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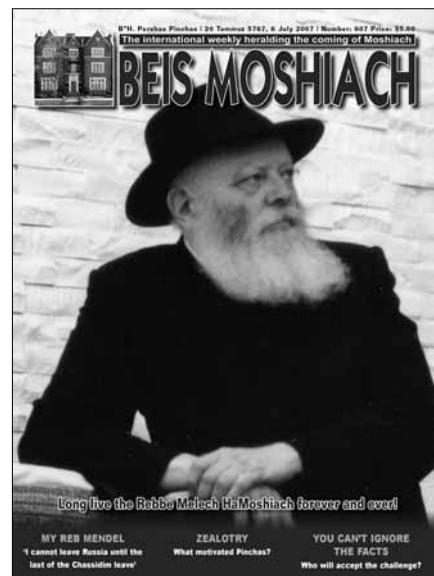
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HOW COULD G-D DESTROY THE HOLY TEMPLE?

Likkutei Sichos Vol. 29, pg. 9-17
Translated by Boruch Merkur

1. We have already discussed many times¹ that from the very first Torah portion, B'Reishis, all the way until the Seventeenth of Tammuz, “We conclude the Torah reading with [a Haftora of] the same subject matter as the portions – coupling like with like. But from then on [the Haftora goes] according to the time [of the year] and the event [that took place at that time]” (as stated in Tur²).

Nevertheless, since all matters of the Torah are extremely exact, it is understood that the Haftoros throughout the period beginning on the Seventeenth of Tammuz (namely, the Haftora of “The Words of Yermiyahu,” read with the portion Pinchas (or Mattos), and etc.,³ “The Vision” (Chazon), with the portion D'varim⁴), which are established “according to the time,” also have a connection with the **Torah portions** read on the Shabbasos throughout that period (“of the same subject matter as the portions, etc.”), though they are mainly “according to the time and the event.”⁵

This connection is particularly emphasized on Shabbos Chazon. Insofar as this Shabbos (according to Jewish custom, which “is Torah”) is named after the Haftora – Shabbos Chazon – it is understood that this [name/Haftora] expresses the significance of the (entire) Shabbos.

2. Among the concepts that are common to both “*Chazon Yeshayahu*”⁶ (“The Vision of Yeshayahu”) and the Torah portion (D'varim) are:

The prophecy of the Haftora “*Chazon Yeshayahu*” is comprised of words of rebuke to the Jewish people. Nevertheless, the Haftora concludes and is sealed with the concept of redemption: “I will restore your judges, etc. Tziyon shall be redeemed through justice and its penitents through righteousness.”⁷

Similarly, we find that the Torah portion D'varim begins with “words of rebuke,”⁸ yet it concludes and is sealed with the concept of the entry of the Jewish people into the Land of Israel: “You shall not fear them, for it is G-d, your L-rd, Who will wage war for you.”⁹

Since “Everything goes according to the seal,”¹⁰ it is understood that although the subject matter of the Haftora is “Retribution,”¹¹ and of the Three Weeks of Retribution, the Haftora of Chazon is the most severe,¹²

nevertheless, the main point it expresses (the conclusion and seal) is the concept of redemption: “Tziyon shall be redeemed through justice and its penitents through righteousness.”

Since the Haftora comes as the completion and the conclusion of the portion in Torah,¹³ it comes out that the conclusion and the bottom line of the portion is the concept of redemption.

The above discussion sheds light on the fact that in *Likkutei Torah*, which contains discourses arranged by the Tzemach Tzedek “according to the order of the Torah portions, etc.,”¹⁴ there is only one discourse¹⁵ for the Torah portion D’varim. Namely, the discourse on the verse, “Tziyon shall be redeemed through justice and its penitents through righteousness.” (There is no discourse on a verse from the Torah portion itself.¹⁶) We may infer (as a possibility) that this is because this [verse in the Haftora] comprises the meaning of the Torah portion.

Notwithstanding the fact that **this** concept (that the main point of the Torah portion is expressed in the Haftora, and the conclusion of the Haftora [in particular]) is applicable to all the Torah portions, we don’t find other instances among the other portions whereby the discourse in *Likkutei Torah* (on a Torah portion) is focussed **solely** on a verse of the Haftora,¹⁷ and the conclusion of the Haftora in particular.

We may propose that the reason why this applies specifically to our Torah portion is because the concept of exile and redemption is uniquely underscored here, as will be discussed.

[To be continued be”H]

NOTES:

¹ See *Likkutei Sichos* Vol. 9, pg. 61, where it is elucidated; *Likkutei Sichos* Vol. 18, pg. 342, among others.

² Orach Chayim 428 (in the name of the P’sikta). Similarly in *Shulchan Aruch* 428:8; Tosafos on Meseches Megilla 31b,

entry beginning with the words, “Rosh Chodesh”; and see Rambam Laws of Prayer 13:19.

³ Read during the Three Weeks of Retribution.

⁴ So too with regard to the Seven Weeks of Consolation.

⁵ See *Likkutei Sichos* Vol. 9 *ibid* in particular, as well as the footnotes there.

⁶ Yeshayahu 1:1 ff.

⁷ *Ibid* 26-27.

⁸ See Sifri, Targum Unkelus, Targum Yonasan, and the commentary of Rashi on the beginning of the Torah portion D’varim.

⁹ 3:22.

¹⁰ Brachos 12a

¹¹ Tosafos on Megilla *ibid*, *Tur Shulchan Aruch* *ibid* – from the P’sikta. In Rambam *ibid*, “with words of rebuke.” However, according to the opinion of Rambam it is a different order, unlike that described in *Tur Shulchan Aruch*.

¹² See Tosafos *ibid*, end, etc. – see Footnote 11 in the original.

¹³ To note the meaning of the term “Haftora” – entry in *Encyclopedia Talmudis*, beg. See there that there were those who called it “*Eshlamta*” (completion), insofar as it is the completion of the Torah reading.

¹⁴ Wording of the title page of *Likkutei Torah*, edited by the Rebbe the Tzemach Tzedek.

¹⁵ on a verse from the Torah portion or the Haftora. Even the second discourse there comes as a continuation to the discourse that begins, “Tziyon shall be redeemed through justice.”

¹⁶ See Footnote 15 in the original.

¹⁷ See Footnote 16 in the original.

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A DAILY DOSE OF MOSHIACH & GEULA:

20-26 TAMMUZ

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

Collected and arranged by Rabbi Pinchas Maman
Translated by Michoel Leib Dobry

20 TAMMUZ: THIS IS NO ORDINARY PLACE

Regarding the location of the Beis HaMikdash, it is said (B’Reishis 28:17): “How awesome is this place!” and Unkelus translates: This is no ordinary place.

The world is “an ordinary place,” as created in the Ten Utterances, which are called “worldly matters.”

However, the place of the Beis HaMikdash is not an “ordinary place,” as in all “the Ten Utterances,” it is written, “And Elokim said,” whereas in the place of the Beis HaMikdash, there was a revelation of the name Havaya: “Indeed, there is Havaya in this place” (ibid., verse 16).

(sicha from the Rebbe shlita)

21 TAMMUZ: THE FUTURE BEIS HA’MIKDASH WILL ALSO BE BUILT OUT OF IRON

The First and Second Beis HaMikdash were destroyed through iron, and therefore, iron is negated in the Beis HaMikdash. However, in the Future Beis

HaMikdash, an eternal house with no connection to destruction, there is no relevance to any concern from the corresponding concept of iron, since in the Future to Come, the corresponding concept of iron will be nullified.

Thus, its construction can and must be with iron as well, in order to emphasize the elevation and wholeness in the transformation of the iron that destroyed the Beis HaMikdash into the iron in the building of the Beis HaMikdash.

(Shabbos Parshas VaYechi 5752)

22 TAMMUZ: ONE LARGE BEIS HA’MIKDASH

In the Future to Come, the Beis HaMikdash will be as large as Yerushalayim in this world, since in the rebuilt Yerushalayim in the Future to Come, all the places of all the shuls that were in this world will be appended to the Beis HaMikdash” (Chiddushei Agadta, Megilla 29a).

The connecting of the shuls from throughout the world’s nations (“small sanctuary”) to the Future Beis

HaMikdash will be in accordance with the varying degrees among them.

The special shuls that have an advantage over other shuls...will have precedence in its connection to the Beis HaMikdash, being literally connected to the Beis HaMikdash (touching and attached to it with no obstacle between them), and thereby all other shuls throughout the world's nations will be connected to the Beis HaMikdash.

(Kuntres Beis Rabbeinu Sh'B' Bavel 5752)

23 TAMMUZ: WHO WILL BUILD THE THIRD BEIS HA'MIKDASH? [A] – DIFFERING OPINIONS

There is the known opinion of the Zohar (Vol. I, 28:1) that the Third Beis HaMikdash will be built by G-d, “the building of the Holy One, Blessed Be He.” Similarly, Rashi writes (Sukka 41:1) “The Future Mikdash for which we await, elaborately built, will be revealed and come from Heaven, as is said, ‘The

Its construction can and must be with iron as well, in order to emphasize the elevation and wholeness in the transformation of the iron that destroyed the Beis HaMikdash into the iron in the building of the Beis HaMikdash.

sanctuary, Hashem, which Your hands have founded.”

On the other hand, however, we have found in [the sayings of] our Sages, of blessed memory (Talmud Yerushalmi, Megilla 1:11), that the Beis HaMikdash will be built by the Jewish People. Similarly, Rambam rules (Hilchos Melachim, Ch. 11) that Moshiach will build the Beis HaMikdash.

The reason is apparently simple, for the building of the Beis HaMikdash is a positive commandment – as is written, “And they shall make Me a sanctuary” – and a mitzva is something that is incumbent upon the Jewish People.

24 TAMMUZ: WHO WILL BUILD THE THIRD BEIS HA'MIKDASH? [B] – MEDIATING BETWEEN THE TWO OPINIONS

We therefore can find numerous commonalities between these opinions:

The building of the Beis HaMikdash down below will be through man, and within this sanctuary there will descend and be manifest the spiritual sanctuary Above.

Alternatively, the physical sanctuary will descend from Heaven, but the doors and the gates that sank into the earth, made by the hands of man, will rise and be revealed and be erected in their place. Indeed, the one who erects the doors is considered as if he built it.

Accordingly, we find that the future construction will require both concepts – the concept of “the building of the Holy One, Blessed Be He” and that it will be made by man, Melech HaMoshiach.

(Likkutei Sichos, Shabbos Chazon 5751)

25 TAMMUZ: THE THIRD BEIS HA'MIKDASH WILL BE BROUGHT DOWN FROM ABOVE WITH ITS FOUNDATION STONE

May it be G-d's will that through the avoda to fulfill “You shall place judges, etc., in all your gates” in a manner of “I shall restore your judges, etc.,” this shall be fulfilled in actual deed – in “your gates” in Eretz Yisroel, and “in your gates” of the Third Beis HaMikdash, for “its gates sank into the earth.”

The children of Israel shall construct this building anew through their avoda, and together with this, the Beis HaMikdash itself (which is elaborately built Above) descends below from Above, together with the Holy of Holies

and the Foundation Stone (*Even HaSh'siya*), from which the whole world is founded.

(Shabbos Parshas Shoftim 5751)

26 TAMMUZ: THE THIRD BEIS HA'MIKDASH – THE TIME FOR ITS REVELATION IS ALSO AT NIGHT

Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, Chief Rabbi of Eretz Yisroel: In relation to the Beis HaMikdash, we don't have to wait until they build it (according to the opinion of the Rambam that Moshiach “builds the Mikdash”).

This is because the Future Mikdash, for which we are waiting, will be revealed and will come from Heaven elaborately built (according to the opinion of Rashi and Tosafos).

The Rebbe shlita: And therefore, it can be revealed and come even at night, now mamash.

(yechidus, 6 MarCheshvan 5752)

MY REB MENDEL

I asked: Are you R' Mendel? He said he was and he asked: Are you the son of Avremel Zaltzman? I said that I was, and we both greeted one another. I couldn't hold back my tears and I noticed that R' Mendel's eyes were also moist with tears. * Rabbi Hillel Zaltzman remembers the mashpia R' Mendel Futerfas.

It was recently the twelfth yahrtzait of the Chassid and baal mesirus nefesh, Reb Mendel Futerfas a"h, on 4 Tamuz, and I would like to share my memories of this dear Chassid. His entire life consisted of mesirus nefesh for every member of Anash and other Jews as well, and even under harsh interrogation, he never denied his association and connection to our Rebbeim.

I will begin with a few anecdotes about R' Mendel's mesirus nefesh during the great flight of Anash from Russia in 1946-7 and about his period of imprisonment. However, this chapter will deal with my first encounter with R' Mendel after he was released from prison and the years following that, when he went to Samarkand and settled there, as per the Rebbe's instructions, until he left Russia.

R' Mendel was one of the leading figures who organized the great flight of Anash from Soviet Russia via the border city of Lemberg. His

mesirus nefesh was boundless. When his wife asked him why his concern extended to all large families (preference was given to families with children) except for his own, he answered: If you want, I will send you and the children out, but I cannot leave Russia until the last of the Chassidim leave.

And that is what R' Mendel did. He sent out his family and he remained in the lion's den until his luck ran out and he was caught by the police.

Those in charge of the smuggling in Lemberg were greatly helped by the children of Anash. Since the askanim lived in separate apartments, in order not to arouse suspicion, they used children as couriers to transmit secret messages to each other. My brother-in-law, R' Aryeh Leib Demichovsky, was just past his bar mitzva when he conveyed a message to R' Mendel.

Before leaving, he memorized his message until he was sure he would not forget a single detail of it, for

every detail was vital in these secret messages. As he approached R' Mendel's house, he looked carefully all around and when he saw a car sitting in front of the house across the street with a man at the wheel, he assumed R' Mendel was being watched.

He decided not to go directly to R' Mendel but to walk around the neighborhood a bit to ascertain whether R' Mendel's house was indeed under surveillance. After walking round and round, he became certain that R' Mendel was being watched. He didn't know what to do. He finally decided that he had to enter, if only to inform R' Mendel that he was being watched.

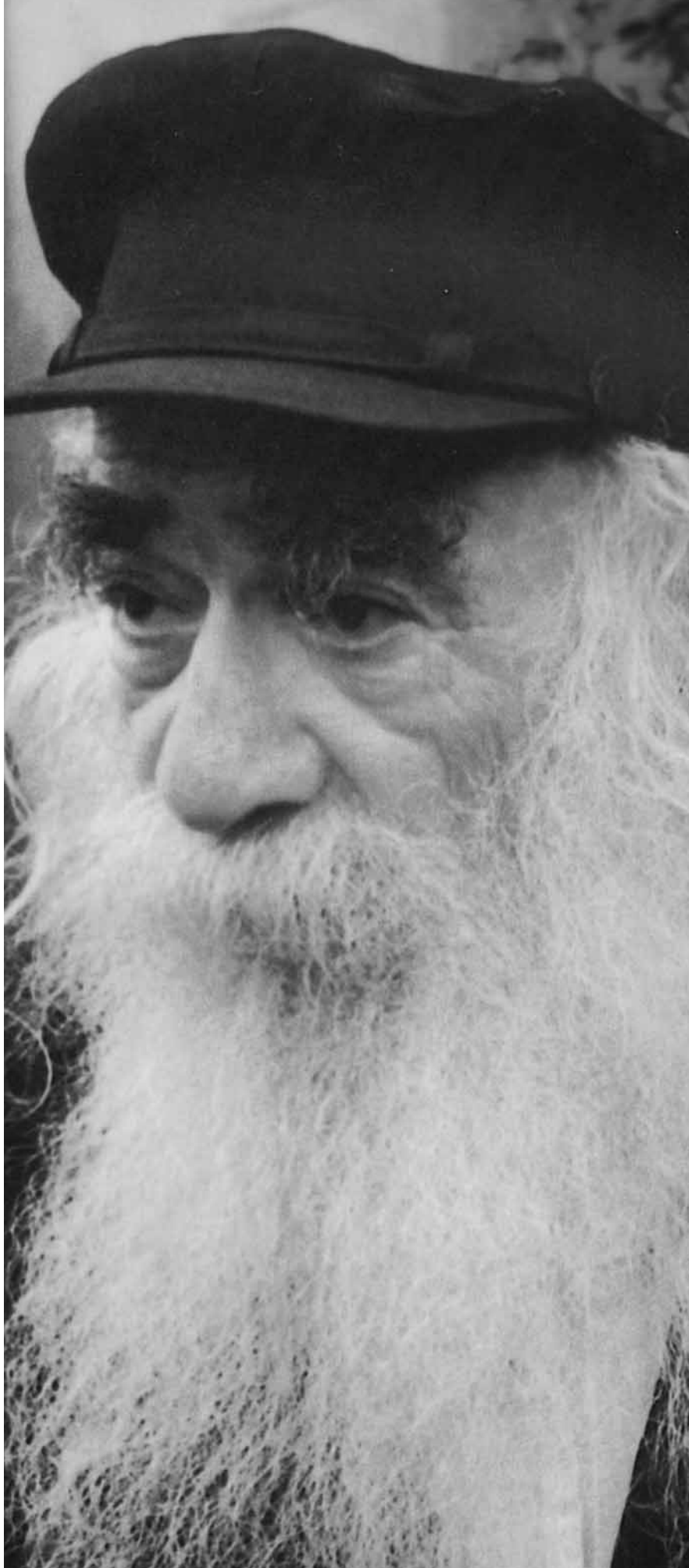
When he entered R' Mendel's apartment, he found him preparing breakfast. R' Mendel was very nervous since my brother-in-law was supposed to come at eight in the morning and because of the detours he had taken, he had come late.

"Where were you? I was very worried about you."

My brother-in-law, who did not want to tell him his suspicions immediately, tried to avoid answering, but R' Mendel understood. "Why are you avoiding answering me? Did you see them following me?"

My brother-in-law nodded his head yes. R' Mendel thought for a moment and said, "Listen Leibke, as long as we're free, we must continue our work. When they arrest us, we won't have a choice, but now we must use every moment."

Despite the worrisome information that he had just received, and knowing that if he was



caught his life was in danger, R' Mendel was as cool as could be and this amazed my brother-in-law. He invited my brother-in-law to join him for breakfast and even managed to joke around a bit. "Look Leibke, I put the potatoes in the pan, added a little oil, and out came this calf..."

IF I WAS OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA AND THE REBBE IN RUSSIA, I WOULD TRAVEL TO SEE HIM

R' Mendel was caught by the police shortly thereafter and thrown into jail. Before he was arrested he managed to send a message to Anash which said not to worry since he would take all responsibility upon himself. He also said that if they arrested other askanim, they could say that he organized everything.

In the difficult interrogations R' Mendel endured, the interrogators tried to extract information about Anash, being well aware that R' Mendel knew all the details. R' Mendel, however, insisted he knew nothing.

Unlike certain others who avoided declaring that they belonged to Lubavitch, since this was a crime in itself, R' Mendel did not want to be disassociated for even a moment and he proudly declared that he was a Chassid of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. In his defense, R' Mendel said that his goal in attempting to escape was solely to be able to see the Rebbe.

I have nothing against Russia, he said, and the proof is: If the Rebbe was in Russia and I was in another country, I would yearn to visit Russia to the same extent that I now yearn to leave Russia.

He added that all the Chassidim who were caught in the final attempt to leave were not guilty, for he was the one who convinced them to leave Russia in order to meet with the Rebbe.

R' Mendel didn't speak much

about the interrogations and about the brutal methods the interrogators used in order to extract incriminating information from him about other Chassidim. However, from the following story we can imagine how hard it was for R' Mendel when he was in the clutches of the KGB.

Years after his release, when R' Mendel was in Samarkand, there were hard times once again, and I, who was already involved in community work, expressed my fears to him that if another wicked person like Stalin arose, who knows what would be?

R' Mendel told me: You really want to know what will be? They'll arrest you, interrogate you, and beat you murderously until your blood

screams, they suddenly heard a gunshot and then absolutely silence. You can well imagine what went through the minds of those waiting to be interrogated.

When the interrogators realized they would not be able to break R' Mendel's spirit with beatings and physical tortures, they tried psychological tactics on him: You realize that after everything you've done you deserve the death penalty. But if you agree to cooperate with us, we will reduce your punishment to 25 years and you will stay alive.

R' Mendel responded: You know that I believe in G-d and I have no doubt that if G-d wants me to die, then even if you release me now, I could be in a car accident and die. On the other hand, if G-d wants me

prisoners told him that there had been a man by the name of Yona Kogan (the Chassid R' Yona Cohen) and since he didn't eat anything, he had died after a short time. R' Mendel realized that because of the Siberian cold you had to eat something warm in order to survive, and he resolved that just as putting on t'fillin is a daily obligation, so too he needed to obtain a hot meal every day in order to fulfill the mitzva of "and you shall protect your souls" and remain alive.

He set aside a slice of bread from every portion of bread that he was given and obtained an iron box. Every day he cooked the bread mixed with water and that was the hot "dish" he had daily. When he obtained vegetable oil, then he had a veritable feast. During the winter he would take snow and melt it. Even when he was very tired when he came back from a day of hard labor, he made sure to prepare a hot dish. This helped him survive the hardships of Siberia.

R' Mendel knew that Anash were very worried about him, and he tried to get out the word that he was alive. My brother-in-law, R' Aryeh Leib Demichovsky, related that one time a gentile came to his father's (my father-in-law, R' Efraim Demichovsky) slaughterhouse and said to him, as though imparting a secret: "I just came from Siberia and there was a Jewish man there with us by the name of Mendel Mendelovitz (Mendel son of Mendel). He is a distinguished man and everybody loves him. We arranged a special place for him to pray and we all tried not to disturb him while he prayed.

"When he heard that I was about to be released, he asked me: If you see a Jew who looks like me, with a beard and an obvious Jewish appearance, tell him my name and ask him to convey that I am well and that I am hopeful that I will be

I have nothing against Russia, he said, and the proof is: If the Rebbe was in Russia and I was in another country, I would yearn to visit Russia to the same extent that I now yearn to leave Russia.

sprays the walls...

I was terrified by this horrifying description and I asked him: R' Mendel, is that what they did to you?

R' Mendel avoided answering me and said: Don't ask what they did to me. I'm telling you what they do.

On one of the rare occasions that R' Mendel spoke about those interrogations, he said that before the interrogation they sat in a large waiting room, full of people accused of crimes. The waiting room was near the interrogation room so that those waiting would hear the bloodcurdling screams and would be terrified before they even entered the room themselves.

Often, after they heard cries and

to live, you will be unable to kill me.

NU FUTERFAS, YOU'RE A LUCKY MAN!

After going through all the interrogations and being sentenced to death, R' Mendel was transferred from place to place. One of the interrogators who was passing by snarled: Nu, Futerfas, you're a lucky man!

R' Mendel didn't know what he meant and only afterwards did he find out that before his sentence was carried out, a telegram came from Stalin that said that those who had not been killed yet should be given 25 years instead.

When R' Mendel arrived in the labor camp in Siberia, the gentile

released too, and they should not worry.”

Thus, even with the walls of the Soviet camp, R' Mendel made sure to uplift the spirits of the Chabad Chassidim who remained in Russia.

KNOWING HIM FROM A YOUNG AGE

My acquaintance with R' Mendel began when I was a child, during World War II, when I learned with R' Zushe Der Shamash (the Sexton). I remember an incident from that period: R' Zushe was known for his severe demeanor and his students greatly feared him. The great composer Rabbi Yom Tov Ehrlich a”h, who was in Samarkand at that time, composed a song that depicted the lives of Chassidim there, and he mentioned R' Zushe the Melamed, who stood like a general and whose students trembled before him.

It once happened that I did something displeasing to him and he hit me. Then R' Mendel showed up and I looked at him like an angel from heaven who might rescue me from the melamed's belt. R' Mendel began yelling at him: What do you want from the boy? His father is in

jail. He is like an orphan. See how thin he is. Leave him alone!

But R' Zushe, who was elderly and strong-willed, wasn't impressed by R' Mendel and told him to stop interfering with his work.

Throughout my childhood and youth, R' Mendel was a symbol of a genuine Chassid and a baal mesirus nefesh to me and my friends. We, who grew up in Samarkand after the war, without the presence of the great Chassidim who filled the city during the war, received our Jewish, Chassidic education through the stories that we heard from our elders about the holy Rebbeim and about Chassidim, such as R' Asher Batumer (Sossonkin), R' Nissan Der Geller (Neminov), R' Yona Cohen, and of course, R' Mendel Futerfas.

We heard vivid descriptions of R' Mendel's lengthy and sweet prayer, about his Chassidim aphorisms, and about his wondrous acts of chesed.

It is interesting to note that R' Chaim Dovber (Berke) Chein, who was himself a giant of a Chassidic personality, spoke a great deal about other Chassidim, and since he had heard a lot about R' Mendel, whom he knew personally, he would tell us

“If you want, I will send you and the children out, but I cannot leave Russia until the last of the Chassidim leave.”

a lot and emphasize his mesirus nefesh.

All those Chassidim, giants of the spirit, left Russia during the great flight of 1946-7. R' Mendel was one of the few left behind in Russia and he spent many years in jail. We always hoped that one day he would be released and we would be able to meet him face to face.

R' BERKE AND R' MOSHE DEBATE

After Anash left Russia and following the great wave of arrests of those who were caught in the last attempt to flee, the Chassidim who remained in Russia were extremely fearful. The emotional breakdown that followed the war and the vacuum that was created after all the Chassidic figures disappeared from the scene, contributed towards a feeling of great distress.

We were young children, pre-bar mitzva, but the older bachurim began to get a taste of mesirus nefesh to preserve their Lubavitch appearance. Their beards began to grow in, giving them a distinctively Chassidic look and literally putting their lives in danger. Since it was out of the question to remove their beards, they tried to hide it with a scarf and when they were questioned about the scarf, they would say they suffered from a toothache.

The passing years didn't treat us



My brother-in-law, R' Aryeh Leib Demichovsky



My father-in-law, R' Efraim Demichovsky

well. Black clouds began to cover the skies of Russia. The dictator Stalin, may his name be erased, came up with the infamous Doctors' Plot. Jewish doctors who served as personal doctors of government officials were thrown into jail and arrests of Jews throughout the Soviet Union became routine.

Reliable rumors told of 40,000 barracks that were prepared in Siberia to absorb the millions of Jews whom Stalin planned on expelling after arranging a show trial of the doctors accused of plotting to kill the heads of the government. For a long period of time we lived in daily, palpable fear.

In that bleak time it was a serious offense for people to congregate, and under these circumstances it was impossible to dream about a yeshiva or minyan. A private melamed would come to our house a few times a week for an hour a day, but not at a set time so that the neighbors wouldn't notice anything unusual.

It was impossible to go to shul to daven and Anash tried to arrange secret minyanim in private homes, at first only on holidays and then on Shabbos Mevarchim too. Since we did not have a Torah, the sidra was read from a Chumash, just in order to give us young boys an idea of what communal prayer was like.

After the unexpected death of the tyrant Stalin, Khrushchev, who took over, revealed the horrifying details of what Stalin planned to do. The doctors were released and many people arrested in the great wave of arrests in 1937-8 and in 1950-1, were released too.

In the meantime, we had grown up and had become bachurim. R' Moshe Nisselevitz once called me over and told me that he planned on founding an organization that would give us more energy and chayus to work in spreading Judaism and Chassidus. At first, this organization

was called Chaburas Ahavas Yisroel (Chai).

In later years, when R' Moshe saw in the holy Sh'lah about how great it is to bring merit to the many, he changed the name to Chaburas Mizakei HaRabbim (Chamah).

We began with underground activities with the encouragement of R' Moshe. We started a gemach fund to aid the needy, and tried to be mekarev those Jews who went off the derech.

Throughout all our secret work we were witness to an ongoing debate between R' Moshe and R' Berke Chein, who hid in Samarkand at that time, and was one of the remnants of the previous generation of spiritual giants. In his farbrengens, R' Berke stressed that before working with others, you had to invest energy and efforts in avoda with yourself. Only afterwards could you influence others.

R' Moshe opined that if we delayed the work with others until we were ready, it could be too late. The other person is not at fault because we are not ready, he heatedly maintained.

In 5719/1959, with the reduction in the level of fear of

Stalin's time, I planned a trip into the depths of Russia on behalf of the community. I planned on visiting a few cities including Chernovitz, of course, where R' Mendel lived after he was released from jail in 1956.

Before I left, I spoke a lot with R' Moshe about R' Mendel. He told me what he knew about R' Mendel's mesirus nefesh and he also told me about his cleverness. I wondered whether I could tell R' Mendel all the details about our underground work in Samarkand, which in those years had grown quite large.

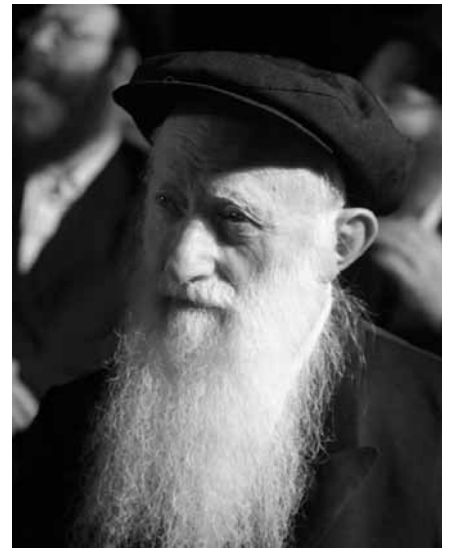
People's fear of those who had spent time in the KGB's lair was so great that we could never know what happened to that person "over there." Did the KGB agents manage to recruit them? I consulted with my father a"h and my brother-in-law R' Eliyahu Mishulovin a"h and both rejected my concern out of hand.

R' Moshe Nisselevitz was also firm in his opinion: G-d forbid to suspect R' Mendel. We heard how he conducted himself during the interrogations, taking all the blame, etc. We decided to tell him everything and to consult with him regarding certain things, without concealing anything.

[To be continued be"H]



R' Berke Chein



R' Moshe Nisselevitz

THE ZEALOT

By Rabbi Yosef Karasik, Rav district Bat Chefer-Emek Chefer

*Pinchas was a young man who took matters into his own hands. What motivated him to risk his life when so many people, including heads of tribes and the Elders, did nothing to stop Zimri? * A discussion about different types of zealotry and those who oppose it. * A fascinating look at the parsha of the week from the perspective of the Midrash, Kabbala, and Chabad Chassidus.*

ZEALOTRY FOR THE SAKE OF HEAVEN VS. SELF-SERVING ZEALOTRY

Sometimes, two opposite forces – such as true love from the depths of one’s heart and vicious hatred – bring about the same practical result. The difference between them is only in the motivation of the act. For example, a knife can serve a doctor when he needs to amputate a limb in order to save a life. A knife can also be used to maim and kill. Although the results are similar, there is an obvious, extreme difference between them.

Religious fanaticism, fighting for the Torah and taking revenge on the wicked, can originate in one of two opposing sources. One person fights with all his might for the sake of Torah, and when he sees a

wicked person degrading the Torah, he rises up against him in a holy war in order to subdue him. In extreme instances, he kills him for the sake of Heaven, in order to save him from continuing his sinful ways. We see this with Pinchas, who, when he saw the terrible thing that Zimri ben Salu did, killed him in an act motivated by religious zealotry. Pinchas’ love and fear of Hashem compelled him to put his life aside and to fight those who desecrated the honor of Heaven.

Some, on the other hand, use religious zealotry in order to hurt others, to insult them and to shed blood, doing so because they take pleasure in hurting others, and not because of any desire to increase the honor of Heaven. They enjoy shaming others but hide their cruelty in a guise of holiness.

The other side of the coin, those

who fight against religious zealots, can also be divided into opposite categories:

Some oppose religious zealotry for good reasons. In their opinion, acts of religious zealotry cause a desecration of G-d’s name, distances people from the Torah, and takes away from the Torah’s honor and from the honor of Torah scholars. They consider the proper approach to be mekarev Jews to be one of pleasantness.

However, there are people who, upon encountering zealots for Hashem and His Torah, fight against them; they simply cannot stand seeing someone who takes the Torah to heart to such a degree. They are bothered by genuine men of truth. When the zealot directs criticism against them, they respond violently with a war that comes solely from the Evil Inclination and from lack of honor for the Torah and those who follow in its holy ways.

Discussions about zealotry have stirred up the Jewish people since the beginning of time until this very day:

Does shouting and cursing to protest Shabbos desecrators and those who desecrate the Torah come from pure zealotry for Hashem and His Torah, or is it an outlet and excuse to insult people? Does religious zealotry increase the honor of Heaven and add soldiers for Hashem and His Torah, or does it push people away?

Let us examine the types of zealots and those who oppose them in order to establish when their acts are pure and good and when they are invalid and bad. In instances where the Torah view is to act with zealotry, how can we explain to and convince those who fight zealotry that this is the proper way? We will look at Pinchas’ zealotry and that of Moshiach, with which he will conquer and save the world.

PINCHAS AND HIS ZEALOTRY

Zimri, the Nasi of the tribe of Shimon, took a gentile woman and Pinchas, in his zealousness, opposed him with mesirus nefesh and killed him. At first glance, you can get the wrong impression about both Pinchas and Zimri:

Zimri was a tzaddik who led his tribe of Shimon and provided for their needs. His love for them was so strong that when his tribe told him that they were going to die because of the gentile women they had taken, he felt compassion for them. Despite his stature, he himself took a Midyanite woman, Kozbi bas Tzur (under the impression that a child born to a Jewish father and a non-Jewish mother would be Jewish) and he asked Moshe, “If you say it is forbidden to marry a Midyanite woman, why are you married to one, the daughter of Yisro?” (In addition to which, Moshe served as a Kohen, and a Kohen cannot marry even a convert.)

The one who opposed Zimri was not a famous person – it wasn’t Moshe and not one of the 70 Elders, nor one of the N’siim. It was Pinchas, who was himself descended from a Midyanite woman (because his father Elozor married the sister of Tzipora, Moshe’s wife, one of the daughters of Yisro the Midyanite). He did not engage in discussion and debate; he simply killed Zimri!

Many Jews thought that Zimri was on a higher level than Pinchas. They considered Zimri to be a loving leader and Pinchas to be a young fanatic.

“THE TRIBES DISPARAGED HIM”

Most of the Jewish people opposed the murder of Zimri, saying that Pinchas’ zealousness

was not genuine. They thought that Pinchas had desecrated the name of Hashem. This group was composed of two categories of individuals.

The sinners who lived with Midyanite women opposed Pinchas for selfish reasons. They identified with Zimri, who took a gentile woman, and they feared that they too would be killed. However, they presented their opposition in the guise of concern for the honor of Heaven, supporting it with religious reasons.

The truth is that love for Torah was not their motivation. Their lust, anger, and personal vendetta against Pinchas is what spurred them on. Moshe did not respond to their complaints and many of them were killed by the court for their sins. Their rectification was not through explanations and intellectual proofs, because the Evil Inclination burned within them.

The rest of the Jewish people, those who disparaged Pinchas, did not have personal reasons for doing so. They were not from the tribe of Shimon and were not sinners. Their anger against Pinchas came from pure motivations – the honor of Moshe and the other Torah scholars and leaders.

They maintained that Pinchas disparaged the leaders, for how could one so young know the halacha about killing a Jew who has relations with a non-Jew, when the “man of G-d,” Moshe Rabbeinu, did not tell them this halacha? Thus, they thought Pinchas’ act was not motivated by love for Hashem.

They examined Pinchas’ lineage and discovered that his grandfather, his mother’s father, fattened cows and slaughtered them for idols. The act of fattening them indicates a cruel nature. Although at first glance it seems as though he fed them in abundance out of love for the animals, his real intention was to ultimately kill the fattened

animals!

This is how the tribes interpreted Pinchas’ zealousness in killing Zimri, saying it stemmed from his cruel nature which was inherited from his ancestors who enjoyed killing, and not from zealousness for the sake of Heaven.

In fact, they went further and said that the nature of a cruel person is such that he particularly hates compassionate people. The kinder the person, the greater his hatred for them. They interpreted the killing of Zimri as an expression of Pinchas’ hatred for someone who was known as a good man, a loyal leader who was good to his tribesmen.

“PINCHAS SON OF ELOZOR SON OF AHARON”

Hashem “examined kidneys and the heart,” and He testifies in His Torah that they were wrong about Pinchas and about Zimri: Pinchas “the son of Elozor the son of Aharon” is a man with wonderful character traits. He is the grandson of Aharon, who “loves peace and pursues peace.” Pinchas is all kindness and mercy, love of Hashem and love of people! He is not cruel and does not rejoice at suffering. He takes no pleasure in striking anyone. His only motivation is the honor of Heaven – zealousness for Hashem!

By taking a spear and killing Zimri, Pinchas vanquished the plague. (The Zohar explains that Pinchas took the letter Mem from the word “*mavess*” (death) and added to it the strength of Yitzchok Avinu, whose name is numerically equivalent to “*rach*,” 208, to form the word “*romach*,” a spear. By taking the letter Mem from “*mavess*,” the Angel of Death had no power to kill, and the plague ceased.)

Furthermore, by killing Zimri, Pinchas rectified Zimri himself, as the Noam Elimelech writes, “And he took a *romach* (spear)’ means that Pinchas took the 248 limbs (the gematria of “*romach*”) of Zimri and rectified them and infused them with life,” because “the power of the holiness of Aharon HaKohen can be mekarev all souls and return them to holiness. (By being moser nefesh, he fulfilled all 248 mitzvos, which is hinted at in the phrase, “and he took a spear,” for “spear” equals 248, the number of positive mitzvos –Tiferes Shlomo, Balak.)

Whereas Zimri, the leader of the Tribe of Shimon, instead of serving

was wrong (“who permitted the daughter of Yisro to you?” he asked). Zimri had 24,000 guards from his tribe. So what motivated Pinchas to endanger both his spiritual and physical lives? By killing Zimri he stood to be disqualified for the service of the Kehuna, and killing a Jewish man who has relations with a non-Jew is not one of the three sins for which we are commanded to sacrifice our lives!

The answer is that Pinchas did not think it through, weighing the pros and cons, material and spiritual. He saw one thing before him – following an explicit instruction from Moshe. He

Moshiach will “compel all Israel to follow it [the Torah] and strengthen its breaches and fight the wars of Hashem.” This is the ultimate in religious zealotry – Moshiach will compel all Jews.

as an example of holiness and purity, guiding his tribe not to take Midyanite women, succumbed to his Evil Inclination and sinned. He was impudent to Moshe and he fell into the depths of darkness of the impurity of Midyan. (In Kabbala it is explained that the source of his soul was a reincarnation of Sh’chem, the son of Chamor, who kidnapped Dina.)

ONE MAN SAVED AN ENTIRE NATION!

A lone individual did something with no backing by any spiritual figure and he opposed someone who was a Nasi. Zimri had proved with halachic reasoning that Moshe

nullified himself to what the leader of the Jewish people had said and ignored everything else. Since he had heard directly from Moshe that “one who has relations with a non-Jew, zealots kill him,” he stuck to it at all costs, even though he could have been a source of mockery to all, and even though by doing so he endangered his life. He rushed to carry out the instruction with mesirus nefesh, without considering whether it was worth his while to do so. The main thing was to do what his Rebbe said!

This one deed by an individual gave great nachas to Hashem and saved the nation!

MOSHIACH’S ZEALOUSNESS

The greatest zealot for Hashem and His Torah is Moshiach. Rambam (Laws of Kings, 11:4) says that Moshiach will “compel all Israel to follow it [the Torah] and strengthen its breaches and fight the wars of Hashem.” This is the ultimate in religious zealotry – Moshiach will compel all Jews.

How will Moshiach accomplish this? What are his weapons? We learn what they are from the Rebbe’s behavior on countless occasions. He compelled people to do mitzvos – in ways of pleasantness, as in the prophecy of Zecharia (11:7) that Hashem, the Shepherd has two sticks and two ways of conducting Himself: “the stick of *chovlim*,” i.e., with power and with punishments, and “the stick of *noam*,” i.e., pleasantness, as the Ohr HaChayim HaKadosh, whose yahrtzait is 15 Tamuz, says (D’varim 11:22): “to reprove with pleasantness, words of love and affection, to turn the heart of man to straighten the crookedness of the heart.”

This is what the Rebbe taught all his shluchim and disciples worldwide: to compel the world to believe in Hashem and to compel the Jewish people to go in the ways of Torah with the warmth of simcha.

The approach of Musar is to compel people to do mitzvos with threats and with descriptions of the punishments of Gehinom, but the approach of Chassidus is to inspire people to do mitzvos with simcha.

The Rebbe, the “Pinchas” of the generation, guides all members of the generation to the proper zealotry of Moshiach, to conquer the world and illuminate it with the light of holiness and Torah with the stick of pleasantness, kiruv and love, with the complete Redemption, may it be now!

Sources: Likkutei Sichos vol. 8 among others

TEL AVIV REVIVAL

By Menachem Ziegelboim

*As a child, he watched the Chassidim in the Chabad shul in Tel Aviv, and observed their davening, their avoda, and their farbrengens suffused with old-time Chassidishkait. His grandfather was a rav, his father was a rav, and he saw all this as he got up to speak when he himself became rav a few months ago. * An interview with Rabbi Chaim Ashkenazi, rav of the Chabad community in Tel Aviv and a frequent contributor to Beis Moshiach.*

I sat with Rabbi Chaim Ashkenazi in his home, in a cool room full of s'farim, with an old-fashioned ceiling fan whirring. R' Ashkenazi is a fascinating person. He knows how to talk and how to listen in silence. He uses these thoughtful moments of silence a lot when asked interviewed about his position of rav in Tel Aviv.

"I recently accepted this position and I'm still learning," he explained, unlike many others who know it all as soon as they start.

Rabbi Chaim Ashkenazi was born in Tel Aviv sixty years ago. His father was Rabbi Moshe a"h, the rav of the Chabad community in Tel Aviv for 47 years, and a member of the hanhala of Agudas Chassidei Chabad. His mother was Rebbetzin Devorah a"h, daughter of Rabbi Eliezer Karasik a"h who was also rav of the Chabad community in Tel Aviv and one of the people who set Chabad in Eretz Yisroel on its feet.

R' Chaim learned in a Chabad Talmud Torah on Rechov HaRav

Kook 16 in Tel Aviv, continued in Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Lud, in Rishon L'Tziyon with R' Shaul Brook a"h, and in Kfar Chabad. He spent his year on K'vutza between Pesach 5729 and Pesach 5730 and received smicha for rabbanus from Rabbi Yisroel Yitzchok Piekarski, rosh yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim-770.

After he married, R' Chaim was appointed mashgiach in the mesivta of Tomchei T'mimim in Lud. Two years after that, he was offered a position in the yeshiva ketana, which was called *charifta* back then. After the Rebbe instructed him to find out whether it entailed any *hasagas g'vul* (encroachment), R' Ashkenazi received the Rebbe's bracha.

During a yechidus that his wife had, in which the Rebbe spoke about the role in yeshiva, the Rebbe smiled and said: Your husband has smicha for rabbanus... When he heard about this, R' Ashkenazi said he was afraid that one day he would have to serve as rav.

R' Chaim Ashkenazi served as mashgiach for twenty years and guided thousands of talmidim in Torah and Chassidische behavior. In recent years, he has been mashpia in Tomchei T'mimim in Ohr Yehuda. A few months ago, when his father passed away, he took over his father's position as rav of the Chabad community in Tel Aviv.

You are serving as rav of the community you were born into...

Yes. I grew up in this community.

Surely you have memories of your childhood in the community...

I was raised in the Chassidische atmosphere. The community was focused on the shul on Rechov Nachalat Binyamin. The community wasn't just the center for Chabad in Tel Aviv, but for the entire country, as Chabad was small at the time. The shul was another world, one that breathed Chassidishkait.

Everything took place at the shul - the farbrengens, the shiurim - or at the homes of Anash. They were always looking for a special occasion or other reasons to go to shul. Whoever had some free time went to shul and sat and learned. It's what united the entire community. They farbrenged and davened together, learned Chassidus and Nigleh, fought, made up - it all took place in shul.

Was the emphasis on Shabbos and Yom Tovim?

Not necessarily, although the atmosphere on Shabbos was obviously, a lot more lively, throughout the week, whoever had

the time would go to shul. Even a working person would go before Mincha and stay and learn. There were always reasons to stay.

As a boy I heard a story from my mother that illustrates what the atmosphere was like back then. In those early days, when making a livelihood was so very difficult, my grandmother would bake cakes and sell them to the stores. My father brought them to the stores to sell them, and that's how they supported themselves.

My father was a friend of the Chassidim, R' Moshe Dubinsky, R' Nachum Goldschmidt, and R' Pinye Altheus, even though he was

younger than them. One time, my father was walking in the street with the cake, on his way to one of the pastry shops, when he met R' Moshe and R' Nachum.

"Moshe, what are you holding there?"

"Cake," he answered.

"Ah, great! We have mashke and you have cake, and that's a reason to farbreng," they said. They went into the shul with him and farbrenged for hours.

That was the atmosphere in those days.

The focal point of Chassidic life was, of course, the farbrengens on Shabbos, which I'll never forget. I

The topics of conversation were not about politics but about stories of Chassidim, living with the Rebbe, living with Moshiach...



was a boy and a boy did not sit near the farbrengen table. Back then, children did not get near the table, not only in the physical sense but also in the spiritual sense. Children knew that their place was not near the table but around it. (In general, in those days, there wasn't much of an emphasis on children participating in farbrengens. The Rebbe is the one who emphasized the importance of this.)

Nevertheless, I would try to stand behind the benches and listen. I was always on the alert to go and bring mashke or the chulent from the home of R' Moshe Yaroslavsky or someone else.

Rabbi Moshe Gurary and my grandfather, Rav Eliezer Karasik, were the main speakers. Before them

farbreng on other occasions, my grandmother and mother would ask: "What happened? It's not Shabbos Chazon today!"

At these farbrengens, there wasn't food as there is today. There was herring and a little cake, mashke, and water from the faucet. There was no soda. I remember the first time they brought bottles of seltzer. There was a lot of grabbing and then they got rid of it. Soda at a farbrengen?!

At a certain point, they began bringing cups of tea from the big urn in the Gerrer shtibel on the second floor. The first few times, they got rid of the cups of tea. That's the way it was at farbrengens, without tea and without special drinks. However, over the years,

Simchas Torah was the highlight of the entire year. This was the time that they farbrenged in my grandfather's house (and before that, in the home of R' Shmuel Zalmanov), until late at night. Afterwards, they would go on Tahalucha to shul. They would somersault and dance along the way and stop traffic. Sometimes, they would take drivers out of their cars and dance with them.

That's how they arrived at the shul, very late at night, and would begin davening Maariv and Ata Horeisa. By this time, people in the other shuls had finished their hakafos and their Yom Tov meal, and they would come to watch hakafos at the Chabad shul. The shul was packed, with people standing on the windows and in every corner. And what a sight it was!

There was real joy and they danced and danced and danced. There had said a lot of l'chaim and there was what to hear from them. There was no violence, not even verbal violence against anyone, G-d forbid. On the contrary, it brought out more of their p'nimius, as was always the case with Chassidim in those days.

Even the taking of mashke was done in a special way. There were Chassidim who drank on Simchas Torah night, like R' Ben-Tzion Weingruber a"h, and there were Chassidim who drank mashke in the daytime (and they never switched times!), like R' Yudel Shmotkin a"h and R' Nissan Eber a"h. It wasn't drinking for the sake of drinking, ch"v, but a genuine Chassidic expression of simcha.

In general, Tel Aviv was different in those days. It was a different planet than the one we are familiar with now. Tel Aviv was secular then but the secularism wasn't in the streets; it was in the homes or on the beach. The streets were quiet and

When we stayed a long time to farbreng on other occasions, my grandmother and mother would ask: What happened? It's not Shabbos Chazon today!"

was R' Zalman Moshe HaYitzchaki, but I don't remember him. There was also the niggunim part of the farbrengen, which was led by R' Nachum Goldschmidt and R' Pinye Altheus, both of whom were wonderful baalei menagnim. When they sang, it was silent and all were under their spell. They had their favorite niggunim, which were called "R' Nachum's Niggun" and "R' Pinye's Niggun."

Farbrengens took place nearly every Shabbos and lasted until Mincha. After Mincha there was a review of a maamer Chassidus. They didn't always go home Shabbos afternoon. On Shabbos Chazon, for example, they farbrenged all day. So when we stayed a long time to

little by little, there was tea, spritz bottles of seltzer, no more than that. People sat to farbreng in order to listen, not to eat.

Despite the lack of refreshments and despite the length of the farbrengens, Anash didn't leave in the middle of a farbrengen. Someone who had to go home snuck out so people wouldn't notice. First he would send one of his children out with his tallis without people noticing, and then he would go out to the bathroom, supposedly, and go home.

If they caught him in the act, boy would he get it! When he returned for Mincha, he would look uncomfortably around him and try to be inconspicuous.

there were few privately owned cars (especially during the time of austerity, when every car had to be idle one day a week). Secularism was quiet intellectual-heresy, and not something externally visible.

* * *

The Chabad community in Tel Aviv was led by Rav Eliezer Karasik, who was also one of the main Chabad askanim in Eretz Yisroel. On Friday night, 5 Nissan 5720/1960, R' Karasik had the Shabbos meal at home, in the course of which he sang many Chassidishe niggunim.

After the Shabbos meal, he told his grandson, Chaim Ashkenazi (who lived in his house from the age of 11, when his father sent him from Brazil in order to learn in Eretz Yisroel), "Now you have vacation and we can learn Gemara together." After finishing Shnayim Mikra V'Echad Targum, he went to bed. He had a heart attack in the middle of the night.

A doctor who lived in the neighborhood was called and he

gave R' Karasik a strong injection, but it didn't help. Towards morning, R' Karasik passed away. Out of the entire extended family, only his eleven-year-old grandson Chaim was present, almost as if Divine Providence was indicating that he would one day take the mantle of leadership.

The Rebbe said the rabbinic position should be passed on to his son-in-law, Rabbi Moshe Ashkenazi.

When your father accepted the rabbanus, did he institute changes?

When my father took on the position, the community was beginning to disintegrate. The young generation left Tel Aviv and scattered to Kfar Chabad, B'nei Brak, Ramat Gan and Petach Tikva. They said they had nothing to do in Tel Aviv. In those days, the Rebbe said that a Chabad neighborhood should be built in Tel Aviv, but Anash didn't internalize the message.

They began to look into it, but the area that the municipality agreed to set aside was in the dunes near Tel Boruch, far from the center of

the city, and nobody wanted to live there. Later on, the Ramat Aviv neighborhood was built there, which today is an exclusive area north of Tel Aviv, where there is a beautiful Chabad community led by Rabbi Yossi Ginsburgh.

In any case, when my father arrived, the school was shrinking and he held on to it with his teeth, so to say, for a long time, on his own account. At a certain point, he left his work in the diamond exchange and became a melamed.

The same with the shul. My father and Rabbi Sholom Dovber Butman strengthened the community with all their might. More than once, people said: Let's close up shop. What are we hanging on to the shul for? Its fate is sealed.

But my father refused. R' Sholom Dovber Butman, the mashpia of the shul, tended it with endless devotion from both the material and spiritual aspects. As time passed, the benches began to fill up again. Rabbi Boaz Segal was one of the first of the "young guard" of the worshippers in the shul. Baruch Hashem, in recent years new faces have been appearing of people who have become baalei t'shuva thanks to the shluchim who are all over the city. Some come regularly and some come occasionally, but we hope that the shul will experience a revival.

My father did not make a revolution per se; he was not the type, but he preserved what he had. It would not have taken much for the shul with its beautiful past to be closed for good, but my father, in his quiet way, with his incredible patience, preserved what there was.

What happened to the community under your father's leadership?

The shul was like a nature preserve of authentic Chassidishkait. Every Shabbos there were t'fillos and farbrengens. Whoever came to the Chabad shul could not stop help but remember the farbrengens that



Three generations of rabbanim: Rabbi Eliezer Karasik (sitting), with his son-in-law, Rabbi Moshe Ashkenazi and grandchildren (from left to right), R' Mordechai, R' Notke a"h, R' Chaim

took place every Shabbos. Today as well, we look for a reason to farbreng and we always find one. Sometimes the farbrengen goes late into the night. We speak about Chassidus, tell Chassidische stories, stories of the Rebbeim. It's a *taanug* (spiritual pleasure). People say they haven't found another corner of Tel Aviv like this one. There's no doubt that the place is saturated.

The topics of conversation were not about politics but about stories of Chassidim, living with the Rebbe, living with Moshiach, and all this thanks to my father, who made efforts to preserve the character of the shul.

My father was always particular about sitting until the end of the farbrengen, even though it lasted many hours and it was hard for him. In his later years, when he couldn't sit for many hours, the grandchildren bought him a reclining chair which they brought to the women's section. Since women also sat at the farbrengen until late, my father would wait until they left and then he would go to the women's section, where he rested until Mincha.

* * *

After R' Moshe Ashkenazi passed away on 23 Teives of this year, his son R' Chaim was appointed rav of the community. Under the present conditions, it was not an appointment that brought him honor and acclaim, but R' Chaim Ashkenazi is fulfilling his father's wish:



Installing Rabbi Chaim Ashkenazi as rav of the Nachalat Binyamin Shul in Tel Aviv

"On a number of occasions, my father said he wanted someone from the family to continue the rabbinic tradition in the community," said R' Chaim. In the final years, R' Chaim stayed with his father every Shabbos. "My father said to me, 'You started and you are fitting, so continue.'"

When you got up to speak when you accepted the position, you probably saw before your eyes, your father and grandfather, your predecessors, and those illustrious Chassidic figures and the vibrant Chassidic life of the past...

Yes, it was very emotional as well as very surprising. Who am I to take on this position? I feel like a little boy putting on his father's big shoes, taking his hat and umbrella and

saying, "I am like Abba." Who am I to fill the place of my father and grandfather? Who am I that I should serve as rav in a place which was the birthplace of Chabad in Eretz Yisroel? But this is what my father wanted.

Your father instructed you?

My father tried not to tell us what to do so we wouldn't transgress in Kibbud Av. He would always phrase it as a suggestion and never gave orders. Sometimes, when he would tell us something, he would hurry and call us up afterwards and emphasize that it was only a suggestion and not an instruction.

[To be continued be"H]

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YOU CAN'T IGNORE THE FACTS

By Rabbi Shlomo Halpern

Translated By Michael Leib Dobry

I'd like to make a practical suggestion: Gather together all of the Rebbe's answers and responses known to us in connection with the subject of Moshiach and the Redemption – from "both sides," every answer publicized in the past (prior to Gimmel Tammuz 5754) or with proven credibility, without ignoring a single instruction, sicha, or action, and bring them to light without commentary. Who is prepared to "accept the challenge"?

Permit me to begin with something of a personal confession: Something changed within me since Gimmel Tammuz 5754, and before our devoted readers move on to the next article, I have to explain: Since

then, I have stopped reading the weekly magazine that defines itself today as "the weekly magazine for Chabad chassidim in Eretz HaKodesh." What the reasons are for this – whether it was me who

changed or perhaps it's the magazine that has changed – is an important subject for discussion, but not in this forum.

As a result of this decision, while I apparently "lost out" on several articles, interviews, and reports that have created a storm in the Chabad world, nevertheless, it doesn't appear to me that we're talking about too heavy a price. In any event, when there was something really important, there was always someone who brought the matter to my attention, thus enabling me to respond whenever the need arose.

It is specifically for this reason that I was stunned to see the heading of an article publicized in the aforementioned periodical, entitled "A Chassid Does Not Hide From Uncomfortable Instructions." This appeared to me as if it should be the title to an article in the *Beis Moshiach Magazine*, and therefore, I began to read it eagerly. Then, I came to the paragraph where the author establishes, "It is essential to have a direct and proper approach

when we're talking about the words of the Rebbe. We are chassidim, and the most precious thing to us is to go in the direction of the Rebbe's holy viewpoint. We do not have positions dictated to us in advance. If we reach the conclusion that it is the will of the Rebbe that we should do such and such, this must be our outlook and our aspiration." The author continues by expressing his astonishment: "How is it possible that in a public discussion among chassidim, they totally ignore a complete series of answers and instructions simply because it contradicts the position that someone holds, as if they're saying, 'Don't confuse me with facts.'"

I was beside myself with joy, as this represented the very reason why *Beis Moshiach* was founded. Are we now no longer needed?

In fact, the author had chosen to make his readers aware of one particular instruction that had been personally brought to his attention.

G-d forbid, if we should ignore this instruction, and G-d willing, we will discuss it at some point. However, in order that we should not find ourselves merely repeating the words of others, we will bring here a few more instructions, which even this person surely is not trying to ignore. (They appeared in this very same magazine more than thirteen years ago.) Furthermore, the fact that since then "they totally ignore a complete series of answers and instructions" is certainly not "simply because it contradicts the position that someone holds." Let's attempt here to correct this distortion.

Rabbi Shalom Dovber HaLevi Wolpo – yes, the one from the farbrengen at the start of 5745, which became one of the foundations of the "chassidic outlook" – brought into the Rebbe MH" M unbound pages from his seifer *Yechi HaMelech HaMoshiach*, to which the Rebbe referred even then. On the 19th of MarCheshvan

5752, the Rebbe replied, "**It was received, many thanks. It is enclosed with this [note] to be published and exchanged for a bound one – and thank you in advance. May it be with success and for good tidings.**"

(NOTE: We're talking about the publishing of a seifer publicized and distributed even in non-Chabad circles, publicity in every respect, and see the type of positive and encouragement-filled response Rabbi Wolpo received!)

If the answer to Rabbi Wolpo is to be categorized as a response to a private individual, there are dozens of positive answers that groups of Chabad women and Anash members throughout the world received in response to reports of the signing of petitions on *kabbalas ha'malchus* (acceptance of the Rebbe's sovereignty) – and they are definitely along the lines of general instructions.

Chabad women were privileged



to receive the most encouraging answers about their activities for *kabbalas ha'malchus*, etc. In the preparations for their kinus, during the kinus itself, and even afterwards, they merited to have the Rebbe MH" M issue clear answers and references, including on the matter of acceptance of the Rebbe's sovereignty as Melech HaMoshiach. In this article, we are focusing only upon instructions, and therefore, we will mention here just the Rebbe MH" M's instruction to the Chabad women of London: **"And surely they will be in touch with N'shei Chabad here to know about their celebration here recently"** – the celebration where they accepted and signed on *kabbalas ha'malchus*!

As mentioned earlier, there are so many answers of this type, a small quote from one of them causes a tremendous injustice in presenting the case. Nevertheless, we will rely upon the readers to find those answers that have been publicized in the past, including recently in *Beis Moshiach* and elsewhere. Here, we will bring only one such answer.

There were differences of opinions within the N'shei Chabad Organization in Yerushalayim regarding making a kinus with the objective of *kabbalas ha'malchus* through signatures, etc. A proposal was made that the two sides submit their arguments to the Rebbe together on two separate slips of paper.

When these two slips were brought before the Rebbe, he took the first one, which included the proposal of collecting signatures, and responded, **"And it should be in a good and an auspicious hour. I will mention it at the Tziyon."** Afterwards, the Rebbe perused the second slip (which included the argument that the petition proposal can drive people away) for a few seconds. He then asked for the first slip again, placed it on top of the

second one, and after a bit more perusing, took the second slip (the negative one), placed it on the side, and again gave the first slip to the secretary with the instructions, **"Give them the response"** (as mentioned above).

WHO DID THE REBBE INSTRUCT NOT TO SPEAK ABOUT MOSHIACH?

As we have promised, we are not ignoring other instructions, and for the benefit of our readers who don't graze in strange pastures, we will bring the instruction received and publicized by R. Menachem Mendel HaLevi Brod. In brief, the story goes as follows:

One day leading up to Yud Shvat 5753, Rabbi Brod was invited to appear on a television program and respond to the activities of a group of Chabad women who were approaching passers-by and getting them to sign petitions for the acceptance of the sovereignty of the Rebbe as Melech HaMoshiach. At first, Rabbi Brod refused to appear, but when he understood that the report was already an established fact, he decided to come on the program and explain how students and chassidim perceived their rabbi to be Melech HaMoshiach, as is known and taught throughout the Talmud and by Torah giants in every generation. Regarding Rabbi Brod's initial decision not to make any comments, the Rebbe issued a response: **"And he should also continue [as such] in the future."** As matters progressed and Rabbi Brod appeared to give his prepared explanation, the Rebbe wrote, **"Doesn't he understand that when he starts to speak, they will make him continue even more?"**

I don't understand what commentary we have to build around this answer. Why don't we

just accept it according to its simple meaning? The Rebbe didn't want Rabbi Brod to respond in the media on the subject of publicizing the identity of Melech HaMoshiach, and even explained the reason why. What's so hard to understand? Did the Rebbe instruct him to take action against the publicity, as he does now?

While we have no need for "inferior" explanations, in any event, anyone who happens to hear this person being interviewed in the media or appear at various functions (except for his articles – as no one disputes his flair for writing – prepared lectures and Torah classes, or anywhere else where he is allowed to prepare his words, as is known with others in the field) in connection with the identity of Melech HaMoshiach, exposed in the content of what he says and the manner in which he presents them, will readily understand, even within his limited intellect, the instructions of **"And he should also continue in the future."** We must feel only deep regret that this distinguished writer didn't obey this order, and instead commented on the subject of the publicity over Melech HaMoshiach's identity. Perhaps this was his intention when he said that it is forbidden to ignore instructions, even when they are "uncomfortable." It indeed makes you most uncomfortable to know that you are prevented from responding on such a "burning" issue. It's even less comfortable to understand that you violated this instruction on more than a few occasions, and not just in 5753, when you were "carried away" by your approach, but even to this day. In any event, yasher ko'ach for publicizing the Rebbe's answers. We'll remember and remind anyone who is being stifled on the subject of Melech HaMoshiach's identity.

However, to claim that from now on, this answer obligates all those

dozens of people who received instructions, answers, and approval on publicizing the identity of Melech HaMoshiach – that’s already a very long path that contradicts everything that we know, since answers to private individuals do not obligate the general public. However, something that is done publicly, as in our discussion, such as encouraging the singing of “Yechi” before thousands of people, including media representatives from all over the world – this is what is relevant to all of us.

Answers to private individuals do not obligate the general public. However, something that is done publicly, as in our discussion, such as encouraging the singing of “Yechi” before thousands of people, including media representatives from all over the world – this is what is relevant to all of us.

IF YOU REALLY WERE “CARRIED AWAY” – THEN RESIGN!

To pursue this point further, it is impossible not to relate to the impudent claim regarding the question, “Why weren’t we stringent in holding the line back in 5753?” as if to say, “We got carried away then, and crossed certain red lines that should not have been crossed.” First of all, if you got carried away and regret it, then who gave you the authority to speak in the name of “all of us”? Getting to the heart of the matter, I was happy to hear where the Rebbe was during the time “we got carried away.” Did he actually oppose all these activities, or

did he approve them and encourage the singing and proclaiming of “Yechi,” as we noted? Isn’t it the height of audacity to suggest that things were done against the Rebbe MH”M’s will for a period of over a year with his knowledge and approval? What are we coming to?

Did the Chabad rabbanim – in Crown Heights, in Eretz Yisroel, and the world at-large – who established (leading up to Yud Shvat 5753) that it is the desire of the Rebbe that people proclaim “Yechi Adoneinu,” do so without knowing the Rebbe’s opinion on the matter? How much more distortion can we endure?

All the expressions of faith publicized everywhere – including on the front page of the *Kfar Chabad Magazine*, numerous maamarim, etc., when one of its leading advocates was none other than the “chozer” himself, was all this contrary to the Rebbe’s opinion? How is it even possible to make such a claim, and to put it in writing no less?

There are those who attribute this to the fact that even the “chozer” admitted that “we made a mistake,” and here the child asks the question: If the Rebbe MH”M says sichos, give instructions, etc., in a manner that everyone, even someone meant to give them over and publicize them, understands in a certain way,

should we be expected to give serious consideration to any reaction made the day after Gimmel Tammuz 5754? I was very close then to the author of the aforementioned article, and everyone knew what his mood and emotional state was when he wrote it. It can alter the simplest understanding, which is based on what we have seen and with the full knowledge of the Rebbe.

If Rabbi Brod would really believe what he writes, then he and all the “philosophers,” headed by the “chozer,” the editor of his magazine, and almost all the Chabad rabbanim should immediately resign from their positions. This is because we’re not talking about “being carried away” here, but publicizing an opinion, which according to them, is against the Rebbe’s viewpoint. How can it be that someone who failed so badly should be allowed to continue at his post, and he should be the one to “correct” that which he distorted? This is far worse than Mr. Olmert’s claim that he must remain in office, because he mistakenly trusted the army chief of staff. And who did you trust?

However, everyone knows the truth – the publicity on the identity of the Rebbe as Melech HaMoshiach was made with the knowledge, approval, and encouragement of the Rebbe himself. Anyone who claims otherwise is, at the very least, rejecting the facts, or worse, distorting them. As for anyone who claims that there is a need to change course after Gimmel Tammuz, it’s not within my power to determine what he can say, but why does he have to distort the words and opinions of the Rebbe MH”M? Let him simply say that since the circumstances have changed, he now is of the opinion that we have to act differently. Are his arguments so flawed that he has to distort the facts?

LET'S BE HONEST

Getting back to what we discussed at the beginning, when I saw the title "A Chassid Does Not Hide From Uncomfortable Instructions," I thought to myself: How can there possibly be instructions that someone finds uncomfortable? Are we all not obligated by every instruction, and do them joyfully? How can any instruction be considered "uncomfortable"? Then I understood: Even if there are instructions that you obviously don't carry out for a variety of reasons, it is forbidden to hide this fact, in order that at least others will know that what you say is in contradiction to an explicit instruction, and they won't make the same mistake.

Therefore, when you publicize in the weekly magazine, which the Rebbe removed (in his letter for its 500th issue, winter 5752) from its title the words "Weekly Magazine for Chabad Chassidim in Eretz HaKodesh," you must publicize this so that everyone will know the type of "establishment" you write for, and they won't erroneously think the Rebbe considered you to be the

When the Rebbe MH" M nullifies the whole concept of "Chabad spokesman," you must publicize this so that everyone will know that when you say something, you are merely stating your own personal views.

person in charge of the opinions of "Chabad Chassidim in Eretz HaKodesh" (and the time will come to respond to several more omissions from that letter). Thus, when the Rebbe MH" M nullifies the whole concept of "Chabad spokesman," you must publicize this so that everyone will know that when you say something, you are merely stating your own personal views.

PRACTICAL ADVICE

In conclusion, I'd like to make a practical suggestion: Gather together all of the Rebbe's answers and responses known to us in connection with the subject of Moshiach and the Redemption – from "both sides,"

every answer publicized in the past (prior to Gimmel Tammuz 5754) or with proven credibility, without ignoring a single instruction, sicha, or action, and bring them to light without commentary. Who is prepared to "accept the challenge"?

The main thing is that we should all fulfill the instructions of the Rebbe MH" M down to the letter, and carry out the only remaining shlichus – preparing ourselves and the world to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu with the proclamation encouraged by the Rebbe MH" M himself:

*Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu
V'Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach
L'olam Va'ed!*

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LEADER OF ALL THE NATIONS

By Nosson Avrohom

This is the story of a double miracle that the Rebbe did among non-Jews who committed to observing the Seven Noachide Laws and to publicize them to their friends.

Hundreds of people take part each year in the Yud-Alef Nissan farbrengen that Moshiach activists around Paris organize, led by Rabbi Dovid Turgeman. Last year, the date of the Rebbe's birthday fell out at a time when French schools were on vacation, which increased the number of participants.

Last year, there was an interesting guest speaker, a French gentile from Bordeaux. He was holding a little girl and he said about her, "She belongs to the Rebbe of Lubavitch!"

The crowd was amazed, especially since the residents of materialistic Bordeaux are typically very distant from matters of spirituality and faith. After hearing the man's fascinating story, the crowd danced around the room to "Yechi" for quite some time.

Rabbi Sholom Bar Sheshes of Kfar Chabad was at the farbrengen and he relates the story.

"I'd like to preface the story with a few words about one of the most interesting shlichim in France, Rabbi Dovid Turgeman. He is the shliach in Aubervilliers in northern Paris, but his activities affect all of France. He just doesn't relax when it comes to spreading Judaism and the Besuras HaGeula, spending days and nights being mekarev Jews from all backgrounds to their religion in general and the Rebbe in particular.

During his years on shlichus, R' Turgeman has been the catalyst in the transformation of many Jews to Chassidim. If you are there in 770 when he brings a group of mekuravim, you will surely get a glimpse of the depths of emuna and hiskashrus that he has implanted within them.

In recent years, in accordance with the Rebbe's sichos to work with the non-Jewish nations of the world, R' Turgeman designed billboards in Arabic with the message of the Seven Noachide Laws, and had then

displayed in Moslem neighborhoods throughout France. The project cost tens of thousands of Euros, but this was not a deterrent.

R' Turgeman feels that the work with non-Jews to convince them to commit to the Seven Noachide Laws is extremely important, and he decided to do even more to publicize the universal code of morality. He constructed an impressive website which includes numerous miracle stories of the Rebbe. He invites those who commit to keeping the Seven Noachide Laws to ask the Rebbe for counsel and a blessing.

The following story began one day three years ago, when R' Turgeman read an email from a gentile who lives in Bordeaux by the name of Pascal. Pascal said he was married for many years but still did not have children. He and his wife yearned for children and had spent plenty of money and had visited top doctors in their quest. They had tried various medical approaches but all to no avail.

When Pascal concluded that the medical world was unable to help them, neither modern Western medicine nor alternative medicine, he sought help through other avenues. He went to all sorts of mystics and idol worshippers who made promises to no avail. Although he was disappointed time and time

again, he searched for any possibly useful lead on the Internet.

One day, he stumbled upon R' Turgeman's Seven Noachide Laws website. What attracted him to this site over others was the fact that he could ask for blessings. In his email he described his plight and quoted the pessimistic views of the doctors.

R' Turgeman called him up and explained to him about the Rebbe, how all blessings in the world are channeled through him, and not only for members of the Jewish nation. He promised to put Pascal's request in a volume of the Rebbe's letters on one condition – that he commit to

observing the Seven Noachide Laws and spreading them among his friends. R' Turgeman assured him, "If you do what I ask, I am positive that the Rebbe will bless you. When the miracle takes place, take a video of you and your child and send it to me."

Pascal was taken aback by what R' Turgeman had to say. He had never met someone so self-assured – not in the world of mysticism nor in the medical world. He was impressed, and he agreed to commit to observing the Seven Noachide Laws, which he heard about for the first time from R' Turgeman.

Yet, he was later to relate, in his heart of hearts he did not completely believe that the blessing of some man would resolve his problem when the doctors all said he should forget about having a child of his own. He kept his doubts to himself but his reservations did not prevent him from zealously observing the Noachide Laws.

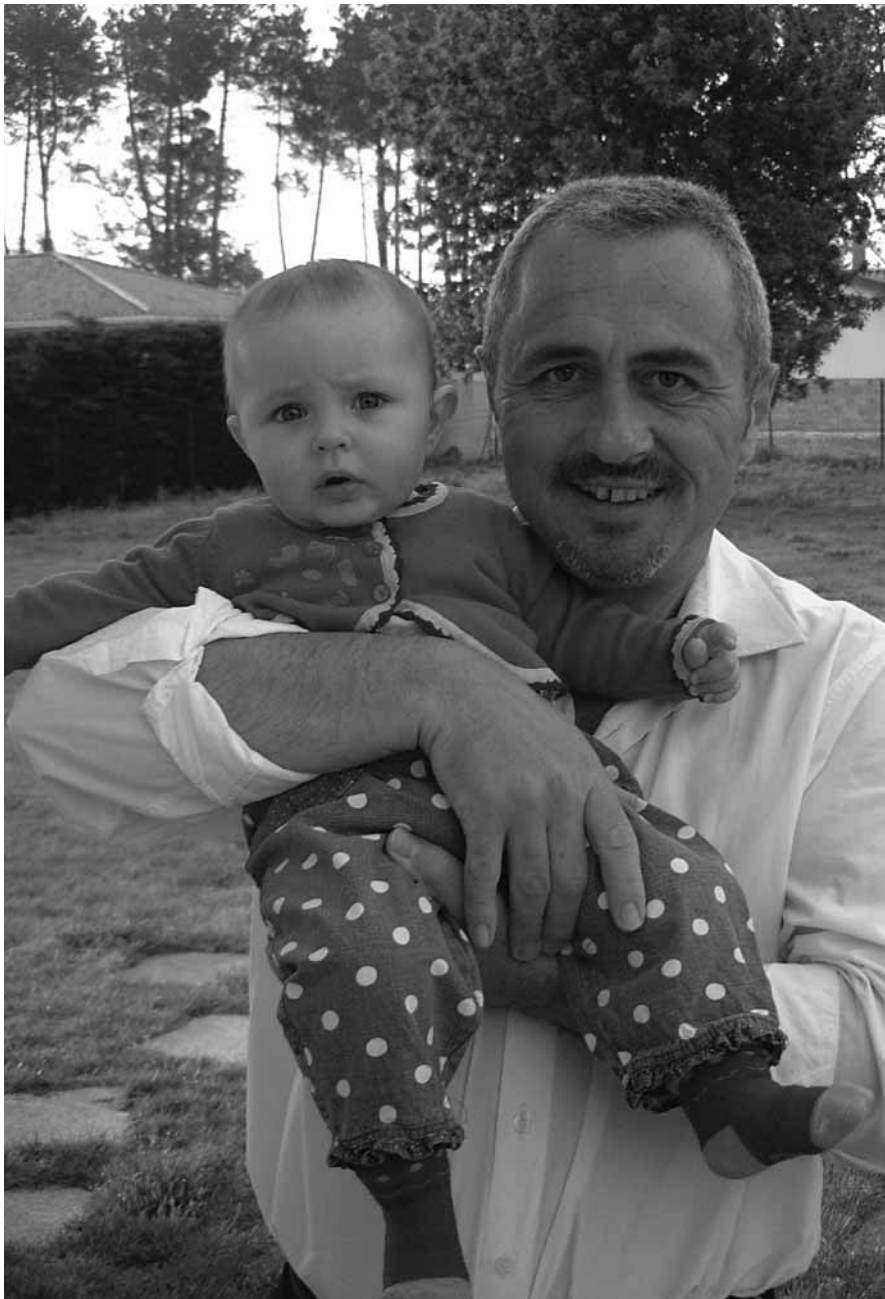
Months passed and the doctors confirmed that his wife was expecting a child. She subsequently gave birth to a healthy girl in a natural birth with no complications. Pascal knew unequivocally who was to thank for the birth of his daughter. A few hours after the birth, he ran home and called R' Turgeman. He shouted the news, "We had a girl and it's all thanks to the Rebbe and to you for telling us about him!"

A month later he carried out the second part of his promise and made videotapes of himself and his daughter with his wife standing behind him as he excitedly related the chain of events that led to the blessing and the birth of his child.

R' Turgeman smiled as he watched the video when he noticed a huge picture of the Rebbe hanging on the wall behind the threesome. Pascal had bought it in a Judaica store. "I want to warmly thank the Lubavitcher Rebbe and Rabbi Turgeman, who connected me to him. We continue to disseminate the Seven Noachide Laws and tell everybody about the miracle."

But the story does not end here. The non-Jew took his obligation to publicize the Laws seriously. Whenever he met people he told his story and asked people to commit to the Seven Noachide Laws.

One evening, a couple from Switzerland came to visit them whom they hadn't seen in a long time. After they exchanged friendly greetings, Pascal told his Swiss friend about the miracle of his daughter who was born thanks to



the blessing of a famous Jewish rabbi, the Lubavitcher Rebbe. He also explained what he had heard about the Geula.

The Swiss friend and his wife were taken aback by the faith of their friends. They did not remember them as big believers and there they were telling them a miracle story. On their way home, the couple discussed their friends' radical change, finding it very bizarre that they had begun to believe in a rabbi.

Two weeks went by and one afternoon, the Swiss woman had a severe heart attack. Her husband immediately called an ambulance and during the ride to the hospital she had another heart attack, worse than the first one. The doctors, who worked to save her life, told the terrified husband that he should prepare for the worst. "It is highly unlikely that she will survive," they said.

Hearing the doctors' dire predictions, he despaired until he remembered what his friend had told him, as strange as it seemed. He figured it couldn't hurt to call him, so he ran to his car from where he called his French friend. His friend told him that there was one way to obtain the Rebbe's bracha. "Commit to observing the Seven Noachide Laws and spread this among your friends and when the miracle occurs, publicize it." It was word for word what he had heard from R' Turgeman.

The Swiss fellow agreed to the conditions, "the main thing is that she recovers!" he said tearfully.

After hanging up, he wondered, "What happened to me that I've begun believing in rabbis?" But since he had promised, he kept his commitment and began to talk about the Laws to those who came to visit him.

A few days went by in which his wife lay there unconscious, hanging between life and death, and he hung



Rabbi Dovid Turgeman davening in 770



The baby born thanks to the Rebbe's blessing

between hope and despair.

A week later she began to awake and recover. Another two weeks later she was released from the hospital. The Swiss man called his French friend again and exultantly exclaimed, "The Lubavitcher Rebbe did a miracle for me too and my

wife is better!"

They also bought a large picture of the Rebbe and hung it up in their living room. "When people come in and ask me who it is, we tell them about the big miracle that the rabbi of the Jews did for us."

REUNION AND RE-JEW-VENATION IN ERETZ YISROEL

By S. Cohen

Reuniting. Seeing old faces of the remote past. It's healing a bond which had been severed – and sometimes even lost. But all at once that vision of the past returns, and those lost sparks come to life once again. We are reconnected. Reunited. Reborn. Rejuvenated. That dormant layer of our selves comes out of hibernation. Old memories. New perspectives. Renewed commitment.

This past June was a time of

reconnection and reunion. When Rabbi Manis Friedman arrived in Eretz Yisroel, many of the early alumnae of Bais Chana of Minnesota – from as far back as thirty years ago – were reconnected and reunited with their 'first sparks' in Yiddishkait. Old memories. New perspectives. Renewed commitment. Those lost sparks came back to life again.

"Your first teacher always holds a special place in your heart," began

Chaya Gross of Yerushalayim, "because that teacher is the one who's changed the course of your life. For me, Rabbi Friedman was my very first teacher in Yiddishkait, and it will always stay that way in my mind. Every time I see him, I feel this great sense of gratitude that my life was moved in this direction. He was a messenger of the Rebbe, and he helped point me in the direction of Yiddishkait, the Rebbe, and Hashem."

Yet how did this change of course actually begin?

"I first came to Bais Chana twenty nine years ago in December 1980," Chaya continued. "It was pretty amazing how I got there. I flew to Washington, D.C. for the winter convention of the Jewish Students Network, and Rabbi Friedman was one of the guest speakers. However, I missed it! When I got together with my friends after the class, they did not stop talking about it, so I contacted the Chabad House to find out how I could speak with him. They told me he was on his way back to Minnesota, but if I wanted they would sponsor a ticket to Minnesota to learn in Bais Chana for two days. I said 'well, if you really mean it, then so do I,' and I was on the next



plane. I ended up staying nearly two whole weeks, which changed the course of my life.”

Twenty-nine years later, Chaya recently opened up the first English-Speaking Chabad Center for Women in Jerusalem. Chaya believes that when the alumnae joined his classes, it was reverting back to a special moment of truth.

Danya Boksenboim of Tzfas felt similar.

“When I joined Rabbi Friedman’s classes in Tzfas, it was like returning home to a beautiful memory that was a ‘frozen moment in time.’ I sat there and felt I was healed just by listening to those classes and seeing my first teacher.”

In 1985, Danya was the famous singer Diana Marcovitz. She sang in Canada, New York, and Los Angeles, and produced several albums, but Yiddishkait was just not on the agenda.

“When my father died, I still had no interest in religion, but my brother dragged me to the Conservative synagogue while he was saying Kaddish. I became more interested and wanted to know more. At the same time, I received the new Bob Dylan album, and I noticed he thanked some “Rabbi Manis Friedman” on it. I wanted to know who this Rabbi was, and why Bob was thanking him. From the Shul experience, I came to the Chabad House and they told me lots of things in Yiddishkait. They suggested I go learn more in Minnesota with this Rabbi Friedman who I remembered from Dylan’s album. I was on the next plane.”

Twenty-two years ago, the match caught fire.

“Seated among forty five women in the room, I was able to feel as though he was talking to me directly and all of my questions on Yiddishkait were answered. I did not even need to speak with him ‘one-on-one’; I got everything I needed

“On top of the terrific classes we had, the healing, mountain air of Tzfas did me wonders. Now I have to actually do the ‘avoda’ we learned.”

for life from those classes. The experience left me feeling I had heard the word of G-d. Through this, I made a decision right then and there to keep Torah and Mitzvos.”

Batya Zisk of Yerushalayim first met Rabbi Friedman at a p’gisha in Crown Heights in the late 1990’s and a year later at another p’gisha. She was brought up in Northern California and became observant in Boston.

“Just from speaking to Rabbi Friedman at those two p’gishas in Crown Heights I came to live in Crown Heights, and my life moved in the direction it is moving today. Rabbi Friedman’s insights have guided me and will continue to keep me for a lifetime. I still live by that guidance.”

Today, Batya is a high school teacher in Yerushalayim. She came to nearly every one of Rabbi Friedman’s classes in Yerushalayim and traveled especially to Tzfas for the rest of them.

“My cup is just so full,” she told me as Shabbos in Tzfas was over and we had to return to Yerushalayim. “Coming to all of his classes in Yerushalayim in the weekday moved me up a few rungs on the spiritual ladder, and by the time Shabbos arrived, I literally felt

“new wings.” On top of the terrific classes we had, the healing, mountain air of Tzfas did me wonders. Now I have to actually do the ‘avoda’ we learned.”

I also heard all of those classes both in Yerushalayim and then in Tzfas. I knew just what she meant.

“Rabbi Friedman’s classes are a journey to the deepest part of ourselves,” she continued. “I was changed by his classes because I felt it gave me real tools to dealing with the dichotomy of the body and the soul. Also, I felt this added sense of pride in being Jewish in a really internal way. The lesson that sticks most in my mind is the *Tanya* shiur he gave. My love for Hashem was reaffirmed when he taught us in *Tanya* that Hashem breathed into us a Neshama and it was coming from His essential breath and therefore we have a piece of the Creator in us.

This was an important message for me. It’s one thing to see the Creator in nature or in Divine Providence, but knowing that I have this ‘piece of the Creator’ in me, I feel tremendous dedication and closeness to my Creator. It’s a completely different perspective than when I was growing up, where being Jewish was more of an external, social kind of dimension. I did not have access to a deeper understanding of the soul, and the world was a more superficial place for me to be living in. I questioned my purpose. Now I am given an ability to see my role in this world on a deeper level. Because I have a neshama, which is a piece of G-d, I am no longer just a passenger in the car; now I am in the driver’s seat, as far as my ‘avoda’ is concerned. I have a responsibility as a Jewish person and I want to use my potential to its maximum.”

I did not interrupt her when she was talking, but I certainly could have. I had a lot to add on. I also grew up missing this understanding about our link with Hashem. And I

grew up religious! Once I began learning *Tanya*, it was moving into a different reality in Yiddishkai. The dryness in Avodas Hashem was replaced with vibrant enthusiasm, optimism and introspection at many levels and in different realms.

I first encountered this 'different reality' in 1979, when I was in one of the colleges of City University. The elevators were packed to capacity. I made my way up to my class on the thirteenth floor, and noticed signs in the stairwell about an 'encounter,' a p'gisha, in Crown Heights. The topic was "Femininity," the exact topic of my term paper in my 18th Century English Literature course. I went. As I expected, I was the only one to show up in religious looking clothes. As I expected, many odd things happened that Friday evening when two journalists were snapping pictures, even though it was already Shabbos. But as I did not expect, it was the beginning of a process for me as well, even though I was not secular. I was invited to learn in Minnesota, but did not end up going. At the time, I bought Rabbi Friedman's book and tapes.

About fifteen years later, when I was already married and living in Yerushalayim, I found a calendar pasted on to my front door with a tiny advertisement "Kol HaChassidus" and a telephone number. What was this? I called up and it was the telephone line of recorded tapes. When I pressed

"English," and then "*Tanya*," it was all of Rabbi Friedman's daily *Tanya* tapes. It all came back to me. I remembered that p'gisha in 1979, the powerful speech on "Femininity," and an individual talk about learning Chassidus, which left a deep impact on me. I remembered what I had learned in the tapes and the book. For the next seven years, I listened every single day to those tapes on the telephone as I washed the dishes and folded laundry. It gave me "chayus," better davening, more emuna, insights on sadness and joy, and much more. Finally, I called this place "Minnesota" to tell Rabbi Friedman he had been teaching me *Tanya* for the past seven years over the telephone. That discussion led to another few discussions. A few years later I got to Minnesota for classes, and I was sorry I didn't come nineteen years earlier. I felt I had struck gold.

My understanding of what I then called 'religiosity' went through a deep overhaul with every class and tape I heard, and especially the tape "Why Am I Here." For me, religion was some kind of sociological framework by

which the individual defined his socio-economic, political, educational and residential parameters, but it never defined the very essence of one's being. "You" were your outer being, the titles and status by which society defined you. So, if you 'made it' on American standards you were a valuable being in the world. If you 'didn't make it,' well you might as well 'get going.' Who needed you, anyhow? And why were you here? By the same token, if you stopped 'making it,' and the Wheel of Fortune turned, then it was time to pass away, since your purpose had terminated. This approach always left many unanswered questions. What about all those senior citizens living unproductive lives and even wasting society's time, money and energies. Didn't G-d realize their usefulness had terminated? What about the poor, the homeless, the disabled, and the chronically ill? How did this American dream support the view that G-d created the world with wisdom?

That tape rearranged the cards and I learned that one of the most important statements in discussion of Creation of the world is that "G-d created **one** man." It was not a mass production network. Every soul, which comes into a body, is handpicked because that soul needs to be created. It has a Divine mission in this world. And as long as that soul remains in a body, its Divine mission has not been completed, even if we do not grasp it. That explained poverty, illness, and disabilities. As he explained,

"Judaism which is not G-d-centered is just another religion." For me religion was no longer a backdrop; it is G-d-centered. And to think that this rearrangement all began by a sign in the college.

There were many other kinds of "signs" in the life of Ruchoma.* Today, Ruchoma lives in Eretz Yisroel with her husband, children and grandchildren, and hearing those classes in Tzfas was also a special moment for her.

"It's a special moment when you reunite with the memories of how you took your first 'baby steps' in Yiddishkai," she told me. "Joining that Shabbos experience brought back that turning point in my life, how it all started, and where I was at then."

For Ruchoma, it all started in India in the mid 1970's. She left California and landed in Southern India, where she sincerely wanted to learn how to meditate. At first it was exotic and different. But as time passed, she spent too much time in solitude and meditation, and she was receiving messages in her



Rabbi Manis Friedman teaching a class

meditation to fast. At that point she took a room in a pump house (a little hut of one room with a motor that pumps the water for the rice paddies). For eight months she fasted on and off and hardly slept at night. She would meditate by the flame of a candle and one night, out of sheer desperation and weakness, she collapsed. She heard someone knocking on the door and she was brought to a hospital in Bangalore. The nurses were all Christian nuns and one told her, "but you're Jewish, don't you know you have the truth." She stayed there for one month until one of her American friends called her parents in Minnesota to send her a ticket to come home. The nuns would not release her from the hospital because they were afraid she

also as Bais Chana. (Girls came and went all summer, and during the winter break from college.) Besides attending classes there, the girls also lived there in the mansion. For most, it was their first time living as Jews.

"I walked in there looking as though I had just arrived from India. They told me I would not sleep in the dormitory, but in Rabbi Friedman's house. His wife was so good to me. I felt so honored to see how they went out of their way for me. That first Shabbos, Rabbi Bergstein spent four straight hours teaching me Chassidus; I had been seven years into that cult and he tried to give me as much as I could take.

"Then I started learning *Tanya* with Rabbi Friedman and I felt in a

the two Shabbosim in Yerushalayim and Tzfas, but I did not get to speak with them. About three hundred women showed up at the lecture in the Bais Malka Hall in Yerushalayim. They came from everywhere, and anywhere. Different ages. Different stages. Different stripes, and different types. It was a mixed bag of many colors. A number line with many digits along the continuum.

But it was a reunion. Of memories and musings. Of ideas and impressions. Of our own past, and our own present. Of our present, and our unknown future, though the link seems tenuous.

It was a moment of reuniting. Seeing old faces of the remote past. Healing a bond which had been severed – and even lost. And all at once, that vision of the past returned, and those lost sparks came to life again.

And it was a re-JEW-venation. Learning *Tanya*. Learning about ourselves. About Hashem. About our place in the world. About the essence of doing Mitzvos. How kavana in davening is like the wings of a bird. Why Torah is compared to water. Why being needed is more important than being loved. Why it's important for us to say T'hillim. Why we are here in the first place.

For many, that dormant layer of the self came out of hibernation. The logistics of daily life don't enable it. This was a chance to ignite those sparks all over again, and watch them catch fire. And rise. Slowly, yet consistently. Like the bird with its wings. Like a soul returning to its Maker. A fire of gratitude to Him. For shaping our lives. For bringing us to the fire in the first place.

Old memories. New perspectives. Renewed commitment.

Re-JEW-venation.

**Name changed for anonymity*

***If you would like your own story published, please email: quill@neto.bezeqint.net*

What about the poor, the homeless, the disabled, and the chronically ill? How did this American dream support the view that G-d created the world with wisdom?

would wander off again. They drove her from the hospital to the airport and put her on the plane.

When she arrived in Minnesota, she received her first "sign" from Above. At the airport in Minnesota, there was a sign "Welcome Bais Chana Girls – Minnesota, Lubavitch." Her parents took her to a doctor who happened to be an Orthodox Jew. He suggested she check out Lubavitch. That was the second "sign." Meditating, while sitting on the floor, she noticed the newspaper write-up on Bais Chana of St. Paul. That was the third "sign."

The next morning she drove to St. Paul. It was the twentieth day of Av in 1976. The stone lined mansion also served as a Chabad House and

very deep place that every word of *Tanya* was true. It was the words of *Tanya* that helped me make steps in t'shuva. Chassidus itself changed me. It refined me. But it was also the people. I met the most wonderful women and that also made a difference."

But that was not the end of the story. Ruchoma continued to work in Bais Chana, and in 1980, she even got married in the Bais Chana mansion.

"The Chuppa was in Bais Chana, and the dinner was at one of the halls of a nearby shul. And here I am in Eretz Yisroel thirty one years after that first Shabbos in Minnesota."

Old memories. New perspectives. Renewed commitment. Many other 'old timers' joined the classes and

ONLY IN ISRAEL

By Shai Gefen

Anybody with any sense predicted in advance exactly what would transpire after the Disengagement, except that it happened faster and was far worse than they anticipated. However, if you think that the Israeli leadership has learned anything from recent events, you couldn't be more wrong. The politicians have already announced that events in Gaza will not stop them from working towards a two-state solution. In the meantime, the Arabs already got two states of their own.

THE NEW MIDDLE EAST

A new day has dawned upon the land of Israel. On the very day that Shimon Peres was chosen as the new President of Israel, violence broke out in Gaza. Hamas took full control of the area.

Less than two years after the expulsion and destruction of settlements in the Gaza Strip, we now have, five minutes away from Ashkelon, a miniature Iran. This is not something that we can blame on Ahmadenijad or the Neturei Karta. This was carried out by the Israeli government, which brought the danger to our doorsteps. Although they refuse to acknowledge their

mistake, they are already trying to deflect any blame, but nothing can ever succeed in covering up their crime.

Everybody warned exactly what would happen, but it came to pass a lot faster than they anticipated. Hamas, which has officially taken over all of Gaza, got its hands on all of the weapons that Olmert recently gave to Abu Mazen to help bolster his regime. According to all appearances, events in Gaza will repeat themselves in the West Bank in the not so distant future, G-d forbid.

Whoever thinks that the leaders in Israel have learned anything from

all this is mistaken. Tzipi Livni already announced that what occurred in Gaza will not stop the government from working towards two states for two nations. Meanwhile, they have already got three states for two nations.

The Rebbe MH" M warned repeatedly that the accords Israel signs with the Arabs are not worth the paper they are written on. Throughout the years, the government, with the help of the propagandist media, tried to paint a false picture of a regime in Gaza that was working for peace, but were hampered by a small peripheral group trying to stir up a war.

Now, it has all blown up in their faces. Hamas received a clear majority in the last elections and rose to power through official means. That disclosed the lie they tried to feed the Israeli public for years. Only last week, Hamas has demonstrated its absolute control on the ground, not only in the ballot box.

The Hamas takeover has helped explode another myth. Any place from where we have run away and handed over to terrorists has invariably turned into a dangerous hornet's nest. That is what happened in Lebanon, which has become "Hizballastan" from where they fired rockets and missiles that reached as far as Hadera, and so too, Gaza has turned into "Hamastan." Instead of using these facts to show the world just how dangerous and bloodthirsty the

Arabs are, the government leadership insists on repeating the same deadly mistakes. Once again, they will try to sell us some agreement or another, in order to promote their ideal of a Palestinian state (G-d forbid).

It is at a time like this that we must publicize the words of the Rebbe, which are now becoming clearer than ever before, warning of the dangers that a Palestinian state represents for Jews in Eretz Yisroel. Millions of Jews were exposed to the Rebbe's message over the past few months, thanks to the bus campaign, "A Palestinian State endangers Israel." The campaign needs the support of every Chassid, who should realize that the publicity helps awaken the interest of the public and makes them realize the true danger that they are bringing down on our heads under the guise of peace accords.

Time and again, Hashem sends us signs, and more than just signs, in order that we wake up to the realization that we may not give away any territory that we received as a Divine gift.

BARAK IS BACK

As if nothing happened, and as if we never had a second Lebanon War here this past summer, Ehud Barak, was just appointed to the position of Defense Minister. This is the man most responsible for the recent war in Lebanon and the terrible bloodshed we have endured since the breakdown of talks with Arafat.

In order to prove that he keeps his promises, he ordered the withdrawal from Lebanon. Through that cowardly act he brought the Hizballa up to the border fence and gave them the power to arm and strengthen their forces – all of which led to the war of the past summer, when the entire northern area of Israel was under the threat



Will they stop in time?

of missiles.

In a country like ours, not only does the man responsible not face the consequences of his actions, but he is actually rewarded for his failures. Barak is appointed to be Defense Minister! Anybody who needed any additional signs that the state is falling apart just got as clear a sign as you could wish for.

STOP THE BLEEDING

Since Hamas has taken over Gaza, we keep hearing a new refrain from the government talking heads about a "new opportunity for peace." Olmert even went so far as to say that we haven't had such an amazing opportunity in the last 40 years! Once again, they are bringing up the possibility of establishing a Palestinian state on the West Bank, but this time they are telling us that this is an opportunity that should not be passed up.

It may sound crazy to you and me, but this is what is going on before our very eyes, and everyone either goes along with the program or remains silent. We have been playing out this same farce for the last fourteen years, since the accursed days of Oslo. The idea that we will "domesticate" the good wild animals and that they will control the bad ones and tend to our security, has not worked for even a single day. Arafat, may his name be erased, played us for fools under

our noses, and they continued to spill our blood, with our own leaders calling the victims "sacrifices of peace."

Today, we all have enough experience and we can all see the results. However, that doesn't stop the criminals in power. Now, they are talking about strengthening the armed forces of Abu Mazen, when they haven't even been able to free Gilad Shalit, who is being held about five minutes away from Israel proper for a full year. And yet the news headlines proclaim, "PM Olmert has not ruled out providing military materiel, including armored vehicles and protective vests, to the Fatah forces loyal to Abu Mazen in Yehuda and the Shomron." Apparently, someone forgot to mention that a few months ago, Olmert sent weapons to Abu Mazen in order to bolster his presidency against the Hamas parliamentary majority, and now those very weapons have fallen into the hands of Hamas.

PLUG THE LEAK

The current situation is described in amazing fashion in a sicha of the Rebbe, said on Shabbos Parshas Ki Sisa 5739/1979 in regards to the Camp David Accords:

This case is similar to a dam, whose function is to seal off the flow of water, which has a crack in it. The solution is not to beautify

Apparently, someone forgot to mention that a few months ago, Olmert sent weapons to Abu Mazen in order to bolster his presidency against the Hamas parliamentary majority, and now those very weapons have fallen into the hands of Hamas.

the crack and make it round or square, but to seal it off. So too in our matter: There is a crack that is allowing the “waters of iniquity” to push forth. But instead of sealing the leak, they write that from now on this hole will no longer be known as a “crack” but instead we will call it “peace.” And they do all this despite the fact that the crack continues to grow, which leads to the “waters of iniquity” pouring through the crack, and they themselves are on the other side of the dam.

Rashi in his commentary on the verse, “And Moav said to the elders of Midyan,” raises the question, “Haven’t they always hated each other?” And Rashi answers that, “out of their fear of Yisroel, they made peace between themselves.” Even though they are at war with each other, when it comes to hatred of Jews, they all

join forces!

Israel will give them oil and the US will give them armaments and even more money than they give the Jews, because they argue it is only fair and just, because there are only three million Jews [in Israel], and the Egyptians number thirty million. Even the Jews themselves argue that it is fair and just to give the Arabs more than them, especially as it is such a poor country and the Jews are far more economically developed.

Ai, how could they say such things if it is endangering their very own lives? That is why they scream, “Be quiet!” “Don’t make a tumult!” “Don’t try to save Jews!” The main thing is to proclaim “Mazel Tov,” and on the crack in the wall of defense that protects us from our enemies, they will hang a big sign with big bright letters that says “Shalom/Peace.” Under that

line will be written, also in large letters, “Autonomy.” When you ask them what autonomy is, they answer that they haven’t yet decided. The main thing is that they signed an agreement that there will be autonomy, despite the fact they have yet to decide what this autonomy is all about!

ONGOING SHAME

Out of the blue, the Israeli newspaper of record remembered to inform their readership in the form of a shocking article about the current situation of the expellees from Gush Katif. There were no outright falsehoods in the article, but it was far from accurate in describing their far more horrific situation than that portrayed in the already hair-raising article.

Two years have passed since the crime and there is a government and media conspiracy of silence to try to make the public forget the historic crime that will hound us in perpetuity. Within our cities and communities, there are thousands of tragic victims whose lives and dreams were shattered, many of whom will never fully recover. The scariest thing is the artificial silence of a cover-up.

The Jewish nation must wake up and realize that help for the expellees, whether material or emotional/spiritual, is the obligation of our time. Perhaps that may be the only thing we can and are obligated to do for them, while also protesting the heinous and callous behavior of a government that robbed and pillaged them and their homes without coming through with the promised reparations and resettlement. We can’t rest in the face of such extreme injustice, especially when those rabbis and public figures who should be speaking out are sitting comfortably in their own homes.

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A CHASSID AND MATHEMATICIAN

By Eli Shneuri

*When he studied in university, he was torn between the outlook of Torah and l'havdil, the outlook of science. He remained confused about this until he came to Chabad and began to realize that there is no need to pick one over the other, that within science one can see the truth of Torah. * An interview with Professor Shimon Silman, founder of the Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib Research Institute on Moshiach and the Sciences.*

Those who frequent 770 know Rabbi Shimon Silman. Shabbos after Shabbos, year after year, he is the one who proclaims “Yechi” from the bima after the Torah reading of Shacharis in the Rebbe’s minyan. What many do not know is that this Chassid who proclaims “Yechi” with simple faith is a professor of math at Touro College.

Prof. Silman was born in Minnesota. His father, Rabbi Moshe DovBer Silman, was a personal friend of the renowned posek HaRav Moshe Feinstein z”l and received rabbinic ordination from him. His grandfather, HaRav Yakov

Eliezer Silman, was a friend of HaRav Feinstein going back to their days in Russia where the two families lived together in the town of Uzda in the suburbs of Minsk. The friendship between the families continued when they came to America.

“My friend, the son of a family friend, my beloved and cherished...,” is what HaRav Moshe Feinstein once wrote to Rav Moshe DovBer Silman.

After Reb Shimon completed his studies at the local day school, his father wanted him to attend Yeshiva University’s high school in New

York. The school had a good reputation for both its limudei kodesh and secular studies departments, and Shimon quickly acclimated to yeshiva life.

“Science and faith can be in conflict with one another if you don’t have Chassidus,” says Prof. Silman. “It is only through Chabad Chassidus that you can understand that there is no contradiction between them. The atmosphere at Y.U. was one in which people argued over what was right, kodesh or chol (the holy or the secular). There were various views. One view maintained that kodesh was correct and chol was only to be used for purposes of making a living.

“Others said the opposite – that science is real and serious and the holy needs to be interpreted in a way that doesn’t contradict it. This debate was very interesting to me, but I did not have the knowledge to determine which view was correct.”

SHABBOS T’SHUVA 5726 WITH THE REBBE MH”M

While at Y.U., Shimon heard his friends talking about a trip to the Lubavitcher Rebbe MH”M in Crown Heights and he decided to join them. The first time he went to spend an entire Shabbos was Shabbos T’shuva, Vav Tishrei 5726. The Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach was the shliach tzibbur, because it was the first yahrtzeit of his mother,



Rebbetzin Chana z"l.

“When I arrived early in the morning, 770 was mostly empty, aside from a few individuals scattered about here and there. Then I noticed a small group of people standing packed tightly around the bima. It took time until I realized that they were trying to get as close as possible to the bima in order to hear the Rebbe MH”M davening. As the shul filled up, I was gradually pushed to the outside

Left: HaRav Moshe DovBer Silman with his sons, Shimon (head just above the table) and Yakov Eliezer

and was unable to hear the Rebbe MH”M davening.

“When my host, an old chassid, heard what had happened, he said to me, ‘You have to push, you have to push!’ and he gave me a good shove to demonstrate.

“Sometime later, my roommate and I took a picture of the Rebbe MH”M and hung it on the wall of our room in yeshiva. It was an expression of our great esteem for the Rebbe. The picture had an impact on us and it happened more than once, that just looking at it stopped us from wasting time.

“I attended the Purim farbrengen

that year. Until then, I was used to seeing men and boys drinking on Purim until they became drunk, acting wild and rejoicing. At the Rebbe MH”M’s farbrengen I got a different perspective. I saw thousands of people standing in their places with great seriousness, and listening to the Rebbe MH”M.

“I went to more and more of the Rebbe’s farbrengens even though I still identified as a Litvak. I think Rabbi Soloveitchik would have been pleased with my going and when I told my father that I wanted to go to the Rebbe for Rosh HaShana he was also pleased.”

BLENDING SCIENCE AND TORAH

Reb Shimon’s father wanted him to continue at Y.U. after high school. Shimon, however, wanted to attend a yeshiva al taharas

1ST ENCOUNTER WITH THE REBBE MH”M

On Sukkos, 5727, I stayed at the home of Rabbi Moshe Horowitz a”h (the former Bostoner Rebbe) on President St. with some friends from YU. One day of Chol HaMoed, as I walked down President Street, I was amazed to see the following sight:

A Chassidic-looking man got out of a car, opened the back door and stood there looking at me as though he meant for me to enter the car. I didn’t know him and I was nervous about the whole scene. I thought of turning around and walking away when the door of a house opened and I saw the Rebbe MH”M come out, walk down the steps and walk quickly towards the car – walking right past me as he gave me a penetrating look. This was my first encounter with the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach.

After I explained the issues of atomic structure that were involved, I marveled at the complexity of it and blurted out, “You know there are people who think that all of this just evolved!”

ha’kodesh (with no secular studies) and he tried to persuade his father.

“At that time, Jews were moving out en masse because of the influx of lower class gentiles into Jewish neighborhoods. This affected Minnesota too and the Jews in my father’s neighborhood were leaving. We were among the few Jews left. With no minyan for the t’fillos, my father’s shul closed. Then my father said, ‘Being a rabbi today is no simple thing. You need to look into other possibilities. Even the Lubavitcher Rebbe MH”M studied in university.’”

Shimon decided to ask the Rebbe MH”M himself. He wrote a letter in which he detailed his thoughts and those of his father. But the Rebbe did not respond and Shimon entered the University of Minnesota to study physics.

“Once again I encountered the supposed contradiction between Torah and science. It was there that I began developing a unique outlook on faith and science that developed fully years later.

“I was once sitting in the physics library at the university, writing up a lab experiment, when a gentile student sitting nearby asked me to explain the theory behind the experiment. After I explained the issues of atomic structure that were involved, I marveled at the complexity of it and blurted out, ‘You know there are people who think that all of this just evolved!’

“I laughed and the gentile student also laughed. At that moment I realized that it’s possible

to recognize G-dliness from within the world itself, and not only within Torah. There are the spiritual and physical worlds and the amazing thing is that we can recognize the Creator from within the physical world.”

A FASCINATING SHABBOS WITH REB REUVEN DUNIN

In his third year of college, Shimon transferred to the Technion in Haifa, where he studied physics and mathematics. In Haifa he met the special Chassidic personality, Reb Reuven Dunin a”h, who visited the Technion occasionally to talk to the students and invited students for Shabbos meals.

“After the meal he would learn sichos of the Rebbe MH”M with us. At that time, Reb Reuven operated a tractor during the week and by the time Shabbos came around, he was exhausted. One time, after the meal, he began to read a sicha as usual, but he started to doze off. I began to read a few words in order to wake him up. After doing this a few times, he finally said ‘Shimon, continue,’ and fell asleep.

“The truth is, I had no problem with learning Gemara, Poskim, and other Nigleh subjects, but I had not managed to understand a word of Chassidus. At that point, when I had no choice, my mind suddenly opened up and I understood the sicha and was even able to explain it to the others. I was thrilled that I was finally able to understand what

the Rebbe MH”M said, on my own. That is when I discovered that I too could understand Chassidus.”

Reuven Dunin’s sincerity made a great impression on Shimon. It was all the more impressive since Reb Reuven lived in a small apartment under very crowded conditions...

“I returned to Minnesota and began to learn Chassidus. I regularly visited the Chabad House, where we had a shiur in Chassidus in which we focused mainly on the Rebbe Rayatz’s maamarim.

“Shortly afterward, I actually began teaching Chassidus on my own. As part of the curriculum of the University of Minnesota, I taught a course on Talmud and included selections from *Tanya* and Chassidus.”

3:40 IN THE MORNING

In 1973, Shimon married a young lady from Minnesota who had also studied in Litvishe schools – Yavneh in Cleveland – and had come to Lubavitch. After their wedding, Shimon studied and taught mathematics at the University of Minnesota. Several months later, he went to the Rebbe MH”M and had a yechidus (private audience) along with his wife.

“It was Motzai Zos Chanuka at 3:40 a.m. I thought the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach would ask me what I was learning in Chassidus. But instead he asked, ‘What is your profession?’

“For a moment I was confused, but then I responded, ‘I am a teaching assistant in mathematics at the university.’

“The Rebbe MH”M looked straight at me. But his eyes appeared to be focusing on a distant location, or on the distant future. He asked, ‘Where, here in New York?’

“I was completely confused. The Rebbe MH”M knew that I taught in Minnesota from the letters that I

wrote to him and to which he had responded. Why was he asking? I said, “No, in Minnesota,” which he wrote down on our letter.

Afterwards, the Rebbe MH”M showered us with brachos.

“In the *HaYom Yom* it says that the first yechidus of a Chassid with his Rebbe is according to the essence of the Chassid, and the Rebbe sets out his avoda for him. I thought a lot about what the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach had told us, again and again, and tried to



Prof. Silman’s grandfather,
Rabbi Yaakov Eliezer Silman

understand it. But it was only a while later that I actually understood it.

“Throughout this time, I jumped from the world of mathematics to the world of Torah and back again. I was between two worlds that seemingly opposed one another. For a while we lived in New York and I learned in the Lubavitch kollel. Over the years I also taught Jewish subjects and worked in computers.”

At another crossroads in his life,

in 1978, Prof. Silman once again asked the Rebbe MH”M whether to continue in mathematics or to continue learning in kollel. The Rebbe MH”M instructed him to ask the advice of friends and gave a bracha on whatever Shimon would decide.

Shimon did not know with which friends to consult, those in university or those in kollel. He was sure that each would offer his recommendation in accordance with what he himself was doing.

“In the end, I consulted with a friend in Minnesota, an Iranian Jew with whom I learned Chassidus. I felt that he was the friend that I needed to speak to. He advised me to return to university and to complete my degree so I wouldn’t lose out on the years of study I had invested. I went back to university and continued my study of advanced mathematics.

“Throughout this period of living in Minnesota, we went to the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach many times. On the spot, we’d decide to travel to the Rebbe MH”M for a special day on the Chassidic calendar. We loaded all our stuff in the car and drove for a few days until we reached Crown Heights.”

AN INSTITUTE AND MOSHIACH & SCIENCE CONFERENCES WITH THE REBBE MH”M’S BLESSINGS

At some point during the mid-80’s, Prof. Silman learned of the life and mathematical works of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach’s brother, Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib. “The very fact that such a person existed,” Prof. Silman explains, “a member of the Rebbe MH”M’s family who devoted his time to the intense study of Chassidus while being a mathematician of such a high caliber, reassured me that my

quest for the unification of Torah and science was attainable. Just looking at his mathematical paper put my mind at ease.”

“In Cheshvan 5752 I was sitting in the Chabad house in Minnesota and learning *Likkutei Sichos*. I noticed a letter from the Rebbe MH”M to a man who referred to himself as a secular Jew. The Rebbe MH”M said there is no such thing as a secular Jew because every Jew is holy. However, some Jews’ professions are in the secular world and some Jews are occupied with holy work, like Yisachar and Z’vulun, but the secular is ‘*chulin al taharas ha’kodesh*’ (secular done in a holy manner for a holy purpose).

“The letter was dated 13 Iyar 5732, the 20th yahrtzait of Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib. I thought, the Rebbe MH”M’s brother’s 40th yahrtzait is coming up later this year and it would be nice to do something to mark the day. I had the idea of holding a gathering on



Putting t’fillin on with Dr. Lawrence Lasher, project manager of Pioneer 10 at NASA

HE NODDED TO ME

One day in 5753, I was learning the sicha (Parshas BaMidbar, 5751) in which the Rebbe MH”M says that when Moshiach comes, “everyone will say ‘Shalom aleichem’ to him.” I decided that at my next opportunity to walk past the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach, I would do this.

On the night of 27 Tishrei 5754, I had this opportunity. There was a yechidus klalis and it was the only time to date, after 27 Adar 5752, that the Rebbe MH”M gave out dollars.

I approached the Rebbe MH”M with great awe and greeted him with, “Sholom aleichem Melech HaMoshiach!”

The Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach nodded his head to me.

the topic of Moshiach and Science, and *chulin al taharas ha’kodesh*, and to emphasize the connection between them.”

“I worked with Rabbi Moshe Feller, the head shliach in Minnesota, to organize the event which was titled ‘The Role of Science in the Era of Moshiach.’ It took place on 13 Iyar 5752 and Professor Pesach (Paul) Rosenbloom a”h, a Lubavitcher chassid and a world renowned mathematician was the main speaker.

“Professor Rosenbloom had a very close relationship with the Rebbe MH”M. Every year on Yud Alef Nissan he came to the Rebbe MH”M and presented mathematical research that he had done in honor of the Rebbe MH”M’s birthday, which was also Rosenbloom’s birthday.

“In 5735, the Rebbe MH”M gave Prof. Rosenbloom a mathematical treatise that his brother had written which had not been published. The Rebbe MH”M

asked him to translate it from German and to publish it and said he would pay for it. Prof. Rosenbloom did the work and published it in *The Journal of Approximation Theory*. When he attended our conference, he told of his connection to the Rebbe MH”M and about this story.

“Another Lubavitcher chassid and mathematician, Dr. Tzvi Saks a”h who worked in topology (an abstract mathematical field), also spoke at the gathering. He explained the connection between Torah and science and the lack of a contradiction when it is explained according to Chassidus. He also spoke about his unique research on the concept of infinity in mathematics and Chassidus.

“All in all, the gathering was a great success and we were surprised by how many people attended. And the audience was in a very joyful mood.”

At the end of 5752, Prof. Silman and his family moved to Crown



Prof. Silman conversing with Professor Alvin Radkowsky (d. 2002), a pioneer nuclear scientist, who developed a design for a nuclear reactor that can only be used for peaceful purposes

Heights.

“When Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib’s yahrtzait came up in 5753, I wondered whether to do another event. The previous event had marked the 40th yahrtzait, a milestone. But should we do an annual event?”

“In addition, I was new to the neighborhood and I didn’t know how to arrange a conference in Crown Heights. I asked the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach whether to go ahead with it, and even if not, whether to publish the lectures from the previous gathering. I received a positive answer to both questions.

“Prof. Rosenbloom suggested that I ask Prof. Yakov Reich to help me and together we organized the second gathering. We decided it would take place over two days. We invited Dr. Naftali Berg a”h, a Lubavitcher who headed the Advanced Technology Office of the Army Research Laboratory of the Pentagon.

“On the morning of the event I had the idea to establish an institute

which would organize these annual conferences and publish on Moshiach and Science. I wrote to the Rebbe MH”M suggesting the idea and proposing the name ‘Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib Research Institute on Moshiach and the Sciences.’”

The conference was more successful than anticipated and Prof. Silman was satisfied. Later that day he was informed that the Rebbe had given his consent and blessing to the new organization he wanted to found, and every year since, the RYAL Institute has held a Moshiach and Science conference on 13 Iyar, Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib’s yahrtzait. Some prominent participants have been Professor Alvin Radkowsky, who designed the nuclear powered submarines and aircraft carriers, etc., for the U.S. Navy and had more recently designed a nuclear reactor that cannot be used to make weapons, and Dr. Lawrence Lasher, NASA project manager for the Pioneer 10 project. Professor Yirmiyahu

Branover has also been a frequent participant.

The RYAL Institute has also held Moshiach and Science conferences in various places around the world. Regarding one such conference in Israel, Prof. Silman relates the following:

“One day, I opened a volume of *Igros Kodesh*, where I read the following letter: Surely you participated in the international convention on matters of research. When I read this, I didn’t understand what it referred to since I was not aware of any such conferences. However, the next morning I got a phone call from Rabbi Zimroni Tzik who proposed that we organize a convention of scientists and professors in Tel Aviv University on the topic of Geula and science.

“The convention took place on Rosh Chodesh Shevat, 5756, and Prof. Yirmiyahu Branover, Rabbi Yitzchok Ginsburgh, Rabbi Shmuel Chefer, Rabbi Zimroni Tzik, and I delivered lectures. The lecture hall was full. Many of the participants, which included university professors and students, signed a document of Kabbalas HaMalchus. Thanks to this convention, many people became more involved in the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach’s teachings and on matters of Moshiach and Geula.”

When I asked Prof. Silman when he began proclaiming “Yechi” in 770, he said, “In the period after Gimmel Tammuz I noticed that they stopped saying ‘Yechi’ from the bima after the Torah reading, so I decided to do it myself. The main thing is that we see the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach revealed right now and the whole world will call out together, ‘*Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V’Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach L’olam Va’ed!*’”

This article is dedicated to the memory of HaRav Moshe DovBer ben HaRav Yakov Eliezer Silman z”l whose yahrtzait is 17 Tammuz.