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

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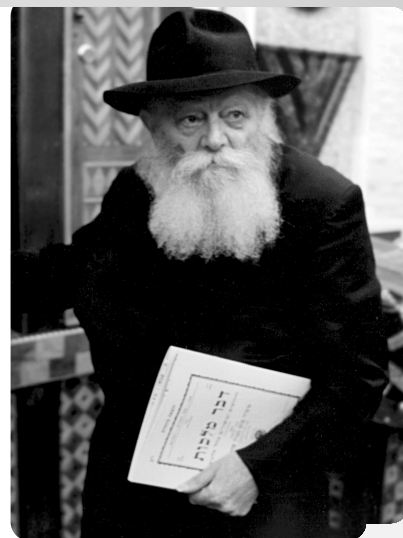
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# BEYOND THE DESERT

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



[Continued from last week]

4. It is relevant here to discuss the words of Rambam in the Laws of Repentance, for thus we may elucidate the latter explanation (which is according to the inner dimension of the Torah) in terms of **Torah law**.

In Chapter 10 [Law 1] of Laws of Repentance the Rambam writes: “One should not say, ‘I am doing the Mitzvos of the Torah and delving into its wisdom in order to receive all the blessings written in it or in order that I may merit the life of the World to Come, and I shall stay away from the transgressions which the Torah cautions against in order to be saved from the curses written in the Torah or so I shall not be cut off from the life of the World to Come.’ It is not appropriate to serve G-d in this manner, for the service of one who serves in this manner is motivated by fear. It is not the virtue of the Prophets nor the virtue of the Sages. Only the ignorant, as well as women and children, serve G-d in this manner, for they are educated to serve out of fear – until their minds expand and they may [then] serve [G-d] out of love.”

In the preceding chapter [Chapter 9, Law 2], Rambam writes: “For this reason all the Jewish people – their Prophets and their Sages [included] – eagerly anticipated the Days of Moshiach. That is, in order that they may rest from the kingdoms which do not permit them to occupy themselves with Torah and Mitzvos properly. They will [then] find themselves calm and will increase in wisdom **in order that they shall merit** the life of the World to Come.”

At first glance, this begs the question: How is it possible that in Chapter 10 it states, “It is not appropriate to serve G-d in this manner ... **It is not** the virtue of the Prophets nor the virtue of the Sages,” when preceding this he writes explicitly that this is the way of the Prophets and the Sages (for which reason “all the Jewish people – their Prophets and their Sages

[included] – eagerly anticipated the Days of Moshiach”)? This is indeed the virtue of the Prophets and the Sages!

Simply speaking, we may answer that there are two separate matters here: Chapter 9 does not address the manner of the **fulfillment** of Torah and Mitzvos; it outlines, rather, the definition and nature of the reward for Mitzvos that is [received] in the life of the World to Come [FN 36: and it comes as a continuation and conclusion to what he began in Chapter 8: “The good that is hidden away for the righteous” is life in the World to Come], which is “the end of all the reward in its entirety and the final goodness which has no interruption nor diminishment” [Rambam 9:2]. Therefore, “all the Prophets eagerly anticipated it” [ibid 8:3, end], and “to what an extent did [King] Dovid pine and yearn for the life of the World to Come” [ibid 8:7, beg.]. For this very reason all the Jewish people – their Prophets and their Sages included – eagerly anticipated (for this state to be manifest **in the world** [see FN 40] in) the Days of Moshiach, for specifically through this (they would be able to occupy themselves with Torah and Mitzvos properly and) they shall merit the life of the World to Come.

Whereas, in Chapter 10 the Rambam elucidates the desired manner of the **fulfillment of Torah and Mitzvos**. Namely, that the intent of being occupied with Torah and Mitzvos should not be for the sake of meriting the life of the World to Come; it should be motivated, rather, by love [of G-d]. Thus, although there must be the yearning for the life of the World to Come, this is not the purpose of the fulfillment of Torah and Mitzvos, but a matter unto itself.

However, this distinction is, at first glance, contrived, for the wording, “(they will then find themselves calm and) they will **increase** in wisdom **in order** that they shall merit the life of the World to Come,” implies that ultimately their thought

and their intent (even when not during the fulfillment of Mitzvos) is that being occupied with Torah and Mitzvos is in order to merit the life of the World to Come.

5. The Rambam continues in Chapter 10 [Law 2] (in a law unto itself): “The one who serves [G-d] out of love, occupies himself in Torah and in Mitzvos and goes in the ways of wisdom – not for the sake of any thing in the world, not because of the fear of bad fortune and not in order to inherit the good fortune, but – acts in accordance with the truth [simply] because it is the truth, and in the end, good fortune will come as a result of it. The virtue of this approach is exceedingly great. But not every Sage merits it. This is the virtue of Avrohom our Father, whom the Holy One Blessed Be He called ‘His Beloved,’ for he served [G-d] solely out of love.”

This requires explanation, for also this passage seems to pose the following contradiction: In Law 1 Rambam writes that service out of fear is the way of the ignorant, as well as women and children: “It is not the virtue of the Prophets nor...the Sages” – implying that the service and virtue of the Sages and the Prophets is service motivated by love. Whereas, in Law 2 he writes regarding serving out of love that “The virtue of this approach is exceedingly great. **But not every Sage merits it.**” Thus, this is not the virtue of (all) the Prophets and **all the Sages** [to which he refers in Law 1].

Furthermore, in Law 1 he concludes that even with regard to the ignorant, etc., who serve G-d in this manner, they “are educated to serve out of fear – until their minds expand and they may [then] **serve [G-d] out of love**” – implying that service out of love is within the reach of every single person. Whereas, in Law 2 Rambam explicitly writes that “The virtue of this approach is exceedingly great.

But not (even) **every Sage** merits it.”

6. Therefore, it appears correct to say that the meaning of involvement in Torah and Mitzvos “in order that they shall merit the life of the World to Come,” mentioned in Chapter 9, is not in order to receive the **reward** of the World to Come

per se, but in order to advance to the **continuation of involvement** in Torah and Mitzvos in the manner that it is in the World to Come. [FN 45: Among the resulting practical differences is that progress in a given **matter** arouses and spurs the person to further advancement – as our Sages say, “One who has one hundred wants two hundred; [one who has] two hundred wants four hundred” (Koheles Rabba 1:13) – and he has no rest, whereas, with regard to reward, one is liable to be happy with his portion and that is his rest.]

The explanation of the matter: Regarding love of G-d, Rambam continues [10:3]: “How is the appropriate love [of G-d expressed]? It is that one should love G-d with a love that is overwhelming, extremely powerful, to the extent that his soul is bound in love of G-d and he is constantly engrossed in it...” (and in the end of the chapter [10:6]), “It is something that is known and clear that the love of G-d is not bound in the heart of a man until he is constantly engrossed in it, etc., loving G-d intent on coming to know Him, etc. Thus, a person must devote

himself to understanding and intellectualizing teachings of wisdom and understanding which inform him about his Master, etc.”

[To be continued be”H]

*The meaning of involvement in Torah and Mitzvos “in order that they shall merit the life of the World to Come” is not in order to receive the reward of the World to Come per se, but in order to advance to the continuation of involvement in Torah and Mitzvos in the manner that it is in the World to Come.*

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# '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 3*

## HAIR COVERING

The custom in Korenitz was that immediately following the wedding, married women would cut off their hair and put on a kerchief. Once, a woman refused to cut her hair after her wedding, and when Reb Zalman Korenitzer called her to come see him, she refused.

Upon hearing her of her refusal, Reb Zalman began pacing back and forth in his house trying to resolve his dilemma. On the one hand, he did not want to curse her, as after all, she is a Jew. However, if he would not curse her, others would learn from her and follow her example.

In the end, he cursed her to have a scalp wound that no doctor would be able to heal, which is exactly what transpired. She developed a wound that the doctors couldn't heal, until she was forced to cut her hair. However, even that didn't help until she went to Reb Zalman, and he told her that only if she promises to cover

her hair with a kerchief would she be helped, and so it was.

## MEDITATING IN DARKNESS

Reb Avrohom of Zhembin once asked his disciple, Reb Shmuel Groinem, how he spends the long winter Friday nights. Reb Groinem answered that he buys two long candles that burn all night. After the meal, he goes to sleep until 2 AM, and then he gets up and learns Chassidus until the morning. Reb Avrohom told him: I can't afford to buy such candles, so I also go to sleep after the meal and wake up somewhere around one or two o'clock, and then I sit and meditate on a subject in Chassidus for five hours or so until daybreak.

## THE GUARANTOR PAID

Reb Shmuel Gurary would sell lumber to the government for laying railroad ties. According to the contract, he was supposed to provide high quality lumber. At some point,

they discovered that he defrauded them and delivered lower grade material, and a date was set for trial. This was a huge difficulty, and he found himself facing grave punishment.

During that time, a Jew who lost all his money approached him for a loan of ten thousand rubles. This Jew was known as someone with a low likelihood of being able to return the money, so, when Reb Shmuel Gurary answered that he would give the loan only if he could find a guarantor, it became immediately obvious that nobody would sign for him. Lacking any other option, he wrote on the deed of guarantee that Hashem will be the guarantor. When he saw that, Reb Shmuel took pity and gave him the loan.

The time for the trial came around, and miraculously, Reb Shmuel won the case. In fact, he came out ahead with the astounding sum of ten thousand rubles!

The lender invested the money successfully and eventually came to repay the loan. Reb Shmuel told him that the Guarantor already repaid the loan, and he refused to accept the money. I am not sure, but I think they actually had a Din Torah over the issue.

## WITH WHAT DO YOU DAVEN?

Reb Zalman Dovid was one of the *chozrim* (those who reviewed the discourses of the Rebbe from memory) in Lubavitch. He was a few years older than I was, but because we shared the same living quarters, I merited to hear a great deal from him.

He would daven Shacharis the entire day until Mincha. He would start after studying Chassidus, at about 11 a.m., until Mincha time, which in the winter was about 4 p.m. Originally, he would eat something before the davening, until he decided this was not proper, so he stopped.

He once told me that because he thinks Chassidus all day and doesn't eat until nighttime, he doesn't have the head for learning Nigleh. Therefore, he would only come to the Chassidus times of study in the morning and evening, but he did not show up for Nigleh.

Once, the mashgiach, Reb Yaakov Boruch saw him in his room and asked if he still learns in yeshiva, because he hadn't seen him at Nigleh study for two months. Reb Zalman Dovid didn't answer, and the mashgiach went to the dean of the yeshiva, the Rebbe Rayatz (before he was Rebbe), and said that this bachur didn't show up to learn Nigleh for two months.

The Rayatz called him in and asked him, "With what do you daven?" He answered, "With the maamer from Shabbos (said by the Rebbe Rashab). I think it over in my mind, repeatedly." This conversation took place (I think) between Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur. The maamer of that Shabbos began with the words '*kenesher yair kino*.' It is very long and very deep.

The Rayatz told him to repeat the maamer, and Reb Zalman Dovid reviewed the maamer looking in his eyes the entire time for a sign if he was saying it over properly, however, the Rayatz's face showed nothing. In the

middle, the Rayatz asked him if he thought there should be an addendum at some point.

Reb Zalman Dovid said that he thought there should be and even pointed out the exact point in the maamer and the suggested comment, and once again, there was no sign on the face of the Rayatz if he was correct or not. At some point, the Rayatz asked him to provide an explanation and he did so, but he got no sign if what he said was correct. When he

*When Reb Shmuel Gurary answered that he would give the loan only if he could find a guarantor, it became immediately obvious that nobody would sign for him. Lacking any other option, he wrote on the deed of guarantee that Hashem will be the guarantor...*

finished, he left the administrative offices, and nothing further happened.

This particular maamer was sent in to the Rebbe Rashab by the *chozrim* (I think) three times. Reb Zalman Dovid also prepared a "hanacha" for himself, but he did not publicize it, as nobody would publicize anything without approval from the Rebbe Rashab. Around the month of Shvat, the Rebbe called Reb Shilem and asked for another "reshima" of the maamer. (The Rebbe Rashab never called it a

"hanacha." He would refer only to a "reshima" or "tzetel" and the like.) Reb Shilem called all the *chozrim*, and they struggled and toiled but did not succeed in putting together a "hanacha," as it was already four months after the saying of the maamer.

Reb Zalman Dovid, who learned the maamer four times from his own written notes before he went to Reb Shilem, knew the entire maamer clearly. Therefore, even though he didn't want to show off his knowledge, occasionally, when the others were stuck, he would fill in the gaps.

Eventually, Reb Shilem said, "Nu, you know it better than anyone else, you prepare a 'hanacha,'" which is what Reb Zalman Dovid had in mind all along. He went and brought his "hanacha" to Reb Shilem, who gave it in to the Rebbe Rashab.

The "hanacha" remained by the Rebbe for five days, and afterwards, he returned it by way of Reb Zalman Havlin. When Reb Zalman Havlin gave the "hanacha" to Reb Zalman Dovid, he told him what the Rebbe Rashab said about him, but Reb Zalman Dovid would not tell what he said under any circumstances.

## WHAT IS MY LEIBEL DOING?

The Chassid, Reb Leib Sheinin was a big batlan. He was an oved, who would daven for four or five hours. He lived in Cherson. His mother was not of Chassidic stock and his father was a Chassid, but a simple Jew.

After he married and settled in Cherson, one of the Chassidim from Cherson came to the Rebbe Rashab, and the Rebbe asked him, "What is my Leibel doing?"

The Chassid answered that he became corrupted, because in Lubavitch, they didn't wear white collars or ties, yet he had started wearing a white collar and a tie. However, he concluded that there is one consolation, namely that the tie is never in the right place, but sometimes

sideways or backwards. When the Rebbe heard that, he smiled.

### “OPENING THE ARON”

My wife's grandfather was a Chassid of the Tzemach Tzedek and afterwards of the Rebbe Maharash. Once (I think in 5636/1876), he was by the Rebbe Maharash, and he went with another Chassid to the Rashab to ask him to review the maamer they had heard from the Rebbe Maharash. He agreed, but he would daven at length for three to four hours each day, so he said they should return at a certain time after he finished davening and then he would review the maamer. They came at the appointed time, and he reviewed the maamer for them.

In the middle, Reb Shmuel Ber, one of the elder Chassidim who would stay with the Rashab, walked in. (Reb Shmuel Ber was a Chassid of the Mittlerer Rebbe and in the time of the Tzemach Tzedek was already considered one of the elders. When he would visit the Tzemach Tzedek, he would stay by the Rebbe Maharash, and when the Maharash became Rebbe, he switched to staying with the Rebbe Rashab. He too, would daven at great length.)

He had just finished Shacharis, and he said to the Rebbe Rashab, “You are honored with opening the aron.” They didn't know what he meant, but the Rashab got up and opened the bookcase and took out a bottle of mashke and some cake, and served him.

*(I heard this from my father-in-law, Reb Shneur Zalman, the son of the witness to the story. His father's name was Shimon and he was born around 5592/1832.)*

### THE WEDDING OF THE YOUNGEST SON

My father-in-law, Reb Zalman Levin the shochet, was born in the year 5619/1859, and he was present at the wedding of Reb Menachem Mendel, the youngest son of the Rebbe Maharash in the year 5642/1882.

He recounted that the hall was

packed and fifty people stood on each table. There were even those who tied themselves to the beams under the roof, and hung from their belts.

One wise fellow wanted to be close to the Rebbe Maharash, so he came

early and hid under the Rebbe's table. After the Rebbe finished saying the maamer, he moved his feet under the table and felt that someone was hiding underneath. He looked down and called the Chassid by name, and he said, “It is mamash a *sakana* (life

### BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF REB BETZALEL WILSCHANSKI Z”L

Reb Betzalel, or Reb Tzale Chersoner, was known for his brilliant and multifaceted personality. He was an impassioned Chassid, an outstanding yerei Shamayim, a shochet and mohel with great mesirus nefesh under the Communist regime. He also displayed exceptional Torah scholarship as well as an ability to render halachic rulings, as he studied in the Rabbinic Institute, which the Rebbe Rayatz founded in Nevel.

Reb Betzalel holds a place in the front row of the dazzling gallery of eminent Chassidim, who served as mashpiim and activists. When he arrived in Paris, and later in Australia, he was appointed by the Rebbeim as a member of the administration, as seen in the *Igros Kodesh* of the Rebbe Rayatz and the Rebbe MH”M.

His power of influence was great, whether amongst the Chassidim living with mesirus nefesh in Russia, or the Chassidim living in free countries, or ordinary Jews of all walks-of-life in Australia. All of them basked in the light of his Torah knowledge and were warmed by his Chassidic fire. Everyone who knew him honored him, and continue to treasure his memory.

Already in his younger years, as a student in Tomchei T'mimim in Lubavitch, Reb Betzalel was one of the prominent T'mimim, and this was in the heyday of the yeshiva in Lubavitch.

He was born on 21 Shvat, 5658/1898, and arrived in Lubavitch at the end of 5672/1912, at the tender age of fourteen and a half. He learned in Tomchei T'mimim until his wedding in 5681/1921, when he married his distinguished Rebbetzin, Chaya, a descendant of the Ramak and the daughter of Reb Shneur Zalman Levin the shochet of Romanovka.

In addition to his studies in Nigleh and Chassidus, Reb Betzalel absorbed the unique Chassidic atmosphere of the yeshiva. He particularly drank thirstily of the stories he heard at farbrengens from the great Chassidim, especially from the mashpia of the yeshiva, Reb Groinem. Later, he himself was known as an exact transmitter of Chassidic lore and history. He had many stories engraved in his memory, and he would spice every talk with a Chassidic story appropriate for the occasion. His stories gained renown because in addition to telling each story with amazing exactitude, he would always become emotional as if reliving the story.

Most of the stories recorded in this compilation are from the personal notes of his grandson, Reb Meshulam Zushe Stillerman, from what he heard when his grandfather farbrenged for the public in Melbourne, Australia.

threatening situation)! What are you doing here (this was because about fifty tables already broke), and why don't you come out?"

The Chassid answered that it was impossible to get out because there was no room. The Rebbe said to him, "Come out from my side." The Rebbe made room for him to crawl out and he stood next to the Rebbe Maharash.

He then asked the Chassid why he hid under the table, and the Chassid answered because he wanted to hear the maamer. When he asked if the Chassid heard, he replied that he had, and the Rebbe told him to review the maamer. He began to repeat the maamer and after he reviewed a portion, the Rebbe stopped him, because it was clear that he knew the maamer. The Rebbe then said, "Nu, baruch Hashem, at least one person heard; I thought nobody had heard."

The farbrengen at the chasuna lasted all night, and when the people left the hall, it was already light outside. The Rebbe Maharash told all the badchanim present (and there were

***"Nu, baruch Hashem,  
at least one person  
heard; I thought  
nobody had heard."***

many) that they should each say something. They all did so, and he paid each one.

Afterwards, as they were leaving in the morning, the crowd formed two rows to allow the Rebbe Maharash to leave. When he saw one badchan who hadn't yet said anything, he called to him and asked him to say something "kurtz un gut" (short and good). The badchan replied, "Rebbe, git gelt" (Rebbe, give money). The Rebbe laughed a great deal and gave him some money.

### SAVED FROM THE CANTONISTS

When my grandfather was a small boy, the Russian authorities grabbed

him with a group of children to join the Cantonists. They placed all the children in a small dark room, without even a glimmer of light.

His mother was a short woman, and she dressed herself in an extra set of clothing. She approached the authorities and cried that she wishes to part with her son before he is taken away. They allowed her to enter, and as mentioned, it was completely dark. She dressed up her son in the clothes of a small girl, which she had worn under her own, and put a kerchief on his head.

Since his face was smooth, and she left with him while it was still dark outside, he looked like a girl and they didn't recognize that he was one of the boys they grabbed. In this manner, she saved him. They ran away from the city and went straight to the Tzemach Tzedek to ask his advice how to escape. The Rebbe told them to travel to the end of the Dnieper River. The boy went to Cherson, where he had a close relative, and remained there until his wedding.

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# YOU CAN RELY ON CHABAD IN A DIFFICULT TIME

BY NOSSON AVROHOM

*We spoke with Rabbi Shmulik Caplin, a bachur who is working on shlichus in Bolivia for the second year now, as he was on his way to a small Indian village located in the north of the country. He goes there to watch cows being milked so that he can supply the Chabad house with chalav Yisroel. I realized soon enough that speaking to him on the fly was not going to work. "There is so much work that needs to be done here that there is no free time," he apologized. \* The story of a shliach who operates under conditions of mesirus nefesh.*

First, a little background on the country that in the past two years has become a Jewish oasis: Bolivia is a landlocked country in the west of South America. It is bordered by Brazil in the north and east, Paraguay and Argentina in the south, and Chile and Peru in the west. Bolivia is the poorest country in South America and the percentage of Indians, the indigenous people of the country, is the highest on the continent at 70%,

so the Indians far outnumber the whites.

The capitol of Bolivia is La Paz, the highest capitol in the world, being 3600 meters above sea level.

After World War II, about 50,000 Jewish refugees emigrated from Europe to Bolivia. Most of these war survivors settled in Fricha. Back then, the mayor asked the president for help for these emigrating Jews. The

government acceded and within a few years, many Jewish schools and mosdos were built. These included shuls, schools, and mikvaos.

However, what the Nazis did not manage to accomplish, assimilation achieved. Many of the second generation intermarried with gentiles and the remainder left for nearby countries, such as Brazil and Argentina.

Today, Jews live in the three largest cities: La Paz, where the Chabad house is located, S. Cruz, and Cochabamba. In every one of these cities are hundreds of Jews, some of whom call themselves Jews after being converted by a Reform rabbi who came every year to S. Cruz and converted thirty people within a few days.

Aside from La Paz, where only a bit of tradition remains in the hearts of some Jews, Judaism is almost non-existent in this little country. According to different estimates, tens of thousands of Israelis visit Bolivia, most of them arriving around Pesach and Tishrei time. The Israeli tourists are a significant percentage of all tourism in the country.

In recent years, T'mimim were sent to make a seider for the Israelis



tourists. “A few weeks before Pesach of last year,” says 24-year-old Rabbi Shmuel Caplin, “five of us T’mimim sat in 770 and felt we had to do something big for Pesach. We decided on Bolivia. After some hasty preparations, we left for Bolivia and arrived in La Paz one morning.

“We knew nothing about the mentality of the local people and how we would manage. The first thing we did was Mivtza T’fillin in the area of the hostels, where the Israelis live.

“A week before Pesach a delivery of wine and meat came from New

*“I’ll never forget the reactions of parents after we located their children. One of them said, ‘Chabad is the only movement you can rely on in a difficult time.’”*

York via the central Chabad house in Peru. Everything we did at that time was blessed with wonderful hashgacha pratis. It started from the minute we began looking for a hall for the seider. We found one owned by a Jewish woman named Pessia who loved the fact that we were there. Apparently we reminded her of her father’s house and she agreed to give us the place for free, not just for Pesach but for an additional month following Pesach!

“Despite our rushed preparations, nearly 300 tourists took part in the seider.”

Chaos ensued about a week after Pesach following the popular uprising against the president. The country was shut down with strikes for a number of weeks. The airports were closed and public transportation was non-existent. Only a few private cars braved the streets after the rebels took over the main arteries of the country and the borders.

“At that time,” says Caplin, “we served not only as a Jewish spiritual center, but we became the center where all the worried phone calls from parents came to, as they wondered what was happening with their children. Since there is no Israeli embassy in Bolivia, the calls to the Israeli foreign office were forwarded to us.

“I’ll never forget the reactions of parents after we located their children. One of them said, ‘Chabad is the only movement you can rely on in a difficult time.’ Another mother reacted with amazement when she heard how old we were (i.e., that we are bachurim). She was sure that the people working here spent years preparing for shlichus.

“In the heart of the storm, at a time when all organizations and people kept a low profile, the Chabad house continued to operate as usual.”

\* \* \*



Yanky Dan with tourists

"We decided that we had to get chalav Yisroel. I remember explaining to an Israeli who had been frum but dropped out that chalav Yisroel for a Lubavitcher is in the category of 'allow yourself to be killed but do not transgress,' because chalav Akum (milking not supervised by a Jew) spiritually contaminates the heart and mind.

"The two of us once went to supervise the milking and when we got there he understood why this was so important. In the same containers and with the same machines they also milked female camels and pigs. 'Now I get it,' he said in amazement.

"I once went to supervise the milking with someone named Shmulik Porat, a young man with a strong feeling for Judaism. As a rule, whenever I go to watch the milking, I take along some tourists and I use the trip there to talk to them about emuna and hashkafa.

"On the way, and this was a week before Lag B'Omer, he asked me whether we would make a bonfire like in Miron. I said it looked as though we would not be able to do so since it is illegal to make fires in La Paz.

"So he suggested that we make a bonfire in the village. We spoke to the villager where we milked the cows and on Lag B'Omer we brought two busses to the village and many other carloads came with Israelis. The atmosphere was incredible. We danced by the bonfire and spoke about the students of Rabbi Akiva, as well as what we could learn from the story.

"Many of the villagers came to watch the unusual sight. It was a kiddush Hashem."

The work at the Chabad house is exhausting, from early in the morning until late at night. Every day there are minyanim and shiurim in Tanya and the weekly sidra. Many tourists take part.

\* \* \*

After Shavuot 5765, Shmulik Caplin left Bolivia and went on shlichus to Miami. Half a year went by and a week before Purim he was surprised to get a phone call from someone in the community of La Paz, a Jew named Chosa. Chosa said, "You must come to read the Megilla because no one will do it except for you."

At first Shmulik tried to say that surely, other bachurim would be

*"The two of us once went to supervise the milking and when we got there he understood why this was so important. In the same containers and with the same machines they also milked female camels and pigs. 'Now I get it,' he said in amazement."*

there, but the man wasn't satisfied.

"During the course of the conversation, I realized that this wasn't just a phone call but hashgacha pratit and that the Rebbe wanted permanent shluchim in Bolivia. Bolivia was one of the only countries in the world without a permanent shliach. I asked him to wait a few hours and I called Mendy Holtzberg and Menachem Peleg in Crown Heights. They were the Chabad house's logistical team the

year before. They volunteered to go again this year. Within 24 hours, I was on the first flight to Bolivia with only a suitcase of clothing and a kosher Megilla.

"Upon my arrival I rented a room in a hotel. The room quickly became a Chabad house. The first thing we did was celebrate the birthday of one of the tourists, as I explained the customs for a birthday as the Rebbe taught us. The next day I went to one of the restaurants where the Israelis hang out, and convinced the owner to allow us to have a Megilla reading there.

"Erev Purim, dozens of Israelis came there and were flabbergasted to encounter an authentic Purim celebration in Bolivia. By the way, after we exerted a lot of pressure, the owner of the restaurant agreed to have the place kashered and to get his chickens from us. We promised to sell them to him at the same price. This will enable many Israelis to eat kosher chicken.

"An interesting thing happened between Purim and Pesach, a story that gave the final push towards the decision to have a permanent Chabad house in Bolivia. One of the tourists, Roy Turi, came to put on t'fillin and helped us out.

"One day we told him about writing to the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh*. The next day he came to the Chabad house and said he had written to the Rebbe and here was the answer he had gotten. The answer he opened to was in volume 5, p. 199, a letter written to Rabbi Shmuel Toledano of Paris:

**I was especially pleased to hear of your good reputation and your good work in strengthening Torah and Judaism in your community, especially in proper chinuch and setting aside times for public Torah study ...**

**It is unnecessary to elaborate for one such as yourself the great merit**

and mitzva to be among those who bring merit to the many. Indeed, the merit of the many depends on him, and reliable is the Employer to pay the reward, in this world and the next.

I strongly hope, since every living

thing is recognizable in its growth and development, so too your good work will continue to grow from strength to strength, by increased strength in your efforts and your influence on others. May Hashem endow you and all who participate in this holy work, with an abundance of

blessing and success both in your public work and in your personal matters, with visible and revealed good, from spirit to flesh.

I would be happy to receive good news about the growth and expansion of your good work, increased shiurim in public in both Nigleh and Chassidus, the light within Torah, and in your good efforts to draw close the hearts of Jewish men and women to their Father in heaven.

With regards to the entire group.

“I didn’t need more than this in order to understand that I would be staying there to start a permanent Chabad house in Bolivia. In the letter, the Rebbe detailed all the community’s problems, especially the chinuch of the next generation, which is deeply assimilated, and mentioned expanding the shiurim that we started with them, which we saw had a great impact.

“At the end of the letter, the Rebbe blessed all the members of the group. In connection with that I’ll point out that that day, eight T’mimim came to help us out,” said Caplin excitedly.

“A week before Yom Tov,” said Dovid Caplin, one of the eight boys who came to help, “we brought five or six suitcases each on the flight, with meat, wine, and other important items. Before leaving the airport in Bolivia, we paid for each suitcase but the problem was that the law in Bolivia states that you cannot bring meat and wine into the country, certainly not in those large quantities.

“When we landed at the airport in La Paz, we noticed that three suitcases did not show up. We waited for two hours but they weren’t there. In the meantime, the customs people got tired of waiting and so they left the airport without checking us. This was an open miracle. Who knows what they would have done if they had discovered all our meat and



Obtaining chalav Yisroel milk in Bolivia (Shmuel Caplin in the back with a hat)



Mountain view

wine.

"The miracles didn't stop there. We filled out a complaint form about the three missing suitcases and the next day they called us to say the suitcases had arrived and were in customs because a red liquid was leaking from one of them.

"We took a taxi to the airport, taking utensils with us to immerse in

the nearby river. We left the car briefly to get more keilim and unfortunately, the driver who was supposed to wait for us, took off with all our things. In addition to the utensils that he stole, there was also one of the American's passport and papers, as well as the customs form that had been filled out which was the receipt for the three missing suitcases.

"Miraculously, the very next day the passport was found in the garbage. If not for the customs form which had our local telephone number, we could not have been contacted.

"Anyway, we went into customs but, as expected, they refused to release the wine. We threatened them by saying that the Israelis, who were

## MIRACULOUS RESCUE

Shmuel Caplin relates:

After Mincha on Shabbos, we sing niggunim. Last Shabbos, we had about twenty tourists at the Chabad house and the niggunim reverberated in the room. Then an Israeli named Idan came into the room, trembling and crying. His appearance shook us all. Some people went over to him with a glass of water to calm him down. We knew him because he was a regular visitor to the Chabad house and we knew that he was supposed to be in the Rosbaca jungle, a plane flight away from the city, at this time.

After he had calmed down a bit, he told us his story. Friday morning he went to the airport in the nearby city of Alto, which is about 5000 meters above sea level. In order not to waste gas, the airport is built on the side of a mountain, so that the moment the planes reach the side of the mountain they get extra lift for takeoff.

For some reason, he had decided to take many pictures of the Rebbe along with him, even though he is not religious. What surprised even him was that this was the first time in his life that he had decided to say the T'fillas HaDerech. While saying the t'fila, he noticed the words, "and bring us back in peace," which is in parentheses. He did not know whether to say them or not and finally did say them.

Two minutes after the plane took off, the engines suddenly shut down and the plane began to fall. The passengers were terror-stricken and nobody thought

they would make it alive since underneath them was a steep incline with sharp rocks. Aside from Idan, there were another four Israelis on board and the rest were English gentiles.

They all cried out in panic and he began to scream, "Rebbe, help me!" and he quickly distributed pictures of the Rebbe to all the passengers. The pilot was trying to glide down but it was all mountainous terrain and he searched desperately for something level to land on.

Suddenly he saw a little village with a dirt road and miraculously, the plane made an emergency landing on a narrow, winding, rocky road at the foot of the mountain. They were seconds away from crashing and their tires exploded on the rocks on the road.

On board, there was a camcorder filming the people screaming for help. They all conceded that this was a great miracle. The next day, the film was shown on local television and everybody agreed that they had been saved in the merit of the Lubavitcher Rebbe from New York.

Afterwards, this Israeli ended up in a hospital and when we went to visit him, some English tourists, who had been with him on the plane, pounced on us. They took out the pictures of the Rebbe from their wallets and kissed it repeatedly.

Idan has since visited 770 and farbrenged and thanked the Rebbe there.



**Blown out plane tire**



**Edan with the pilot**

a high percentage of their tourists, would be very upset, and they needed this wine and crackers (matzos) otherwise they wouldn't visit Bolivia anymore. The customs officials were convinced and allowed us to take all three suitcases."

850 Israeli tourists attended the seider at the Chabad house! Two months of feverish activity culminated in the third biggest seider in the world. 200 people remained after the seider to farbreng with the T'mimim.

"There was a feeling of terrific achdus," says Caplin. The T'mimim worked for days beforehand with the help of some tourists in peeling potatoes, cooking eggs, and preparing the meat and fish, and of course cleaning.

The seider night began with over 500 tourists gathering in the local shul, one of the nicest in South America. For some of them, their first and last visit to a shul was at their bar mitzva. After the moving davening, they all walked for about half an hour until they arrived at the hall.

Local reporters found out about the huge Jewish gathering and the next day there were big headlines on the front pages of the newspapers.

The emotions expressed spontaneously by the tourists were genuine: "I never said the entire Hagada before," admitted one older woman. "If not for you, we wouldn't know it was Pesach today," said a young guy. "We felt that the Rebbe was helping us throughout," said the shluchim.

Tamim Yanky Dan related, "Seider night I met a man and woman who were with me the previous year at the seider in Melbourne. It was exciting to meet them again and we agreed that next year, we would celebrate in Yerushalayim."

The shliach relates, "One day

*"During the tour we went to an unusually beautiful mountain by the name of Valley De Laluna. We reached the summit with mini-tractors and had a farbrengen up there."*



David Caplin with a local Jew

before Pesach, I met a woman who said she was Jewish. I asked her whether she would be celebrating Pesach. She said yes, and added that she would be doing so with another four families.

"When she explained how she would be celebrating, I realized that she was going to be having a Pesach ceremony and not a seider. On the second day of Pesach, we (some T'mimim) surprised her, after walking 12 kilometers, we brought wine and

matza with us. She was very moved. We stayed with the family until late at night and spoke about the meaning of the holiday and about the Rebbe."

Aside from the large hall that the Jewish woman gave the shluchim to use as they pleased, the shluchim also began to use the old shul in the city. It was magnificent but closed for decades.

As with everything in Bolivia, this shul had a history. As I mentioned before, there exist large Jewish campuses, built by the Jewish refugees after the war. One of these

campuses is in La Paz. It contains the magnificent shul as well as other religious institutions and even a mikva.

Sadly, the community rented out the rest of the religious buildings to a local, private school. "The mazal is that the community elders, who apparently realized it was the sad end to the community, signed that it was absolutely forbidden to sell the place."

The place is called “Beit Seifer HaYisroeli” even though all the students are goyim, aside from two that the school administration promised, as part of their agreement, to teach Jewish history.

One Shabbos, the T’mimim went to shul and they saw the beautiful Aron Kodesh and the many s’farim. It was sad to see the shul in this state for although its beauty was apparent, it was dusty and neglected.

The T’mimim decided to reopen the shul. They exerted pressure on the members of the community and with the help of Pessia who had previously served as a member of the Bolivian parliament from one of the parties in the country, they passed a resolution that the shul would reopen.

“Shabbos Rosh Chodesh Nissan is when we had the first t’filla,” says Yanky Dan, “and I can’t begin to describe the excitement there. Posters were hung wherever Israelis might see them. Many more people came than we had expected. About 150 tourists came on Erev Shabbos, after walking for half an hour. Then we had a Shabbos meal together.”

Fewer tourists came the next day and the shluchim thought there wouldn’t be a minyan on Motzaei Shabbos.

“Shabbos afternoon a kibbutznik came to shul and said that he had heard of the sudden passing of his grandfather. He was obviously close with this grandfather, for he cried. He asked whether he should make a donation and the shluchim explained to him about the holiness of Shabbos and how they needed a minyan so he could say Kaddish. And that is how we had a minyan on Motzaei Shabbos too.”

Throughout Yom Tov, there were t’fillos in the shul, and since then there are t’fillos every Erev Shabbos and Shabbos day. Some of the participants are members of the

Jewish community who remembered their fathers’ home, and you can just imagine their emotions.

“Last Shabbos, two tourists suddenly showed up, kibbutzniks. They wanted to bless Hashem for helping them. I told them to say ‘HaGomel’ and they left immediately afterwards. Later on, I heard that they had been saved from a plane crash (see box) and they left because they were embarrassed by their lack of knowledge.”

The Chabad house is involved in numerous activities, one of them being visiting Israelis in hospitals on Fridays. Many of them become ill

after eating in unclean places and contracting salmonella, a widespread illness in Bolivia. In recent months, dozens of Israelis came down with it. The Lubavitchers bring them wine and challa and ask those who are there with them to make Kiddush for them.

The sick people are thrilled when the Lubavitchers come to visit and cheer them up. “At the seider this year, because of the good connection we have with the director of the hospital, he released some of the sick people who were attached to IV’s, so they could come celebrate with us. Then they returned to their hospital

## THANK-YOU LETTERS

April 19, 2006

Beis Chabad, Bolivia: I felt more at home than anywhere in the world. That is why I stayed for so long, two and a half weeks, Pesach, Shabbasos, Shvii Shel Pesach, and especially the Seudas Moshiah, I really felt at home. It was terrific.

Chizku v’imtzu all of you!

Thanks for everything. Continue giving of yourselves as per the Rebbe’s orders. We appreciate it.

Hadas Sechayek

Afula, Israel

\* \* \*

Dear Shmulik, Dudi, Mendy, Yankele, Moshe, Menachem, and the rest of the crew:

We were at the opening and couldn’t tear ourselves away from the special atmosphere that Shmulik is primarily responsible for. Mamash, thank you for everything. You did so much in so short a time, and with hardly any help, you raised an empire.

There is an evening I will never forget and that was the seider night that we spent with hundreds of Israelis in Bolivia. We read the Shma Yisroel and sang, “*HaRebbe shlita ein kamocha b’olam...*” In the main square of La Paz we marched in a way that no nation in the world can do.

So thank you for the matzos, fish with lemon, and the wonderful hospitality.

Shai writes:

One final thing – this year in Yerushalayim ha’bnuya and Shmulik and all the guys are invited to us, always.

Shai Henig and Eli, the Yerushalmim



The hall prepared for 850 participants at the seider

rooms.”

David Caplin recalls a moving story:

“A girl by the name of Sophia from Ramat HaSharon, visited the Chabad house a number of times. One time she was given a pocket-sized picture of the Rebbe.

“She went mountain climbing one day and suddenly felt terrible

stomach pain. The group leader realized it was appendicitis but knew that the hospital was 26 hours away. Generally, if appendicitis is not treated, the patient dies, and so the girl took out the Rebbe’s picture, kissed it, and read the T’fillas HaDerech and asked the Rebbe to help her. She was sure she wouldn’t make it back alive and asked the Rebbe to save her.

“She had a miracle and she made it to the hospital while still conscious. After the operation, the doctors told her that she was on the brink of death. Her life was saved but two days later she caught a serious infection on the other side of her stomach. She called the Chabad house and we went to the hospital with wine and matzos.

“We learned Tanya there and she committed to light Shabbos candles. Once again, in a miraculous way, her life was saved. She came to a farbrengen that we made on Acharon shel Pesach, and told everybody about the double miracle she experienced.”

Shmuel Caplin is not resting on his laurels but is



Inside the restaurant



Restaurant sign

preparing the groundwork in order to be able to open a kosher restaurant. His brother David, who learned sh'chita with Rabbi Yitzchok Kogan in Moscow, and received ordination by Chabad rabbanim and the chief rabbinate, joined him.

The next big project is cleaning and fixing up the mikva, which is near the shul, enabling it to be used on a daily basis.

"With Hashem's help and the Rebbe's brachos, we hope to restore Jewish life to the local community," says Shmuel Caplin, "along with providing full Jewish services to thousands of Israeli tourists who come to Bolivia, preparing this country too for kabbalas p'nei Moshiach Tzidkeinu."

## A CHABAD TOUR IN BOLIVIA

Thousands of Israelis tour Bolivia. One of the interesting projects the Chabad house runs is organized tours with a Jewish flavor. Three such tours have taken place to date with kosher food from the Chabad house. During the tours, time is allotted for davening, learning Chassidus and talks about the meaning of life.

The first tour was a great success and word spread among the Israelis. Since then, you have to register for a tour.

"During the tour we went to an unusually beautiful mountain by the name of Valley De Laluna. We reached the summit with mini-tractors and had a farbrengen up there. The tour was to a place where we immersed dishes and this was an opportunity to explain a bit about the laws of tahara and the immersion of vessels.

"The last tour was to Mt. Banbaru where we took a large group of Israeli tourists. This is the highest inhabited mountain in the world. From the peak, we could see all of La Paz and the surrounding area. In this beautiful spot, we sang niggunim and we were all greatly inspired. The next day, many of the tourists came to the Chabad house in order to put on t'fillin and to join one of the Chassidus shiurim."

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# Sivan 28 - Gimmel Tammuz Magbis

B.H. Sivan 15, 5766

**To all Anash, Men and Women, G-d bless you.**

We are soon approaching the very auspicious day, Gimmel Tammuz. This day comes in close proximity with Sivan 28, the auspicious day that the Rebbe MH"M and the Rebbetzin arrived in the United States.

Obviously, these are very opportune days, especially when it is connected to the number ten, when one should again evaluate his or her "Hiskashrus" (connection) with the Rebbe, and more important, to utilize these special days to 'strengthen' the Hiskashrus to the Rebbe.

"KUPAS RABBEINU," was established with the full consent and blessing of the Rebbe, with its purpose and goal to make every effort that all of the Rebbe's activities, institutions etc. continue unchanged. By supporting Kupas Rabbeinu, one is actually participating in many of the Rebbe's activities, and thus strengthening their *Hiskashrus* to the Rebbe.

With this in mind, we therefore urge each and everyone of anash, men and women to support Kupas Rabbeinu in every possible way.

In this merit may we be "zoiche" that much before Gimmel Tammuz, the Rebbe will be revealed as Melech Hamoshiach and redeem us from this deep and bitter Golus and lead us all to the true and final Geulo, NOW MAMAOSH.

VAAD KUPAS RABBEINU

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

You may also send Maimad, Keren-Hashono, Magbis etc. to Kupas Rabbeinu.

Eretz Yisroel address: KEREN KUPAS ADMU"R / P.O.B. 1247 / KIRYAT MALACHI / ISRAEL

# SOLDIER ON DUTY!

*His outstanding abilities were noticed when he was quite young, before he began learning in Tomchei T'mimim Lubavitch. After he married, he served as rav in various places with the communists in hot pursuit, until he was forced to resign. This didn't help though and he was arrested twice and sent to labor camps. Throughout his life, he was a Lubavitcher soldier on duty until his strength gave out and he died in a labor camp. \* Portrait of a Chassid, Rabbi Shmuel Notik.*

## IN YESHIVA AT AGE 11

The Chassid, R' Shmuel Notik, was born on Yom Kippur 5650 (1889). His father was R' Avrohom Zerach, a Lubavitcher Chassid, who named him Shmuel after the Rebbe Maharash, who had passed away seven years earlier.

His family lived in the town Karislava in Latvia, where about 4000 people lived, one quarter of them Jews.

R' Shmuel learned in his hometown, where his outstanding abilities were noticed. His father sent him at the age of eleven to learn in the yeshiva ketana in nearby Dvinsk. There he learned by R' Yehoshua Arsh, a distinguished Chabad Chassid.

After Pesach 5664 (1904), when he was 14, he went to Lubavitch. After successfully passing the entrance

exams, he was accepted into Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim. In those days, the young T'mimim learned at first in branches of the yeshiva in various cities throughout the Soviet Union.

R' Shmuel, who was a young bachur, was sent to Dokschitz, where he quickly acclimated to the yeshiva in which they studied Nigleh and Chassidus. With time, the talmidim learned how to daven and work on their middos, as Chassidus teaches.

After a while, he went to learn in the branch in Horoditch, not far from Lubavitch, and a year later, he went to learn in the zal in Lubavitch, which shows his maturity both spiritually and in his learning, at a young age.

R' Mendel Aharonov related in the name of his father, R' Yehoshua Zelig, who learned in Lubavitch at that time:

"In Tomchei T'mimim Lubavitch there were some geniuses that were baalei Nigleh, but when you wanted to know where in Shas a certain topic appeared, you went to Shmuel Notik, who was a baki in Shas at a young age."

When he became of draft age, he went to the Rebbe Rashab for yechidus in order to get his advice and bracha. The Rebbe told him: "Instead of serving in the Russian army for four years, learn Shas in four years!" R' Shmuel accepted this and the Rebbe blessed him.

R' Shmuel presented himself to the draft board, confident in the Rebbe's bracha, and he soon received his exemption papers.

He considered the yeshiva his first home. He felt inseparable from the yeshiva. They say that the Rebbe Rayatz, the menahel of the yeshiva,

## UNTIL HIS FINAL DAY

R' Notik and his wife boarded the train in Lvov with all their belongings including pictures and documents. All this was confiscated during their arrest, so no pictures remain.

Efforts are being made to locate a picture from relatives and Chassidic historical researchers so that it will be a remembrance of an outstanding Chassid, a Tamim, and soldier who stood at his post until his final day!

once met R' Shmuel at the train station in nearby Rudnia. The Rebbe Rayatz asked him if he was going home, meaning whether he was on his way to the yeshiva in Lubavitch.

R' Shmuel threw himself into his study of Gemara and the commentaries for a number of years and then began studying *Shulchan Aruch* in order to get smicha for rabbanus. After much study and toil, he was given smicha by the g'dolei ha'rabbanim in the area of Lubavitch.

### **"THE CHOICEST OF OUR STUDENTS"**

R' Shmuel learned in Lubavitch and its branches for 12 years until he married Miriam, the daughter of Rabbi Dovber Avigayil, the rav of Dokshet in Lithuania and a distinguished rav in the Vilna district, in 5676 (1916).

After his wedding, he was offered a rabbinic position in Bielogorod, but it did not work out, apparently because of WWI and the Bolshevik revolution.

In those days, the Rebbe Rashab wrote a letter of recommendation for him, which said, **"It would be proper and right to accept our friend, the choicest of our students, R' Shmuel Notkin of Kraslava as rav,**

**and with His blessed help you will derive satisfaction from him in every detail. May Hashem grant success spiritually and materially."**

Since the offer didn't materialize, he was sent by the Rebbe Rashab to serve as mashpia in Orsha, where many Chassidic families lived. He brought to this position and to the families of Anash, the atmosphere of Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim.

In 5679 (1919) R' Shmuel was appointed rav of Kopust in Byelorussia. His appointment took place in the years when the communists had already started stamping out Torah and mitzvos, yet he led his community with noteworthy mesirus nefesh.

He also served as a shochet though for some reason, the authorities turned a blind eye.

In his town, there was a bathhouse, which also served as a mikva. During the revolution, the communists took it over, but due to pressure

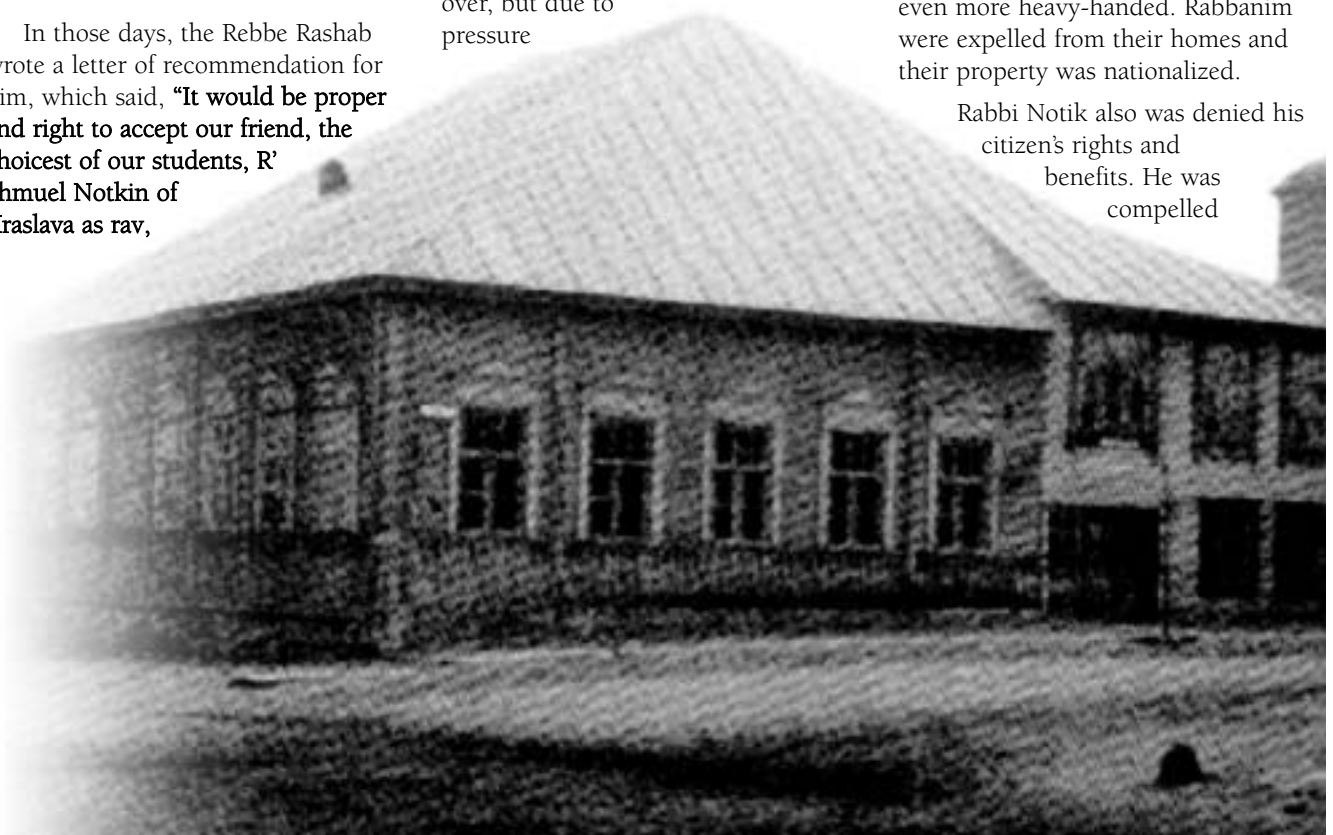
from the community, the mikva was given back to the Jews of the town in exchange for a monthly rent. The Jews of the town, led by R' Shmuel, worked hard to raise the monthly rent but the difficult economic times made it hard to collect donations and pay for wood and other expenses.

After a number of years, the mikva was closed by the secret police, to the sorrow of the Jews of the town.

### **PERSECUTION**

The persecution of rabbanim began immediately in the first years of Soviet rule, particularly through personal vilification and libel. The communists realized that in order to oppress religious Jews, they needed to attack those who led them. First, they revoked the rabbanim's rights as citizens, imposed heavy taxes upon them and exerted nonstop pressure on them in order to get them to leave their positions. When these approaches did not work, they were even more heavy-handed. Rabbanim were expelled from their homes and their property was nationalized.

Rabbi Notik also was denied his citizen's rights and benefits. He was compelled



The central shul of Kraslava, R' Notik's birthplace

to go out and chop trees while the gentiles of the town laughed at him. They imposed enormous taxes upon him when he had no income. His position was unbearable and we read about it in this heart-rending letter that he wrote to his friend in New York, Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson:

B”H

10 Sivan 5694 (1934)

Kopust

To my dear friend, R’ Yisroel, greetings,

I ask you please to try and obtain some exchange [money] for me for the purpose of our redemption and the redemption of our souls, since I am in a very great misfortune r”l, which cannot be explained at all in a letter. This is aside from the tremendous poverty and lack of a livelihood since every source of a livelihood has been completely closed before me. Aside from this, there are great and powerful persecutions on the part of the government, who oppress me tremendously.

They impose large taxes on me, which I cannot possibly pay, because I don’t even earn that sum in the course of an entire year.

They also impose labor upon me, to go to the forest and cut trees in the winter, in the snow and terrible cold. They also impose other difficult and humiliating jobs and the gentiles gather round me to see my suffering, to laugh and mock and rejoice at my sorrow and the sorrow of all Jewry, seeing the fall of Judaism and the Torah’s humiliation – that the rav of the town works at hard labor, against his will. And many other terrible persecutions that cannot be explained in writing.

They are also compelling me to send my children to school, in attempt to make them abandon their Judaism, Heaven forbid. I have two sons. One is 13 and the other is 11, and I always learn with them and I educate them in Judaism, and I never sent them to school because there they teach the children heresy and to hate the Jewish people. Everybody sends their children to school because the law is that

everybody must do so, but I have never sent them. We are always terrified about the danger to their souls, ch”v.

For whoever does not send their children to school as the government desires – so that they should not be religious and to the contrary, that they should mock religious and religious people – is considered a traitor. All the persecutions with which they persecute me are all because of this, and I am in great danger, Heaven forefend.

***“When the train stopped at the border in Premishlan, the ‘sweet dream’ was interrupted. Armed soldiers burst in from both sides of the car with rifles drawn and ordered us to follow them. We immediately knew the game was up and the price to pay would be steep.”***

I constantly anticipate the danger of being put in jail, ch”v, because of the great taxes imposed on me constantly, which cannot possibly be paid, and because of this they arrest people and their ways are known. And I anticipate an even greater danger ch”v, because of my children, that I don’t send them to school and I teach them Torah and Judaism, and this is considered by them as one who organizes a rebellion against the government.

They have warned me a number of

times to send my sons to school and I put my life in my hands and do not send them. Only G-d knows what will be and I need much mercy. Therefore, we must flee from here.

R’ Notik knew that he couldn’t hold on forever, so he decided to leave his job and move to Eretz Yisroel with his family. The first obstacle he encountered was getting tickets. In those days, you sailed to Eretz Yisroel from Odessa, and a lot of money was needed for tickets, which he did not have.

After much effort, R’ Notik managed to buy one ticket. He wrote about this to the Rebbe Rayatz, who lived in Warsaw at the time, the capitol of Poland, and asked for help in buying additional tickets. A letter like this, sent abroad, was censored, so it wasn’t easy to send one.

In Nissan 5694, the Rebbe responded: **See to a second one and I hope that when you have two tickets that I will be able to obtain a third one. Write how much you need.** The Rebbe promised his help if R’ Notik managed to obtain another ticket. Obviously, this was no simple matter since he needed six tickets.

## IMPRISONMENT

One Shabbos in the year 5695 (1935), the secret police came to R’ Notik’s home and after a protracted search of his home they informed him of his arrest. He was taken to the police station of the town from where he was transferred to the NKVD center in Minsk.

The interrogators treated him cruelly and demanded that he reveal to them who were the Chassidim who ran the underground movement to teach Torah. R’ Notik did not reveal a thing and preferred to be tortured rather than incriminate his fellow Jews. The interrogators forcibly removed his beard and he suffered terribly in lengthy interrogations.

After a period of suffering and



**The Lubavitch Shul in Dokschtz**

received rations, part of which he did not eat because of kashrus problems. The lack of nutrition was apparent in all the prisoners and many of them collapsed from hunger and were buried near the camp.

Each year, before Pesach, the family tried to send him matzos. It was with these matzos that R' Notik survived throughout Pesach. One year the matzos did not arrive and he survived on potatoes and sugar cubes for eight days.

While in exile, he was careful about everything, less stringent and more stringent alike, despite the tremendous hardships with which he had to contend. He began to grow back his beard despite the danger this entailed.

## **WHOLE IN BODY AND SOUL**

It was with miracles that R' Notik managed to survive the exile, while many other prisoners died. At the end of five years, in 1940, he was released. He went by train until he reached Mozayesk, a suburb of Moscow, where his wife and sons lived.

Many tears were shed when he entered his home. There was no end to the family's joy. The sons were not present since they had gone to learn in underground yeshivos.

When the happy news reached his son Yaakov, he immediately returned home in order to see his father. "It was thrilling to see my father, whole in body and soul, after five years of exile. Throughout that period, we feared for his lot. My father was very thin and weak. In any case, there was tremendous simcha, especially after a short time when he recovered and regained his strength."

Later, R' Ben-Tzion Shemtov related that in his youth he had learned with R' Shmuel in Lubavitch and for many years he did not see him until he returned from exile. He met him in the Marina Roscha Shul in Moscow.



**Rabbi Sholom Ber Notik**

torture, he was put on "trial" before three judges, called a troika, and within minutes they decided his sentence: five years of exile in a labor camp in distant Kazakhstan.

Shortly thereafter, R' Notik was put on a train of prisoners. It was extremely crowded, stifling, and there was little to eat. Many prisoners did not survive the trip to its destination at the Kirganda camp.

The camp had many exiles



**Rabbi Yaakov Notik**

including numerous Jews and some rabbanim. Upon his arrival, R' Notik was happy to meet Rabbi Mordechai Perlov, a distinguished Lubavitcher rav with whom he had learned in his youth in yeshiva in Lubavitch. R' Perlov had been sent to exile for ten years for similar "crimes."

Thus, in his forties, R' Notik was forced to labor in the heat and cold, from dawn to dusk, at hard labor, alongside thieves and murderers, who terrorized the other prisoners. He

"I saw that he had remained a Tamim as he was when a bachur in Lubavitch. His conduct and thinking remained at it was during yeshiva days and he was devoted to our Rebbeim. I was amazed that despite all the tzaros and persecution he had endured, no change was apparent on him."

## EXPELLED FROM MOSCOW

When the cursed Germans invaded Russia, the Notik family had to leave Moscow because the Russians feared that former prisoners would collaborate with the conquerors. The Notiks were told to leave the city immediately and thus were saved from the bombing of Moscow as the Germans approached. R' Notik and his wife and daughters packed their belongings and left on a train to an unknown destination.

During the war, there was total chaos as millions of citizens rushed to flee for their lives. If that wasn't enough, German planes strafed trains and many were killed and wounded. When under attack, a train would stop and the passengers would run for cover and when the danger passed, they would board the train once again and continue their journey.

In the chaos that ensued, R' Notik was separated from his wife and daughters for a short time and then he couldn't find them. When he tried to find out where they had gone, he failed to do so. So he sadly continued on the difficult journey until he arrived in Kutaisi in Georgia, where his sons were learning.

R' Notik settled in the city and began looking for his lost family. After much effort, he found out where his wife and daughters were. He sent them word about where he was and the family reunited.

At this time, Tomchei T'mimim in Kutaisi was in poor shape since the ravages of the city, Rabbi Levik Slavin (may Hashem avenge his blood), had been arrested and nobody had replaced

him. R' Notik took on the responsibility to see to the continued learning in the yeshiva. He himself began learning with the talmidim, and became the menahel, the rosh yeshiva, and mashpia. Aside from the educational role, he also took care of the gashmius and during wartime, it was no easy task to feed a group of bachurim.

As time went on there were more bachurim and dozens of young and older bachurim learned in the yeshiva headed by R' Notik. The yeshiva was located in a shul and the secret police ignored them. Nobody knew when the police would stop this policy. Everybody knew it was only a matter of time.

R' Notik's son Yaakov, who learned in this yeshiva during the war, relates:

"From 1942-1946, I learned in the yeshiva in Kutaisi with my father and the other talmidim. My father gave shiurim in maamarei Chassidus of the Rebbe Rashab, and in Nigleh, he taught Gemara and its commentaries. The learning atmosphere during the war years was excellent, even though many talmidim lived in fear for their families who were scattered throughout the Soviet Union."

R' Yechezkel Brod was also a talmid in the yeshiva in Kutaisi at that time and he said:

"We learned for a long time with Rabbi Yosef Goldberg, and when he became engaged he left to get married. Then Hashem sent us a special gift, Rabbi Shmuel Notik (Karislaver), may Hashem avenge his blood.

"This Jew was stuffed with both Nigleh and Chassidus. He was a Jew who lived day and night with the pure spirit of Chassidus. He did not rest. He would learn with one class and then a second and try to instill in us a Chassidishe spirit, and he farbrenged a lot with us. I thank Hashem for the privilege of being educated by him. The little bit of Jewish and Chassidic enthusiasm that we have, we absorbed from him.

"We learned with him maamarei Chassidus, *Torah Ohr*, and *Likkutei Torah* and also mimeographed maamarim of the Rebbe Rashab. R' Shmuel demanded that we live 24 hours with every maamer that we learned, that we daven with the maamer, eat with the maamer, and sleep with the maamer.

"I particularly remember the special atmosphere when we learned



The city of Lvov

המאמר ד'חול תיחלה" 5659. In it appears the demand to serve Hashem: 'with the aspect of bittul of one's desire, above one's nature and habit, to transform one's heart from one extreme to the other, so that all that one's heart is naturally inclines to do, he does not do, and what his heart does not incline him to do, he does.'

The letter R' Notik wrote to R' Jacobson

"For weeks we all lived with the special atmosphere of 'doing' and 'not doing.' Every day, R' Shmuel explained the inyan in different ways with analogies and examples. He instilled the inyan deep within us, not to do what we want to do but to do what we don't want to do."

## IN TOMCHEI T'MIMIM IN SAMARKAND

Shortly after the war, R' Notik moved and settled in Samarkand, where hundreds of Chassidic families had fled during the war. In Samarkand, he continued to disseminate Torah by learning with the T'mimim in the yeshiva founded there during the war. Groups of young talmidim learned in houses and cellars. R' Notik himself learned with a group of T'mimim in a secret apartment.

Among R' Notik's talmidim was R' Mordechai Gorodetzky, who related:



R' Notik's friend, R' Yisroel Jacobson

"R' Notik was a gaon and a tzaddik in the full sense of the word, but modest and simple. While learning, it became obvious to us that R' Notik was a baki in Shas and a gaon in all parts of Torah.

"Since he had already suffered in exile he was very afraid of the NKVD, so he came each day to the apartment, where we learned with his tallis and t'fillin under his arm so that it would look as though he came to daven and not to learn with the T'mimim.

"One morning he came to yeshiva as usual and was followed inside by a Jewish, Bucharian policeman. R' Notik turned pale and you could see the terror in his eyes. He managed to convince the policeman that he had only come to daven and he had no connection with the young bachurim who learned there alone."

## FAILED SMUGGLING ATTEMPT

After the war, as is known, there was an opportunity to leave Russia with forged Polish passports, and many Chassidim took this chance to flee the vale of tears. Along with many other Chassidim, the Notik family also arrived in the border city of Lvov, and waited for an opportunity to leave Russia.

While waiting, R' Notik did not sit with arms folded; he taught young boys who wanted, even at this time, to sit and learn.

With Hashem's help, a number of groups crossed the border in peace, but one day the Chassidim found out that the authorities had begun to suspect something and the situation had become dangerous. The efforts to speed the process intensified.

One of the large groups left on Monday, 9 Kislev 5707 (1946). The smuggling committee forged a large number of passports. R' Mendel Garelik, who was a talented artist, sat for hours and forged the various documents until Shabbos.

Even then, many documents were missing for the group of Chassidim, who yearned for freedom. R' Notik, seeing this, realized that if there would not be enough documents, many families would have to stay in the Soviet Union and he decided that this was a matter of pikuach nefesh.

He paskened that this was pikuach nefesh that set Shabbos aside and told R' Mendel to keep working on Shabbos.

"Forge them with your right hand

without any change, so as not to Heaven forbid, endanger lives if they were to catch the forgeries.”

R' Mendel sat an entire Shabbos and forged documents, and to show that he meant it, R' Notik sat with him and sharpened pencils.

Thus, a train left that Monday with hundreds of Chassidim, men, women, and children on board and the group crossed the border.

R' Notik was going to travel in that train of refugees, but for various reasons he did not board it. A month later he decided to join the mashpia R' Mendel Futerfas and leave the Iron Curtain with a small group of only nine people, including R' Mendel, R' Shmuel, his wife and daughter, and the brothers R' Avrohom and R' Shmuel Gorowitz and R' Yosef Greenberg.

R' Berel Rickman related:

“Before they left, we agreed upon certain signs that they had to give us after crossing the border safely, so we would know that all was well.

“We who remained in Lvov waited for the agreed-upon signs but in vain. There was nothing. We began to fear that something terrible had happened. Only later did we discover that the man who had taken care of their tickets was a KGB plant and he informed the authorities about the nine men who were planning to smuggle across the border.”

Later on, R' Shmuel Gorowitz, a member of the group, related what happened:

“They told us to come to the train station in the morning in order to leave on the train for Poland. We left Lvov in the hours before noon on a regular passenger train. Most of the passengers were military and government men. We acted as though we too were traveling legally.

“The train headed towards the border near the town of Premishlan. In the meantime, a number of people in

civilian clothes passed through our car, speaking amongst themselves. I inadvertently overheard what they said and to my shock I could hear one say to the other, ‘They are dreaming sweet dreams...’ I refused to believe they were referring to us.

“When the train stopped at the border in Premishlan, the ‘sweet dream’ was interrupted. Armed soldiers burst in from both sides of the car with rifles drawn and ordered us to follow them. We immediately knew the game was up and the price to pay would be steep.

“At first they put us all in a hut that was used by those who worked at the station and they placed guards

around us until the next day. In the morning, they put us on a military truck that brought us to the station of the counter-espionage branch of the secret police. We were separated and each of us was taken to a separate room. The interrogations began.”

The prisoners, including R' Notik, his wife, and daughter Sarah Fruma, were taken to the secret police department in Lvov. After protracted interrogations and terrible torture, the trial began in which they were declared guilty of running organized crime, betrayal of the homeland, forging of documents, etc.

The girl, who was only 16, was given four years of exile. R' Notik's

## APHORISMS OF RAV NOTIK

These sayings of Rav Shmuel Notik were written by R' Yechezkel Brod, his student in Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Kutaisi, Georgia.

### **“DO NOT REMOVE YOUR SPIRIT OF HOLINESS FROM ME”**

He would repeat what R' Shmuel Groinem, mashpia in Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Lubavitch would say on the t'filla, “and do not remove your spirit of holiness from me,” do not take from us the little bit of a good taste that we have in Chassidus.

### **“THERE IS ONE WHO ACQUIRES HIS WORLD IN ONE HOUR”**

The Gemara says about the story of Rabbi Elozor ben Durdaya: “Rebbi cried, ‘there is one who acquires his world in one hour.’” R' Shmuel asked: Why did Rebbi cry? Shouldn't he have rejoiced that a person can acquire his world in one hour?

Rather, the crying is because it speaks of one specific hour, a uniquely auspicious time. If the opportunity is wasted, one can lose an entire world.

### **A WARMING OATH**

R' Shmuel related in the name of one of the great Chassidim that once, there was a soldier in the czar's army who stood at his post at night. It was bitter cold but he did not move from his post and his feet froze.

When they informed the czar, thinking that the soldier would surely be given a medal for his devotion, the czar said he should be given 25 lashes. “The oath he swore to loyally serve the czar, should have warmed his body.”

The Chassid concluded by saying that this story gave him chayus in his avodas Hashem for 25 years!

“We swore at Har Sinai to serve Hashem with all our hearts and all our soul, and this oath ought to warm us up forever.”





**The building of Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Kutaisi**



**R' Berek Rickman (left) and R' Moshe Dubrawsky in the labor camp**

wife Miriam was given seven years and R' Notik himself was sent to exile for ten years of hard labor.

The prisoners spent Yom Kippur in one cell, which had seventeen people, most of them Anash. "The t'fillos were said by heart, without Machzorim and without Krias HaTorah, but I am sure that everybody's t'fillos came from the depths of our hearts," said one of the prisoners at a later point.

"Food was rationed and in our physical state any crumb was a matter

of pikuach nefesh. I remember that one of the prisoners asked R' Notik about the kashrus of a certain food item that was served the prisoners. R' Notik said, 'In jail everybody paskens for themselves.' His meaning was clear. When in a situation of danger, it is permitted by halacha to eat, because danger to life overrides other considerations, and it's up to the individual to decide what to do."

After Yom Kippur, R' Notik was transferred with a group of prisoners

to detention in Charkov. The members of the group declared that since they were imprisoned for religious reasons, they refused to share a cell with thieves and murderers. When the prison authorities saw that the Jews were insistent, they allowed them to be in a separate cell but they included a priest among them. After all, he was also a religious prisoner.

It was on Simchas Torah that the prisoners heard that they would all be sent to exile, each one to the destination decreed upon him. The Chassidim organized hakafo, said the p'sukim and began to circle the cell in tears.

Suddenly, the cell door opened and the hakafo came to an end. The jailor called out the name of one of the prisoners and they all parted from him with great sorrow and with heartfelt wishes that they meet again soon. The cell door closed and the hakafo continued.

A few minutes went by and once again the door opened and another Chassid was taken. And the scene repeated itself until all of them, including R' Notik, were taken from the cell and shipped off to exile.

## **SECOND TERM IN KIRGANDA**

R' Shmuel's daughter, Sarah Fruma, was sent to a labor camp near the city of Tchilibinsk at the edge of Siberia. R' Notik and his wife were sent to Kirganda, where they suffered from backbreaking labor, cold, and endless disease. R' Shmuel was in the men's camp and his wife was 12 kilometers away in the women's camp. They were not permitted to maintain contact despite their proximity.

For R' Notik, this was a nightmare come true. Just ten years earlier he had been released from the labor camp in Kirganda and now here he was, once again, in the same camp with the same jailers and the same prisoners.

He lived under difficult conditions.

Each morning he was given a paltry amount of bread and this was the only food whose kashrus he could rely on. The sanitary conditions were deplorable and the labor was grueling.

The prisoners did hard labor from morning until night in cold and heat, under the constant supervision of the guards, who urged the prisoners to work quickly and without a break. Many prisoners collapsed while working, as a result of starvation and illness.

### DYING IN EXILE

R' Notik suffered for two years in this labor camp until he came down with a severe case of jaundice in 5709 (1949). For a time it seemed as though he had recovered, but sadly, shortly thereafter, the illness returned, stronger than ever. His health rapidly deteriorated until he passed away with much suffering at the young age of 59. May Hashem avenge his blood!

His wife, in the nearby camp, heard testimony from the one of the prisoners about her husband. Her son Yaakov relates:

"My mother knew the secular date of his passing and she sent me a letter in which she informed me of his passing. I calculated and figured out that he had died on 5 Shvat 5709.

*Sources: Igros Kodesh Admur Rashab, Igros Kodesh Admur Rayatz, Toldos Chabad B'Russia, Zichron Livnei Yisroel, Yagdil Torah, So'aros B'Dmama, Kitzur Toldos Chabad, Latvia-Battei Knesses V'Rabbanim, Ohr Chassidi B'Choshech HaSoviet, Gulag, Beis Moshiach, Kfar Chabad, and oral interviews.*



On the gate of the labor camp it said: "Work in the Soviet Union is the source of honor and glory"



Subhuman conditions – the barracks in the Soviet labor camp

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# LOW JEWISH SELF-ESTEEM

SHAI GEFEN

## WHAT TOOK PLACE THIS WEEK

Here's a brief summary of news of the previous week, under Olmert's government:

-Prime Minister Olmert apologized to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak for the recent incident in which two Egyptian terrorists who shot at IDF forces were killed.

-GSS chief Yuval Diskin told a Knesset committee that "World Jihad" was taking root in the PA. Smuggling has placed another 11 tons of TNT and 10,000 rifles at its disposal for attacking Israel.

-Sderot residents held a protest, after Kassam rockets smashed into a child's bedroom and near a school that morning. "How long can we rely on miracles?" they ask.

-Kassams landed dozens of meters away from the home of Defense Minister Peretz in Sderot.

-Public Security Minister Avi Dichter told the Cabinet Sunday morning that Israel should reenter parts of the Gaza region in order to stop Kassam rocket attacks.

-Erev Shavuot, PM Olmert announced that the convergence would not take place in stages, but all at once. "The expulsion of 70,000 Jews will take place at one time in order to prevent unnecessary friction and a split in society."

-Minister for Developing the Galilee

and Negev, Shimon Peres favors a more phased approach to the expulsion process. Peres said he does not think the government has the capability to expel 60 – 80 thousand Israelis from their homes all at once.

-PM Olmert on Thursday assured Jordan's King Abdullah II that he would seek a negotiated settlement with the Palestinians and meet soon with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

The problem is that this wasn't a unique week, but this goes on every week! The lives of Jews are putty in the hands of corrupt leaders. The very same Olmert who had knocked Defense Minister Peretz two days before, suddenly became his best friend and praised him for his security work.

It's only in a country without a backbone that the PM flatters the Defense Minister for his successes in Gaza when just days before missiles landed right near that minister's home! Olmert talks about a withdrawal in one fell swoop while the world saw how the Disengagement endangered our security. His very announcement caused serious damage!

The entire world knows that the Israeli government is a failure and it's only here, in Israel, that we act as though nothing happened. Dozens of yishuvim are shelled daily. Entire yishuvim have become ghost towns (the media hides this fact – just this

week, someone from yishuv Netiv HaAsara told me that the place has become a ghost town since everybody has left).

Huge amounts of weapons are smuggled from Egypt via the Gaza Strip and nobody says boo. Meanwhile, our government is busy protecting the life of Abu Mazen who will save us from Hamas.

In retrospect, maybe it's good that Olmert and Amir Peretz are leading the country together. This way nobody will think for a moment that there is any real strategy behind the government's decisions.

In the past, the prime ministers and defense ministers had a certain aura about them, so that we lowly citizens naively thought that surely there was a method to their madness and that they knew things we weren't privy to.

Today we all see and know who are making decisions, two ordinary men. The very fact that they are in these positions turns the government into a joke. So at least we are not blinded and we know that only very narrow personal interests are what concern them.

## INTERVIEW WITH GIORA EILAND

Ten months after Israel expelled thousands of Jews from their homes and gave Gush Katif to our murderers, the results are in. We don't need



researchers and prophets because it's all out in the open for all to see. Everything we were warned about came to pass. Everything we learned in the Rebbe's sichos and read in *Karati V'Ein Oneh* was fulfilled.

Now it turns out that the perpetrators of this Disengagement crime, led by former PM Sharon (who was just moved to Tel HaShomer hospital) deliberately hid the serious security warnings about the ramifications of the Disengagement. Even when it came up for judicial discussion in Supreme Court, it was all hidden in proper communist tradition. The goal was to perpetrate the expulsion no matter what the cost.

The outgoing head of the National Security Council, Major General Giora Eiland gave an interview to *HaAretz*. He had warned about the Disengagement and now he warns about Convergence. It's only in this parting interview that we finally get to hear the truth.

We will quote a few paragraphs from the interview that show how the fateful decision was made and how the U.S. was shocked by our leaders' decisions. Keep in mind that Eiland was the man who planned the Disengagement for Sharon:

"When I assumed my office, on 18 January, 2004, there was only an amorphous term 'disengagement' from a speech in Herzliya. I asked Sharon how much time I had to formulate a plan and he told me, four months. But very quickly it became clear to me that [PM Sharon's adviser] Dov Weissglas had already met with the Americans and committed us to a major unilateral step both in Gaza and the West Bank.

"Weissglas' trip and [Sharon's] interview with [*HaAretz's*] Marcus, made it impossible to prevent the withdrawal from Gaza. When you say that evacuating settlements is good for Israel, you can no longer get anything in exchange for doing so. Condoleezza

Rice told us this in one of our meetings.

"Condoleezza Rice told us, 'Let me explain to you what the meaning of a unilateral step is. You make a unilateral step when it is good for you. Therefore, you do not expect to receive anything in return for a step that you are doing because it is good for you.'

"The 1967 lines, even the Clinton Plan, do not give Israel defensible borders. As soon as portions of Highway 6 can be taken over by a rain of machine gun and RPG (rocket-propelled grenade) fire, Israel is in trouble. As soon as strategic areas within the State of Israel are within range of a hand-held missile launcher, Israel is in trouble. If you have the most advanced plane in the world, but it cannot fly since the airport is within easy range of guided weapons, there's a problem... Control of the row of hills which overlook Ben Gurion Airport and Highway 6 is vital.

"I argue that even a Palestinian state with 100 percent of the Gaza Strip and 97 percent of the West Bank is not viable. Such a country will be poor, radical, restive, where the demographic pressures will be unbearable. In 2020 there will be 2.5 million people in the Gaza Strip, in an area of 365 square kilometers. This will inevitably lead to pressure against the fences.

"In the best case scenario, we will return to guerilla style attacks and theft of the fedayeen back in the fifties. In the worst case scenario there will be total collapse and conflict. So the classic paradigm of two states for two nations between the sea and the river is not doable. The whole world might agree to it but it's just not doable.

"The Convergence raises a host of dilemmas that must be clarified. The first is the dilemma of where to draw the line. The more eastward the line of withdrawal will be, the fewer settlers will be evacuated and the less turmoil

*As long as they lack the Torah's perspective and do not act in accordance with Torah, we're in a bad plight. Only a Jew can force himself to go against Hashem, against the Torah, against logic, and against the yetzer ha'ra when it itself opposes these moves.*

within Israel, but the chance to gain international legitimacy will be lost.

"The more westward the line, the more international legitimacy but then we have a very difficult challenge of moving 70,000 settlers. That is a ten times bigger job than the Disengagement. The places they want to remove them from are more important from a security standpoint and have a far deeper historical significance than Gush Katif. Ofra, Beit El and Kiryat Arba are part of the Israeli ethos. They are the heart of the heart of Eretz Yisroel. And the military campaign that would be necessary will be extremely complicated. The financial cost is 100 billion shekel.

"I'm not saying it's impossible but if it's not done right, it can lead to the

breakup of Israeli society.”

## LOW JEWISH SELF-ESTEEM

How is it that time after time, with the utmost irrationality, our leaders do such foolish things? What is it that happens to them when they attain their position that makes them change from one extreme to another?

The Rebbe supplies us with the answer:

When a person is afraid and feels inferior to the goyim since “you are the fewest of all the nations,” and he needs the kindness of the goy in order to get more dollars or weapons, etc., then he becomes insignificant in his own eyes to the point that even those things that the goy does not want to take at all, even then he incites the yetzer ha’ra and wants to give it to the goy!

As was already said once at length

about what we say in the “al cheit” – “al cheit for sinning before You with the yetzer ha’ra” – it is not readily understood. How could there be a sin *without* the yetzer ha’ra? After all, all sins are done because of the yetzer ha’ra and so how can it be that after listing various sins, we enumerate this sin in particular: “al cheit for sinning before You with the yetzer ha’ra!”

The commentators on the Siddur explain that there is a sin that even the yetzer ha’ra doesn’t think up, but the Jew himself incites the yetzer ha’ra, r”l, and convinces it to sin.

Here too, the Torah, the Torah of truth, testifies that the nations of the world believe in the Bible. Therefore, they also believe in the story of Avraham Avinu paying for the M’aras HaMachpella, “four hundred silver shekels.” And so they know that it belongs to the Jews. So too for the site

of the Mikdash and Sh’chem.

However, when they begin to fall in their own estimation before the goy, then they incite the yetzer ha’ra to convince the Jew to do something that even the goy doesn’t think up! And all this comes from feeling inferior because of the goyishkait within them, because of the “strange god within you.”

Sadly, this began on the “seventh day,” immediately following the Six Day War, as the Rebbe wrote Rabbi Zevin that back then, the Israelis asked the Arabs to take back what they had conquered. As long as they lack the Torah’s perspective and do not act in accordance with Torah, we’re in a bad plight. Only a Jew can force himself to go against Hashem, against the Torah, against logic, and against the yetzer ha’ra when it itself opposes these moves.

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# RESTORE OUR JUDGES AS IN FORMER TIMES...

BY SHAI GEFEN

TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

*Anyone who has followed the newspaper headlines in general over the past few years, and particularly during the last year in connection with the conduct of the ruling authorities in Eretz Yisroel and the spreading corruption at every level and in every institution, knows that this represents a situation of absolute anarchy, even chaos. However, we who look upon this process with “Geula’dike” glasses can see clearly the signs that attest to the era just prior to the coming of the day of G-d Alm-ghty at the True Redemption.*

In the framework of an honest and upright government regime, there are two important forces that must guard the very foundations of a proper normative society: a system of justice and a system of enforcement, i.e., police. The cooperation between these two operate to protect the peace, well-being, and overall welfare of its citizens, preserving “the awe of sovereignty” in all matters.

Anyone who has followed the newspaper headlines in general over

the past few years, and particularly during the last year in connection with the conduct of the ruling authorities in Eretz Yisroel and the spreading corruption at every level and in every institution, knows that this represents a situation of absolute anarchy – even chaos. However, we who look upon this process with “Geula’dike” glasses can see clearly the signs that attest to the era just prior to the coming of the day of G-d Alm-ghty at the True Redemption, with the knowledge that

while these signs appear negative, they are actually positive in nature.

All the *Galus’dike* systems have collapsed, one after another, particularly over the main issue that will mark the coming of the Redemption – “then all laws return to as they were in former times.” The crumbling of the *Galus’dike* legal systems is part of the fulfillment of the destiny of Redemption.

As we contemplate this matter further, we see that all ruling and judicial conduct in a *Galus’dike* regime has been shattered with a resounding crash. Something that had once been considered supreme, causing all to tremble before its “holiness,” has been revealed to be the height of wretchedness and corruption. It’s enough to read the signs at the conclusion of Tractate Sota to understand that the process of collapse is an integral part of the process of Redemption.

During the expulsion of the Jewish communities of Gush Katif from their land, the Jewish People had already witnessed something totally amazing. They had seen how the lawful authorities, entrusted with the responsibility of protecting the weak and the oppressed, had changed their

spots. When the High Court of Justice was petitioned against the great injustice done to some remote Arab village, the entire legal system rallied at the side of the state attorneys with a tremendous outcry, while others looked on in utter shock at the serious acts of corruption and collaboration by Israeli judges against the Jews of Gush Katif, without any semblance of justice and fair play.

High Court Justice Mishael Cheshin explicitly confirmed this in an interview two weeks ago in honor of his retirement from the bench: “[Chief] Justice Aharon Barak is prepared to have thirty to fifty people blown up, provided that there are human rights. I am not so prepared.”

A few months ago, the World Bank published an investigative report comparing the nations of the Western world, revealing that “Israel is found to be one of the most dangerous countries... with an unstable and ineffective regime, a low level of responsibility, a relatively high level of government corruption, and a low degree of law enforcement.” The World Bank’s findings reveal that in comparison to the more developed nations of the world, Israel today is at a “particularly low index.”

The corruption has not even avoided the Ministry of Justice, which is supposed to represent the entire legal system in Israel with pride, as opposed to the claim that everything is permissible to them, a charge made by many simple citizens.

This festering corrosion hasn’t stopped at the lower echelons of government; it has even reached the ivory chambers of the High Court of Justice, as revealed in several embarrassing scandals over the past year. What more do we need than the statement of outgoing Justice Mishael Cheshin in his retirement interview, where he admits that the court guarded Sharon against criminal indictment in order that he could

properly carry out the expulsion from Gush Katif.

In a reaction to Justice Cheshin’s comments, Attorney Yossi Fuchs, one of the leaders of the legal struggle against the disengagement plan, stated that “the cat’s out of the bag.” Cheshin’s retirement, Fuchs continued, freed him from Barak’s judicial wrath and subsequently loosened his tongue. “His statement expresses the feeling burning within the heart of the Israeli public, which is repulsed by Barak’s use of his influential position as chief justice to advance his radical leftist ideology at the expense of Israeli citizens who have been victimized by Arab terrorism. How sad it is that a man

*In order to pass  
safely through the  
“doubled and  
redoubled darkness,”  
we have an obligation  
to review regularly  
the Rebbe’s  
instructions.*

such as Barak used his legal genius to protect the enemies of Israel.”

Attorney Fuchs added that “there is no doubt that Barak’s legal decisions gave consistent preference to the comfort of Palestinians over the security of Israelis, as with his refusal to permit the General Security Services from transferring terrorists classified as ticking time-bombs, his invalidation of the original sketches for the security fence, his rejection of the practice of quiet detention for wanted criminals, his opposition to amending the Citizenship Law, and a litany of other rulings.”

A few months ago, a special conference of the Lawyers’ Bureau was

held for young up-and-coming attorneys. A number of leading veteran, practiced, and wily attorneys in Israel appeared to address the participants, and provided some valuable advice from their years of experience.

They exposed all the cards up their sleeves on how to work with judges who are supposed to represent the Israeli system of law and justice, yet are really as far from honesty and integrity as east from west. The daily *HaAretz* newspaper reported on the conference in great detail:

“Attorney Yoram Yarkoni, who specializes in family court cases, was the first to approach the rostrum. Without any superfluous introductions, he proceeded to reveal to the young advocates that contrary to what they had been inclined to believe, if any slanderous material gets into an indictment, it might arouse the interest of the presiding judge in the case... Attorney Yarkoni stated that most judges don’t even read the indictments that the attorneys go to the trouble to prepare. Bottom line: With the rare exception of those who will anyway leave the bench at an early age, none of the judges read everything.

“In his words, you have to get acquainted with the judge in order to know what style he or she prefers. For example, there are judges who enjoy family court cases that contain particularly explosive gossip. Yarkoni mentioned the name of a recently retired judge and said, ‘We filled an indictment with all the recent gossip in order to tempt her to read it.’ The audience burst into laughter... If you lodge a complaint, Heaven forefend, against injustices done by a member of the judge’s staff, you’ll pay for it...

“Similarly, in order to avoid unnecessarily making new enemies in court, Yarkoni advised the young attorneys to refrain from registering complaints against judicial staff members, i.e., secretaries and typists,



even if the complaint is justified. 'It is quite likely that the judge is aware of everything, but he won't let you join in on the fun – and all you will do is to turn his staff into your enemy.'

These are your judges, Israel...

Even in the so-called system of law enforcement, a.k.a., police, the people of Israel have revealed that we're talking about a bunch of lawbreakers who have no qualms about strangling innocent people with their bare hands – among other things.

If they thought up until now that this just referred to a few corrupted cops, it became known a couple of weeks ago that leading figures in the national police, including the commissioner, have been conducting murky connections with criminals. The warning letters delivered to these police brass proves that the fish stinks from the head, to the point that as a result of the current ongoing investigation, fifty criminal files that had previously been closed have now been reopened.

We say in the Shmoneh Esreh three times a day that one of the objectives of the Redemption is "Restore our judges as in former times, and our advisors as of yore," something that

takes actual expression in light of the serious injustices being carried out today in the official realm of law and justice. In this period of "Many have been purified, become white, and become refined," all this is being revealed by those very people who have sat in the ivory towers.

Even with all the examples brought here from the most recent period, we've only reached the tip of the iceberg – there's far more beneath the surface. If so, how can we deal with all this?

On Shabbos Parshas Shoftim 5751, we received a clear instruction from the Rebbe MH"M on how to prepare for the fulfillment of the Redemption while still in the time of Exile. In order to pass safely through the "doubled and redoubled darkness," we have an obligation to review regularly the Rebbe's instructions:

It is understood from this what we learn as we stand at Shabbos Parshas Shoftim in our generation, particularly in recent times, the final moments of Exile: there must be avoda in accordance with the principle of "measure for measure" in a state of Redemption:

One must publicize to himself and

all those whom he reaches that they must accept upon themselves (in greater strength) the instructions and advice of "your judges" and "your advisors" of our generation. In general, "Who are the kings? The rabbanim," and particularly, the leader of the generation, who comes as a continuation of the Rebbeim who preceded him — the judge of our generation, the advisor of the generation, and the prophet of our generation...

With the aforementioned instruction, we must publicize to the entire generation that we have merited that G-d has chosen and appointed someone with free choice, who is far higher than the people of the generation, to be "your judges," "your advisors," and the prophet of the generation, who will provide instructions and give advice relevant to the avoda of the entire Jewish People and all the people of this generation in all matters of Torah and mitzvos, and in relation to general daily conduct, including "Know Him in all your ways" and "All your deeds shall be for the sake of Heaven"... until the main prophecy, the prophecy of "Immediately to Redemption" and instantly "Here comes Moshiach."

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# ‘THEY ARE ADDING WHILE WE ARE DECREASING’

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN BERGER

*For decades, the Rebbe Rayatz maintained an ongoing connection with the Gaon, Reb Chaim Ozer Grodzinski, in matters of communal activism, in various struggles for Russian and European Jewry. When certain forces tried to undermine the position of Reb Chaim Ozer, the Rebbe Rayatz wrote a fascinating letter to support him. \* Part 2 of 2 covers the unique bond between the two giants, as well as a meeting with the Rebbe MH”M.*

(Continued from last week)

## DECADES OF JOINT EFFORTS

The connection started between the Rebbe Rashab and Reb Chaim Ozer, and continued in greater measure with the Rebbe Rayatz when he took over the Chabad leadership following the passing of his father the Rebbe Rashab.

Their connection actually began earlier, during the lifetime of the Rebbe Rashab, when the Rayatz carried out many communal activities under the direction of his father. Twenty years,

from 1899 to 1918, there was a strong and close connection between the Rebbe Rayatz and Reb Chaim Ozer, which included regular correspondence, many meetings and extensive joint activity.

The Bolshevik takeover in Russia severed this connection due to the Iron Curtain severely limiting foreign correspondence. It was renewed immediately upon the expatriation of the Rebbe Rayatz from the Soviet Union, in the month of Tishrei 5688/1927. Reb Chaim Ozer

immediately sent a telegram blessing the Rebbe upon his safe arrival in Riga, his new place of residence. The Rebbe Rayatz answered with a thank-you letter, and from that point on the contact started anew.

Their first meeting took place in Adar 5688/1928, when the Rebbe Rayatz visited Vilna for a few days during which the two exchanged visits. The Rebbe reported about the situation of the Jews of Russia, and Reb Chaim Ozer agreed to help him in whatever way possible.

During that period, the Rebbe Rayatz worked diligently to inform Rabbis and communal leaders of the true situation of the Jews in Russia, and asked them to lend a hand to help these Jews, who were downtrodden materially and spiritually. Unfortunately, not many answered the cry for help, and Reb Chaim Ozer was the first to do so. The Rebbe wrote this to him in a long letter dated 7 Elul 5688 that details the difficult state of affairs in Russia. **“The one and only is His Torah Honor, who responded to the sound of the cries of the downtrodden”** (*Igros Kodesh*, vol. 15 p. 202.)

After Reb Chaim Ozer read the detailed description of the condition of

Russian Jewry, he responded with greater energy to support the Rebbe Rayatz in various means to help those Jews. A month later, the Rebbe points this out in a letter that lays out all the efforts undertaken till that point.

As mentioned, the connection started up again in the form of correspondence and personal encounters. An extensive and regular correspondence, as well as meetings and messages sent by special couriers, comprised but a part of the unique bond between the Rebbe Rayatz and Reb Chaim Ozer.

### A MAN OF GREATNESS AND MANY LOFTY QUALITIES

In the seifer *Nesiei Chabad U'B'nei Dorum*, it recounts:

“One meeting between Rabbeinu [the Rebbe Rayatz] and him [Reb Chaim Ozer] took place when they were together at the healing hot springs. In connection with that encounter, it is told that Reb Chaim Ozer once took a walk and met the Rebbe going without an escort. Reb Chaim Ozer asked him, how it was that he was walking without anyone else, and the Rebbe answered that this was his restfulness.

“Once, when the Rebbe came to Vilna, he planned on paying a visit to Reb Chaim Ozer. However, Reb Chaim Ozer heard about the Rebbe’s arrival beat him to it and visited the Rebbe.”

The unusual esteem and admiration displayed by the Rebbe Rashab towards Reb Chaim Ozer, continued with his son, the Rebbe Rayatz.

In the summer of 1928, there was talk of elections for the leadership of the communities in Lithuania. The Chassid, Reb Shlomo Eliyahu Ushpal (may Hashem avenge his blood), the Rabbi of Korenitz and others, turned to the Rebbe Rayatz for guidance in the matter. The Rebbe answered that they should follow the resolutions passed at the rabbinic gathering in Vilna, led by Reb Chaim Ozer and the Chafetz Chaim.

In a letter dated 5 Tishrei 5689/1928, the Rebbe Rayatz wrote to his uncle Reb Moshe and his aunt Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka (sister of the Rebbe Rashab) and informed them that Reb Chaim Ozer would be taking a rest cure in Otvotsk (which served as a resort town outside



The Rebbe Rayatz as a young man



The Rebbe MH"™M as a young man



Reb Chaim Ozer  
at a resort near Vienna

Warsaw). In that letter, he suggests that his uncle pay Reb Chaim Ozer a visit, writing, "I am certain you will find it a great pleasure, for he is a man of greatness and many lofty qualities."

When Reb Chaim Ozer established a network of chadarim and Talmud Torahs, based on the pure and ancient traditions of chinuch, he sent out letters requesting donations. The Rebbe Rayatz sent his own personal donation along with a letter to Anash, instructing them to donate.

"I am asking of Anash of Vilna, its environs and the outlying areas to participate, materially and spiritually, in supporting and maintaining the Talmud Torahs and chadarim." (*Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayatz* vol. 11 p. 102)

The letter from the Rebbe was published with great fanfare in the newspaper *Dos Vort*, (issue 229), which came out in Vilna in those days.

### I POURED OUT MY HEART

In the winter of 5689/1929, the Rebbe Rayatz began agitating about sending matzos to the Jews of Russia. In the years under communist rule, almost no kosher matzos were baked. Additionally, the year 1929 was a year of famine, and the Jews – most of whom suffered great poverty – had no money to buy flour for matzos.

The Rebbe Rayatz saw an urgent need to send large quantities of matzo, together with *maos chitin*, financial aid for Pesach. In order to organize such large scale assistance, he set up a special committee together with the Chafetz Chaim and Reb Chaim Ozer.

There were some who joined the effort to help. However, there were others, who argued that the Rebbe only wanted to help his own Chassidim. On 16 Shvat, 1929, the Rebbe Rayatz wrote a long letter to Reb Chaim Ozer (*Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayatz* vol. 16 p. 30) explaining the cold response of many European rabbis in the face of the terrible

situation in Russia. Referring to this letter, the Rebbe writes, "From my great pain and suffering over the general coldness and iciness of our brethren from outside regarding the situation of our brothers who are suffering, particularly that of the honorable rabbis, I could not speak. Instead, I poured out my heart before the Gaon Reb Chaim Ozer, who, thank G-d, put himself into the work to benefit Torah Jews and Torah students...and inquires into it, and knows all the details of the work in all its branches."

*Reb Chaim Ozer  
came out of his office,  
and when he heard  
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Rayatz and his  
family.*

Reb Chaim Ozer resolved to refute the claims of the rabbis who spread the rumors, so he sent a letter to Reb Shmuel Yitzchok Hillman, one of the eminent rabbis of England, wherein he negated the false claims leveled against the Rebbe Rayatz. He also suggested that the financial aid be sent directly to the rabbis in Russia, or else to the board of rabbis, which included himself and the Chafetz Chaim. The letter is published in a collection of letters from Reb Chaim Ozer, in *Kovetz Igros Achiezer*, vol. 2, letter #237).

### FLOUR CAN'T BE BOUGHT FOR MONEY

In those days, the Rebbe Rayatz traveled to Berlin, which was the home of the financial center for the sending of matzos. Later, a proclamation went out calling for donations to provide matzos for the Jews of the Soviet Union, due to their great poverty and the fact that in a famine year they could not even buy flour for money. This was signed by the three great leaders of the generation, the Rebbe Rayatz, the Chafetz Chaim, and Reb Chaim Ozer. Additionally, the heads of the rabbinic organizations of Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia also signed. These were Reb Yechezkel Livschitz of Kalish, the head of the Agudas HaRabbanim of Poland, Reb Menachem Mendel Zak of Riga, the head of the Agudas HaRabbanim of Latvia, and Reb Avrohom Dovber Kahana of Kovno, head of the Agudas HaRabbanim of Lithuania.

Even after the fundraising, the Rebbe Rayatz still faced the bulk of the work. The Rebbe and a number of eminent Chassidim, together with Reb Chaim Ozer, worked tirelessly to get the necessary permits to ship the goods. After much effort in forging contacts, the matzos and monetary assistance were shipped to their destination, and the Jews of Russia were able to celebrate the seider and holiday properly.

The complex project is summed up by the Rebbe in a letter dated 27 Nisan:

"28 railroad cars of already baked matza were shipped, as well as 5689 packages of flour for Pesach and financial aid."

A year later, the situation in the Soviet Union continued to deteriorate. It became dangerous for Russian Jews to even receive matzos. The government only allowed foreign relatives to send to their Russian relations 5 kilograms of flour to bake matza only for their own families. The Rebbe Rayatz went into action again



**Congratulatory telegram from Reb Chaim Ozer  
to the Rebbe Rayatz upon leaving the USSR**

and together with the Chafetz Chaim and Reb Chaim Ozer, accomplished that each community organized the local Jews to send small packages of flour to private families.

In the years that followed, the three worked in tandem to send matzos through various means. At the same time, they also worked to send help to the Jews of Russia throughout the year. They set up committees in Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia, and the financial aid they sent, literally saved lives.

### **THE REBBE RAYATZ AND REB CHAIM OZER DANCED TOGETHER**

Many of Europe's rabbis and Rebbes maintained ongoing contact with the Rebbe Rayatz, who was based in Riga but visited many different European countries, where he met with many rabbis and Admurim. However, beyond the broad spectrum of Torah leadership, three individuals stood out. Namely, the Rebbe Rayatz, the Chafetz Chaim, and Reb Chaim Ozer, who were the objects of tremendous esteem from the Torah world of old.

Reb Chaim Ozer sat side-by-side with the Rebbe at many important gatherings, and on one occasion, the two actually danced together.

This occurred in the month of Sivan in the year 5692/1932, at the celebration of one of the Sheva Brachos for the Rebbe's youngest daughter, Shaina, who married her cousin, Reb Menachem Mendel Horenstein. Reb Yitzchok Dovber Ushpal, who was present at the occasion, tells, "Many delighted in the luminous sight, as our Rebbe and Reb Chaim Ozer danced together for a while."

### **THE REBBE MH"M AND REB CHAIM OZER**

Reb Chaim Ozer also met another leader in the chain of the Nesiei Chabad, namely, the Rebbe MH"M, prior to his ascending to the role of Nasi. Over the years, the two met on a number of occasions.

The first time, apparently, was when the Rebbe was sixteen years old, in his parents' home during WWI, when Reb Chaim Ozer lived in Yekaterinaslav as a refugee. During that period, he was in regular contact with the rav of the city, Reb Levi Yitzchok, the Rebbe's father. At that time, the Rebbe was sixteen and living at home.

Over the years, it is known, that the two met on various occasions. Reb Zushe Wilamovsky (the "Partisan") told of one such meeting:

"Once, the Rebbe Rayatz sent the

Rebbe on a mission to the rav of Vilna, Reb Chaim Ozer Grodzinski. When he arrived at the Beis Midrash, the local yeshiva students knew that he was the son-in-law of the Lubavitcher Rebbe and they started asking him many questions in learning. However, the Rebbe did not respond. When they saw that he was not answering, they said that in Chabad they don't learn.

"After the Rebbe left his meeting with Reb Chaim Ozer, he returned to the Beis Midrash and proceeded to answer all the questions that he was asked previously. All those present were astounded by the depth and brilliance of the Rebbe's answers, and one of the boys went to call Reb Chaim Ozer and tell him about the young genius.

"Reb Chaim Ozer came out of his office, and when he heard the whole chain of events, he asked the Rebbe why he didn't respond earlier, which caused people to mock the Rebbe Rayatz and his family. The Rebbe answered that since he was on a mission for his father-in-law, the Rebbe, until he fulfilled his charge, he could not involve himself in anything else."

A similar story, (or perhaps a different version of the same story), is told by one of the distinguished students of Reb Boruch Ber Leibowitz, a disciple of Reb Chaim Brisker and the rosh yeshiva of Kaminitz:

"Once, Reb Boruch Ber traveled to Vilna to visit Reb Chaim Ozer zt"l, and he took me along. Reb Boruch Ber went into Reb Chaim Ozer's room, and I waited outside. At that time, there were a number of Torah scholars present, and suddenly a young man appeared. In response to our queries, he identified himself as the son-in-law of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, and he said that he was on a special mission from his father-in-law, the Rebbe.

"We explained to him that Reb Boruch Ber was inside, and in the interim, we started talking in learning. We raise many difficulties, but the

young man did not respond the entire time. Suddenly, the door opened and when Reb Chaim Ozer saw the young man, he inquired as to the purpose of his visit, as well as about the topic of the discussion going on outside.

“The young man reviewed all the questions which had been raised, and in a clear language answered every one. Reb Boruch Ber was very impressed by the Torah insights of the young man, and he immediately proposed that he should go with him to the yeshiva in Kamenitz, where he promised to make him a ‘Gadol B’Yisroel.” When the young man explained that it was not possible for him to comply, I saw that Reb Boruch Ber broke out in tears.”

The young man in the story, the Rebbe MH”M, had come with a letter from the Rebbe Rayatz for Reb Chaim Ozer to sign, addressed to one of the philanthropists of Vilna.

## HE APPRECIATED THE VALUE OF THE YESHIVA

The Chabad Chassidim who resided in Vilna were, naturally, on good terms with Reb Chaim Ozer. One of the Lubavitch activists, Reb Mendel Levin, who also served on the Jewish Community Council of Vilna, was especially close to Reb Chaim Ozer.

At the founding of the Yeshiva Tomchei T’mimim in Vilna, Iyar 5687/1927, Reb Chaim Ozer provided his assistance and saw to it that the yeshiva receive funds from the Vaad HaYeshivos of Lithuania, which he directed. The allocation was 25 dollars a month, which was discontinued after three years because the yeshiva sent out an independent fundraiser which the leaders of the Vaad found objectionable.

The administration of the yeshiva turned to the Rebbe Rayatz, and the Rebbe got involved to reinstate the grant. He directed the members of the yeshiva staff to visit Reb Chaim Ozer, and to include the wealthy philanthropist, Reb Shneur Zalman

Seligson, who was a neighbor of Reb Chaim Ozer.

In a letter (*Igros Kodesh Rayatz* vol. 13 p. 204), the Rebbe writes:

“They should choose a group of three members of the administration, with our friend R’ S.Z. Seligson as one of them, to visit Reb Chaim Ozer shlita, to ask him that for the upcoming session they should increase at least up to fifty dollars a month. I have no doubt that knowing the facts on the ground, and being informed that with Hashem’s help they plan on adding another section for students who can learn on their own, certainly, he will do everything possible to fulfill

their good request.”

Concurrently, the Rebbe sent a special letter of request to Reb Chaim Ozer (*Igros Kodesh* vol. 13 p. 205), explaining the situation and asking him to intercede. We have no record of Reb Chaim Ozer’s response, if any, however, the yeshiva continued to receive a regular allotment from the Vaad HaYeshivos through the years. We know this from a report written by Reb Eliyahu Veitz, the founder and dean of the yeshiva. The report, published in *HaTamim* of Kislev 5696/1936, says, “Additionally, Reb Chaim Ozer Grodzinski shlita, recognized the precious value of the yeshiva and

## THAT IS GENIUS

In the previous generation, there lived in Lithuania a Jew of Chabad Chassidic lineage, whose family name was Bimbad (Beis Yud Mem Beis Dalet). One day, this Chassid received a letter from the Rebbe Rayatz, with quote marks in his family name indicating it to be an acronym. The Chassid tried to puzzle out the meaning, but could not do so.

He approached Reb Chaim Ozer, hoping that he would be able to discern the deeper meaning, but he could not come up with a solution and suggested the Chassid ask the Rebbe.

The Rebbe’s response came as a surprise. He revealed to the Chassid that the origin of his family name is the acronym for *B’m’heira Yavo Moshiach Ben Dovid* (speedily, he should come, Moshiach the son of Dovid). When he showed the answer to Reb Chaim Ozer, the latter exclaimed:

“Ah, that is genius!”

## THEY ACCORDED HIM GREAT HONOR

In the winter of 5689/1929, there were those who tried to undermine the position of Reb Chaim Ozer as the rav of Vilna. The Rebbe Rayatz mobilized to defend his position, and wrote a letter to one of the people involved, which explains the qualities of Reb Chaim Ozer as one who labored tirelessly over decades for the sake of the Jewish people.

In the letter, the Rebbe writes what he personally saw, beginning thirty years prior, and what he heard from others who came to Lubavitch, how the great leaders of the previous generation esteemed and deferred to Reb Chaim Ozer, and accorded him great honor as an activist leader. The names listed in the letter, include the Rebbe Rashab, Reb Chaim Brisker, Reb Elya Chaim Meisel of Lodz, Reb Dovid of Karlin, Reb Lazer of Telz and Reb Yitzchok Elchonon Spector of Kovno.

The letter concludes, “Can it be that after forty or more years of such energetic work for the benefit of the public...youths mock him, and he should suffer such humiliations, and from whom? Anyone who hears of this should be stunned over such a terrible and shocking thing.”



Students and staff of Tomchei T'mimim



Reb Shmuel Zalmanov with his students in Vilna during WWII

allotted it a monthly allocation from the funds of Vaad HaYeshivos.”

### OUTBREAK OF WAR

With the onset of WWII in 1939, the yeshiva closed and the students dispersed. However, a short while later it reopened with the students and teachers who escaped to Vilna from Tomchei T'mimim in Poland. One of the roshei yeshiva at that time was Reb Shmuel Zalmanov, who was the editor of *HaTamim*.

When Reb Chaim Ozer met Rabbi Zalmanov, he seemed quite amazed. “Such a young man is the editor of *HaTamim*?” he asked. Reb Shmuel Zalmanov was only 36 at the time. From this exclamation, the Chassidim in Vilna learned that the Lithuanian gaon had gone through the issues of *HaTamim*, published as per the

instructions of the Rebbe Rayatz. The publication contained a dense assortment of Torah discourses on Nigleh and Chassidus from the top Chabad scholars, as well as Chassidic stories and history.

During the war years, the Rebbe Rayatz worked to help the student refugees in Vilna escape from war-torn Europe. A number of attempts were made to help them through various means. One plan was to acquire “certificates” to travel to British controlled Eretz Yisroel.

A large number of such certificates were supposed to be delivered to a committee led by Reb Chaim Ozer from Rabbi Yitzchok Isaac HaLevi Herzog, the Chief Rabbi of Israel. The Rebbe Rayatz asked the two of them to provide a hundred certificates for the students and staff. Ultimately, the plan

fell apart. Some of the students managed to leave Vilna and spend the remaining war years in Shanghai. The others all perished, may Hashem avenge their blood.

### ALL MOURN HIM

In the beginning of the month of Av 5700/1940, the great gaon Reb Chaim Ozer, one of the greatest leaders of Lithuanian Jewry, passed away. The war was underway throughout Europe, though it had not yet reached Vilna. Even with the upheaval of war, Jews throughout the world mourned the tragic news.

Shortly after, the Rebbe Rayatz wrote a letter of mourning:

To Khal Adas Yisroel,

Hashem upon them, may they live,

I am broken and crushed by the saddening news of the awesome tragedy, which has befallen us, the entire community of Jewry, with the passing of the tremendous gaon, master of the Torah, our teacher Reb Chaim Ozer. May his soul be bound up in the bond of life.

A Nasi of the Jewish people, the entire nation of the G-d of Avraham mourns him. And may He console us, all of us, amongst the mourners of Zion and Yerushalayim.

I have no words with which to be consoled, let alone to console others. However, it is our duty to know that the same holy work carried out by the departed to save Torah scholars, yeshiva students and roshei yeshivos... is incumbent upon us to continue with greater measure and greater force.

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These two chapters chronicle a history of the close connection covering a broad array of areas between Reb Chaim Ozer and the Nisiei Chabad who lived in his time. Apparently, this is only the tip of the iceberg, but still vitally important to make known, as per the will and instruction of the Rebbe, who asked that this information be spread in all Jewish circles.