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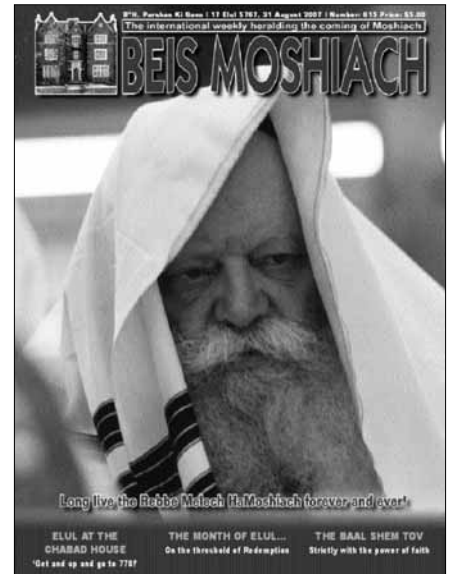
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# G-D'S RETURN WITH THE JEWISH PEOPLE FROM EXILE

Likkutei Sichos Vol. 9, pg. 175-183  
Translated by Boruch Merkur

1. Rashi questions the wording of the verse, "G-d, your L-rd, will return (with) your captivity,"<sup>1</sup> saying, "The verse should have read, 'He will return your captivity.'" The intent here, in Rashi's analysis, is: a) Instead of saying, "*V'shav*" ((He) will return (Himself) [i.e., in the reflexive tense]), the verse should have said, "*V'heishiv*" (He will return (your captivity)); b) Why does it say, "G-d, your L-rd"?<sup>2</sup> Prior<sup>3</sup> to this verse it says that the necessary **preface and cause** for "*V'shav*" [i.e., the resulting "return" of your captivity] is, "You shall return to G-d, your L-rd," defining a causal relationship, measure for measure. That is, if "**You shall return** (to G-d, your L-rd), then "**(He) will return**, etc." Thus, it is apparent<sup>4</sup> that the return (whether it is "*V'shav*" [i.e., G-d should cause Himself to return] or "*V'heishiv*" [i.e., G-d should return others, namely, "your captivity," the exiles of the Jewish people]) refers to "G-d, your L-rd," the Holy One Blessed Be He. Rashi answers [the question he posed regarding the unusual occurrence of the word "*V'shav*"]: "Our Rabbis<sup>5</sup> learned from here<sup>6</sup> that the Divine Presence resides with the Jewish people, as it were, amidst the suffering of their exile. But He has inscribed redemption for Himself

when they are to be redeemed, for He will return with them."

We must understand the following:

a) Earlier, in the Torah portion Shmos,<sup>7</sup> Rashi had already remarked that the fact that G-d appeared to Moshe Rabbeinu "from amidst the [burning] **bush**" is "because 'I am with him [i.e., the Jewish people] in [their] suffering.'" How then could Rashi say here that we learn this for the first time "**from here**" that the Divine Presence resides with the Jewish people amidst the suffering of their exile when we already know this from the portion Shmos?

b) "I am with him in suffering" is an explicit verse<sup>8</sup> [in Tanach]. Thus, it is unnecessary to learn this concept "from here" from an **analysis of** another verse.<sup>8\*</sup>

c) In the verse, "G-d, your L-rd, will return," it says only that G-d returns **from exile**. Where does Rashi infer the emphasis that "the Divine Presence resides with the Jewish people...amidst the **suffering** of their exile"? From

this verse we only know that the Divine Presence is **with them**<sup>9</sup>; not that He is **with them in suffering** per se, a concept that is apparent in the verse, “I am with him in suffering,” or the verse, “Amidst all their suffering, He suffers.”<sup>10</sup>

d) Since Rashi remarks that “the Divine Presence resides **with the Jewish people**...amidst the suffering of **their exile**,” it is already clear, **necessarily**, that when the Jewish people leave exile, the Divine Presence will also leave exile.<sup>11</sup> Why must Rashi make specific reference to the fact that “when they are to be redeemed, etc., He will return with them”?

e) Even if Rashi wants to mention this explicitly (notwithstanding the fact that it is seemingly self-understood) in order to elucidate the terminology, “G-d, your L-rd, will return,”<sup>12</sup> he should have only said, “when they are redeemed, He will return with them.” What is his intent with the words, “He has inscribed redemption for Himself”?

2. Rashi continues after the citation quoted above: “Moreover, we could say that that the day of the ingathering of the exiles is so great and with so much strife that it is as if He personally needs to literally hold the hand of every single person [to extract each one] from his place [in exile], as the concept is expressed in the verse, ‘You, the Jewish people, shall be gathered one by one.’<sup>13</sup> Indeed, this concept is also found with regard to the gentile nations, as it is said, ‘I shall return the returnees of the Ammonite people.’”<sup>14</sup>

The following must be understood:

a) Why must Rashi utilize **two** explanations?

The fact that Rashi does not suffice with [the latter part of his response, beginning with the words], “Moreover, we could say,” can, at first glance, be explained, as follows. The words, “G-d, your L-rd, will return” (meaning that G-d will return, as it were, from exile) suggest that He is found **in exile**, as it were, even **prior** to the time of “(He) will return,”<sup>16</sup> and not only that He will go there on “the day of the ingathering of the exiles” in order to extract the Jewish people from there. Thus, there is a need for the explanation “that the Divine Presence resides with the Jewish people, as it were, amidst the suffering of their exile, etc.”<sup>17</sup>

However, the following is still not understood. Why does Rashi need, “Moreover, we could say, etc.,” not sufficing with the first explanation?<sup>18</sup>

[To be continued be”H]

#### NOTES:

1. Nitzavim 30:3.

2. See Footnote 2 in the original.

3. 30:2

4. Which is not so in the mention of, “G-d, your L-rd,” in the **numerous** other occurrences of this phrase later in the Torah portion.

5. See Sifri B’Haalos’cha 10:35, Massei 35:34; Megilla 29a. (But see later Footnote 11 in the original.)

6. It is significant that Rashi writes, “Our Rabbis **learned**, etc.,” for the **simple** reading of, “G-d, your L-rd, will return your captivity,” is that He will cause **the Jewish people** to return. However, since it says, “V’shav, etc.” (and not “V’heishiv”), the Scripture is **teaching** (an **additional** concept). Namely, that G-d will return with them.

We may assert that this is the reason why Rashi writes, “**The verse should have read**, ‘He will return your captivity,’” instead of, “**It does not say**, ‘He will return your captivity’” (as he writes in the portion Savo 26:2, “**It does not say**, ‘every beginning,’” especially insofar as also the Sifri and Megilla state, “‘V’heishiv’ **is not said**”). Thus, Rashi employs the phrase, “**The verse should have read**, ‘V’heishiv,’ etc.,” to suggest that, even according to the final conclusion of the matter, the meaning of “V’shav” includes that of “V’heishiv.”

7. 3:2

8. T’hillim 91:15

8\*. And if the verse, “I am with him in suffering,” does not suffice, Rashi should have said in Shmos, “Our Rabbis learned from here, etc.”

9. As the **superficial reading** of the deduction from this passage is learned in Megilla ibid.

10. Yeshayahu 63:9 and as per the words of our Sages on the two passages (Taanis 16a).

11. See Footnote 11 in the original.

12. But this is a stretch, because since, “when they are to be redeemed, etc., He will return with them,” is self-understood (from Rashi’s earlier comment – that “the Divine Presence resides with the Jewish people...amidst the suffering of their exile”), the answer to his question, “the verse should have read, ‘He will return your captivity,’” is **necessarily** understood.

13. Yeshayahu 27:12.

14. See Footnote 14 in the original.

15. See Footnote 15 in the original.

16. Especially since it says, “G-d, your L-rd, will return (‘V’shav,’ not ‘V’heishiv’) **(with) your captivity**” (i.e., the meaning of “**(with) your captivity**” (*es shvus’cha*) (according to what is alluded to by the word “V’shav”) is like “with your captivity” (*im shvus’cha*), thus) it is logical to say that “**G-d, your L-rd, will return**” [i.e., G-d’s return, as it were] **parallels** [the return of] “**your captivity**,” the return [of the Jewish people] from exile. See further in the text proper, etc. – see Footnote 16 in the original.)

17. See Footnote 17 in the original.

18. See Footnote 18 in the original.

# A DAILY DOSE OF MOSHIACH & GEULA:

17-23 ELUL

*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

## 17 ELUL: MOSHIACH AS A TRIED AND TESTED PHYSICIAN

The Alter Rebbe was asked: Who is greater – Moshe Rabbeinu or Moshiach Tzidkeinu?

The Rebbe's reply: Moshiach Tzidkeinu. For Moshe Rabbeinu is likened to an inexperienced doctor, whereas Moshiach exemplifies a tried and tested physician.

*(sicha, Motzaei Shabbos Parshas BaMidbar 5739 – bilti muga)*

## 18 ELUL – BIRTHDAY OF THE TWO GREAT LUMINARIES – THE BAAL SHEM TOV AND THE ALTER REBBE: MOSHIACH WILL REMOVE THE HEART OF STONE

“And I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.” (Yechezkel 36:26)

The Alter Rebbe (*Baal HaTanya v'ha'Shulchan Aruch*) was asked: Why does he always talk about such lofty spiritual levels to which we seemingly have no connection?

The Rebbe's reply: Regarding the days of Moshiach, it is said, “And I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh” – specifically a heart of stone, and not a brain of stone, for it is very difficult to change the heart of

stone before the days of Moshiach. Changing the heart is something that depends upon Moshiach.

In contrast, it is possible to prepare the brain even today – through our avoda during the time of the exile.

Therefore, we talk about such lofty matters in order to remove (at least) the brain of stone.

*(sicha, second night of Pesach 5723)*

## 19 ELUL: WE WILL GO OUT OF THE EXILE WITH MERCY BY TASTING THE INNER TEACHINGS OF TORAH

Our Sages, of blessed memory, have already revealed the manner of our going of exile and reaching the days of Moshiach:

“Through the Jewish People tasting in the future from the Tree of Life, which is the Book of the Zohar, they will go out from the exile in mercy.”

And according to Moshiach's response to our Rabbi, the Baal Shem Tov, *nishmaso Eden*, “when your wellsprings will spread outward,” then he will come.

*(Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 4 – Lag B'Omer)*

## 20 ELUL: EVERY ACTION AND EFFORT HASTENS THE COMING OF MOSHIACH

We must all know clearly that every single action, every single effort in spreading the wellsprings outward, illuminates the darkness of the exile and hastens the coming and the revelation of Moshiach.

Furthermore, words are inadequate to describe how difficult is even one additional moment in the exile, and how precious is even one additional moment with the revelation of Moshiach.

*(letter, Pesach Sheini 5710)*

***We must all know clearly that every single action, every single effort in spreading the wellsprings outward, illuminates the darkness of the exile and hastens the coming and the revelation of Moshiach.***

## 21 ELUL: MOSHIACH AS A SHLIACH TO BRING THE COMPLETION OF THE SHLICHUS

Moshiach is the shliach through whom the concept of G-d's shlichus will reach its culmination in bringing the True and Complete Redemption, when there will be the total unity of the soul and the body, the Jewish People and G-d completely as One.

Furthermore, even within the world – there will be the complete revelation of G-dliness within this physical world, in a manner that the entire world will be a dwelling place for Him in the lower realms.

*(sicha, Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sara 5752)*

## 22 ELUL: THE SOUL OF DOVID AND MOSHE RABBEINU IN MELECH HA'MOSHIACH

**“In the future, G-d will appoint them another Dovid (who will rule over them in the future, Rashi), as is written, ‘And they will serve Hashem their G-d and Dovid their king whom I will establish for them.’ (Sanhedrin 98b)**

Is it not written: And Dovid My servant will be their leader forever?

The explanation is not that Dovid himself is Melech HaMoshiach but that the soul of Dovid HaMelech is clothed in Melech HaMoshiach.

This is in accordance with the saying of our Sages, of blessed memory (Shmos Rabba 2:6), “The first Redeemer is the last Redeemer” (even though Moshe is from the tribe of Levi and Moshiach is from the tribe of Yehuda), as the soul of Moshe Rabbeinu is clothed in the soul of Melech HaMoshiach (Ohr HaChayim, Parshas VaYechi 49:11).

*(Likkutei Sichos, Parshas VaYigash 5751)*

## 23 ELUL: UTILIZING WEALTH TO HELP OTHERS

The Redemption depends specifically upon “our actions and our avoda” in the time of the exile...beginning with his portion in the world, through an increase in the fulfillment of mitzvos with physical objects, especially including the mitzva of tz'daka (“the most basic of the physical mitzvos”), where one takes of his possessions and his wealth (with which the Holy One, Blessed Be He, blessed him) and helps another so that he too will have food and clothing, in a manner of “honor and splendor,” befitting “a kingdom of priests.”

Thus, he assists Torah and charitable institutions and the like.

*(sicha, Shabbos Parshas Acharei-K'doshim 5751)*



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Boruch Hashem, Elul 5767

## Mivtza: HELPING THE NEEDY

**To every member of the Lubavitcher community:**

During this month of preparation for Rosh Hashonoh, the "head" of the New Year, we fondly recall our Rebbe's words that this is an especially auspicious time for strengthening our deep bond of Hiskashrus with the "Rosh Bnei Yisroel," the "head" of the Jewish people and leader of the generation.

Our Rebbeim explain that **an important way to strengthen Hiskashrus is by participating in the Rebbe's activities and concerns, consequently, by supporting an organization that brings together a number of these activities, the Hiskashrus is greater and stronger.** Such an organization is Kupas Rabbeinu, which seeks to continue many of the Rebbe's activities and concerns without change from the way he would conduct them himself.

Every year at this time, the Rebbe would call upon us to contribute generously to help needy families with their extra expenses for the coming month's many Yomim Tovim. This also coincides with the special emphasis during this month of giving extra Tzedokah, (indicated in the Hebrew letters of the word "Elul," as explained in many Sichos etc.), as a vital way of preparing ourselves for the new year and arousing Divine mercy upon us.

**We therefore appeal to every individual man and woman to contribute generously to Kupas Rabbeinu, enabling us to fulfill the Rebbe's desire to help all those who anxiously await our help. The greater your contribution, the more we can accomplish.**

Your generous contribution to Kupas Rabbeinu will be the appropriate vessel for receiving the abundant blessings of the Rebbe, who is its Nasi, that you may be blessed with a Ksiva Vachasima Tova for a good and sweet year, materially and spiritually. May it help to bring the full revelation of Moshiach - our Rebbe - immediately now!

Wishing a Ksiva Vachasima Tova for a good and sweet year,

**In the name of Vaad Kupas Rabbeinu**

**Rabbi Sholom Mendel Simpson**

**Rabbi Yehuda Leib Groner**

P.S. Of course, you may send to Kupas Rabbeinu all contributions that you would send to the Rebbe; all will be devoted to the activities to which the Rebbe would devote them.

You may also send Maimad, **Keren-Hashono** (this coming year 5768 - 383 days), Vov Tishrei, Yud Gimmel Tishrei Magbis etc. to Kupas Rabbeinu.

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

KUPAS RABBEINU / P.O.B. 288 / BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11225

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

# A THREE-FOLD BIRTH ON CHAI ELUL

Compiled by Menachem Shaked

*A compilation of short stories to mark the birth of the holy Baal Shem Tov, Nasi and founder of the Chassidic movement.*

## THREE-FOLD BIRTH

The Chassid, R' Sholom R' Hillel's (who was thus named because he constantly traveled with R' Hillel of Paritch), related in the name of R' Hillel, who heard this from the holy R' Mordechai of Chernobyl, that the latter's father (the Rebbe R' Nachum of Chernobyl) said that the Baal Shem Tov was born body, *nefesh*, and *ruach* on Chai (the 18th) of Elul.

Body: when he was born.

Nefesh: on the day of 18 Elul, his holy teacher and master was revealed to him.

Ruach: the Baal Shem Tov's own *hisgalus* (revelation to all as a tzaddik).

All three took place on Chai Elul. I – said R' Hillel – would designate Chai Elul as a day of feasting and rejoicing, but you need a Rebbe to establish a Yom Tov.

Why did they not establish it? I think the reason is because *keser* is not counted among the *s'firos*.

(Likkutei Dibburim)

## THE MEANING OF THE NAME “BAAL SHEM TOV”

One of the great students of our master the Baal Shem Tov, Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz, defined the descent of the soul of the Baal Shem Tov to this world as follows:

“At that time, the Jewish people were [spiritually] asleep, on the level of a faint, and the soul of the Baal Shem Tov came to arouse them.”

The great Chassidim expounded on this comment of R' Pinchas. They said that there are various levels of sleep: 1) light napping, 2) deep sleep, 3) unconsciousness, i.e., being in a faint.

A tried and true remedy to arouse someone from a faint is to say the person's name in his ear. That restores him.

The great Chassidim classified our long exile after the destruction of the Mikdash into these levels of sleep. During the period when the Baal Shem Tov was revealed, our people were on the level of unconsciousness, and the role of

the Baal Shem Tov was to whisper the true and personal name “Yisroel” into the ears of the nation. This was to enable them to rouse themselves from the dark sleep into which they had sunk.

This is why he was called the Baal Shem Tov – Master of the Good Name – for he elevated the nation and reminded it of its lofty name Yisroel.

(Seifer HaToldos)

## HOLINESS DOES NOT MOVE FROM ITS PLACE

One time, the Baal Shem Tov and his students were in a field. The Baal Shem Tov asked them to stand in a circle and for each to place his hand on the shoulder of the other. When they did so, they suddenly saw many people wrapped in talleisim and crowned with t'fillin, and davening.

The Baal Shem Tov explained that in this place Jews had prayed over 300 years before, and he said:

“What you saw are not the t'fillos themselves, for the prayers rose up above, but all matters of holiness make an impression, and this is the impression of the words of prayer.”

(Seifer HaSichos 5696)

## IT'S NOT GOOD TO BE ALONE

The verse in B'Reishis 2:18 says, "It is not good for man to be alone, I will make him a helpmate opposite him." The Baal Shem Tov explained, if man would be alone, he could err and think that he was complete. Therefore, Hashem makes him a helpmate, a source of assistance, in other people. By seeing shortcomings in his friends, he knows that he too has that flaw in some form.

*(Keser Shem Tov)*

## YOU JUST DON'T WANT TO!

The Baal Shem Tov once sat with his students in the beis midrash. A non-Jew passed by on the street with his horse and wagon and sank into the mud, and was unable to extricate himself. He stuck his head into the beis midrash and asked the students to help him with his wagon.

The students said they were unable to help him.

The non-Jew exclaimed, "You can help, you just don't want to!"

Afterwards, the Baal Shem Tov explained that in these words of the non-Jew lay a lesson in the service of Hashem. When you don't want to do something, it seems as if you can't.

*(Sicha 16 Tamuz 5720)*

## A BLESSING TO A MISCHIEVOUS CHILD

One time, in the middle of davening, the Baal Shem Tov put his siddur on the lectern for a moment and turned to the side. One of the children there went over to the open siddur and turned the pages this way and that.

When the Baal Shem Tov returned he asked, "Who turned

the pages of the siddur?"

The other children pointed to the boy who had done it. The Baal Shem Tov went over to him and said, "May you live long."

That boy grew up and lived a long and remarkably healthy life. Rabbi A. Dubrawsky related that he heard from R' Yaakov Fishel of Fadabranka that he knew this man when he was 114 years old. He described the man's strength in amazement, "When they rebuilt the beis midrash in town, the men carried the planks of wood on their shoulders. While two or three men carried a plank from its narrow side, this man carried it alone on its wide side."

Whoever saw this old man and marveled at his strength, heard the man tell of this miracle of the Baal Shem Tov.

*(Shmuos V'Sippurim)*

## DESCENDING TO THIS WORLD

In the time of the Baal Shem Tov, there was a wealthy woman who donated generously to tz'daka whenever asked to do so by the Baal Shem Tov. One day, the woman passed by a river and drowned.

When he heard about this, the Baal Shem Tov decreed that the river dry up. The angel in charge of the river complained about this in the heavenly court. The court's decision was that since Hashem fulfills what a tzaddik decrees, the river would dry up. However, if a descendent of the Baal Shem Tov would pass by the area, the river would emerge once again and drown him. That is why the Baal Shem Tov commanded all his descendants not to pass by a certain area.

Many years later, long after the passing of the Baal Shem Tov, one of his descendants was traveling in

that area. A strong wind blew and snow covered the path. The traveler did not know where he was going and without realizing it, he passed by the place that used to be a river. It immediately turned into a river and began to drown him.

The man shouted, prayed, and asked for mercy in the merit of his ancestor, the Baal Shem Tov, and as he screamed he noticed a candle floating on the water. He grabbed it and emerged safely.

The Baal Shem Tov later came to him in a dream and said: I left the world some time ago. When they told me that you were drowning, I went down to save you. If I knew how difficult the descent to this world was, I would abandon you and your children and I would not have gone down.

*(Shmuos V'Sippurim)*

## THE KEY TO CHASSIDUS

One time, the Baal Shem Tov did something and brought the *Samech-Mem* (the angel appointed over the forces of evil) down to this world. The S"M appeared before him as a black dog standing on its two hind legs at the window.

The S"M was furious with the Baal Shem Tov and said, "You putrid drop, how dare you bring me down here! I was in this world a total of two times, once with the sin of the Tree of Knowledge, and once at the destruction of the first Mikdash. Aside from those two times, I do everything through emissaries."

The Baal Shem Tov replied, "I don't fear anyone, just Hashem Himself."

The S"M asked the Baal Shem Tov what he wanted of him. The Baal Shem Tov said, "Release the key to Chassidus!"

Later on, the mashpia in Lubavitch, R' Shmuel Grunem, explained that this was a reference



to the soul of the Alter Rebbe, in order that it should be allowed to descend to this world.

(Sippurei R' Perlow)

## HIS PLACE CAUSED HIM TO SIN

One time, as the Baal Shem Tov traveled with his holy disciples with Alexei the wagon driver guiding the horses, the Baal Shem Tov said, "Pray and think thoughts of repentance because the uncircumcised one wants to kill us!"

The students, who knew Alexei, who had served them faithfully for years, were taken aback, but they began to pray and think thoughts of

explained that in that spot, Jews had been killed years before and it left an impression of murder there. This is why Alexei had been overtaken by a feeling of murder.

"However, after passing by there and thinking thoughts of repentance, you nullified the evil spirit and from now on, no Jew will be harmed there."

(Sippurei R' Perlow)

## THE POWER OF AHAVAS YISROEL

The Baal Shem Tov said: We cannot estimate the great power of brotherly love. Friends that arouse much mercy on their fellow and peer in his time of difficulty, rip up

explanation very much.

(Otzar Pisgamei Chabad)

## CHINUCH FOR MESIRUS NEFESH?

Before the Baal Shem Tov was revealed as a tzaddik, he worked as a teacher's assistant. His job was to accompany the children from their homes to their teacher and from their teacher to their homes. He also assisted the melamed in teaching the children.

The Baal Shem Tov used his time with the children to walk with them through the forest so they could breathe the pure air. There, their pure hearts opened in sweet song to Hashem. He also taught them not to fear anything but Hashem.

The Satan was angered by this and he appeared in the guise of a witch who lived in that area. The witch appeared in the form of a wolf and when the Baal Shem Tov and the children passed through the forest, it sprang forward and menaced them.

The little children who were innocently walking and singing praise to Hashem were very frightened by this. They screamed and scattered and the Baal Shem Tov gathered them together with difficulty.

The parents were afraid to entrust their children to the Baal Shem Tov, so the Baal Shem Tov decided to wait several weeks until everyone calmed down. Then he began appeasing the children to go with him again, promising that nothing would happen to them. To inspire more confidence, he took a thick staff and told the parents that he would defend the children when necessary.

The parents allowed their children to go with him once again. When they came to the thick of the forest, the wolf sprang forward yet

***The Baal Shem Tov explained that in these words of the non-Jew lay a lesson in the service of Hashem. When you don't want to do something, it seems as if you can't.***

repentance until they reached a village.

Then, the Baal Shem Tov called to Alexei and said, "Tell me the truth. What did you think as you passed by that place earlier?"

Alexei immediately fell to the Baal Shem Tov's feet and said, "I thought of killing you all."

The Baal Shem Tov then asked him, "You know that I know everything and that you cannot hide anything from me, so how could you think that?"

"I don't know myself," said Alexei. "An evil spirit took hold of me all of a sudden," and once again, Alexei fell to the Baal Shem Tov's feet and begged forgiveness.

Later on, the Baal Shem Tov

a decree of seventy years. They transform the curse into blessing, and death into long life.

(Seifer HaToldos Admur Rayatz)

## AL CHEIT WITH JOY

The Baal Shem Tov once visited a Jewish community and celebrated the Yomim Noraim with them. On the holy day, when the chazan reached the Al Cheit, he sang it happily. The Baal Shem Tov wondered about this and asked the chazan about it.

The chazan said: When you remove the dirt from the palace and clean it for the king, shouldn't this be done joyously?

The Baal Shem Tov liked this

again, but the Baal Shem Tov beat it strongly on the head until it fell down dead.

The children, seeing their teacher's bravery, were very impressed, but the Baal Shem Tov immediately explained that as long as a person fears Hashem, he need not fear any creature, and no evil will befall him.

The next day, the witch was found dead in his house with a gaping wound in his head.

*(Siddur im Sippurim Chassidim)*

## DANCING IN A CIRCLE

The Rebbe Rashab said: Dancing in a circle as Chassidim do was renewed by the Baal Shem Tov. A circle dance is *makif*. The first revelation has to be in a manner of *makif* – it does not rest in vessels at all and especially not in an inward manner.

The Alter Rebbe, with his self-sacrifice for Chassidus and Chassidim drew the *makif* into p'nimius and made vessels for p'nimius. Today, when Chassidim dance in a circle, it is lights in vessels, and an *ohr makif* rests on them, and this *makif* dwells in the p'nimius.

*(Likkutei Dibburim)*

## ACCORDING TO A PERSON'S IMAGINATION

During the days of the Baal

***After that incident, the Baal Shem Tov said, "I abandoned all the meditations, the fasts, and mortifications, and operated solely with the power of faith!"***

Shem Tov, the Russian czar promulgated evil decrees. Several hundred Chassidim went to the Baal Shem Tov for Rosh HaShana to ask him to pray for the rescinding of these decrees.

Their cries touched the Baal Shem Tov's heart and he threw himself into his learning, davening, and fasting until his soul rose up to the heavenly worlds, but he saw that all the gates were locked and an iron wall blocked them, and accusing angels did not allow them pass. The Baal Shem Tov put more effort into his avoda until the iron wall fell and he fell asleep.

An angel roused the Baal Shem Tov and called him to come along. The Baal Shem Tov went with the angel and behold, there was no wall, and no locked gate. All was open before him. The Baal Shem Tov made all his requests and together with him went all the t'fillos of several hundred years, with nothing to block them.

As he departed, the Baal Shem Tov met Eliyahu HaNavi and he asked him how it was that when he entered, the gates were locked,

and now all was open before him and there was no wall.

Eliyahu HaNavi explained, "You should know that of the actions of man who goes according to his imaginings and relies on people who don't have the ability to save him, a wall is created that blocks him from his Father in heaven. Know that it is all worthless imagining, because there truly is no wall that blocks us from our Father in heaven."

After that incident, the Baal Shem Tov said, "I abandoned all the meditations, the fasts, and mortifications, and operated solely with the power of faith!"

*(Siddur im Sippurim Chassidim)*

## THE BLESSING OF A HIDDEN TZADDIK

During the years when he was concealed from the world, the Baal Shem Tov was accustomed to place his holy hand on the heart of children and bless them: Be a warm Jew!

*(Likkutei Dibburim)*

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# THE MONTH OF ELUL ON THE THRESHOLD OF REDEMPTION

Interview by Shai Gefen

*In the past, our main requests during the month of Elul centered on our material and spiritual needs. Today, we know that the point of Elul is how will the “rule over the entire world altogether” be fulfilled. This is actually what the Geula is all about. \* This Geula-Elul avoda needs to permeate and encompass all aspects of our avoda. \* An interview for these days of mercy and Slichos in which “the King shows us a laughing countenance.” \* An interview with the mashpia, Rav Elozor Kenig.*

The month of Elul is a very significant one in the world of Chassidus, especially in Chabad, as we know the Alter Rebbe’s parable of the king in the field. How do we properly “live” the month of Elul?

One of the special things about

Elul is acting according to the parable that the Alter Rebbe brings in *Likkutei Torah* about “the king in the field.” The Rebbe explains that this avoda pertains to our mundane activities. In the month of Elul, Hashem wants to see us excel in those areas of “all

your deeds [should be for the sake of Heaven] and in all your ways [know Him].” The focus is not on those things which we are told we must do all year but on how we do those things we weren’t commanded to do.

This is the point about the “king in the field.” We need to examine ourselves to see how we are transforming the world, i.e., transforming the “field” to holiness. We see how, in Elul, hearts are opened and Jews are willing to listen, because the main avoda of the king in the field is expressed in those areas which we were not commanded to do and which are not the “norm.”

**How does the avoda of “in all your ways know Him” connect to the idea of the king in the field?**

There are two types of *hiskashrus*. *Hiskashrus* is doing what the King wants, as Chazal say, “Who is a kosher woman? One who does her husband’s will.” This manner of *hiskashrus* is in fulfilling Torah and mitzvos.

The *hiskashrus* to the king in the month of Elul is on a completely different level. *Hiskashrus* must be demonstrated even in those areas where no demands are made on you at all,

and furthermore, matters that from Above, as it were, can't be accomplished and can only be effectuated from below, along the lines of what Chazal say quoting Hashem, "You have conquered Me, My sons, you have conquered me." This is the inner-Chassidic meaning of the Chazal, "Who is a kosher woman? One who does her husband's will" – that the woman "makes" and draws out her husband's will.

The woman is Knesses Yisroel, which draws and impacts the will of Hashem, creating a new aspect of the Divine Will, as it were.

This is the avoda required of us in the month of Elul: to bring down the will from Above. This is done specifically in those areas in which we were not commanded, the areas of "in all your ways, know Him."

This is the idea of the king in the field. The point of mitzvos in general is that they are *levushim* (garments). When the king is in the field it means that our hiskashrus to him is without intermediaries (ministers, servants) but with the king directly. The avoda in Elul is in "I am to my beloved" – to sanctify oneself and purify oneself in those

areas which we were not commanded.

**Yet we know that "greater is one who is commanded and does." It sounds like we are extolling avoda in those areas in which we were not commanded!**

The Rebbe in the sicha of Shoftim 5748 brings an example from chinuch. Until age 13, a child has no obligation to do mitzvos, but the mitzvos that he does are so lofty that it says that the world stands on the breath of the mouths of the schoolchildren! They are the army of Hashem, and the most loyal soldiers are those who do things without being asked – that is how they are victorious and give nachas to the king.

The Rebbe himself complained many times in his letters about how people wait for him to say everything. In the army, you also need to do those things you were not asked to do, and this is how you win. We see that every aspect of the coronation of a Jewish king has no command. The idea of malchus is only when the people request it. So in order to crown the King once again and draw down into the world those lofty lights that have not been present

since the creation of the world, we need an avoda that is not done simply because we were commanded to do it.

**How was Elul looked at before Chassidus and the chiddush of the Alter Rebbe?**

The month of Elul was without an especial chayus. Chai Elul, the birthday of the two great luminaries, instilled a chayus into the month of Elul. Before the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe there was no chayus in Elul; they looked at Elul as a time of stocktaking and giving an accounting before the King and they trembled. The emphasis was on fear and distance, not on closeness and connection.

In avodas Hashem too, there was the idea of trembling and fear, the opposite of a "smiling countenance" and love. Chassidus innovated that Elul is the peak of closeness between a Jew and Hashem, and the Jewish people have the power to affect matters up Above that they cannot attain the rest of the year.

**Did the Rebbe innovate anything about the significance of the month of Elul?**

In the sichos, the Rebbe often mentioned the five forms of avoda that pertain to Elul alluded to in the acronym of Elul: Torah, T'filla, Tz'daka, T'shuva, Geula. The Rebbe says that the fifth acronym about Geula needs to permeate all the other aspects of avoda.

Avodas Hashem in Elul in our time, on the threshold of Geula, is completely different than what we understood Elul to be in previous years. When you work on instilling the avoda of Geula within all other aspects of avoda it means that there are no limitations. This is essentially what we are requesting on Rosh HaShana, "Rule over the entire



world altogether and all creations will know that You created them.” It’s about every physical thing knowing and recognizing what is energizing it, what creates it and gives it life.

In the past, our main requests in Elul focused on our material and spiritual needs, while today we know that the point of Elul is how “rule over the entire world altogether” will be fulfilled, which is actually what the Geula is about. This Geula-Elul avoda needs to permeate and encompass all aspects of our avoda.

I’ll put it another way. If the avoda of Elul used to be in order for us to get a bit more Gan Eden,

and giving without limits as the Rebbe taught us. **T’shuva** – in the spirit of Geula, namely *t’shuva ilaa* (the higher form of repentance), which is done through simcha. And not only t’shuva for sins but t’shuva on a more refined level, as it says that Moshiach will come to bring tzaddikim to t’shuva.

Elul of today is about living with the Geula in all its details. It all depends on how we take Elul. If we limit ourselves so that our requests are that it be a bit better for us, the avoda is also limited. If our avoda is done in a Geula-like manner, unlimited, it looks entirely different. The kabbalas

the Rebbe for Tishrei is about devoting oneself to the Rebbe.

These days, when we seemingly do not have giluyim, this is the purpose of our dedication – giving and giving from our end, seemingly without seeing anything in exchange. The preparations for the trip to the Rebbe don’t begin in Elul but as soon as we return from our previous trip to the Rebbe, as R’ Mendel Futerfas a”h said.

The avoda today in traveling to the Rebbe is a very deep personal avoda and the preparations for it need a lot of time. Now, when the Rebbe is the “king in the field” all year round, as we see today, when we can “access” the Rebbe wherever we are, the avoda demanded of us now is far greater than it used to be.

Therefore, the avoda of Elul of “know Him in all your ways” needs to apply year-round. What can be higher than spending the seventh month with the king in his palace? As the Rebbe Rashab said, where could a Jew be on Rosh HaShana if not in Lubavitch?

The Rebbe said that he is in 770 and this is the place for the revelation of the Sh’china until the full hisgalus. So on the coronation day and in the month of coronation, the natural place of a Chassid is with the Rebbe in 770.

The Rebbe said that the sole remaining avoda is kabbalas p’nei Moshiach Tzidkeinu, and he said that all the avoda of Elul needs to be permeated with the avoda of Geula, which means to open your eyes and discover the aspect of Geula within every detail of Creation. This itself hastens the fulfillment of “rule over the entire world in Your glory” with the true and complete Redemption.

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

***If the avoda of Elul used to be in order for us to get a bit more Gan Eden, and our requests were for fewer pogroms and an easier time for us, today the point of our request is, as the Alter Rebbe said, “I don’t want Your Olam HaBa, I want You!”***

and our requests were for fewer pogroms and an easier time for us, today the point of our request is, as the Alter Rebbe said, “I don’t want Your Olam HaBa, I want You!”

The atmosphere of Geula needs to permeate these things all year: **Torah** – that every inyan of Torah study should be on a completely different level, a preparation for “a new Torah will go forth from Me”; writing chiddushim as the Rebbe asked, and in-depth study of inyanei Moshiach and Geula.

**T’filla** – till the soul is wrung out. **G’milus chassadim** – giving

ha’malchus and the chayus of being with the king in the field is on a whole different plane – we and the King, without any limitations or barriers.

**Elul is associated with a trip to the Rebbe, as throughout the month people work on making this dream happen. How does this relate to what you’ve been saying?**

As I said before, Elul is about preparing to crown the King on Rosh HaShana. To go to the Rebbe for Tishrei, especially for Rosh HaShana, is part of crowning the Rebbe as king, accepting his malchus. Going to

# ‘THEY BELIEVED IN HASHEM AND IN MOSHE, HIS SERVANT’

By Y. Ben Menachem

*As we start to think about the new school year, let's hear what five mechanchim, who have experience with grades 3-6 and preschool, have to say about the simple faith that children have that the Rebbe is Moshiach, about hiskashrus for children who never saw the Rebbe, and about traveling to 770. \* Although this discussion took place 11 years ago, it is as relevant as ever. Part 3 of 3*

## PARTICIPANTS

**Rabbi Aharon Gold**  
Ganei Chabad, Kiryat Gat

**Rabbi Efraim Kenig**  
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**Rabbi Nachum Kaplan**  
Talmud Torah, Lud

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[Continued from last week]

**Parents always played an important role in educating their children. How do parents help you handle the problems and difficulties that arise because of 3 Tamuz?**

**R' Kenig:** We have a big problem today that I don't see a

solution for in the near future.

The problem is that, in our modern day and age, there are many parents who are not spending enough time with their children. In many homes, children see their father only at night and the father is tired and doesn't have the time and patience to sit with his children and instill Chassidus

and hiskashrus. So these days, teachers don't expect much help from the home-front. They try to do all they can to fill the gap.

In addition, there is no comparison between a child who grows up in a home whose environment is Chassidishe and a child who grows up in a home that isn't that Chassidish. If you want

to explain the polar differences that you sometimes see between two children, even though neither one sees their father during the week aside from a brief period in the evening, you have to say it's the Shabbos table that makes all the difference.

If, at the Shabbos table, the father sits with his children and sings Chabad niggunim, sings "Yechi," reviews sichos, etc., the child takes in this Chassidishe atmosphere at the Shabbos table and it stays with him all week.

A child who sits at the Shabbos table and doesn't hear his father sing Chabad niggunim, doesn't hear "Yechi" sung in his home, and doesn't hear sichos – a child like that won't live with the atmosphere of Moshiach during the week. A child like that needs much more effort to instill him with a Chassidishe atmosphere.

**R' Kaplan:** Of course, if the child comes from a Chassidishe home and the atmosphere at home is no different than the atmosphere in the classroom, the child will really live with those feelings, but there are homes that are not very Chassidish, which don't have that much of an atmosphere of Moshiach. The only place that will have an influence on them is the classroom.

**R' Gold:** Most of the children in my school are not from Chabad homes, so the children are having an influence on the parents, not the other way round. The children go home and sing "Yechi" and constantly talk about Moshiach. It creates an atmosphere of Moshiach at home. It's the fulfillment of the prophecy, "and returning the hearts of the fathers [through] the children."

**R' Rosenfeld:** Every teacher knows that there is a direct connection between the position parents take and the position the children take on the same topic. If the home is one where the topic of Moshiach is "alive," then the child lives with it.

A child naturally identifies with the opinion that prevails at home, because a child feels that his father is right. A child whose father is cold about the topic of Moshiach will prove to be a problem for the teacher, though not such a difficult one. When a child like this understands that Moshiach and Geula

are good for him too, he will also wait for it in anticipation and live with it.

How can parents help? When I walk in Kfar Chabad on Friday night and hear niggunim being sung at the Shabbos table, I can tell you who is living in a Chassidishe atmosphere and who isn't.

In a home where I hear Chabad niggunim, the niggunim of the Rebbe or "Yechi" – I am sure that a child from this home will come to class with Chassidishkait and chayus for inyanei Moshiach and Geula. In other homes, the child is cold to inyanim of k'dusha and the teacher has to put in a lot of work so that this child too can grow up in a Chassidishe environment.

Aside from the Shabbos table there are other opportunities for parents to instill a Chassidishe environment in the home. If the father sits with his son once a week to learn an easy sicha of the Rebbe, it instills an atmosphere of Chassidishkait and

hiskashrus in the child. If the sicha is about inyanei Moshiach and Geula, the father also instills an atmosphere of Moshiach and Geula.

The simple fact is that a father's image is influential, and if the father is a Chassidishe Yid, the child's entire upbringing is different, he talks in terms of Chassidishe concepts and the child absorbs it. What the father

koachs in, the child will koch in.

**"U'faratzta" is the motto of our generation. How do we instill the desire to influence others and what areas of outreach do we emphasize?**

**R' Gold:** Whatever a child's rebbi says is considered "holy of holies" to the children. A child considers his teacher the final authority. No wonder that many children call their teacher "rebbe." This can be used to encourage a child from a very young age to be involved in "u'faratzta."

When the teacher tells his class that they have to go over to a boy in the neighborhood and tell him what they heard about Moshiach and Geula, they'll do it. With their childish innocence they'll say that the Geula is coming and you have to get ready for it. This is how you can get young children involved in "u'faratzta."

**R' Kaplan:** In Talmud Torah (elementary school),





***The problem is that, in our modern day and age, there are many parents who are not spending enough time with their children. In many homes, children see their father only at night and the father is tired and doesn't have the time and patience to sit with his children and instill Chassidus and hiskashrus.***

*--Rabbi Efraim Kenig*

the “u’faratzta” is mostly in Mivtza Ahavas Yisroel and Mivtza Torah, whether it’s convincing a child to give in to another child in order to fulfill Ahavas Yisroel or to persuade a child to learn with a weaker boy in school or to go to his house after school and review the material they learned in class.

There is also Mivtza Tz’daka. It often happens that a boy forgets to bring money for the pushka. If this happens, another boy finds some extra change and gives it to him for tz’daka. He does this automatically, since Mivtza Tz’daka is something ingrained in them.

I think the Rebbe changed our entire way of thinking through these mivtzaim. If we have a boy who gets ten coins as change for a shekel and he gives the coins to his friends so they can give tz’daka, this is a direct result of the fact that the Rebbe himself would give out coins for tz’daka.

**R’ Kenig:** I would divide the concept of “u’faratzta” into two areas, the home and the school. At home, a child can join his father or older brothers on Mivtza T’fillin, Mivtza Lulav etc. and obviously, the teacher should encourage this. However, it’s probably not that necessary for the

teacher to push it since most of the boys are interested in doing it anyway.

In the classroom, the possibilities are more limited. You can’t take a class out on Mivtza t’fillin or mitzva lulav. What can be done in the classroom is emphasize Mivtza Ahavas Yisroel, as this mitvza is one of the Rebbe’s ten campaigns.

**R’ Rosenfeld:** As the others said, the only mivtzaim that can be implemented in yeshiva are Mivtza Ahavas Yisroel and Mivtza Torah. The problem is that at the time the Rebbe announced the mivtzaim, they didn’t emphasize that mivtzaim is not only for the outside, with people on the street, but amongst ourselves too.

If the children feel that learning with a friend who needs help is actually Mivtza Ahavas Yisroel and Mivtza Torah combined, I am sure they would be more willing to help weak students. They would do it with the desire of fulfilling the Rebbe’s ratzon and to give him nachas. I see that when children come to Kfar Chabad from non-Chabad homes, the Lubavitcher boys know good and well how to treat them, in order to fulfill the mitvza of Ahavas Yisroel.

So the job we teachers have is to instill this idea in the children, that helping a classmate is part of Mivtza Ahavas Yisroel. When a rebbi asks him to learn with another boy, he won’t feel that the rebbi has a problem and he is solving it by using him as part of the Rebbe’s mivtzaim. He will feel that he is fulfilling his obligation as a Chassid and want to fulfill the mitvza of Ahavas Yisroel.

The way to do this is the same as it is for anything you want to instill in a child, through various contests. If he learns with his classmate, he’ll get a point and ultimately he’ll get a prize, etc.

**R’ Reinitz:** There is a sicha of the Rebbe in which the Rebbe refers to the complaint of bachurim who went on Merkos Shlichus but didn’t feel they accomplished much. The Rebbe explained that not only the overt activities were considered spreading the wellsprings but even those things which were mekarev Jews indirectly to Judaism and to Chabad Chassidus in particular were considered “u’faratzta.”

The Rebbe said that three months after the bachurim returned from Merkos Shlichus, the Rebbe Rayatz received a letter from an Orthodox rabbi who



thanked him for the changes he [the rabbi] made because of the visit of the bachurim. The rabbi was there for fifteen years and he never considered that he himself had to do t'shuva.

After the bachurim visited and he saw their Chassidishe behavior, how they were so particular about how they did things, and how they were enthusiastic about their observance, he realized that his own conduct needed to change.

We see from this that just by walking down the street, a child can make a difference. Since in Crown Heights we don't really have the idea of "u'faratzta" in the usual sense (and I teach 8-9 year olds and it's hard to demand that they actually go out and do "u'faratzta"), I emphasize "kiddush sheim Lubavitch" and outstanding Chassidishe behavior when walking down the street.

**How do you think *Beis Moshiach* magazine helps you in your work?**

**R' Kaplan:** It's great having a weekly magazine that proudly trumpets inyanei Moshiach and Geula. As far as our work is concerned, when a boy sees that his teacher or someone from his yeshiva was interviewed in the magazine, he will be curious to see

what he said. I am sure this will motivate them to read the article and when they see that the teacher praises them for their behavior in the classroom, it will spur them on to bigger and better, because who knows what it will say about them in the next issue!

**R' Kenig:** It's obvious what an enormous influence this magazine has regarding the Rebbe's directive to "live" with Moshiach. As an example, I read an interview with Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Offen that was terrific. His answers clarified a lot of matters.

As far as how it helps in my work, I would like to suggest that *Beis Moshiach* have a regular chinuch column. I am sure we have enough material for a column like this, whether it's sichos of the Rebbe or the Rebbe's letters, rewritten for easy reading or just an interview with teachers about problems that arise in their work. I am sure this would help many teachers and it will hasten the goal for which the magazine was founded, the hisgalus of the Rebbe MH"M.

**R' Reinitz:** The first thing I'd like to mention is the cover. Here in yeshiva we cut them out and hang them up. The halls are full of pictures of the Rebbe. I don't have

to tell you about the importance of seeing the Rebbe's face, and we definitely have to say thank you to *Beis Moshiach*.

Aside from that, the magazine contains interesting ideas that are useful in the classroom, as well as stories that provide us with plenty of material to tell the children that enable us to instill the idea that the Rebbe continues to lead us.

**R' Rosenfeld:** As we mentioned many times in this discussion, the personal example of the rebbi is very important and so I thank the mashpia, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Ginsberg for his terrific articles that help us live more with Moshiach and Geula. They are written for adults but sometimes, I can take an idea and present it in an easier format for children. He also has wonderful stories that can be told to children.

Most importantly, *Beis Moshiach* provides the antidote for the coldness some have when it comes to Moshiach and Geula. It stands firm against the questions and doubts that people have.

May we soon see the Rebbe MH"M in the third *Beis HaMikdash*!



***The children go home and sing "Yechi" and constantly talk about Moshiach. It creates an atmosphere of Moshiach at home. It's the fulfillment of the prophecy, "and returning the hearts of the fathers [through] the children."***

--Rabbi Aharon Gold

# HASHEM SENT HIM SIGNS

By Sholom Dovber Crombie

*He left a religious home, knowing good and well what he was leaving behind. Like waves crashing on the shore, his soul repeatedly crashed on the rocks of Judaism until he found his way. \* Part 2 of 2*

[Continued from last week]

During Sukkos, which Shimi enjoyed very much, Rabbi Yanki Har-Tzvi asked him whether he would take a package of nosh with him to India for his friend, Rabbi Shimshon Goldstein in Pushkar. Shimi agreed. He had no idea how this package would change his life.

The day after Sukkos, Shimi left Milan on a flight that landed in Bombay in southern India. From there he had planned on going to an idol-worshipping center in Carla, but he suddenly didn't feel comfortable about this. Magical India that he remembered from his previous trip was no longer magical. He found it hard to adjust to the atmosphere and felt disgusted by it.

Shimi remained in Bombay another day, thinking that in the meantime he would adapt, but as time passed he felt more and more

estranged. He had a strong desire to flee India. His thoughts about studying in the idol-worshipping center changed to yearning for the modern Europe he had just come from.

Even when he left Bombay for a small Indian village nearby, which a friend had recommended, he felt the same way. What did he need in this country? He strongly regretted traveling back to India.

The first night in the village, Shimi thought about everything he had experienced in the previous months. He concluded that his discomfort in India was a result of the enormous distance he now felt about G-d and the desire to run away from Judaism. He burst into tears, genuine tears that came from the desire to find the right path and to live in tranquility and with purpose.

He took out the Siddur that he had taken with him from the Chabad house in Italy, and there in the Indian village he began to daven. He poured out his soul to Hashem and asked Him to help him come close to Him and be strengthened on the path of truth.

When Shimi finished his prayer, he realized there was no point in going to the center in Carla and that it wouldn't provide him with happiness in life. He decided to travel to New Delhi, where he figured that at least he would be able to spend time with the many Israelis there.

R' Aharon Kupchik welcomed him at the Chabad house in New Delhi. He invited Shimi to put on t'fillin, but Shimi politely refused because of the confusion he felt about where he was heading.

After a short conversation in which Shimi told Aharon his story, Aharon gave him a *Tanya* and recommended that he begin learning it according to the daily cycle. Shimi put the *Tanya* in his backpack but did not open it. He was intimidated by it and by the unfamiliar language it used.

His visit to New Delhi ended within a few hours and shortly afterwards he was on an ancient rickety bus, surrounded by dozens of

Indians on his way to Rishikesh. He planned on celebrating Simchas Torah there at the local Chabad house.

Rishikesh was the first place in India that Shimi began to feel some tranquility and he found there a warm and loving group of Lubavitchers. “I became so close to them that on the day they set off to return to Eretz Yisroel, I felt I couldn’t part from them. We spent the night together, talking about Judaism. When they left, I decided to continue the tradition of Shabbos meals that had taken place at the Chabad house.

“Every Shabbos I would collect all the tourists who remained there and we would have a Shabbos meal together. The guys called me the ‘rabbi of Rishikesh.’

“I began davening every day and washing my hands in the morning. I also devoted a lot of time to

earnestly reciting T’hillim. I spent two months in Rishikesh, two months in which I took many steps towards a life of Torah and mitzvos. As Chanuka approached, I decided to leave in order to celebrate it at one of the Chabad houses in India.”

Shimi decided to go to Pushkar in order to give the package of nosh to the Goldsteins. On the day he arrived there, it was the birthday of little Chaya Mushka Goldstein, but the nosh that the Goldsteins had brought with them from Eretz Yisroel had been depleted by then, and so the birthday “menu” was rather limited.

Shortly before the party began, Shimi walked in and handed over the package of nosh (full of treats, Bamba, and other surprises) just in time for the birthday celebration! Naturally, this endeared him to the Goldsteins, who offered a bedroom in the Chabad house for him to sleep

in.

As soon as he got up the next day, Shimi went to put on t’fillin. During the day, he participated in lectures and shiurim.

“When I began learning chapter 2 of *Tanya*, everything changed for me and I felt I had to make a revolutionary change in my life. This feeling was so strong that the next day, when I went to an Indian restaurant, I suddenly felt that I just couldn’t eat non-kosher food. At that moment, I committed to kashrus. The same happened with my entire outlook on life. I suddenly realized what the mission of the Jewish people is and how deep this is, a feeling that permeated me through and through.

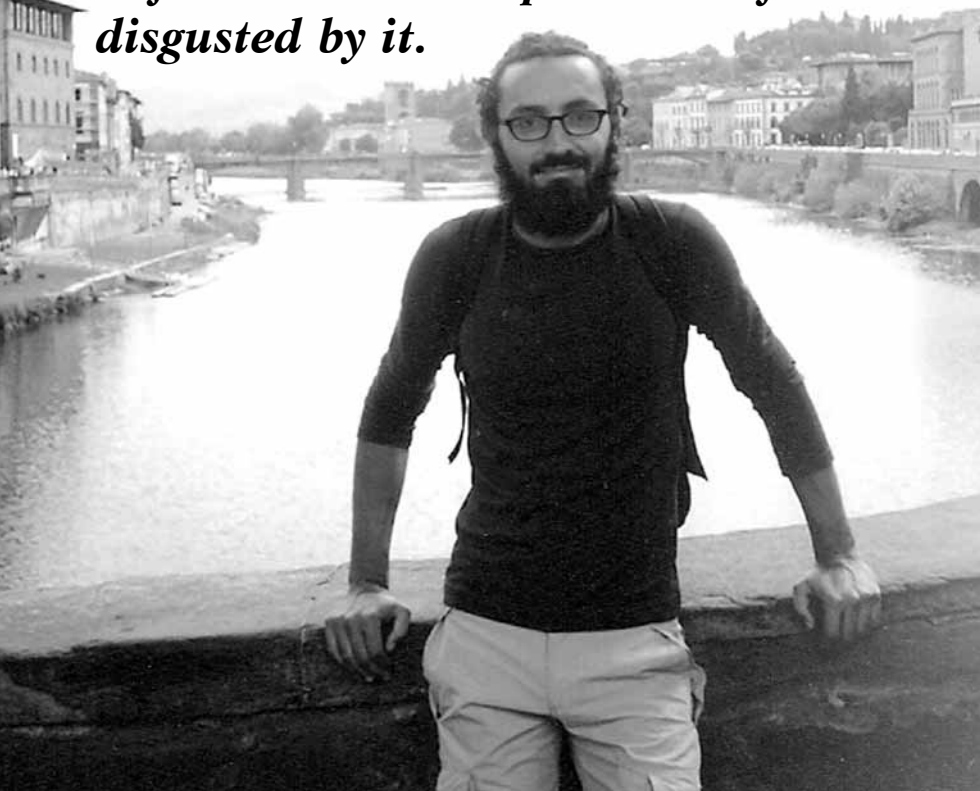
“After one of the shiurim, when we had finished learning several chapters of *Tanya*, I couldn’t talk to anyone. I was stricken dumb and I began to sum up the chapters of *Tanya* in writing. Then I cried again, but this time it was a different sort of crying. This time I felt that I had arrived, that I had felt what my soul sought. I realized that there is only one truth and we must cling to it with no compromises!

“That day I started wearing tzitzis. This was the stage when I decided to leave my then-current situation and the life I had lived until then and to begin my return to Jewish life. As soon as I firmly made this commitment, I felt relieved and it became easier for me to begin keeping mitzvos with pride.

“Whenever I joined a *Tanya* shiur, I felt that the words were touching my soul and I felt tremendously uplifted. I received a new chayus from every maamer Chassidus and when I recited T’hillim, I would cry to Hashem that He help me on my way. I felt as though there was no significance to all the years that preceded this one, and that I was starting over.

“When I saw videos of the Rebbe

***The “Magical India” that he remembered from his previous trip was no longer magical. He found it hard to adjust to the atmosphere and felt disgusted by it.***



at farbrengens, I shuddered and I would cry like a child. Chabad niggunim also tugged at my heart and I would listen to them avidly.

“Nevertheless, throughout this period of time I did not change anything in my outward appearance and I continued to have a long ponytail and clothes to match. I couldn’t think of changing my style of dress at that time because as it is, it was hard for me.

“Unlike my friends who got involved at the Chabad house at the time, for me, things were difficult and more complicated. I didn’t have anything spectacular happen to me and I am a cool-natured person.

“The four months I spent at the Chabad house in Pushkar were replete with spiritual experiences and learning but they weren’t easy since I had to cut myself off from the world I had become accustomed to for years and change my whole life. At first, I did the mitzvos out of a sense of *kabbalas ol*, only because I had come to the conclusion that this was the right thing to do, and not because I found it enjoyable.

“I knew that I couldn’t stop and that I had to continue on this road of t’shuva. This period of time entailed serious battles with the Evil Inclination; enticements weren’t lacking, but I stayed to learn at the Chabad house. I knew that I had tried everything, physically and spiritually. I remembered all those festivals and trips I had taken part in and the career I had left behind, and how all of that did not bring me any satisfaction. I was sure I was in the right place and that I had to carry on, despite the enormous challenges to this resolution. I realized that I couldn’t run away from the truth anymore.

“One day I sat in one of the tourist places in Pushkar and got into a conversation with an Israeli tourist who told me that he had never put on t’fillin before. I began



Learning in the Chabad house in Pushkar

to work on convincing him to go to the Chabad house and celebrate his bar mitzva. Slowly, other tourists gathered round and listened in to our conversation. I could see that the man was wavering. He finally agreed to do it, and as he put on the t’fillin, he began to sob. I cried along with him.

“This incident affected me a lot since I had suddenly encountered the identical soul-searching that I was experiencing at that same time. The hesitation I had witnessed in the tourist, whether to put the t’fillin on or not, was the same for me as it pertained to my entire way of life. The fact that he agreed to put on



On his way to shlichus in Pushkar, India



With the children of the Goldstein family in Pushkar

t'fillin strengthened me a lot and gave me the fortitude to continue on my chosen path."

\* \* \*

Shimi returned to Eretz Yisroel and after a few weeks he went to the Chabad yeshiva in Ramat Aviv. His friends looked askance at his t'shuva, but his family was ecstatic. The warmth and love of his parents made things much easier for him and enabled him to stand up to the negative reactions of his friends, who didn't understand what had suddenly come over him.

At this same time, Shimi found out that one of his close friends, with whom he had dropped Judaism in their youth, had also done t'shuva. This also gave him the strength to continue on his new path despite all the hardships this entailed.

"I didn't think that I would go to a yeshiva and become a *dos* (i.e., a derogatory term for religious Jew), but I told myself that in the meantime I was in yeshiva and checking it out. One month went by, and another, and I slowly began to grasp what Chassidus was about and

what the Rebbe was conveying to us with his teachings, as well as what a Chassidishe farbrengen is and what is a Chassidishe niggun.

"I understood what it means that a Chassid is mekushar to the Rebbe. Every so often I thought about life beyond the walls of the yeshiva. I had lived there and didn't lack anything, but these thoughts were set aside when I remembered that horrible feeling I had lived with until I came to Judaism and the study of Chassidus. The learning in yeshiva gave me the strength to continue onwards with confidence.

"A year after I entered yeshiva, I was asked to go to Pushkar for the month of Nissan, this time, as a Chabadnik. I was happy to do this and the trip provided closure for my t'shuva experience. This time, I felt that I was coming from an entirely different place, having direction in life.

"I remember that I looked at the young people coming into the Chabad house and inquiring about Judaism and knew precisely what they were experiencing. While there on shlichus, I tried to help the

tourists who came in and to help them take their first steps in the world of Judaism.

"After this trip, I returned to the yeshiva in Ramat Aviv with renewed commitment and began to prepare for a trip to 770 for an entire year, along with the talmidim on K'vutza.

"Spending an entire year with born and bred T'mimim and being in 770 on a daily basis, made me complete the t'shuva process and attain true serenity in my life and the feeling that I am fully channeling the inner, deep process in my life. The daily conduct of the T'mimim, the Ahavas Yisroel among the T'mimim and the tremendous simcha, won me over. During my stay in 770 I felt that I was falling in love with Chassidic life and that I had gotten on track. I began a new life."

When the K'vutza year came to an end, Shimi returned to yeshiva in Ramat Aviv and joined the staff as a mashgiach. In his work, he uses his own past experiences to relate to the new talmidim who come directly from the non-religious world, and they get help and guidance from him.

Today Shimi helps smooth the way for newcomers who are first encountering the world of Judaism and Chassidus. Many of his mushpaim in yeshiva say that it is this combination of someone who came from the world they come from and went through many upheavals in his life, and who now has a typical Chassidishe look, that enables them to acclimate to yeshiva life. Many of them are still in the early stages of t'shuva and they are able to feel comfortable approaching him and talking freely to him.

"I have a shlichus and I feel I get the kochos for it. If you had told me four years ago that one day I would be a staff member at a yeshiva, I doubt I would have believed you."

# MOSHIACH IS REVEALED SPECIFICALLY AFTER GIMMEL TAMMUZ

By Rabbi Sholom Dovber HaLevi Wolpo  
Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry

*In response to requests by our readers, we now present the forth in a series of excerpts from “V’Torah Yevakshu MiPihu,” Rabbi Sholom Dovber HaLevi Wolpo’s seifer on the Rebbe’s teachings regarding Chabad chassidus, its approach to emuna, and its various customs.*



## 5. SOURCES CLEARLY SHOW THAT MOSHIACH IS REVEALED SPECIFICALLY IN A POST-GIMMEL TAMMUZ ENVIRONMENT

It seems that the Rebbe’s faith regarding his father-in-law, the Rebbe Rayatz, can possibly be explained in accordance with the statement in Gemara by our Sages, of blessed memory (Sanhedrin 98b), “If he is among the living, he is like Rabbeinu HaKadosh [Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi]; if he is among the dead, he is like Daniel Ish Chamudos.”

It is further stated there the story of how Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi met Eliyahu HaNavi, who told him

that Moshiach is sitting “at the entrance of the city.” Rashi comments: “It appears to my teacher, not literally ‘at the entrance of the city’ but Gan Eden, which corresponds to the whole world, and he said that Moshiach is located on that side of Gan Eden that corresponds to ‘the entrance of the city.’” The Maharsha explains in his commentary on the Talmud that Rashi’s commentary is according to the Midrash that Moshiach was taken from the world to Gan Eden and from there he will be revealed.

Furthermore, the Abarbanel writes in his seifer *Yeshuos M’schicho* (Vol. 2, 2:1): “It is stated in

Masechta Derech Eretz Zuta, ‘Nine entered Gan Eden alive...Chanoch ben Yered, Eliyahu, and Moshiach...whose soul was placed in Gan Eden Above...and when G-d returns the exile of Tzion, then Melech HaMoshiach will be there and he will rule over His people. Don’t be perplexed that Melech HaMoshiach will be among those who rise at the Resurrection of the Dead, for they were already satisfied by ... ‘if he is among the dead, he is like Daniel Ish Chamudos.’”

Similarly, in the seifer *S’dai Chemed* (Peias HaSadei, Maareches HaAlef 70), after explaining at great length the concept that there is a

[potential] Moshiach in every generation, he adds that when the Jewish People have “a great merit,” then Moshiach comes at the Resurrection in a manner of “Clouds of Glory,” as is stated in the Gemara, “if he is among the dead, he is like Daniel Ish Chamudos.”

We derive from his words that it is by no means contradictory to say that Moshiach is a person who comes at the Resurrection. On the contrary, it comes to teach us that specifically this method is called “meriting – with Clouds of Glory.”

Similarly, in the holy Ohr HaChayim, Parshas Balak, on the pasuk “A star shall come forth from Yaakov,” he writes that revelation in a manner of “a star” means “that if the Redemption will be through the merit of the Jewish People, the matter will be with a wondrous quality, and the Redeemer of Israel will be revealed from Heaven with signs and wonders, as is stated in Seifer HaZohar.”

The Zohar explains (Parshas Balak 203b) that at the time of the birth of the soul of Moshiach, “The days of Moshiach...and he will

rise,” i.e., Moshiach departs and then receives infinite supernal life and the soul of Moshiach, and then he rises to redeem the Jewish People.

The Alter Rebbe explains in his seifer *Biurei HaZohar* on Parshas Balak (106b, see also the Tzemach Tzedek’s *Biurei HaZohar* and *Yahel Ohr* on the pasuk, “I am obliged to declare: Hashem said to me, ‘You are my son, I have this day begotten you,’” T’hillim 2:7) that when the soul of Moshiach has to be revealed and openly born – and the birth of Moshiach derives from the s’fira of Malchus (“the lower mount”) – in order that the revelation of the soul of Moshiach will be in a manner of “supreme life,” his soul must rise to the s’fira of Bina (“the higher mount”), and then there will be a state of “the days of Moshiach,” as it were, and his soul will receive at that time the supernal life from the s’fira of Bina called “*alma d’chira*” (the world of freedom), and then Moshiach, “will rise” and be revealed with supreme and eternal life. The Alter Rebbe then concludes by stating that this is based on the pasuk, “I will replace their

mourning with rejoicing.”

We find further in the *Biurei HaZohar* (105b): “The level of the soul of Moshiach ben Dovid...which is the level of conception in the womb of Malchus...endures all suffering...because the culmination of harsh severities holds tightly in Malchus, until the time of the birth, when all the severities are sweetened, and then it is the level of revelation of the annals of the soul of Moshiach, which is born and emerges from hiding, etc. Thus, it is said regarding Moshiach that he is desecrated from our transgressions, dejected by our sins, etc., which is specifically in the time of the exile, because “her feet descend to death,” as mentioned above... However, in the time of the Redemption, he emerges revealed at the level of birth.”

Thus, it seems that we could say that all this constitutes the basis for the faith that the Rebbe implanted within us to believe that there is no contradiction between Yud Shvat 5710 and the fact that his father-in-law, the Rebbe Rayatz, *nishmaso Eden*, is Melech HaMoshiach.

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# ELUL AT THE CHABAD HOUSE

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelewitz, Shliach, Beit Shaan

*At the farbrengen in Tzfas, Rabbi Y.Y. Chitrik, principal of the seminary taught the following song, “Eilu v’eilu omrim, fortunate is he who goes to 770, and whoever didn’t go, should get up and go, get and up and go, he and his family...”*

The Rebbe Rayatz in his sichos describes the special atmosphere in Lubavitch upon the advent of Shabbos Mevarchim Elul. I think that every Chabad house feels the change in atmosphere with the special activities of this month. Ask any shliach, “What is Elul about for you?” and see the reaction, the smile.

Rabbi Shlomo Berkowitz, shliach in Rosh Pina says, “Elul? It’s Mivtza Shofar, giving out jars of honey, checking t’fillin and mezuzos, special shiurim, farbrengens. After all, the King is in the field! People take more of an interest and get involved. There is a deeper significance to everything we do, qualitatively and quantitatively. More people come to the davening and shiurim, and they are more open to listening, accepting and doing.”

Rabbi Benny Bitton, shliach in moshava Menachameha: “Most of our people are Sephardic, and from

the beginning of the month they say Slichos every day, early in the morning. Every year we choose one day and invite everybody, young and old, from all the surrounding kibbutzim. We start saying Slichos at four in the morning and continue with Shacharis.

“After the davening there is a shiur and inspiring words from the rav of the moshava, shliach Rabbi Dovid Veknin. It has become a tradition. Righteous women of Menachameha lovingly prepare traditional pastries in honor of the worshippers and those who say Slichos.”

## THE RIGHT SONG

A few years ago, I prepared a page with some Chabad niggunim that are appropriate for the month of Elul and the work of making a spiritual accounting which is customary at this time of the year. I

made many copies and distributed it to the participants of the shiur and taught them all the songs.

After several attempts at teaching the chevra the tunes (not all got it ...), I decided to help things along. I found out when the main Chai Elul farbrengen in the Chabad yeshiva in Migdal HaEmek would be taking place, and all those who attend the shiur went in an organized group.

There, so I hoped, they would hear how 200 T’mimim sing “Kol Dodi” or “Ashrei Mi Sh’Lo Chata.” It would definitely make an indelible impression on them.

I made a few more dozen copies of my song sheet and began to give it out to the bachurim at the farbrengen. The rosh yeshiva, Rabbi Yitzchok Goldberg, noticed papers being passed around and he asked what was going on. I brought him a paper and asked that the bachurim sing the songs that are appropriate for the month of Elul.

Rabbi Goldberg looked over the list of songs and for some reason he wasn’t enthused by most of them, but he found one that he liked and he said it should be sung again and again. This was the song that expresses the deep connection between Chassidim and the Rebbe and the impact made on every Chassid who travels to the Rebbe: “Tiku ba’chodesh, ba’chodesh ha’shvii, shuva Yisroel.”

200 bachurim sang this song and in my mind’s eyes I was flying to the



Rebbe. I sang along with them all, "Tiku ba'shofar, ba'chodesh ha'shvii, shuva Yisroel..."

## IN ELUL WE GO TO THE REBBE!

From the day I went to a Chabad yeshiva and even before that, my teachers and mashpiim taught me that the special avoda for the Chassidishe month of Elul is: preparing to travel to the Rebbe. Today, I try to bequeath this ideology to my children and mekuravim and to whoever is willing to listen.

There is no limit to the efforts it pays to invest in order to be with the Rebbe for Tishrei. I clearly see that whoever went to the Rebbe (especially in Tishrei), changed for the better throughout the year, and throughout the following year he lives in anticipation of the next Tishrei.

He is willing to learn Mishnayos, Maamarim, and chapters of *Tanya* by heart, in order to earn another dollar and another dollar that are given out in contests. I see the girls who forego the pleasures of their summer vacation and use every minute to work in Chabad camps. Every bit of money they earn goes towards their trip to the Rebbe.

It gives me Chassidishe pride to see, on the one hand, young people with all the things they enjoy doing – taking trips, hanging out, shopping for the latest fashions – and the contrast, on the other hand, of young

Chassidishe boys (and girls) studying material by heart or working, in order to fly to the Rebbe.

I have to say that as opposed to those who complain and sigh about the youth nowadays (and we truly do have to beware and pray), I see that all dear T'mimim (and B'nos Chabad) who traveled to the Rebbe, make

the proper preparations, participate in the learning contests and tests, and participate in the s'darim of learning and the farbrengens in 770. These young people are not involved in "bad stuff" because they are busy with positive things, Chassidus and the fire of hiskashrus to the Rebbe, to his teachings and his eternal horaos.

At my house, when we sing Friday night, there is one line that the children shout enthusiastically. That's the line in "Azamer Bishvachin" that says, *yihei rava kamei, d'Tishrei al amei.* Their kavana is Tishrei in 770.

A few years ago, I went with my wife and children for a Shabbos reunion of graduates of Beis Chana in Tzfas. At the Shabbos meal, which turned into a Chassidishe farbrengen, Rabbi Y.Y. Chitrik, the dean, taught us

the following revised song, *Eilu v'eilu omrim, ashrei mi sh'nosa l'770, ashrei mi sh'nosa l'770, u'mi sh'lo nasa, yakum v'yisa, yakum v'yisa, hu u'mishpachto* (fortunate is he who goes to 770, and whoever didn't go, should get up and go, get and up and go, he and his family ...).



The page given out with the songs for the month of Elul

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# BREAKING DOWN THE WALLS

By Nosson Avrohom

*The reception that Rabbi Refoel Tawil and his wife Chaya received upon their arrival in Salata, Argentina, was decidedly frosty. Many assumed that he would give up within a few months. When they saw that he stubbornly remained, they officially ostracized him. In just three years, the shluchim have accomplished a revolution in the city. With tact and wisdom, and many brachos from the Rebbe MH”M, Rabbi Tawil has succeeded in breaking down the walls. Today, he is the dominant religious figure in the local Jewish community. \* A story of a shliach working and succeeding against all odds.*

The leaders of the Jewish community of Salata, Argentina, attended the community event and were listening to the speech of one of the respected members. At that moment, the speaker turned his

attention to the young shliach sitting there. “You all see this young man?” All heads turned to Rabbi Refoel Tawil. “From my experience, not only is it difficult to run at his speed, it is almost impossible to walk at his

pace,” he said, referring to his boundless energy.

## A SOLID WALL

Salata is one of the prettiest cities in all of Argentina. It is in the northern part of the country and shares a border with Bolivia. One of the famous attractions of the city is the train that runs along the mountaintops at a height of 5000 meters, sometimes passing through low-hanging clouds. The construction of the city is in the colonial style, the last remaining vestige of Spanish imperialism. The city itself is in a lush valley, surrounded by very high mountains.

Many tourists pass through the city. This is evidenced by the presence of at least two hotels on every street, and the presence of many boarding houses and entertainment venues. Quite a few Jews and Israelis pass through during the year, usually to refresh themselves before continuing on to Bolivia or on their way back from there.

Until a few years ago, there were two Jewish communities in Salata, one Ashkenazic and the other, Sephardic. The Sephardic community reacted strongly when any of its members would intermarry, and that person would have to leave. In the face of the high

level of assimilation and intermarriage among the youth, as well as the trend to migrate to the big city of Buenos Aires, the only ones who remained in the Sephardic community were the older people. Over time, many of these passed away, and so the shul and other

community organizations closed down. A similar process played out in the Ashkenazic community, but instead of pushing away those who intermarried, they welcomed them, and they became officially aligned with the Reform movement.

Three years ago, a shliach of the

Rebbe, Rabbi Refoel Tawil arrived together with his wife Chaya (formerly of the Tessler family from Chaifa), and walked unsuspectingly into this difficult environment, only a few months after their wedding. From the start, they knew that they wanted to devote their lives to



R' Tawil putting t'fillin on with a local Jew

preparing another place on the globe for the coming of Moshiach. Their desire to go on shlichus came to the attention of the shliach in Tucuman near Salata, Rabbi Daniel Levy, who made the connection between them and Salata.

The reception they got upon their arrival was not very friendly. Some even asked them in most undiplomatic fashion to pack their bags and leave. Most judged that within a few months, the shliach would despair in the face of the solid wall put up by the Reform community, and he would cave in and depart. When they saw that this assessment was off the mark, the

leaders of the Ashkenazic community decided to formally ostracize him and sabotage his work. Nobody believed that he would be able to survive more than a few more weeks.

R' Tawil is blessed with typical Chabad determination, and he well knew that a Chassid of the Rebbe doesn't desert his post, as difficult as it may be. He explained this very idea to those few local Jews who took pity on him due to his isolation.

"Looking back, we really had no idea what we were getting into," admits R' Tawil. "I will never forget the first Shabbos after we arrived. The first service we held was

attended by four people: the head of the Sephardic community, his nephew, another local Jew and myself. I never guessed what kind of difficulties I would have to face.

"A few days after my arrival, I invited the head of the Ashkenazic community for a visit. Innocently, I informed him that I had come to Salata to serve as the rabbi of the Sephardic synagogue, in order to breathe fresh life into that dying community. I had no clue as to the uproar that would be generated by my very arrival.

Obviously, he did not accept my invitation. Not only that, but when I tried to make some contacts among the local Jews, and inform them of my plans, I noticed that people responded with avoidance and the shrugging of shoulders. I found out that the members of the board of the Reform community had spread rumors that I came to the city to split the community in half, after years of unity. I quickly began to catch on to what I was up against.

"One day, I got hold of a copy of a newsletter sent to the members of their community, and I saw an announcement signed by the leaders of the community, calling upon the members to excommunicate me! They wrote that I should not be allowed into their school, their synagogue, the community wedding hall, etc.

"Those few people with whom I had already made a connection were afraid to talk to me. They knew that I wasn't as dangerous as I was made out to be, but they figured it wasn't worth getting in trouble over, especially as nobody thought I would survive the attacks and smear campaign. Some even told me, 'What do you need all this commotion for? You're a young guy. Leave the city and find some other place to invest your positive energy.

"Obviously, I wrote many letters to the Rebbe via the *Igros Kodesh*,

## HELP FROM AN UNEXPECTED QUARTER

Salata is a largely Christian city and the local Jews were used to seeing only the symbols of their holiday season. It was no surprise that many of them expressed concern at the idea of the shliach to proudly erect a public menorah.

Undeterred, he approached the office of "foreign communities," whose function is to provide freedom of religious expression for the minority religions in the city. He entered the office uncertain as to how pitch his proposal, not knowing the surprise that awaited him inside.

The woman who greeted him was actually the main administrator. She heard out his request, and responded, "My maternal grandmother was born in Tel Aviv and she was Jewish." R' Tawil could not restrain his excitement and told her that according to the Jewish religion, she was a member of the Jewish people that would soon be celebrating the "Festival of Lights."

On the spot, he gave her a menorah along with candles and a brochure about the customs of the holiday, and she in turn gave him the necessary permit.

At a press conference held two days before the public menorah lighting, this woman spoke tearfully about how upon receiving the gift of the menorah, she remembered her grandmother and the chain of Jewish tradition, which she was a part of. The menorah was put up in the main plaza of the city, which commemorates the independence of Salata.

The event was publicized in all the local media. However, on the day of the event it appeared that an approaching storm would force it to be cancelled. A number of Jews, who had initially opposed such a public display, called R' Tawil in a panic, asking, "what will be?" The shliach did what any shliach would do in such a situation and sat down to write a letter to the Rebbe. Amazingly, the storm clouds that had darkened the skies of the city moved on as the large crowd filled the area, and the event was a resounding success.



All ages participate in the Chabad House activities



R' Tawil (second from right) with visiting bachurim on mivtzaim

and I merited many amazing answers and tremendous blessings. Those few who continued to talk to me and showed empathy and compassion, learned from me what a Rebbe is, what shlichus is, and what is behind the stubbornness of a Chabad shliach.

“Only after a number of months did it begin to sink in that I was here to stay, and I wasn’t going anywhere. There were those who slowly began to get close and realize that I wasn’t all that bad, and they even became good friends. This first group of people really respected my

tenaciousness. In fact, one of them invited me to a yahrtzeit meal that he held in the hall of the Reform community. I consulted a rav, who gave me permission to attend, in order for me to meet other Jews and let them get to know me. I recall how some of the members who were standing nearby and saw me for the first time, whispered among themselves, “Eh, that’s the big deal? He’s just a kid!”

## BREAKTHROUGH

Slowly, the shliach began getting through to some of the community members, and the excommunication became less severe. Now, he had to face another hurdle. When these people began attending services at the Sephardic synagogue, they discovered that mixed services were no longer being held, and that the men and women had to sit in their respective sections. In more than one instance, he had to forgo bringing in additional congregants who insisted on mixed seating. The early difficulties were manifold, but his determination did not waver.

“When people saw that time was marching along and I would not break, and on the contrary, I worked tirelessly to breathe new life into the community, this led to the first bunch of people interested in checking me out. Some of them arranged meetings with me, while others met me through chance encounters. They thought that they would be dealing with a primitive, archaic individual, but were amazed at meeting a Jew who is committed to every last detail of tradition but is also someone that you can have a pleasant conversation with.

“However, when the leaders of the Reform community saw the first cracks in the wall of excommunication, they decided to sabotage me.

“Every time I organized an event, whether before the holidays or at

## DIARY OF A SHLUCHA

At the conclusion of the High Holiday season last year, the shlucha, Mrs. Chaya Tawil published a blog entry on Chabad.info. Here are some excerpts:

When the Chabad House in Salata, which is located in the north of Argentina, wants to make a meat order for the holidays from the distant capitol city, a number of factors must be taken into account. First of all, there are the Israeli backpackers, who have already become part of the regular scenery in the city, and so, for the holiday or just a regular weekday meal, they are looking for a taste of home. Then there are the community holiday meals, as well as meat deliveries for the needy, communal barbeques and of course, the family meals with the many guests in attendance.

Preparations for the holiday began with an evening for women entitled, “The month of Elul – how do we get close to our Beloved?” Following that evening, a number of women called complaining that the children also want some special programming geared for them. We held an event for the children, a hands-on holiday meal, which was well attended and many prizes were raffled off among the children.

At the end of the program, a boy named Ariel approached the shliach in all sincerity and said, “Rabbi Rafi, you are right. I really did feel something when you blew the shofar.” The prayers of Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur are done in an innovative format. Since many of those present don’t understand the meaning and significance of the prayers, the shliach instituted that certain portions are first read out loud by the children, and other portions are read by the chazan in a low voice as he explains the prayers.

Until the holiday was ushered in, it was unclear how many transient Israelis would participate in the meals. Last minute preparations made it possible for dozens of Israelis, who had heard about the meals by word of mouth, to sit at tables laden with festive foods. Although it was crowded, the atmosphere held a special warmth aided by family members of the shliach who came from Eretz Yisroel to help out.

For the shluchim themselves, this was the first time that they had the opportunity to celebrate the holidays with their biological family since going out on shlichus.

Of course, it was the children of the shluchim who benefited the most. Three-year-old Miri explained to her little brother that it was okay to eat the popcorn, because Aunt Esty brought it and it was kosher...

On Erev Yom Kippur, there was a table set up outside the local Jewish cemetery with honey cake and t’fillin, for the community members whose custom is to visit their departed loved ones on that day. The visitors took advantage of the unique opportunity and even performed the custom of Kaparos. Despite the short notice, there were enough “kreplach” for all the Israelis who showed up for the Seuda HaMafsek, and they also were made aware of the custom to ask for “lekach.”

***Yehoshua, a septuagenarian baal t’shuva, was moved, and he told those present that his father, who hailed from Brody, used to tell him this story when he was a child.***

Shluchim in faraway places, have their own unique Jewish prayers and requests from Above. They don’t just pray for a Calabrian Esrog to arrive safely, but that the “aravos” will last through the entire holiday of Sukkos. On Hoshana Rabba, the Tawil family saw that their prayers were heard and the entire set remained intact and kosher for use, so they circulated among the local businesses to give as many Jews as possible the opportunity to fulfill the mitzva.

When Isru Chag arrived, when the Shluchim might have entertained thoughts of a respite from the hectic month, they were invited to attend a Chanukas HaBayis ceremony at the home of one of their mekuravim, Mr.

Binyamin Laon. R’ Tawil utilized the opportunity to speak about the importance and the sanctity of the Jewish home, and he cited the verse which is said as part of a prayer which is recited in some communities on such an occasion: “*U’l’Binyamin Amar...*” (and to Binyamin he said), which was appropriate as this was the name of the host.

At lunch, R. Tawil recounted a story of the Baal Shem Tov on the importance of prayer. Yehoshua, a septuagenarian baal t’shuva, was moved, and he told those present that his father, who hailed from Brody, used to tell him this story when he was a child. He added tearfully: “I am certain that the Rebbe heard my request and sent you here two years ago, right before I arrived in Salata.”





Celebrating the Hachnasas Seifer Torah



other times, they would arrange their own event for the same day at the same time. And they did the same for prayer times and other occasions. This came to a head on Purim.

"I decided to wait for their advertisements to see when they were scheduling their event in order to schedule my event on a different

day. I found out that they were making a Purim party on Motzai Shabbos, a few days after Purim, so I arranged the Chabad House event for Purim day. I printed up brochures and handed them out among the local Jews.

"A day before the event, one of the members of the Reform community in charge of children's

programs, who was secretly friendly with me, told me that the head of the Reform community called him and asked him to arrange an event for the children so that they should not come to me. In the end, most of the kids and parents visited both events, and they saw which was more impressive, and many of them decided to stay at mine. This was a major breakthrough.

"Since then, everything is different. On Simchas Torah of the following year, many young people came to our synagogue. These are kids who never knew what an authentic Simchas Torah is all about. We really connected and talked about things in a really joyous atmosphere. That is how I established a solid connection with many young guys and they began to attend shul regularly.

"We set up the custom to hold birthday farbrengens. They really got excited by this, and many even began attending the classes that I give. The heads of the Reform group realized that they were no longer reaching the youth, so they turned their focus on holding on to their adult membership.

"At one point, I sent two of the three Sifrei Torah that we had for checking. When they were returned



The press reports about the Hachnasas Seifer Torah

after all the necessary corrections were made, I decided to make a Hachnasas Seifer Torah event with a big shturem. Even those from the older generation had never witnessed such an event.

"I worked up my courage and I suggested to the leaders of the Ashkenazic community that as a gesture of unity, we should release a joint announcement and we should begin the procession from their events hall to our shul. That is where we would also hold a Seudas Mitzva.

"They silently acquiesced to my request, and that is exactly what happened. I brought ten T'mimim from the yeshiva in Buenos Aires, and together with the nearby shliach, Rabbi Levy, we danced through the streets. This was a holiday for the entire community; everyone participated in this rare event.

"At the beginning, people were embarrassed to join the circles of dancers, but they quickly got pulled in. This event broke down many barriers, and the wall of ice that still existed between many members of the community and me melted completely. The youngsters ran the whole show, and I saw many tears of emotion and Jewish pride. As a result, many of the older people started coming to services in our shul."

## **TAKING OVER JEWISH EDUCATION**

Another important step in breaking down the final barriers occurred at the beginning of this past year. The Ashkenazic community encountered financial difficulties and could not afford to fund the local Jewish school that provides two hours a day of Jewish studies for children after the general studies in public school. Obviously, many of the children are not actually Jewish, as they or their mothers underwent Reform conversions.

Some leaders of the community

turned to R' Tawil and asked if he would undertake to teach the after-school classes. He agreed happily. The only thing left to do now was to call a community-wide meeting to ratify this decision. Many members of the community showed up at the meeting, and he was asked to address the crowd and present the proposed curriculum of what he planned on teaching.

"I opened my address on a light and somewhat humorous note. Generally, these meetings were known to degenerate into heated arguments and fights. I explained as pleasantly as possible the problem with the youth and the need to provide them with an authentic Jewish education.

"The crowd listened attentively to what I said, words that came from

community and connect the next generation with their past. We tried Reform and it seems we made a mistake.'

"That event laid the groundwork for the Beis Chabad becoming the dominant force in the religious life of the community. I taught the higher grade and my wife volunteered to teach the lower grade.

The excommunications and ostracisms, which were a big part of our early experience, were forgotten.

"With assistance from Above, we succeeded in getting the kids to like us and to connect them to their traditions. One clear result was among the girls who started celebrating their Bas Mitzvas with us, even though we told them in advance that they would not be

***"Now, after three years of hard work, and the many blessing that we receive from the Rebbe on a constant basis, our community is blossoming."***

the heart. Initially, I was overcome with emotion in the face of this large crowd willing to sit and listen to what I had to say. Apparently, what I said made an impression, and people realized that if they want to preserve the community they need to have a stronger commitment to tradition. Only one person complained that I would make the kids Orthodox and take them back to the 'Dark Ages.'

"In reaction to his sharp words, the most powerful man in the community stood up to respond. 'Listen,' he said, 'I'm the one who brought the Reform out here in the first place, and today I admit that it was a mistake. We need to embrace Chabad with open arms, because with their unique approach they are the only ones who can revitalize the

called up to the Torah or wear a tallis.

"I will never forget the first Bas Mitzva we held. It was for the daughter of a man who was a mekurav but his wife was very opposed. I was shocked when she called me and asked that I organize a Bas Mitzva for their daughter. It seemed to me that this was a great opportunity to show people that without an aliya la'Torah, it could be a very meaningful event. It came out on Purim, so at mincha on Taanis Esther, we called the father and grandfather up to the Torah. After the fast and the Megilla reading, we held a proper kosher Purim feast, which we worked very hard on. The girl spoke about the special quality and beauty of a Bas Yisroel, based





A shiur in the Chabad House

on the sichos of the Rebbe.

“The mother of the girl, who had originally opposed us, was very moved and she gave her daughter the set of candlesticks that she had received from her grandmother, who had survived the Holocaust. On that very night, a number of parents approached me asking me to arrange a Bar or Bas Mitzva for their child.

“Now, after three years of hard work, and the many blessing that we receive from the Rebbe on a constant basis, our community is blossoming. More and more Jews are coming to classes, and on the flipside, the Ashkenazic-Reform synagogue has lost most of its congregants and sits empty for most of the year. People realized that only Judaism that is rooted in tradition can persist and thrive.”

## SAVING SOULS

The work of shluchim based in South America focuses a great deal on the struggle against the tide of intermarriage, which rivals most other Jewish communities around the world. A lot of their work centers around finding lost Jewish souls, “captive children,” or as the Rebbe refers to them in the Hagada, the “fifth son.” Many of these lost souls don’t even know that they are Jewish. Here’s a story about one of those lost souls:

“A little over a year ago, before taking a flight to visit Eretz Yisroel, I

went to the supermarket owned by the president of the Sephardic community to say goodbye. Before I entered his office, I heard a woman’s voice telling her son in Hebrew to approach me and wish me ‘Shabbat Shalom.’ I was quite surprised, as I wasn’t aware of any Israelis living in the city. I approached them and introduced myself. We got into a conversation and she told me that she had come a few years before with her husband and son to live in Salata. She added that they don’t know any other Jews in the city and feel very lonely.

“I told her about the local community and my activities, and I suggested that when I return from my trip in two weeks, I would contact her. She agreed happily, and we both continued on our ways.

“When I returned to Salata, I tried to contact them, but the woman kept avoiding me by constantly claiming she couldn’t come to the phone because she was busy. I didn’t give up and kept leaving them messages. One Friday, she called me back and said that she needed to talk to me. I invited her to come to the Shabbos meal with her husband and son. During the meal, she explained why she had cut off contact with me. By profession she is a dentist, however, she had not been able to find work for a long time, and their financial situation began to deteriorate.

“Her friend, who is a devout Christian, suggested that she come

to church and that would help her find work. Innocently, she started going to church and the leader of the church convinced her to adopt their beliefs and ideals, and she and her son started attending regularly. She felt torn and confused, which is why she avoided me.

“I was very pained to hear how far she had fallen. It was clear to me that she understood that her behavior was incompatible with the spirit of Judaism. She asked my opinion, and I made her realize the severity of the matter, adding that even the Christians acknowledge that we are ‘elder brothers’ and that Judaism is the source, so why go to the imitation?

“I prayed that I would succeed in uprooting whatever they had absorbed from the church. I explained to her that even after going to church she still didn’t find work, and that they don’t have the power to help her. After many hours of persuasion, she recognized the error of her ways and asked how she could correct the transgression. I responded that Hashem accepts all Jews who return to Him with open arms, and that she was in the category of a ‘captive child.’

“We then arranged to study *Tanya* once a week. I have never before seen a finer example of how *Tanya* refines the soul from one extreme to another. With each class, they got closer to Judaism, began saying T’hillim, and eventually became our greatest mekuravim.

“At some point, the city municipality decided to offer assistance to professionals, and she received a building from the city for a dentistry office rent-free. She immediately made the connection between her coming close to Judaism and how things worked out. Today, they are particular about kosher food and her husband is a regular attendee at the davening.”

“The Torah promises that no soul will ever be completely lost to the

Jewish people. In South America, the shluchim see many instances of that promise being fulfilled. R' Tawil excitedly recalls:

"Just a few weeks ago, I discovered another Jewish family. Two women who come to our weekly *Tanya* class, told me about a friend who wants to join the class. This woman was a known figure in the community and she started to come regularly. One day, she told me about a sister of hers that I never knew of who plays in the Salata symphony orchestra and is married to a Moslem and they have children together. I inquired about her in the community, and nobody knew anything about her, as she had maintained no connection with her people. I contacted her and we are in regular contact, and I hope there will be positive developments."

## LONG-RANGE EFFECTS

A lot of the work is focused on Israelis that pass through Salata, which serves as a way station for those touring other South American countries. Many trekkers join the weekly Shabbos meal at the home of the shliach, and some of them even visit the Sephardic synagogue that operates as a full service Chabad House.

"Two hundred and fifty Israeli tourists signed up for the Pesach Seder this past year, and close to four hundred actually showed up! The travelers enjoyed the Seder, which continued late into the night with the help of a group of T'mimim from Buenos Aires. Many of them ask for information about other Chabad Houses along their route of travel, and we maintain contact with quite a few of them."

"When I asked R' Tawil to elaborate a bit regarding his work with Israelis, he replied that it is almost impossible to see the results, since the longest stay is about ten days. "There was one Israeli girl

who stayed for a long time," he says. "She had problems with her foot and was forced to take a break from her travels and remain in the city. During Chol HaMoed Pesach, she was a guest in our home and she was entranced. She was particularly impressed by the Seudas Moshiah and the atmosphere of deep commitment and truth. Before she left, she told us, 'In the past, I was torn about whether to become a baalas t'shuva. Now my inner struggle is whether to become Chabad.'

"Since then, we have kept up an ongoing connection with her. She returned to Eretz Yisroel and began to seriously look into Judaism, where she became a baalas t'shuva and will soon be married and set up a proper Jewish home."

## THE POWER OF TORAH

One of the outstanding features of the work of the shluchim is the large range of Torah classes offered by the Chabad House for all age groups. There are classes for men, women, teens and children. "I consider the Torah classes to be my main challenge. When I teach *Tanya*, for example, I can't simply focus on explaining the words, but I have to broaden the discussion and draw connections to timely issues and various mitzvos.

"Not long ago, we reached chapter 34 in the *Tanya* class for adults. This is a great accomplishment. Many youngsters and their parents decided to hold their Bar or Bas Mitzva in the Chabad House as a result of the classes."

"In Salata, as in the rest of South America, the impact of Torah classes is most strongly felt when the shliach tries to explain to a young man why he can't marry his gentile girlfriend. "Last month, I hosted a young man who participates in many of the classes, and because of that we have

a strong personal connection. I invited him to join us for the Shabbos meal.

"This young man got close with a gentile girl from Albania and was considering marriage with her, and had traveled a number of times to visit her at the university where she was studying in Italy. He wanted to fully understand why it was not proper for him to marry her. I asked him to picture life in the future, when his own children will not be Jewish and this conflict will ultimately tear them apart. We talked late into the night, and it was only a while later that I realized that he really took our talk to heart and had decided to break up with her.

"At one class, which took place before this past Yom Kippur, I spoke about the significance of the fast. One woman stood up and said, 'I haven't fasted since I was fifteen years old, and this is one thing that I don't understand. There are people who fast and spend the day watching movies. Isn't that meaningless?'

"I asked her to remain after the class, and later I explained to her that one of the purposes of the fast is to refine the physical body. When you fulfill the commandment not to eat, you become less interested in physical gratification. She responded to the explanation and agreed with me.

"That Yom Kippur, after many years, she fasted and came to the Chabad House to daven. Not long ago, she told me that since she started to come to classes, she feels a great transformation going on inside herself and she thinks that she needs to strengthen her involvement in Judaism."

For this school year, R' Tawil is opening a Chabad preschool, so that the local children will have the opportunity for a full Jewish education, and not just a few hours after a full day in public school. Another plan that is in the works is a mikva in the community building.

# THE SOUND OF TORAH IN THE BEGINNING OF ELUL

*Two years have passed since the Ohr Menachem school opened in Crown Heights, and they haven't stopped surprising us, not only with the number of students, which went from fifty in the first year to nearly two hundred for the upcoming year, but mainly with the original educational ideas which the hanhala has succeeded in implementing every few months. \* This past week, as most talmidim were still in camp, I spoke with the menahel of Ohr Menachem and was surprised to discover that the school year had already begun.*

When I went to the yeshiva Ohr Menachem on the edge of Crown Heights this week, I was sure that my conversation with the menahel, Rabbi Dovid Kahanov, would be routine. In the United States, the school year begins after Labor Day, and children are still in camp. How

surprised I was, as I approached the school, when I heard the sound of students learning!

**I thought I had made a mistake in the day we chose for the interview!**

R' Kahanov (chuckling): Yes, this can be confusing for those who

are used to the American system, where vacation from school begins on July 4<sup>th</sup> (actually the end of June) and ends on Labor Day in September. A ten-week vacation is the norm, and unfortunately, religious schools have adopted it.

Here at Ohr Menachem, we try not to do what's "done" just because it's done, but to follow the Rebbe. The Rebbe's opinion about summer vacation can be summarized with one quote from a letter (*Igros Kodesh*, vol. 11, p. 313): "If I were able to, I would have abolished it in the past, and all the more so for the present and future!"

In many sichos, the Rebbe said he wanted yeshivos to cancel vacation or at least to minimize it. In a letter to the hanhala of the Vocational School in Kfar Chabad, the Rebbe wrote (*Igros Kodesh* vol. 11, p. 292): "I was shocked to receive indirect information that you are giving or have already given vacation to the talmidim from the beginning of the month of Av and perhaps even earlier, and then you intend on giving vacation also at the end of Elul, the beginning of Tishrei, etc. It is highly surprising to even consider such a mistaken view – shocking *bittul Torah*."

If this was the Rebbe's opinion



regarding the students of a vocational school, most of whom were not from Chabad homes, what should we say about Chabad yeshivos for Lubavitchers?

So we decided to minimize the summer vacation as much as possible at our school. Whereas other schools in the US ended at the beginning of Tamuz, we continued until Erev Tisha B'Av and we started again at the beginning of Elul, a three-week vacation.

We had a special program for the summer session. Staff members from the yeshiva went with the older classes to a camp in Maryland, where they continued their learning along with outdoor activities. For the lower classes we had a day camp here in yeshiva.

#### **What do the parents think about this schedule?**

To the parents' credit, they worked with us despite the difficulties. It wasn't easy, both because of the new routine and because families have children in other schools that finish in June. We were able to see the parents' commitment towards their

children's chinuch. When they understood that this is what the Rebbe wants for their children's good, they adjusted.

We were able to see the parents' commitment towards their children's chinuch. When they understood that this is what the Rebbe wants for their children's good, they adjusted.

You know the story about the Chassid who fired the melamed of his children because he discovered that he wasn't acting with the proper fear of Heaven. In his defense, the melamed said: But I train **your children** to proper fear of Heaven!

The Chassid responded: That is precisely the problem. My children will grow up just like you, acting improperly while teaching *their* children about fear of Heaven!

This story pertains to parents as well as teachers since we all need to be role models of yiras Shamayim and Chassidishkait. Since the talmidim in Ohr Menachem are residents of Crown Heights, we make stringent demands of the teachers and the parents.

Fortunately, thanks to their cooperation, the parents of our students are particular about their Chassidishe appearance, high standards of kashrus in the home, and an atmosphere at home that befits Chabad Chassidim (no television or inappropriate videos, etc.).

#### **I've heard that you have innovated many things in your yeshiva. Please tell us about them.**

Our school was started by a group of parents who wanted to improve the chinuch in Crown Heights and to give people the opportunity to educate their boys in a quality school, at a high level of learning, with personal attention given to each student. This is why we constantly try to think out of the box and come up with new ways to improve our children's chinuch.

For example, in Chabad schools in the US, the norm is for one teacher to teach his class all day. We, on the other hand, decided to have teachers who teach specific subjects in addition to the main teacher. This works out well for both the students and the teachers



and is good for the level of the learning, because there is no comparison between a teacher that needs to prepare five subjects and a teacher who prepares just one subject. It is also beneficial for the teacher to see different faces throughout the day and for the students to see more than one teacher all day; it keeps the interest level high.

Another innovation is in the teaching method. In the US, since lashon ha'kodesh is not the children's mother tongue, it is hard for many of them to master reading and comprehension of lashon ha'kodesh. We place an emphasis on learning and practicing reading and writing with a special emphasis on comprehension. This way, the students learn to understand and relate to the material that is being

taught.

If it is explained well, every child can understand, and when he understands, he relates to the material and loves to learn. When a child loves to learn, the sky is the limit...

**One can assume that, just like in every other school, you also have students who don't like to learn. How do you handle them?**

We addressed the problem of weak students as soon as we founded the yeshiva when we decided not to accept more than 18 students per class. After two years of experience, we see how wise this decision is. The teachers were able to give each boy personal attention and to develop their abilities. Thus, we prevented most of the problems before they had a chance of cropping up.

Even when a problem arose, the teachers worked closely with the students and dealt with the problem. When it became necessary, they contacted the parents. The wonderful results are apparent to all.

**On the sign on your yeshiva it says, "Mosad Chinuch al Taharas HaKodesh." What does that mean?**

In this too, we try to follow the Rebbe's sichos in which he says that mosdos chinuch that are "al taharas ha'kodesh" do not have any secular studies. The first yeshiva to be founded according to the Rebbe's wishes in this area was Oholei Torah. Other schools have followed, and we are one of them.

In addition to *sur mei'ra* (staying away from the negative), we put in great effort to *assei tov* (the positive), i.e., to educate the children al taharas ha'kodesh, imbuing the boys with yiras Shamayim, derech eretz, and Chassidishkait. We started a special program which is run by bachurim from 770. They bring a special chayus from 770 and convey it to

***We constantly try to think out of the box and come up with new ways to improve our children's chinuch.***



the children with great success.

Last year, for example, the bachurim produced a CD with chapter 32 of *Tanya* to catchy tunes. They offered prizes for those who learned chapter 32 by heart, and now there is hardly a child who doesn't know it. Now they are working on taping the first 12 chapters to the tune of catchy Chabad niggunim. I believe that soon we will be able to report about dozens of children who know all 12 chapters by heart.

The chayus that the bachurim bring with them from 770 is not limited to the curriculum. Last year, after Tishrei, I enjoyed standing at recess and watching the boys act out their experiences in 770 during Tishrei with the t'fillos, farbrengens, and dancing. It demonstrated to me how permeated the children are with

Chassidishe concepts.

By the way, we don't keep these ideas to ourselves. Just as we like getting ideas from other schools, we'd be happy to share the ideas that work for us. Reality has shown that cooperation among schools benefits the talmidim in all the schools.

#### **What do you think is the secret to the success of Ohr Menachem?**

First of all, lots of *siyata d'Shmaya*. It says that when we strive in the right direction, Hashem helps us above and beyond our expectations. We see this happening. The staff is dedicated to doing the Rebbe's ratzon in all areas. Once a week the entire staff has a shiur on *Klalei Chinuch V'Hadracha*, and we put in great effort to implement these ideas.

Another thing which is very

important is the chayus in inyanei Moshiach and Geula. When the children see their teachers "living" with what the Rebbe said about Moshiach, including the belief that the Rebbe is Moshiach and is *chai v'kayam*, it has a profound effect, and it teaches them to "live" with all the Rebbe's sichos and horaos, without exception.

If I had to sum up the secret of our success in one line, I would say it is our efforts to fulfill the Rebbe's ratzon in all areas, even if it sometimes entails difficulties.

\* \* \*

When we had completed the interview, I suddenly noticed that it was quiet in the building. "Where are the boys?" I asked R' Kahanov. He suggested that I go to the nearby park where the children were enjoying recess. "Fortunately, we have a spacious park nearby and the children can refresh themselves in ways that many children who live in Brooklyn can only dream about..."

When I got to the park, I saw the boys playing on the playground equipment. Out of the corner of my eye I noticed a group of boys sitting on the grass in a half-circle around their teacher and listening closely. As I got closer I could hear him telling them Chassidishe stories about life in a Jewish shtetl. I looked at the children's pure faces gazing at their rebbi and I could imagine the nachas the Rebbe has from such Chassidishe chinuch.

The only thing left for me to do was to wish the menahel and the entire staff, the parents, and of course, the students, that the efforts they are all making to fulfill the Rebbe's ratzon be successful and bring the true and complete Redemption, thanks to the *hevel tinokos shel beis rabban* (the breath of the schoolchildren). One can point at each one of them and see Moshiach!

# MIDRASHA PNIMIUT IN TEL-AVIV

In the heart of the exclusive neighborhood of North Tel-Aviv, known for its elitist and haughty attitude to anything that resembles Judaism (the neighborhood greeted the first shluchim with a thunder of ripe tomatoes), a quality chassidic Chabad community has developed in the last ten years. A young vibrant community that is constantly growing with new couples, people who left their previous empty lives for a new meaningful life of chassidus and connection to the Rebbe.

The area boasts three beautiful Chabad shuls, which attract young students and youths from the neighborhood, along with successful businessmen. There is a Yeshiva and women Midrasha Pnimitut that baruch Hashem produced successful Shluchim world-wide. This year a new division will be added to the community – the Midrasha seminary in English for girls from overseas.

Esther Piekarski, who will be heading the Midrasha, will serve as a mashpia to the girls. Racheli Marzel and Chani Zohar will act as assistant principals. The teachers are from the staff of the successful Pnimitut Midrasha for Israelis.

We were interested to know what is unique about this Midrasha and for whom it is intended.

**What is unique about this Midrasha compared to all the other seminaries?**

Esther Piekarski: Midreshet Pnimitut is designed for students from abroad, to train them for future shlichus, to strengthen their belief in the Ko'ach HaMeshaleach. This is supplemental to the core subjects: chassidut, halacha, Tanach, etc. The teaching staff are experienced and dedicated educators in the Midrasha.

The afternoons will be devoted to workshops dealing with challenges of shlichus. The students will attend classes on nutrition, home economics, graphic design, marketing & PR, drama, accounting, guidance in

setting up Bat Mitzva clubs, Rosh Chodesh groups, women's events, Friendship Circle, etc...

During the year we will explore issues that shluchim encounter, for example, dealing with the Reform movement, intermarriage, etc. Shluchim will be guest lecturers and share their first-hand experiences. The students will visit shluchim and intern in their community. They will blend with the up-and-coming community in Ramat Aviv by mingling with university students, the students in the midrasha, doing mitzvaim and helping area shluchim. The Chabad community in Ramat Aviv is made up of young professionals who can be very resourceful to the students. All in all it can be a win-win situation.

Racheli Marzel: We are opening this branch as a result of numerous requests from girls from abroad who visited our program for Shabbos, and were favorable impressed. A shlucha who was a counselor in one of the seminaries asked Rabbi Yossi Ginsburg to open a branch for overseas girls. Baruch Hashem, this year it's coming to fruition!

**How will the local and overseas girls interact?**

Channie Zohar: They will share evening classes, farbrengens, Shabbatons, and trips. In the past, Anash girls came as madrichot and we saw the wonderful impact they had on the girls of the Midrasha.

**Who can attend this Midrasha ?**

Esther Piekarski: The Midrasha is designed for Chabad high school graduates or graduates of Seminary Alef. It's important to note that the years of post-high school are meaningful in shaping the direction of the young women. This is when they complete their formal education and begin to chart their way and bring to fruition all that they learned, far away from their home environment.

From my experience working in several seminaries for girls from abroad, I see a big leap in their

spiritual growth in the one year they spend here.

**What will you consider to be a success story?**

Esther Piekarski: On a spiritual plane, we want to enrich the women's spiritual level so that they in turn can be mashpiot on their own, and be proud to be shluchot connected to the meshaleiach.

On a practical level, we want to give practical tools so that these women can be successful on shlichut. In other words, a young woman who goes on shlichut to a new city will have the know-how to be a confident shlucha. She will have the skills to entertain groups, create an evening with a flair, cook for a large crowd, prepare a nice flyer, even basic bookkeeping for home and Beis Chabad.

Racheli Marzel: Success is when students are active in the community and a positive influence on our girls in the Midrasha, who are taking their first formal steps in the Chassidic world – then our goal will be realized.

**How is the gashmius?**

Channie Zohar: The community is situated in the heart of exclusive Tel Aviv. The apartments are lovely and their physical needs will be more than met. They will go sightseeing and enjoy the wonderful sights.

We know that parents might be hesitant in sending girls to Tel Aviv, a city where Yiddishkai at the moment is not a priority. However, we have the greatest confidence in our girls and in our Chinuch that the girls will be Mashpia on the neighborhood and not Chas v'shalom the opposite.

Esther Piekarski: As a Shliach and mother, living in Tel Aviv for the last 28 years, we baruch Hashem can say that the Rebbe's Brachos are visible in all the children of the Tel Aviv Shluchim, across the city, and the positive interest, and awakening that the Tel Aviv residents are displaying. Mamash Yemos HaMoshiach!