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

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*Wishing our readers to receive the Torah  
on Shavuos b'simcha u'b'pnimius!*

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# BEYOND THE DESERT

LIKKUTEI SICHOS VOL. 33, PG. 85-94  
TRANSLATED BY BORUCH MERKUR



1. Our Sages learn [Megilla 23b] from the fact that (in our Torah portion [Shlach 14:27]) the spies are called an “assembly” [or “congregation”], and since they were ten in number (for Yehoshua and Kaleiv were not counted among them [in this instance]), that all groupings of ten Jews are considered a complete assembly. [Footnote 3 in the original: See Rambam Laws of Prayer 8:5; *Shulchan Aruch of the Alter Rebbe* Orach Chaim 55:2.]

Investigation is required into this matter, for the source of this law, regarding the especial virtue of an assembly in matters of sanctity (for “all matters of **sanctity** shall not have less than [a quorum of] ten [adult men]” [Megilla *ibid*; Brachos 21b]), is learned specifically from the spies (of whom it is written, “how long [can] this **wicked** assembly [be tolerated]?” [Shlach *ibid*]).

One might attempt to respond on the basis that the law regarding a sanctified assembly (for “all matters of sanctity shall not have less than a quorum of ten”) is that also a wicked person “is included for a quorum of ten in all matters of sanctity...(because) ‘a Jew, irrespective of whether he has sinned, is a Jew’ [Sanhedrin 44a, *beg.*], and he maintains his sanctity and does not become excluded

from the Jewish body” [*Shulchan Aruch of the Alter Rebbe* *ibid* 55:14 – see FN 9]. However, at first glance, this rationale falls short of justifying the matter. Namely, because (in addition to the fact that if you maintain

(according to the simple reading) that the spies are considered to have been **rebellious** against G-d (as expressed by Kaleiv, “Don’t rebel against G-d” [Shlach 14:9 – see FN 10]), it is not obvious in Torah law [see FN 11] whether those who are “rebellious” may be including in a quorum of ten for matters of sanctity, and surely this is so when **all** ten are rebellious) the lesson learned from Scripture regarding the spies – that an “assembly” is a group of ten – also applies to the law of an “assembly” of the **Sanhedrin**, the Supreme Court (“The assembly shall judge...and the assembly shall rescue, etc.” [Massei 35:24-25]), which is [composed of a quorum of] ten [Mishna in Ch. 1 of Meseches Sanhedrin (2a, end)]. In this context it is obvious that there is no wicked person included. [FN 14: Although we may point out a distinction here – that this case of exclusion differs insofar as the person is excluded not on the grounds that he is not considered part of the “assembly” per se, but because he is not a member of the Sanhedrin.]

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*Although according to the literal reading, the spies committed a serious sin, it is necessary to say that also in the revealed dimension of Torah there is at least an allusion to the virtue of the spies that is discussed in the inner dimension of the Torah.*

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[Thus, we are left with a case whereby we derive a concept regarding the sanctity of a “congregation” from an apparently wicked assembly.] We may answer that this is one of the allusions in the revealed dimension of Torah to that which is explained in the inner dimension of Torah, namely, that the spies were actually on a lofty level [of holiness]. [FN 15: To note the saying of our Sages: “The intentions of Satan and P’nina were for the sake of Heaven” (Bava Basra 16a).] That is to say that not only was their intent not, G-d forbid, to rebel in the literal sense, but on the contrary, “They were on an extremely lofty level” [Likkutei Torah Shlach 36d, end], as will be discussed at length.

(As it is explained in several places, the revealed part of Torah and the inner dimension of the Torah together compose a single Torah. Therefore, although each part has its own definition and principles – for example, we do not learn Torah law from Agada [Yerushalmi Peia 2:4 – see FN 17] – nevertheless, since in essence they are [aspects of] one Torah, it is understood that they have

an association between them, a connection, in fact, a union (to the extent that they relate to each other as body and soul, as it is said in the Zohar [III 152a]). Even the concepts in the inner dimension of the Torah that don’t run in accordance with the literal reading and not with Torah law have a foundation and source in the revealed dimension of Torah, whether by allusion or in its interpretation.

(So too with regard to our present concern. Although according to the literal reading of the text (and the revealed dimension of Torah in general), the spies committed a serious sin – as a result of which they themselves were punished and on account of them, the entire generation of the desert, etc. – nevertheless, it is necessary to say that also in the revealed dimension of Torah there is at least an allusion to the virtue of the spies that is discussed in the inner dimension of the Torah.)

[To be continued be”H]

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# SHAVUOS: THE COMPLETE REFINEMENT OF THE ANIMAL SOUL

BY RABBI CHAIM ASHKENAZI  
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

*The parable of the father and his son is most appropriate for what is happening to us in our times. We were privileged for a while to enjoy various forms of pampering – maamarim, sichos, lekach, dollars, kos shel bracha, farbrengens, brachos, etc. Now, however, we must internalize all this and absorb the main message: At any moment, there will be a G-dly revelation that will be followed by no hiding or concealment, an eternal revelation. Excerpts from a chassidic farbrengen.*

## THE JEWISH DAY OF INDEPENDENCE

Anyone who reasons that the Yom Tov of Pesach, the Holiday of our Freedom, is the Independence Day of the Jewish People – will find

support for such a statement. The Maharal of Prague, for example, says that the freedom that we merited on this holiday is eternal, and therefore, since the Exodus from Egypt, it is no longer applicable for the Jewish People to be slaves.

This is also the reason why, according to Chabad custom, we don't say "the Pesach seider has been concluded." For the reality that we are free men is a continual and uninterrupted process, as is written, "so that you will remember the day of your departure from the land of Egypt **all the days of your life**" – every moment. As a result, in the words of the Rebbe Rashab and the Rebbe Rayatz, only a Jew's body can be in exile, however, since the "Independence Day" of Pesach, it is not possible that the soul should be in exile.

On the other hand, even those who conclude that it is more appropriate that the holiday of Shavuos – the day of Mattan Torah – should be the Jewish day of Independence can find proofs to verify this opinion. The Torah grants freedom to those involved in it, as is written, "You have no **free man** except for someone involved in Torah." We learn this fact from the pasuk, "Engraved (*charus*) on the tablets," which our Sages interpret,

“Don’t say *charus*, but *cheirus* (freedom).”

In a similar vein, the author of *Seifer HaChinuch* writes regarding the reason for *S’firas HaOmer* that every Jew feels like a slave who **longs for the day that he will go free** – and therefore, he counts the days until that time – the **Holiday of Mattan Torah**.

If so, are there two Independence Days on the Jewish calendar? Or in other words, when (and how and why) did we become independent – on Pesach or on Shavuos?

As we look into the Torah sources, we discover that while the release from bondage began on Pesach, the freedom that we were granted on this holiday was not complete. The Alter Rebbe (in *Likkutei Torah*) derives this from the fact that we don’t recite the whole Hallel during Chol HaMoed Pesach. Similarly, the Alter Rebbe brings the pasuk describing the holiday of Pesach, “a solemn assembly (*atzeres*) **to Hashem your G-d**,” and not “an assembly **to you**.” The word “*atzeres*” means gathering. On this occasion, there is a condensed version of the G-dly revelations of the preceding “Yom Tov.” Thus, if we say that the assembly is “**to Hashem, your G-d**,” and not “to you,” this means that the lofty revelations of true freedom are not yet **your** inheritance. The people are still subservient to Pharaoh and his inclinations, and only on Shavuos, considered (according to the Midrash) as the “*Atzeres*” of Pesach, can a Jew attain the ultimate freedom.

Therefore, the Gemara states regarding Shavuos, “everyone admits that it must be **‘to you’** on Shavuos.” In other words, only Mattan Torah can create a situation where it is possible to call it **Atzeres**, meaning gathering the lofty revelations of Pesach, i.e., only on Shavuos can there be the “to you” of Pesach,

absorbing the inner meaning of the Yom Tov of Pesach.

If that be the case, we have to understand: What is lacking in the independence of Pesach that is then completed only through the independence of Mattan Torah?

### “GRABBING” THE PESACH GOODS

To answer this question, we first must contemplate on what Chassidus explains in general, and especially the Rebbe MH”M’s maamarim and sichos about the Exodus from Egypt.



When they were in Egypt, the Jewish People had sunk into the forty-nine gates of impurity, and therefore, there could be no redemption through an angel or a shliach, rather only through G-d Himself in all His glory. If He would have sent an angel or the like, possessing limited G-dly powers, it would have **sunken** there too.

It is known that purity and impurity are not synonymous with cleanliness and filth. There hasn’t been a cleanser invented that can remove the stains of impurity. The terms *tuma* and *tahara* are spiritual

in nature, as the Rambam explains, *tuma* represents harmful opinions, i.e., an improper outlook on the world around us.

In connection with our discussion, we find the following example: Consider a person who has such inappropriate beliefs that even when he sees a supernatural occurrence, he’ll find some natural and logical explanation and will be unwilling to admit that the event represents a revelation of G-dly power designed to awaken one’s faith in G-d and save him from spiritual destruction. To this person, the Redemption, which requires the absolute knowledge that G-d is the boss, cannot come through an agent garbed in natural limitations, since these G-dly revelations are subject to his rationalizations. The animal soul within him is so strong that it doesn’t permit the slightest opening for something truly G-dly to weave its way in. (Thus, a “recognizable” miracle enwrapped in nature, such as Purim, is considered the highest form of G-dly revelation. It is a miracle so great that even though it was revealed according to the ways of nature, everyone still admitted that it was a miracle.)

Therefore, harmful opinions are compared to chametz, which unlike matza has the letter “*Ches*,” closed from three sides and open only from the bottom. This means that “*chametz-galus-Mitzrayim*” people only look downward, seeing only the coarse natural matter. In contrast, the Redemption, which is matza, has the letter “*Hei*,” unique by the appearance of an additional opening for a way to look upward. This constitutes the level of “Make for me an opening as the eye of a needle,” enabling the threading of something ever so small but true. As is said regarding the letter “*Hei*,” “She opens her mouth with wisdom” – it has an extra opening to receive Supernal Wisdom, which is an expression of

G-dly strength.

As a result, in order to redeem the Jewish People from Egypt, where Am Yisroel was in a state of “*Ches*,” it was necessary for G-d to reveal Himself in all His glory, as only a G-dly power, above and beyond all natural limitations, can succeed in opening the G-dly window that can change the “*Ches*” to a “*Hei*.” In the words of the Hagada, “The King of all Kings, the Holy One, Blessed Be He, was revealed to them and redeemed them” – the level of Malchus above all others in the progression of the spiritual worlds, “*Malchus D’Ein Sof*.”

The intensity of the G-dly revelation also gave a powerful shock to the forty-nine gates of impurity (for this reason, the opening to the letter “*Hei*” is on the left side, the side “opposing” holiness), and therefore, it became possible at that moment to redeem Am Yisroel. This means that the G-dly soul awoke, and this marked the great innovation in contrast to the deep slumber that the Jewish People had endured until then. The gloom in the exile of Egypt was so great that “they didn’t listen to Moshe due to impatience of spirit and hard labor,” i.e., until then, there was not even a crack to penetrate the way to their G-dly soul.

## EGYPT – HERE AND NOW

As is known, the bondage in Egypt and the subsequent departure from there are a parable of a similar process regarding a Jew’s soul. The Egypt of today constantly changes its form, with the main purpose of blocking every crevice from where one could exit. As I once heard from R. Chaim Shaul Brook, of blessed memory, who said in the name of the Rebbe Rashab that “this world” is filled to the brim with questions, and there isn’t the slightest bit of room for answers.

Thus, the Exodus from Egypt is described by the words, “I taught Efraim also to go, taking them by their arms,” i.e., G-d had to grab the G-dly soul by the arms, as it were, and to run from there, because a small crack had been opened due to the intensity of the revelation that had caused such bewilderment in Egypt – and it could close up at any moment. This crack took expression in the form of the “*Hei*” in the word “*matza*,” which has an opening in the animal soul.

In another pasuk, the Jewish People also use an expression indicating that the first stage of the Redemption will be a grab: “Draw me forward, we will run after you.” Hashem pulls the G-dly soul into this frightful passageway, and the use of the word “draw” comes to tell us that there is no essential change here, rather, a transfer from one place to another.

According to this concept, the Alter Rebbe explains in *Tanya* what is said regarding those who left Egypt, “for the nation had fled.” **Fleeing** means to escape from somewhere without the master’s permission, but Pharaoh didn’t just agree that they should leave, he begged the Jews to go. If so, what is the meaning of “the nation had fled”? Pharaoh’s agreement was momentary and fleeting, stemming from the klipa’s shock and recoiling from the intensity of the G-dly revelation. In kabbalistic terms, the father’s light blinds the eyes of the chitzonim (similar to what happened to S’dom, when the angels caused blindness to the people of S’dom, and then they could pull Lot and his family out of there). The fact that the Egyptians went back to their bad ways and went out in pursuit of Am Yisroel proves that their consent was not real.

The translation of this process into a spiritual Exodus from Egypt

says that the initial release of the G-dly soul is so minimal that it has no influence whatsoever over the animal soul. It goes back to what it was before, because it essentially didn’t change.

We can compare this process to what happened with the Arabs after the Six Day War. At first, they were so terrified that they even trembled before a Jewish child. This fear derived from the powerful shock over the miraculous victory that G-d had made, as He saved his lamb from the Arab wolves that had risen up against her. However, this situation was only temporary, and they quickly returned to the path of hatred and terror, as their nature had not changed a bit.

Therefore, this stage is called fleeing from the evil, not going out, because the evil had not reconciled itself to the release from bondage. Thus, the release was not complete, and it would be fully realized only when the evil had changed. The aspiration for freedom is not just a matter of comfort; it is the very reason and purpose to the soul’s descent into the body. The G-dly soul had things much better and more pleasant back in Gan Eden, and it could have stayed there, but it came down into this world in order to change and refine and animal soul, raising its characteristics to the level of holiness. This action is learned from the pasuk, “I gave Har Seir to Eisav to inherit it.” This is not quite understood: If Har Seir was given to Eisav, and he thereby received this as an estate, why did he have to inherit it? Chassidus explains that this means that the Jewish People will receive this inheritance from Eisav, i.e., they will bring Eisav and his inheritance into the realm of holiness.

## PHASE TWO: THE SOUL TREATMENT

While all the G-dly revelations

that were on the level of Pesach represent redemption and independence, they were felt only by the G-dly soul. To be more specific, the G-dly soul is not yet at a level of true independence at this stage, and it requires proper protection against those who would cause harm to G-d's vineyard. These destroyers must be subject to a spiritual form of root canal. This "soul treatment" is alluded to in the pasuk "You will count seven weeks from the first moment that the sickle is placed upon the standing grain." In other words, it is made by raising the sickle upon the bad middos, the essence of the animal soul, called "standing grain," i.e., before it has been cut, when the crop stands full and tall in the field, as due to the strength of the yeshus that exists within it, they remind us of the straight and tall standing grain.

But in order to purify the middos of the animal soul, a preliminary action must be carried out. Since the animal soul has not only middos (which represent its main essence, since it's an animal) but intellect as well, therefore, there is a need first to affect something in this intellect. For despite the fact that the intellect in the animal soul does not rule over the middos, nevertheless, it does provide them with some direction, e.g., what to desire, how to express anger, arrogance, etc.

According to chassidus, this initial treatment symbolizes the departing journey from Egypt in the form of offering the Omer. The Omer is compared to intellect, since it is made from grain, which is connected to the intellect, based on the well-known saying, "A child doesn't know how to say 'Father' until he tastes grain." If grain has an influence upon our understanding and knowledge, we might expect the grain we offer should be made from wheat, food fit for human consumption. However, in fact, the

Omer is offered from barley, "animal fodder," since the waving of the Omer offering results in an elevation of the intellect of the animal soul.

Afterwards, it would be possible to begin the avoda of purifying the animal soul – "U's'fartem lachem" (and you will count). "U's'fartem" – to polish it until it shines like a sapphire (*sapir*); "lachem" – so that it will be instilled within you. This avoda purifies the forty-nine general and specific possibilities for bittul

*When such a person sees a supernatural occurrence, he'll find some natural and logical explanation, and will be unwilling to admit that the event represents a revelation of G-dly power designed to awaken one's faith in G-d and save him from spiritual destruction.*

for the purpose of removing all of the animal soul's expressions of "me." When we wave the sickle over its noise and selfishness, all that remains is the raw matter that can and must be brought into the realm of holiness, as we say in davening, "Hashem, Yours is the greatness (*chesed*), and the strength, and the glory, etc."

This is the treatment during the days of S'firas HaOmer, as we count

them in the words "Today is such-and-such days of the Omer." It would be more rational to say "such-and-such days from the Omer" or "such-and-such days until Shavuot." However, the purpose is to say, "for this many days in the world, we have purified the Omer," an offering of barley, representing the avoda of the animal soul.

Therefore, when we count the Omer, we say "Today" (there have been this many days of the Omer). At first, it seems to be a bit redundant: "today" and also "days." However, chassidus explains that the purpose to saying the word "Today" is not in reference to the day of counting, rather to draw the **day** – revealed light – into the days of the **Omer**, animal fodder, i.e., into the middos of the animal soul.

## TWO SOULS IN A JOINT RACE

Accordingly, we can now understand the meaning behind the pasuk, "Draw me forward, we will run after you." At first glance, a situation of "Draw me forward" first means that I am dragged after you against my will. If so, how can I possibly be "after you" at the same time that "we will run" willingly and at my initiative? It would seem that it should have said "Draw me forward, I will be dragged after you." The Exodus from Egypt was a state of "Draw me forward," where the G-dly soul is drawn towards Hashem. However, the animal soul comes along, prior to being purified by "the King of all kings was revealed to them," standing against us and placing us behind G-dliness. This very situation causes the awakening and longing to alter the selfish, natural, and animalistic habits.

At this stage, we reveal the quality and strength of the animal soul, which is a creature naturally inclined to do what it likes – and through running. It has no concept of

walking; this exists within the G-dly soul. In the animal soul, however, there exist two situations: either something doesn't interest it whatsoever or it does interest it and it runs toward it, befitting something rooted in the world of Tohu.

If the animal soul is harnessed to work, led by the G-dly soul, it attaches its fast pace to the

G-dly soul as well so that it will also run. The G-dly soul goes along because it doesn't have the "*shturem*" on its own, and therefore, we say "we will run" in the plural – two souls running together after G-d.

Now the G-dly soul can enter, as is written regarding Mattan Torah, "The king has brought me into his chambers." There is no need for escape. This is an entrance with great honor into the most inner sanctum – to the True and Complete Redemption, to receive the Torah, the "new Torah," that "came forth from Me."

By virtue of the G-dly soul's connection to G-dliness through running and with a great and tremendous strength, the true state of independence is revealed; the break-out through animalistic force is no longer just a passing occurrence. Thus, the "*Atzeres*" can begin, becoming "*lachem*," the Atzeres of Pesach, the holiday of true independence that commenced on Pesach. And if it were not properly utilized through the avoda of S'firas HaOmer, it would vanish and not take expression in the form of true independence.

Through the avoda of the forty-nine days of the Omer, we reach the level of "You have no free man except for someone involved (*osek*) in Torah." A business (*esek*) is something that requires investment with enthusiasm and skillfulness, occupying a person's thoughts when he eats, rests, sleeps, and even dreams, because it stems from

the strength and agility of the animal soul. A "free man" is one whose G-dly soul has been overtaken by the fervor of the animal soul until it is *involved* in Torah, and doesn't just *learn* it.

### PAMPERING, AS OPPOSED TO REACHING ONE'S TRUE HEIGHT

When the animal soul has already been purified, and works hand-in-hand with the G-dly soul, it is possible to eat chametz and even offer it as a sacrifice in the Beis HaMikdash, in accordance with the command to offer "the two loaves" that come with the sacrifices on Shavuos, as strength and agility are in the realm of holiness. Prior to the avoda, chametz symbolized a person's intellect, haughtiness, and "me" – totally forbidden. During the avoda, it becomes possible to use the intellect, and after the purification process, use of the intellect becomes a mitzva.

Therefore, we say the whole Hallel on Shavuos, as there is definitely what to praise, since the freedom is now complete. This stands in contrast to Pesach, when we only say the whole Hallel on the first days of Yom Tov, because although we went out of the darkness, as things continued, the situation remained quite unclear.

In connection with Pesach and Shavuos, the Alter Rebbe brings a parable of a father who spoils his young son by taking him on his arms, playing with him, and showing him how much he loves him. When the child grows up, we don't see the love expressed as openly, because it's not accepted practice to play with a much older child by carrying him on your arms, etc.

To pursue this point further, we see that while all the love the father expresses for his young child was

extremely pleasant for the child at the time, it leaves nothing for his "to you," because as soon as the time for pampering has passed, the child remains as he was. However, after he matures, the father provides him with important chapters of life, teaches him a trade, advises him, etc., all in order to get him to stand on his own two feet with a sense of true freedom.

Similarly, we find in connection with Pesach. From G-d's point of view, we received the loftiest and most sublime revelations – the spoil of Egypt and the spoil at the sea. However, Torah and mitzvos, which are our whole purpose in life, were given to us only at Mattan Torah, i.e., grasping the aspect of "to you" is made possible specifically on Shavuos.

\* \* \*

The parable of the father and his son is most appropriate for what is happening to us in our times. We were privileged for a while to enjoy various forms of pampering – maamarim, sichos, lekach, dollars, kos shel bracha, farbrengens, brachos, etc. Now, however, we must internalize all this and absorb the main message: At any moment, there will be a true revelation that will be followed by no hiding or concealment – an eternal revelation.

For as mentioned above, this is still only the first independence. We remain on the level of "These are the journeys of the children of Israel as they went out from the land of Egypt." We are still in the stages of going out of Egypt, and have not attained the true level of "*lachem*," which is truly eternal in an inner sense with no room for change. Anyone privileged to reach such a plateau is considered to be a person of great quality on a uniquely high level. The world has not yet been purified to such an extent that this will be its nature. Thus, the true



independence is lacking here, and anyone who says Hallel every day is deemed **blasphemous**.

Only in the future (G-d willing, very soon), will there be “and we thank you for our Redemption and the deliverance of our soul,” with the true level of “to you” through the Rebbe MH”M, immediately, mamash. Therefore, we say after counting the Omer, “May the Merciful One restore the avoda the Beis HaMikdash” for until then, we will not be in a state of true freedom.

### TRUE INDEPENDENCE – PRACTICAL HALACHA

In conclusion, practically speaking, how and when do we reach freedom and independence? When we begin our avoda to G-d, each according to his level and status, as expressed by changes in our conduct, thought, speech, action – this is an expression of freedom. However, this might still be only at the level of “to Hashem your G-d,” as on Pesach. It also might stem from the awakening of the animal soul, but since animals are prone to break and destroy everything in its way, this can cause a conventional form of breaking, even in matters of Torah and mitzvos.

Even when the aspect of “we will run” (in plural) is fulfilled, with two souls running together, there is still a more ideal state of fulfillment and independence.

For example, a person wakes up in the morning with a desire to serve G-d, and continues in this state of excitement for several days. However, he doesn’t utilize this arousal for doing avoda more than customary, rather, he does what he is obligated to do, albeit with desire and vitality. However, things that are against his nature, his comfort zone, and his habits neither move him nor speak to him. This type of freedom is only for the G-dly soul, because

the animal soul is what enables him to change his habits. Therefore, when the effects of this Heavenly inspired revelation wear off, he goes back to the same situation where he was before.

Such a person can ask himself in astonishment: What happened to me? If I made a change, then why didn’t I succeed? He can reach far-fetched conclusions, e.g., I’m not worth anything, so why bother trying again? Such a person is liable to be resigned to his fate, and say to himself: I lack the strength to change myself. This is clearly what G-d

*In the imminent future there will be “and we thank you for our Redemption and the deliverance of our soul,” with the true level of “to you,” through the Rebbe MH”M.*

wants, and there’s nothing I can do about it...

He fails to see that he made no change. All that happened was his G-dly soul went out for a period of temporary freedom, because the animal soul was temporarily blinded by the light of Divine revelation that had been sent to him from Above (called “from Above” because he had no hand in its creation).

In contrast to this person who did nothing with his animal soul, we have the example of someone who made a drastic change in his life. Influenced by his participation in a

lecture or a farbrengen, he starts putting on t’fillin, keeping Shabbos, etc., etc. He rises higher and higher on the ladder of mitzvos, as he continually increases in his observance. It’s clear that his animal soul underwent a change, as he speeds in the direction of all that is connected to Torah and mitzvos. However, together with these positive changes, he might cross certain important borders in his life, e.g., time, place of residence, work, or even distancing himself from family that does not run at the same pace that he does.

While this person is quite anxious to complete all that is lacking in his service of Hashem his G-d, he still has a long road ahead of him. Thus, if he continues in this fashion, he is liable to reach a situation that only the animal soul wants, like a horse without a rider.

Therefore, he must direct the animal soul’s efforts into proper “vessels” of his daily life, an orderly plan of action in *avodas Hashem* with obligations to family, community, and his overall surroundings. The benefit he will derive is twofold: The actions of the G-dly soul receive extra acceleration as the animal soul goes into full throttle, and the G-dly soul provides its leadership in the framework of Torah and mitzvos to this process, doing so in a manner characteristic for *avodas Hashem* – pleasantly and gradually.

If the two souls are partners in this process, the result will be that even **the external actions** will be holy to G-d and **the inner strengths** will be purified and elevated, and then this person will have true independence from the physical fetters, as he conducts himself in a manner of “good for the heavens and good for the creations” and “that which is honorable to himself and brings him honor from man.”

# ‘I DON’T WANT MONEY; I WANT A PROMISE FROM THE REBBE!’

*A compilation of stories about our Rebbeim and their Chassidim that were written down by R’ Betzalel Wilschanski. \* From a t’shura by the Wilschanski family in Morristown. \* Part 1*

## THE POOR MAN’S CONTRIBUTION

One of the Shadars (emissaries who spread Chassidus and raised funds) in the time of the Mittlerer Rebbe traveled around the country and would even go to a small village where all the residents were extremely poor and could only give a coin worth fifteen kopeks, which was called a gulden. One year, the Shadar figured out that the expenses of the trip to that village were greater than what he collected there. He decided not to visit that village anymore.

The people of that village, seeing that the Shadar was not coming, collected the maamud money and sent it to the Rebbe. When the Shadar went to the Rebbe, the Rebbe rebuked him and said: Even though they don’t give that much, the gulden of the poor is more precious to me than the large donations of the wealthy!

## THE REBBE’S SCHOLARSHIP VS. YOURS

I once met a Misnaged who said he

would tell me a story of the Rebbe Maharash. He prefaced it by saying that he was considered a *baki* (a scholar of encyclopedic knowledge) but his father was a real scholar, expert in Shas and Rambam, etc. Although he was a Misnaged, he held of Chassidim.

The Misnaged said that his father wrote a commentary on the second portion of Yoreh Dei’a, in Hilchos Nidda, and while writing it he had a tremendous question. He traveled throughout all the towns of the country and asked all the Torah greats his question but did not get an answer.

He also went to Lubavitch, and headed for the home of the Rebbe Maharash to pose his question to him. The Rebbe Maharash immediately went over to the bookcase, took a Gemara and after looking inside briefly, he said: It’s a Tosafos in the tractate K’subos. His father, who was also a genius, immediately understood the answer, which displayed enormous genius, and was absolutely flabbergasted.

Then he traveled to R’ Ayzel Charif,

who was famous as one of the geniuses among the Misnagdim, and posed his question. R’ Ayzel gave him two answers but he negated both of them. Afterwards, R’ Ayzel told him the answer he had already heard from the Rebbe Maharash.

His father said to R’ Ayzel: That’s the difference between you and the Rebbe. He answered me on the spot while it took you a long time.

## AN ORIGINAL FORM OF PAYMENT

I heard the following story from R’ Moshe Madayevski, who was a rav in Charal:

Once the Rebbe Maharash came to visit Charal, and since he was the rav of the town the Rebbe stayed in his home. The Rebbe asked him if he could arrange for a tailor to sew him a new coat. The rav called an observant Jewish tailor, and the Rebbe Maharash questioned him to ascertain that he would sew the coat without shatnez. The tailor replied that he had never sewn anything containing with shatnez.

After the tailor took the measurements, the Rebbe said that he wanted the work to be done in his room. The tailor thought that it was due to concern that he would keep the leftover material and he assured the Rebbe that he had never done such a

thing. However, the Rebbe said that he still wanted the work done in his room. The tailor acquiesced and proceeded to sew a beautiful coat, which fit perfectly, and he left.

Three weeks later, before the Rebbe Maharash was to leave town, he asked the rav to call the tailor in order to pay him. When the tailor arrived, he told the Rebbe that since you did not make up a price with me, I have the right to ask whatever I want.

The Rebbe agreed that the tailor was correct, and asked him how much he is demanding. The tailor answered, "I don't want money, I want a promise for long life."

The Rebbe refused, saying, "Do I have long life in my pockets, which I can give you? I am willing to give money!" However, the tailor would not accept money and repeated that he wants a promise for long life. Finally, the Rebbe asked him how many years he wants. When the tailor replied that he wanted ninety years, the Rebbe agreed and blessed him.

### EDUCATE YOURSELF

The Rebbe Maharash said to someone who asked for guidance in educating his children:

The nature of children is that they copy what their father does. If their father is a storekeeper, then when they play with their friends they do the same thing as part of their play, and if he is tailor, they will pretend to be the same. Therefore, if you want your children to learn, then you should learn. When they see you learning, they will do the same.

### FROM POVERTY TO WEALTH

Reb Binyomin Altheus a"h was exceedingly impoverished throughout most of his life. He eked out a meager living from making coal. He had a small yard, and the owner of the adjoining yard asked him if he wished to purchase his property. Reb Binyomin had no need to expand his

yard, but he asked the Rebbe Maharash about the offer anyway. The Rebbe told him to purchase the adjoining land, and Reb Binyomin did so at a very cheap price.

Shortly afterwards, war broke out. Next to Reb Binyomin's now enlarged yard there was a factory, which produced weapons. Due to the increased demand generated by the war, the owner urgently needed to expand his factory. He approached Reb Binyomin and asked to purchase his land. The owner knew that he had bought the yard cheaply, for

*The Rebbe refused, saying, "Do I have long life in my pockets, which I can give you? I am willing to give money!" However, the tailor would not accept money and repeated that he wants a promise for long life.*

approximately 2500 rubles, and he offered to pay double the amount, 5000 rubles, for the land.

As was his custom, not to decide anything without consulting the Rebbe, he asked the Rebbe about this offer. The Rebbe told him to put off the sale until he got the go ahead from the Rebbe. Meanwhile, the neighbor raised his offer higher and higher until he reached the sum of 60,000 rubles. Only then did the Rebbe agree that Reb Binyomin sell the yard, and he became wealthy from the sale.

### IF THE LUBAVITCHER SAYS – THEN I AGREE

There were once two wealthy men, one a Chassid of the Rebbe Rashab, and the other a Chassid of Reb Mordechai Ber of Horonsteipel. The two made a shidduch between their families and the Chassid of the Rebbe Rashab gave his son in marriage to the daughter of the other Chassid. Since they were both wealthy, they gave a significant sum to the new groom, which he used to purchase a large forest near the Dnieper River, and he ran a large lumber business.

Five years passed, and the couple still were not blessed with children. The wife visited a number of doctors, who informed the couple that the problem was hers. They suggested that she visit the specialists in Kiev. She traveled to Kiev, and after testing by the specialists, they concurred with the assessment of the earlier doctors, but said they could correct the problem through surgery. She returned home and informed her husband, however, he did not want her to undergo surgery, and so the matter was delayed.

Time passed, and she felt that she couldn't wait any longer, so one day while he was in the forest, she traveled to her Rebbe the Horonsteipler. (Apparently, they lived close by, as she was able to go and come in one day. In that place, the means of travel was by way of crossing the river in a small boat, and so she traveled to Horonsteipel.)

The woman asked her Rebbe for his advice, and he told her that if the doctors say that she needs surgery, she should undergo surgery.

She reported to her husband what her Rebbe said, but he didn't want to rely on her Rebbe and insisted on consulting the Rebbe Rashab. Immediately, he set out for Lubavitch, and asked the Rebbe's advice. The Rebbe Rashab heard all the details and said that he did not agree to surgery, saying it wasn't necessary and she would conceive without it.

The husband returned and told his wife what the Rebbe said. The woman was not comfortable with the decision, so when her husband next visited the forest, she traveled again to her Rebbe. When she told him that the Rebbe Rashab opined that she did not require surgery, he responded, "If the Lubavitcher says that you don't need surgery and can conceive without it – then I also agree."

Within a short time, she had a child, and I think they ended up having five children.

### WHO DO YOU LEARN TORAH FOR?

A certain Misnaged would taunt the Chassidim in his town, claiming that Chassidic rabbis are not knowledgeable in Torah. Some of the Chassidim suggested that he visit Reb Zalman Kornitzer, one of the great Chassidim, also known as a Torah genius. The young man went to speak to Reb Zalman in learning, and despite his own accomplished learning, was extremely impressed by Reb Zalman's brilliance.

The Misnaged, recognizing Reb Zalman's outstanding genius, said in amazement, "If you were amongst the Misnagdim, the entire world would *shturm* with you!"

Reb Zalman smiled and said, "Let me answer you with a parable:

"A well-known seller of Torah works would travel from city to city to sell and buy *s'farim* of value. Once, he heard about a certain wealthy man, who was willing to pay large sums of money for rare manuscripts, and he maintained a large library, which contained many rare volumes. The dealer traveled to see the wealthy man who purchased a number of books from him.

"When they concluded their business, the dealer asked if he could see the man's collection. The wealthy man agreed, and brought him into a room of wall-to-wall books, many of which were exceedingly valuable. The

dealer was amazed, and he said, 'How is it that I do not have so many rare books and everyone knows me and heard about me, whereas you have so many valuable editions and nobody knows about you?'

"The wealthy man responded, 'The answer is simple. With you, everything you buy is only to sell to others, whereas with me, it is all for my own personal collection.'"

### REB MENDEL CHEIN AND REB CHAIM BRISKER

The Chassid Reb Dovid Tzvi Chein would say, "I am better than my father (the Chassid Reb Peretz Chein), because I have a son who is better than

*The Rebbe rebuked him and said: Even though they don't give that much, the gulden of the poor is more precious to me than the large donations of the wealthy!*

the son my father had."

His son, Reb Mendel, was a tremendous genius, and the father would often say, "I am aware that my son can learn better than me."

Reb Chaim Brisker once considered doing a shidduch between Reb Mendel and his daughter, and sent two of his top students to test him. They tested him on all of Shas and he answered all their questions satisfactorily. Afterwards, they asked him to say an original pilpul (exegetical Talmudic exposition). He began to say a deep pilpul for about half an hour. The two tried to disprove his thesis, but were unsuccessful and were forced to concede that what he said was true.

After they concurred, Reb Mendel, with a greater display of genius disproved, his entire discourse. The students of Reb Chaim tried to defend the original pilpul by resolving the new questions he had raised, but they were unsuccessful, and so agreed that it did not stand up. Once again, Reb Mendel expounded on the subject proving that his original premise was correct. Again, they tried to disprove it, and had to concede that the pilpul was solid.

Reb Mendel's father, Reb Dovid Tzvi, wanted to know what the students would report to Reb Chaim about his son. He asked the Chassidim to go to nearby Shtzedrin (where he lived), and to get on the same train as the emissaries of Reb Chaim, so as to follow them and try to overhear their report to Reb Chaim.

The Chassidim complied, and when they boarded the train, they sat down near the students of Reb Chaim. The emissaries asked the Chassidim, "Where are you from?" They answered, "From Shtzedrin."

"Do you know Reb Dovid Tzvi and his son?"

"Yes."

They began to discuss Reb Mendel Chein, and of course, the Chasidim praised him highly. Afterwards, they asked the Chassidim where they were traveling to and they told them Brisk. The students asked them if they could come to Reb Chaim Brisker, who liked to daven Mincha early, but often had trouble putting together a minyan. The Chassidim readily accepted, so they could actually be present when the emissaries reported to Reb Chaim.

When Reb Chaim entered to daven Mincha, he saw the emissaries and asked them, "Nu, can he learn?" They responded through hand signs showing amazement and indicating a very high level. Reb Chaim asked, "Like my Itzele?" (His son, commonly referred to as Reb Velvel, but Reb Chaim called him Itzele). His students answered, "He is much greater!"

(To be continued be"H)

# WHAT ABOUT THE FACT THAT MILLIONS OF JEWS HAVE GATHERED IN ERETZ YISROEL?

TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

*In response to requests by our readers, we now present the third in a series of questions and answers from the seifer Between Light and Darkness, Rabbi Sholom Dovber HaLevi Wolpo's provocative new guide for the perplexed regarding the establishment regime in Eretz Yisroel today and the tragic events they have brought upon the Jewish People.*

## QUESTION:

The Lubavitcher Rebbe claims that according to the Rambam, there can be no ingathering of the exiles without Moshiach. However, I don't understand the relevance in arguing this point. It is already an established fact that millions of Jews have gathered in Eretz Yisroel from the nations of the Diaspora, including some very dangerous locations. This represents a literal ingathering of the exiles, and this

ingathering is the Redemption.

In fact, the process is happening now, exactly as stated in the Gemara (Megilla 17b): "And they saw fit to say [the bracha for] the ingathering of the exiles after the bracha for the years [in the Shmoneh Esrei], as is written, 'But you, mountains of Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to My people Israel, for they will soon come.'" This means that after the land will again bear its fruits, the

children will begin to return.

As a result, even if you say that the flowering of the land is only a sign that this time is approaching, there can be no denying the actual ingathering of the exiles, which marks the start of this time. After seeing the fulfillment of such an event in our generation, it has been proven that the Redemption, or at least the *is'chalta d'Geula*, has already begun in practical terms. What's the point in debating this issue any longer?

Similarly, the gaon R. Yehoshua of Kotna writes in his responsa *Yeshuos Malko* (Yore Deia 66): "And there is no doubt that it is a great mitzva, for the ingathering is the *is'chalta d'Geula*... and especially now that we have seen the tremendous longing among inferior, average, and righteous people, the spirit of Redemption is certainly about to sparkle."

## ANSWER:

1. If the emigration of Jews to Eretz Yisroel today marks the appointed time for which we have waited for two thousands in exile, then doesn't the

emigration of millions of our brothers and sisters **from Eretz Yisroel to Chutz LaAretz** mark the destruction of the “Third Temple”? Today, we already have a “negative balance” in the aliya account, i.e., more people leaving than coming?!

2. If this the ingathering of the exiles that we have anticipated, then what do we call the emigration to Eretz Yisroel of **hundreds of thousands of total Gentiles** in the last several years, some of whom intermingle and assimilate *r”l* within the Jewish People?

3. Every Jew has known throughout the years of exile that the ingathering of the exiles is not merely the “technical” issue of many Jews living in Eretz Yisroel, rather, the G-dly matter of how He will take all dispersed Jews out of the exile, even those lost in the land of Ashur, i.e., those lost through the fulfillment of all their material pleasures (*Ashur* is derived from the word *osher*, meaning pleasure), those dispersed in the land of Egypt, i.e., those driven away by a multitude of sorrows (*Mitzrayim* is derived from the word *meitzar*) – G-d will awaken them, remind them of their Yiddishkeit, and bring them to Eretz HaKodesh through His Moshiach. Only those who wanted to copy the nations of the world – saying, “As all the nations, the House of Israel,” and we also have a state and a nationality, etc. – they are the ones who take the physical settlement of Eretz Yisroel and **strip it of its Jewish spirit**, seemingly as part of the process of “the return of the exiles of Tzion” in order to give a messianic stamp of approval to this form of nationalism.

4. According to all the aforementioned, in the context of Redemption, there simply cannot be an ingathering of exiles that has no connection to a process of spiritual elevation. Did we pray two thousands years for an ingathering of the exiles represented by the arrival of millions of Jews to Eretz Yisroel who then underwent **a terrible spiritual descent**?

The fact is that hundreds of thousands of immigrants from North

Africa, etc., departed from the path of their forefathers specifically in Eretz Yisroel, and their children and grandchildren don’t even know the words of the “*Shma*.” Tens of thousands of young people from the Youth Aliya Movement, starting from the orphans rescued from the Holocaust and the children of Yemen and Tehran, etc., became open heretics through the guidance of those who brought about this ingathering of the exiles. A large portion of the hundreds of thousands of immigrants from Russia, the Ukraine, Bucharia, Georgia, etc., lost in Eretz Yisroel the Jewish spark that they had managed to preserve throughout the more than seventy years of



persecution behind the Iron Curtain. If that be the case, how can anyone possibly venture to think that this is the ingathering of the exiles that we have hoped and prayed for?

5. Furthermore, **even the residents of Eretz HaKodesh are in exile**, as even those who live in the Holy City of Yerushalayim testify about themselves during their davening every Yom tov, “And due to our sins **we were exiled from our land**.” To pursue this point further, all those who are in Eretz Yisroel now and have been living there for decades still say in davening three times a day, “and bring us together speedily upright to our land,” and they **also include themselves** in these

prayers. Thus, it is quite clear that all those who emigrated to Eretz Yisroel disembarked from the airplane or the boat, **right into the Eretz Yisroel-style exile**, and not the Redemption, as this was merely a transfer from one form of exile into another far worse.

However, in the real ingathering of the exiles through Melech HaMoshiach, the dispersed of Israel will come to the Eretz HaKodesh of the Redemption. We understand from this that the emigration of millions of Jews to Eretz Yisroel is no contradiction whatsoever to the Rambam’s clear halachic ruling that the ingathering of the exiles can take place only through Moshiach.

6. But most importantly, even if we accept their mistaken thesis that the emigration of Jews to Eretz HaKodesh in these times marks the beginning of the ingathering of the exiles, nevertheless, the Zionist state has no connection to the Redemption. Furthermore, even though the regime in Eretz Yisroel assists in this ingathering, Koresh also helped the ingathering at the time of the Second Beis HaMikdash – does that mean that he is the Moshiach or there is any holiness attributable to him?

7. Regarding the quote that you cited from *Yeshuos Malko*, the use of the term *is’chalta d’Geula* is figurative, as is said in Gemara (Megilla 17b): “The wars of *is’chalta d’Geula*.” Thus, it is understood that this has no connection to the literal start of the Redemption, which can only be through Moshiach and after the building of the Beis HaMikdash.

8. Even if we interpret the quote from *Yeshuos Malko* as literally referring to the Redemption, the fact is that while recent rabbinic figures have come to contradict the Rambam’s clear halachic ruling (that only Moshiach gathers in the exiles), those who adhere to the Rambam’s approach have no need to provides additional answers or proofs. On the contrary, there is no disputing the Rambam’s *p’sak din*, which is accepted by all halachic authorities.

# A DWELLING PLACE FOR HASHEM – IN POONA

*Nosson Avrohom was in Poona for a week. He didn't act as a guest but joined in the work of the Chabad house run by Betzalel Kupchik and his wife and children. He kept a diary of his visit, which he shares with us.*

Over the past few years, I have had the privilege of working on the Rebbe's inyanim in various places, often by way of helping local shluchim in Eretz Yisroel or abroad. I've seen the great mesirus nefesh of the Rebbe's shluchim in nearly 100 Chabad houses. The focus here is on the unique experience I had over the course of a week in Poona, India.

My friends and I had a nightmare flight of close to eight hours. I have never had a flight like that before, one with numerous air pockets and turbulence that forcefully shook the plane. We finally landed in the international airport of Bombay, hoping the nightmare was behind us. Unfortunately, we were too optimistic.

Three hours of Indian small-minded bureaucracy ended with a symbolic bribe and we finally left the airport. Outside, the air was polluted and loud voices shouted in a cacophony of sound. Honking could

be heard from all sides from old cars alongside hundreds of rickshaws and patchwork mini-cycles. Chaos.

The one who aroused us from our stupor was a little Indian fellow holding a big yellow Moshiach flag and calling out "Moshiach Now." This was obviously the individual R' Kupchik had sent to bring us to Poona, a four-hour trip.

Outside the terminal dozens of women and children in rags begged for food. Before we went to India, we were told to ignore them but the Jewish heart just cannot. We gave them some chocolate bars.

We saw some Israelis standing nearby and we took the opportunity to put t'fillin on with them. One of them commented, "It's a good start to our trip." His friend, a tall fellow with all sorts of earrings said, "They told me I'd meet Chabad in India but I didn't think it would be this quick!"

We loaded our suitcases into the car that looked like the newest model around and left for Poona.

Along the streets are thousands of people in cotton robes lying under every leafless tree, in some attempt to escape the blazing sun. In Bombay, the skies are not blue. They turned gray long ago – not because of rain clouds but because of the pollution. Cows, goats, monkeys, and dogs wander the filthy streets unimpeded.

Four hours later, we arrived at the Chabad house in Poona, the most impressive building on the street. Aside from the Kupchik family, we were greeted by a pair of elephants meandering down the street, followed by some local emaciated Indians and a few monkeys.

We lay down to rest for a few hours, trying to recover and digest the new reality that suddenly confronted us. Just half a day ago, we were in an altogether different world.

In the evening, R' Kupchik gave us an overview of life at the Chabad house. The Chabad house is open all day and Israeli tourists or Israelis who have been living there for years come and go.

The ashrams of Poona are a major draw for tourists. A significant percentage of the people at the

ashram are Jews. One of these ashrams is located behind the Chabad house.

We went in for supper. This meal takes place every night, at the same time, and is open to all.

Our first encounter with tourists took place an hour later when Rafi and Liat from Raanana came in. Liat said excitedly, "When I walked down the street I saw the light – in both senses."

They said they had just come from Thailand. In the next two days, in addition to the many tourists who came and went, this young couple became part of the Chabad house scenery. They stayed into the night and a conversation about the Rebbe ensued. One miracle story after another was recounted and the chevra were enthralled.

"You should know," said Liat, "my father and grandfather, are both Holocaust survivors. They are far from Jewish observance, but I believe in G-d. Recently we ate non-kosher fish and I felt terrible all day. I decided that

from now on, only kosher food for me!"

The couple was being transformed before our eyes; the dust was being removed and the light began to shine. It's amazing how here in India, surrounded by idol worshipers, the pintele Yid begins to glow. In addition to Rafi putting on t'fillin every day, the couple wanted to learn how to say brachos and took a great interest in Judaism.

Before they left for their next stop in Goa, Liat asked to write to the Rebbe, though not before making sure that one of the Kupchik children had prepared a candle-lighting kit with a calendar of the times for weeks to come.

The answer Liat opened to was in volume 8, p. 251:

**In response to your informing me that on 29 Adar I, when we increase simcha, on Erev Rosh Chodesh Adar II, when we increase simcha, you are beginning to bake matzos –**

**May it be Hashem's will that it be**

**fulfilled in you, "and you shall guard the matzos," and as our Sages learn this – that consequently the success will be drawn into the physical, bringing ample livelihood. Just as with spiritual matters, one draws down from this for the entire year, this too should be a good beginning for a proper livelihood, for the entire year, and from the "bread of affliction" you should go to "bread of pleasure" – literally and as it is explained in Chassidus.**

I did not understand how the answer applied to her, but as is often the case with miracle stories, the people involved understand it quite well. Liat exclaimed, "The Rebbe is a prophet!"

She said that she and her husband had left their jobs on hiatus to travel. Before they left, her husband had applied for a job at the Chaifa port and he was supposed to get a final answer before Pesach: "During our trip I've been worried that he won't get it, but now, after the Rebbe's answer, I am sure he'll be accepted."





\* \* \*

Life in India begins late in the day. We saw this on our first day of shlichus when the tourists showed up at the Chabad house starting in the afternoon. So the morning hours are for planning and other activities. I was chosen to learn Gemara with the older Kupchik children, while my shlichus partner learned *Shulchan Aruch* and Mishnayos with the younger boys.

We knew that the Rebbe takes the responsibility for the children of shluchim but it's always moving to see this. I have to say that we too learned a good deal from the children.

When I asked Avichai Kupchik if he didn't miss classmates and the atmosphere back in yeshiva in Tzfas he said, "In the summer we go back to Eretz Yisroel and I go to camp and learn in the Talmud Torah a little bit. But I have a problem. The teacher repeats the same thing again and again and I get bored." This was said without boasting, but with a tinge of bashfulness.

They sit with Mrs. Kupchik, who learns the daily Chitas with them and in the evening, she has them read from the *Seifer HaShlichus*. The following Shabbos was Shabbos Mevarchim Kislev, and when we woke up a bit late we saw the Kupchik children, young and old, busy saying T'hillim. Children, nine and under, finish the entire T'hillim!

Yinon had a birthday and turned nine. In the morning, they printed flyers announcing a birthday celebration that evening at the Chabad house. The children make the flyers, which are later hung up around town where Jewish tourists are likely to see them.

Yinon decided to finish the entire T'hillim in honor of his birthday, but due to lack of time, he parceled out the chapters among his brothers, taking the largest portion for himself.

He makes sure that his brothers stand by their commitment. I observe this from the sidelines and I'm amazed. He's alone, without friends his age, and his Chassidische chinuch is, bli ayin ha'ra, superior to that of many children his age.

In general, the Kupchik children are an integral part of the shlichus. I see how they get into conversations about hashkafa and emuna with people who come to the Chabad house. They are knowledgeable and the way they speak really touches the tourists. They accomplish incredible things.

Seven-year-old Yigal surprised everyone when during a Shabbos meal he said he wanted to make a siyum on a book he had been reading for a number of months on the stories in Chumash.

Dozens of tourists or wandering

Jews as well as people here on business come to the Chabad house every day. There is always tea available and sometimes other food. All of them, from the most shy to the boldest, feel at home. Many ask to put on t'fillin. Some of them have just arrived in India and they want to put down their suitcases until they find a place to stay. Some of them sit down to learn something before continuing on their way.

There are also some who feel like old-timers. One of them is Shmuel, whom I met one morning. He's middle-aged and has been living in Poona for nine years. After he retired in Israel, he decided to take a break and relax in India. He went to Poona in order to study yoga at a certain place but was told he would have to wait two years before he is accepted. In the meantime, he began going to the local ashram near the Chabad

## HASHGACHA PRATIS

While still in the airport in Israel we felt how the Rebbe is leading us and that we are on his shlichus. This is what happened:

After going through security and having sent on our luggage, we weren't sure whether we wanted to go through the police check or to wait, since we had a lot of time until our flight. We ultimately decided to go into the terminal.

As we passed Chabad's mivtzaim area that was empty at the time, we heard the phone ring. We wondered whether we should answer the phone when we weren't in charge there, but since no one was around we answered it.

The person on the line was none other than the director of the Chabad house at the airport, Rabbi Nachman Maidenckek. He asked who we were and we told him.

"Oh boy, you've come from Heaven!" he said gleefully.

He quickly explained that the person who was supposed to man the area during these two hours had told him, at the last minute, that he couldn't make it and so he had decided to try his luck and call, and there we were!

We couldn't help but be moved by this hashgacha pratis. That night there were only two flights to India and Bangkok and we were the only Lubavitchers on the flight. We had two hours left to go, just the amount of time that he needed us to run the stand. We got to work and helped many people.



A variety of activities, some of them original and unique to India, with an emphasis on inyanei Geula and Moshiach

house and became involved in their activities.

The Kupchik children remember how when they organized the davening for the Yomim Nora'im near the German Bakery (a restaurant frequented by Israelis), he was there and refused to identify as a Jew. Now, he comes to the Chabad house every morning in order to learn Chassidus for an hour.

I got to know him well. His knowledge of Chassidus is truly impressive! For two years, he learned through various Chassidus s'farim. When I asked him if he wanted to learn with me, he took out Hemshech 5672! When I spoke to R' Kupchik about him, R' Kupchik said, "He has an unusual grasp of the material. Until now, I've taught him, but now he has surpassed me."

When R' Kupchik went to the Kinus HaShluchim, this man became the dominant figure at the Shabbos meal. At a certain point, he wanted to add to what Mrs. Kupchik had said about the Rebbe's avoda of uniting all Jews in the world. He said, "This is true, but the main thing is to bring about the hisgalus of the Rebbe."

Another frequent visitor to the Chabad house is Goala. Her life story is complicated, tragic actually. She is an older American woman who has been living in Poona for 29 years! In her search for meaning in life, she found herself in the ashram located near the Chabad house. With time, she became active in the ashram helping establish additional branches in Croatia to spread the guru's teachings.

In recent years, she began visiting

the Chabad house. At first, when asked whether she was Jewish, she said, "My sisters are Jewish." She began visiting the Chabad house more and more often and her interest in Judaism grew from visit to visit. She remembered things she had learned as a child. Abandoning her belief in the guru's teachings that she had acquired over many years wasn't easy, but from one Shabbos meal to the next her Jewish feelings came to the fore.

Dovid is also a regular visitor. In his youth, he learned in the Ponovezh yeshiva, where he experienced a trauma following which he left the ways of Judaism. He fled to Poona. When he first entered the Chabad house, he refused to wear a kippa, but as time went by his opposition diminished and he became involved in the goings-on.



**R' Betzalel Kupchik draws those who visit the Chabad house into true Chassidic joy**

Shmuel, Goala, and Dovid are just three people out of the many who regularly visit the Chabad house. There are also the dozens of tourists who float in and out, join a supper meal, sit and learn a bit, watch a video of the Rebbe and ask (or are asked) to put on t'fillin. There are also a few businesspeople, psychologists, workers in high-tech and the aircraft industry, who come at certain times of the year. They know that the Chabad house is their first stop.

Mordechai runs a number of alternative medical clinics in London and visits India to buy medication. He is a religious Jew, which is why he visits the Chabad house whenever he can. "I feel like part of the family here," he told me.

What impressed me more than anything else was the mesirus nefesh the shluchim have just in being there. Only someone who has been there can appreciate what I mean when I refer to the sub-standard living conditions. Just think about a Lubavitcher family leaving a warm community in Tzfas. These are not newlyweds. They move to a city of idol worship, the likes of which you read about in stories in Tanach. They are so far from anything Jewish. The culture of the people living in India is vastly different from that of the West.

Even Israeli tourists, who have

experienced plenty of adventure, express their amazement over how one can possibly raise a Western family in a city as primitive as Poona. There is no grocery store to buy basic kosher food items and even importing meat and milk from Eretz Yisroel entails complicated logistics and costs a fortune.

"Over the years," states Mrs. Kupchik matter-of-factly, "I've learned to make cheese." Every few days the Kupchik family goes to a barn (no, in India there aren't organized and clean dairy farms; I'm talking about a few cows in someone's house, with the Indian family living upstairs). The

children watch the manual milking into special containers brought from the Chabad house. Then they go home and make cheese.

Another difficulty is the planned power outages that take place daily for four hours! Not to mention the weak stream of water that comes out of the faucets. The hardest part of all is that the children have no Jewish-Chassidic friends. When I asked Mrs. Kupchik about this, she didn't understand what the problem was.

"I've gotten used to it. I feel that the Rebbe gives us special kochos." She wasn't just saying it. She lives it.

### **THE RIGHT WING STRATEGIST FROM SPAIN**

As I sat in the German Bakery, the local restaurant frequented by many Israelis, I spoke with some of them. A Spanish non-Jew who spoke English interrupted and asked, "What's with you people?! Why are you humiliating yourselves before the Arabs?"

One of the Israelis, a Leftist, tried to explain it to him but apparently this fellow was knowledgeable about what is going on in our area and he responded as though he was one of Baruch Marzel's strategists.

He kept on raising his eyebrows and saying in incredulity, "You are fighting your brothers in order to appease your murderers?!"

This time, it was the Israeli's turn to raise his eyebrows. "I thought we had to do this because the world is against us!"

The Rebbe said that the nations of the world are waiting for us to do the right thing, and we saw this clearly that day.

# LOST & FOUND

BY NOSSON AVROHOM

*Rabbi Rachamim Nimni of Crown Heights tells of two souls who were nearly lost to our people, who were touched thanks to the Rebbe and now connected to Torah and Chassidus.*

Rabbi Rachamim Nimni is very involved in spreading the wellsprings, especially among Jews from North Africa who live in the United States. A few years ago, he started his organization called Ohr Torah V'Chesed, which is mekarev Jews to Judaism and Chassidus.

The decision to start the organization came about after he asked the Rebbe, through the *Igros Kodesh*, which area to focus on. The answer was that since he is a Sephardic rabbi, his shlichus is to be mekarev his fellow Sephardim to Chassidus.

Rabbi Nimni operates around the year, running free day camps for families far from Yiddishkait, doing Mivtza T'fillin daily at senior centers, rallies, farbrengens, and having ongoing shiurim in various neighborhoods of New York.

On Yud-Alef Nissan every year, hundreds of his mekuravim come to 770 for a festive farbrengen. Rabbi Nimni also serves as rabbi of the Shaarei Tziyon congregation in Queens. He has many wonderful stories to relate:

I'll tell you an amazing story that took place just a few months ago. I got a phone call from a woman

named Leah in Chaifa. She said that she had heard from Lubavitcher Chassidim that I work with Israelis in New York and she begged me to help



**Rabbi Rachamim Nimni**

her, saying I was her last chance.

Her son, who was the product of a traditional education, finished his army service and took a job in security. In the course of his work, he met a young gentile woman from the U.S. When she found out that her son had a non-Jewish girlfriend, she was extremely upset and she pleaded with him to leave her immediately.

When she realized that it wouldn't be easy to convince him, she got rabbanim and other influential people involved. They all tried to persuade him with stories and with heartfelt words, as well as by warning him that his children would not be Jewish and he would be cutting himself off from his people. Nothing helped.

When the mother heard that her son was making wedding plans, she was beside herself with grief and got her family involved. His grandfather, who was close with him, tried his luck, but in vain. The mother tried everything to get her son to change his mind and the son, seeing the mounting pressure, left the country for a small town in New Jersey.

When the mother heard about me, she called to tell me that she had just managed to contact her son and she beseeched me to do all I could to help. She tearfully said that it wouldn't be easy but she asked me to try anyway.

"You are a Chassid of the Lubavitcher Rebbe and I am sure you will be successful," she added.

I didn't lose precious time but that very evening I called him up. When he realized what I wanted to discuss with him, he said, "Listen, I greatly respect you because you are close to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, whom I greatly esteem. However, you can speak to me about any topic under the sun except about my girlfriend."

So I began talking to him about

anything and everything in order to try and gain his trust. I mentioned things having to do with Judaism like our importance as the Jewish nation, the chosen people, and I told him miracle stories of the Rebbe about situations like his, reassuring him that I didn't mean him.

He was stubborn and very wary. When he realized that I was indirectly referring to his relationship with his girlfriend, he would stop me and remind me of our agreement.

For a month and more, I would call him every few days in order to ask him how he was doing, and to bring Jewish matters to the forefront of his consciousness. The truth is that I despaired about being able to change his mind but I continued to call him, something that became a routine part of my day.

One day, I was sitting with my father, Rabbi Michoel Nimni, one of the great Sephardic rabbis in New York, and I told him about this boy. My father asked me whether I had written to the Rebbe. I said that I hadn't thought about doing that.

That day I wrote to the Rebbe and put it into a volume of *Igros Kodesh*. The answer I opened to in volume 16, p. 55, was written to students in Morocco:

**Chassidus cites the statement that mezuzah corresponds to all the mitzvos. Also, according to Nigleh this is understood according to the kavana [intent of the mitzva] brought in Shulchan Aruch as Halacha – that t'fillin is about subjugating the heart and mind – i.e. the entirety of the person – and the mezuzah is the seal of the King of all kings, Hashem, over all the property and things in this house.**

That same day I bought a few mezuzos and then I called him and suggested that I put kosher mezuzos in his house. To my surprise, he agreed. He told me that he was

taught about the importance of the mezuzah as something that protects the home.

The next day, I traveled to his home in New Jersey, and we put up five mezuzos.

Two, three days passed, and in our daily phone conversations, I started to pick up on arguments breaking out between the two of them over small issues, which never bothered them in the past. This included what type of food she prepared for him, the lack of order in the house, and even...why she wore his slippers. Both of them sensed that their relationship was struggling.

*The girl felt that it was the mezuzos which brought the poisoned atmosphere between them, and she asked him to take them down. For some reason, he absolutely refused to do so.*

They tried to figure out what it was, but it just seemed that some outside force was insinuating itself into their lives. The girl felt that it was the mezuzos which brought the poisoned atmosphere between them, and she asked him to take them down. For some reason, he absolutely refused to do so.

One day, while we were speaking, he told me about the arguments between them. He even mentioned that she wanted to take down the mezuzos from the doorposts. I realized that it was all because of the mezuzos, so I told him the story from

the Gemara how Reb Yehuda HaNasi sent a mezuzah to the gentile king, which proves that a mezuzah has the segula that it protects gentiles. He agreed with me, and tried to convince her that it was not a good idea to take down the mezuzos. However, the rift between the two continued to grow each day.

Matters came to a head one evening when he came home from work and found all the mezuzos taken down. Since, she expected him to be angry, she decided to go on the offensive before he could even respond, and she began to heap scorn, hatred and mockery upon the Jewish people and their beliefs.

That evening, he contacted me and it was clear that their relationship was coming to an end.

Two days later, I met him in Crown Heights, and he told me, "Rabbi Nimni, I have good news for you. I left the gentile girl and I realize it was all foolishness, a black mark in my life. In a few days, I am returning to Eretz Yisroel."

Last summer, when I was visiting Eretz Yisroel, we met and went together to the Kosel. Apparently, the fellow fully realized his folly, whereas I got a lesson in following the Rebbe's instructions even when we don't fully understand them. We must do and Hashem will do as He sees fit...

\* \* \*

And another story:

There's a senior officer, by the name of Mordechai, who happens to be frum, at the police station in Flatbush. I knew him before he became religious, when he still went by the name Martin and was married to an Italian woman.

I met him when I made a Chanuka party at one of his friends' homes, one of my mekuravim. His friend introduced him to me as an atheist who was about to marry a non-Jew, and as someone who utterly



I met our common friend a few weeks later and he was ecstatic.

“Didn’t you hear? Martin’s marriage is on the rocks. He began going to shiurim and in general is very involved in Judaism. He comes to the shiur every week in Flatbush and has already passed me in his religious observance!”

I was amazed. I certainly hadn’t expected such a drastic change and in such a short time! I called Mordechai and when he heard my voice he immediately realized why I was calling. He apologized and explained that he felt ashamed to tell me about his new interest in Judaism after he had spoken so disparagingly about it the first time we met.

Today, as I said earlier, he’s completely observant. I’ll never forget how one day he called me to find out whether two slices of pizza are considered a “meal” according to halacha (and require certain blessings and washing hands).

Once in a while we learn together and he has become an ardent Chassid of the Rebbe. One time, when we had a heart-to-heart talk, he said, “Rabbi Nimni, you want to know why I became a baal t’shuva? It’s all because of the t’fillin. They gave me no rest. They succeeded in arousing my Jewish spark.”

I told this story some time ago to someone who is a Litvishe Torah scholar who learns in Yeshivas Rabbeinu Chaim Berlin in Flatbush. He attacked Chabad for putting t’fillin on people on the street.

“What’s it worth when the next minute they are mechalel Hashem and eat treif?”

By way of reply I told him this story and I even had them meet. Mordechai told him how it was thanks to the t’fillin that he became a baal t’shuva. Since then, that Torah scholar has to admit that the Rebbe is right.

disdained everything associated with Jewish tradition.

I tried speaking to him about how terrible assimilation is and how his children would not be Jewish, but he wasn’t interested. My friend said that he and his friends had promised Martin that if he married a Jewish woman they would pay for the wedding, but that didn’t sway him.

When I realized that Martin was completely deaf to anything we said, I pointed at the menorah and asked him what he thought the candles were telling us. He shrugged and said what he remembered, “It’s for the victory of the Maccabees over the Greeks even though they were few in number.” I tried to impress him with the message of the story.

“No, it won’t work. I don’t believe in anything and I never believed.”

I ignored this and asked him whether he’d agree to my request to keep just one mitzva.

“Did you come to change me,” he challenged me.

I continued to nudge him and finally, after much discussion, he agreed to do one mitzva. I asked him whether he’d be willing to put on t’fillin every day. He hesitated and then said, “I agree, but on two conditions. First, I’m not paying for

them. Second, I will only say the three paragraphs of the Shma and not the entire davening.” Of course, I happily agreed.

We got underway then and there with my taking out a pair of t’fillin and putting them on him. He seemed to take it seriously.

I bought him a pair of t’fillin and he promised to use them. Sadly though, he married the gentile woman.

One day, when I called to ask how he was doing, he said, “You should know that I travel on Shabbos, eat treif, and transgress everything, but I put on the t’fillin you gave me.”

Erev Pesach 5765, about three months after I met him for the first time, I went to his home to bring him shmura matza, which I bring to all my mekuravim. He refused to accept them.

“I agreed to do one mitzva,” he said, “and I do it! Leave me alone about doing other mitzvos.”

“Listen,” I said. “These are your matzos. Try and eat them at least on the first night.” I hoped that the matzos, being “food of faith,” would have a positive effect on him. He dismissed what I said with a wave of his hand, but took the matzos.

# THE AMERICANS AREN'T INTERESTED

SHAI GEFEN

## THE GOYIM SAY NO TO CONVERGENCE PLAN

Prime Minister Olmert went to Washington to ask for 10 billion dollars to implement his convergence plan, which would only bring destruction upon us. It turns out that President Bush is not keen on the plan, to say the least.

Here are some of the news reports, which came out prior to Olmert's arrival, "An American think tank in recommendations made to the president, said to refrain from supporting the prime minister's convergence plan. They said that if the convergence plan is implemented, it will rip apart the Middle East, enable Iran to strengthen its influence in the West Bank, and turn the area into a terror base against the U.S. in the Middle East in general and American soldiers in Iraq in particular.

"The think tank also warns that the convergence plan will endanger the security of Jordan and is liable to cause a wave of terror in that country. 'Unfortunately,' write the members of the think tank, 'it seems clear that an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank will encourage terror against America and will create a new base for worldwide terror.'"

This information proves, yet again, what the Rebbe said years ago, that the Israeli claim that they act under American pressure is incorrect. Most of the time, Israeli leaders simply want to

show how deferential they are to the goyim. All the agreements made in recent years were at Israel's initiative and they coerced the Americans to go along with them. This was true with Oslo and Wye and the Disengagement.

Those familiar with the Rebbe's sichos know that, decades ago, the Rebbe said the problem is the Israeli government. Washington has been stunned by Israel's concessions. During the Camp David Accords, on Yud-Tes Kislev 5740, the Rebbe said something that directly applies to our current situation:

**When the Israeli delegation arrived in Washington and expressed their agreement to give Egypt the oil fields in Alma and the like, the Americans were incredulous: Can this be? How are you willing to do that?**

**Even Egypt did not think Israel would abide by the agreement, which, from the very start, had no legitimacy, since it is harmful to all Jews, wherever they are. The one who signed to it is not the owner of the territories, for "the earth and what it contains belongs to Hashem," and "He chose to take it away from them and give it to us." Although it [Sinai] is not within the borders of Eretz Yisroel, it is still a part of the land outside of Eretz Yisroel, which protects Eretz Yisroel. By giving it away, a situation of "the land will be open before them," may develop.**

**And this entire agreement is in opposition to Washington and its**

**allies, who are not interested in strengthening Egypt, because then Egypt won't need the U.S. as much. They used the trait of "a stiff necked nation" in order to stubbornly oppose simple logic, straight thinking, and most importantly, Torah logic.**

**And they don't just give them the territories but are "mehadrin min ha'mehadrin," giving it months before the time they agreed upon so that they will consider them "pursuers of peace."**

**What does "pursuers of peace" mean? It comes at the expense of Jewish lives and pikuach nefesh!**

**Now, when there is nothing to negotiate, since they demand it all, naïve Jews of the U.S., who are no experts in this, pressure Israel to continue capitulating and giving things away.**

**This is despite their hearing from the goyim in Washington that this is the most foolish thing, since it puts them in danger. This was said by American officials to the Israeli representative in Washington, who came a number of times, with his purpose being to find favor in their eyes. But they told him: We don't want you to give things to Egypt since it makes them stronger at the expense of American interests.**

**But regarding this complaint that this agreement weakens America's power they say: Since... we are "pursuers of peace," therefore, in order to prepare peace "for our**

grandchildren” we don’t make calculations.

**I don’t want to express in words how terrible the situation is. Not only the present situation but also what they plan to do in the future is terrible, may it not come to pass. This all comes about because they give them more and more.**

### WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

Those who read the news, especially about the tragic consequences of the disengagement and what silence and passivity resulted in this past year, know that something must be done to shake people up so that Olmert’s government doesn’t carry out its plan. It’s not enough that most nations of the world oppose the plan, because it still stands.

In a situation like this, we all must act as the Rebbe’s ambassadors. It’s simply forbidden to remain quiet. Everyone must protest the madness. And it’s helpful to visit the yishuvim in the Shomron that are about to be dismantled and the Chabad houses there. Directors of Chabad houses in the center of the country need to bring their mekuravim to those places.

Another point to bear in mind is that one of the reasons why the present government is continuing with its convergence plan is because the expulsion from Gush Katif wasn’t the national trauma that we expected. The destruction of Amona had far more repercussions, which are felt to this day. The reason is simple. In Gush Katif they sang of their love for their soldiers and were photographed hugging and kissing the ones who came to destroy their homes. People understood from this that the expulsion wasn’t so bad. There was love, although it wasn’t victorious. In contrast to this, the scenes from Amona were so painful that they stopped the evacuation from other outposts and atoned, just a bit, for

what happened in Gush Katif.

So we need to show people that our departure from Gush Katif was indeed traumatic so that they realize how great the damage was and don’t want to repeat it. The Matteh HaOlami To Save the Nation and the Land produced stamps of Gush Katif and Amona depicting scenes of the destroyed yishuvim and shuls going up in flames. Many people affix these stamps next to the official postal stamp. People see it and are reminded of the horror that took place here last summer. It is only by reminding people that we have a chance to prevent another withdrawal.

Everybody must remember that we are a shliach tzibbur and we cannot wait for someone to get us to take action because it doesn’t look as though that’s going to happen. The most important thing is to convey the Rebbe’s message. Last year, a CD was produced with sichos of the Rebbe translated into Ivrit about giving away land. The message must get out. People have to be awakened and convinced that there is a great danger facing us.

At this time, when the government isn’t stable and any wind can topple it over, we must do all we can to change the course of history.

### BLOOD MONEY

They told us they wouldn’t negotiate with Hamas. Everybody laughed and knew this was just talk. Today, not only do they talk with them, they even gave them 50 million shekel. At the very same time that the Kassam missile landed in the schoolroom in Sderot, the murderers got a gift of 50 million dollars. Miss Livni, the Foreign Minister, explained that they differentiated between Hamas and the P.A.

Despite missile attacks against Israeli cities and moshavim, the Israeli government is eager to continue giving



*This information proves, yet again, what the Rebbe said years ago, that the Israeli claim that they act under American pressure is incorrect. Most of the time, Israeli leaders simply want to show how deferential they are to the goyim. All the agreements made in recent years were at Israel’s initiative and they coerced the Americans to go along with them. This was true with Oslo and Wye and the Disengagement.*

terrorists prizes so they can continue their acts of destruction.

How much ink has been spilled and how many words have been written about this? Blind people see



the results of this warped approach and the destructive consequences of the disengagement. The world looks on in astonishment at the “wise and discerning nation” and don’t understand what is going on.

The boldness our enemies have gained in the world to attack us is a direct result of our concessions and withdrawals here in Eretz Yisroel.

There is no doubt that if the U.S. was in charge here, they would not be giving millions of shekels to a terror state on the day they shell yishuvim. How absurd! They shoot at civilian sites in the heart of Israel every day!

Perhaps, from this perspective we can understand what the Rebbe said to Moshe Katzav, who then served as Transportation Minister – that if it was decreed to give over land to our enemy, it would be preferable if a gentile government did so, so it would not be a chilul Hashem.

One would have thought that after

*People see it and are reminded of the horror that took place here last summer. It is only by reminding people that we have a chance to prevent another withdrawal.*

Israel offered a gift to its enemies with the disengagement, the minimum requirement would be to defend itself, not to allow itself to be shot at from those same places they ran away from and from where they expelled Jews.

We learn an important point here, that the galus we are presently in, the galus of the Israeli government; is double and redoubled darkness. Not

only is there no “independence” but there is debasement and capitulation to the goy, the likes of which we have never seen before under a foreign government. We never experienced anything like this in our history, that Jews deliberately endangered their fellow Jews.

Those who think that this is a one-time misstep – once they said it was Rabin, then they said it was Peres, but suddenly it turns out that it’s also Netanyahu and Sharon and now Olmert – is mistaken. This is about leaders from all parties. Over the years, we expected that Arab terror would open their eyes and teach them a lesson, but it hasn’t happened yet.

It’s incredible that of all people, it’s the Arabs and the goyim who consistently oppose our giving away land. Only Jewish minds coupled with Jewish stubbornness can come up with the insanity we are witnessing these last decades.

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# HOW DO YOU START A SHIUR?

BY NOSSON AVROHOM

*A discussion about Mivtza Torah, presented in honor of Shavuos, the Time of the Giving of Our Torah. \* Part 2 of 2*

Can you give us some tips on how to start and build up a successful shiur?

**R' Elroi:** The Rebbe said that what you're supposed to do is teach Chassidus not according to how you are "constructed," but to how the people are "constructed." This is the key to properly organizing shiurim, constructing a shiur in Toras HaChassidus according to the character and nature of the participant.

Another point. Rabbi Ginsberg has the ability to speak to the heart of the people he addresses. When he gives a shiur, his voice is quiet and he speaks eloquently. Here in Ramat Aviv you can't scream it. So this is how he manages to find the way to reach the hearts of many people who never

heard a thing about Judaism and certainly not about Chassidus.

With many of the participants of these shiurim, we would not have a common language with which to attract them to come to a shiur, and it's only because one person brings another that they come and enjoy. The Rebbe says this as well, in a sicha: How do you know if you are successful? When your talmid brings other talmidim!

**R' Kotzer:** If the shiur is ongoing over an extended period, we bring refreshments. Some people regard this as a trivial point but the truth is that it isn't so. The refreshments create a nice atmosphere and make the shiur less heavy.

Another thing, it's important that the atmosphere not be pressured or

tense, that everybody can express themselves. Nobody should feel that they want to ask something but feels that he or she can't.

**R' Garelik:** The secret to success in bringing in this generation, which is far from Judaism, is through gimmicks. The best example is the series of shiurim I mentioned earlier, the shiurim given by Rabbi Karasik. Many non-observant couples attended it.

What attracted them was advertising that described a class on mysticism and kabbala, topics that are very appealing to young people these days. And when this is combined with "relationships" it's a recipe for success. We also advertised in the papers.

**R' Segal:** Most of my time is spent on visits to businesses, something most directors of Chabad houses cannot do since they are busy with other things. Unlike what most people think, those in offices and factories have more time than most and they love to listen. People at



Rabbi Yechiel Kotzer



Rabbi Menachem Segal



Rabbi Chaim Elroi



Rabbi Mordechai Garelik

home are more tired and drained after a day's work.

I give short shiurim in production plants on a regular basis. I do it primarily before holidays. I go to the

**PANELISTS:**

**Rabbi Mordechai Garelik** is in charge of programming at the Chabad house in Petach Tikva along with shliach, Rabbi Asher Deitsch. He devotes a lot of time to organizing shiurim in his city, some of which he gives himself.

**Rabbi Chaim Elroi** is director of general programming in Ramat Aviv. He organizes shiurim and develops personal ties with the residents of the community. He works within the Chabad community, headed by shliach of Ramat Aviv and rosh yeshiva Rabbi Yosef Ginsberg.

**Rabbi Menachem Segal** is director of programming at the Chabad house in Ofakim under the leadership of the rav of the k'hilla and shliach of the city, Rabbi Yisroel HersHKowitz. Rabbi Segal gives many shiurim in the industrial area of the city.

**Rabbi Yechiel Kotzer** works for the Chabad house in Eilat and gives shiurim in Eilat, including one-on-one classes with various mekuravim of the Chabad house.

plants and make a l'chaim with the manager and his employees. I take this opportunity to give over Chassidische ideas and explain how the holiday is illuminated with the light of Chassidus.

As the relationship deepens, you can speak to the employees on a deeper and more serious level. In the Shnas Hakhel I spoke at one of the plants about Hakhel. Afterwards, I suggested to the manager that every month, at meetings for the employees, I should come and explain the significance of that month. The manager loved the idea and said that he had many employees who were Russian immigrants, who knew nothing about the holidays. So this manager, despite the fact that he did not come from a religious home and had no background himself, was willing to go along with this. When you come with interesting ideas, the opposition melts.

I think this is a good way to reach hundreds of people that you ordinarily have no access to in daily life, in the course of the Chabad house's usual activities.

**What impact do the shiurim have on the participants?**

**R' Kotzer** – You really don't know what's going on in someone's soul. Of course, Torah makes a deep impact. You can clearly see the difference on someone before and after the shiur, because afterwards he is much more

refined and calm.

If someone keeps on looking for results though, in other words, every two months he wonders what he accomplished with so-and-so or so-and-so, it could work against you. That's not the way to check on the success of a shiur. You can't always know what is going on in the student.

At the end of the shiur, people come and ask questions. When you spread Judaism, you reach people because we are guaranteed that our work will not return empty handed.

At the end of a shiur, it's very important to befriend the participants and listen to what they have to say, forging a warm and close connection with them. Many of the participants at my shiurim attend because they came for Shabbos and joined other programs. They feel wanted and close.

**R' Segal:** We have a shiur every evening attended by the same people every day, fathers and husbands. They leave everything in the busy evening hours and come to the Chabad house or other locations where shiurim are held. They come, simply to listen to a Torah shiur, which demonstrates how much they enjoy it. These shiurim lead to other things – questions in halacha, personal questions, and help. Many of them truly become closer to Chassidus and the Rebbe and some of them write to the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh* on a regular basis.

There was a divorced man who was drowning in debt. He came every day to the shiur at the high-tech company, where he worked. One day, he came over to me at the end of the shiur and told me his problems.

I suggested that he write to the Rebbe and amazingly, within a short time he met a woman and married her. His money problems are almost resolved too.

### **How do you implement the Rebbe's horaa to learn inyanei**

in every shiur, we look for the connection to inyanei Moshiach and Geula. For example, in the shiur on the weekly sidra we try to focus on the topics connected with Geula.

In addition, there are shiurim on "Acharis HaYamim" or "Yemos HaMoshiach," like the shiur I give in the "Midreshet Boker" for women at the Neshama center. And of course there are shiurim on inyanei Moshiach and Geula in Chabad shuls.

**R' Segal:** Firstly, Moshiach is a

this is the great darkness before the light of dawn. Naturally, you have to add explanations, analogies, and examples to clarify this.

The second approach is to go with faith. This is what the Lubavitcher Rebbe said and the Rebbe is the Nasi Ha'dor and its prophet, and just as he prophesied things that seemed unrealistic at the time but they came true (such as his prophecies about the Gulf War, the Six Day War etc.), so too now, even when we don't fully understand what he said, we believe him. We believe that what the Rebbe said will happen. In my experience, people accept this.

**R' Kotzer:** My work with tourists is harder because you don't have the time to sit with them and explain it all, so I just get them started. I try to take apart everything they believed up until that point. Any Gemara I talk about, any vort on the parsha, always brings up the topic of Moshiach and then it's easy to say the Rebbe's view.

Of course, they are skeptical and when they want to hear more information I refer them to the Chabad houses in their hometowns, where they can get answers to all their questions.

The very fact that someone sat with them and spoke to them about a deep subject, and they see that I'm a normal person, makes them respect Lubavitch. The tourist who sees that the lecturer isn't just being bombastic, but he seriously explains inyanim of Moshiach, then even if he doesn't immediately understand it, he figures that this is serious and worth looking into.

By the way, when you speak about Moshiach and that the Rebbe is Moshiach, you have to do so proudly. If you yourself are in doubt and you say things as though forced to do so, they can sense that.

**R' Elroi, how do you teach about Moshiach to young people trained to**

### **"WHOEVER ACCEPTS THE YOKE OF TORAH"**

Rabbi Sagi Weiss gives shiurim in Eilat. He has the following amazing story to tell:

One of the mekuravim regularly attended the shiurim. He was an important person and was the maitre d' at an exclusive restaurant. One of the times he came to the Chabad house, I had a chance to connect with him and I taught him the following Mishna in Pirkei Avos. "Whoever removes the yoke of Torah, the yoke of government and the yoke of worldly matters is placed upon him. And whoever accepts the yoke of Torah, the yoke of government and the yoke of worldly matters is removed from him."

Some time went by and I noticed that he wasn't coming to shiurim. I was surprised but didn't want to pressure him. After a while, he came to me, overwrought with emotion and said, "Now I understand the 'pasuk' you explained to me."

He said that the night before, the manager of the restaurant had demoted him to be a waiter like all the others. He was beside himself but his pleading fell on deaf ears. He suddenly realized that it had to do with the fact that he had stopped attending the shiurim.

From then on, he became a regular attendee and yes, the manager gave him back his job as maitre d'.

### **Moshiach and Geula b'rabbim?**

**R' Garelik:** The Rebbe said to increase in Torah study in general and especially in p'nimius ha'Torah, and more especially in inyanei Moshiach and Geula. In other words, we're not supposed to close all other books and just learn inyanei Moshiach and Geula.

It's important to remember that every shiur in Chassidus is a taste of "toraso shel Moshiach," and of course,

topic that people love, especially in the situation we are in now. In my experience, when you mention something connected to this topic, people listen up. They want to hear about Moshiach and find it very interesting.

You can explain the topic in two general ways. One way is that our era is the era of Geula and it is specifically because of the terrible situation we are in that we know that

see things only from an intellectual perspective?

When you tell them that the ultimate in peace and security in the world will take place when Moshiach comes, they find this interesting. A topic like this has to be explained simply and clearly. Of course, we are asked endless questions, but baruch Hashem, we have answers. Isn't it interesting that many businesspeople who view everything through the lenses of rationality write to the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh* before closing a deal?

**Please sum up.**

**R' Elroi** – As I said earlier, we have lots of work with businessmen and this work requires sensitivity and calm. Just a few days ago, a businessman that I know came over to me and said, “You have no idea how different it is since you came to

*The Rebbe says this as well, in a sicha:  
How do you know if you are successful?  
When your talmid brings other talmidim!*

this neighborhood.” He explained that such great changes took place, not only in the spiritual sense, but also in the willingness of people to listen to other views. If you are familiar with this area then you know that Rabbi Yossi Ginsberg, with the Rebbe's ko'ach, has turned this place over!

As for the young people we encounter, they used to be afraid to talk to a religious Jew and now they are more open, which is a great achievement in itself. Many of them do not become baalei t'shuvah but they understand that Judaism is not a primitive religion and is not so bad that they have to fear it. The many shiurim we offer are one of the main reasons for this revolution.

**R' Segal** – There's no shliach who doesn't see the revolution which is taking place. There is a tremendous thirst for anything having to do with Torah and Judaism, and we must jump in and spread the wellsprings. Both the quantity as well as the quality of the people who are coming to shiurim is not what it once was. It's definitely a revolution.

I am sure that this revolution is one of the signs that we are in the last moments of galus, and we Chassidim of the Rebbe have to lead the way and take advantage of this opportunity.

**R' Kotzer** – Whoever gives shiurim is developing an opportunity with which he can have a dialogue with the people who come to the shiur. I'd like to emphasize an important point here. There are Lubavitchers who are gifted with a lot of energy, who are very active. There are Lubavitchers who have an unusual ability for diligence in Torah study. It's important to remember that each one should not try to switch roles with the other, because it won't work. It's just not him, and then you lose out. You have to work where you're suited to work.

Another important thing to remember is that when someone comes to your shiur it should be with his wife's consent, especially when it's a daily shiur! Because this time is taken from his family and it can cost him in shalom bayis. When she agrees, then the man can have a positive impact on the entire home.

## INADVERTENT RESCUE

Rabbi Yair Kalev, a popular lecturer, relates:

I once flew to the Far East to give a series of lectures. One of the places I lectured in was the Chabad house of Bangkok. There was a nice crowd and I taught *Tanya* while accompanying myself on the guitar.

One couple sitting there laughed and talked the entire time. When it really bothered me, I began to speak about the trait of patience and the need to listen to every view without automatically dismissing it. I did this so the couple would get the hint and stop their loud chatting, but it didn't work. So I tried to ignore them and continued giving the shiur.

Afterwards I was very curious about their behavior and I wondered how to ask them about it. However, before I could approach them, the woman came over to me. She was Israeli and she exclaimed, “You saved us!”

Her husband was American and did not understand Ivrit. Throughout the lecture, she was translating what I said for him. She also said that just a few days earlier they had attended a lecture at one of the monasteries and they had enjoyed it very much and had even decided to convert.

On second thought, the woman decided that before taking such a big step, she wanted to hear a lecture by a rabbi. They saw an advertisement for my class and came and they dismissed whatever the Christian lecturer had said.

“You saved me from converting,” she concluded.

# WOMAN TO WOMAN – KFAR CHABAD TO GUSH KATIF

BY ALIZA KARP

*The women were dedicated to making a difference in the lives of their guests. The Ahavas Yisroel of the project infused the volunteers with a unity that, again, broke through boundaries. Women who would not usually be seen together were working side by side towards their common goal.*

This year N'shei Chabad of Kfar Chabad surpassed their limits by venturing, not only out of the boundaries of their location, but by venturing to break their habitual boundaries of who would attend their Chaf-Beis Shvat Farbrengen. The women of Kfar Chabad hosted an evening for the women who had been expelled from of Gush Katif.

"It is hard to believe it really happened and was such a success," said Yehudis Piamenta, one of the team that put the evening together. "It was so beyond what we thought we could do, it was a dream and it became real!"

Yehudis and other women felt they wanted to do something for the evacuees of Gush Katif, "When the

Disengagement actually happened, something changed. We knew we had to act."

Through their efforts the women of Kfar Chabad were able to add some amount of comfort to their sisters in pain. Following the event, one of the guests from Gush Katif said, "I had such a feeling of joy knowing that we were not forgotten by Chabad." Another woman expressed that she felt "the women of Chabad are true friends."

The process from the original idea to the actual evening was long and arduous. Along the way, the small group of volunteers living in Kfar Chabad expanded to include quite a few women. The women were dedicated to making a difference in

the lives of their guests. The Ahavas Yisroel of the project infused the volunteers with a unity that, again, broke through boundaries. Women who would not usually be seen together were working side by side towards their common goal.

Tzipporah Kirshenaft, Shlucha of Gush Katif, who at the time was still pigeon-holed in two rooms of a hotel with her growing family, was at first the organizers only contact person. She introduced the women to Amira Nagar, formerly of Neve Dekalim, and together they planned and developed the program.

The first hurdle was to convince the beleaguered women of Gush Katif that the event would be worth their time and energy. Tzipporah warned the organizers that it would not be easy to convince the evacuees to come to an event with people whom they were not familiar with.

The evacuees had been dispersed so successfully by the government that they were in too many locations to reach them all, so the organizers chose which locations, within reason, they would try to canvas. One of the organizers had a connection with a printer, so invitations and posters were printed.

Seminary girls were dispatched to the hotels in Yerushalaim and groups of women went to other locations where the evacuees were taking refuge. Invitations in hand, they went door-to-door to introduce themselves to the evacuees and urge them to come and join the event being prepared from them.

The door-to-door campaign resulted in nearly 250 Gush Katif women attending the event. As they were descending from the buses which had been sent to fetch them, some of the organizers were overcome by emotion and began to cry. They would never have believed the initial response would be so great.

Throughout the preparations the Igros was consulted time and again. The Rebbe was positive and encouraging every step of the way. Even on the actual day of the event, a letter was sent to the Rebbe and he replied that the event cannot be canceled... Hashem has his ways to resolve the problem.

One of the early decisions was choosing a location. Since most of the women were coming from Kfar Chabad or Nitzan, Mercaz Shapira was chosen. It is just south of Kiryat Malachi, not far from Ashkelon.

Mercaz Shapira is a religious Zionist community. One of the organizers had a personal connection to this location. As a child, she had been expelled from Mercaz Shapira. Yes, expelled! Not everyone realizes how exclusive religious Zionist communities can be. Her family was living there. Her father was Rosh Yeshiva. He began to come closer to Chabad. When he started to teach Tanya in the Yeshiva, he was given two weeks to leave.

When the women came to check out the hall and subsequently book it, they were warmly welcomed by the people of Mercaz Shapira. These days they have an appreciation for what Chabad stands for.

Although as much as could be donated was donated, there were still outstanding bills. The organizers approached Rabbi Sholom Dovber Wolpo, whose organization responded generously in order for the evening to take place.

So that the guests would not feel the event was a superficial gesture, the organizers attended to multitudes of details. The hall was decorated, flowers were donated, the women of

***Rabbi Jacobson told the women that they should not lose faith. He clarified his statement saying that he was not talking about faith in G-d. He knew he was speaking to women whose faith in G-d was not shaken. Rather he encouraged them not to lose faith in themselves.***

Kfar Chabad cooked and baked the amount of food that Jewish mothers produce when they are worried there will not be enough!

At the door each woman was given a magnet with the Rebbe's picture and the words, "In the merit of the Jewish woman, we were redeemed and in the merit of the Jewish woman we will be redeemed."

Each woman from Gush Katif was

given a raffle ticket, a chance to win a dollar from the Rebbe. As one woman received her ticket, she knew the dollar would go to her. She said she just knew it. Later in the evening, when she did win the dollar, she told the audience that she had received a Rebbe dollar twenty years ago from Rabbi Grossman. She had treasured the dollar. But when someone she knew fell sick, she felt obligated to give the dollar to them. She felt it was the right thing to do. So she said that when she came in tonight, she knew her time had come to receive another dollar from the Rebbe.

Interestingly enough, the organizers had forgotten to bring the dollar they had designated to give away, and someone in the audience was moved to give up her personal dollar so that the raffle could take place. Of course, she was reimbursed after the evening, but it was still an interesting turn of events. The workings of the bracha of a dollar from the Rebbe have their own pathways.

The program included speakers, videos of the Rebbe, and music for dancing and singing. Everything went well, thank G-d, and was received well.

Amira Nagar read the Rebbe's Kapital. Rabbi Wolpo, who was very involved in anti-Disengagement efforts and who was in Gush Katif until the end, came to address the women. Tzipporah Kirshenzaft, familiar to all, said a few words. Tzipporah Maidantzik put together wonderful clips of the Rebbe with Hebrew subtitles. The first one she showed had the Rebbe speaking about the power of women. The second one was the Rebbe singing 'We Want Moshiach Now!'

The main speaker for the evening was Rabbi Yossi Jacobson. Because the event was early in the week, his trip to Eretz Yisroel involved staying over Shabbos. When he asked his

wife Estee if it was alright for him to take the trip, she answered, "That is the least I can do for these women."

In the past few years Rabbi Jacobson has spoken in many locations in Yehuda and Shomron – including Elon Moreh, Har Bracha, Karnei Shomron, Kiryat Arba and Bat Ayin – but he had not previously spoken before an audience from Gush Katif.

When asked what it is that forges his connection to his audiences from Yesha, Jacobson said, "The Jews of Yesha are heroic figures who are dedicated to holding onto the Land of Israel. But on a global level they are isolated, both physically and ideologically. They appreciate that I come from the outside, as someone who travels the world, who deeply cherishes them and their commitment to Eretz Yisroel.

"The future of the liberated territories is in peril. The state of Israel stands at the threshold of a new era. Zionist ideology, which has survived a few generations, is shortsighted. Now we have to face the conflict of why we are fighting for the land as opposed to living comfortably. Few are ready to extend the question of why we are in Eretz Yisroel and not in New Jersey. It is safe for the Jews in the US, with no explicit anti-Semitism. What are they gaining by staying there? The theory that Hertzfel hypothesized was that the world would be rid of anti-Semitism if the Jews had their own



**Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Jacobson**

country, just as the English have England and the French have France. Now we see that the worst anti-Semitism is directed towards the Jewish state. So what is the logical conclusion? The question is not the territories, the question is all of Eretz Yisroel. Only Jews make the distinction of the territories. Jews who live there are taking the brunt of the uncertainty that permeates the mood of the entire country. The underlying question remains – one which the Rebbe answered repeatedly – is the land ultimately ours?

"In accepting the invitation to speak at Mercaz Shapira, my primary

contribution was to share with my audience perspectives in Chassidus, how Chabad deals with uncertainty. However, as much as I tried to give them, I took away more. I have none of the challenges they face, or the pain they endure..."

When addressing his audience Rabbi Jacobson thanked the women for their love of Eretz Yisroel and confirmed that their sacrifices for Eretz Yisroel and Toras Yisroel had not gone unnoticed.

He told the women that they should not lose faith. He clarified his statement saying that he was not talking about faith in G-d. He knew he was speaking to women whose faith in G-d was not shaken. Rather he encouraged them not to lose faith in themselves.

Yehudit reported, "Rabbi Jacobson spoke for more than an hour. There was total silence, except for the crying or laughing in response to what he was saying."

Yehudis said that the goal of the evening was to bring the Rebbe to the women of Gush Katif. "We feel very encouraged that the Rebbe accepted our invitation and came with us to greet our guests, the best proof being that at the end of the evening more than forty women signed up for phone Chavrusas to learn more about Chassidus. We hope to continue programs for our new friends, expanding to include evacuees at other locations and by making programs for the children as well."



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# MOSHIACH IS OUR MOTTO IN LIFE!

BY MENACHEM ZIEGELBOIM

*He is the rav of the fourth largest city in Eretz Yisroel (200,000 residents), member of the Beis Din Rabbanei Chabad in Eretz Yisroel. He also heads the Machon Oholei Shem that publishes early manuscripts and he is the author of s'farim. \* We interviewed Rabbi Eliyahu Yochonon Gurary and asked him to tell us about his rabbanus, about his encounters with the Rebbe, and about his Chassidishe daas Torah on timely topics. \* Presented for Shavuos, which is also called "Chag HaMorei Tzedek."*

Many rabbanim wanted to be the rav of Cholon. The candidates lobbied, sent emissaries, wrote letters, and made every effort to attain this coveted position of rav of the fourth largest city in Eretz Yisroel.

One of the candidates was the gaon and Chassid, Rabbi Eliyahu Yochonon Gurary, rav of the Kiryat Sharett neighborhood in Cholon, a Lubavitcher Chassid and an unassuming, soft-spoken man.

He wasn't interested in the position but he knew that the Rebbe wanted it, for the Rebbe had sent him to Eretz

Yisroel and had assigned him the role of rabbi from when he was a young man. This is what he told his family and friends who were sent to convince him to withdraw his candidacy. "The Rebbe wants it!" he said.

On election day, while the other candidates did what they could to convince people to vote for them, Rabbi Gurary sat at home, washed his hands, put on his gartel and wrote to the Rebbe and asked for his bracha. He then put the letter into a volume of *Igros Kodesh*.

The letter he opened to was

## CHOLON

About 200,000 people live in Cholon, the fourth largest city in Eretz Yisroel. It is named Cholon for the pasuk in Yehoshua (15:51), "V'Goshen, V'Cholon, V'Gilo..." since the founders wanted to describe the scenery, which at first included only sand and desolation.

The city was founded in the 30's when five communities were united into one city. Cholon was one of the first yishuvim, which absorbed the waves of immigration. Out of a city of sand, a city bloomed. It has numerous schools and parks and is in the center of the country, at the crossroads.

addressed to "one who sits in judgment and leads his community in righteousness" (letter #5573), an amazing letter:

**Just as they saw, open, supernatural miracles then, now too it is an auspicious time to fulfill the request of those who are connected to matters of Torah and mitzvos and all matters that help in this... All the more so with regard to a rav who leads a flock in Israel, the expansion in his personal matters will surely bring about an expansion in all matters of Judaism within his community. With**

**respect and blessing for good news in all the above.**

Rabbi Gurary quietly said to his family, "The elections have been decided."

Later that night, when the votes were counted, they saw that unexpectedly, the man who did the least to promote himself, Rabbi Gurary, had won.

\* \* \*

I grew up in Crown Heights. I was

one of the first talmidim in Oholei Torah. Before that I learned in the yeshiva on Bedford Avenue, but when Oholei Torah opened, a school that had no secular studies, my father switched me to that yeshiva. This was in the 50's and I was one of the first talmidim in the first class.

My parents are R' Nosson a"h (who passed away ten months ago), and Tema Gurary, who raised their children in a very Chassidische atmosphere.

In 1948, my father traveled, as a

bachur, along with Rabbi Uri Ben-Shachar, to learn in 770. A trip like that in those days was quite unusual. My father had the privilege of sitting for hours in the Ramash's (later to be the Rebbe) room and typing up the sichos that the Rebbe Rayatz said. He was very close to the Rebbe. No wonder then, my father was immediately mekasher to him after the histalkus of the Rebbe Rayatz, even though many other Chassidim were unsure and confused.

My father returned to Eretz Yisroel, but when the Rebbe officially took on the nesius, my father rushed back to 770 – even though he had grown up in a well-to-do home and was already married – in order to be with the Rebbe. He arrived at 770 in Adar 1951, two months after the official beginning of the nesius.

Some time after he arrived, he had a four-hour yechidus with the Rebbe. The Rebbe was very inquisitive as to the goings-on in Eretz Yisroel and about various Chassidim. At this time, the Rebbe told him that his shlichus was in the United States. "I want you to move here." In 1953, my mother joined him and we lived in a room in the building 887 near 770.

The Rebbe's relationship with my family was very close. The Rebbe would ask my father what we ate each day. The Rebbe once said to a few Chassidim: "This is a Chassid who is mekushar to me." As I said, my father left his parents' wealthy home and moved to the U.S. with almost nothing. After some time, he began to work in the s'farim business.

My mother was one of the founders of N'shei Chabad in the U.S. Throughout the years she was a member of the N'shei Chabad committee and she edited *Di Yiddishe Heim*, as per the Rebbe's instructions. It is the only Chabad publication in existence for over 40 years, and she edits it until this day.

So I grew up in a home with



**Rabbi Eliyahu Yochanon Gurary, rav of Cholon and member of the Beis Din Rabbanei Chabad in Eretz Yisroel**

Chassidishe parents who had many yevrim from the Rebbe.

After I finished the yeshiva system, I learned in 770.

\* \* \*

Throughout his years as a bachur, R' Gurary had an unusual relationship with the Rebbe. At every opportunity, the Rebbe asked the hanhala of the yeshiva about his progress, and about the activities and mitzvaim, which he did.

One time, in 1964 the hanhala of the elementary school class he was in split up the class into two groups. His parents complained to the Rebbe, for now it looked as though their son was learning on a lower level than before.

The Rebbe said, "Many children come to me and here in this room the truth is known. There aren't too many children who came to me the way he [R' Gurary] came to me. You will see that you will have much nachas from him."

From the time he was bar mitzva, he had a yechidus every year. Sometimes he went along when his parents had yechidus and sometimes his parents went with him.

"Each time I went for yechidus, I would bring the Rebbe a present. It was always a seifer or s'farim. My father had a big s'farim store on the East Side. S'farim collectors would frequently visit the store to look for interesting s'farim. Every Friday, right after learning, I was off to my father's store in order to see what was new.

One time, when I was in the store, someone unfamiliar to me came over, showed me a "bichel" of Chassidus and asked me to look at it. I flipped through it and saw that it was Chassidus Chabad. The person wanted to sell it to me but I didn't know much about it, and I told him, "Leave it with me for a few days and I'll check it out and then give you an answer." He agreed.



**Rabbi Gurary in Oholei Torah, sitting at the table on the right, on the bench on the right near the window**

This was before my birthday and when I went for yechidus, I brought the bichel with me and told the Rebbe

I had brought a bichel Chassidus. The Rebbe took it, put on his glasses (this was the first time I saw the Rebbe in glasses), and flipped through it while saying to himself, "This was printed, this was not printed. This is from the Mittlerer Rebbe, this is from the Tzemach Tzedek."



**Rabbi Gurary as a bachur in yeshiva**

And the Rebbe continued in this way, identifying maamer after maamer. When he was finished, the Rebbe asked me where I had gotten it and I told him the story. The Rebbe said: Leave it here for me to review, and you'll get it back from the secretaries.

A week or two passed and I hadn't gotten the bichel back. I tried to inquire from the secretaries what was going on but they had

*“There were a number of conditions and I had nearly no chance of being picked for the shlichus...”*



Parting from the Rebbe before traveling to Eretz Yisroel on shlichus, Shevat 5736, Rabbi Gurary in the center

no answer. In the meantime, the man was asking me for his bichel back or payment and I didn't know what to tell him. I offered various excuses but when I no longer had any choice I told my father what was going on.

I didn't know how much the man would want for the bichel. He could ask for ten thousand dollars or more. My father got up his nerve and asked the man how much he wanted for it, and he said \$10!

Another time, I found a book called *K'dushas Aharon*. When I flipped through it I found a paper between the pages that was handwritten by R' Betzalel Azaritsher, a Chassid of the Alter Rebbe. At my next yechidus, I brought the paper.

The Rebbe looked at it and asked, "Where did you get this from?"

I told the Rebbe I had found it in a bookcase in my father's store. The Rebbe asked, "Did you take it with your father's permission?"

I was married in 5735 and the shadchan was the Rebbe. A number of suggestions had been made and I wrote to the Rebbe that I didn't want

to hear about shidduchim but if the Rebbe said I should, then I would present the suggestions that had been made to me. The Rebbe said that yes, it was time, and he circled the name of my wife, daughter of the Chassid, Rabbi Dovid Bravman a"h, secretary in Kfar Chabad.

She was in Eretz Yisroel at the time and the Rebbe said she should come to the U.S. and less than a week later, we were engaged. After the wedding, I learned in the Rebbe's kollel.

In 5736, the Rebbe spoke about shlichus to Eretz Yisroel. The Rebbe said that whoever wanted to go should sign up and then he would choose the lucky shluchim. Dozens of people signed up. There were a number of conditions and I had nearly no chance of being picked. Firstly, one of the conditions was that the couple should be married at least a year and we were married only nine months. Another condition was that the candidates not be Israeli and I am from an Israeli family. But I still wanted to be a shliach very much and I signed up.

The names were presented to the Rebbe, who chose the shluchim. This

was a Friday, 8 Teives 5736. I went with my wife to the hospital for her to give birth and after a while, a nurse came out and said we had a daughter. A minute later the phone rang and it was R' Binyamin Klein telling me I had been picked to be a shliach.

I was very excited and when I went outside everybody wished me a double mazal tov. Baruch Hashem, this daughter of ours is on shlichus in Germany with her husband, Rabbi Teichtel.

The group of shluchim to Eretz Yisroel consisted of eight couples and three bachurim. Before the trip, all the shluchim convened in Gan Eden HaTachton and the Rebbe said a sicha and gave out s'farim. I received a volume of *Likkutei Sichos* and my wife received a *Tanya* and the baby, a Siddur.

We left for Eretz Yisroel on Yud-Alef Shevat 5736 with our one-month-old baby. We arrived in Tzfas, which was a physical and spiritual wilderness and the shluchim sat and learned in the kollel founded by Rabbi Leibel Kaplan a"h. We learned there for two years. Then I wrote to the Rebbe,

asking what I should do next.

One day I received an answer with a list of priorities. First preference was rabbanus. Only after that did the Rebbe list the other possibilities. The contents of this letter were then sent to the other shluchim, but the first horaa was sent to me.

### **Had you been thinking about rabbanus?**

Not at all. I had never considered it, didn't even dream of it. Shortly afterwards I opened the yeshiva in Tzfas and Beis Levi Yitzchok, along with Rabbi Eliyahu Friedman a"h. He was the menahel gashmi and I was the menahel ruchni. We had no money, so it was rough and the work was very hard. There was no kitchen so we bought falafel for the bachurim. That was breakfast, lunch, and supper for the bachurim. We schlepped mattresses from my home to the yeshiva and back. The yeshiva's material state was really sub-standard.

This went on for a year and a half, and then I wrote to the Rebbe again and asked what I should do. The Rebbe answered: rabbanus. I told the Rebbe that I did not want to be supported by the public; I wanted to earn my own livelihood. But the Rebbe wrote again about rabbanus and I realized this was my task in life.

Even before I married, the Rebbe told me to get smicha for rabbanus. I began learning and then received smicha from Rabbi Piekarski and then from Rabbi Moshe Feinstein z"l. Years later, I could see how the Rebbe was guiding me towards the world of rabbanus.

After repeated horaos, I realized that I had to start looking for a place to serve as rav. I traveled to the center of the country several times a month to look for a place. R' Zushe Partisan a"h helped me by going with me to different places. There were a number of possibilities like Moshav B'nei R'eim near Kiryat Malachi, Yesod HaMaala,

Rosh Pina, and other small yishuvim. I visited all these places but didn't think any of them was the place for me.

At this time, I had to go to Rabbi Shlomo Goren, who then served as Chief Rabbi, in order to get a "suitability" certification. This was no simple matter since you needed protektzia and at that time the Rebbe had opposed various things Rabbi Goren had done, so I was afraid I wouldn't succeed. But in the end, it worked out and he gave me the certificate.

For a long time I traveled from Tzfas to the center of the country and each time I returned disappointed. One day I wrote to the Rebbe that it was hard for me to keep traveling and the Rebbe said I could move to Kfar Chabad. So we moved to Kfar Chabad Beis and I worked in the library while still looking for a rabbinic position.

I went to the Rebbe for Tishrei 5740 and during that month I wrote to the Rebbe that finding a place was extremely difficult, especially when I lacked the help and support. I said it just wasn't happening and asked to be released from this assignment, but the Rebbe did not let up. On the contrary, he wrote a letter about rabbanus and

concluded with a bracha: "Hashem will help you."

A few days after I returned to Eretz Yisroel, I met Rabbi Blau in Kfar Chabad, who told me that there was an open call for a job opening for rav in the Kiryat Sharett neighborhood of Cholon. I was skeptical since I knew that a public tender of such a job is generally decided ahead of time with a particular candidate that the deciding committee wants. And I didn't believe it possible for me to be a rav in an important city in the center of the country. However, afterwards I saw how the Rebbe was in charge.

I sat down in the office in Beit Shazar and figured I would give it a try. I spoke with the head of the religious council in Cholon and introduced myself. He asked various questions, about my learning and smicha. In the middle of the conversation, he suddenly asked from where I was calling. I said, "From Kfar Chabad," and thought that this spelled the end of our conversation. But to my surprise he said, "Ah, you're a Chabadnik?" I told him that I was and he immediately invited me to his office.

I met with him two times and



**At a reception for the chief rabbi, Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, with other rabbis and important figures of Cholon**



Rabbi Gurary speaking at a kinus in Cholon

during our visits, we spoke about rabbanus, etc. After the second meeting he said, "There are five

candidates for the position. One of them was groomed for the job in advance. I don't know why, but you

will be my rav."

Then I presented myself to the religious council. I said over an inyan in Nigleh and then they asked me many questions about my views on life. One of their questions was whether I was a Zionist, and this was after they had disqualified some rabbanim for not having served in the army.

I answered, "I don't understand you. I had a good life in the U.S. and despite that I came to live here, and you're asking me whether I'm a Zionist?!"

A few days later, I was told that I had been chosen to be the rav of the Kiryat Sharett neighborhood of Cholon. At that time, this was the largest neighborhood in the country and had 42,000 residents!

(To be continued be"H.)



Rabbi Gurary speaking at a meeting of Tzach HaOlamis