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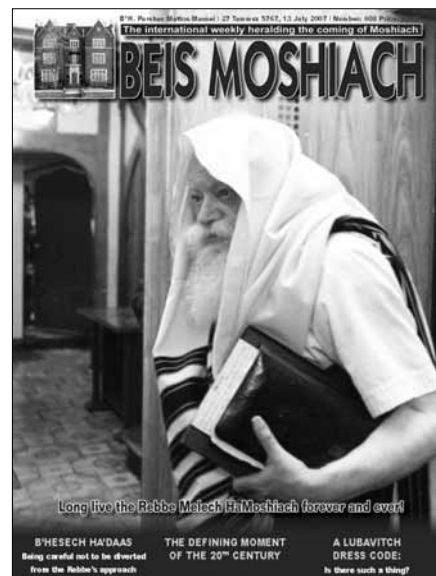
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Shlichus | Ben-Zion Sasson



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HOW COULD G-D DESTROY THE HOLY TEMPLE?

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

[Continued from last week]

3. The above will be understood in light of an analysis of what is stated in [the compilation of Midrashim known as] Yalkut [Shimoni] in the beginning of the section on Yirmiyahu¹⁸: “‘*Aryei* (a lion) arose in the astrological sign *Aryei* (Lion/Leo) and destroyed *Ariel* (the Lion of G-d)...’ [The latter statement is elucidated as follows.] ‘*Aryei* arose’ refers to Nevuchadnetzar, as it is written, ‘A lion has arisen from its thicket.’¹⁹ ‘In the astrological sign *Aryei*’ [is referred to in the verse], ‘until the exile of Yerushalayim in the fifth month [i.e., Av, which corresponds to the astrological sign *Aryei*].’²⁰ ‘And destroyed *Ariel*’ [referred to in the verse], ‘Woe, *Ariel* – *Ariel*, the city wherein David encamped!’²¹ [The statement continues] ‘...in order that *Aryei* should come in the astrological sign *Aryei* and build *Ariel*.’ ‘*Aryei* should come,’ refers to the Holy One Blessed Be He, as is written of Him, ‘A lion has roared. Who will not fear?’²² ‘In the astrological sign *Aryei*’ [is referred to in the verse], ‘I will turn their mourning into joy.’²³ ‘And build *Ariel*’ [referred to in the verse], ‘G-d is the builder of Yerushalayim [i.e., the Holy Temple in Yerushalayim]; He will gather the outcasts of the Jewish people.’”²⁴

All Torah matters are **precise**; certainly the Torah does not contain anything that is frivolous, G-d forbid. Thus, we must understand: What is being underscored by the use of the term “*aryei*” (lion), both with regard to the destruction of the Holy Temple (“*Aryei* arose in the astrological sign *Aryei* and destroyed *Ariel*”) and to its [re]construction (“in order that *Aryei* should come in the astrological sign *Aryei* and build *Ariel*”? The passage could have simply read: “Nevuchadnetzar came in the fifth month, etc., in order that the Holy One Blessed Be He should come, etc., and build the Holy Temple.”

4. The explanation is that in this manner the Midrash negates a general misunderstanding with regard to the destruction of the Holy Temple, as follows.

It has been ruled as Torah law²⁵ that “All those who break vessels and tear clothing and demolish buildings, etc., in a destructive manner transgress the prohibition ‘Do not destroy’²⁶ [i.e., wastefully destroying property].” Moreover, in addition to the prohibition “Do not

destroy,” with regard to the Holy Temple, there is the prohibition of “(You shall tear down their altars, etc.) Do not do so (to G-d, your L-rd)” – we may not damage [even] a part of the Holy Temple: “One²⁷ who smashes [even] a single stone from the alter, or from any [part] of the Temple proper, or from the area between the façade of the Temple and the alter, in a destructive manner, is punishable by lashes, as it is said,²⁸ ‘You shall tear down their altars, etc. Do not do so to G-d, your L-rd.’” How much more so does the latter prohibition apply with regard to the destruction of the entire structure of the Holy Temple, as the Rambam lists the prohibition “not to destroy the Holy Temple or synagogues or centers for Torah study”²⁹ in the Enumeration of the Commandments.

The question is raised³⁰: Since “He tells His words to Yaakov, **His** decrees and **His** judgments to Yisroel”³¹ – that is, G-d fulfills the Commandments, as it were, which He tells to the Jewish people³² – how could³³ G-d have been “allowed” to destroy the Holy Temple?! Indeed, the demolition was done as a mission from G-d, may He be blessed, as stated in prophecy, “Behold, I send and I will take all the families of the north, says G-d, and to Nevuchadretzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and I will bring them upon this land and upon its inhabitants and upon all these nations around, and I will destroy them and make them for a desolation and for a hissing and for perpetual ruins.”³⁴

If the Holy Temple was destroyed because the Jewish people were not worthy to have it, G-d could have simply concealed it, as we find with regard to the Sanctuary (Miskan) that “The Tent of Meeting was stored away, etc.”³⁵ Moreover, regarding the Temple itself it is stated that “Its gates were sunken into the earth.”³⁶ Likewise, several of the Temple’s vessels were stored away.³⁷

[To be continued be”H]

NOTES:

¹⁸ Remez 259, etc. – see Footnote 17 in the original.

¹⁹ Yirmiyahu 4:7.

²⁰ Ibid 1:3.

²¹ Yeshayahu 29:1.

²² Amos 3:8.

²³ Yirmiyahu 31:12.

²⁴ T’hillim 147:2.

²⁵ Rambam Laws of Kings 6:10; the Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch Choshen Mishpat* Laws of Care for the Body and One’s Life and the Prohibition of Wasteful Destruction of Property s’if 14.

²⁶ Rambam ibid continues, “but he is punished with lashes only...according to Rabbinical Law.” See the commentary *Mishneh L’Melech* on Law 8...that according to the opinion of Rambam, every instance except with regard to [the wasteful destruction of] trees is only according to Rabbinical Law. However, the wording of the Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch* ibid is, “transgresses a **[Biblical] prohibition**, as it is said, ‘do not destroy, etc.’” See the legal dispute paraphrased in *Encyclopedia Talmudis* entry “Not to Destroy,” beg.

²⁷ Rambam Laws of the Chosen Temple 1:17, etc. – see Footnote 26 in the original.

²⁸ R’ei 12:3-4.

²⁹ *Seifer HaYad*, beg., Prohibition 65; similarly, in *Seifer HaMitzvos* Prohibition 65, etc. – see Footnote 28 in the original.

³⁰ The reference for the following is the book *Nefesh Chaim* Vol. 1 (of Rabbi Chaim Palagi), 2nd Edition, Section 14, where it is discussed.

³¹ T’hillim 147:19.

³² Shmos Rabba 30:9; similarly, Yerushalmi Rosh HaShana 1:3. See Brachos 6a (regarding t’fillin), **among others**.

³³ See B’Reishis Rabba 11:5.

³⁴ Yirmiyahu 25:9 ff. See ibid 7:14 (“**I will do** to the house upon which My name is called...as I did to Shiloh), 32:3 (“Behold **I deliver** this city into the hand[s] of the king of Babylon, and he shall capture it”), **among others**.

³⁵ Sota 9a, end.

³⁶ Eicha 2:9; Eicha Rabba ibid (2:13); BaMidbar Rabba 15:13; Zohar I 3a. See Sota ibid and the commentary of Rashi there.

³⁷ Yoma 52b, where it is discussed.



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A DAILY DOSE OF MOSHIACH & GEULA:

27 TAMMUZ - 4 AV

*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

27 TAMMUZ: THE PERFECTION OF THE BEIS HA'MIKDASH WILL BE INSTILLED WITHIN THE WHOLE WORLD

At the dedication of the Third Beis HaMikdash, "the Sanctuary which Your hands, Hashem, have established," the concept of "I will come to you and bless you in every place where I mention My Name" (as is written at the conclusion of the reading of the Ten Commandments) will be revealed in the whole world (literally "in every place").

In other words, the perfection of the Beis HaMikdash, "where the Kohanim were given permission to mention G-d's Ineffable Name at the Priestly Blessing," will be revealed and instilled within the entire world, as is written, "on that day G-d shall be One and His Name One," "as I am written, so am I called," since the whole world will be a dwelling place for Him (as in the example of the Mishkan and the Beis HaMikdash).

(Shabbos Parshas Naso 5751)

28 TAMMUZ: THE THIRD BEIS HA'MIKDASH WILL EXIST ETERNALLY

It is stated in Zohar (Vol. III, 221a) that the First and Second Beis HaMikdash are "structures of man" (which have no permanence), whereas the Third Beis HaMikdash, since it is "the building of G-d," will exist forever.

The First Beis HaMikdash corresponds to Avrohom, the Second Beis HaMikdash corresponds to Yitzchok, and the Third Beis HaMikdash corresponds to Yaakov.

And since the attribute of Yaakov is truth, and truth means that it has neither interruption nor change, therefore, the Third Beis HaMikdash will have an eternal existence.

(Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 9, p. 26)

29 TAMMUZ: THE DEDICATION OF THE THIRD BEIS HA'MIKDASH – THE GREAT FARBRENGEN THAT WILL BE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE ENTIRE JEWISH PEOPLE

In simple terms, the request of Yaakov to dwell in tranquility is immediately fulfilled *mamash* in actual deed and in a revealed state (in the name and on behalf of all Jews, as it were), and there will be fulfilled [the

concept of] “Indeed, the righteous shall praise Your Name, the upright shall dwell in Your presence,” in the Third Beis HaMikdash.

There will be a great farbrengen for the dedication of the Third Beis HaMikdash before all the Jewish People – “all its inhabitants upon it.”

(Shabbos Parshas VaYishlach 5752)

ROSH CHODESH MENACHEM AV: THE PRIESTLY BLESSING IN THE TIME OF THE REDEMPTION

Birkas Kohanim (The Priestly Blessing) is a bracha recited by the Kohanim as they stood on the platform in the Beis HaMikdash. Even today, the Kohanim continue to bless the Jewish People with it, but with one difference.

Then, in the time of the Beis HaMikdash, the bracha was recited with G-d’s Ineffable Name, i.e., the Kohanim pronounced G-d’s Name as it appears in the bracha in its complete form, “as I am written, so am I called.” Today, however, the “Name of G-d” is

The gates of the Beis HaMikdash were sunken and hidden in their place, and when the Third Beis HaMikdash will descend from Heaven, these gates will be revealed and Melech HaMoshiach will erect them in their place.

pronounced in the manner we have become accustomed to using.

In the time of the Redemption, the Kohanim will once again bless with G-d’s Ineffable Name, as is written (BaMidbar 6:22), “And they shall set My Name” – they shall bless them with G-d’s Ineffable Name.

(Shabbos Parshas Naso 5751)

2 MENACHEM AV: ALL JEWS IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES [A]

There are those who ask how is it possible that at the coming of Moshiach, all Jews will enter *Kodesh HaKadashim* (the Holy of Holies), when the pasuk states explicitly, “With this shall Aharon enter the Holy, etc.” – specifically Aharon (and the Kohen Gadol in general), specifically on Yom Kippur, and specifically with the offering of special sacrifices?

Answer: According to several opinions, Aharon HaKohen could enter the *Kodesh HaKadashim* anytime he wished. Furthermore, since in the Future to Come,

all Jews will be on the level of Aharon as Kohen Gadol (“And you will be to Me a kingdom of priests,” “Kohanim G’dolim”), it is understood quite simply that the place of every single Jew is in the *Kodesh HaKadashim*, and when a Jew can enter the *Kodesh HaKadashim* – how can he possibly be anywhere else?!

(Shabbos Parshas Shoftim 5748; 15 B’Av 5746)

3 MENACHEM AV: WHEN WE MUST ENTER THE HOLY OF HOLIES IMMEDIATELY [B]

Another answer to the question on how all Jews can enter *Kodesh HaKadashim* (the Holy of Holies):

There is an opinion that Jews will need to enter the *Kodesh HaKadashim* immediately, in order to bring the Holy Ark (with the Tablets, etc.) from the place where it is hidden to its place in the *Kodesh HaKadashim*. For this purpose, every single Jew can enter *Kodesh HaKadashim*, and surely one can enter for the sake of “repairing the House” when there is no alternative, even in a situation of the opposite of purity, and not only “in crates,” but even “through the [usual] entrances.”

(Shabbos Parshas Shoftim 5748; 15 B’Av 5746)

4 MENACHEM AV: THE GATES OF THE BEIS HA'MIKDASH THAT WERE SUNKEN IN THE GROUND

Our Sages, of blessed memory, said on the pasuk (Eicha 2:9), “Her gates are sunk into the ground,” that the gates of the Beis HaMikdash were sunken and

hidden in their place, and when the Third Beis HaMikdash will descend from Heaven, these gates will be revealed and Melech HaMoshiach will erect them in their place.

At first glance, what is the need to use the gates of the Beis HaMikdash that “sunk in the ground”? Just as the Beis HaMikdash will descend from Heaven, its gates can come down as well?

However, since G-d is the ultimate good (“and it is the nature of the good to do good”), and since “An individual prefers a portion of his own over nine belonging to his friend” (Bava Metzia 38a), therefore, even in the Third Beis HaMikdash (which will descend ready from Heaven), there will be the elevation of the works of man (“a portion of his own”) through the erection of the gates that sunk in the ground, by which there will come the elevation of “a portion of his own” within the entire Beis HaMikdash, as the one who places the doors is considered as if he built it all.

(Shabbos Parshas Truma 5744)

A LUBAVITCH DRESS CODE: IS THERE SUCH A THING?

*It says in holy s'farim that in the generation before Moshiach, tznius will be a great challenge. As we stand on the threshold of the true and complete Redemption, we see how tznius is a major test in our times. * Chabad Chassidim, who spread the wellsprings and deal with all sorts of people, need to be extra careful in this area. We are role models for the entire world. * As the summer begins, a time when the Rebbe urged protecting and strengthening tznius, we present a noteworthy panel discussion with several Chabad rabbanim, for the purpose of bringing this urgent topic to the attention of parents and educators.*

Unlike other topics, tznius is not so clearly defined and there is more room for judgment and personal opinion. How can we deal with this and how can we come up with clear-cut rules?

Rabbi Diskin: Remember, tznius problems are the plague of our generation and all groups have to contend with it. With us, every school has standards for tznius too, and the standards generally cover most things. As soon as the school establishes a standard, mothers and daughters have to sign to it and the administration of the school has to enforce it.

If we don't stand behind our own rules, we lose everything. It's hard, and we cannot explain all the rules to the girls, but the moment a school obligates the parents and sticks to their guns, they will be successful. Occasionally, new problems crop up and we have to update the rules. We also need to be aware about what people can take on and what will fail.

Regarding what is permissible and forbidden in women's clothes, there is a booklet put out by Rabbi Wosner which details precisely what type of clothing is permissible and what is not, along with illustrations.

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Author of K'vuda Bas Melech on the laws of tznius, New York

It has the kashrus seal of the Badatz HaEida HaChareidis. We should have a similar thing that will clarify what Chabad's position is.

Rabbi Drukman: Generally speaking, there are instructions from the Rebbe that we should do what is accepted by other chareidi mosdos, Beis Yaakov and the like. (By the way, the Rebbe said this also regarding the curriculum.) In order to set clear guidelines, it's not enough to know the halachos; you also need to be aware of styles and

what is accepted in the "world."

There are many nuances and subtleties (or rather lack of subtlety) and there are groups who have already done the work for us. All we need to do is adopt what they've already decided (in chareidi mosdos).

Rabbi Ashkenazi: "Tznius" is from the root "tzanua," i.e., not to stand out. The function of modest clothes or a modest hairstyle is to express a person's dignity, unlike immodest clothing, where the intent

is to stand out. If you use this as a guideline and you check everything against it – does it impart dignity or does it stand out – you can readily see where the bounds of tznius are being breached.

At a woman's funeral, may Heaven protect us, it is customary not to place the deceased there for the recitation of Kaddish and T'hillim because of tznius, even though she is covered, so as not to emphasize that there is a woman present. Today people think that a covered woman is a modest woman and the truth is, you can be covered but in a way that is the complete opposite of tznius, by wearing clothing that is ostentatious and provocative.

Rabbi Weiner: Regarding all those things explained in *Shulchan Aruch* about covered or uncovered areas of the body, customs of a place or the prevalent styles make no difference, since the Torah is eternal. However, there are details in the laws of tznius that depend on the customs of the place, though the custom of the place can only be *more* stringent than what it says explicitly in halacha, not less so.

In other words, even if most women in a community or a bungalow colony, etc., are not particular about the length of sleeves, dresses, and stockings, as explained in halacha, it is forbidden for women to follow the prevalent custom there! It is regarding such a "minhag," that it says that the letters of "*minhag*" are the letters of "Gehinom."

One of the reasons our ancestors left Egypt is because they did not change their way of dress. How does this pertain to us, the generation of Geula?

Rabbi Ashkenazi: This is very pertinent to us. Unfortunately, today we buy clothing according to what is in style, which is determined by the goyim, and it changes every so often. Truly modest women wear the same



Rabbi Chaim Ashkenazi

Not every group of people can take on all stringencies, but when it comes to those things that are obligatory according to the laws of tznius, there can be no compromises.

styles for years.

Tznius needs to start with the mothers and teachers, because when they wear short or tight clothing, it has a direct influence on the girls.

Remember that lack of tznius is worse than eating pork! Since a lack of tznius can impact dozens, even hundreds of people a day, those who are exposed to forbidden sights, this is in the category of “causing many to sin,” and a person cannot do t’shuva for this! Someone who appears immodestly has no way of knowing how many people were ensnared because of her, and if she wants to do t’shuva she will never know who she harmed.

Rabbi Drukman: This is all the more important in this period of the eve of the Geula, especially in light of what it says in holy s’farim that the generation of Moshiach will have the greatest test in the area of tznius. In the Torah it says, “It should not be seen any immoral thing amongst you and He will turn away from you.” From here Chazal learn that immodesty causes the Sh’china to depart.

The Rebbe once said that if a Jewish woman or girl thought about what immodest conduct could cause (the departure of the Sh’china!), the conclusion would be obvious.

We find that the prophet attributes the destruction of the first Beis HaMikdash, among other things, to the immodesty of Jewish girls. Of course, today, as we anticipate the complete Redemption and the rectification of the churban with the building of the Beis HaMikdash, our behavior has to be appropriate.

Rabbi Diskin: We Chabad Chassidim need to be different (“v’niflinu”). Our girls should not look Modern Orthodox. It should be clear to all that they are Chabad. There should be a difference in how we look even in those things that are permissible according to *Shulchan Aruch*. As soon as it becomes

impossible to discern that this is a Lubavitcher girl, then even if what she is wearing is technically modest, it shouldn’t be worn.

Rabbi Weiner: In the Siddur Yaavetz (*Amudei Shamayim*) it talks about tznius before the coming of Moshiach, and it says there, “It is proper for Yisroel to be outstanding in their clothing and their customs and in all their ways, so that the legion of the King will be known among the nations as His seed, His glory and splendor when the loyal shepherd comes and recognizes his flock. And who can calculate the day of his coming, the master whom we seek [i.e., Moshiach Tzidkeinu].”

In other words, the modest clothing of the Jewish people will be the way Moshiach recognizes them. Rabbi Pinchos of Koretz is quoted in his Midrash Pinchas as saying, “The exile hangs on a hair,” and some explain this as the hair in a man’s beard and others explain it as a single strand of a woman’s hair that is not covered.

The Rebbe says that according to *Shulchan Aruch*, a girl from the age of 3 has to conduct herself with tznius (*Likkutei Sichos* vol. 18, p. 448). Yet we see many who do not do so. Is there a halachic basis for not doing so?

Rabbi Weiner: In the sicha of Parshas Truma 5741, the Rebbe says explicitly, “the inyan of tznius, according to most poskim, begins at three years and a day,” and he cites the work *K’vuda Bas Melech*, where I brought the views of various poskim who discuss this. I wrote that the halacha is to dress little girls, when they reach the age of 3, according to all the laws of tznius detailed in halacha. The fact that some do not do so is irrelevant, as we said earlier regarding a custom which is the opposite of halacha.

Rabbi Drukman: The Rebbe once told me in yechidus that the details in this depend on the custom of the place (and he told me to ask

other rabbanim what the custom is in Eretz Yisroel, and said it also depends on the climate of the region). From what the Rebbe said, I understood that, generally speaking, from the age of three there must be tznius, which would mean long sleeves, no pants, etc.

However, regarding the details (socks, etc., and the precise length of the dress) apparently this depends on the custom as well as the child’s physical development. In any case, at one point an announcement was posted in 770, and they said it was from the Rebbe’s secretariat, that the girls who come to shul should be dressed modestly from the age of 3.

Rabbi Diskin: In the Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch* it does not say anything about the age of 3. I remember a time when in Beis Yaakov schools they were particular about tznius only from grade 3 (age 9). However, due to the decline in the generations, we cannot start being particular about tznius from the age of 6 or 9, because immodesty is so prevalent. Therefore, the Rebbe instructed us to be particular starting from the age of 3.

I have been teaching in Chabad girls schools for 25 years. Tznius problems that in the past, came up in tenth grade and up, are now commonplace in grades 5 and 6. And I’m talking about things that go against what it says in *Shulchan Aruch*. Therefore, just as the Rebbe spoke about starting to light Shabbos candles even before age 3, and he explained that because of the intensifying darkness we need to illuminate the house from an earlier age, so too with tznius.

I once asked Rabbi Wosner about this and he said that even though in the past they began at age 6, nowadays we begin at age 3.

Rabbi Ashkenazi: As soon as the Rebbe writes that, we Chabad Chassidim have no *heter* to act otherwise. However, apparently this horaa is primarily about the tznius of

clothing. So for example, we find regarding a 3-year-old in the men's section of shul, that the Rebbe said this is permissible until she reaches the age of chinuch and understanding (and maybe this is why she needs to dress modestly, because she is in the men's section, for the men cannot say the Shma or take out a Seifer Torah if she is not dressed properly).

How do we implement the Rebbe's guideline to do as they do in Beis Yaakov?

Rabbi Drukman: The Rebbe once sent the educational director of Beis Rivka in Kfar Chabad, Rabbi Mordechai Levin a"h, to the menahel of Beis Yaakov (Seminar Wolf) in B'nei Brak, Rabbi Avrohom Wolf a"h (who was known as a big zealot). The latter told R' Levin that the first thing to do is to have the teachers be role models!

Rabbi Diskin: Beis Yaakov schools also have problems, but there is one difference. In Beis Yaakov tznius is constantly spoken about. In Lubavitch, it was never the main topic, since we speak a lot about hiskashrus and shlichus. We need to encourage the girls in their tznius as much as possible, even if they don't always accept what we say.

Rabbi Ashkenazi: Obviously, we

need to carry out the Rebbe's horaa, though Beis Yaakov does things that go beyond the requirements of the halacha and are additional stringencies. Not every group of people can take on all stringencies, but when it comes to those things that are obligatory according to the laws of tznius, there can be no compromises.

Can a woman or girl be stylish while being tznius?

Rabbi Drukman: Wanting to be fashionable comes from feelings of inferiority that some of us have. It's no secret that there are plenty of people who regularly try to be trendy and modern. We have this in Lubavitch too, unfortunately, because of the interactions with all kinds of people while doing mitvtzim. If a person is aware that they are acting on behalf of the Rebbe, they raise the mushpa to them rather than descend to him or her.

They tell that the Chassid R' Itche der Masmid (may Hashem avenge his blood) once met with students of Litvishe yeshivos (who shaved their beards and grew their hair long) and he mocked them, saying, "You look like [university] students." He intended on mocking them but they took it as a compliment!

It's not that important to our bachurim, but a Litvishe bachur recently told me that in his yeshiva, if you buy a shirt for less than 200 shekels, people look down on you.

Rabbi Ashkenazi: One of the principles of a Chassidishe chinuch is not to accept the world's assumptions. When you wear something trendy, it's a gateway through which you can be dragged after things that are immodest. It could be that the garment itself is modest, but since it was designed by a goy whose intention was not to preserve modesty, wearing it can sooner or later lead to outright prohibitions.

It seems that the big enemy of tznius in our generation is the electronic media. Cell phones and internet have claimed many victims and in another few years they expect every child to be connected. How do you think we should be handling this in our homes and schools?

Rabbi Diskin: This is a general problem that requires a general Chabad response. Since this is such an urgent matter, I would like to take this opportunity to call upon rabbanei Chabad to organize a gathering of the Beis Din Rabbanei Chabad [in Eretz Yisroel], together with menahalim and rabbanim of Chabad schools, for the purpose of presenting a united position on tznius for all Chabad schools. It should be clear and signed by the Beis Din and be binding on all school principals.

Then we need to ensure that the standards are enforced by carefully surveying the schools and seeing how many girls were dismissed because they did not conform to the standards.

Today the situation is such that principals are afraid to fight with parents and they do not suspend girls because of tznius infractions. As soon as they have the support of the rabbanim, it will obligate them to take action. Likewise, parents would be able to complain to the beis din about lack of tznius at a particular school, and if necessary, the principal



Rabbi Chaim Shlomo Diskin

can be called down to discuss it.

The same goes for internet and cell phones (with internet connections) – we need to issue a p’sak din of all rabbanim that if someone does not need it for purposes of work (and even then, it needs to have other websites blocked), they cannot be in one’s home. Schools can be told not to accept students who have internet at home.

How come even public schools can establish rules about the students’ homes but in our mosdos we do not obligate parents to get rid of the internet?

Rabbi Ashkenazi: Regarding television, the Rebbe said that having one brings a priest and a church into the home. Internet and the phones and other little devices that are now available on the market, go even further than television! When they are brought into the home, they cause people to transgress serious sins, especially the three cardinal sins that we are obligated to give up our lives for rather than transgress: idol worship, immorality, and bloodshed.

When parents or educators realize what these devices can do and how they can easily lead a person to transgress these three cardinal sins, I am sure they will treat them accordingly and keep them away from children.

Rabbi Drukman: It starts with the atmosphere that the parents instill in the home. For example, in my role as rav of the city – and this is not a chareidi city – I need to appear at various events. I’ve made it a point not to take my children with me, either because the event is mixed, men and women, or because of the atmosphere.

At home they should know that we need to keep the rule, “always keep your distance from the sordid and the like.” Parents can tell children, “We are not buying shoes in Tel Aviv but in B’nei Brak for

reasons of tznius.” Remember, we are not all on the level of great Chassidim who did not notice their surroundings as they walked down the street, being preoccupied with a maamer Chassidus. If at home there is an atmosphere of openness and the lack of awareness of basic rules of modest conduct (guarding one’s eyes, harchakos, etc.), how do they expect their children not to sin?

I don’t say that it’s necessary to constantly talk about this in an aggressive manner; that’s not desirable either. But every so often it should be brought up and I remember that the mashpia, R’ Shlomo Chaim Kesselman a”h would occasionally discuss these matters associated with preserving k’dusha with the T’mimim.

How should the phenomenon of immodest wigs be dealt with and what is the halachic view on this?

Rabbi Drukman: The answer lies in your question itself. The phrase “immodest wigs” sums it up. If a woman feels good with the fact that her appearance reminds people of a Hollywood star, then this is a problem, and I’m not talking about the element of chilul sheim Lubavitch. (I will mention that some simchas that take place in Lubavitch and the way the women dress for these events, give no honor to Lubavitch.)

Rabbi Weiner: If the sheitel does not cover all the hair (even if only a small amount is uncovered), she is transgressing the halacha. A sheitel that covers all the hair, even if it is as nice as her own hair, even nicer, is fine. In *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 13, p. 189, the Rebbe says: A sheitel is preferred even if it is nicer than her own hair. When I asked the Rebbe why it is preferred if it is nicer than her hair the Rebbe said: “This is immodesty with her own body, and this [the sheitel] is a foreign item (the covering of the head is like the covering of the foot, etc.).”

Rabbi Ashkenazi: A sheitel needs to cover the hair, like an item of clothing which covers the body. The rule that clothing should not draw the attention of people on the street applies to a wig as well.

Rabbi Diskin: This gets back to my call for rabbanei Chabad to issue a clear p’sak din on tznius and to see that it is implemented. Rabbanim need to pasken what length is permissible, bearing in mind that it should be a “decree that people can abide by.” The phenomenon of many Lubavitcher women wearing a kerchief or other non-sheitel head coverings outside, something that the Rebbe fought against, also needs to be decreed.

What about “men’s fashion”? Does the fact that it is infiltrating our camp pose a tznius problem or is it just something that is not Chassidish?

Rabbi Ashkenazi: We know that every action that is done in this world with a holy intent, or at least without the opposite of a holy intent, can have a positive influence. Something done with an intent that is the opposite of holiness has negative energy, and one who does this is nourished by the three impure klipos.

The same is true with tznius in men’s clothing. It says in the Zohar that a man who styles his hair is nourished by the impure klipos. The entire purpose of fashion is to emphasize matter over form, which has its source in Greek culture. The Chashmonaim and our ancestors fought this with mesirus nefesh, which is why we celebrate Chanuka.

In general, the importance of modesty in dress is that immodest clothing is intended to draw the attention of the opposite gender.

Rabbi Drukman: Everything I said earlier about feelings of inferiority and submission before the customs and trends of the world regarding women and girls applies to

men as well. Not to be fanatical, but I remember once asking the mashpia R' Mendel Futerfas a"h why he doesn't wear a watch. He said, "It's modern and it's hard for me to get used to it."

I don't mean to say that people should stop wearing watches. The point is the spirit of what he said. The appearance of men must also be uniform and Chassidish (and I'm not talking about obvious things like a beard and a short haircut). It was always the way you could identify a Chassidic young man. (Clearly one does not need to look like a shlump, which, for some reason, some boys and men are "mehader" in; nor is the other extreme desirable.)

In chareidi areas I notice working men, drivers, vegetable store owners, etc., who despite their line of work, are dressed in Chassidic clothes (each according to the group he belongs to). For some reason, in Lubavitch (and without making generalizations), some people think that because they left yeshiva, they need to wear a leather yarmulke (because an ordinary black yarmulke is too frummy), and they are not particular about wearing a hat and jacket outside the times of davening. We've got to get it into our heads that even when not within the walls

of yeshiva, Hashem did not retire.

A generation ago, Rabbi Yaakov Landau a"h started Tiferes Bachurim in Moscow for working boys, and it was very successful. Even a bachur who, for whatever reasons, is not learning in a yeshiva, has to find a way to have set times for Torah study and continue to see himself as being connected to the ways of Chassidus, and just as important – those around him should view him that way too.

Rabbi Diskin: Baruch Hashem, this is less problematic with us [in Eretz Yisroel] than in other places. It's not that important to the bachurim. A Litvishe bachur recently told me that in his yeshiva, if you buy a shirt for less than 200 shekels, people look down on you.

How should a bachur who goes on mivtzaim or to a place of shlichus conduct himself when women ask them questions (and what should a woman do in the reverse situation)?

Rabbi Ashkenazi: The best thing is for a woman to speak to a woman and a man to a man. If this isn't possible, the interaction should be done in a very careful way, i.e., keeping a distance both physically and emotionally. The moment a person sees that it's going beyond that, they need to escape immediately

and give it over to someone else to handle.

If there is a yichud problem, then there is no heter to transgress this for purposes of mivtzaim. As a rule, if it's a conversation, it is preferable that it take place in the presence of someone else.

Rabbi Diskin: The Rebbe emphasized a number of times that men should work with men and women with women. If a woman asks a bachur on mivtzaim a question, he can give her material and refer her to the nearest Chabad house or give her a phone number of a Chabad house, but no more. There have been cases in which a conversation began on matters of faith and led to extremely negative things.

Rabbi Drukman: Of course you need to be polite and respond. However, when it's an ongoing activity, it is not proper for unmarried bachurim to be involved on a regular basis. Even in the case of young married men, a rav and mashpia need to be consulted to know how to go about it. Rabbi Chadakov would see to it that bachurim going on Merkos Shlichus would not go to places known for their lack of tznius.

When shluchim work with a



Rabbi Dovid Meir Drukman

R' Itche der Masmid once met with students of Litvishe yeshivos (who shaved their beards and grew their hair long) and he mocked them, saying, "You look like [university] students." He intended on mocking them but they took it as a compliment!

mixed crowd, how particular should they be about tznius in dress and separate seating (even if it will alienate people)?

Rabbi Drukman: In my experience, I don't accept that it alienates people (and I work in a place that is absolutely chiloni, as people put it). If it's presented properly, nobody is alienated. In general, there are explicit instructions from the Rebbe to keep men and women separate and I remember going to many lectures at kibbutzim of HaShomer HaTzair (virulently anti-religious kibbutzim) and they were definitely separate.

Yes, there are places (like in Russia, etc.) where it is hard to do this (and there are instructions from the Rebbe about this). However, we need to know that this is in the category of a forced situation and second-best. It shouldn't be publicized to the world; it should be kept quiet. Nobody should think that it's a first-choice scenario and a general license to do the same elsewhere.

Rabbi Ashkenazi: The Rebbe's instructions are that obviously, where possible, all guidelines of tznius should be observed. However, we need to differentiate between situations in which we are asked to be the guests to convey a message and situations in which we are making the event.

If the first case, we need to insist on the more essential matters, such as the area where the speaker is should not be one that is immodest. In the latter case, we need to ensure that all the details are as they should be. That is part of the job – getting people to realize that this is the way we do things.

A Chassidishe, G-d-fearing rav should be consulted. A Chassid – for he knows we need to be mekarev others. G-d-fearing – so he knows what is forbidden. One should not draw conclusions from someone

else's event and what takes place in other countries. And there's a difference between married men on shlichus, and T'mimim or girls on shlichus.

While on the topic of outreach, do you have ideas on how to teach mekuravim about tznius when the world associates beauty with the lack of tznius?

Rabbi Diskin: When I speak about this, I explain the point (which is explained in the Rebbe's sichos and letters) that when a person wants to express or reveal himself, he does so by means of the emotions or the intellect. When he tries to express himself through his body, it shows that he does not take pride in other things.

You can point out the deterioration of tznius in the world in that twenty years ago, certain things were out of the question, and today you see it. This shows how necessary it is to preserve the bounds of tznius.

Rabbi Ashkenazi: A Jew must know to display his real self, his intellect and emotions. One who dresses immodestly is proclaiming: I'm just a meat market. I have no substance. Look at my flesh.

Rabbi Drukman: Before we attempt to convince mekuravim, we need to convince those close to us, and in a big way. When we see the deterioration of the family unit and society, as a result of permissiveness, we need to draw our conclusions and change direction.

It's hard to cover the subject exhaustively in the course of an interview, and to do it right you need to invite speakers (men and women) whose specialty is not only in "heavenly" matters but also in what is going on down here, on earth. They can give examples "from the field," and from the shocking consequences of the licentious behavior of today.

Sometimes, our speakers (men

and women) speak lofty words and are aloof of the fact that the audience is already drowning in the 49th level of impurity and that lofty talk goes over their heads.

These lectures should also be given by baalei t'shuva, who can teach others the lessons they've learned. It is not necessary to videotape every such lecture, and you have to know who your audience is, because some topics can only be addressed in private.

What are the bounds of tznius within the extended family?

Rabbi Drukman: According to halacha, aside from a father and his daughter, a mother and her son, a grandfather and his granddaughter, and a grandmother and her grandson – other family members should not display signs of affection.

All the laws in *Shulchan Aruch* that deal with keeping a distance between men and women, apply to relatives too (and in a certain way, it is more serious with relatives). At the Shabbos table, there should be separate places for men and for women (although there is no need for a mechitza). Only men should sing z'miros.

Rabbi Ashkenazi: You need to be exceedingly careful about getting too close, not to mention touching. A brother-in-law and sister-in-law are like other unrelated men and women. The same is true for uncles and aunts and cousins – they need to be interacted with in the same way as to men who are strangers, and there is no heter for getting too close.

In the family setting, relatives meet and there is a need to talk about all sorts of family topics and to hand things to one another. Even then, you need to keep in mind that they are really outsiders and it's only because they are part of the family circle that there is a connection. You need to constantly remember, like a red light, that this person is a stranger as far as getting close.

Rabbi Diskin: You need to be careful to avoid any familiarity which goes beyond ordinary friendliness, not to laugh or be frivolous together. If we are not careful about this, we need to know there are tragedies and problems among us as a result.

What precautions should be taken at work regarding tznius?

Rabbi Diskin: First, you need to be knowledgeable in the laws of yichud. I don't think this is studied enough in school, which is why people are unaware of the basics. Practically speaking, a Chabad house should have a male secretary, even if the Chabad house director is careful about halacha. The same is true for other jobs, where you need to be careful beyond the bounds of halacha.

Rabbi Drukman: This is a question that every person has to ask his rav personally. In general, of course you need to be careful to avoid yichud situations, and when it is necessary to speak to women in work-related matters, there is no heter to talk at length and to joke around and be otherwise social. Many have fallen because of this. In short, "and your camp should be holy" – k'dusha is a vessel for blessing.

I want to point out that when the

Rebbe writes to women, he begins with "Bracha v'shalom" and not "Shalom u'v'racha," because the halacha says, "*asur lidrosh b'shlom isha*" (it is forbidden to inquire [directly] regarding a woman's welfare).

I once saw a brochure that was published by a mosad in Eretz Yisroel which praised the patron of that mosad while noting that she was also a singer. Although it did not say that men listen to this female vocalist, the Rebbe's handwritten note said to see in *Shulchan Aruch* where the halacha says "the voice of a woman is erva."

If Chazal declared l'halacha that "*ein apotropos l'arayos*" (there is no safeguard for immorality), it's not an exaggeration. It's a halacha and a statement of fact.

Rabbi Ashkenazi: If you are referring to the person in charge at a place of work or office, he must see to it that there is no yichud situation and no serving of drinks and refreshments to men and women, and that the female employees be dressed modestly. If you are referring to employees, they need to describe the situation to a Chassidishe, G-d-fearing rav who will guide him or her as to what is in the category of "be killed and do not transgress" and

what is okay.

Rabbi Weiner: I'd like to mention the book, *Yeitzei Adam L'faalo* which deals with this question. I recommend it. [In English *Nine to Five: A Guide to Modest Conduct for Today's Workplace* by Rabbi Shmuel Neiman and *The Journey to Virtue - the laws of interpersonal relationships in business, home, and society* by Rabbi Avrohom Ehrman are recommended.]

To sum up – action is the main thing:

*It's best to shop in modest places.

*There should be lectures on the topic of tznius that are down-to-earth and specific.

*People should be knowledgeable in the laws of yichud and these laws should be taught in school.

*Schools must have standards of tznius.

*Rabbanei Chabad are asked to provide tznius standards for all schools, to enforce them, and to compile a book which enumerates what is permissible.

*See above regarding sheitels and internet.

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Rabbi Moshe Weiner

The modest clothing of the Jewish people will be the way Moshiach recognizes them. Rabbi Pinchos of Koretz is quoted in his Midrash Pinchas as saying, "The exile hangs on a hair," and some explain this as the hair in a man's beard and others explain it as a single strand of a woman's hair that is not covered.

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. * Part 2*

[Continued from last week]

MEETING IN CHERNOVITZ

When I left Samarkand, although I had several things to take care of, my thoughts were on my future meeting with R' Mendel. I arrived in Chernovitz on 16 Tamuz. Taking the necessary precautions, I searched for the street where R' Mendel lived. I feared that the home of a former prisoner would be under surveillance, so I passed it by a number of times until I was certain there were no suspicious people in the area.

I knocked on the door but there was no response. One of the neighbors heard me knock, came out and asked me who I was looking for. I answered: Comrade Futerfas. He told me that Futerfas was not at home and was probably at the home of his friend, Moshe Veshedsky since he spent a lot of time there.

He described where R' Moshe

lived, which wasn't far from R' Mendel, and I went over there. After ascertaining that nobody was staking out the house, I knocked.

I heard footsteps and then a woman's voice asking who was there. I answered in Yiddish, "One of us."

There was silence for a few seconds and then she asked again, "Who is there?"

I repeated my answer, "One of us."

I heard whispering and after a few moments the door was opened. I entered but did not see anyone. Then the woman asked me once again for my name. "Zaltzman," I answered loudly, since I assumed that the people in the house were in a nearby room and could hear me. I loudly asked, "Is R' Mendel Futerfas here?"

A moment later, R' Mendel came out. Since the last time I saw him was when I was very little, I did not recognize him. I asked, "Are you R' Mendel?" He said he was and he asked, "Are you the son of Avremel Zaltzman?" I answered that I was, and then we greeted one another. I could not hold back my tears and I noticed that R' Mendel's eyes also

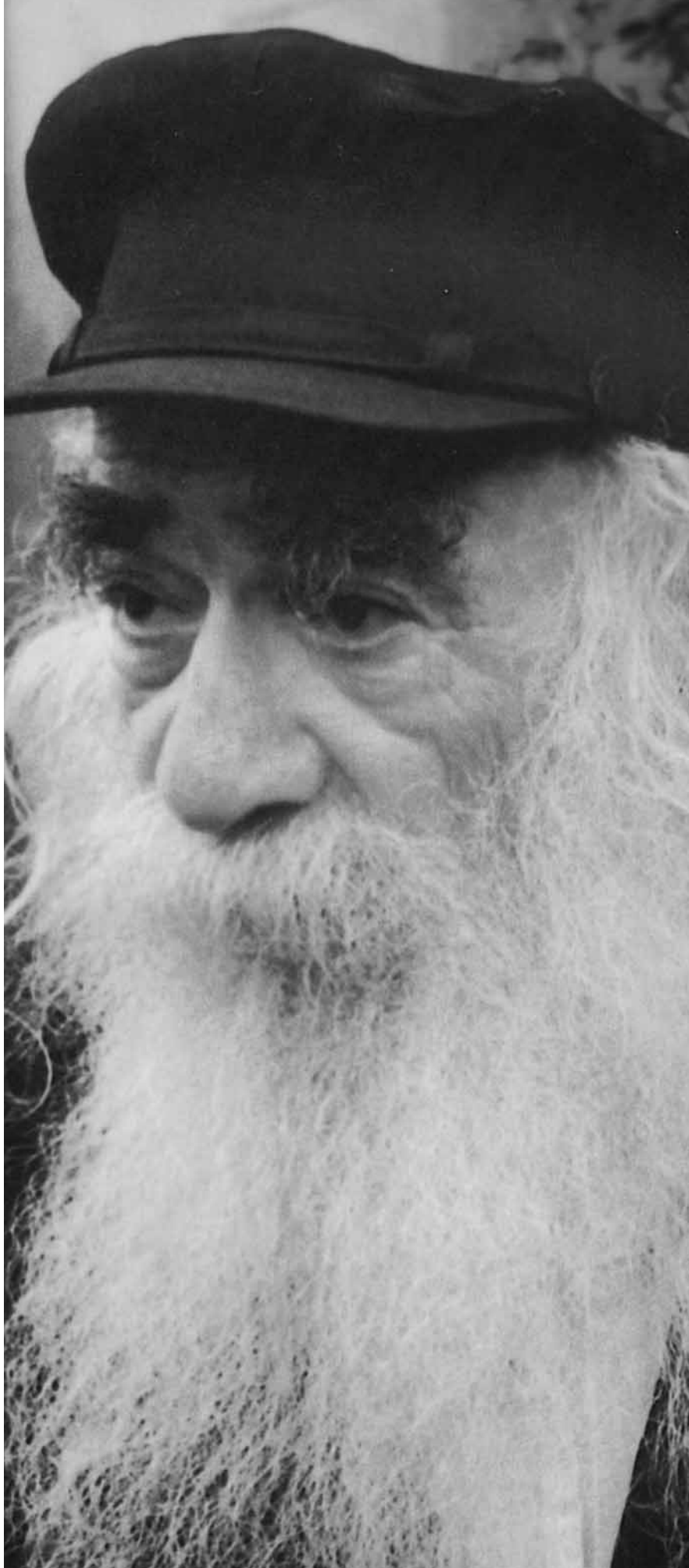
WHY WAS REB MENDEL IMPRESSED?

During the time that R' Mendel lived in Chernovitz, the Ribnitzer Rebbe lived there. Many people turned to this tzaddik for his brachos but the Chabad Chassidim knew that although he was a great tzaddik, we have our own Rebbe.

His mekuravim related in amazement to the Lubavitchers that the Ribnitzer fasted every day, immersed himself daily, and davened for hours. The Lubavitchers would listen but not be amazed.

When R' Mendel came to the city and they told him that the Ribnitzer Rebbe fasted every day, immersed daily, and davened for hours, he was very impressed and said he wanted to meet him.

At first, R' Mottel Kozliner did not understand why R' Mendel was so impressed and only afterwards did he say: the reason none of us were impressed was because none of us had tried to fast or to daven all day, so we did not appreciate the greatness in this. R' Mendel on the other hand, knew what this was about and when he heard that there was a Jew who served Hashem in this way, he just had to meet him!



reddened and were moist with tears.

R' Moshe Veshedsky, who overheard the moving encounter, also came out of the other room. I gave him shalom while glancing at his tormented eyes, in which the hardships of the exile he was in was apparent. R' Moshe realized I had come to meet with R' Mendel and he left us to sit together and left for the other room.

I sat facing R' Mendel and was speechless. I was a young man of 20 and I felt uncomfortable talking to an older Chassid who had many years of activism and mesirus nefesh behind him. R' Mendel understood how I felt and began our discussion with his clever smile and a loving demeanor.

I felt that he was wary of me and was telling me way less than he was revealing. I certainly understood him. After all, he barely knew me and even if I was Hilke Zaltzman, the son of his good friend Avremel, so what? There were plenty of cases in which the father was a Chassid and the son was...

But as we continued talking, we warmed up and R' Mendel realized that I really was "one of us," and he asked me about Anash in Samarkand and Tashkent. I told him at length about our lives there and about the underground activities.

I told him about the ongoing argument between R' Berke and R' Moshe during farbrengens, about which ought to take precedence – working on oneself or influencing others and asked his opinion. I sensed that he did not understand the question and it was only after I had explained myself that he said:

If Eliyahu HaNavi himself comes and tells you that you do not have to work with others, tell him: You are truly Eliyahu HaNavi, but we won't listen to you; we will continue working with others.

As we spoke, R' Moshe walked

by. Since I did not know him and did not know whether he could be relied upon, I refrained from speaking about certain topics. In general, the rule in Russia was that you didn't say everything, even to those you relied upon. You just said what the person needed to know in order to carry out his tasks in the Chassidic underground.

(People would joke about the secretiveness in Samarkand and would say that if someone from Samarkand told you something, he could speak for a long time without saying anything. The conversation would go something like this: I went to a certain place and met with someone. I argued with him about something and after a vigorous debate he agreed with me and all is well...)

R' Mendel noticed my apprehension and said: If you are being careful about him, don't tell me anything either, because I'll tell him everything.

I expressed my surprise at this and R' Mendel said, "we are one body and one soul," and he went on to tell me at length about their deep friendship since their youth.

WHERE DID WE SEE SUCH THINGS IN LUBAVITCH?

The next day, the fast of the 17th of Tamuz, I went to R' Moshe again. Since R' Mendel's family was in England, he had nothing to do in his house and he spent his days with R' Moshe.

That day, R' Moshe Chaim Dubrawsky a"h was visiting too. This was a group of friends who visited together occasionally. I stood up to daven and when I got up to Slichos, R' Moshe Chaim passed near me. He looked at me, then at R' Mendel, and pointed out that I was saying Slichos. He said: Where did we see such things in

HOW CAN I SLEEP IN PEACE?

R' Mendel was a real Ish Chesed. During the war, when he was in Samarkand, he often joined R' Dovid Deitsch and R' Mordechai Rivkin in business ventures. Each time he had to invest money, he would take a loan from his partners since the money he earned in the previous business venture had already been given to the needy.

One time the partners decided that the profits from their next venture would be used to buy gold bars and they would hide it under the floor since owning bars of gold at that time was considered a crime. When they needed money for their next deal, they would sell the gold.

That's what they did but when it came time to do the next deal and they asked R' Mendel for the gold, he said: I heard that one of the men cannot support his family even with minimal bread and I thought to myself, how can I sleep in peace with gold bars under the floor, when one of our young men needs this money for food for his children? I had no choice but to sell the gold and give him the money.

Lubavitch?

R' Mendel just said to leave me alone. (Afterwards, I found out that in Lubavitch they did not say Slichos on fast days. Though, the custom was reinstated later on.)

In the meantime, R' Mendel began to daven. I couldn't help but be amazed by R' Mendel's davening. He davened at length, like a son pleading before his father, using the niggun of R' Michel of Zlotchov. There are no words to describe the sweetness that I heard in his prayer.

During my stay in the city, I noticed that R' Mendel tried to avoid going to his house. He realized that I wanted to spend as much time as possible with him, and he did not want me to visit him at home since the neighbors would see me and word could get back to the authorities. Why was a former prisoner who was still considered a counterrevolutionary, spending time with a young man like me?

Other Chassidim lived in Chernovitz at this time, like R' Chaim Zalman Kozliner a"h (known by the acronym Chazak), R' Avrohom Shmuel Lehenhartz, and others. R' Mottel Kozliner the son of Chazak, had gotten married and

R' Berke Chein had left, and we were left without a mashpia. There was no one with whom to farbreng, from whom to get Chassidish warmth and chayus, etc. After discussing it from all angles, we came to the conclusion that better that a Jew like R' Mendel should come, despite the danger this entailed.



Reb Mendel

moved to Tashkent, and R' Moshe's son, R' Michel Veshedsky, also moved to Tashkent and lived with his sister Dina, who was married to R' Mordechai Gorodetzky. Young people generally did not remain in Chernovitz and most moved to Tashkent, where there was a young Chabad community.

I left Chernovitz with mixed feelings. I was happy for having finally met a true Chassid and drawing from him an abundance of Chassidische chayus for working on behalf of others. On the other hand, I missed him. I wondered when I would meet him again.

On the way to Samarkand, which took two weeks with all the stops, I kept on thinking about my encounters with R' Mendel and about the other Chassid I had gotten to know, R' Moshe Veshedsky.

When I arrived in Samarkand, people were impatient to hear about my travels and especially, what R' Mendel had to say about the debate between R' Berke and R' Moshe. R' Mendel's view causes a great *hisorerus* in the underground work. R' Berke also attributed great

importance to what R' Mendel had to say.

THE REBBE'S ANSWER: CONSULT WITH THE AVREICHIM OF SAMARKAND

Throughout those years, R' Mendel tried repeatedly to get out of Russia in order to see the Rebbe, and to reunite with his family who lived in London. He submitted a request to leave time after time and was always refused.

R' Mendel once related that one of the times that the clerk told him the answer was No, he began to yell: What do you want from me? How much can you punish someone? I've been a prisoner for 17 years already, first in Siberia and now within the four walls of my home!

Their wicked answer was: Don't even dream about getting out. We will never allow you to leave Russia and reunite with your family.

R' Mendel did not lose his faith and he responded: We will see... What G-d wants is what will ultimately prevail!

In the meantime, R' Moshe Veshedsky received permission to emigrate and he left Russia. R' Chaim Zalman Kozliner moved to Samarkand and R' Mendel remained in Chernovitz, alone and with no possibility for leaving the country.

Chazak lived in our neighborhood and I took the opportunity to learn Gemara with him. He was an excellent teacher and I acquired much knowledge in the study of Gemara from him.

One day, when I came for our shiur, Chazak told me that R' Mendel wrote him that he had asked the Rebbe that since the emigration officials in Chernovitz refused to let him out, whereas in Central Asia some Chassidim had been allowed to leave (like R' Boruch Duchman and R' Berke Chein, who left Samarkand), should he move to Samarkand or Tashkent. R' Mendel also mentioned that he was alone in Chernovitz while in Samarkand and Tashkent there was a Chabad community.

The Rebbe's answer, which was transmitted somehow or other, said: consult with the avreichim of Samarkand, how they will receive you.

Therefore, Chazak said to me, go discuss it with the group and tell me what they say.

Chazak was not involved with the underground in Samarkand since we tried to refrain from talking to anyone unless it was pertinent. But Chazak, with his Chassidic sixth sense, knew that we had a group and that I was part of it, so he told me to check it out with them.

I immediately went and told my brother-in-law, R' Chaim Eliyahu Mishulovin. He was considered the brain of Samarkand and many people consulted with him. When he heard the Rebbe's answer, he began to analyze it. On the one hand, this

was a z'chus for the avreichim of Samarkand and it was also a clear hint that the Rebbe wanted R' Mendel to move to Samarkand. On the other hand, one could understand from the Rebbe's answer that there was reason to fear danger and it might be better for him not to move.

What danger was there in moving to Samarkand? Very simple. At that time there were some groups of bachurim who learned underground. If R' Mendel, a released prisoner who was under constant surveillance by the KGB, would live among us, it could lead to great tragedy.

The KGB would know where he lived, with whom he met, and if we farbrenged with him or met with him, they would know about it. This would put all the underground activities in danger.

Go consult with R' Moshe, said my brother-in-law, and I headed straight there. I told him about the letter that Chazak got from R' Mendel and about the Rebbe's answer, and he exclaimed: Oy, oy, oy, R' Mendel wants to come to Samarkand... He was well aware of the danger we would be in if R' Mendel came to Samarkand.

We saw that the Rebbe was particularly careful when it came to



R' Mendel (center) receiving the four minim in the Rebbe's room

Samarkand. We found out that tourists who had yechidus with the Rebbe and said that they planned on visiting cities in Russia including Tashkent and Samarkand, were asked by the Rebbe not to visit Samarkand. Rabbi Binyamin Katz was also warned by the Rebbe not to go to Samarkand.

Yet, after living in Samarkand for nearly ten years, R' Berke Chein had left, and we were left without a mashpia. There was no one with whom to farbreng, from whom to get Chassidishe warmth and chayus, etc.

After discussing it from all angles, we came to the conclusion that better that a Jew like R' Mendel should come, despite the danger this entailed. R' Moshe said: we are three people – Eliyahu, you, and me. Let us pasken together like a beis din that Hashem will help, that all will be well!

I immediately sent a message to Chazak that the avreichim of Samarkand agreed wholeheartedly that R' Mendel should come. We excitedly awaited R' Mendel's response and two weeks later we heard that he was on his way.

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TO BE HEALTHY... AND TO KNOW IT

By Rochel Shavi

“I’m sorry, it’s not the tooth. The reason it hurts is because there is an inflammation under the root of the tooth. See? You don’t have to be a radiologist to see it. It’s the black area above the white root.”

“Aha, I see it. So what now?”

“I’m going to refer you to an oral surgeon. He needs to open it up and clean it out.”

“Surgery?”

And there he was, my old acquaintance, gripping my heart with icy hands. Hello there Mr. Fear. I haven’t exactly missed you... Why Hashem?

Yet, the core of all tests is: **not to be at all afraid**. In other

words, complete bitachon in Hashem.

“It’s nothing,” said the dentist in his most soothing manner. “You won’t feel a thing.”

But the Chassidic woman sitting there just a moment ago had disappeared. There remained only trembling and dread.

“Here’s the referral.”

“Thank you, Dr. Lieberman.”

Hashem, why me? I’ve already told you, I can’t go through with this!

* * *

When I wrote to the Rebbe, these are the answers I opened to:

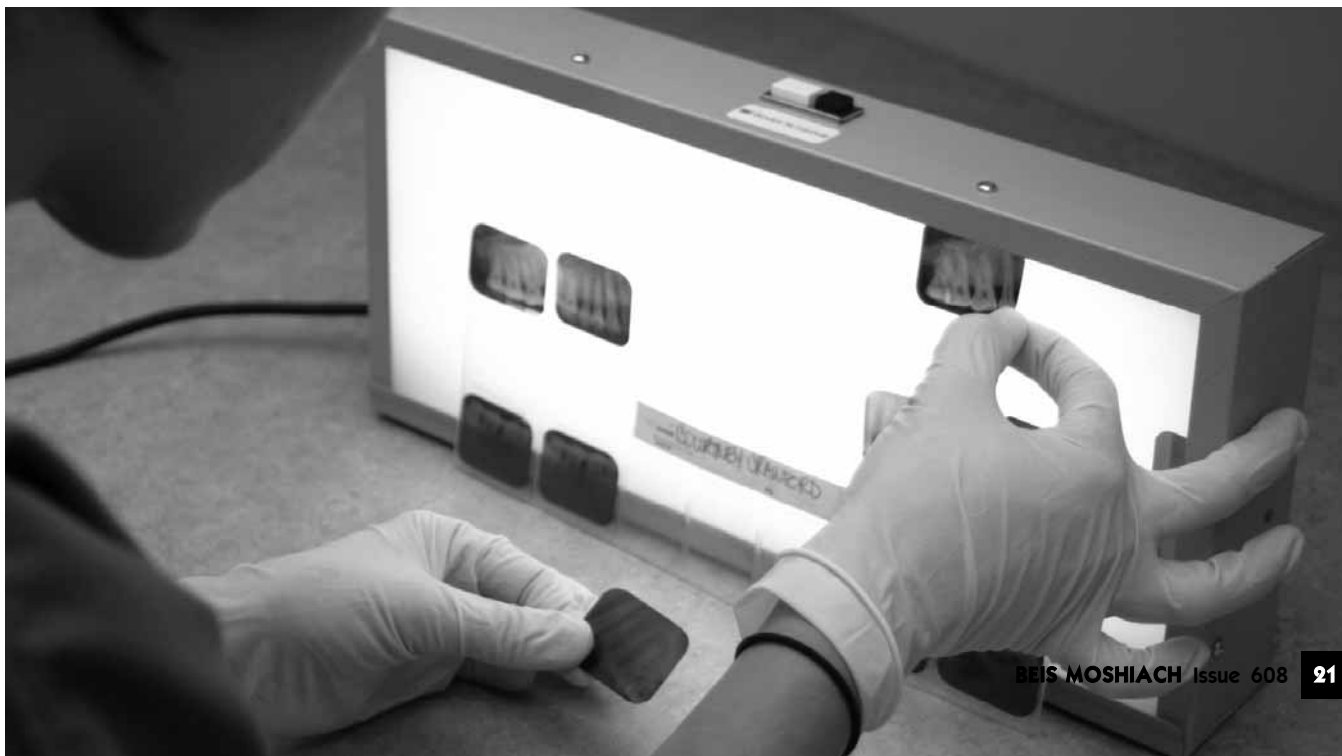
I’ve already written you my opinion, that your thinking is

incorrect and there is no basis for your fears, and certainly it is nothing but the counsel of the Inclination.

What inclination, Rebbe? I saw the X-ray!

With blessing for proper health and that you should know it (letter #1123).

Heaven forbid. I did not mean to give rebuke but I am bothered about your pain and anguish for reasons that have no basis and surely also have no reality, and as is known according to what is explained in Chassidus, the difference between the concept of tests and birurim (experiences one can work through and refine).



(ibid #929)

Rebbe, it explains there that with **birur** – **there is** something that needs to be extracted, and with a **test** – **there isn't** anything there, and never was... But I saw it on the X-ray! The dentist did too.

Another two days until the surgery. True, it's minor surgery and I won't feel anything – but in my mouth!? And what can it be? And why didn't my cleaning routine work? Maybe, G-d forbid, there's something awful there? That is why my old acquaintance hangs around my neck, hardly allowing me to breathe. Two days can be a long time.

How embarrassing. The mind should be ruling the heart! I'll try again. The *HaYom Yom* says that the Baal Shem Tov says that everything we see and hear is a G-dly directive for what we need to correct within ourselves. What can it be? **Above** the upper root of the upper tooth, hmmm. Up on top, **above**. In my body, in my home, above, **above** the top floor...

Oh my! That door! The door that for some reason the carpenter installed when he raised the roof because rain was dripping in, a door whose threshold is way up there and there is no ladder or steps to reach it, and it doesn't lead anywhere except into that space under the roof, but it's a door nonetheless!

Danny! Remember that door up there? The one that leads from the awning on the porch on top, to the roof over Shneur's room? The one that the carpenter put there when he was fixing the roof a year ago? **It doesn't have a mezuzah, right?**

Mendy! Quick, go bring a ladder. I don't care from where.

That same day a mezuzah was put up.

* * *

Two days later, with the incriminating X-ray on the light box and butterflies in my stomach, I was at the oral surgeon. "You know doctor," I tentatively began, drawing on my heaviest artillery, "I once had something and the Rebbe miraculously removed it. Are you sure we have to go through with this?"

"Well, if you don't want to lose the tooth..." he said, as he instructed his assistant to prepare the materials he needed.

The materials were prepared and he donned gloves. They took out the knives from the metal trays and I was in turmoil. I even cried a little, in fear. They shined the light in my eyes and gave me a local anesthetic. Yikes!

Until the anesthetic took effect,

He called his colleague Dr. Lieberman.

"Hello, Dr. Lieberman. This is Dr. Tamir. Regarding the woman you sent me. Yes, I'm holding the X-ray you took from two days ago and another one I just took now and the difference between them is like night and day. No, there simply is nothing there, no problem at all. What? The tooth is loose? (He looked into my mouth with the phone in one hand while trying to shake my tooth with his other hand.) No, it's not moving at all. A pocket? (And again, with the phone in one hand and one of his tools in the other hand, he tried to locate the space (i.e., pocket) between the tooth and the gum. "No, there's no pocket..."

"There's nothing wrong here,

Someone once asked the Rebbe what doctors will do when Moshiach comes. The Rebbe said, "They will convince people that they are healthy."

the doctor said it paid to take another X-ray from another angle. A few minutes later and the nurse brought the little celluloid slide. He peered at it suspiciously and said, "I don't see anything. Dry it some more."

She went off to dry it some more and then came back. "I can't believe what I'm seeing!" he said quietly to himself.

"Mrs. ..., all the miracles happen to you!"

For the second time within 48 hours, I examined my upper jaw and once again, you didn't need to be a radiologist to see, or better put – not to see, that which wasn't there...

"How can that be?" muttered the doctor.

nothing at all!"

"Doctor Lieberman, she's fine, goodbye."

He looked at me and bent over a bit. "Now they're tears of joy, right?"

Of course.

All I had left to do was apologize to the Rebbe and make an accounting with the despicable one [i.e., the Evil Inclination], who had vanished as though he had never been present, with all the names that Chazal call him and a few more that I thought up myself.

And you should know that that tooth shook like a door and there was definitely a pocket there, until suddenly...

* * *

Someone once asked the Rebbe what doctors will do when Moshiach comes. The Rebbe said, "They will convince people that they are healthy."

I never understood that, for if someone is healthy, they're healthy, aren't they?

Well, apparently not, as long as he doesn't **know** that he is.

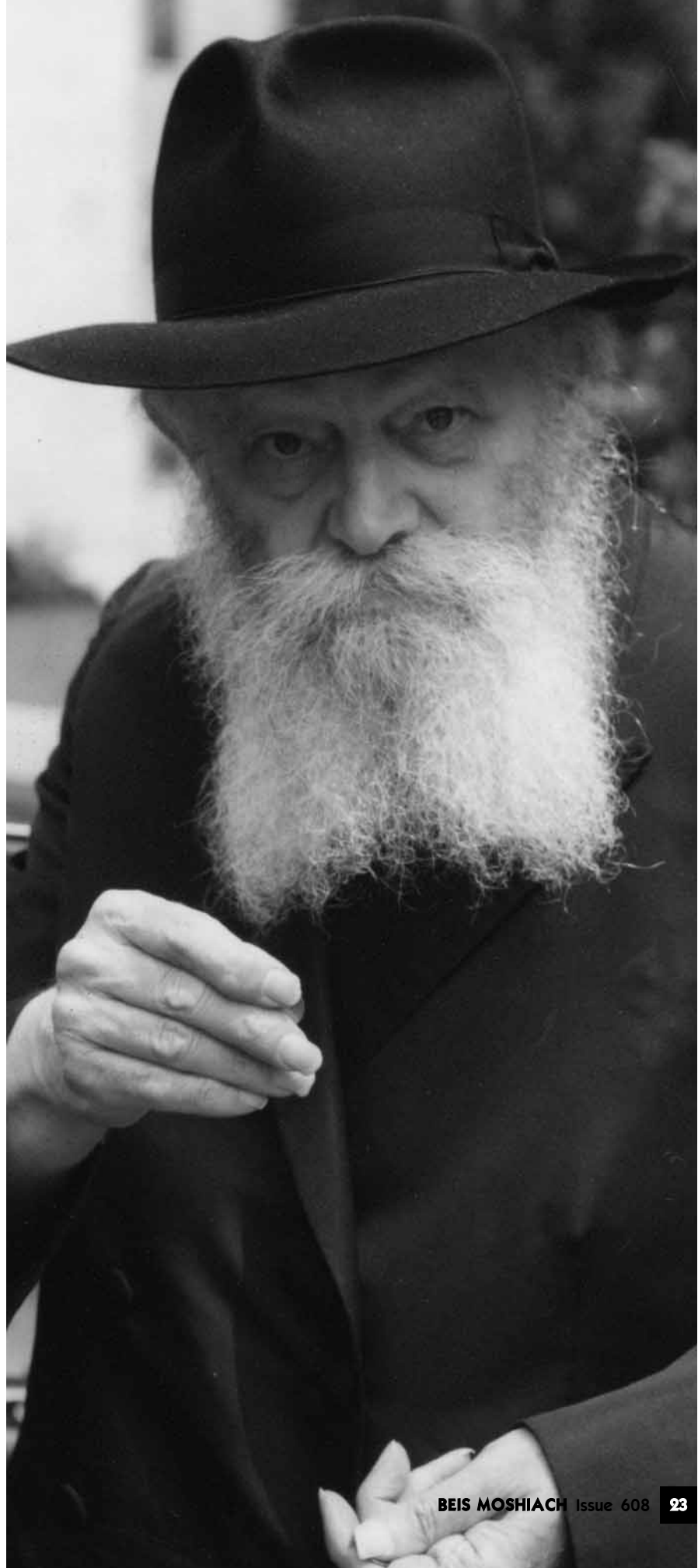
This needs to be publicized! To convince... And this is seemingly a serious job because the "opponent" in the heart is truly a fool (at least my inner opponent), and really stubborn too. It's not so easy to convince him, even when the miracles are taking place and even when we are told, time and again, that the Avodas HaBirurim is over, and there's nothing here. If there are no more birurim, what is there? Tests.

The final test, the only remaining avoda, is to prepare the world, i.e., to tell everybody and convince them that this is true! The nightmare is over even if we don't quite see that this is so. Perhaps only another little bit of effort is needed and that's all.

To convince them that it's possible to relax. To stop being afraid. To start breathing (the air of Moshiach). That we need to be happy and confident now! For those who cannot accept this directly from the Rebbe, from the sichos of 5751-2, Hashem will use other ways to get the message across... Doctors who don't even wear kippos yet, for example.

Whether we want it or not, we are the generation in which it will happen ("you won't feel a thing"). "Mrs. ..., all the miracles happen to you." "A difference between night and day," "now they are tears of joy." It's not hard to find the source in the prophetic words: with blessing for proper health.

And what is no less important: **That you should know it!**



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. * Part 2 of 2*

[Continued from last week]

What's happening these days with the community?

First of all, we are trying to preserve what we have, but the goal is to bring things back the way used to be, to the glory days.

It's the last two to three years that the shul has started bustling again, even on weekdays. R' Mendel Tzurkenik put in great effort and was able to reestablish a

regular minyan for Mincha-Maariv every day. For a while now, we have had a shiur in D'var Malchus on Thursday night and this is followed by a shiur in Gemara. For about three hours, people sit and learn with chayus. On Friday night there is a shiur in Likkutei Torah.

Lately, we've revived the shiur in Chassidus Shabbos morning, a shiur that weakened in recent years because people find it hard to come

early in the morning.

We hope that we can add more shiurim, thus expanding the shul and strengthening it.

Can something be done to bring in the people and restore the shul to what it once was?

This is one of the reasons why I agreed to take the position, in the hopes that I can, with Hashem's help, help draw more people in, and I'd like to do this as soon as possible. It can be done through shiurim at the shul; to see to it that the farbrengens are interesting and attract people; and through mitvzaim that will create a connection between the people in the shul and those living in the area. Remember, the shul is in the center of Tel Aviv, with everything that entails.

These activities, as well as the work being done in Tel Aviv by the shluchim, will – with Hashem's help – be successful and the shul will bustle with life again.

The shul has a lot to offer. Today too, there are special Chassidic figures, like Rav Butman, a Chassid who conveys a great deal of Chassidic flavor, Rav Menachem Lipsker, who remembers the Chassidic glory of days gone by, Rabbi Avrohom Shmuel Levin, who is chockfull of Chassidic stories from the time he was the Rebbe's representative in Agudas HaRabbanim in the US, Rav Eliezer Reichman, a remnant of the generation of genuine ovdim, and Rav Boaz Segal and his wife, who are full of Chassidic energy.

The Rebbe's way is not to wait for people to come to you, but to go out in the street with a lantern. We plan on doing a series of programs, like having Shabbos meals Friday nights for the residents of the area, together with Chabad Chassidim, to give them a taste of the Chabad-Shabbos atmosphere.

There's definitely a demand for this and we hope to follow through on this soon. It will attract people to the shul. There's so much to do in Tel Aviv, a city with plenty of people who are seeking meaning in life. If you put in the work, you can reach them.

What would you say is the role of a rav of a k'hilla?

I think that nowadays, a rav is a sort of psychologist of the k'hilla. The role of rabbanim today is not only to answer halachic questions. Every self-respecting group has someone with whom they discuss things. Even banks pride themselves by saying there is

someone you can talk to there. In my opinion, a rav today is someone with whom you consult and talk things over, someone who can help.

In other respects, it depends on many factors. A rav who grew with his congregation is different than a rav who joined an existing k'hilla. So I think that the Alef-Beis of a rav is that he be a listening ear, especially when there are so many mekuravim who need a listening ear. They don't necessarily have questions but they experience many difficulties and a lack of clarity about how to look at different things. I'm not talking only about

mekuravim, but Anash too, Chassidim who go way back.

I'm not coming to give advice to old-time rabbanim, and especially not to rabbanim who hold and promote strong views. Who am I to tell them what to do? But it seems to me that this is something we all need to think about.

In the past, a person knew that in order to eat meat, it needed a hechsher. He had to know who the shochet was, whether he was G-d-fearing. etc. The rav was responsible for the local shochet, and he would check the knives, etc. They didn't need more than that.

In our generation, in contrast,

There's so much to do in Tel Aviv, a city with plenty of people who are seeking meaning in life. If you put in the work, you can reach them.



we need a hechsher on everything, on pants, on socks, on sheitels. There is nothing that doesn't need a hechsher. I'm not talking about a potential problem with shatnez or idol worship, etc. Today, there is a blurring between k'dusha and the opposite of k'dusha. This confusion is tremendous and it affects all aspects of life.

People don't think we need a hechsher on everything, but we do! Take a cell phone for example. Who would have imagined that a cell phone needed a hechsher? Do you eat it? But a cell phone has something that other things don't have. If a person did all sorts of prohibitions, he wouldn't attain what a cell phone can cause. It's a

treif! People don't understand that this is a generation with new means at its disposal. People are stringent about using meat that is Sh'chita Lubavitch or Eida HaChareidis, but they forget that there are things they use every day that are in the category of completely forbidden.

The role of rabbanim is to talk about this night and day and to make sure that each item gets its hechsher. A rav has to get the message across that we need to pay attention to every detail in our lives. The challenges today are very serious. Once upon a time, the tests were of the sort that "if you do this, you're a Jew, and if you don't do this – you are not a Jew." Today you can be considered a

the Evil Inclination, you didn't meet him. You could live 120 years and not meet the Evil Inclination, relatively speaking, of course. As long as you remained in a village, you needed candles to seek out the Evil Inclination.

Today, you need to seek the Good Inclination with candles. There's the well-known Mishna with the Arizal's explanation, "the night of the 14th, you check for chametz by the light of a candle," that when you reach age 14, you need to begin searching out the Evil Inclination by the light of a candle, which is the neshama.

Today it's the opposite. You have to seek what is permissible. Today, the world is in the category of the forbidden. Therefore, if we are moving away from the principle that a rav has to wait for people to come and ask questions about what permissible and what isn't, then he has to drill it into the heads of those who listen to him that there are problems of what is prohibited and the world needs a hechsher. The pritzus, meaning the breaking of boundaries, is in all areas of life. So the relationship between a man and his rav is in everything.

A rav needs to know that it depends on him. If he conveys the message that all problems center on the hechsher of meat, then their relationship will be about a hechsher on meat. If he insists that people come to more shiurim, then the relationship will focus on that.

Rabbanim used to rebuke people for not coming enough to shiurim and farbrengens, but today we have to convey that all 24 hours of the day need the halachic guidance of a rav.

To the credit of mekuravim I'll say that we see this more with them. Someone who was born into a frum home thinks he knows what is permissible and what is forbidden, but those who became

You used to need a rav to be able to ask him a question about the kashrus of a chicken, because other things were clear-cut. If you didn't go to the big city to seek out the Evil Inclination, you didn't meet him.

small device, but it is very powerful, and people don't acknowledge this.

To a certain extent we can say that today, it is far less likely for someone to be tripped up with treif meat than to be tripped up by hearing or seeing things that are in the category of idol worship, immorality, and bloodshed. Most of the meat sold in stores [in Israel] is kosher, to some extent or another, and this is true for other food items, but most of the clothing that is sold is far from being mehadrin!

Most of the written media is not mehadrin! Most things that are heard are not mehadrin, and not only fall short of mehadrin, but

Chassidishe Yid even with all the prohibitions in the world.

What do you think should be the relationship between a young married man and a balabus, with the rav of the k'hilla?

As I said, if a rav is successful in instilling the awareness that everything needs a hechsher, then naturally, the relationship between the rav and his congregation will be one that encompasses all aspects of life. He directs his k'hilla in shalom bayis, chinuch, parnasa, etc.

You used to need a rav to be able to ask him a question about the kashrus of a chicken, because other things were clear-cut. If you didn't go to the big city to seek out

from later in life, don't know a lot. You see that their connection with the heads of the community, whether rav or mashpia, is on nearly every subject.

Is there a difference between the conduct of a rav and the conduct of a Chassidishe rav?

The difference is not only among rabbanim but in everything. There's a melamed, and a Chassidishe melamed. There's a rosh yeshiva, and a Chassidishe rosh yeshiva. There's a shochet, and a Chassidishe shochet. Even shluchim – there are organizations that send people out to distant places, yet there is a difference between a shliach and a Chassidishe shliach, a shliach of the Rebbe.

The common denominator in all of them is expressed in the question: who is for whom? Is the rav for the sake of the k'hilla, or is

the k'hilla for the sake of the rav? Is the shliach there to serve the city or is the city there for the shliach, etc. In other words, how do I see the k'hilla, how *I* want it to be or how the Rebbe wants it to be?

The question boils down to whether first there was a k'hilla and you were chosen to run it, or whether the k'hilla is there to serve you, to give you proper respect. This sums up the difference between a Chassidishe rav and a non-Chassidishe rav. Someone who is not a Chassid is not ashamed to say openly that the k'hilla is for me. I am a rav the son of a rav, generations of rabbanim. I received this k'hilla

as an inheritance from my father or father-in-law. They built up the k'hilla and I am succeeding them.

If the starting point is that I am for the congregation, the rav feels that "it's not authority that I give to you, but servitude."



Rabbi Yosef Shmuel Gerlitzky,
shliach in Tel Aviv, blessing
Rav Chaim Ashkenazi on the
occasion of his appointment as rav

I remember, when my father came to the yeshiva in Rishon L'Tziyon in order to invite Rabbi Shaul Brook to my bar mitzva, R' Shaul told him a story. In the courtyard of Rav Boruch Mordechai of Bobruisk there was a mud hole. One time, at a Chassidische farbrengen, they insisted on an explanation as to why there was a perpetual mud hole in his yard.

He answered that when Adam HaRishon saw all the future generations and their leaders, he asked who would be the rav of Bobruisk. Hashem told him, Rav Boruch Mordechai. Adam spat and said, "Some rav he is," and out of his spit this mud hole was formed.

That's a Chassidische rav.

One of the issues of the day is the representation of rabbanim of Chabad congregations in the Vaad Rabbanei Chabad in Eretz Yisroel.

How do you think communities should be represented?

I don't want this to be

In other words, how do I see the k'hilla, how I want it to be or how the Rebbe wants it to be?

interpreted as though I am seeking honor. I am definitely not in a role where I can come and represent a large congregation, but because of this, it's possible that what I have to say will be taken more sincerely, without ulterior motives.

Since the time the Rebbe appointed the Vaad Rabbanei Chabad and till this day, many changes have taken place on the Chabad map in Eretz Yisroel. K'hillos have grown and others have moved on. Thought must be given as to how to build the Vaad Rabbanei Chabad in accordance with the present-day needs of Chabad.

I don't mean, G-d forbid, that they should change any of the principles that the Rebbe established, but it definitely has to be built according to present-day needs. It doesn't have to be

something that only the communities want, but the Vaad Rabbanei Chabad themselves have to want it. Otherwise, it looks like a private business for a group of people, and then it's hard to demand that the Chassidim respect it as a place where their voice is heard. The impression that exists today is a painful one. In recent years they made no changes in its composition, no permanent or even temporary additions.

The goal is to give all Chabad Chassidim the feeling that they are represented by this Vaad, thus strengthening the rabbinic leadership in all Lubavitcher communities wherever they are, and then their views will be more widely accepted. There's no question that this would give great nachas to the Rebbe MH"M.

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B'HESECH HA'DAAS

By Rabbi Shlomo Halpern

Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry

Despite the fact that it says that Moshiach will come “b’hesech ha’daas,” at a moment of diversion, we must be careful not to be diverted from the general approach of the Rebbe MH”M to personal instructions, from his conduct during the years of 5753-5754 to the limited responses from earlier years.

THE CONFUSING STAMP

During the time of the Beilis Affair, a Torah scholar living in a small town in Russia came up with an idea on how to refute the blood libel. He sent a comprehensive letter to the prosecutor himself, detailing all the Torah evidence from Talmud and *Shulchan Aruch* for the prohibition against consuming blood, and – so he thought – their claims would be nullified...

The letter arrived at its destination, and the prosecutor read its contents. When his secretary asked him for his opinion on the letter, he responded angrily, “What do you mean? Didn’t you notice what the Jew did on the letter? He placed the stamp bearing the picture of Czar Nicholas on the envelope – with the Czar’s picture upside-down! That’s rebellion against the king!”

The prosecutor was not the slightest bit interested in the refutations and claims contained in

the letter, and he didn’t want to deal with them. He decided instead to tend to the stamp on the envelope with the Czar’s picture upside-down, coming with the excuse that this is rebelling against the king!

THEY CLAIMED WHEAT, AND HE ADMITTED TO BARLEY...

Over the past several days, I have received numerous phone calls from friends and acquaintances: “Nu, have you seen it already? Have you responded?” In order not to go against my friends’ advice, I read the article written in response to my article last week, and I immediately remembered the aforementioned story, which the Rebbe MH”M told at a farbrengen on Yud-Tes Kislev 5730.

In his response, Rabbi M.M. Brod chose to deal with only one point, and it wasn’t really the main

one: For some reason, the instructions that he and Rabbi Wolpo received in connection with the printing of the seifer *Yechi HaMelech* were simply ignored. I have no cause to doubt the veracity of what he wrote, and thus it is not my intention to refute him, although there were some inaccuracies in his presentation. If my suggestion had been accepted to gather together all the Rebbe’s answers on the subject of Moshiach and the Redemption, this whole discussion could have been spared in advance. In any event, he deserves some appreciation, as in his merit, we are learning about additional answers from the Rebbe. Here, the child asks: What are you waiting for? Maybe you’ll finally consent to give us the privilege of seeing all the answers in your possession? Did you receive instructions to release them with an eye dropper?

So why does this remind me of the story of the stamp? Very simple. Here too, there is no response to the main claims made in the previous article. I never suggested that the answer to Rabbi Wolpo was meant to apply to everyone. Rather, the publishing of the seifer is a matter that has relevance to everyone.

In his current article, the author was careful not to show disrespect, etc. If only he would take that approach in all the articles throughout the periodical to which he contributes. However, just a few weeks beforehand, we were privileged to endure some unprecedented attacks, based upon “the well-known series of notes from

the end of 5744” and the sicha from 5745, with the purpose of creating a “delegitimization” of Rabbi Wolpo. It’s amazing to note that even according to the author of this recent article, **the writer of the seifer had received permission from the Rebbe MH”M to publicize matters on Moshiach and the Redemption!** Thus, anyone who makes a call to establish an opinion based upon the days of 5744-5745 is mistaken and being deceptive!

THE FULL STORY

In pursuance of this point, I clarified matters with Rabbi Wolpo, and discovered that in connection with his seifer *Yechi HaMelech*, he wrote to the Rebbe in 5744 that he didn’t state that the Rebbe is Melech HaMoshiach. The Rebbe’s reply: **“In the sheets he enclosed, there is no need to look for allusions, as all of them are filled with the aforementioned proofs.”** These are the sheets that were spoken about on Shabbos Parshas B’Reishis 5745, **and which the Rebbe gave his approval to print** in 5752! The editing made by Rabbis Goldberg, Wechter, and Brod, in accordance with the Rebbe MH”M’s instructions, omitted only a few expressions, but this didn’t alter the fact that “all of them are filled with the aforementioned proofs”!

In any event, it is clear that on the one hand, there were answers that limited and negated different forms of publicity. On the other hand, the writer of said article admits that there were answers where the Rebbe responded positively to the publicity, and therefore, I see no need to argue with him.

However, the one who is claiming that “the Rebbe doesn’t want that they should be involved in this” is Rabbi Brod, who didn’t bother to mention that this was a **personal instruction to him**. If he

would have noted that “in certain instances, the Rebbe rejected the publicity, but there were also a number of cases where the Rebbe related positively to the idea,” this would have saved you from having to read the recent articles. (But then how would we have merited the full disclosure of the Rebbe’s instructions in relation to the seifer *Yechi HaMelech*?)

In any event, the fact that there were positive answers in connection with the publicity undoubtedly constitutes a “change in approach” or a new development on the matter. Even the seifer’s author understands this, and the proof is his renewed appeal to the Rebbe MH”M regarding actually publishing the seifer.

In addition, regarding the publishing of the kuntres in Adar Rishon 5752, Rabbi Wolpo requests that the writer of the article refresh his memory. The intention was to publish it as official material of “N’shei U’Bnos Chabad” in the form of Torah study on Moshiach and the Redemption, as instructed by the Rebbe. They raised concerns, and were answered accordingly. We are naturally not ignoring this answer, however, we must relate to it just as any other answer – based on the question and the situation. In practical terms, the Rebbe MH”M gave his approval to publicity on more than one occasion – including regarding the identity of Moshiach.

Yet, after all this, another much clearer and explicit seifer was published, *Yechi HaMelech HaMoshiach*, **containing statements of approval from all of the leading Chabad rabbanim in Eretz HaKodesh!** (see insert) – including those that Rabbi Brod calls upon in deference to their authority. Weren’t they aware of the aforementioned answers? Weren’t they concerned about driving Jews away?

AREN’T WE MISSING THE MAIN THING?

Let’s get back to the upside-down stamp. First and foremost, the spokesman chose in his article to ignore the Rebbe’s constant expressions of encouragement for more than a year to the singing of “Yechi.” Doesn’t the encouragement of the proclamation of “Yechi,” not just in the Rebbe’s *Daled amos*, but before millions of people throughout the world, constitute a publicizing of the identity of Moshiach? During that year, were there not more responses from the Rebbe on the subject? Why was this matter not mentioned in his article, and when will we finally be privileged to hear a reply that has some bearing on this point?

We must ask a further question: If this really isn’t a “change in approach,” as he would like to suggest, how did the *Kfar Chabad Magazine* have the guts and how did the “chozer” get the courage to publicize articles about the identity of the Rebbe MH”M, articles approved by the magazine’s editorial board, and which far less frequently elicited responses from the Rebbe, such as: **“If they print something even vaguely resembling that, they should head towards shutting down the paper.”** In light of the Rebbe’s sichos and instructions from 5751-5752, isn’t it clear that we’ve taken a step forward somewhere, i.e., what was undesirable up until then has been transformed into something both permissible and appropriate? The child then asks the question: After you have publicized such articles, only now do you remember the aforementioned instruction? If such is the case, then why didn’t you shut down the paper, as the Rebbe instructed?

The answer to all these expressions of bewilderment is clear: Anyone who heard and learned the sichos understood that they have one

meaning: The Rebbe said about himself – pardon me, not about himself, but about someone from the seed of Dovid – “his name is Menachem,” whose leadership is a continuation of the leadership of “my teacher and father-in-law, the Rebbe,” who is found in 770, and who also has the initials “MaMaSH” – that he is Moshiach. In these edited sichos, the Rebbe gives a “green light” for the publicity of his identity as a prophet and as Moshiach, when all the editing of the sichos in those years was

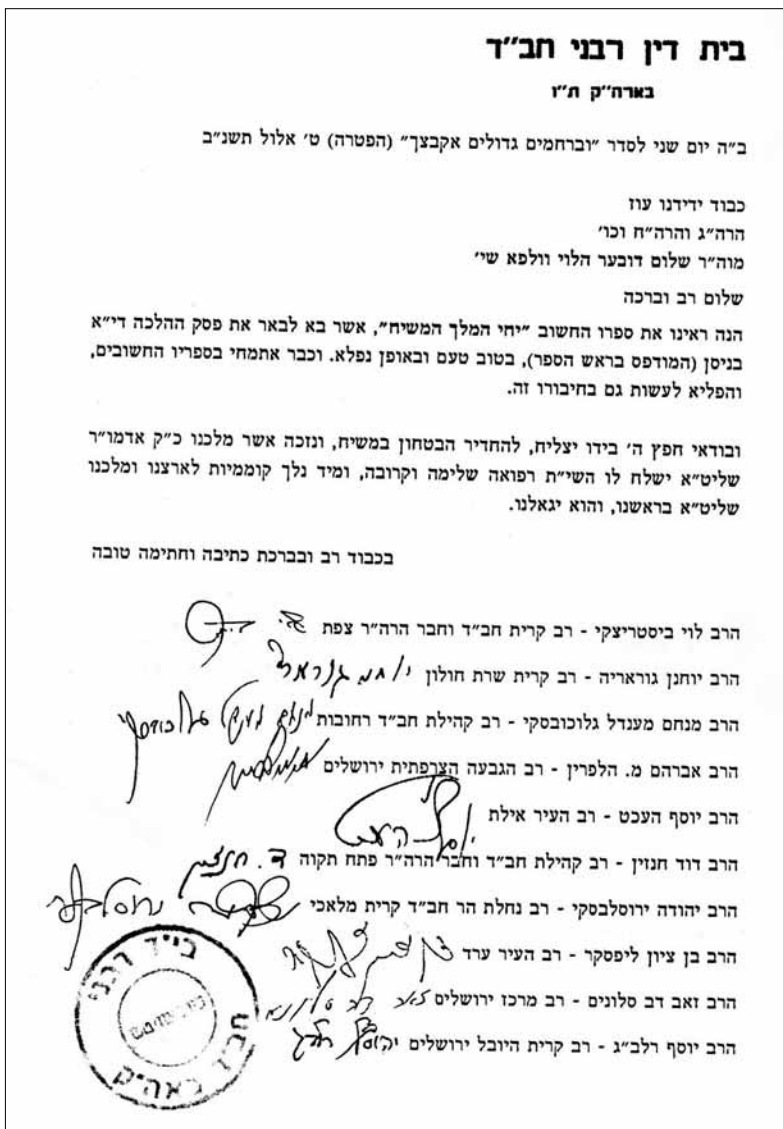
specifically for **publicity in the papers!** If there was still room for any uncertainty, there came the encouragement to the singing of “Yechi” on dozens of occasions, thus casting aside any doubts.

With regard to Rabbi Brod himself, the author tells that **he received personal instructions forbidding him from dealing with such matters** – he didn’t receive instructions to work against the publicity. If such is the case, then why does he accept interviews on these subjects and speak in the name

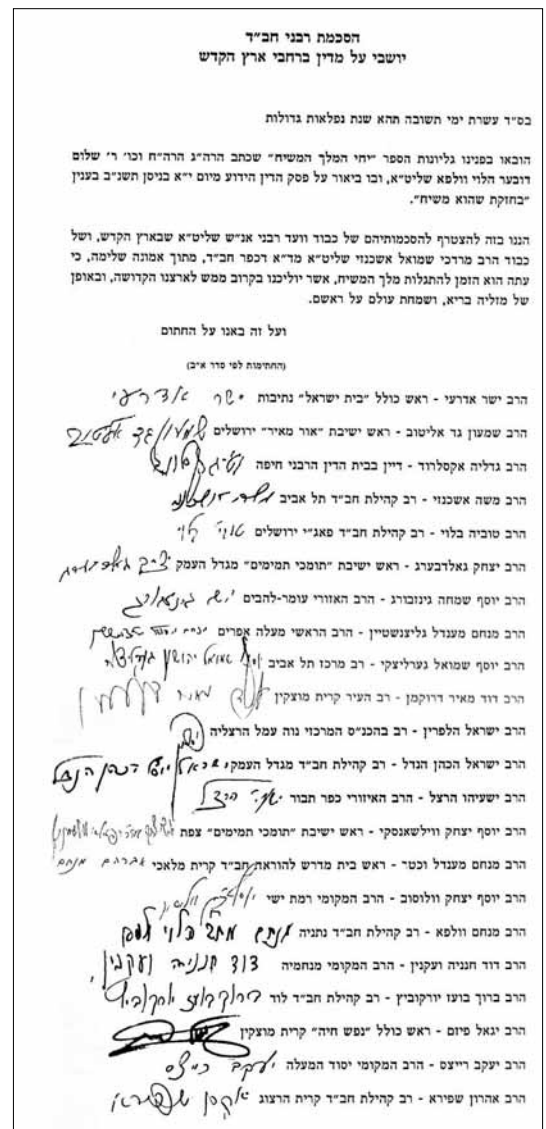
of Lubavitch? He should simply say, “I am not authorized to make comments on the subject,” thus carrying out the instructions the Rebbe gave him, and earning him no less respect and appreciation than what he receives today, including from the media. How did the author of said article respond to this claim? He simply chose to ignore it for some reason!

OBSERVE AND DO

Another subject I wrote about that elicited a response was the



Letter of approval from the Chabad Rabbinical Court and dozens of additional Chabad rabbanim on the seifer *Yechi HaMelech HaMoshiach*, which explains that the Rebbe is Melech HaMoshiach



publicity about the omission of the term “weekly magazine for Chabad chassidim,” with regard to *K’far Chabad Magazine*, from the Rebbe’s edited letter. There are those who argued: How is it possible to learn something from what the Rebbe omits? *The intention is to learn from what is written!*

On its surface, this claim sounds justified, and it would be appropriate for everyone to remember it when they make claims about the removal of “Who is Moshiach?” from the sicha of Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sara 5752. Nevertheless, it is impossible to argue against the facts. The Rebbe instructed the removal of those words from the title, yet afterwards, **in direct contradiction to the Rebbe’s opinion**, the magazine decided to use this phrase. Does this fact not demand an explanation? *K’far Chabad* is not “the weekly magazine for Chabad chassidim,” and therefore, it should not present itself as such.

In conclusion, let’s get back to the matter of instructions received from the Rebbe MH”M, which are in fact a lamp unto our feet and for our activities:

After it has been agreed upon that there have been answers from all directions, how are we supposed to conduct ourselves? It appears to me – and not only me, but also many mashpiim and askanim who were then involved in the receipt of such answers – that the line of action was sufficiently clear: Whenever chassidim did activities and then submitted a report to the Rebbe MH”M, there was a positive reaction, encouragement, brachos, and even instructions on what we can learn from these actions. However, when they started to ask constant questions, and particularly when they raised concerns before the activity or the publicity began, then the answers varied according to the person asking, the nature of the

question, and the matter at hand. Yet, while we don’t have anyone who possesses “supernal knowledge,” the direction is still quite clear. Of course, all this comes after years when the Rebbe MH”M also gave negative reactions to certain activities that had been done.

But the main thing is that all

these matters will be remembered and done, and each one of us will increase in spreading the announcement of the Redemption and preparing the world to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu.

*Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu
v’Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach
l’olam va’ed!*

FROM EXILE TO REDEMPTION

In 5746, Sichos in English prepared a collection entitled *From Exile to Redemption* a selection of sichos from the Rebbe on the subject of Moshiach and the Redemption arranged by Rabbi **Alter Eliyahu HaKohen Friedman**. While this work did not even allude to the concept of the Rebbe as Melech HaMoshiach, nevertheless, it merited to elicit the following response on the second day of Rosh Chodesh Adar Sheini 5746:

It is clear that:

a seifer such as the aforementioned will provoke war on the faith in the imminent arrival of Moshiach, or make it greater – in those circles where they are already waging war. And the results are understood.

Anash and those close to them – have no need for the aforementioned, as they have greater interest in the *hanachos* than in the seifer.

the seifer will add nothing whatsoever to the spreading of Torah and mitzvos and the like. It will cause damage to the success of mitvzaim and the like.

Naturally, after such an answer, the seifer was put into hiding for many years. However, in Iyar 5751, the publishers received an instruction to publicize the material, and in response to a letter with the first booklet, in which all sichos from 5746 until 5751 were added, the Rebbe replied that “**it brought much pleasure**,” and in a later reply: **Received with much appreciation and the time is essential.**

Afterwards, leading up to the publishing of the entire seifer, they were privileged to have the Rebbe edit the preface and add the date at the end.

It should be noted that the date written by the Rebbe shlita on the seifer’s preface is Tuesday, Parshas Shoftim, the 3rd of Elul 5751, and on that Shabbos, immediately after the seifer was printed, we were privileged to hear the marvelous sicha of Shabbos Parshas Shoftim, where the Rebbe speaks about the announcement of the Redemption as a prophecy, how the Rebbeim are prophets, and other wondrous expressions.

In any event, we see clearly from these responses that during the years of the *Mem’s*, the Rebbe forbade the publishing of s’farim that dealt solely with the subject of Moshiach and the Redemption, even when they didn’t deal with Moshiach’s identity. However, in 5751-5752, the Rebbe gave his permission and even encouraged the printing of such s’farim.

THE DEFINING MOMENT OF THE 20TH CENTURY

By Rabbi Simon Jacobson

Maybe now, 80 years later, the time has come to appreciate the events of 1967 and 1927 which have so dramatically shaped the world in which we live in today.

80 summers ago, in 1927, a miraculous event occurred that was mostly obscure at the time, its implications invisible, but it set in motion major breakthroughs that would transform the world.

40 years ago, in June 1967, another miraculous event transpired, one that had much more exposure, but still has not been appreciated or lived up to its true potential.

40 years is a key milestone in human development; it marks a new level of understanding that is achieved. As the Bible tells us (Deuteronomy 29:1-3) that until the fortieth year from the Egyptian Exodus the people were unable to truly appreciate “all that G-d did in Egypt before your very eyes, to Pharaoh, to all his servants, and to all his land.” Though “your own eyes saw the great miracles, signs and wonders, but until this day [40 years later], G-d did not give you a heart

to know, eyes to see and ears to hear.”

The Talmud derives from this verse that “until forty years a student cannot fully understand the mind – the essential intention – of his master.”

Maybe now, 80 (40 x 2) years later, the time has come to appreciate the events of 1967 and 1927 which have so dramatically shaped the world in which we live in today.

* * *

Rarely can we recognize a major historical event at the moment it takes place. The simple reason is because while in midst of an experience we cannot see the forest from the trees.

But with time and perspective we can begin to detect, in retrospect, the forces that an event unleashes to shape the present and the future.

40 years ago today, following the

Six-Day War in 1967, the Rebbe, delivered a historical talk that was as sweeping as it was fascinating, identifying just such an event that generated an historical shift; one that would dramatically affect the future course of the world in which we live.

I was a mere 9 year old at the time, but reading his words today sends a resonating shudder up your spine, striking you with a sudden clarity – like a flashbulb going off in a dark room – which illuminates the events of the entire 20th century and beyond.

The defining event the Rebbe identified in 1967 was the liberation of his father-in-law, the Rebbe Yosef Yitzchak from death and imprisonment by the Soviet authorities forty years earlier today, in 1927. The day is known as Yud Beis-Yud Gimmel (12-13) Tammuz, which ever since is celebrated as a “festival of liberation.”

At first glance this liberation may not seem like a major event. One man saved amongst millions who perished is hardly a great miracle. True, he was a leader, but when it comes to life and death every soul is equally precious. The Rebbe’s freedom seemingly pales in comparison to the events that would come – both the tragedy of six-

million Jews killed in the Holocaust and the miracle of millions more who were saved, the return to Israel and the general renaissance of Jewish life. Indeed, the events after 1927 were so earth shattering that it would seem to overshadow the Rebbe's liberation.

Yet, upon a deeper look into the reason for Rebbe's arrest – and especially taking into account events that would take place over the next 40 and 80 years – the significance of the event takes on a new light.

To appreciate its significance, which is only possible today with 80 year of perspective, let us briefly review the extreme nature of the single most paradoxical century in history.

The 20th century – like no other century – brought to the fore both the worst and best in the human condition. No century was bloodier and no century was more productive. Never had more people been killed. Hundreds of millions of lives annihilated. Hundreds of millions more shattered and uprooted, with unimaginable suffering and loss.

Yet in the same short century we also witnessed unprecedented growth, prosperity and freedom. Miracles of the highest order. Life expectancy rose by 30 years. Major advances in medicine and technology have revolutionized every aspect of life.

The 20th century captured the stark battle between good and evil. Some men stooped to depths inferior to beasts. Other rose to heights superior to angels.

Usually in history ups and downs of such magnitude spread over centuries. Here, in the span of several decades, all of history's roller coasters came together, encapsulated in one century.

For the Jewish people in particular – whose history has always mirrored the history of the

world – the 20th century's extremes marked their lowest and highest point: From the brink of unparalleled destruction to the threshold of unprecedented prosperity – the Jews underwent the greatest transformation ever recorded, all in just a period of several years. From almost total decimation by Stalin and Hitler, they achieved miraculous rebirth and renaissance.

Nowhere was the miracle more apparent than in Israel. Attacked by five surrounding Arab armies, the small country of Israel won the 1948 war. Till this day no one can understand how a small country of several million can survive and thrive surrounded by countries numbering hundreds of millions sworn to Israel's destruction.

The epitome of Israel's miracle came in the 1967 Six-Day War. Fledgling Israel was surrounded from all three sides and in a mere six days Israel triumphed and tripled in size. The unprecedented victory of a tiny country over the overwhelming Arab countries stunned the world. The miracle became the source of unparalleled Jewish euphoria and pride. Religious and secular alike, believers and cynics, could not contain their tears when touching the stones of the newly reclaimed Western Wall.

Thus, the Jewish story of the 20th century mirrors the global story: One hundred years of untold misery, as well as unprecedented growth and prosperity. [Historically, both evil and good have always first affected Jews, signaling what would come next to the world. Hatred and genocide first attacks the Jews, then the rest of the world].

How did one century yield such diametrically opposed extremes?

Volumes have been written tracing the roots of the collapse of the world order in the 20th century – the two World Wars and the ensuing massive upheavals that have

reshaped literally every corner of the globe.

Less discussed, if at all, are the roots of the positive events of this century. In many ways these roots are far more mysterious, especially considering the contrast that amidst such enormous devastation should also emerge amazing achievements. How is it possible that the same world that produced such evil should also bring so much good?

The only way to understand the 20th century, and for that matter any historical period, is in perspective: to look at a longer series of events that have contributed to shape the present and the future. Events, especially global ones, are never what they seem. Every major event is part of a series of previous events that together, accumulate to create a bigger picture.

Forty years ago the Rebbe identified the defining positive moment of the 20th century as the 1927 liberation of his father-in-law. Though at the time it may not have been noticed, but today we can see that it was an event that would pave the way and chart the course of the subsequent enormous miracles and developments that would follow decades later.

The 1927 arrest and liberation of the Rebbe Yosef Yitzchak was not a private or personal matter. It represented a colossal confrontation between good and evil, between spirit and matter.

Why did the Communists arrest the Rebbe? Why did they see him as a threat? They gave many excuses – he was a counter-revolutionary, religious commitment undermined devotion to the Party, religion is the opiate of the masses. But the true, underlying reason was their war against spiritual freedom. As the psalmist writes: "Why do nations gather in rage and scheme...[they] rise up... against G-d and His anointed" (Psalms 2:1-2).

The Rebbe was arrested for his spiritual activities to emancipate and build the spiritual lives of Jews throughout the Soviet Union. Broadly – this was a battle for spiritual freedom for people all over the world.

When the Bolsheviks and Communists came to power they abolished everything religious, with particular focus on persecuting the Jews and their infrastructures. They methodically closed down synagogues, schools and all aspects of institutional Judaism. But the Rebbe defied their actions, and did everything in his power to keep the flame alive – through a wide network

personal freedom and expression, which the Rebbe stood up for. And his liberation – by the same authorities that arrested him – manifests the dominance of spirituality, to the point that it transformed (for the moment) the enemy into an ally.

Thus the arrest and battle with the Rebbe Yosef Yitzchak was not his personal affair; it was not an isolated event. It represented the formidable forces of one of the most powerful countries in the world rising up against the freedom of the human spirit. No small matter. The stakes were never higher. The consequences never greater.

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of underground activities.

In 1927 thing finally came to a head. The Rebbe was arrested by the Communists, namely agents of the GPU and the Yevsektzia (“Jewish Section” of the Communist Party) for his activities to preserve Judaism throughout the Soviet empire and sentenced to death. Miraculously, the Soviets, who did not hesitate to shoot millions without due process, commuted his sentence to exile and, subsequently, released him completely – 80 years ago today.

The Soviet opposition to the Rebbe and his activities represented the battle of all fascist forces against

Whoever would win this battle, would determine the future course of history.

At the time the Rebbe’s efforts could have been seen as futile; one man standing up to the formidable Soviet Union, a nation of over 180 million people, led by the all-powerful, psychopath Stalin. But as he boldly told his captors: “we will see who will prevail, you or I...” When they pointed a gun to his head threatening him with his life, he calmly, unflinchingly said: “this toy can frighten someone who has one world and many gods; not one who has on G-d and many worlds.”

At the time, the Rebbe’s stubbornness seemed for naught. Yet, today in retrospect we see that his efforts have lived on, while Stalin, and the entire Soviet Union have collapsed.

He had the wisdom and determination, and above all, the vision – that rare power that few people are blessed with – a vision that overrode the immediate dark events of his time, and gave him the strength to stand up to the great Soviet Union.

The significance of the Rebbe’s stand can be appreciated 40 years later, during the Six-Day war, where the same thing took place: The same Soviet Union that waged war against the Jewish soul in 1927 and on, now armed Egypt to wage war against the Jews in Israel. And just as the entire situation was miraculously reversed in 1927, so too in 1967 the Soviet weapons that were directed at Israel and Jerusalem were conquered, and those same weapons were “turned around” and became part of Israel’s arsenal in its war against its enemies.

The uncanny similarity between these two events – 40 years apart – demonstrates the true and far reaching implications of the Rebbe’s stand against the Soviet Union: He was not just defying them in 1927; he was declaring for the ages, for generations to come, that the spirit of the Jewish people will not be broken. His staunch commitment broke open the door and brought on the reversal of fortunes, both in his time (in 1927) and 40 years later (in 1967).

Indeed, forty years allows us to appreciate the deeper meaning of events that transpired back in 1927.

We now understand that the Rebbe, back then, recognized that at the heart of his battle with the Soviet leaders lay the essence of all battles: The battle between matter and spirit, between higher purpose and brute power. His victory then opened up

the door that would help overcome all the challenges of the 20th century:

All the battles between good and evil in the 20th century are essentially a war against spirit – the human soul and the Divine plan; an assault on the inalienable spiritual rights of every human being.

Being a battle against spirit, the Rebbe understood how high the stakes were. This was not just a short term battle, but whoever would be victorious would define forever the dominance of spirit over matter, of faith over self-interest.

He understood that every redemption is rooted in an event that breaks through boundaries. At the time it may not appear very remarkable. But in time, as new doors open and new opportunities emerge, we can then appreciate in retrospect the early events that led us, that pioneered that introduced the revolution. Once the fruits bloom, we can then appreciate the seeds planted years earlier.

All great achievements begin as a planted seed. Without drama, the seed lays silently in the ground, slowly being nourished, until the sapling breaks through the ground, and one day grows into a mighty tree.

How amazing it is to trace the great trees in our lives to their early roots and seeds.

The Exodus from Egypt is a good example: Though many far greater events followed the Exodus (the revelation at Sinai, building the Temple, the miracles in the wilderness), yet we always remember the Exodus, and even the Ten Commandments open up with “I am you G-d who took you out of Egypt.” Because the Egyptian Exodus (Yetzias Mitzrayim) broke open all the boundaries, paving the way for all the events that would follow.

In mystical terms: Life consists of

two dimensions – times of revelation and blessing, when things are going well. And times of deprivation and darkness. History too – as so vividly experienced in the 20th century – has times of light and times of great darkness.

Even the darkness is another form of Divine truth, but it is concealed. What is the purpose of dark and difficult times? That we not succumb by the challenges of darkness, but we stand strong and recognize that this is simply a “test” to see if we can recognize the concealed “hand inside the glove.” This strength of spirit ultimately has the power to overcome the challenge and reveal how the “enemy” actually turns around and becomes a force for good.

This was the miracle of 1927. The Rebbe Yosef Yitzchak was not intimidated by the formidable enemy. He knew and understood that, as difficult as it may be, now the time has come to take a stand. To demonstrate that we are not afraid, we are not backing down.

At the time it may have seemed as an act in futility. What could he expect to gain and win? Why not pick himself and all the Jews and move away from the accursed Soviet Union?

But as a true leader, the Rebbe knew that, as much as we detest the challenge, there come times when the “darkness” of the Divine concealment shows its ugly head and does all it can to eradicate hope, faith and strength to forge ahead. And in such time, it is critical to stand strong and not retreat.

By doing so, you actually break the back of the “concealment” and not only does it cease to resist, but it actually becomes an asset, an ally that help appreciate the revelation. Like an example that a teacher gives his student, which initially may conceal the concept, but once the student understand the concept via

the example, the example itself becomes an extension that supports the idea.

At the time this “breakthrough” was not yet visible. The Rebbe was freed and ultimately left the Soviet Union and ended up coming to the United States. But the darkness of the times would only intensify. Stalin began his reign of terror, killing millions. The Nazis would annihilate millions more.

But the seed of redemption was born in 1927. It would take close to two decades before the dawn would break, and life could begin to be rebuilt. And the dawn did indeed break. Slowly broken people, who miraculously survived, began to miraculously rebuild their lives.

After the darkness of World War II and the Holocaust few believed that life could ever be rejuvenated. The worst in man had unleashed its fury on other men. How could the world survive that? How could young children, left alone with no family, home or country, ever expect to rebuild their lives?

Yet, rebuild they did. And how. Within a few years, communities began to spring up over Europe, Australia, South America, the United States and Canada. And of course, a major influx began rebuilding their lives in Israel. And finally, in 1967, the miraculous victory in the Six-Day war, transforming Soviet weapons to assets, consummated the 1927 miracle.

Within a few more years, rebirth turned into renaissance.

The key is to always recognize the Divine Hand behind these events, to perceive that the Soviet authorities in 1927 and the Soviet tanks in 1967 are just a “tool,” an example, to express the Divine power to transform the liability into an asset, the evil into good. By recognizing the hand of G-d in all events of the world, we actually access the Divine power that lies

even in the negative experiences, and reveal them, so that the enemy is actually reversed into an asset.

Where did all this strength come from? When did this process begin?

Retracing the steps of the 20th century, from the miraculous renaissance back into the darkness of the 30's and 40's, suddenly the miracle that happened in 1927 looms large: It is the first spiritual victory of the century. And not just the first – it took place in the belly of the beast. It thus was the “door opener” of events to follow. Like a small ray of light in the pitch-darkness that would descend on humanity in all its horrible forms.

In 1927 – in the infancy of the 20th century tyrannies, before the worst would come – the seed was planted, and redemption born. And just like the Egyptians chased the Hebrews out of their land, the Soviets did the same with the Rebbe, with his family and belongings.

But the miracle of 1927 can only be appreciated 40 years later, in the victory of the Six-Day War in 1967 over Egypt and the other Arab countries. Just as the miracle of the Egyptian exodus could only be appreciated 40 years later as they were ready to enter the Promised Land. And even more appreciated now – with another 40 years of experience, as we stand in midst of unprecedented prosperity and freedom in 2007.

The Rebbe's determination, his spiritual fortitude, pioneered the way – it opened up a new channel – that would give us all the power to overcome the darkness that was yet to come.

He took a stand against all odds, and his effort will forever ring in the annals of history.

Recognizing the roots of the renaissance following the World Wars is not a mere academic exercise. It teaches us that behind all our growth and progress lies an

invisible hand – behind it lays the unwavering power of the spirit, which rises above matter.

80 years ago the Rebbe Yosef Yitzchak demonstrated how the power of the soul can overcome and reverse the strongest forces of the material. Something we can now appreciate – 40 and 80 years later.

In every battle, a stand must be taken. Every victory in battle begins with the first stand that is taken against the enemy. And this first stand goes down as the benchmark, the milestone that turns the tide.

The liberation event that happened 80 years ago today marked the first stand against the atrocities of the 20th century – both in the Soviet Union and in Europe. And this first stand opened the door and paved the way making it easier for all of us to achieve spiritual conquest, the victory of quality over quantity, of the few over the many, of eternal faith over temporary power, of spirit over matter.

Yes, because of the stand taken

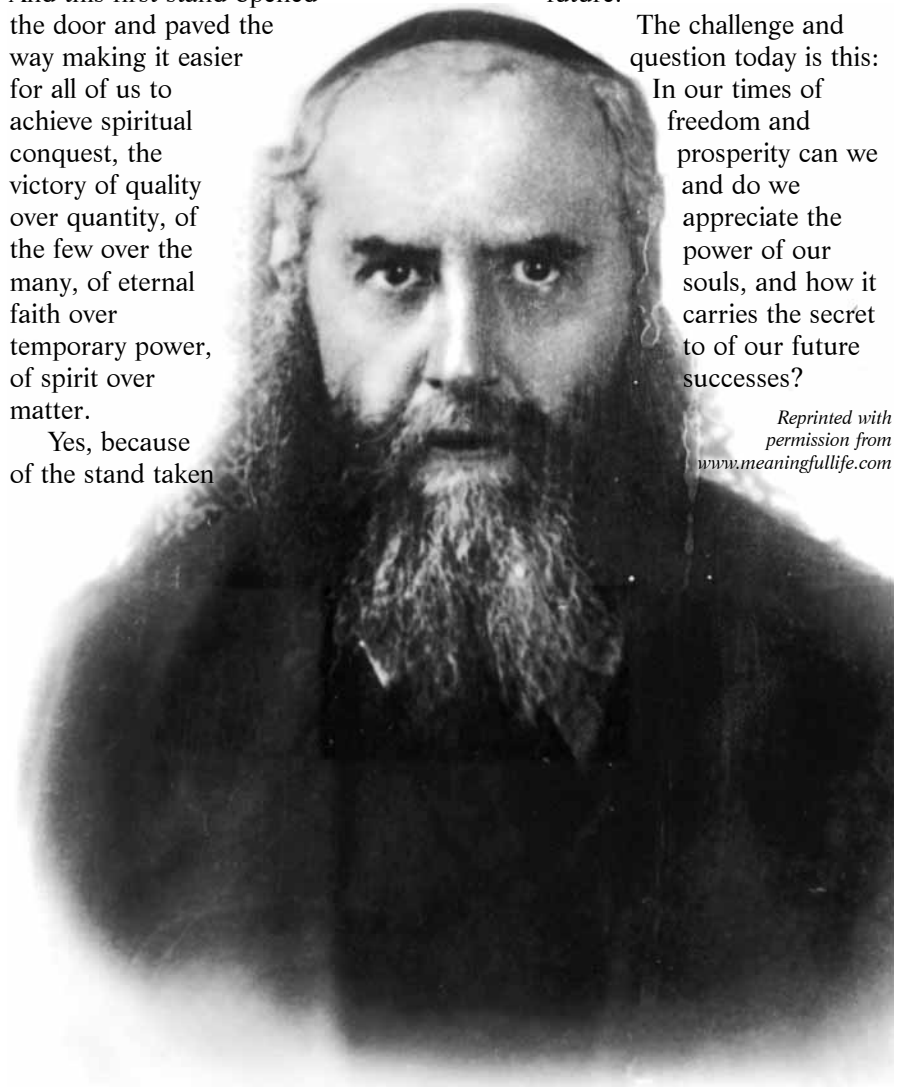
by the Rebbe Yosef Yitzchak eight decades ago we now each have the power of our successes and prosperity.

No period in time stands in a vacuum. Every event in our lives and in the world at large is a result of preceding events, and should not be taken for granted.

By appreciating the stand taken by the Rebbe in 1927, and following in his footsteps – which we can do today without oppression – we can better understand the world in which we live today, both our unprecedented prosperity and technological advances, as well as the unique challenges that we face. Moreover, this can help us understand and prepare for the future.

The challenge and question today is this: In our times of freedom and prosperity can we and do we appreciate the power of our souls, and how it carries the secret to of our future successes?

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THE RABBI OF BROOKLYN

By Ben-Zion Sasson

*In Rabbi Yaakov Gerenstat's shul in Brooklyn, no bachurim come from 770 for Tahalucha on Simchas Torah. The reason is simple – it is a ten-hour flight to S. Paolo, and then you have to get to the southernmost part of the city, and then you reach the neighborhood called Brooklyn (spelled Brooklin in Portuguese). * At the door of the shul, there is a basket of yarmulkes with Yechi written in Portuguese, which of course “distances” many Jews. It distances the young men from their shiksas and the older folks from their secular outlook and the temptations of Brazilian life, and brings them close to the light of faith in Hashem and Moshe, His servant. * The seventh installment in the series on Shlichus in Brazil. Part 1 of 2.*

SCOUTING TRIP

When R' Yaakov Gerenstat decided to open his own Chabad House, after many years of Shlichus in S. Paolo, he considered the area around the famous Avenida Paulista, the main street of S. Paolo and the greatest business center on the entire South American continent. He had done many outreach activities in the area, and had developed contacts with some of the Jewish residents and business people.

However, at that time, his savings ran out and his fourth child was on the way, and he was still unable to buy a house in the area. He wrote to the Rebbe, and the answer that he opened to said to “consult with the Chabad Rabbis in your city,” so he turned to Rabbi Shalom Ber Gourarie, the rav of the local Mishkan Menachem Shul. He had heard a rumor that a certain wealthy individual had donated the entire construction costs of R' Gourarie's shul, and asked him to let him know of other communities in the city who wanted to build a shul.

R' Yaakov laid out his plans to build a Jewish center on Avenida Paulista to R' Gourarie, who listened to what he had to say and said that he felt it would be superfluous because the Jews of that area were connected to the outlying communities, including his own shul. However, he concluded, “Clearly, I will not try to stop you



from opening up, but I feel there are other areas where there is no Chabad House or any Jewish activities, and you are more needed there.”

In response to his query as to where, the answer was, “Ibica Paulista.” Armed with a map of the city, R’ Yaakov set out for the train station and started out on a trip to a borough of the city he was unfamiliar with.

The ride was quite long, and the area didn’t look too appealing. For a second, he had the thought that perhaps somebody was trying to send him as far away as possible, and he decided to head back. On the trip back, things started to look a bit different. Only minutes after pulling out of the station, he noticed that on both sides of the street were tall luxurious buildings. He began to

wonder whether Jews live there.

He got off the train immediately and began walking towards the buildings. At the entrance of the fancy neighborhood, he saw a bright sign in big letters: Brooklin, and underneath in smaller letters, “Ibica Paulista.” Aha, he realized, this is the place that R’ Gourarie was referring to.

OPENING A SHUL

R’ Yaakov immediately set out in search of a suitable hall or hotel to hold the first event of the Chabad House of Brooklin, for the upcoming holiday of Purim. Queries at a number of halls indicated that this was indeed a luxury area and the prices were shockingly exorbitant. When he began to despair, he decided to go into the

nearest hotel and try his luck. The mezuzah on the doorpost was the first sign that fortune was smiling upon him.

Exhausted from his trek around the neighborhood, he approached the reception desk on his last legs. Without any preamble, he asked, “Who is the owner here?” The answer was, “Sonny Israel Wertzman.” He recognized the name from the community where he lived. The reception clerks were surprised to see him turn and walk off without any further ado. One phone call later, and Mr. Wertzman donated the main hall of the hotel for the Purim party of Beis Chabad Brooklin.

The next step was to contact the Jewish Federation of S. Paolo, in order to get a list of all Jewish residents in the area. He received a

list with 400 names, which he trimmed down to 200, as the old list included many who had moved away as well as those who had moved on to a better world.

After an intensive publicity campaign, 26 people showed up for the event, ten from Brooklin itself,

and the rest from his own neighborhood of Higienopolis. R' Yaakov realized that he needed to do some serious groundwork, and he began visiting the homes of all the local Jews to set the stage for opening a Chabad House and ultimately moving his family there.

Two days after the birth of his fourth child, he found a suitable structure for the Chabad House. His wife went straight from the hospital to the site, in order to offer her opinion. R' Yaakov then sat down to write a letter to the Rebbe, and he received an amazing answer in the

A JEWISH SOUL IN A GENTILE BODY

A young man named David who began drawing close to Yiddishkait became a frequent visitor in the Brooklin Chabad House. One time, the shlucha mentioned to her husband that she thinks this David is the adopted cousin of one of the women who had become a Lubavitcher Baalas T'shuva through the Chabad House, and had once told them about her cousin who was adopted.

The shliach didn't want to take any chances, so he picked up the telephone and called the boy's aunt to find out if this was the case. The aunt, who answered the phone, said that this was nonsense and that his mother is his biological parent. Shortly after, he received a call from the mother herself. She was quite upset and screamed at R' Yaakov that he had no right to say such a thing as she didn't want the boy to know that she wasn't his real mother. She explained that as far as she was concerned, he was Jewish, and told him that if you don't accept his conversion as valid, you are destroying years of labor. She insisted that he promise not to tell the boy anything.

R' Yaakov, who was thrown off a bit by the tone of the conversation, tried to calm the mother and reassure her that he would not act against her wishes, but he informed her that if the young man did not undergo a proper halachic conversion, they could not regard him as a Jew.

Realizing that this was a problematic situation, he tried to sidestep the problem by distancing young David. However, this tactic accomplished the opposite result. The more he tried to push the boy off, the more David felt a closeness and desire for

Judaism. Try to imagine a scene where there are ten Jews in shul, but the shliach won't say Kaddish. David turns to him and asks, "What is the problem, there is a minyan here?" The shliach answers, "No, we only have nine, because one of the people here is a gentile." When David expressed surprise as to why he was never called up to the Torah, the shliach answered, "One day, you will understand."

The situation got worse, as David began to realize that there was some problem with him that he didn't quite understand. One day, he showed up with his mother and demanded that the shliach tell him what was going on. "Now that my mother is here, I want you to tell me what the problem is, because she also needs to know what's happening with me."

R' Yaakov was completely stymied, as he had no idea what to do, especially as right across from him, standing behind David, his adopted mother was signaling frantically with her hands that he not say anything.

Finally, he said, "David, you have a Jewish soul in a gentile body. This is a kabbalistic concept that you need to study and then perhaps you will understand." It is important to note that at this point, David looked like a full-

fledged Lubavitcher with a hat, dark suit and beard, and he was fully observant.

At some point, in a private conversation with the shliach, he was sent to confront his mother, who had no choice but to reveal the truth. David was determined and committed. He began the process to undergo a proper conversion, at the end of which he went to learn in the yeshiva in Morristown, where he began to build a full Jewish life for himself.

She explained that as far as she was concerned, he was Jewish, and told him that if you don't accept his conversion as valid, you are destroying years of labor...

Igros Kodesh. He opened to a letter addressed to a woman who was hesitant about wearing a wig due to the high cost involved. The Rebbe wrote that due to the importance of the matter, she should not worry about cost, because she would be given a loan from a special fund designated for such matters. All that she needed to do was write the name to whom the check should be made out, and then she could pay back in easy installments.

R' Gerenstat did not think twice. He took a piece of paper, wrote down his bank account information and put the paper in the volume of *Igros Kodesh*. A while later, a donor donated the first twelve months rent on the new building.

Besides for the high-rise buildings, there was no other identifying sign of Jewish life in Brooklin. Relatively speaking, it had a small number of Jews, and no organized Jewish community. The closest synagogue was a half hour walk away, and when the people of that community heard that R' Gerenstat planned on opening a shul in Brooklin, they opposed the idea because it would rob them of some congregants.

One day, he was called to a meeting with the president of that shul, who warned him that if he opened a shul, he would call him to a Din Torah (a case judged in a rabbinical court). R' Yaakov was not put off by the threat, and he explained calmly that he intended to open a shul regardless, but he had no interest in fighting. His only concern was to enable more Jews from Brooklin to attend services.

Turning the tables on the man, he asked, "Would you agree to sign that you take full responsibility for those Jews who reside in Brooklin who don't attend your shul due to the distance?" Understandably, the president did not agree. In response, R' Yaakov said, "Actually, you are a



R' Yaakov Gerenstat

wealthy and very successful person, perhaps you can even help us out?" The president was momentarily thrown off by the request and he mumbled, "It depends how things play out." That was the end of the conversation.

Shabbos Mevarchim Elul 5760/1999 was the first week of the new minyan in Brooklin.

BACKGROUND OF A SHLIACH

R' Yaakov Gerenstat's life story is fairly typical for Chabad in Brazil. He was born in Rio de Janeiro to a family distant from any Jewish practice. For his ceremonial entrance to manhood – you probably know of it as a Bar Mitzva – he was prepared by a woman psychologist. In his youth, he was considered a gifted child with a promising future.

The change in his life began in 1989, when as an 18-year-old he traveled with his family to Eretz Yisrael, to celebrate the Bar Mitzva of his younger brother. During that trip, they went one day to visit their relatives in Kfar Chabad, the Peles family. That visit ignited a spark within him. When they returned to Brazil, his family was surprised to

hear that he had plans to move to Eretz Yisrael.

His mother was totally stunned. To move to Eretz Yisrael when you are in middle of your second year of university as an honor student? How could you consider that when you already received training in high school in computers, which paves the way for a respected position in a large computer firm? And don't forget, Yaakov, you are a member of the city lacrosse team of Rio! You want to give all that up to study in some unknown school like the Technion in Haifa?

In desperation, his mother turned for help to none other than the Lubavitcher Rebbe! She knew about writing to the Rebbe from her older son who was learning in the Chabad yeshiva in Petropolis, under the leadership of Rabbi Chaim Binyamini. The shaken mother appealed to her son Yaakov to write to the Rebbe. The response that arrived via fax a while later said, "Check tefillin and mezuzos, I will mention it at the Tziyun. In connection with your question, consult with a rabbi who rules on halachic issues and knows you."

Yaakov went in search for a practicing rabbi, who could also be described as knowing him. First, he turned to R' Binyamini, who explained that he could not be of assistance, as he did not rule on halachic issues. Finally, he turned to Rabbi Avrohom Berkis, shliach and rav of the shul in Rio de Janeiro.

He presented his problem to R' Berkis, but an answer wasn't readily forthcoming. After two weeks of waiting, it seemed the rabbi still had no answer for him. Impatiently, he approached the rav again, demanding an immediate and clear ruling. The answer was, "This is a big step and there is no need to rush into it."

Yaakov followed this ruling and pushed off his plans to move to

Eretz Yisroel. Three weeks later, he dropped his entire material life in his hometown, and joined the yeshiva in Petropolis. He learned there for close to a year, growing in leaps and bounds in Torah and mitzva observance. From there, he went to the Chabad yeshiva in Tzfas, and then on to 770, until his marriage with Rochel Litzman from Kfar Chabad.

After a year of learning in kollel, he received two shlichus offers. One was in Russia, and the other was in the Higienopolis neighborhood in S. Paolo, Brazil, under the shliach R' Yitzchak Michaan. R' Yaakov was inclined to accept the second offer, and he got his answer from the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh*, "Success in shlichus in South America."



With youngsters in the Chabad House

SHLICHUS JOURNEYS

Towards the end of 5755, the couple arrived in Brazil with their three-month-old son. For Yaakov the adjustment was smooth, but for his Israeli-born wife things were different. The beginning was difficult for her, but time and determination led to her slowly acclimating to the local language and mentality.

As mentioned, R' Gerenstat began his shlichus work in the shul of R' Michaan, giving Torah classes, organizing Shabbatons and other activities. From there, he moved to work under the shliach, R' Yaakov Begun, the rav of the shul Tiferes Lubavitch, where he worked with the youth. The next stop was the shul on Augusta street, administered by the shliach, R' Shimon Brand.

On Erev Rosh HaShana 5759, he sat down to write a letter to the Rebbe. He was surprised to find that the answer in *Igros Kodesh* dealt entirely with opening a new shul. The emotional difficulty in dropping everything and starting from scratch, as well as the financial hardship in taking such a step, led him to think that perhaps he had not understood the answer properly.

After Tishrei, during which he visited Eretz Yisrael with a study group of 16 girls, he sat down again to write the Rebbe. This time, the answer was not only surprising, it was somewhat shocking. In his words, "I felt that the Rebbe was really getting down on me. The entire letter was written in such terms that I didn't know how I had

ignored the previous answer. 'Why haven't you opened a mosad...this is very important...there is no Judaism in the place...each day that you don't open is an irretrievable loss.'"

At this point, he had no doubts. He had to open a shul, no matter what. Two days later, the shliach he worked for called him into his office and informed him that he could no longer afford to keep him on at full salary, but perhaps for half a day's work. The shliach expected R' Yaakov to try to convince him to reconsider, but to his surprise, R' Yaakov agreed to leave without any argument.

However, he knew that he was about to start on a new stage in his shlichus work.

[To be continued be"H]

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R' SHOLOM DOVBER VESHEDSKY A"H

The world of Lubavitch was saddened to hear about the passing of R' Sholom Dovber Veshedsky of Crown Heights on Rosh Chodesh Tamuz after a long illness, at the age of 72.

R' Sholom Dovber was born on 4 Cheshvan 5695/1935 in Gorky. His father was R' Moshe Veshedsky. In his youth he learned Torah at home with mesirus nefesh and he never attended public school. At ten, he was sent to Tashkent, where he learned for a year in the school founded by Anash in the middle of the war.

When Anash began leaving Russia in 1946, his parents could not leave with everybody else, but they wanted to save their son from having to live in Russia so he could openly live a Chassidic life. They gave Sholom Dovber, who was eleven, to the family of his brother-in-law, R' Meir Zarchi, who was leaving Russia. They did so even though it meant he might never see his parents again. This was a sacrifice on the part of the parents and their son.

Sholom Dovber went with his relatives to various refugee camps and for some years he was in Peking,

where he continued to study Torah. After Purim 1952 he arrived in New York and entered Tomchei T'mimim – 770.

When Oholei Torah was founded, R' Sholom Dovber was one of the first teachers. He wasn't only a melamed but a mechanech, and he took a personal interest in his students.

In 5722 he married the daughter of R' Abba Pliskin.

In 5726 R' Sholom Dovber was appointed mashpia in Yeshivas Hadar HaTorah for baalei t'shuva in Crown Heights. He devoted himself to his students and guided them and treated them as family members. In addition to his work with them, his students ate at his home.

R' Veshedsky was also the rav of the Reinis Shul. He was devoted to all the Rebbe's inyanim and at many farbrengens with Anash and

T'mimim he would demand that they strengthen their ways of Chassidus and their hiskashrus to the Rebbe.

R' Veshedsky is survived by his wife, children, and grandchildren.



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MENACHEM MENDEL MOSHIACH A”H

What a shock it was to hear of the passing of the bachur, 14-year-old Menachem Mendel Moshich of Crown Heights, on Friday, 13 Tamuz. Although on Shabbos there is no mourning, the sad news quickly made its way around the neighborhood.

Two weeks ago, Menachem Mendel was hospitalized after having a heart attack. His condition deteriorated until he passed away.

Menachem Mendel grew up in a home that is a model of Ahavas Yisroel, hospitality and giving to others. When the Hachnasas Orchim organization called them in Tishrei to ask them to host guests, his parents happily agreed to do so. The Moshich family doesn't screen guests; any guest of the Rebbe is welcome as their guest.

Menachem Mendel excelled in mitzvaim, following the example of his father. R' Avner spends hours on mitzvaim, going out every week like a Tamim to reach out to the Persian community. It seems there isn't a Persian Jew in New York who hasn't heard of Moshich, who is mekarev Persian Jews to the Rebbe MH”M.

One of Menachem Mendel's close friends found it hard to speak of him in the past tense and choked up when asked to describe him. “I attended davening together with Menachem Mendel Moshich for a few years in the children's minyan in the basement of 770 until Shabbos, Rosh Chodesh Tamuz. That Motzaei Shabbos, he was rushed to the hospital. I saw a real Tamim who davened with a chayus and helped the organizers of the minyan as well as his younger brothers, with amazing devotion, without standing out and with utter simplicity. What a loss...”

The midda of Ahavas Yisroel characterizes the

Moshich family. Merely 24 hours after the terrible news and a few hours before his funeral, the family asked some writers for the Chabad media to come to their house because there was a message they wished to convey.

At the beginning of the emotional talk, Mrs. Ayala Moshich said, “During the last two weeks, we experienced great miracles. He wasn't expected to live back on 3 Tamuz. That he lived was a veritable resurrection of the dead.”

During these two weeks, while Menachem Mendel was in a coma, groups of bachurim from his class, and other people from Crown Heights, stayed near his room.

“There was great interest in how he was doing. People from all over the world called the hospital to find out how he was. The doctors who worked in the department who saw the bachurim praying for his recovery, were very impressed. They told us that in their opinion, the stabilizing of his condition was miraculous. It was a great kiddush Hashem.

“When our son arrived at the hospital, his heart had stopped beating. They worked on him and his heart began to beat again. It was an open miracle.

“When Menachem Mendel passed away, I asked one thing, that Moshich come.”

During the last week, Menachem Mendel's parents opened a volume of the *Igros Kodesh*, where the letter spoke about Achdus. “This is a topic that the Rebbe spoke about time and again. Despite our differences, let us all preserve our Achdus and Ahavas Yisroel, for this is what will bring the hisgalus of Moshich and T'chiyas HaMeisim.”

