decision to keep Shabbos and now he was being offered work he had never dreamed of.

"No, I have no other job and I can undertake this project."

"Great, come to our office in New Jersey tomorrow."

"You're kidding me. Where will I get the money to go to New Jersey? I don't have a car."

"No problem. Take this slip and give it tomorrow to the driver of the limousine that will come to your house at eight in the morning."

When he went home, he told his wife of the angel he had met and the job offer. "He was probably just

kidding me and nothing will materialize."

The next morning he was shocked to see a fancy limousine waiting for him outside. He quickly got dressed and left the house.

They were waiting for him at the office in New Jersey. The forms were all waiting for him and he went prepared with certificates and recommendations, all in Russian.

"I don't know English well – how will I work for you?"

"Don't worry, we're willing to hire a private tutor for you to learn English!"

Seeing how vital he was to their interests he ventured to say, "Someone suggested that I keep Shabbos and I decided to do so. Will you let me observe Shabbos and holidays?"

Their answer surprised him. "We see that you don't quite know what you're talking about. There's a religious person here who can explain what Shabbos is to you and as far as your condition, we are willing to have you observe the Shabbos and holidays."

* * *

The man did well. He kept Shabbos and today he is frum. The salary he got for his work at that time (over 15 years ago) was \$100,000 a year! And it was all thanks to the Rebbe's bracha.

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SARALE'S K'VUTZA: 'PLANTING' THE MOTHERS OF THE NEXT GENERATION

BY CHANA KATZ

Often, when the woman passed by the secular high school in Tzfas she took note of the girls intermingling outside in the latest fashions – from blue jeans to rings in the upper lip. She wanted to reach out to them but never figured out how to do it.

One day, while exiting a weekly Torah shiur, she noticed a couple of teenage girls waiting in front of the house. A mini-bus pulled up and suddenly another couple dozen blue-jean-clad girls came bursting off the bus with an enthusiastic stride and also headed for the house. "What are they coming here for?" she asked a woman from her shiur. "Oh, they came to learn *Tanya*," was the simple yet shocking answer. "My daughter's been working with them for two years."

With that, we bumped into a beautiful story: A story of pure adherence to the truest desires of the Rebbe and Chassidus, of one young woman who reached out to her not-yet-connected peers with such Ahavas Yisroel that they come to taste the wells of Yiddishkait and Moshiach with true simcha and inspiration. This is the story of Sarale's "k'vutza."

AN IDEA IS BORN

Every Erev Shabbat, Sara Rothschild and a group of seminary girls in Tzfas go to the local high school to give out Shabbos candles and information. They put a lot of effort

into this project and took time to wrap the candles to make the gift attractive and desirable. One day a student came up to Sara and told her she remembered Tzivos Hashem parties Sara made years earlier for the children in her neighborhood. Is there anything like that for girls our age, she asked?

For years Sara dreamed about

For years Sara dreamed about helping high school girls and now an opportunity knocked right at her door. "If you organize a group of friends, then we'll start," Sara told her.

helping high school girls and now an opportunity knocked right at her door. "If you organize a group of friends, then we'll start," Sara told her.

And so they did.

Can you tell us a little about the girls?

Most of the girls come from traditional homes. Their grandparents

are religious and they have a strong belief in Hashem. Unfortunately, the girls have no connection to Torah and mitzvot. Judaism is something that they associate with their grandparents.

How did you get so many young girls involved with the class?

At first, I asked the girl to give me a list of all her friends. I called each one and told them about the program. While speaking to them, I got all their friends' numbers as well and had close to a hundred numbers. I called them and said, 'we're going to have something interesting.' From all those telephone calls a big group of girls showed up.

Once a girl called and said she would come only if her friend came. So I called the friend and she said she really wasn't interested. I kept telling her that she was going to like it. She still said she didn't want to come, and then eventually she came. Now she comes every time and brings her sisters and some of her friends!

I learned to never give up. There're girls I've been in touch with for a long time. One girl I called for two years and she never came, and then she showed up – and continued to come all the time! There are always new girls coming and they bring their friends. Now we have two groups: seventh through ninth grade (they play games and do special arts and crafts) and

10th through 12th grades (they have discussions, learning and workshops).

* * *

For the first year, they met once a month, usually around a holiday or important Chassidische event. Sara's grandmother invited the group to meet in her home in a pretty Tzfas suburb. The girls were very happy to have their own private meeting place far away from the atmosphere of school. Each week a different speaker came and farbrenged with them or told a fascinating life story. Afterwards they played a game, worked on an arts and crafts project and had refreshments.

Sara: "At first they asked, 'no boys?' They never had time being only with girls. But soon they started to enjoy not having the tension they had at school in mixed classes. The group formed a bond. Some of them, who weren't acquainted before, had something in common. They're very proud they are a part of this group. They tell their teachers and they tell their friends. Everyone in their families knows all about it. All week they wait to get together. They always walk in with a smile on their face and many times we have to call the driver and tell him to come a little later because the girls want to stay longer."

Can you tell us about your involvement with the girl's outside of the class?

In addition to the regular class, we go to the girls' homes for their birthdays. I invite some of her closest friends and we come in with balloons and make a surprise party. We play games and celebrate her birthday the Jewish way.

We've taken them to Meron (to Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai) and to the Arizal. Before Rosh HaShana, we did an evening of Slichot, with a speaker starting at 12 midnight. Then we took a tour of the old city of Tzfas and visited the shuls. We continued with a musical performance and a video of the Rebbe and went to Slichot at the Abuhav shul at 4 a.m.

Another time, we've had a make-up artist come in and teach the girls about make-up and tznius. We baked challos and learned the blessings for separating the challos. We stress the importance of living with the times, of showing how the chaggim and the Torah parsha relate to us today.

This summer we did something extra special. We learned the laws of the Beis HaMikdash and every day we

put out a halacha and they had to answer through an email. It was amazing to see the girls learning and doing what the Rebbe wants. The (two) winners got a prize – 100 shekel to spend at New Pharm!

As a preparation for Yud Shvat we started a Tanya Baal Peh contest.

The class was meeting once a month. When and how did it become weekly?

THE LEFT TURN

The high school where Sara does her mitzvaim has an administrative assistant with a very high position. This well regarded administrator grew up in Haifa and had very leftist views of life. But over time, a very special relationship between Sara and this woman emerged.

"When we started giving out candles," Sara said, "I kept just a friendly relationship with her of, 'Hi, how are you?' She saw that I came every week so we started to talk a little.

"One day I overheard that her husband was going in for surgery and asked her if she wanted to put a letter into Igros. The answer she got was that she has to add in learning, so we decided we were going to have a class in her office.

"Every week after I finished giving out the candles we sat together in her office and learned. Her office is really a very busy place and everyone was amazed that she was learning Chassidus. Although I was many decades younger, I sat on the same side of the desk learning with her.

"In the beginning she was very negative, her emuna was much hidden. I would say something and right away she would answer back. I never argued with her. I let her say what she wanted and always went back to the sicha, and tried not to get into too many discussions. But she continued to learn.

"Now, two years later, you can't recognize her. She's so positive. She only says good things about the Rebbe and the Torah. Her whole way became so positive.

"I also learned from this never to be scared. She's a very smart person, an intellectual. She has a high position and she's much older than me. And who am I — just a young girl.

You always have to remember you're the Rebbe's shliach and the Rebbe will put the right words in my mouth.

"I once heard it said that we're like a channel. Someone might think they are not the best they can be, so who am I to do such things? We're like a channel. A channel could be really small, with some cracks. It could be dirty, but the water goes through. Let the water go through you. It doesn't matter who you are. But of course, it's a lot of responsibility. The girls are looking at you, so you have to be a good example."

Because it was very costly, it was only once a month. We don't charge. They are high school girls and aren't yet working. The programs are free. At first I used my money to pay for everything. We saw the girls were so interested and involved and realized the need to have it regularly. The first time we met this year I told the girls – the words just came out of my mouth – 'this year we're going to have the class every week!' I didn't even think about how to pay for it. Then again, I wondered if maybe having it a few times a month, fewer girls would come. I was surprised that even though it's once a week the same number of girls come – and more!

Now we're learning *Tanya*. We had a speaker once, a hozer b'tshuva, who told the girls that since she started to learn *Tanya* her life changed. Since then, either she or her husband comes regularly to teach *Tanya* and the girls are really interested and we see a change b'maser-poal. One girl started to keep Shabbos, some got more into davening. Others are thinking twice about joining the army, which is a big thing – here they've been making strides and the army tends to do the opposite as far as Torah and mitzvot.

We try to encourage them to do other things besides go into the army, but these are girls who have been educated their whole lives that's what they're supposed to do. Last week I got a call from two girls who called from their army base. They said they missed the class and told me they lit Shabbos candles and decided to keep Shabbos there!

I understand the Rebbe MH"M is very involved in your class...

The Rebbe is running the class! Recently, I called everyone to remind them about a class and many girls seemed to have good reasons why they couldn't make it that week aside from two girls. It was one hour before the class! I told the Rebbe I was doing this for him and opened the *Igros*. The Rebbe talked about Didan Netzach. I

didn't cancel the class and it turned out to be one of the biggest classes!

One of the girls was in charge of an evening class party in her school but she decided she would be a little late for that. She stayed until the end of the Torah class. Having mesirus nefesh, she missed most of her school party she organized.

Another girl once told me she'd leave in the middle of class to meet her friends, but she stayed the whole class. One mother called me and said her daughter had a dentist appointment for three months and she asked me to make sure the girl didn't miss the appointment because she enjoyed the

The first time we met this year I told the girls – the words just came out of my mouth – 'this year we're going to have the class every week!' I didn't even think about how to pay for it.

class so much.

I think it is amazing that they come, but the Rebbe is so involved. Every time before the class I write the Rebbe about what I'm going to do and I get very clear answers. I also write to the Rebbe after the class to relate what happened. Once, it had been awhile since I wrote to the Rebbe after the class and then I did write and wanted to tell the Rebbe about the last program we had. But instead of using the word 'program' as I usually do, I used the word 'farbrengen.'

The Rebbe addressed the Vaad organizing farbrengens (he used the word farbrengen) and the Rebbe said,

"I'm going to take part three times chai." So I understood from that that someone was going to donate the money, or somehow I would get the money. I went to the bank, took out the money for that night's shiur. I arranged for the driver, bought them pizza, but at the end of the day I counted and there was 54 shekel more. I went over the cheshbon over and over and I saw the Rebbe gave me the money!

You're talking about a ride for the girls, prizes, refreshments... How do you support your project?

Of course running such a program cost a lot of money. We want the quality to be nice. When it was once a month, I was able to pay from my own money. Now all the activities cost about \$150 each time, yet I am still paying for everything myself. Big thanks go to Rabbi Lipsch of Tzfas who pays for transportation of the speakers and the Friday trip to the high school. I have a lot of plans of more things I would do if I had the money, such as Shabbatons, where the girls would have a taste of keeping Shabbos, and maybe even a summer camp. But now I hardly get support for the class, and the Rebbe recently told me to give maaser but not all my money for this. If someone wants to help, the Rebbe says to work with teens is a big z'chus.

How is the keshet between the Rebbe and the girls?

One day I got a call from a girl who couldn't come to class because she had a strange infection in her mouth and for two weeks doctors couldn't figure out what it was. She's in 12th grade and was missing a lot of tests and was in bed feeling miserable. I spoke with her on Wednesday and that Sunday she was supposed to have a major matriculation exam. It couldn't be put off. I suggested she write to the Rebbe. The Rebbe addressed a person who had already experienced a lot of miracles in his life and said if he had bitachon, everything would work out.

The letter on the other page was about a teacher who has to teach and be in school b'simcha. I asked her what she wrote. She didn't ask for a bracha. She said she wants the thing in her mouth to disappear and would she be able to take her government-issued test on Sunday.

I told her she got a bracha from the Rebbe. Motzaei Shabbos I was very curious and called her to ask what happened. She told me the thing in her mouth totally disappeared. The night we talked it started getting better. By the next day, her infection was gone.

The next program I told the story without using the girl's name, but some of her friends figured it out. Another girl then asked if she could write the Rebbe for success on her driving test. The tests cost a lot of money and it's rare that the girls pass on the first test. So she wrote to the Rebbe and the answer she got was to someone who was davening at a Conservative shul and maybe they were doing so not knowing it wasn't acceptable according to Yiddishkait. I didn't quite understand it.

I told her maybe she was doing something wrong and she told me that the week before she had gone to a fortune teller. I told her this was not proper and as far as the driving test, I told her to 'tract gut v'zaint gut.' The whole week she had very strong emuna. She was going to pass! Even my emuna wasn't so strong. The whole week she sent me messages that she was going to pass and I told her to tract gut v'zaint gut. She passed on the first try. The next class she told her story and other girls started writing.

One girl said she had been in a serious accident but B"H a miracle occurred and nothing serious happened to her. She wrote to the Rebbe and the letter started by saying the answer was coming late because of the k'dusha of Shabbos. She told me the accident happened on Shabbos.

Now there's an Internet site and the

Some of the things I found helpful are:

- *It's nice to have the meeting in a private home
- *Not to forget refreshments
- *You have to know when to charge and when not to charge; in some places they don't come if there's a charge and in other places they don't come if there's not a charge!
- *Every girl who comes, take down information about her, who her friends are. Follow up.
- *Every single girl who comes, give her attention. Let her know she makes a difference.
- *Call everyone the day before and send them a message on their cell phone reminding them to come to the class.
- *If it's a small city such as Tsfat, pick them up and bring them home.
- *Always be aware of what's going on with them in terms of tests, parties and don't have the class on a day when there is a lot going on.
- *From the Rebbe's letters I've learned that they don't want watered down or partial Torah. They want to know the truth, even if they're not at the level of doing it.
- *Divide the class into groups and design the program according to the needs of the age.
- *After every class, write a summary of who was there and what was done, etc.
- *I never expect immediate change!

girl's know how to write to the Rebbe themselves. And every time they do they take on a hachlata.

This is what we're supposed to be doing, bringing them closer to the Rebbe, and these girls are really close to the Rebbe. If something happens in their family, they get clear answers. The words they use they see come up in the letter. It's unbelievable how the Rebbe answers them.

Once a speaker came to speak about tznius and she referred the Rebbe as the 'Rebbe M'Lubavitch' and the girls didn't understand her. "You mean Moshiach" they asked?

THE DREAM

A girl had a dream about the Rebbe and the Rebbe blessed her. It says that when you have a dream about a tzaddik, the tzaddik really comes to you. That week, she wrote the Rebbe about someone who needed a refua,

and the Rebbe wrote, "It was really nice seeing you face to face."

Is there anything you want to share with other young girls from Anash who may wish to organize similar outreach in their communities?

From what I've seen, a lot of shlichus has to do with various ages – older people, new immigrants, children...but I haven't see a lot of work with teenagers. It may seem like they're not interested and they don't care, but if you look inside, their neshamos really want it. We just have to get started. The Rebbe often wrote that we should work with the "naar" – teens – and the Rebbe says everything you do with teens is like planting – especially girls, they're the mothers of the next generation. That's why it's important to put so much into them.

R' BERKE

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN BERGER

*It was enough just to see the Chassid R' Berke Chein a"h to be captivated by him, by his wise eyes and his warm smile. He was a Chassidic figure who was able to bring his life of mesirus nefesh in Russia to modern civilization in Kfar Chabad. * Beis Moshiach brings you the biography of the famous Chassid, R' Dovber Chein, starting with his childhood in Russia, his fight for religious observance, and his surprising release from jail. * Part 1*



R' Berke davening in 770

The Chassid, Rabbi Dovber Chein a"h, known by all as R' Berke, was born in 5668 (1908) in the Chassidic town of Nevel. His father was R' Peretz and his mother was Chana Frayda Devorah.

He received a Chassidic education from his father and grandfather, Rabbi Meir Simcha Chein, who was one of the great Chassidim and was very wealthy. Many Chassidim were hosted in the home of his grandfather, R' Meir Simcha and young Berke loved to hear their divrei Torah and Chassidus. He himself once told about a meeting between two famous Chassidim in his grandfather's house:

"The Chassid, R' Itche the Masmid (may Hashem avenge his blood) was shadar, and since he raised money for Kupas Rabbeinu he was hosted many times by my grandfather, R' Meir Simcha in Nevel. One of these times, he encountered the special personality, R' Nissan Nemenov, and he said about R' Nissan, 'R' Nissan with his kabbalas ol will surpass you all.'"

When R' Berke was a boy, his grandfather R' Meir Simcha took him to the Rebbe Rayatz. When his grandfather went in for a yechidus, Berke accompanied him. The Rebbe spoke with his grandfather while Berke hid behind his grandfather. Suddenly, the Rebbe leaned his head to the side and said to Berke, "You should learn because you need to learn."

In his youth, R' Berke learned in underground Yeshivos Tomchei

T'mimim and he made sure that his younger brothers, Avrohom Aharon, Dovid Leib, and Feivish would learn there too. He did this without his parents' knowledge since he knew that if his parents would convince his brothers to learn in Tomchei T'mimim, they could get into trouble with the authorities. So he convinced them himself.

R' Avrohom Aharon and R' Dovid Leib became outstanding Chassidim (Feivish died young).

The government didn't like the fact that the family was continuing in the ways of Chassidus. When persecuting them didn't help, the family was sent away from Nevel, their property was confiscated, and they remained bereft of everything. The family moved to Kremenchug, where many Chassidim lived.

R' Hershel Abramov a"h described the Chassidic atmosphere in Kremenchug:

"When I was a child, there were eleven shuls in Kremenchug, two of them Chabad. One was called 'the little Chabad' and the other was called 'the big Chabad.' The latter had the Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim and a mikva.

"Every Motzaei Shabbos there was a Melaveh Malka in the home of one of the Chassidim, which was attended by close to forty people. There was a special atmosphere because of the participation of the great Chassidim of the city including: the Chein brothers, R' Dovid Gorachover, R' Shimon Levin, and others. The main speaker at the Melaveh Malka and at farbrengens in general was R' Yisroel Noach Blinitzky."

After a few years, the family moved to Moscow, where R' Berke's father did baking in his house to support the family and so as not to desecrate the Shabbos. This work enabled him to barely provide for his seven children.

FROM A MERCHANT TO A WORKER

In 5693 (1923) R' Berke married Faige the daughter of the Chassid, Rav Shneur Zalman Kalmanson of Vitebsk. After he married, he lived in Vitebsk, where his oldest son, Meir Simcha, was born. A few years later, he moved to Ditsky Silo, a suburb of Leningrad, where there was a small Chabad community.

After he married R' Berke was a businessman. He spent most of his day on business. Years later, he related that he had a great thirst for money at that time. How then, did R' Berke the businessman turn into the Chassid R' Berke, whose life was one

They were very nervous, but R' Berke didn't understand what they wanted from him, for he hadn't been playing around but davening!

of avodas Hashem?

It was because of a severe illness he had when he lived in Leningrad. The climate was very cold and many people not used to the cold, became sick. R' Berke came down with pneumonia, an illness that was considered fatal. His wife cared for him devotedly throughout his illness and he subsequently said he owed her because of this.

At a certain point, the doctors gave up on him. His family and friends davened and also added the name "Chaim" as a segula. The prayers were accepted and R' Berke recovered, although the illness left its mark on him till the end of his life.

The doctors told him to vacation in the forests, where pine trees grew, so he could breathe the fresh air. For a while, he stayed in the resort city of Yalta, which is in the Crimea. This vacation lasted eight months and it was at this time that R' Berke began diligently studying Nigleh and Chassidus and was inspired in his avodas Hashem.

He later related that when he had no choice but to leave his business he began to immerse himself in davening and learning, and that made him into a different person.

When he returned to Leningrad, he was a different man. He had made a soul commitment to work on himself. He changed his way of life from one extreme to another. He began davening with avoda and learned Chassidus with renewed vitality. He put all his energy into learning Torah with mesirus nefesh with the young Chassidim.

The Chassidim in Ditsky Silo, were amazed by the new R' Berke, who davened with such devotion and said T'hillim with a great chayus. He even said the brachos over food loudly and with a certain sweetness.

A LONELY KOLKHOZ ON THE TOP OF A CLIFF

In the summer of 5701 (1941), the Germans broke the non-aggression pact with Russia (the Molotov-Ribbentrop Treaty) and attacked the Soviet Union. This was the biggest surprise in history. The Germans stormed the border that was 3000 kilometers long, and within a few months had conquered the Baltic States in the north, western Ukraine in the south, and in the center of the country they got as far as 60 kilometers from Moscow the capitol.

Leningrad found itself suddenly on the frontlines and it waged a bloody battle for its survival. First the regular soldiers were offered up and tens of thousands of them died. Then

there was a massive draft of reservists. The situation was unbearable. The German planes strafing the city at all hours of the day and hundreds of thousands of people fled the city into the depths of Russia.

Among those who fled were also many Lubavitcher families, including R' Berke Chein and his family. In the group were also a number of men and boys over bar mitzva age, and together they comprised a minyan, which enabled them to daven properly in those difficult days.

With great miracles, the group managed to board one of the last trains out of Leningrad. R' Berke, like the other families, had abandoned all his property in the city and boarded the train even though he didn't know its destination. The goal was to flee as far as possible.

The train began its journey and the refugees had mixed feelings. On the one hand, they had managed to flee the burning front, but on the other hand, they were uncertain as to where the train was heading and where they would stay in the near future. The only consolation the group of Chassidim had was in the holy books and Torah scroll they carried with them.

The train traveled quickly so as to get far away from the German planes but the Germans chased after trains to get them off the tracks. After they began precision shelling of the train, the engineer had to stop the train and all the passengers fled into the nearby forest where they hid.

This happened a number of times





R' Peretz Chein, R' Berke's father

on the journey. After each bombing, R' Berke saw terrible sights of people who were unable to flee the train in time. When the shelling ceased, the passengers looked for compartments that were still intact, and packed into them.

After three long days of travel, the train arrived in Yaroslavl. The food that Anash had brought with them had been used up. The women began to gather grasses and seeds out of which they prepared patties, which were bitter but at least contained some nourishment.

After a brief rest in Yaroslavl, R' Berke and his household with a group of Chassidim boarded a ship, Sophia Pirovsky, that sailed the Volga River. It was a cruise ship and its beauty was still apparent. The dangers weren't over. German planes continued to bomb the ship too and it was only with open miracles that the Germans were unsuccessful. (Later on they heard that on the way back, the ship was sunk by German shells.)

After a few days of sailing, the

passengers transferred to a smaller ship that traveled one of the waterways of the Volga until it came to a high cliff over the river with a small kolkhoz (a collective state-owned farm) by the name of Bortyuk on top. The entire trip took three weeks.

The group of refugee Chassidim got off on the shore and the news quickly spread that Jews had arrived! Many residents of the village came down to the river in order to see the creatures called Jews. "We never saw Jews before," they explained. "According to the descriptions we heard, we thought you were alien creatures."

After the natives recovered, they seemed willing to help and so they assisted the travelers in cutting out steps into the rock to reach the path that led to the kolkhoz. It was a long distance to the village and there were dangerous heights and turns.

The Bortyuk kolkhoz was in the Shakirya district at the foot of the Ural Mountains. It was a forsaken place and far from any central municipality. It had no electricity and plumbing, and not even gas. Most of the residents were illiterates of Tatar descent. They spoke only Tatar and did not know Russian.

The Chassidim who had just come from the big city found it very hard to get used to such a primitive place but they knew that at least they were safe, far from the front. They had no choice but to start learning the language and get accustomed to the primitive conditions. Each family was given a small home.

As soon as they arrived, they began organizing minyanim in the families' homes. Rabbi Avrohom Eliyahu Plotkin, who had served in the past as a rav mora horaa in a number of towns, served as rav of the small k'hilla. Rabbi Galperin was the chazan and shochet. They had s'farim and the Torah scroll, but there were

no mezuzos or a mikva.

Life in this place was strange. Rabbi Galperin later related that no special hisorerus was needed in order to cry during davening. The war and the conditions of the place they were in were reasons enough to cry

BERKE DAVENS AND THE DIRECTOR OF THE KOLKHOZ WAITS

It was hard to find work in a place like that. At first, the women came up with creative ways of obtaining food. They cut sheets and tablecloths that they had brought with them and decorated them with colorful embroidery. Other women did other handicrafts and what they produced was exchanged for food.

There were hardly any men in the kolkhoz at the time since all were drafted into the army and sent to the front. During the first months of war, food supplies still arrived at the kolkhoz, but this stopped completely in the second year of the war. So the residents went out every day to fish in a nearby river and they began



R' Berke as a young man in Russia

doing work in the fields.

This was hard work for the Chassidim, who were city people, in addition to which the combination of Jews and agricultural work was somewhat unheard of, because for years the government had opposed giving land to Jews. Now, in wartime, the Chassidim had to roll up their sleeves and go out to the fields. Only one who worked got food. At the end of the month, they figured out how much each person had worked in the kolkhoz and the salary was paid accordingly with flour, potatoes, etc. One who was granted a day of work considered it a day to celebrate.

Even during a war for the country's existence, the Chassidic figure of R' Berke stood out in its beauty as the following episode illustrates:

One morning, the director of the kolkhoz went to R' Berke's house. He wanted to send R' Berke to do a certain light job. R' Berke was in tallis and t'fillin at the time and was saying, "Baruch sh'amar v'haya ha'olam" out loud. His family tried to tell him that the director of the kolkhoz himself had come to offer him light work but R' Berke stood behind the stove and davened, as usual, word by word, and didn't look up.

It was only when he finished the Aleinu that he went to find out why they had tried to disturb him at the beginning of his davening. The director sat patiently the entire time and listened to R' Berke daven. When R' Berke finished davening, he offered him the job and then left. The family members were on pins and needles. They were very nervous, but R' Berke didn't understand what they wanted from him, for he hadn't been playing around but davening!

That was R' Berke – even under difficult conditions, t'filla was more important to him than work and making a living.

Just as the group of Chassidim had begun getting used to life on the kolkhoz, they experienced new troubles. It was when the first of the wounded soldiers returned from the front. When the wounded husbands and sons returned from war, they blamed the Jews. They were bitter and they drank at night and then went to the homes of the Chassidim, banged on the windows and cursed the Jews. The Chassidim were terrified and feared that the day was nigh when they would be thrown out



R' Berke with his brothers and sister in a rare photograph

Standing from right to left: Berke and Avrohom Aharon

Sitting from right to left: Dov Leib, Tonia (Minkowitz) and Feivish

of the kolkhoz.

After much effort, the Chassidim obtained flour for Pesach. The big problem arose when they wanted to begin baking. The kolkhoz had a rule that forbade lighting ovens in the daytime so that a fire wouldn't break out and quickly destroy the wooden homes. When someone lit a fire and

the smoke wafted from the chimney, firemen and policemen immediately arrived on the scene. They put out the fire and punished the offenders. So how would they bake matzos?

They finally decided to bake matzos in one of the houses and to block the chimney. The idea worked and many matzos were baked with great devotion despite the intolerable heat and smoke. But after a few days of baking, that which was feared came to pass. A spark caused a huge fire, which burned down the house. It was miraculous that no one was hurt.

The locals gathered around the house and yelled, "Why did you light a fire?" And they began cursing the Jews. With Hashem's mercy, that is where it ended and the local residents did not harm the Jews.

The group of Chassidim lived on the kolkhoz for two years, cut off from the rest of the world. There were no radios and the local post office only had an ancient telegraph machine that barely worked. The letters that came were carefully censored and nobody knew what was going on at the various war fronts and throughout Europe.

One day, they received a letter from a relative of R' Berke's wife. She wrote about the great destruction in the city they had fled from, "It is all S'dom and Amora. There is no food and people are dropping from starvation. The houses in the neighborhood you lived in were destroyed and many of the residents were killed by the shelling."

The letter was read with mixed feelings. On the one hand, they felt thanks and joy to Hashem for saving them at the last minute from the besieged city. On the other hand, they felt great sorrow for the dead including Chabad Chassidim who were relatives and friends.

(To be continued.)

CHAOS AND EMPTINESS

BY SHAI GEFEN

(Written before the news of Sharon's severe stroke was received.)

LYING TO THE PUBLIC

The expulsion Chief of Staff Dan Chalutz appeared on a recent radio broadcast and announced that the scope of attacks has decreased since the Gaza expulsion. Once again, we see how our leaders are making cynical use of the data in order to hide the truth from us and to cover up their failure and the tremendous danger they put us in. As missiles land in Ashkelon, near Netivot and the Zikim army base, he dares to talk about a decrease in the scope of attacks.

If you check out what Chalutz said you will see that the same guy who was chosen for one and only one reason, to carry out the expulsion, continues to toss sand into the nation's eyes and to obscure the facts.

The data from the Security forces themselves tells us that since the expulsion the number of attacks against targets within the Green Line has gone up. Chalutz is correct that the actual number of attacks decreased compared to the previous terror in Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip, which no longer exists. However, the amount of attacks against settlements within the Green Line has greatly increased, as well as

extending the areas under attack most alarmingly.

The Internet site of the Merkaz E'Moreshet HaModiin regularly publicizes statistics on Palestinian terror. In the period following the Disengagement, from September 1 until December 14, 179 rockets, Kassams, and mortars were shot at Israel. In the period between December 15th and the 28th, Palestinian terror organizations took responsibility for shooting 42 additional rockets towards targets in Israel.

In the four months preceding the Disengagement (April – July), 130 rockets and mortars were shot at settlements and positions in Israel, while in the four months following the Disengagement (September – December) 221 rockets and mortars were fired. Based on these numbers, the scale of terror from the Gaza Strip aimed at Israel has **increased significantly**.

If that wasn't bad enough, the General Security Services (GSS) has released its 2005 year-end report, which reveals a dramatic increase in weapons brought into Gaza by Arab terrorists since Israel withdrew from the region.

According to the report just released; there has been a 900% increase in the number of anti-tank missile launchers brought into Gaza

from Egypt by Arab terrorists since Israel's unilateral withdrawal in August as compared with the preceding seven months. Approximately 350 anti-tank missiles were brought across the border in the same post-Disengagement period, representing a 600% increase since the Palestinian Authority took over Gaza.

In addition, the GSS reported that an estimated five tons of explosives have been brought into Gaza since August, as well as 500 anti-tank missiles, 5,000 rifles and handguns, as well as more than a million bullets, mortars, and surface to air missiles. These missiles pose a danger to the air force, which operates over the Strip, and if they are shipped to the West Bank, there's the potential of danger for civilian flights to and from Israel.

The GSS report utterly contradicts anything the Prime Minister, his people, the Defense Minister, and I.D.F. officers maintain for they continue to say that since the Disengagement the security situation has improved.

The truth of the matter doesn't interest anyone. The essential thing is to justify the Disengagement. The same Chief of Staff won't explain how he dared to collaborate with the Disengagement crime and to award a terror state to those who have



murdered us and who plan on trying to continue to murder us. According to recent data they are already preparing katyushas that will reach Ashdod and nearby areas.

Chief of Staff Bogey Yaalon, who was fired after Sharon suspected he would torpedo the Disengagement, said immediately after he was pushed out of his job in an interview with Ari Shavit in *HaAretz*, the following line: "Gaza will turn into Lebanon and Yehuda and Shomron will turn in Gaza." How right he was.

The same Sharon who messed us up in Lebanon and was the cause of so many dead and so many tragedies, is continuing to serve the same Leftist Mafia (though the question is whether he is fit to serve as Prime Minister and who is really running the show, Weisglass, Omri, or Arik?). Sharon continues to turn the south of the country into a second Lebanon. He is turning the center of the country, Kfar Saba and Netanya, into bloodshed and mayhem.

This is precisely what the Disengagement has brought upon us.

NOT EVERYONE IS ORANGE!

In recent months, many have adopted the color orange, the color that symbolized the fight against the destruction of Gush Katif and northern Shomron. In less than another three months, there will be elections and many ask, justifiably so, whether there are parties that truly represent "orange," because, all of the parties on the Right are promoting the symbolic orange. There are even those who suggest covering the country in orange again.

If you check the brief history of the Disengagement, you wonder how pathetic politicians who were responsible (directly or indirectly) for the Disengagement, still dare to use the color orange for political

purposes. There is a reason why many of those expelled from Gush Katif will not vote in the upcoming elections, according to their own statements, for those parties which supposedly represent orange but betrayed them instead.

We won't forget what led up to Sharon's being able to carry out the expulsion crime. The public has a short memory and the politicians rely on that, but we won't allow them to whitewash themselves.

When Sharon put together his government three years ago, he established as a premise that there would be a Palestinian state and that he would follow the Road Map. Nevertheless, parties on the Right, the Ichud Leumi and Mafdal, joined his government along with Shinui and supported the destruction of religion and the destruction of Eretz Yisroel.

Just one year prior to that, Rechavam Ze'evi (may Hashem avenge his blood) left Sharon's government, declaring that Sharon had become the "prophet for the Palestinian state." But that didn't stop the others from joining Sharon's government and allowing him to do as he pleased.

Even when the Disengagement plan was on the threshold, we saw how the ministers of Ichud Leumi tried to dodge and avoid receiving letters of removal from Sharon. They did all they could to save themselves. Mafdal continued to remain in the government and helped Sharon until Avoda and Yahadus HaTorah took its place and allowed Sharon to destroy yishuvim. And during the fight itself, we didn't hear from the politicians. They were struck mute.

Does anybody believe they will stop the ongoing catastrophe in Yehuda and Shomron? Do you want to put your lives in their hands? Are

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they reliable?

The Rebbe demanded that we remind all those politicians how they helped give away land, and we won't stop talking about it, even if they use the color orange!

OBSCURING THE FACTS

In recent weeks, katyushas have landed near Ashkelon and other sensitive areas near the city and the Taanachim strip. It took some days until the news was leaked to the press. The politicians tried to ignore it. That's what politicians have been doing ever since Camp David and the awful consequences that follow these agreements.

On Zos Chanuka 5746, 20 years ago, the Rebbe spoke painfully and strongly against this approach. It's amazing how the Rebbe saw things back then.

We heard the news about the stabbing of a Jew in the Old City of Yerushalayim and a number of other incidents in which Jews were killed in Yehuda and Shomron, but orders are given to conceal these incidents and not to report them in the media so that there shouldn't be a public uproar.

But is this about a public uproar?! This is about pikuach nefesh of the Jewish people in the future, for those terrorists who carried out these missions in the past have not finished their work and are not off for a stroll or to sleep, but they are ready for more! And seeing how they succeeded in killing a Jew and they are allowed to roam free, this arouses them to continue what they've been doing with greater strength, Heaven forbid.

And so what is the purpose in concealing the facts about these many incidents? In the end, one incident is disclosed and then another, and then there is no choice and they must admit that such and such did happen, but they

immediately publicize that it wasn't a terrorist attack but an "incident."

Yet, even this doesn't help, because even when they hide many such incidents and don't allow publicity about them in the media in Eretz Yisroel, ultimately these things are publicized in the media abroad. Especially when the terrorists themselves publicize it around the world, saying that their organization did such and such. Then it turns out that there are dozens of such "incidents"... For it is not just an "incident," but an intensification of terrorist activity in an unprecedented serious way!

A DICTATORSHIP DISGUISED AS A DEMOCRACY

The government of the State of Israel is a dictatorship disguised as a democracy. This past year we all saw this clearly, particularly in connection with the Disengagement. Sharon stole votes, openly flouted the will of the voters and did what he felt like doing. He broke promises to carry out the results of the Likud referendum and had people who worked against the Disengagement arrested illegally though in the guise of legality.

If Sharon's party will get the number of mandates it anticipates in the next election, we can expect it to run a police state as some of the Prime Minister's men have hinted at lately.

The conniving carries on with the Kedima party publicizing a platform full of meaningless slogans while the next stage of the Disengagement is being secretly planned.

More from the sicha of Zos Chanuka 5746:

The big tzara is that it's not "what was, was," but they are clearly announcing that they will continue the same policy! [They say:] This is what I did in the past and I am not the first for that is what my

predecessor did, and so I will continue in the same way!

Did you ever hear anything like this? Since there was someone in the past who failed and put the Jewish people in danger, therefore he will continue the same way since he isn't the first!

If that "explanation" wasn't enough, they put the subject up for a vote, as it were, for this is a "democratic state..." But all the party members must vote a certain way, and are not ashamed to publicly announce that even though there are party members whose personal conscience obligates them to vote differently, the party forces them to vote as the party wishes, the opposite of what their conscience tells them!

A "dictatorship" like this, in the guise of democracy, cannot be found anywhere else in the world, not even in Soviet Russia! Woe that we have come to a situation in which we need to bring proofs from them that even the "corrupt of the nations" doesn't act in this way!

I myself was in Soviet Russia and I know their ways: when they insist on something being done they explain that one's conscience obligates doing what communism dictates, that Marxism and the principles of justice obligate it, the belief that it is forbidden to harm the salary of a worker and other similar things.

They add that if someone expresses his personal conscience in another way, they will put him in jail or send him to Siberia, but to openly proclaim and to officially tell someone to vote against their conscience – no leader of the Kremlin would do such a thing!

And afterwards they [Israel] will publicize to the world that so-and-so's proposal was accepted with "a majority vote" of the representatives of the people, some of whom are communists, some are Christians,

some are Arabs, and some are (l'havdil) Jews! Excuse me for using the expression "l'havdil" – G-d forbid, to differentiate between one and another, for this is the opposite of democracy!

Suddenly they remember democracy! Where was democracy when they ought to have considered what most of the nation truly wants, when they vote according to their opinion and their conscience?

Did someone ask what his opinion is about returning oil fields? What his opinion is about expelling Jews from Yamit? Or about the plan to expel Jews from the Old City of Yerushalayim?

When a dictatorship like this, the likes of which there is nothing in the world, not even in Soviet Russia, is called a democracy, there is no wonder that a piece of paper is called "peace" and the killing of Jewish soldiers is called "open good!"

One might ask, why should people continue to protest even though there is seemingly no point? The Rebbe continues:

What is the point in all that was just said [by the Rebbe]. And since they will be angry about this, they will take their anger out by not giving money towards those things the one crying out [i.e. the Rebbe] is associated with.

First of all, when it comes to

actual bloodshed, there is a mitzva not to stand by your friend's blood. [That people remain quiet – I don't know the reason for this, you have to ask them].

Furthermore, when something really hurts, you don't think about whether crying out will help or not. The crying out is because it really affects you!

Most importantly, a Jew's nature is that he is a "dreamer" as it says that Yosef was a dreamer, and all Jews are called by the name Yosef. This nature gives a Jew the strength to tolerate the suffering of galus especially the suffering that Jews cause to themselves, "those who ruin and destroy you will come from you."

Since this is so, Jews, the grandchildren of Yosef, are reminded about Yosef's dreams and even though Yosef was in jail, he eventually became second to Pharaoh.

(The Rebbe smiled and said): I don't think my crying out will help so that nobody will be able to lift hand or foot without my permission [i.e. like with Yosef] – that far – I don't dream. The "dream" is that maybe, perhaps, from now on, they will guard the Old City of Yerushalayim even more, and Chevron and Sh'chem, and even Tel Aviv!

TAKING THE NAME OF SECURITY IN VAIN

Former Shabak chief Avi Dichter joined the Kadima party. One of the papers had the headline, "Dichter warns about another unilateral disengagement." "Another disengagement is too much," he explained.

The same Shabak chief who is suddenly a pal of Sharon's, dictated on 19 Shevat 5765 a leading headline in Maariv, in which he warned that "the evacuation is dangerous." Sharon was angry about this headline but that didn't stop Dichter from joining the very same Disengagement party that is planning on additional evacuations from Yehuda and Shomron.

Once again, we can understand what the Rebbe meant when he spoke about security people who are motivated by political considerations and that we cannot accept their security views. It's amazing to see, time after time, how those senior defense people have become little politicians. Dichter and Mofaz changed their tune dozens of times so that they have become laughingstocks. It's unbelievable how not only don't the politicians in the Knesset have any shame but so do even those who carry the name of security experts in vain.

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