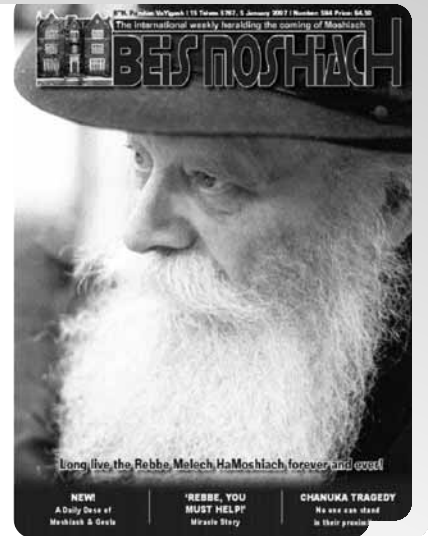


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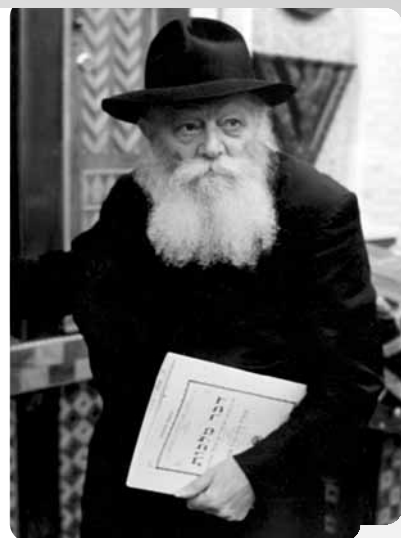
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TO REVEAL THE SECRET OF THE END OF DAYS

LIKKUTEI SICHOS, VOL. 10, PG. 167-172
TRANSLATED BY BORUCH MERKUR



4. We still must understand the specific wording of the saying of our Sages, “the **Divine Presence** withdrew from him.”

The intent here is surely to provide a reason why Yaakov did not reveal the *keitz ha'yamin* (the time when “the end of days” would occur). How does the Divine Presence withdrawing provide a reason for this? At first glance, the phrase should have read, “it (the *keitz*) was concealed from him” [FN 15: as in B'Reishis Rabba Ch. 98, beg.], or the like. Also, it must be understood how immediately thereafter [after “the Divine Presence withdrew from him”], Yaakov told them [his children] many prophetic statements, indicating that the Divine Presence did in fact rest upon him.

The matter is explained as follows:

“Yaakov wished to reveal to his **children** (i.e., knowing [their relative merits]) the end of days,” for according to his observations (seeing them as they “stood in his world,” from his perspective), Yaakov considered them (upon having assumed a state of being “gathered,” a certain milestone in being prepared) worthy of him revealing to them the *keitz*. [FN 16: From the fact that Yaakov considered even **Eisav** to have been refined (*Torah Ohr*, VaYishlach, beg.), permitting the possibility that there should be the Redemption, how much more so [does this logic apply here with regard to his children gathered before him].

To that end, Yaakov told [Eisav], “I have...a donkey” – “donkey” refers to the Messianic King (B'Reishis Rabba 75:6. See *Likkutei Sichos* Vol. 1, pg. 70 ff).]

Thus, Yaakov said, “gather and I shall tell you,” meaning, when you will have gathered and united, “I shall tell (and I will reveal to) **you**...the end of days,” when the end of days will occur.

“But the Divine Presence (*Sh'china*) withdrew from **him** (as he was at that moment, wanting to reveal to his children the end of days). Here the word for “**Divine Presence**,” “*Sh'china*,” refers to the potential to be **present** (to dwell, *l'hash'chin*) in this matter – the revelation of the *keitz* – below (which is the meaning of the term “*Sh'china*,” “that it dwells and invests [itself within]” [*Tanya* Ch. 41]).

That is to say that the Presence of G-d, may He be blessed (the revelation of the Light of the blessed Infinite One), rested upon Yaakov himself even after [“the *Sh'china* withdrew”], for indeed Yaakov told them words of prophecy, as mentioned above. In fact, the *keitz* itself was not even concealed from him. [FN 19: The latter is underscored in light of [Rashi's] diversion from the wording of the Midrash B'Reishis Rabba Ch. 98, beg. – the end of days “was concealed from him” – as will be discussed]. Rather, the “*Sh'china*” (the concept of revelation below) withdrew from the aspect of the *keitz* [i.e., there was no longer the potential for this secret to be revealed in the

*All that withdrew
from Yaakov was the
capacity l'hash'chin
(to be present or
dwell within) and to
channel the revelation
of the keitz (below).*

world].

This explains the precise wording of the Gemara, "the *Sh'china* withdrew from him" (and not, "the *keitz* was concealed from him"), for all that withdrew from Yaakov was the capacity *l'hash'chin* (to be present or dwell within) and to channel the revelation of the *keitz* (below).

5. Nevertheless, our Sages emphasize in their wording, "the *Sh'china* withdrew from him [from Yaakov]" (notwithstanding the fact that the stated withdrawal of the *Sh'china* is a concept that seemingly applies strictly to the leaders of the Tribes [Yaakov's sons]. Thus, it should have said, "but his children were not worthy of this," or the like [FN 20: in accordance

with Sanhedrin 11a]).

[The reason for this emphasis on the withdrawal of the *Sh'china* from Yaakov is that] the very fact that his children were not worthy of the revelation of the *keitz* caused a descent also in Yaakov. Precedence for this concept [of vicarious descent] is found with regard to Moshe Rabbeinu, to whom the Holy One Blessed Be He said, "Go, descend (from your greatness); I have bestowed upon you greatness only for the sake of the Jewish people [who had sinned with the Golden Calf]" [Brachos 32a; commentary of Rashi Parshas Ki Sisa 32:7]. Since they are not worthy, this causes a descent also in Moshe.

[To be continued be"H]

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A DAILY DOSE OF MOSHIACH & GEULA: 15-21 TEIVES

*Selected daily pearls of wisdom from the Rebbe MH”M
on Moshiach and the Redemption.*

COLLECTED AND ARRANGED BY RABBI PINCHAS MAMAN, SHLIACH, RISHON L'TZION, ERETZ YISROEL
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

15 TEIVES: ALL THE DAYS OF YOUR LIFE TO BRING THE DAYS OF MOSHIACH – EVERY SINGLE MOMENT

“All the days of your life to bring the days of Moshiach” (Mishna Brachos 1:5)

The main point of the life of every Jew and the Jewish People in general throughout all the generations: “All the days of your life to bring the days of Moshiach,” with an additional emphasis on our generation and our times.

“All the days of your life” means at every moment that a person lives, day and night, awake and asleep, as even then he lives through breathing air (“Let every soul praise G-d,” “on every breath that a person breathes, etc.”), which must be at every moment (as opposed to eating and drinking).

Furthermore, “all the days of your life to bring the days of Moshiach” means that one’s vitality (at every moment) is in bringing the days of Moshiach, i.e., not only when he thinks, speaks, and does activities to

bring Moshiach, but even the essence of his vitality (“your life”) is to bring the days of Moshiach.

(Shabbos Parshas Toldos 5752)

16 TEIVES: ALL THE DAYS OF YOUR LIFE TO BRING THE DAYS OF MOSHIACH – DO ALL THAT IS DEPENDENT UPON YOU

All matters of avoda (in all the days of your life, and every day itself and every detail and hour of the day) must be instilled with bringing the days of Moshiach. Not just “to increase” (as is written in numerous places) – that he (the shliach) stands and waits for Moshiach to come, and then he takes part and has pleasure from it, etc. – but “to bring,” doing all that depends upon him to bring the days of Moshiach.

...and since this is so, it is understood that all matters and all activities are instilled with the subject of Moshiach and the Redemption, including even one’s eating and drinking – that he longs for the Seuda of the Leviyan, the

Shor HaBar, and the Yayin HaMeshumar, to the point that even after the meal, he remains hungry for the Seuda of the Leviyan, the Shor HaBar, and the Yayin HaMeshumar.

(Shabbos Parshas VaYeira and Chaye Sara 5752)

17 TEIVES: MOVING THE SHULS TO ERETZ YISROEL IN THE FUTURE TO COME

“In the future, the shuls and batei medrash will be established in Eretz Yisroel” (Megilla 29a)

It can thus be said that they will be moved together with the land and ground underneath them.

Accordingly, this answers the question: How is it possible to uproot a shul and beit medrash from its place without any condition?

(Seifer HaSichos 5749, Vol. 1, p. 98)

18 TEIVES: PUBLICIZING THE INSTRUCTION OF “MACH DA ERETZ YISROEL” UNTIL THE COMING OF MOSHIACH TZIDKEINU

As we stand literally right before

the Redemption – each and every Jew must accustom himself to the Redemption and place himself in a state and feeling of Redemption by transforming his personal day into a “day of (personal) redemption,” and turning his own personal place into “Eretz Yisroel” through doing his avoda at that moment and at that place in the fullest sense – in thought, speech, and action.

...and in relation to actual deed, they should make certain to publicize in every location that this is the instruction of “*Mach Da Eretz Yisroel*,” and to continue publicizing the instruction in the days that follow until Moshiach Tzidkeinu will come, and continue then in Eretz Yisroel in its simplest sense, in addition to the future Eretz Yisroel, which will spread forth to all the lands.

(Shabbos Parshas Pinchas 5751)

19 TEIVES: THE DIRECT PATH TO THE REDEMPTION – STUDYING THE SUBJECT OF MOSHIACH AND GEULA

“Tiferes” is a matter of Torah study, and “*Malchus Sh'b'Tiferes*” is the study of Torah on matters pertaining to Melech HaMoshiach and the Redemption, which have been elucidated in numerous places.

In the Written Torah (and in particular, “in the words of the Prophets...as all the s’farim are filled with this matter”) and the Oral

Torah, in the Gemara and the Midrashim – including in particular the inner teachings of Torah, starting with the Zohar, and more particularly in the teachings of chassidus from our Rebbeim, especially the teachings (maamarim and *Likkutei Sichos*) of the leader of the generation, which are a semblance and preparation to the study of the teachings of Moshiach, “a new Torah shall come forth from me.”

Furthermore, the increase in Torah study on the subject of Moshiach and the Redemption (“*Malchus Sheb’Tiferes*”) is “the direct path” to bring about the revelation and coming of Moshiach and the Redemption in actual deed.

(Shabbos Parshas Tazria-Metzora 5751)

20 TEIVES – THE RAMBAM’S YAHRZEIT: LEARNING RAMBAM HASTENS THE TIME OF THE DAYS OF MOSHIACH

In the days of Moshiach, the full measure of the halachos of the Oral Torah, which will never be nullified, shall be revealed (as the Chumash). This is the main subject of the Rambam, who collects all the halachos of the Oral Torah (Mishneh Torah, as a continuation of the study of Chumash).

Accordingly, it can be said that by learning Rambam (a seifer of halachic

rulings), we precipitate and hasten the time of the days of Moshiach, as based on the the sayings of our Sages, of blessed memory (VaYikra Rabba 7:3), “All these exiles are not concluded except in the merit of the Mishnayos” (halachos), when the quality of halachos that are never nullified will be revealed.

(Kuntres on “Halachos of the Oral Torah that shall never be nullified” 5752)

21 TEIVES: LEARNING THE SUBJECT OF MOSHIACH – NOT JUST AS A SEGULA

In relation to the special increase in Torah study on the subjects of Redemption and Moshiach, (the learning must be) not (only) as a “segula” to hasten and bring closer the coming of Moshiach and the Redemption, but (also and) primarily in order to begin “living” with Moshiach and the Redemption, “living with the times” of the days of Moshiach by filling and instilling the intellect with understanding and comprehension of Moshiach and the Redemption in the Torah. And from the intellect, it will also spread forth and instill the feeling within the heart, to the point of actually conducting one’s thought, speech, and action in a manner befitting this unique time, standing on the verge of the Redemption, indicating with the finger that “Here comes (Melech HaMoshiach).”

(Shabbos Parshas Balak 5751)



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THE UNDERGROUND DISCOVERED!

BY YAAKOV SHMUELEVITZ, SHLIACH IN BEIT SHAAN

*I remember sitting and learning Chovas HaTalmidim and crying as I quietly sang to myself, again and again, thousands of times, the popular Toronto Pirchei song called “Horeini Hashem” – show me Hashem, Your way, and lead me on the straight path, ai ai ai ... Please Hashem, I don’t know where to go. Help me, show me the path. I think I found the path but everybody here around me says it’s wrong. * Chapter 4*

Looking back 25 years, I sometimes long for those days. I remember them as happy times in which I went with complete faith on the new path I had discovered, the

path of Chassidus. However, back then it wasn’t at all easy.

I remember what I did for many long months, evening after evening at the Musar class (yes, they have

these classes at Litvishe yeshivos, half an hour before Maariv everybody learns on their own in a volume of Musar recommended by the mashgiach). I remember learning Chovas HaTalmidim (which is considered a Musar work but was written by the Piacetzner Rebbe) and crying.

I quietly sang to myself, again and again, thousands of times, the popular Toronto Pirchei song called, “Horeini Hashem” – show me Hashem, Your way, and lead me on the straight path, ai ai ai, please Hashem, I don’t know where to go. Help me, show me the way. I think I found the path but everybody here around me says it’s wrong. Nevertheless, I feel 100% that it’s right. Who is right? Master of the universe...lead me on the right path.

Long months...evening after evening...I cried and pleaded, “Show

me Hashem, Your way..." and Hashem listened and helped, but of course I had to do the work myself.

MY FATHER CAUGHT ME RED-HANDED

One day my father found out that I was veering off his path and was seeking a new path. How did he find out? Simply by seeing how I wound

my t'fillin strap around my arm with circles turning outward when a few months earlier he had taught me to wind them with circles turning inward.

(There are those who say that this is quite apt since Chabad's goal is to influence others, the outside, spreading the wellsprings outward, while other religious Jews focus

primarily on their own perfection.)

My father, who is also a Torah scholar as well as a maven and someone experienced in chinuch, had a talk with me and asked me why I was tying on the t'fillin that way. With downcast eyes and trembling voice I told him this is Chabad custom.

It was like a bomb went off! Minhag Chabad?! What are you, a Chabadnik?!

I stammered that yes, I was.

What?! Since when? Why? Thanks to whom? Are we and our ancestors not religious enough? Etc., etc.

I had nothing to say in response.

After he recovered somewhat, my father told me to write a letter to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, "your Rebbe," and tell him that my father opposed the new path because of various reasons, "and we'll see what he tells you."

Fortunately, I didn't receive a written answer from the Rebbe to this letter, but the passage of time helped and maybe the Rebbe prayed and blessed me and my father too, because baruch Hashem, our entire family is Lubavitch. As someone put it (and the pun works better in Hebrew), I fulfilled the mitzva of "Kabeid/Chabad your father and your mother."

At the time though, it wasn't so easy. One day my father saw that I had gotten a letter from a friend in 770 and on the envelope it said, "From Beis Chayeinu - 770." My father asked me, "What does that mean, 'Beis Chayeinu-770'?"

I told him that this was where the Lubavitcher Rebbe lived in New York. My father was nonplussed and he went over to the bookcase, took a Siddur and opened it to the brachos of the Haftora.

"See what it says here? 'Have mercy on Tziyon for it is Beis



Talmidim of Itri yeshiva carrying wood for the Lag B'Omer bonfire



Rabbi Klonimus Kupchik



Rabbi Shmuelewitz today

Chayeinu.’ What are you doing, taking some building in the Diaspora and calling it Beis Chayeinu?!”

I didn’t answer since I had to be respectful, but the following Shabbos, at the table, when it was my turn to say a d’var Torah, I related the well-known story (see *HaTamim* 2, p. 126, and *Kuntres Beis Rabbeinu Sh’B’Bavel*, footnote 74) about a Chassid of the Baal Shem Tov who wanted to go to Eretz Yisroel. He heard a heavenly voice say, “The Luchos are in Mezhibozh.”

Nu, when my father heard this was a Baal Shem Tov story, he was ready to accept that 770 can be called Beis Chayeinu.

Telling this episode today is nice



A certificate of excellence that Yaakov Shmuelevitz received when he finished his studies at Yeshivas Itri

and all, but back then it wasn’t easy, and that’s an understatement. I wanted to give my parents only nachas, yet I yearned to continue on the derech Chabad. It wasn’t easy maintaining a balance between these two desires.

I continued to plead, “Show me Hashem, your way” while learning Musar. As the months and years went by, the tears changed from tears of pleading to tears of joy and bitachon and thanks.

Till this day I allow myself to occasionally sing the song “Horeini” (even though it’s generally preferable to sing only Chabad niggunim) and I relive the thirst and the elevation that I had when I chose the path of Chassidus. By the way, years later we got permission to learn *Tanya* and Chassidus during the Musar class!

SUDDEN SURPRISE IN AN OLD HOUSE

It was my last year in yeshiva ketana (what we call mesivta), shiur Gimmel. I had to decide which yeshiva I would be going to the following year. This wasn’t easy either and there wasn’t one clear answer. Today we can all be smart and say, “What’s the question? Go to a Chabad yeshiva!”

But back then we were children facing off against our parents, against the educational system! People had no problem saying that Chabad is heretical and avoda zara!

I remember one week in which we went to several yeshivos to see where to enroll. We went to a certain yeshiva and “spoke in learning” with the rosh yeshiva. Suddenly, he asked me where I planned on going and I said I was thinking of going to Kfar Chabad. He nearly fainted. What?! To Chabad?! What will become of you? An am ha’aretz! Come here and I’ll learn with you b’chavrusa and you’ll become a gadol b’Torah!

We went for a few days to a yeshiva in Chadera. We learned

GER – CHABAD

In our yeshiva underground there was a bachur who also had a connection with Ger and the Gerrer Rebbe, R’ Simcha Bunim known as the Lev Simcha. He occasionally went to the Rebbe’s tish and he grew long peios and arranged them under his yarmulke. He also seriously looked into Gerrer teachings and customs.

That bachur was very close to me. One day he went past the Gerrer Rebbe as he distributed apples. The bachur dared to ask for an apple “for Yaakov Shmuelevitz” and the Rebbe gave him.

The bachur gave me the apple but I didn’t appreciate the significance. I remembered that this bachur had received a letter from the Rebbe on the occasion of his bar mitzva and I offered him a deal: I would give him the apple from the Gerrer Rebbe if he would give me the Lubavitcher Rebbe’s letter.

He agreed and it was a deal that suited each of us. However, I ended up giving him the apple and the letter in the end because I didn’t want to take advantage of his good nature.

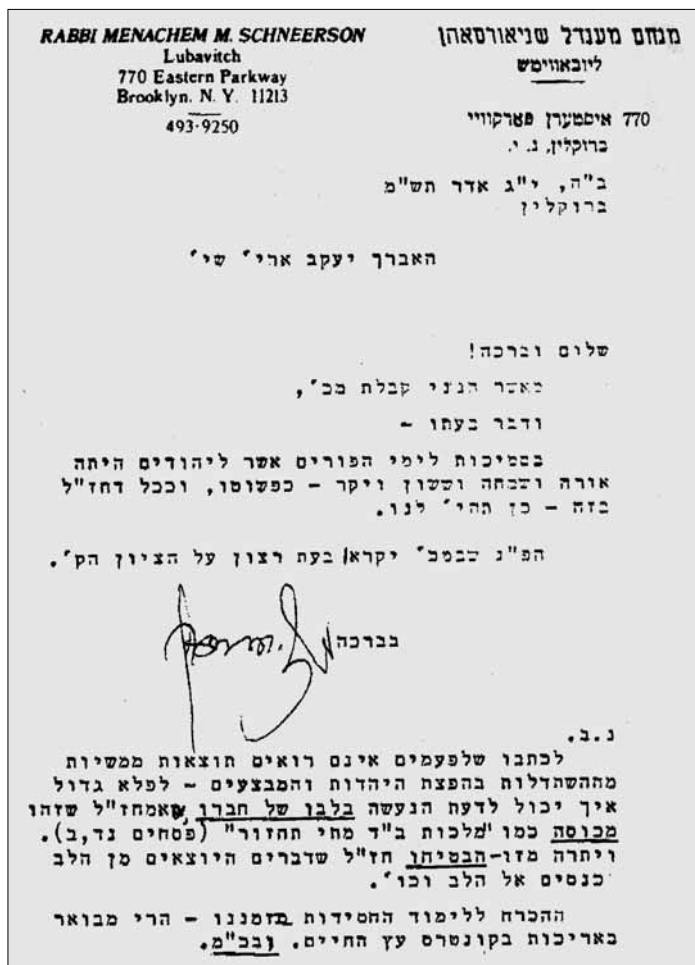
This bachur was drawn to study *Tanya*. One day he went to the Gerrer Rebbe and asked him: In my yeshiva (Itri) there is a group of Chabad bachurim who learn *Tanya* and they suggest that I learn *Tanya* too. Shall I?

The Admur answered: *Tanya* is a holy work. Yes learn it.

A few weeks later the bachur felt that he was drawn to Chabad. He went back to the Gerrer Rebbe and asked: I am wondering whether I should be a Chabad Chassid, what should I do?

The Admur answered: First be a Chassid and then you will see which kind.

Today he is an ardent Lubavitcher Chassid and a loyal shliach of the Rebbe in a big city in Eretz Yisroel.



The Rebbe's letter to Yaakov Shmuelewitz about the need to learn Chassidus

during the day and in the evening we toured around Chadera. Suddenly, we saw light in some old house. We went in and discovered that it was a shul, the Chabad shul in Chadera. A man was sitting there, the shliach Rabbi Klonimus Kupchik.

Litvishe bachurim had landed in a Chabad house. The shliach served some refreshments and we began to talk. I didn't tell him I was a

Chabadnik, but I'll never forget the amazing shiur we had that evening. He explained to all of us what a Rebbe is, what the difference is between a rav and talmid versus Rebbe and Chassid. He spoke so well that all the Litvishe bachurim conceded that he was right and that only in Chassidus is there a true soul connection between Chassid and Rebbe.

LETTER FROM THE REBBE

My vacillation over which yeshiva to go to continued on and on but in truth, there was really no choice. All members of the underground decided to go to Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Kfar Chabad. The hesitation was only about how to obtain our parents' permission and when could we tell everyone where we were going.

I wrote to the Rebbe and asked a number of questions with the main question being where to learn the following year. The Rebbe responded and regarding yeshivos the Rebbe wrote: **the need to learn Chassidus in our times is brought at length in the Kuntres Eitz Chayim and elsewhere.**

A problem arose in that the Rebbe used an abbreviation which I understood to stand for "and elsewhere," meaning other s'farim, and that the Rebbe was saying I had to learn in Kfar Chabad. My father maintained that the abbreviation stood for "any location," that I could learn Chassidus anywhere and not just in Kfar Chabad.

This debate (which reached senior figures in Chabad) didn't end until baruch Hashem I also transferred to Kfar Chabad. The impact was direct and significant: my father and mother switched to T'hillas Hashem and went to the Rebbe. My brother is a shliach in Ohr Akiva and all of us wait for the imminent hisgalus of the Rebbe MH"M.



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‘REBBE, YOU MUST HELP!’

Two miracle stories related at Chassidishe farbrengens

AS HEARD BY T. YANKELOWITZ

I am asking the Rebbe to save Aunt Zissel from the cruel fate of having her leg amputated. I didn't ask. I demanded. I said: Rebbe, you must help!

A farbrengen is the time to hear personal stories, miracles, and wonders that have taken place in our day. At a farbrengen I attended, as one story followed another, Shimon could be heard clearing his throat. He's usually a listener and not one of the talkers. He looked excited and he had something to say. This is the story he told:

You may not all know this, but my family is from the US. We made aliya five decades ago but the entire family did not come with us. Nor did the entire family discover Lubavitch, as we did.

Although most of the family is what is called *oilemishe*, the majority are not *misnagdim*. They are just good, frum Jews who are not looking for anything new or for any changes in their avodas Hashem. Most importantly, they do not mock Lubavitcher Chassidim.

This was all true in the past, when we began our journey to Chabad Chassidus. In later years,

when a certain rosh yeshiva in B'nei Brak began fanning the flames of controversy, our family underwent upheavals, and the opposition and mockery reared their heads. We kept doing what we were doing, with heads held high, as it says in halacha, "do not be ashamed before those who mock."

Of all my close relatives there is one person who stands out. You never hear her say one disrespectful word about the Rebbe or Chabad and in fact, she never said a bad word about any Jew, no matter his religious perspective or conduct. She loves everyone and receives everyone graciously.

That's my Aunt Zissel, who lives up to her name (which means "sweet"). Although she experienced bitterness in her life, it doesn't show on her face and she always smiles. She has had unbearable times in her life with endless trials but she always accepts what Hashem sends her.

I was especially sad to hear recently that her health wasn't good. Aunt Zissel is well into her 90's and is surrounded, baruch Hashem, by many descendents who treat her well, but she had an infection in her blood that turned into gangrene in her foot.

She was taken to the hospital where she was treated with the best medicine. They gave the medicine time to work and sent her home. "Within a few days," said the doctors, "your condition will stabilize and your foot will heal."

Time passed and she wasn't getting better. She was hospitalized again and treated with different medication. Once again, her body did not respond to the treatment. Her body was weakened by all the antibiotics but there was no choice, they had to save her leg.

After various attempts with different medications, the doctors called the family members and gave their verdict. We did all we could but the treatment was ineffective. Not only that, her condition got worse. The gangrene in her foot has begun to spread and the entire leg is affected. This is extremely serious and can endanger her entire body. We are sad to say that we must ask your permission to amputate her leg.

The family was shocked. Their mother-grandmother was nearly 100 and she had to undergo this trauma? There was no other choice? Our modern medicine had nothing to offer aside from amputation?!

The family consulted with other doctors and went to the head of the department. There, they heard a somewhat different perspective. The head doctor was afraid about the operation being done on a woman her age, with a weak body...who knows what the amputation would cause? On the other hand, to leave her this way, they couldn't do that either. It was dangerous. The gangrene was spreading. Not to operate was a death warrant for sure but the actual operation could lead to the same result.

The doctor truly did not know what to do. He needed help in

making the decision and unexpectedly, he asked the family to consult with a rav – a posek! “I cannot take the responsibility to make this decision. None of the choices are good and I don't want to make this decision.”

My cousins, spoke to a rav, I don't know who. He said they could not think about what might be; they had to judge the situation as it was then. If her condition required an amputation so that the gangrene did not spread, then the p'sak says to do that and not to consider what the results of the operation might be.

We, the family in Eretz Yisroel, followed the developments with bated breath. Every day we got a report and every day the report was less positive and encouraging than the day before, until the rav said to amputate.

We heard this news on a Friday. Despite the urgency, apparently a woman approaching 100 is still not top of the list of priorities. The operation was scheduled for Sunday. I was devastated by this news. I couldn't digest the fact that such a special woman, with such refined middos, who had always accepted her trials with love, would have to undergo such a horrible thing. I couldn't make peace with it. This just couldn't be!

So why didn't I write to the Rebbe? Because I didn't feel I could write the whole story, I didn't want to give it a “hold” in the physical reality. As a beloved nephew of Aunt Zissel who saw her live through most of her life from up close, I could only say, she doesn't deserve this! To lose her leg at her age? She proved her ability to endure tests



with simcha dozens of times. What did she need this for?

I couldn't concentrate on preparing for Shabbos. The jobs I usually do around the house were done somewhat haphazardly that week. My head was far away, in the US.

After my wife and daughters lit candles, before leaving with the boys for shul, I stood before a big picture of the Rebbe in the living room. I said to the Rebbe, no, it was actually more of a demand: although I know that it's nearly impossible, even the top doctor is afraid of the two options, I am asking the Rebbe to save Aunt Zissel from the cruel fate of having her leg amputated.

I didn't ask. I demanded. I said: Rebbe, you must help!

Time passed tensely with an attempt to do things in her merit. Late Sunday night the phone rang. It was my brother who had news. I felt my heart beat quickly. Please don't tell me bad news; I can't take it.

"Listen, you won't believe this! They prepared Aunt Zissel for the operation. Everybody was outside, knowing that either way, the situation wasn't good and not knowing what the results would be. As the doctor said, none of the options were good. Before operating they checked her leg, which had been called dead and was inflicted with gangrene that was spreading, one more time.

"And you know what? They discovered that there is a working vein throughout the leg! The leg came to life! Except for some toes where there was still gangrene, which they amputated, they did not have to operate!"

* * *

Another story that I heard at a farbrengen was told by Yom Tov Gindi:

One of my brothers is a mohel in Kfar Chabad. He is often invited to make brissin in various places. One time, he was called to do a bris in the Tunisian community in Tel Aviv.

The rav of the community, Rav Charari, invited my brother and the baal ha'bris to say l'chaim after the bris. The rav took this opportunity to get acquainted with my brother and to ask him where he was from. When he said he was from Kfar Chabad, the rav told the following story:

In our community there was a man about thirty years old who was paralyzed and had to use a wheelchair. This situation had been going on for ten years and then one day he met a Chabad Chassid who

His mother's reaction was: How did the Rebbe know what took place decades ago?

suggested that he write to the Rebbe about his health. The man asked the Lubavitcher to write for him and gave him the relevant information. For some reason, he mentioned his father's name in his letter too.

After some time, an answer arrived at the home of the Chassid. The Rebbe advised him to write a seifer Torah and in the merit of this he would be healed. The Rebbe referred to the handicapped man by name and included his father's name but it wasn't the same name that the man had told the Chassid to write.

Was this a mistake? Couldn't be! The Chassid wrote to the Rebbe again, just to be sure, and once again the Rebbe used a different

name for the father. The Chassid didn't know what to tell the man but he had no choice as he was merely the shliach to convey the answer the Rebbe had sent.

The Chassid told the man what the Rebbe had written and expressed his surprise that the Rebbe used a different name for his father. Did his father have another name?

No. The man insisted that the name he had given was the correct name. He decided he had to find out why the Rebbe had used a different name and the only person who could tell him was his mother, a kibbutznik who still lived on a kibbutz.

He told his mother the whole story, about his meeting with the Chabadnik, writing the letter to the Rebbe, receiving two answers with a different name for his father than he had written. Could she explain this to him?

His mother's reaction was: How did the Rebbe know what took place decades ago?

She told her son that she had been married to an army officer who had fallen in the line of duty and it was his name that the Rebbe had cited in his letter. There was no sitting Shiva at the kibbutz and she married before the three months the halacha requires a widow to wait. Until that day her second husband was considered his father but the truth was that the officer whose name the Rebbe mentioned was his biological father!

This is the story my brother heard from Rav Charari, the rav of the Tunisian community.

* * *

Those farbrenging burst into song, the niggun with which we will go to greet Melech HaMoshiach: *Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V'Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach L'olam Va'ed!*

‘AND THE LIVING SHOULD TAKE TO HEART’

INTERVIEW BY MENACHEM ZIEGELBOIM

*It was specifically during the joyous days of Chanuka that such an awesome tragedy took place, with the deaths of three young T'mimim out on mivtzaim to bring the joy and light of the holiday to other Jews. At this time, we can only follow the Torah directive, "And Aharon was silent." And yet, together with the tears and mourning, we also must continue our shlichus. * A special discussion with Rabbi Yosef Hecht, the Rabbi of Eilat, where the T'mimim involved in the accident were operating in their work to bring light and joy to the world.*



The terrible tragedy of the deaths of the three budding T'mimim, occurred while they were on their way to mivtzaim in the army buses in and around Eilat, under the auspices of the Beis Chabad Eilat. Such a tragedy is extremely difficult to cope with and the best course is to follow the words of the Torah, "And Aharon was silent," a silence which bespeaks the acceptance of Divine judgment with pure and simple faith. It is only that silence

and that faith, which have the power to bear the torment and suffering, whereas attempts at explaining and finding reasons, only lead to heartache and confusion.

At the same time, beyond trying to understand the whys and wherefores, we need to hear a clear message, the call of the hour, as to how do we respond to the events and how do we proceed. This is a time that we need to strengthen

ourselves and push on in carrying out the holy work of the Rebbe, but we need to know how to cope and to compartmentalize between the pain of the present and encouragement for the future.

It would seem that the ideal person to speak with is Rabbi Yosef Hecht, the rav of Eilat, the city from where the T'mimim were operating from as they went forth to bring joy and light to the world and to the

hearts of the soldiers. Rabbi Hecht graciously agreed to provide us with his point of view, but first we asked him to tell about Mivtza Chanuka in Eilat this year.

Chanuka mivtzaim in Eilat have been somewhat famous for years...

That is true. Mivtza Chanuka holds a central place in Israeli life, and especially in Beis Chabad Eilat, run by Rabbi Menachem Klein. We deal with the army bases, which are spread out at great distances, going from Eilat north and northwest of the city, along the borders with Egypt and Jordan. It is a long and wide line of bases and it sometimes requires travel of two hours each way.

Beis Chabad Eilat will not overlook any of the bases, no matter what the distance. In order to reach all the camps, we have been getting over the years an infusion of manpower in the persons of bachurim from Chabad yeshivos all across the country, so as to reach each encampment throughout the days of Chanuka. Among the bachurim there is a high demand to participate in mivtzaim in Eilat and the outlying areas, and it has the reputation of being an experience as well as intensive work.

Eilat is also a tourist city. There

are many tourist attractions which operate throughout the day and night, and the boys make sure to reach every one of these tourist hotspots. The various teams of bachurim who come here all work double shifts. During the day, they visit army bases, and at night, they focus more on the civilian population. During Chanuka, the city is generally filled with Jewish tourists, and no effort is spared to try to pull them into the spirit of the holiday and offer them the chance to do the mitzvos of the day.

All of this is in addition to Eilat being a regular city like every other Israeli city, which has stores and shopping centers, plazas and private homes. The Chabad House reaches every single place on its mission from the Rebbe and brings the atmosphere of Chanuka to those places. Baruch Hashem, we have had great success each year, and so too this year.

The work has a profound impact, not only in the local sense, but the ripples spread throughout the world. Throughout the year, we always hear regards from shluchim around the world who heard from Jews in their communities that they were in Eilat during Chanuka and participated in the menorah lightings and festivities. Clearly, it makes a deep and lasting

I have no doubt that if each of us makes his own personal and individual reckoning, this will bring positive change to the community at large. This will give nachas to the Rebbe and we will merit to receive the blessings in the form of open and revealed good.

impression on a very large scale.

It was these activities that led to the terrible tragedy over Chanuka...

This year, as in every year, many bachurim came from yeshivos around the country. To our great distress, the van carrying one of the teams to one of the bases turned over and three of the boys were killed.



At the scene of the accident



HaTamim Levi Hendel days before the accident, on his way to Mivtza Chanuka



Rabbi Yosef Hecht – Chief Rabbi of Eilat

The shock shook up the entire Chabad community throughout Eretz Yisroel and the world. How did it affect the local community in Eilat?

Naturally, the bachurim that come here for Chanuka sleep in the Chabad House, eat at the homes of local families or in the Chabad House. People see them in shul during Shacharis and Maariv, and so they begin to develop a personal connection with the boys. The local Anash always get to know the bachurim who come. When you see

the bachurim in the mikva and then at Shacharis, afterwards as they prepare a quick breakfast and are getting ready to pull out, you wish them success – to hear a few hours later that three of them are not coming back is a tremendous blow that is extremely difficult to digest. I don't know if it is even possible to digest such a thing. The feeling of the locals is that it is all so unbearable.

Everybody wants to know what they can do and how they can be of

help. Some of the injured were hospitalized locally, so people could at least do something to help them, to sit at their bedsides and offer encouragement and whatever possible assistance. However, there is no such option when it comes to those who have passed on, there is only the feeling of helplessness.

And Aharon was silent?

I think that the two stories do have similarities. In Parshas Shmini it tells of the death of the two sons of Aharon, during the inauguration (chanuka) of the Mishkan, on the eighth day of the Miluim. Those Kohanim who served in the Mishkan were shluchim of Hashem and of the Jewish people. They were holy emissaries doing their shlichus in the Mishkan. The joy of the Jewish people during those days was at its peak, and the presence of the Sh'china was fully revealed.

When such an event transpires, the first question is how could such a thing happen? Why? The Torah responds to these questions with the statement, "And Aharon was silent." Aharon HaKohen, the bereaved father, accepted the decree of Heaven with silence.

The correlations are obvious. Specifically during the joyous days of Chanuka, a time of light and life, such an awesome tragedy occurs with three T'mimim doing the shlichus of the Rebbe to illuminate and bring happiness to others. We have no other option except to fulfill the directive of the Torah, "And Aharon was silent."

When one contemplates the tragedy in biblical times, another point becomes apparent. There was an explicit instruction from Hashem that all the survivors involved in the holy work of drawing down the Sh'china, must continue their holy activities without interruption. This was at the same time that "The entire house of Israel should bewail the

conflagration that Hashem wrought.” The Kohanim-Shluchim could not as a result of the calamity, as painful as it was, interrupt for a moment their shlichus. We must continue!

Perhaps at times it is difficult to attain such a level, but if the Torah demands this of us, it is an indication that we have the requisite strength, and we should operate according to what is written in *Tanya*, “crying is implanted in my heart on this side, and joy is implanted in my heart on this side.” Together with the mourning of “the entire house of Israel,” there is also the command to carry on the shlichus.

Chanuka is the inyan of light, as the Rebbe explains in numerous sichos, as well as the inyan of chinuch. There is nothing like the Rebbe’s Mivtza Chanuka to be mechanech the Jewish people to love of Torah, love of Hashem and love of mitzvos. This mivtza also implants joy into the hearts of Jews. We must continue our holy mission and pray that we never have to deal with such a situation again.

I have said on a number of occasions, when interviewed following the accident, that if we could ask the bachurim themselves if they would want us to have weakened our efforts in Mivtza Chanuka, they would certainly negate such a reaction.

Many have raised the question as to how such a thing could possibly occur while they were “emissaries of a mitzva,” as there is a Torah rule that “emissaries of mitzva are not harmed?”

As we said, this is a time of “And Aharon was silent.” This is not a time for questions and clarifications as to the workings of Heaven, but it is a time to accept the judgment of Heaven. Beyond that, we as believing Jews committed to the Torah dictate, “And you should preserve, very

much, your lives,” must do everything in our power to warn and be extremely careful to avoid putting ourselves in danger.

I would like to use this forum to call upon all rabbanim to cry out unceasingly about the importance of caution when on the road. It doesn’t matter if the driver is a bachur, young married man, or even an older person; all are obligated to exercise great care when driving, both regarding speed and paying attention to the road. We must emphasize this repeatedly, including the importance of wearing seat belts. This is not only a civil obligation, but an absolute Torah requirement.

In the past, the Rebbe addressed a number of such incidents. Do you recall any specific instance?

On Erev Lag B’Omer 5740/1980, there was a tragedy in Chevron where a local yeshiva bachur was killed by terrorists, and the entire community was in deep mourning. The shluchim asked the Rebbe if they should continue their plans for the parade as usual. The answer was in the affirmative, and as the Rebbe later expressed during the farbrengen, the halacha is that “you move aside the dead before the bride,” and thus the activities should go on. So too, in our situation, we could not allow the terrible tragedy to undermine our work. On the contrary, we need to strengthen ourselves and others all the more.

After the horrific car accident in Sivan 5734/1974 in which five of Anash in Eretz Yisroel died, the Rebbe wrote a letter for the “Shloshim,” in which he emphasized the need to increase in mivtzaim that serve as a “protection and salvation.”

The group of bachurim involved in the accident was on its way to an important army base. The soldiers had gathered in anticipation of the arrival of the bachurim, and when they did not arrive, they called to

find out what was holding them up and that is when the accident became known. In fact, the soldiers were the first to arrive at the site. The next day, the division commander gathered all of the soldiers, approximately two thousand strong, and spoke to them about the terrible accident and tragedy. In his remarks, he noted that throughout his tenure in the area, Chabad did not miss one holiday without visiting and bringing joy to the soldiers. One of the participants at this delayed gathering was Rabbi Neimark, the father of one of the injured boys, who reported



Yonason Bitton age 17

that the event was both very emotional and uplifting.

What sign is Heaven trying to send us in light of all these tragedies?

All the years, the Rebbe taught us the words of the Rambam in the beginning of his Laws of Taanis, who writes: “And this is one of the ways of repentance – that at a time when a misfortune comes and they cry out and sound the shofar, all should know that it is because of their wicked deeds that evil has befallen them, as it is written, “Your sins have brought this upon you.” And this is

what will cause them to remove the misfortune from upon themselves. However, if they will not cry out and not sound the shofar, but they will say that this thing is part of the natural order that occurred and this misfortune is just a happenstance, this is the pathway of cruelty and causes them to stick with their wicked deeds, and will add in the misfortune and other troubles...”

Many times, the Rebbe emphasized that every occurrence, and certainly such a harsh one, demands of us that we contemplate it and draw the appropriate lessons. There is nothing that falls in the

pertains to all of Anash.

This was not an isolated tragedy. We are all aware of recent tragedies that have hit Lubavitch around the country and the world. This has affected all Anash communities, and even the three boys who were killed originated from different communities throughout the country. As such, each person must make his own accounting as to what he as a Chassid sees is not in order and what the Rebbe wants of him as a Chassid to correct and improve, without waiting for the other person to correct his behavior first.

I am positive that the Rebbe’s

action, namely the mitvzaim of the Rebbe. I would like to share with the readers the fact that here in Eilat, we founded a weekly class in *Likkutei Sichos* that will be ongoing for the next year as a merit for the departed souls of the bachurim.

We also took on a resolution to expand Mivtza Chinuch, since when we see that we have lost three such wonderful boys, we must do everything in our power to add more students in the institutions of the Rebbe. We plan on boosting the enrollment in the preschools and elementary school, and also to bring more bachurim to learn in the local yeshiva. Similarly, there is the need to increase in practical deeds in each place according to what is appropriate.

In such instances, there are many who rush to point out a particular weakness and to suggest that we need to strengthen such-and-such an area. Who could know for certain what is expected of us to improve?

In Tammuz 5747/1987, a bachur from Crown Heights was seriously injured in a traffic accident. At the next farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke about the need to make a soul-reckoning regarding the internal conflicts, which sadly were raging within the Crown Heights community at the time. The Rebbe added that recently there had been a number of signs from Above indicating dissatisfaction, such as the finding of a flaw in a Seifer Torah as well as the terrible weather at that time (windstorms, lightning, heavy rains). When those signals went unheeded – then there was that occurrence.

Clearly, we can’t always compare one circumstance to another, and yet at the same time, it is obvious that any increase in Ahavas Yisroel will only bring benefit and blessing. However, I reiterate that it is difficult to know why the recent tragedy took



Moshe Golan age 17



Levi Hendel age 13

category of happenstance. This is a concrete foundation of Jewish faith in general and Chassidus in particular, as explained in the sichos of the Rebbe.

To know exactly what is wanted of us from Above – that is an entirely different matter. We are not prophets, nor the sons of prophets. Each person has to make an individual accounting, according to his situation, as to how he can strengthen himself. Perhaps this is even more important than a public communal reckoning of the entire community. We need to start with a personal soul-accounting, and this

blessings are being poured down upon us without limit, but sometimes we merit to see this immediately, and occasionally we don’t see it with our physical eyes and the blessings are concealed. I have no doubt that if each of us makes his own personal and individual reckoning, this will bring positive change to the community at large. This will give nachas to the Rebbe and we will merit to receive the blessings in the form of open and revealed good.

When discussing the idea of a reckoning, we must see to it that it is also translated as an increase in

place. We can't forget what the Rebbe said in the sicha of Naso 5734/1974, "There are matters that as much as one searches, he cannot find and cannot understand why such things occurred."

In conclusion?

Many times, we heard from the Rebbe regarding soldiers who died while protecting the Jewish people in Eretz Yisroel that the verse, "Gather unto Me, My Chassidim who establish My covenant upon the sacrifice" applies to them. When a Jew is killed protecting another Jew, then it is considered that he has entered into a covenant with Hashem by his death. About such people it says in Chazal, "No creature can stand in their proximity."

Similarly, these T'mimim set out on the shlichus of the Rebbe to do mitvzaim, which protect the Jewish people in Eretz Yisroel, as these are the spiritual defensive weapons. Any act of providing a Jew the opportunity to do a mitzva, to participate in the joy and atmosphere of a mitzva, causes added protection and security for the Jewish people.

It can certainly be said regarding those T'mimim who departed this physical plane while carrying out their mission as emissaries of the Rebbe in protecting their fellow Jews, "No creature can stand in their proximity." I have no doubt that their place is in those lofty and elevated worlds.

It is worth mentioning the special regard that the Rebbe had for Mivtza Chanuka. The Rebbe established all ten mitvzaim and each one is very precious and dear. However, it seems to me that Mivtza Chanuka was held in special regard, in the spirit of what the Rambam writes, "The mitzva of Chanuka lights is a very dear mitzva."

In 1986, when during the court case involving the s'farim the other



Rabbi Eliyahu Neimark in an event held after the accident, in the merit of the victims

side argued that Chabad was not active, etc, the Rebbe treated this as if it were a claim that came from Above and he instructed that they publish the Chanuka albums to show the entire world just how active Chabad is. Certainly, each shliach has his own albums of a wide range of mitvzaim activities, such as Mivtza T'fillin, Neshek, etc., and we could surely put together many albums depicting Chabad activities. Despite all that, the Rebbe chose to include pictures of Chanuka mitvzaim (actually, it was that time of the year, but everything is by Divine Providence).

Mivtza Chanuka shows how Chabad illuminates the "outside," just as the Chanuka lights, "the mitzva is to place it at the doorway of his house outside," and specifically in the darkest times like the Chanuka lights, when the mitzva is "from when the sun sets." It is there that Chabad goes to spread light and warmth and to reveal the Divine Unity.

What is the source of our power? The power of "yechida." As we know, Chabad Chassidus is the "yechida" of Torah, and therefore, it has the

power to reveal the Divine Unity in the darkest and most distant places. This too is connected with the Chanuka lights, as explained in Chassidus – that the cruse of oil sealed with the seal of the Kohen Gadol that the Greeks did not desecrate alludes to the "yechida of the soul," which the Greeks could not desecrate as it always remains pure, and has power to illuminate all the soul-powers with the light of "yechida."

Perhaps this can explain the special regard the Rebbe showed for Mivtza Chanuka. It is this that the T'mimim were involved in, in the last days and hours of their young lives, to illuminate the world with the light of "yechida," which leads to the revelation of the general "yechida," i.e., Moshiach. Every time we ignite the Chanuka lights anywhere in the world, we reveal the "yechida" in the soul of each individual Jew and illuminate the darkest places in the world. This, in turn, causes the Rebbe – Moshiach, the "yechida" of the entire Jewish people – to be revealed immediately in all his glory.

THE G-DLY NAME WITH WHICH WE ARE REDEEMED

BY RABBI YOSEF KARASIK, DISTRICT RAV BEIT CHEFER, EMEK CHEFER

*Why was Moshe concerned about the Jewish people asking him, “What is His name?” How would knowing Hashem’s name increase their belief in Moshe? Moshe knew several of Hashem’s names, why did he ask Hashem His name? * A fascinating look at the parsha from the perspective of Chazal, Kabbala, and Chabad Chassidus.*

THE TIME FOR GEULA HAS COME

In Parshas Shmos it tells of an enormous G-dly revelation that Moshe experienced at the burning bush. Hashem said to him: I have seen the suffering of the Jewish people in Egypt and have heard their cries and so you should go to them and say that the time of their redemption has arrived.

Moshe asked Hashem: When I come to the Jewish people on Your mission, they will ask me for Your name. What should I tell them?

Hashem said: I-WILL-BE-WHAT-I-WILL-BE is My name forever, my remembrance from generation to

generation.

Chazal are surprised by Moshe’s question. Why did Moshe think the Jewish people would ask for the name of the One Who wants to save them from servitude? They were suffering in Egypt, so what difference did it make what Hashem’s name is? The main thing is to be redeemed!

This would be like a prisoner in solitary confinement who is beaten and humiliated and forced to do hard labor day and night until he cannot take it any longer. Suddenly he is told that they are coming to remove him from the dungeon and set him free. Would his first question be: Who is coming to take me out? Does knowing who it is matter?

Certainly not! The most important thing is to get out! His heart is full of joy over the wonderful news of his impending release and who will be taking him out is not that significant.

So why did Moshe think that the Jewish people, who were subjugated to the wicked Egyptians, would want to know the name of the Redeemer? If it was because Moshe feared that they did not believe in Hashem and His redemption, how would knowledge of His name help? Whoever believed in Hashem didn’t need to know the name; whoever did not believe, would not be helped by a name!

Furthermore, Moshe knew some of Hashem’s names (he certainly knew the names revealed to the Avos, mentioned in the book of B’Reishis). Why then did he ask what Hashem’s name is?

(Some answer this question by saying that Moshe was straight and truthful, “he was very punctilious in conveying Hashem’s message in all his missions and prophecies,” and he didn’t add a single word to them. Therefore, since in this prophecy there was no mention of Hashem’s holy name, Moshe did not want to say His name on his own, since it

wasn't part of the prophecy.)

HASHEM'S HOLY NAMES

Some people think that a name is external and of marginal importance, saying: what difference does it make, the main thing is the thing itself and not its name. They are mistaken, however, for it is explained in Kabbala that names are highly significant. A name is the "spiritual code of life." When you call someone by their name, you open up and draw down for them from the source of G-dly blessing and abundance.

That is why when praying for someone who is ill, we mention his name and when someone faints we call his name, because a name arouses and strengthens a person's life-force.

There is enormous power especially in the names of Hashem, which are holy and extremely lofty. That is why, generally, in many prophecies Hashem's name is mentioned (and in all prophecies to the Avos, Hashem's name is mentioned).

There is a halacha about the holiness of Hashem's names in *Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Dei'a*. When you write a seifer Torah, t'fillin, and mezuzah, if an error was made in the writing, it can usually be erased and fixed, aside from Hashem's names, "which are not to be erased," even if this means the entire item is pasul.

This is surprising, for if a word within a commandment of a mitzva (Shabbos, Yom Kippur, the Ten Commandments, etc) can be erased and fixed, why shouldn't Hashem's name be able to be erased and corrected?

The halacha says that this is so because even though all the mitzvos are G-dly commandments, Hashem's name is Hashem Himself, and this cannot be erased! When a Jew davens or reads in the Torah and he mentions Hashem's name, he opens a channel of G-dly abundance and brings blessing down upon himself. (Mentioning any G-dly name opens a specific channel that pertains to that holy name, as will be explained further.)

THE NUMBER OF HIS NAMES

Hashem has many names. Some say there are 70 and others say there are many more. This stems from

Hashem's many powers, for as Chazal put it, "I am called according to My deeds." A name is a channel for abundance and since a human being has one ko'ach, he has only one name, but Hashem has infinite deeds and abilities and so He has infinite names.

Each of the Avos called Hashem by a specific name (Avrohom – *HaGadol*, Yitzchok – *HaGibbor*, and Yaakov – *HaNora*). This is on account of the particular G-dly power that each one accessed:

Avrohom, whose spiritual powers were from the midda of chesed, called Hashem a name of chesed (*gadol*); Yitzchok whose spiritual powers were from g'vura, called Hashem a name of g'vura (*gibbor*); and Yaakov whose spiritual powers were from the midda of emes and rachamim, called Hashem by this trait (*nora*).

Of the many names of Hashem there are seven special names (that may not be erased) and they are:

- 1) Y K V K – the attribute of mercy. The Essential Name.
- 2) A D O-N A I – master and ruler.
- 3) E-L – when He suspends judgment for man's sins.
- 4) E L O-H A.
- 5) E L O-H I M
- 6) S H A-D A I.
- 7) T Z E V A O S – when He judges the nations of the world and those who hate Israel, with might.

In the Gemara, the name I-WILL-BE (EHE-YEH) is enumerated as one of the seven holy

names (that are not erased), but the Rambam and *Shulchan Aruch* say it is not listed among the holy names that are not erased. This seems to indicate that it is not as holy as the other names, but Chassidus explains the opposite – that this name is higher, in certain aspects, than the other names.

THE NAME I-WILL-BE

The simple meaning of the name I-WILL-BE is that Hashem will be and can be found everywhere, at all times, in all circumstances. (The Rambam in his *Guide for the Perplexed* writes that this name describes the Essence of His being and existence that is not dependent on anything, for He is "necessary existence" not possible existence.)

This name is unique and wondrous and it accompanies and protects the Jewish people in all situations – whether they were on a high spiritual level, when the Beis HaMikdash stood, or whether they are in



exile and the Mikdash is destroyed – for the name I-WILL-BE is constant and forever.

This name is not one of the names that cannot be erased because it has a special quality they don't have. Namely, it is bound up and dwells within the Jewish people not only in our holy times but also when we leave the bounds of holiness and descend into exile. Even there, the name I-WILL-BE accompanies and protects us.

THE NAME OF THE REDEMPTION OF THE WORLD IN THE DAYS OF MOSHIACH

This name is also the name of the Geula of the Jewish people, because the main idea of Geula is that Hashem's omnipresence will be revealed to all:

Although with the coming of Moshiach many amazing things will take place – as the Rambam writes, Moshiach will bring salvation to the world, delicacies will be plentiful, the sick will be healed, the entire world will study Torah and know G-d – all this does not express the essence of what Yemos HaMoshiach is about.

The central achievement of Yemos

HaMoshiach is the removal of the veil of the material world that obscures Hashem's presence in everything in the world and in nature. When Moshiach comes, people will see the reality of the name of I-WILL-BE – that Hashem is omnipresent.

This is the inner meaning of the verse of Shma. The simple meaning is our proclamation that there is no other G-d in the world. Yet, do we need to proclaim, morning and evening, that there are no other gods? Do the children of the holy tribes need to announce to their father Yaakov that they do not believe in idols?!

Rather, the Alter Rebbe explains, there is nothing else in existence, not above nor below, that is not part of the Creator. "Hashem is one" means that all is G-dliness and there is nothing outside of that.

The avoda of a Jew in the world is to reveal this G-dly truth in the world. This will be fully revealed with the revelation of the G-dly name I-WILL-BE with our Geula in Yemos HaMoshiach.

This is what Moshe meant with his question. The question was not: who is the redeemer – Hashem or other gods? Heaven forbid. Rather,

the meaning of "what is His name" is with which G-dly energy will He redeem the Jewish people from Egypt? Would the energy of geula be mixed with the power of judgment, permitting the geula to be interrupted, for which reason another galus could follow? Or, would it be with a name of chesed and rachamim and then the geula would be complete with no galus to follow?

Hashem answered Moshe that the geula would be with the name I-WILL-BE, which is Hashem's name in all situations, and if we had merited it, Moshe would have taken us into Eretz Yisroel with the power of this holy name and there would have been no further galus. Due to the sins of the generation, Moshe died and did not merit to bring the nation into the land for the final Geula.

However, the Geula in our day, through Moshiach Tzidkeinu, will be complete with no galus to follow. With the power of the name I-WILL-BE, we will merit a Geula in which Hashem, in His Glory and Essence, will be revealed to all, "and all flesh will see together that the mouth of Hashem has spoken."

(sources: commentaries on Shmos 3:14, Likkutei Sichos 26 p. 10, Seifer HaErechim Chabad Vol. 1 I-WILL-BE)

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GOAL SETTING YOSEF'S WAY

BY RABBI YAAKOV LIEDER
DEAN SYDNEY SEMINARY, SYDNEY AUSTRALIA

*Yosef had a vision. He wanted to be in a position where he could make a difference to the world. He wanted this so strongly and thought about it so much that he even had two dreams about it. * We have to live with Moshiach now, because only by living with this reality will we give ourselves over completely to the task of actualizing it in this physical world. * Part 2 of 2*

[Continued from last week]

RULE 6: WORK YOUR PLAN

The Mishna tells us: "Who is a wise man? One who sees the outcome of his actions *before* he takes action." In other words a smart person has a vision and a plan of action. He or she assesses the consequences of his/her actions well in advance, before ever engaging in action. The smart person draws up a precise plan of the actions necessary to achieve goals, and then the wise person gets down to work.

In other words: "*They plan their work and then work their plan.*"

Yosef knew he would be guilty of an injustice by merely *interpreting* the dream and giving general

advice. He felt that another very important step was necessary, and that was to have a precise plan of action. Thus, without being asked, when he had finished interpreting the dream, he did not stop there, but continued to advise Pharaoh in great detail as to the quality of good leadership and what measures were necessary for that goal to be attained.

Pharaoh was more impressed with Yosef's precise plan than with his interpretation of the dreams. He therefore decided right there and then to appoint Yosef as second to the king with instructions to all his people that they must obey Yosef's commands. The message if you have a good plan, and if you implement it well, you will turn a dream into a reality.

Pharaoh's reaction shows that only by having a clear plan of how to achieve your goal will you actually achieve it in the shortest possible time and in the best possible way.

RULE 7: HELP OTHERS ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS AND THEY WILL HELP YOU ACHIEVE YOURS.

All Yosef had been asked by Pharaoh was to interpret his dreams. His interpretation was that there would be seven years of abundance of food, followed immediately by seven years of famine. He had not been asked to provide a solution as to how to deal with the seven years of famine. It was indeed only when Yosef helped Pharaoh achieve his goal of dealing with the famine that Pharaoh reciprocated by helping Yosef fulfil his goal of becoming a king and ruler, precisely as Yosef had dreamed 13 years earlier.

RULE NO 8: DON'T ABANDON YOUR GOAL: EVEN WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH.

When an airplane takes off, let's say from Sydney to Los Angeles, the pilots are given a flight plan, which at the time of takeoff appears to be the best and the quickest way to get to Los Angeles. However, at the

same time, experienced pilots know that throughout their flight they are likely to encounter some unexpected turbulence. When they encounter the turbulence, the pilot does not grab the loud speaker and announce: “Ladies and Gentleman we are sorry the plan is not working. We are quitting the trip to Los Angelis and returning to Sydney.” The pilot is determined and certain that he will land this plane in Los Angeles. Radically abandoning his course is not an option, neither is continuing with the original plan. The sole option is to make sensible, intelligent and rational adjustments to the original plan. These might include trying different altitudes by means of ascent or descent, or maybe opting to make a detour and land at a different airport until the storm has passed.

But the most important factor is the determination to continue through rain, hail, or shine. The essential point is “*the show must go on.*”

When Yosef was put in the pit by his brothers, his goal of being a king was illusionary; when he was sold as a slave and later imprisoned, with all the incriminating evidence stacked up against him, he could have despaired. I can imagine if it were me I would have said, “Forget it. Give up. You’re not cut out for success. Being successful is only for an elite group. Just stop dreaming. At least then you won’t be disappointed.” I could also start feeling like a victim, and cry out, “Why me?” and continue my lament with, “Life isn’t fair!”

None of these thoughts appears to have been in Yosef’s mind. As soon as he became a slave, he gave that position his best shot. Within a short time he was recognized by his master as a man of determination and commitment. Soon he had

promoted Yosef to take charge of his household. Thus, in contemporary language, in a short time he had climbed the corporate ladder and become the general manager. It is the kind of job you don’t usually get in a short time unless your father is the president of the company!

If you allow yourself to feel a victim, or if you are having thoughts of abandoning your goals because you plans did not work out the way you wanted them to, remember the saying “winners don’t quit, and quitters don’t win.”

RULE NO 9: STICK TO YOUR MORALS AND BELIEFS AT ALL COSTS.

We all face, at times, situations where our belief system seems to collide with our goals. Then the question we have to ask ourselves loud and clear is: which one is more important at this given time. For example, if my friend and I are going for the same job, and only one of us will get it, would I say something bad about my friend which will enable me to reach my goal. Would I tell a small lie in my business transaction so that I can win that deal which will help me achieve my financial goal? Would I skip my Chitas today because I am too busy organizing an event?

Such dilemmas are part of day-to-day life. The Yetzer HaRa may appear sometimes – as the Rebbe calls it – with a *Zeidana zupitzea* (a silk coat). This means that he is trying to get us to use the wrong means to achieve the right end. His philosophy in this case appears to be acceptable or even very Chassidish. He may even argue that it is a mitzva to be dishonest in order that you can earn more money and thereby be able to give more tz’daka. Another example is the case where one may think that

it’s a mitzva and a very acceptable thing to humiliate someone just because they don’t think the way I think. Where the truth of the matter is that the end does not justify resorting to incorrect means although it may be tempting at the time to bend principles to achieve my goals. But the important point is that it is only by being firm in our value system that we are protected against *Zeidana zupitzea*’s ideas and seductions.

The good news is that thousands of years before your time, people have been there and done it. The Torah tells us their story so we can learn from previous experiences. Yosef was put to the ultimate test with Potifar’s wife. She even argued using *Zeidana zupitzea*’s approach, saying to Yosef, “I can see in my stars (i.e. my spiritual advice) that we are destined to have children together (Sota 48).” There was, indeed, some truth to it but with a twist. (Some years later, Yosef married her daughter.) “Nobody will ever find out,” she said. “All your goals will be scattered if you don’t do what I want.” She put enormous pressure on Yosef so that he should break his G-dly principles, offering him a better life and the fulfilment of his goals. This tempting conversation did not occur only once, but took place on an ongoing basis day after day. Yosef, however, stuck firmly to his morals and beliefs even though he risked losing his life’s ambition.

RULE 10 HAVE A POSITIVE ROLE MODEL

There is even an opinion in the Gemara that on that day when nobody was home a thought occurred to Yosef (although for a very short time) to succumb to temptation and do the wrong thing. But two things happened that made Yosef refuse the temptation. One is that he said to her, “If I do this, I

will be sinning against G-d, and although nobody may ever find out and it may bring me closer to my goals, my spiritual principles are everlasting and totally override any other goal. The goal of staying true to my G-d has a veto power over everything else. Another source of strength: "Where did Yosef get such

As soon as he became a slave, he gave that position his best shot. Within a short time he was recognized by his master as a man of determination and commitment. Soon he had promoted Yosef to take charge of his household. Thus, in contemporary language, in a short time he had climbed the corporate ladder and become the general manager.

strength from? After all, he was only 17 or 18 when he was forcefully evicted from the chassidishe environment of Yaakov's house where he was brought up. His Rebbe Yaakov was not physically close to him; he could not hear him farbreng, nor could he hope to receive dollars from

him."

So the question is: how was able to have strength? The answer is "Raa diykno shel aviv" (He saw his father's image) and he heard his voice say: "If you go ahead and do this you are cutting yourself away from me and your name will be removed from the Choshen, where all your brothers' names will be." In other words, it was his powerful *hiskashrus* (connection) to the *Tzaddik HaDor*, the Rebbe of his generation, that helped him at this critical point of his life.

The question we have to ask ourselves when facing a dilemma is: what does the Rebbe want me to do now? Will he be proud of my decision? Is this decision in accordance with the Rebbe's teachings? We, who are not as spiritually attuned as Yosef, have to consult a rav or a mashpia to double-check if what we are doing or not doing is according to the will of Hashem, as communicated to us by our Nasi HaDor, the Rebbe.

In the short term, Yosef's decision to refuse doing the wrong thing got him into trouble. He was jailed for 12 years, a very high price to pay for staying true to your principles. But ultimately only because he refused to compromise his principles, bringing about his incarceration, did he eventually come to fulfil his ultimate goal of being ruler. This would not have been achieved had he placed his goals ahead of his Godly and spiritual values.

RULE NO 11: WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH, DON'T CONSIDER YOURSELF VICTIM, TAKE MORE EFFECTIVE ACTION.

As a wise man once said, "When the going gets tough, the tough get

going." Being imprisoned in an Egyptian jail in our days is no holiday. How much more so in those days! Yosef had every right to feel a victim and give up. He could have adopted the attitude: Life is not being fair to me; I am destined to suffer. My goals will never be attained. All the evidence before me shows that not only am I not getting closer to my goals, I am going in the opposite direction – from being a slave, I have now become a prisoner. How did it happen? Because I refused to do the wrong thing!

Furthermore, while in jail, Potifar's wife persisted in spreading bad rumours about him. She wanted him to stay in jail as long as possible so that her daughter would be old enough to marry him (as she eventually did). But Yosef decided that if the *Hashgacha Pratis* had brought him to this place, it must be for a reason. There must be a *shlichus* for him to do there, and this would eventually take him to his goal. He took the same approach as the Rebbe Rayatz did when he was in prison, which was, "You have control over my body, but I will not give you control over my spirit. I am the only one who can choose who controls it!"

Yosef decided there and then to give it the best shot possible and he threw himself into the task of seeing what he could do to make the life of other prisoners better. He stopped focusing on what he himself needed and started focusing on what he was needed for. And so when the Butler and the Baker came to prison, and he was given the job of looking after them, he did an outstanding job. As a result of his dedication, it was indeed the last suffering he experienced before his dreams, goals, and aspirations were fulfilled.

RULE NO 12: BE FULLY FOCUSED ON THE JOB AT HAND

Yosef decided to put his personal needs aside and he became fully focussed on the job. Since excellence stands out, he was with in no time recognized by the Minister of the Prison as someone different from the average prisoner. Clearly this man wanted to make a difference wherever he was and by whatever means he could. Because of this dedication, it was only natural that when the two famous prisoners, the Baker and the Butler, came to jail, Yosef was the best candidate to look after them. He did this job as he had done every other job before, with total dedication, giving it his fullest attention.

One morning, Yosef entered their cell and noticed that they were not themselves. Something was bothering them. You have to be totally without regard for your own misery and totally in tune with the other person's situation to notice when there is something wrong. (And, let's remember that they were not there on a holiday. Not looking well in an Egyptian prison is not an unusual thing only one with a heightened sensitivity for the feelings of others would be aware, and once aware, act.)

***“You have control
over my body, but I
will not give you
control over my
spirit. I am the only
one who can choose
who controls it!”***

Yosef said the following words, which eventually changed the life of the Butler and the Baker as well as his own life and indeed the life of the entire world. Those words were, “Why do you have a sad face today?” To which they responded by relating their dreams. Yosef explained their dreams to them and because of the insight and vision of his interpretation he was recommended to Pharaoh as an interpreter of dreams. It was this that eventually led to his becoming second to the king of Egypt.

All of this was only possible because he was fully focused on the job at hand. He was fully focused on the present and not on the past or even the future.

When we review these twelve steps, we realize how each one is a part of a long chain of events, and

each part is an essential one, as it leads to the next. You could not skip any of these steps. Yosef had a difficult journey, starting with the dream and a plan, but throughout he continued, always remaining focused on the job, never stopping when there were obstacles. He kept the vision and the dream alive, always in the forefront of his mind. And when the going got tough, he asked for help and inspiration from his Rebbe. And while he waited, he continued to be fully dedicated and focused on the mission ahead.

You and I are not like Yosef, and we do not have his strength of character, but neither are we likely to end up in an Egyptian jail. The Rebbe often quotes the Gemara, which says, “According to the camel is the load” or “Hashem does not give us a test which we cannot overcome.” We are all in possession of the power and the tools necessary to fulfil our dreams. And this is the reason Hashem has sent us to this world. We were given all the gifts and tools and the power to carry them out. Although at times those gifts and opportunities may come wrapped up in problems, once we unwrap them we will find the gifts. This is the z'chus of being in the Dor HaShvii, which will bring to realization what Jews have yearned for, for thousands of years: the revelation of Moshiach now!



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WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NETUREI KARTA AND OLMERT?

BY SHAI GEFEN

LOWER AND LOWER

Sometimes you can think and hope that we can't go any lower, but then we see that there's no limit to how low we can sink. PM Olmert met with Abu Mazen, bearing tidings of the decision to unfreeze 100 million dollars to fund terrorism and the removal of roadblocks designed to deter terrorists. The Israeli media, which serves our enemies, have turned Abu Mazen into a suffering martyr, claiming he is the only one we can make an agreement with and everything will be fine. This is how Olmert tries to keep his government alive.

The Americans are pressuring Israel over the Roadmap and whoever dreamed that the story of the Disengagement came to an end after the blows we have received was mistaken. Evil has no bounds. Olmert knows good and well that the money will be used in the attempt to murder more Jews in order to increase pressure on Israel. Olmert knows that releasing Arab prisoners will lead to increased attacks, as we've seen on previous occasions. The money Olmert decided to transfer to Abu Mazen is money dripping with Jewish blood.

While Olmert practices restraint, the Kassam missiles keep falling on

Sderot and Ashkelon, with two ninth-graders being seriously injured in Sderot. One of the boys, 14-year-old Adir Basad, was in very critical condition throughout the night; after a series of operations, his condition stabilized in the early morning and he is no longer in danger of his life. The second boy, Matan Cohen, suffered moderate wounds. Terrorists also succeeded in scoring a direct hit on a strategic facility in the southern coastal city of Ashkelon.

Remember, there is a ceasefire, though what that means when fifty missiles have landed in Israel, I don't know. Even the Defense Minister, who has become a national joke, understands that the ceasefire is being interpreted as weakness. Terrorism is rewarded time and again.

So while the prime minister is moving the process along in which he will release terrorists, he is also having security forces throw dozens of Jews out of their homes without benefit of a trial.

This Kafkaesque situation is definitely not rational. If in the past the other side had some points with some possible validity to them, by now we see that decisions are made not on the basis of logic but *l'matta m'taam v'daas* (below the level of

rational thought).

The only solution is to switch to an approach that is *l'maala m'taam v'daas* (above the limitations of rational thought), to disseminate the *d'var Hashem zu halacha* nonstop and to protest nonstop. This itself will weaken and abolish the terrible decrees hovering over us.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NETUREI KARTA AND OLMERT

The delegation calling itself Neturei Karta, people who look like chareidi Jews, met with the president of Iran and attended the International Conference to Review the Global Vision of the Holocaust in Tehran, a controversial conference that has attracted a number of high-profile Holocaust-deniers. Neturei Karta's representative upheld the reality of the Holocaust during his speech to the assembly, although he went on to say, "Zionists have given much higher figures for how many people were killed." They praised Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who has called for the destruction of the Israeli state, and expressed solidarity with the Iranian position of anti-Zionism.

Naturally, this aroused a storm of protest on the part of Jews around



the world. We don't know what damage the Neturei Karta caused to Israel's security if any; what we do know is that they caused a tremendous chilul Hashem. Yet Olmert's meeting with the president of the P.A. is far more serious and will definitely lead to terrible tragedies, may Hashem protect us.

The thesis of Abu Mazen's doctoral dissertation was *The Secret Connection between the Nazis and the Leaders of the Zionist Movement* in which he wrote:

"It seems that the interest of the Zionist movement, however, is to inflate this figure [of Holocaust deaths] so that their gains will be greater. This led them to emphasize this figure [six million] in order to gain the solidarity of international public opinion with Zionism. Many scholars have debated the figure of six million and reached stunning conclusions – fixing the number of Jewish victims at only a few hundred thousand."

So why is Olmert's meeting considered Israel's "hope for peace"? Why is this meeting any more legitimate than Neturei Karta's meeting, particularly when Olmert's meeting leads directly to endangering the Jewish people while the Neturei Karta damage is only proclamatory?

Olmert and his ministers are deliberately ignoring all the red lights that are flashing warning signals. They are allowing those who seek to perpetuate the Nazi legacy to continue to implement the Final Solution knowing the consequences in advance. We all saw the results of the concessions made to date, and therefore, continuing along this same route is a betrayal of our people.

Collaborating with those murderers is in the category of a crime against humanity. All those

who are presently sitting in the security cabinet know good and well that transferring millions of dollars to Abu Mazen means they are allocating money towards terrorism. This is not a prophecy but the reality as we all know it.

If rabbis think the Neturei Karta ought to be excommunicated, Olmert and his government should be "removed from this world," as we say, "when You remove the wicked government from the earth" with the coming of Moshiach.

IT'S OUR FAULT

The media noted that it's one year since Ariel Sharon fell ill. We all know what has happened since then with all the systems having broken down. The war in Lebanon, danger in the south, the Moslem world, the Axis of Evil of Tehran-Damascus that came to life, and the deterioration of the police-military-legal sectors.

The Rebbe always taught us that when there's a question, you have to see how Torah relates to it. In the selling of Yosef, the Torah says that the brothers went down to Egypt and when various calamities occurred they said to one another, "we are at fault because of our brother, we saw his distress when he pleaded with us and we didn't listen, therefore this tzara has come upon us."

The Disengagement was a sellout of our brothers. The criminal Sharon family did terrible things to thousands of Jews. Recent statistics show that the number of illnesses among Gush Katif expellees has doubled, not to mention the livelihoods and dignity they were robbed of, as well as serious problems with shalom bayis and mental health. We saw their distress and most people stood quietly off to the side and preferred following the

Remember, there is a ceasefire, though what that means when fifty missiles have landed in Israel, I don't know. Even the Defense Minister, who has become a national joke, understands that the ceasefire is being interpreted as weakness. Terrorism is rewarded time and again.

news in the papers and TV screens.

Today, a year and a half later, with a new reality in the Middle East, we ought to be honest with ourselves and make a spiritual accounting about why this tzara came upon us, "he pleaded with us and we didn't listen." We all remember the lines people used, including those among us, "What do we have to do with them?" "So let them leave, it's not our business." Rabbanim who were fearful of government reaction stood aloof as though the expulsion of their fellow Jews and the destruction of Jewish settlements and shuls had nothing

to do with them.

21 YEARS AGO, THE REBBE SPOKE ABOUT RELEASING PRISONERS

The media publicized Chabad rabbi, Rabbi Gedalia Akselrod's p'sak halacha against releasing prisoners, even for the return of kidnapped soldier Gilad Shalit. Rabbi Akselrod wrote, *"There are rumors that they are about to release 1000 terrorists and murderers in exchange for soldier Gilad Shalit, may he be released soon. We must go out and clarify d'var Hashem zu halacha brought in the Mishna in tractate Gittin 45a, 'You do not redeem captives for more than their monetary value for the stability of the world.*

"Therefore we must arouse all poskim to order the religious parties in no uncertain terms to forcefully oppose this insane step which was done already in the past and lead to a great churban. The earlier release of a thousand terrorists in exchange for two captives led to the establishment of the Intifada and the murder of thousands of Jews.

"Since the leaders are lost in the land, we must shine a light for them with the d'var Hashem zu halacha, and warn against the great disaster this step can lead to, no less than the expulsion from Gush Katif, and that the terrorists will see it as another victory and more terminal weakness, and we will save them from the sin of do not stand by your brother's blood."

As always, in the Rebbe's sichos we find an answer for everything. Exactly 21 years ago on Zos Chanuka 5746, the Rebbe spoke at length about this approach and called these wholesale prisoner releases, "regular occurrences."

No terrorist fears the punishment of sitting in Israeli jail, on the contrary, he will have all his needs provided for: food and shelter, which is not the case in his

village...and within a short time a deal will be made, "a prisoner exchange," in which he will be released along with hundreds of terrorists like him, for 3-5 Jews, as they did in the past. All this has become a regular occurrence.

In the sicha of Parshas Mikeitz 5744 the Rebbe spoke sadly about how not completing what should have been finished led to the release of thousands of terrorists:

It was said several times that the US was interested in the operation being concluded fully. For this

reason, the president of the US left the capitol for a period of time in the hopes that they [the Israelis] would use the time to finish the job. Nevertheless, the need to humble themselves before the goy and to find favor in his eyes is to the point that even when everybody realizes that even the goy agrees and is interested, they are afraid to do it!

As a result, it reaches the point that they have to release thousands of terrorists and enable them to return to their places in an organized way and to continue,



An IDF robot lighting the menorah

Heaven forbid, in all their activities!

This is not about the arguments and discussions that took place in Eretz Yisroel as to whether the thousands of terrorists should have been released for six Jews – that is not what I am talking about now, but about that which led to this situation – “the beginning was through neglect and the end was forced!” The feeling is that they need to cave in immediately in the face of any pressure, the absolute opposite of Jewish pride! The root of the problem is the feeling of inferiority before the goy and the need to capitulate to him and find favor in his eyes.

In the sicha of Parshas VaYeishev 5748 the Rebbe spoke about this topic again and said:

The security situation in Eretz Yisroel is deteriorating at an alarming rate so that there are places where Jews are in danger of their lives. They kill Jews while those in charge don't do enough to catch the terrorists, apparently

Today, a year and a half later, with a new reality in the Middle East, we ought to be honest with ourselves and make a spiritual accounting about why this tzara came upon us.

because if they catch them they will have to deal with them. They will have the problem of “what will the goyim say,” and they want to appear to the world as “men of peace.”

Even when they caught terrorists and put them in jail, after a while they exchanged hundreds of them for a few Jews. From a halachic perspective, this might be possible for, after all, the captives are Jews,

each of them being “an entire world,” but those who decided to release hundreds of terrorists did not find out under which conditions an exchange is permissible and when it is forbidden, even from a security point of view – it's well-known that some terrorists that were exchanged were caught doing terrorist acts.

* * *

We just fasted on the tenth of Teives regarding which the verse says, “the king of Bavel besieged Yerushalayim.” We see how all the nations today are besieging Yerushalayim and how Israel is a top item of news. As the Rebbe promised, “the besieging of the king of Bavel” – the word “besiege” having the same root as “help” – will end up being the nations helping the Jewish people.

What we need to do is strengthen the three “shleimus” of the nation, the land, and the Torah and may these days immediately be transformed into days of joy.

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THE SHLICHUS THAT BEGAN ON A BOAT ON THE RIVER

BY CHANI NUSSBAUM

*They asked the Rebbe for a bracha to go out on shlichus and the Rebbe took their request to the Ohel but it was Chaf-Zayin Adar... It was only many weeks later that they received the Rebbe's consent and blessing. * When they arrived in Slovakia with three little children, their apartment wasn't ready and they lived for weeks in a floating hotel. They felt out of place and scared because of the terrible history that the Jewish people experienced in Slovakia due to the Nazis and Communists. * Today Judaism is thriving, thanks to Mrs. Chanie Myers and her husband, who are shluchim in Bratislava, Slovakia.*

I met Chanie for the first time on the Shabbos after 3 Tamuz 5754, twelve and a half years ago. All shluchos had gathered for Shabbos (husbands had gone to New York). As though it was today I remember that she told me that one of the counselors who was supposed to work in their day camp had called and said, "I don't think I can come

now."

Chanie told us, "You know what I told her? I said, I understand you but think, would the Rebbe want us to stop everything now? I will respect whatever you decide."

Chanie's words made a deep impression on me and taught me what mesirus nefesh for shlichus and

refinement are about. She and her family have made the Slovakian desert bloom, which means it is now a place where Jews are proud to be Jews. There is a preschool and a flourishing Chabad house and much more.

Back then, in the early days which were so hard, they didn't think about their living an hour and a half away from Vienna. When they arrived in Slovakia it seemed to them that everything was far away but their devotion to their work helped them overcome the difficulties.

"We arrived in Bratislava thirteen years ago, right after Czechoslovakia was divided. The communists were no longer officially in charge but the communist spirit still pervaded the atmosphere. Things still ran as they did under the communists. For example, there were many things unavailable in the stores, the banks did not even print personal checks, and those who spoke disparagingly about the government immediately lost their jobs. This was despite the fact that it was a democracy at that point.

"At first, when I gave shiurim to women, there were no reactions. Their faces remained impassive even though they were hearing new ideas. One time, when I couldn't take it

anymore, I said, 'I'm an American and I'm used to reactions when I speak...'

"They said, 'You have to understand us. For so many years we kept our thoughts and feelings to ourselves. If only we could change that in an instant.'"

Before hearing about the difficult beginning as opposed to the enormous difference in their shlichus today, I asked Chanie how she and her husband had come to Bratislava.

"After we were married my husband learned in Kollel in England. We really wanted to go out on shlichus and when we wrote to the Rebbe about an offer of shlichus in Slovakia, the Rebbe took the note with him to the Ohel. That was Chaf-Zayin Adar. We called Rabbi Groner and asked him what to do.

"We were told to wait and as disciplined children, we waited, because when father is sick you can't ask questions. More time passed and when it became possible, the secretary read the note to the Rebbe. We had asked two questions, whether to look into shlichus here and whether it paid to make a trip.

"The Rebbe answered yes and nodded his head



Rabbi Myers

affirmatively. We didn't realize at the time what a z'chus this was, because we weren't apprised about what was going on. A short time later we realized that we had received a bracha to be able to handle all the obstacles that arose in this amazing shlichus. Today I know that only because of that bracha did we manage to prevail and continue to prevail.

"At first it was very hard. I remember that I cried a lot. We arrived with three small children with the oldest three years old and the youngest a few months old. Before we arrived we were told that our apartment would be ready but when we arrived we saw it wasn't ready at all. In the meantime they put us in a hotel on a boat!

"Yes, we spent weeks on a boat and I was very fearful that I would wake up one morning and find ourselves in Hungary, because that river reaches Hungary. I lost six kilos (over 13 pounds)! My baby became sick and had high temperature. When I went to the local hospital the doctors told me that she had a fever because of her diaper! They had never seen anything like it. That's what Slovakia was like then.

"My husband went to see whether the apartment was ready. When he came back I asked him, 'Nu?'

"He said it still wasn't ready. I asked him, 'What does it look like now?' He said it had no tiles or painted walls yet!

"In tears I said, 'That's it, I want to go home.'



"I'll never forget my husband's answer. He said, 'Which home do you want to go back to? Do you have another home aside from the place that the Rebbe sent us to?'"

"That was enough for me. That's when I decided that I was accepting this shlichus with love and simcha and I stuck to this decision. I began looking at the place and the shlichus in a positive light and baruch Hashem, it helped."

How did your change in perspective impact on your life and the nature of your shlichus?

"People here are warm and they want to help one another. When I invite guests for Shabbos they always offer to help as they would in their own homes. I got used to the Czech mentality and I have local friends and we see the results of our work. Despite the painful fact that there is a 95% intermarriage rate here, we began to see a Jewish awakening."

* * *

According to Chanie, the awakening began thanks to the preschool that she and her husband started. The children are mekarev their parents.

"When I see children today wearing a yarmulke and tzitzit, there is no greater nachas for the Rebbe. You have to remember that people here suffered from the terrors of both communism and the Holocaust. For many years Jews tried to hide their identity or sadly, they didn't even know they were Jewish because of the terrible fear.

"Today, Slovakian Jews are proud of their Judaism. There's a woman here whose husband is not Jewish and she wants a mezuzah on her door and a kosher kitchen. More and more Jews come to the Chabad house's programs, to shiurim, etc. We are careful about accepting only "halachic Jews."

"The most outstanding example

to illustrate the awakening here is that most of the children born now are given Jewish names.

Circumcisions and bar mitzvas are more and more common. I won't forget the first chuppa my husband made here nine years ago. They had to take the canopy for the chuppa from the museum which showed how deeply asleep the Jews here were.

"When we made a bar mitzva here, the boy said a speech in the course of which he announced that he was committing to putting on t'fillin every day, and baruch Hashem, he stuck to it. If that wasn't enough, he also wanted a bris, so for the first time in many years in Slovakia, there was a bar mitzva and bris on one day. And if *that* wasn't enough, the boy convinced two friends who also began putting on t'fillin every day and they are also strengthening their religious observance."

How did the Jewish revolution in Slovakia begin?

"It began with our first project. We opened a day camp during summer vacation. I remember it as though it was today. We started with only four children. I didn't know the Slovakian language yet, so I wrote everything in English and had a local girl translate it all. Because of the camp, one of the participants began to come regularly on Shabbos to shul and today she lives in London and her son learns in a yeshiva in Eretz Yisroel.

"Another girl from camp helps me now in running the preschool, and she davens with the children in Hebrew. That day camp that started with four children has fifty children, which is amazing for Bratislava.

"Aside from that, we also have a thriving preschool with a Sunday School. I run the preschool with the help of girls from New York and I will take this opportunity to thank them because without their help the school wouldn't flourish. This preschool is the foundation for the Jewish education of the next

BRATISLAVA

Known also as Pressburg, Bratislava has a special place in Jewish history. Jews have been connected to this city for more than 800 years. Since the 1700s it has been an important center for organized Jewish life. Hebrew and Yiddish book printing thrived – always a mark of a community's importance. In the 100 years between 1830 and 1930, about 340 Jewish books appeared, as well as Hebrew and Yiddish newspapers and magazines.

In 1940, nearly 15,000 Jews lived in Bratislava, about 12 percent of the general population. Davening was held in three shuls and in 14 Chassidic shtiblach. Of the 90,000 Jews in pre-War Slovakia, only 15,000 survived. By 1969, the population had declined to 1,500. Today, 720 Jews are registered in the Jewish community.

A 1998 article in the *Jewish News Weekly* reported that Rabbi Myers was physically assaulted twice on the street by teenage skinheads. Despite such events, said the article, "The Chabad rabbi remains determined to walk freely through the Slovakian capital of Bratislava as an identifiable Jew – with a full beard, fedora hat and visible tzitzit."

"The more I do that, the safer I feel," Myers said during a recent visit to the United States. "I try to make my presence known – I try to make people understand that they have to get used to me."

generation.”

* * *

Chanie surprises me when she says, “We have a N’shei Chabad organization here.” When I expressed my incredulity, she said, “Yes, here in Slovakia, not in Yerushalayim or New York. We have at least three yearly gatherings which are attended by nearly one hundred women from all over the country. There are women who travel an entire night by train in order to attend!”

“At one of the Lag B’Omer gatherings I suggested that we get together once a month. I thought they would say no but they loved the idea. Even those who have to travel all night by train to come began offering ideas for programs.

“I asked them, ‘What name should we pick for our organization?’ Their spontaneous response was: What do you mean? We want to be called N’shei Chabad!”

“I was so touched I burst into tears. You have to remember that these women don’t yet keep Shabbos and tznius, yet they want to be called N’shei Chabad.

“When I asked them what they are interested in, in order to choose a theme for upcoming events, one of them said that she wants to know what is most important to daven when you don’t have time to daven the entire thing. Another woman wanted to know whether she could get a translation of the davening into Slovakian, pocket-sized, so she could take it to work every day. Another woman was interested in kashrus. She said she wanted to start immersing her utensils and she wanted to know how to do it – what needs to be immersed and what not, and what blessing do you say. Another woman wanted to learn how to sing songs from the Siddur.

“I was moved by the fact that they weren’t interested in make-up or

proper nutrition or topics like that but in far loftier matters. It was hard to believe that these women were sitting in a place that had experienced the Holocaust and communism which had stamped out anything associated with religion.”

The following story will illustrate that Am Yisroel Chai and how the Rebbe guides us every step of the way:

“At the beginning of the summer a senior official from the

“At first, when I gave shiurim to women, there were no reactions. Their faces remained impassive even though they were hearing new ideas. One time, when I couldn’t take it anymore, I said, ‘I’m an American and I’m used to reactions when I speak...’

municipality called me with a request. They were making a festival for minorities in a few weeks and since she had heard that my husband was the rabbi here, she wondered whether I could send representatives to the festival to represent the Jewish people.

“I was very tired when she called and so I tried to get out of it. I suggested that she have Jewish musicians come, or something like that, but she said that wasn’t what

she had in mind because music was cultural. She wanted to present the Jewish religion and she thought we fit the bill.

“I figured that if this non-Jewish woman understood that there was a big difference between culture and religion, I could not turn her down. I said I would try to prepare a nice presentation with the children of our preschool in which they would appear in costume. They would sing Jewish songs in Hebrew that they learned in school.

“The day of the presentation arrived. It was held in the main plaza of the city. Each child was given a shirt on which it said, ‘Organization of Slovakian Jewry.’ I prayed that we didn’t make a chilul Hashem because all those who performed before us had performed professional music and these were just little children who were going to represent Judaism.

“I believed that miracles would take place and the sweet children wouldn’t disappoint anyone. I was nervous enough and it didn’t help when a mother of one of the children whispered to me, ‘Chanie, I hope we’re not embarrassed.’

“It was our turn. The group before us was about to finish and we were told to get ready to stand in front of the stage and get the children ready. My heart beat fast when there were only two minutes left before our turn to perform.

“Then, while we were on stage, I noticed two Jews wearing yarmulkes. It seemed unreal. Religious Jews touring now?! This was Friday afternoon. I quickly went over to them and introduced myself as the wife of the local rabbi and I invited them for Shabbos. They thanked me but said that they planned on returning to Vienna before Shabbos. I got up my courage and told them about the performance and asked them whether they could join us

because it would be a big help. It would give more confidence to the children and would make a big kiddush Hashem.

“They were happy to oblige and within a few minutes they had rounded up the entire group that was touring with them. I looked around me on the stage and saw fifty Jews, all types: religious, chareidim, not-yet-religious. They seemed to have fallen from heaven and I looked at them thinking I was dreaming.

“Before I could digest it all, they had gotten a piano from an earlier performer to play on and all I had to do was ask them to play songs the children knew. They turned to the children and asked, ‘Are you ready?’ and the children proudly and excitedly shouted, ‘Yes!’ The children felt so very important!

“The performance began and I stood near the stage to direct the children when necessary. At one point, someone motioned to me to turn around and look at the children. I turned and saw them smiling and to the rhythm of the music they were holding hands and dancing, and not only them but a third of the people in the plaza were dancing.

“The mother who expressed her nervousness to me earlier came over to me and burst into tears and said, ‘Chanie, G-d always performs miracles for you. From now on I will begin to believe more...’

“It was truly miraculous and an experience I won’t soon forget. At the end of the performance everyone was photographed and the group of Jewish tourists disappeared as they had come, like in stories of Eliyahu HaNavi.”

* * *

“In recent years, the Jewish mentality has changed. When we came here we saw that Jews were fearful to display their Judaism and/or lacked any knowledge of their

Judaism. Today, we see more and more Jewish pride and openness to absorb new information. Even if they aren’t religious just like us, it’s important to them to have things like a mezuzah and Shabbos candles, and interest in kashrus is growing.

“It began with a few courageous people who started keeping certain mitzvos, like t’fillin, and they drew many others to follow them. The awakening to Judaism here is like an avalanche with no logical explanation, just the ko’ach of the meshaleiach.

“The anti-Semitism that we experienced and suffered from in our

“I was so touched I burst into tears. You have to remember that these women don’t yet keep Shabbos and tznius, yet they want to be called N’shei Chabad.”

first years here has begun to diminish. Judaism is something far more open now. My husband appears on radio and television occasionally and informs the Jewish audience about mitzvos. Judaism is no longer something underground and secret. People see what Judaism is and what an authentic Jew is.”

The famous city of Pressburg, the city of the Chasam Sofer, is synonymous with Bratislava, and I asked Chanie whether Pressburg has tourists in addition to the locals. Chanie answered:

“Many Jewish tourists come to Pressburg and not only in the

summer but year-round. The Chasam Sofer is buried in Pressburg and on his yahrtzeit, which is two days after Simchas Torah, many Jews visit his gravesite as they do year round.”

How do the tourists manage with kashrus. Is there a kosher restaurant in the city and in general, how do you manage with kashrus?

“The kosher restaurant in town is my house. There was a kosher restaurant here for a short time but the owner thought that if he sold treif he would earn more. What happened was, once he sold treif he sustained great losses until he had to close. Jewish tourists who want to eat kosher food have to come to me. We import everything from nearby Vienna and when my husband goes to New York he brings back what he can. You learn to live like this.

“My children got used to having guests every Shabbos. If it happens, rarely, that there are no guests, they’re disappointed as though (smiling) I sit here relaxing with one child...”

What about chinuch for your children?

“I have ten children and before we opened the preschool, we sent the children, when they turned three, to Vienna every day. Everybody in Vienna knew about the three-year-old girls who crossed the border every day, leaving with their passports and returning at six in the evening, traveling an hour and a half each way. It wasn’t easy.

“Today, baruch Hashem, we have the Lauder preschool which has twelve children so our children go to Vienna starting from age 6.

“Sending my daughter off to seminary in Toronto, Canada was difficult. I cried for two nights. I pray and ask Hashem that in the z’chus of shlichus we will experience much siyata d’Shmaya and nachas with our children’s Chassidishe chinuch.”

THE LEGENDARY RAV

BY SHMUEL ALEXANDER

*Many legends are associated with the unique person, Rav Meir Ashkenazi a"h, who was the rav of Shanghai for 25 years. * Shortly before Yud Shvat 5710, he came to 770 and after the passing of the Rebbe Rayatz he was one of those active in working on the kabbalas ha'nesius by the Rebbe MH"M. * Part 2*

CARING FOR THE REFUGEES

All the stories mentioned earlier are an inseparable addition to the

communal work that R' Meir Ashkenazi did. He was head of Vaad Hatzalah for the war refugees. With the help of his connections with all the communities, he was able to get them all involved, including the wealthy, who trusted him completely. There

were many other askanim who worked hard to aid the refugees, among them well-known rabbanim and Admurim, but all of them were adjuncts to the general director, Rabbi Meir Ashkenazi, who was utterly devoted to the holy work.

When the need arose to organize a gathering for t'filla to include all sectors of the community and all the k'hillos, the Amshinover Rebbe, himself one of the Shanghai refugees, suggested that R' Ashkenazi organize it. This way, everybody, without exception, would participate. And that's what happened.

Every group of refugees that arrived in Shanghai went to the rav. He took care of all their needs until each one found his place, and they too got involved in helping the new



refugees who followed them.

R' Meir did not only provide material needs. As someone who had attended Tomchei T'mimim, he was very much aware that the body is only a vessel for the light of the neshama. The neshama also needs to be fed, soul food. R' Meir took care of people's spiritual as well as material needs.

Among the thousands of refugees were modern Jews from Germany who were reminded of their Jewish heritage only because the Nazis rose to power. They were ignorant of all things Jewish and R' Meir taught them Torah and how to fulfill mitzvos. He himself gave them shiurim and worried about their children's chinuch with things like Shabbos observance and family purity. He was mekarev thousands of Jews to their Father in heaven.

TOMCHEI T'MIMIM IN CHINA

There are many chapters told about the refugees in Shanghai, and one of the main ones concerns the yeshivos. Three groups came to Shanghai with the largest group being Litvish, the second being Polish Chassidim, and the third being the T'mimim.

The first group arrived in 1941 and it included hundreds of Mirrer yeshiva bachurim with their rosh yeshiva, Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz and their mashgiach ruchni, Rabbi Yechezkel Levenstein. About 35 T'mimim came with this group.

R' Meir knew about the arrival of the T'mimim ahead of time from a letter that the Rebbe Rayatz had written to him. He and his family waited to greet these distinguished talmidim. The arrival of the T'mimim gave an entirely different flavor to the city of Shanghai, for until then there were only two people with beards, R' Meir Ashkenazi the rav and R' Chaim Plotkin the

Chassidishe shochet, both Lubavitchers.

It was obvious that R' Meir was the man who would take care of all of them and indeed, even before they came, he arranged a building for them, the Beis Aharon shul, which he got from the Sephardic community. That is where the new yeshiva would be. The sound of Torah could be heard in Shanghai the very day the refugees arrived there.

Even after the yeshiva was established and the talmidim were set up in their new living quarters, R' Meir did not leave his post, but along with his wife, they took care of the talmidim as though they were their own children. Rebbetzin Ashkenazi was called the "mother of all the refugees." Any bachur who didn't feel well was put up in her home.

When a small possibility for emigration to the US opened up, R' Meir immediately got to work with his connections and with money to help the refugees move on. The extent of his genuine mesirus nefesh is illustrated in the following story:

Over a decade after the end of the war, when R' Ashkenazi was no longer alive, one of his grandsons went to learn in the yeshiva in S. Paulo, Brazil. He met someone who asked him his name and then begged him to come and be his guest. At first the boy refused but the man insisted and the man also began pestering the boy's host. The talmid went to him for a meal.

During the meal the host treated him with the utmost respect, in a most unusual fashion. The grandson was taken aback by all the honor he received and he couldn't refrain from asking why he was being treated that way.

The man said: We were Litvishe bachurim who were refugees in Shanghai. One day we managed to obtain visas. However, they were sent

to the headquarters of a country that was considered an enemy of China and just entering the place was dangerous. We were beside ourselves and we turned to Rabbi Ashkenazi for advice.

Rather than give advice, the rav himself went to the place in order to get the exit visas. He wore *tachrichim* (burial shrouds) under his clothes and warned his family that if he did not return by evening, he would not return and they should see to it that he had a Jewish burial.

In order to appreciate what R' Meir did to save the Torah world, and the ramifications of this till our day, we would have to describe that terrible period. The elderly have the memories, but the younger generation is not familiar with it, but this is not the place to go on about this at length.

We will suffice with what one of the Litvishe roshei yeshivos said to Rabbi Ashkenazi's grandson, "Your grandfather literally saved the *olam ha'Torah*."

As someone who had attended Tomchei T'mimim, R' Meir knew that the reestablishment of the Mirrer yeshiva, a Litvishe yeshiva, would not suffice. He immediately established a branch of Tomchei T'mimim and since they had no maggid shiur for Nigleh, he took that arduous role, despite his heavy involvement in communal work.

It wasn't easy for R' Meir to support Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim. The Vaad Hatzalah that raised money in the US for the talmidim of the yeshivos in Shanghai was run by a Litvishe rosh yeshiva who strongly opposed Lubavitch. In the telegrams that he sent about the wiring of money to Shanghai he would note: except for Lubavitch.

Yet Rabbi Ashkenazi was seen as the right man to be treasurer of these funds, despite his being a Lubavitcher Chassid. This shows



Rav Meir Ashkenazi sitting to the right of the Rebbe at a farbrengen on 24 Teives 5712
Left: Rav Ashkenazi making a siyum as per the Rebbe's request



how greatly trusted he was by all.

Even after the money sent to Shanghai was distributed, the T'mimim had nothing. While their fellow talmidim wore new clothes, they didn't even have clothes for Shabbos. Nevertheless, neither R' Meir nor the T'mimim would forego the privilege of learning specifically within the four cubits of Tomchei T'mimim. R' Meir took on the burden of the yeshiva along with his wife and when the talmidim were of marriageable age they married them off.

The yeshiva continued functioning until the Rebbe Rayatz was able to obtain money and affidavits and the T'mimim left for

America.

TORAH AND DERECH ERETZ

It should be noted that despite R' Meir's preoccupation with communal work, he did not neglect his learning or his avodas ha't'filla. When he learned it was like the learning of a talmid in Tomchei T'mimim who has nothing in his world but Torah and t'filla.

Rabbi Simcha Elberg, a Shanghai refugee, who was later close with the Rebbe, described it thus in his book *Einei HaEida*:

Rabbi Ashkenazi was in Shanghai for 23 years and throughout those years he was immersed in Torah, in holiness and purity. Holy were his days and holy were his nights. He gathered all the holy sparks of the place and absorbed them. He worked, before anything else, on fixing himself. He always sought the road to spiritual perfection, how to be refined and sanctified. He became an oved Hashem. He weighed every

word, measured every step, how much avodas Hashem there was in every weekday Shmoneh Esrei of his! Whoever saw him daven felt the k'dusha and was uplifted. A holy Jew lives in Shanghai and his name is Rabbi Meir Ashkenazi.

HIS LAST YEARS

For over 25 years, Rabbi Ashkenazi served as rav in Shanghai until all the refugees moved on to free countries whether to Eretz Yisroel or the US. The old-time residents of Shanghai joined them and so the era of the Shanghai community came to an end. R' Meir had his sights set on New York. He wanted to meet the Rebbe and have just a bit of nachas after all the years of travail he had endured.

In 1949 R' Meir arrived in New York. His final days in New York were like Yaakov's last days in Egypt. He was able to bask in the light of the Rebbe Rayatz and the Rebbe, who extended to him great affection.

Few are the Chassidim who merited such an unusual relationship as R' Ashkenazi, yet he actualized the goal of Tomchei T'mimim to be an "illuminating candle" to preserve the Jewish spark, and he did so with mesirus nefesh.

In the notes of R' Avrohom Weingarten he mentions that when R' Ashkenazi came to 770, the mashpia R' Shmuel Levitin had a yechidus with the Rebbe Rayatz and heard him say "lofty words about R' Ashkenazi."

At that time, Rabbi JJ Hecht ran a large children's rally and when he asked the Rebbe who to invite to address the children, the Rebbe told him to invite R' Meir Ashkenazi. R' Hecht was surprised since R' Meir did not know English and the children wouldn't understand him, but the Rebbe said: It's important that the children see a *lichtike tzura* (a luminous countenance).

LEADING THE CALL TO CROWN THE REBBE

The Rebbe Rayatz passed away shortly after R' Meir moved to New York. R' Ashkenazi was the pioneer who led the movement to convince the Rebbe to accept the nesius. He was the head of the rabbanim who were in 770 at that time and he poured his energy into having the Rebbe accept the nesius. An interesting story took place which led to the Rebbe receiving him for yechidus already in Adar 5710:

While still in Shanghai the holy R' Aharon of Belz zt"l visited his father, R' Shneur Zalman who told the Admur about his son. The Belzer Rebbe asked that he [R' Meir] visit him when he arrived in Eretz Yisroel. R' Meir arrived in Eretz Yisroel in 1947 and visited the Belzer Rebbe.

At that time, R' Ashkenazi looked terrible. When the Belzer Rebbe saw him, he said: You are not my Chassid and you don't ask questions [of me], but I will suggest three things for

your health: 1) don't eat dairy products (butter, cheese, etc.) except for actual milk, 2) don't listen to music, 3) don't go to the gravesites of tzaddikim, and if you don't listen, your situation will be worse.

After Yud Shvat 5710, R' Meir didn't know what to do and he went to the Rebbe and said he had questions to ask. The Rebbe told him to go to the Ohel. R' Ashkenazi said that's just what he wanted to ask and he told the story about the Belzer Rebbe.

The Rebbe said: He told you that you aren't his Chassid, so why didn't you ask him for the source of what he recommended? Since you accepted what he said, you should do it.

R' Meir said: If so, I need a Rebbe to answer my questions. The Rebbe put on his sirtuk and gartel and accepted R' Ashkenazi for yechidus.

Not surprisingly, it was R' Meir who read the general letter of Hiskashrus of the Chassidim to the Rebbe on Yud Shvat 5711. He was definitely a model of utter bittul to the new nasi, who worked with all his strength to help firmly establish the Rebbe's nesius and lay the foundation for the expansion of his institutions.

Later on, a certain wealthy man told his grandson, Rabbi Mordechai Shmuel Ashkenazi, that in 5711 his grandfather had taken him for yechidus to the Rebbe. When he left he was amazed by R' Meir's tremendous bittul, for R' Meir was an old man with a white beard and the Rebbe was a young man.

R' Meir was mekushar to the Rebbe heart and soul and didn't make a move without the Rebbe's approval and guidance. R' Meir became seriously ill and was hospitalized and the doctors checked him and said there was nothing they could do. There was no reason for him to remain in the hospital and

they asked him to go home.

R' Ashkenazi refused and said that without the Rebbe's approval he wasn't moving. His son-in-law went to the Rebbe and the Rebbe said it seemed the doctors wanted his bed, which is why they were releasing him. He went back and said this to the doctors who conceded that this was true.

R' Meir received much respect from the Rebbe. The Rebbe even took an interest in his personal life. When R' Meir didn't feel well, the Rebbe suggested he take a vacation. When R' Meir asked the Rebbe what to do there, the Rebbe opened a drawer in his desk and took out the Rebbe Rayatz's recounting of the story of Shimon the Heretic and said: Take this and you'll have something to read. That is how we have this reshima.

When R' Meir sat Shiva for his father in 5712 the Rebbe came to console him and said: Just as all mitzvos need to be done with simcha, this mitzva too.

The Rebbe relied on him in a unique fashion and placed him at the helm of mosdos. It is told that the Rebbe appointed him to supervise, along with two other older Chassidim, one of the yeshivos in Eretz Yisroel. One time, the menahel had a yechidus and he reported about their many expenses.

The Rebbe stopped him and said that R' Ashkenazi reported otherwise... The menahel said that R' Meir lied. The Rebbe said: When someone says that a rav lied, he deserves that all his teeth should fall out. When that man returned to Eretz Yisroel, not one tooth remained in his mouth.

The Rebbe relied on R' Meir's p'sak halacha too, and asked him questions in halacha. When the bachurim asked the Rebbe who should test them for smicha, the Rebbe referred them to R' Ashkenazi



The accounting book of Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in which Rav Meir Ashkenazi is listed as the menahel of the yeshiva

respects to the deceased, the Rebbe said that as far as he knew R' Meir, he would prefer to forego the commotion.

The Rebbe went to console the family and spoke to them at length and davened Mincha there. At the next farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke about R' Meir and said that up Above, the Rebbe Rayatz had done everything to bring him [R' Meir] to him [the Rebbe Rayatz].

Something interesting took place shortly after he passed away. At the home of a woman in Queens, a grandson found an old and worn out book that he had gotten in Vladivostok from a man named Epstein, a descendent of R' Isaac of Homil. The book was full of writing and stories of early Chassidim and the grandson took it to 770 to the Rebbe's library.

When R' Yisroel Jacobson saw it, he immediately identified the book and said: Rabbi Ashkenazi once showed me an excerpt from it (and R' Yisroel pointed it out) which says in the name of one of the Chassidim of the Tzemach Tzedek: We have a tradition that the last Rebbe before the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu will be named Menachem Mendel.

* * *

who is a "genuine baal horaa."

R' Ashkenazi did not live much longer. The trials and tribulations he endured weakened him, his appearance became that of a very old man, and he passed away in 1954 at the age of 63. The Rebbe was

involved in the funeral arrangements and said it should be done as early as possible. When the family wanted to delay the funeral in order to enable the Litvishe g'dolei ha'rabbanim and the thousands of people who had lived in Shanghai to pay their

The material in this article about R' Meir Ashkenazi is only a sampling of information and stories, mesirus nefesh and unlimited Ahavas Yisroel, with true hiskashrus to the Rebbeim.

(From a t'shura given at a wedding of his great-grandson, Meir Wilschansky)

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