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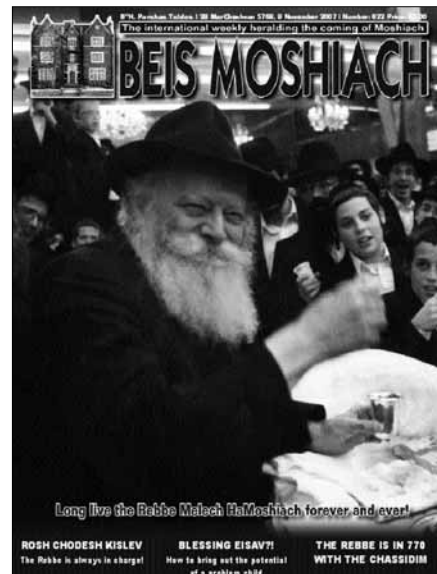
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THE ETERNAL HOUSE OF YAAKOV

Likkutei Sichos Vol. 15, pg. 231-242
Translated by Boruch Merkur

[Continued from last issue]

3. The difference between “Torah” and “the word of G-d” is as follows. The Gemara¹⁹ says, “the word of G-d” – that is *halacha*,” clearly rendered legal rulings. Whereas, “Torah” (especially when juxtaposed to “the word of G-d”) includes the underlying debate,²⁰ lines of reasoning that are scrutinized and etc.²¹

In greater detail:

With regard to customs, we find that the Torah says that one must follow the local custom: “A place where the people have the custom to, etc.”²²

Also with regard to Jewish law there can be a difference between localities, as it is phrased in the Talmud,²³ “In Rav’s locale, the law follows the opinion of Rav; in Shmuel’s locale, the law follows the opinion of Shmuel.” The same principle even applies to the dispute between the Academy of Shammai and the Academy of Hillel. Prior to the law being ruled according to the Academy of Hillel,²⁴ each followed their own opinion.

Moreover, even after the law had been ruled according to the Academy of Hillel – to the point that “[a ruling that follows] the Academy of Shammai instead of the Academy of Hillel is not authentic (*eina Mishna*)”²⁵ – the fact is that “[both] these and these are words of the living L-rd” (*divrei Elokim chayim*).²⁶ G-d forbid that one should say that the opinion of the Academy of Shammai is not part of the Torah, for then such a person would have no connection to the entire Torah²⁷ (as per the ruling of the Rambam²⁸ regarding one who says that a

concept of the Oral Torah is not Divine, G-d forbid).

In fact, even a line of reasoning that was considered and rejected (*salka detach*) and the statement of an apparent difficulty in the Gemara are veritable aspects of Torah that were given from the mouth of the Alm-ghty.²⁹ Even when one learns only a considered line of reasoning or a difficulty in the Torah (not learning the final accepted line of reasoning or the resolution of the quandary in the same sitting), he is obligated to have said a blessing for Torah study, saying about the considered line of reasoning or the quandary – and likewise with regard to an opinion that was not accepted as

law – “...Who gave us His Torah” [as the blessing on the Torah reads].

4. Notwithstanding the fact that all the various opinions and disputes in Gemara and so on, as well as considered lines of reasoning and difficulties in the Torah, are veritable aspects of Torah – “[both] these and these are words of the living L-rd” – the law is rendered according to only a single opinion, as the Gemara puts it³⁰: “G-d (**Havaya**) is with him,³¹ insofar as the law was rendered according to his opinion.” Thus, rendered law and differing opinions parallel the difference between the Divine names “Havaya” and “(these and these are words of) the living L-rd (**Elokim chayim**),” both of which are among the seven Divine names that may not be erased.³²

The following is the explanation of this parallel³³: The name “Elokim” (L-rd) – also “*Elokim chayim*” (living L-rd), which is loftier than just “Elokim”³⁴ – is plural,³⁵ indicating a multiplicity of levels and classifications, as it were. The same distinction is, therefore, traced in Torah. Namely, with respect to [the level of Divinity described as] “*Elokim chayim*,” the concept of divisiveness signified by “these and these” applies, whereas Havaya is the Explicit Name³⁶ (*Shem HaM’forash*), the Essential Name³⁷ (*Shem HaEtzem*), the Special/Specific Name³⁸ (*Shem HaM’yuchad*), transcending divisiveness, for which reason the concept of rendered law in Torah, specifically a single opinion, is derived from the name Havaya.

Havaya is the Explicit Name, the Essential Name, the Specific Name, transcending divisiveness, for which reason the concept of rendered law in Torah, specifically a single opinion, is derived from the name Havaya.

[To be continued, be"H]

NOTES:

19 Shabbos 138b, etc. – see Footnote 19 in the original.

20 Notwithstanding the fact that all matters of Torah, even the narratives, contain teachings, for which reason it is said that “‘Torah’ means ‘teaching’” (Zohar III 53b; Radak, cited in *Gur Aryei*, B'Reishis Ch. 1 beg.). And see later in the text.

21 To note that it is said regarding matters of Torah discussion, “Derive teachings and receive reward, etc. ‘He expands the **Torah** and strengthens it’” (Chullin 66b; Yeshayahu 42:21).

22 P'sachim Ch. 4, Bava Basra beg., among others.

23 See Shabbos 19b.

24 Or, according to R. Yehoshua, that we don't give credence to a *bas kol* (a Heavenly proclamation), Eruvin 6b ff.

25 Brachos 36b, where it is discussed.

26 Eruvin 13b.

Vol. 15] pg. 94 and the citations there.

30 Sanhedrin 93b.

31 Shmuel I 16:18.

32 Sh'vuos 35a.

33 See at length *Ohr HaTorah* Yisro, pg. 890 ff, discourse beginning with the words “*VaYedaber Elokim*,” of 5627; *Hemshech* 5666, pg. 431 ff, among others.

34 See *Pardes shaar Erchei HaKinuyim*, etc., – see Footnote 34 in the original.

35 See also Rashi VaYeira 20:13, VaYishlach 35:7.

36 Sota 38a, Sanhedrin 60a; Rambam Laws of the Foundations of the Torah 6:2.

37 *Kesef Mishna* Laws of Idolatry 2:7, *Pardes shaar* 19, *A Guide to the Perplexed* cheilek 1 Ch. 61 ff, *Ikarim maamer* 2 Ch. 28.

38 Sota ibid, Sanhedrin ibid, etc. – see Footnote 38 in the original.

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5 KISLEV

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28 MARCHESHVAN: THE SIGNS AND TIME OF THE REDEMPTION – FREEDOM FOR THE JEWS OF RUSSIA

The departure of hundreds of thousands of Russian Jews into freedom, thus bringing them closer to mitzva observance, resembles the preparation for the ingathering of the exiles in the days of Moshiach and the fulfillment of the destiny of “a great company shall they return there” (Yirmiyahu 31:7), on the level of “those who taste it merit life.”

(sicha, Shabbos Parshas B'Reishis 5751)

29 MARCHESHVAN: GIVE TZ'DAKA WITH THE INTENTION OF HASTENING THE REDEMPTION – PART OF THE STUDY ON THE REDEMPTION

To bring about the revelation and coming of the Moshiach immediately, every Jew must increase in the study of Torah (particularly) on the subject of Moshiach

and the Redemption... In addition, and this is obviously most important, they should increase in the stringent observance of mitzvos, especially stringency in the mitzva of tz'daka (the most comprehensive of all mitzvos), which “hastens the Redemption.”

Furthermore, it is appropriate and correct to connect the increase in tz'daka with the increase in Torah study on the subject of Moshiach and the Redemption, whereby the increase in tz'daka is with the intention to quicken and hasten the Redemption, since this intention in itself is part of the Torah study on the subject of the Redemption.

(sicha, Shabbos Parshas Tazria-Metzora 5751)

ROSH CHODESH KISLEV: THERE WILL BE REVEALED IN THE FUTURE TO COME THAT THERE IS NOTHING ELSE EXCEPT THE EXISTENCE OF G-D

This physical world hides and conceals the G-dly light within it and the G-dly power that enlivens and sustains everything at every moment anew, ex nihilo (the word “*olam*” (world) derives from “*helem*” (concealment)).

In the days of Moshiach, the truth will be revealed that the world's true existence is only as a vessel for the G-dly light that enlivens it, and there will be revealed that “there is nothing else besides Him,” there is no other existence in the world except G-d.

(Seifer HaSichos 5748, pg. 514)

THE REVELATION OF THE SPARK OF MOSHIACH IN EVERY JEW ON ROSH CHODESH KISLEV

It has already been accepted and spread (continually) throughout the Jewish Diaspora that the month of Kislev is called “the month of the Redemption,” starting with Rosh Chodesh Kislev (which includes the whole month), Rosh Chodesh of Redemption...

Furthermore, it can be said that on Rosh Chodesh there is revealed within every Jew a spark of Moshiach within him, the aspect of yechida, which is a spark from the general level of yechida, the soul of Moshiach. This revelation brings about a renewal of his entire existence, and in all of his affairs that have been done, there is

instilled the level of yechida, and most importantly, it brings about the revelation and coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu, to the point of its most literal expression – a soul within a body, “a king from the House of Dovid, etc.”

(Seifer HaSichos 5752, from pg. 122)

2 KISLEV: DELAYS IN MOSHIACH'S COMING AROUSES ADDITIONAL VIGOR AND VITALITY IN OUR AVODA

Jews must know that that the time for the coming of Moshiach has certainly arrived already, and there is only the need for “Stand ready all of you,” out of a sense of yearning and longing for Moshiach, which will surely bring the Moshiach.

As for the fact that Moshiach has not come until now, Moshiach will surely answer this question himself. However, it is forbidden to allow this question to weaken *ch”v* a person’s avoda. On the contrary, it must arouse an increase in vigor and vitality with greater strength and greater fortitude in his avoda.

(Seifer HaSichos 5748, pg. 574)

3 KISLEV: A RAINBOW IN THE CLOUD AS A SIGN OF THE REDEMPTION

It is stated in Zohar (Vol. I, 72b) that the rainbow is one of the signs of the Redemption. It is explained in s’farim (Abarbanel, Parshas Noach 9b) that the rainbow relates to the elevation and purification of the world through the Flood.

Prior to the Flood, there were thick physical clouds, and therefore, the light of the sun was not subject to refraction as a result of passing through them. However, after the purification of the world through the Flood, even the clouds became more refined, reflecting the light of the sun, producing a rainbow.

This shows us the connection between the rainbow and the coming of the Moshiach, when the whole world will be at the culmination of purity.

(sicha, Shabbos Parshas Noach 5721 – unedited)

4 KISLEV: SEEING THE DIVINE CHARIOT IN THE FUTURE TO COME

“And your Teacher shall no longer be concealed (*y’kaneif*) from you, and your eyes shall see your Teacher” (Yeshayahu 30:20).

It is not possible today to see even just a “*kanaf*,” which is nothing more than the end of the garment. In addition, even the garment itself (not only a “*kanaf*”) is secondary and subservient to the person clothed within it, and all the more so when it’s “your Teacher.”

In the Future to Come, there will be the reality of “*kanaf*” (the “*Seider Hishtalshelus*” (downward progression of the spiritual worlds), the “*Maaseh Merkava*” (Divine Chariot), the Ten S’firos), except that the “*kanaf*” will not conceal.

(Seifer HaSichos 5749, pg. 134)

5 KISLEV: THE SIGNS AND TIME OF THE REDEMPTION – THE TIME OF YOUR REDEMPTION HAS ARRIVED

This year is the year of “I will show him wonders,” the year when there will be fulfilled the appointed destiny of “As in the days of your exodus from the land of Egypt, I will show him wonders” (Micha 7:15).

Furthermore, they have actually seen already “wonders” that testify to the fact that this is the “year when Melech HaMoshiach is revealed,” to the point of “the hour when Melech HaMoshiach comes...and he proclaims to Israel, ‘Humble ones, the time of your Redemption has arrived’” (Yalkut Shimoni, Yeshayahu, Remez 499), until the proclamation that “Here comes [Melech HaMoshiach],” who has already come.

This means that we are already standing on the verge of the beginning of the days of Moshiach, on the verge of the start of the Redemption.

(sicha, Shabbos Parshas Balak 5751)



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THE REBBE IS ALWAYS IN CHARGE!

By Menachem Ziegelboim

*It was the first time in the history of the Seventh Generation that Chassidim were confronted with the notion that the Rebbe is a man of flesh and blood. The event which took place Shmini Atzeres night 5738, when the Rebbe suddenly sat down, looking very pale, shook the Chassidim up. They never dreamed that the Rebbe could be seriously ill. * Thirty years later, I spoke with Rabbi Sholom Yaakov Chazan, one of the bachurim in 770 at the time, and he described the scene, the panic, the tears, and the dancing. * Information from diaries that were publicized at the time are interspersed with the interview.*

The thirty years that have passed since that night, which to a certain extent, was a turning point in the lives of Chabad Chassidim of the seventh generation, have not diminished the tremendous shock that took hold of the Chassidim who were in 770 at that time. The news

hit Lubavitchers around the world like lightning, and especially those who were in Crown Heights.

This was true for balabatim and all the more so for the T'mimim, who had nothing else in their world aside from Torah study and hiskashrus to the Rebbe. The

bachurim, who spent time with the Rebbe during t'fillos and farbrengens, who thirsted for every drop of information about the Rebbe and waited until late at night in order to be able to speak with those coming out of yechidus, were shaken to their core. The Rebbe and health problems simply did not go together. Nobody dreamed that the Rebbe could experience ill health.

I spoke to one of the bachurim who was in 770 at the time, someone knowledgeable about the customs of the place, who knew the people, and who had connections to the secretariat, having worked on editing books for Kehos along with Rabbi Leibel Groner.

During the second and third hakafa, the Rebbe encouraged the singing, clapped, and motioned to all to increase the simcha, albeit with slower movements. During the fourth hakafa, in which the guests were honored, they sang "Al HaSela Hach," but the Rebbe's clapping was different than usual. It was gentle and his hands barely touched one another. The Rebbe's left arm leaned on the lectern.

The Rebbe suddenly turned pale, and without people realizing it, he asked R' Groner to bring him a chair. The Rebbe sat down and brought his siddur closer. It was unusual for the Rebbe to lean back and close his eyes. It looked as though he was suffering

great pain.

R' Groner, who did not know what was happening, called one of the doctors who was standing near the bima. The doctor asked for water. Rabbi Binyamin Klein handed the Rebbe a cup of water, but the Rebbe refused to drink it. The doctor asked for a wet handkerchief to be placed on the Rebbe's hand, but the Rebbe did

not want it, nor did he want to be touched at all.

I spoke with Rabbi Sholom Yaakov Chazan, editor of *Beis Moshiach*, about what happened that night thirty years ago. He had arrived in America from B'nei Brak four years earlier, learned in Oholei Torah for two years, and in 5737 went to learn in Chovevei Torah. Then he learned in 770 until he

married. I asked him to convey how the Chassidim and T'mimim reacted to the news of the Rebbe's condition.

"The bachurim took it very hard," R' Yankel told me. "We thought that this simply couldn't happen to the Rebbe. We saw the Rebbe's holy work and how he was going from strength to strength every year, more healthy and vital, more farbrengens, more of a shturem. A health crisis was out of the question and therefore, it was a tremendous shock when it happened."

How much did you know of what was going on at the time?

We knew almost nothing; they didn't tell us anything. In the first days after the Rebbe's heart attack, Rabbi Groner, after pressure from the public, would come down at seven in the evening and update us. The first night he said that the doctors said there was progress, baruch Hashem. The next night he said the same thing, without volunteering details. After the third night, the bachurim got annoyed.

It was only afterwards that we learned that the Rebbe did not allow them to discuss what was going on. The Rebbe did not allow any information to get out. Over time, bit by bit, with a word here and a word there, people began to realize what was actually going on. It was only several years later, after those in the know published their diaries, that more details were made public.

At the time though, all we knew was that we did not see the Rebbe, the situation was not good, and 770 was closed.

When did you finally realize that something terrible had happened?

During the hakafos we could see that the Rebbe did not feel well. The Rebbe asked for a chair and was very pale. Nobody knew what this meant. They thought it was fatigue



Nobody knew why the Rebbe was saying this when the Rebbe Rayatz had long since passed away. Which doctors should they not listen to?

as a result of the great exertion over Tishrei. After the davening, the Rebbe went up to his room, then went out to the sukka and made Kiddush. The Rebbe even told everybody to go home for the Yom Tov meal. So everyone went home without anybody realizing that something very serious had happened.

Only a few people returned to 770 to see what was going on. During the course of the night they slowly began to fathom the gravity of the situation.

When they reached the seventh hakafa, the Rebbe got up from his seat in order to join the hakafa, as was his custom throughout all the years, to dance during this hakafa. All suggestions that the Rebbe rest, or alternatively, to hold the hakafa on his bima at the front of the shul, were rejected. The Rebbe took the seifer torah and walked towards the bima in the center of the shul where the hakafos took place.

The secretaries tried to speed things up, to make it easier for the Rebbe. The tension was felt. The crowd began to sing the hakafos niggun and the Rebbe danced with Rashag, with his hand on his shoulder. The Rebbe's pale face was the only hint that something terrible had happened.

After a few rounds, Rashag left the dancing and that's how the last hakafa ended. The Rebbe went back to his bima, finished davening, said gut Yom Tov three times in a weak voice and arduously made his way up to his

room.

The Rebbe entered his room and closed the door. The secretaries remained outside.

There were actually signs earlier on, spiritual signs. The Rebbe, as always, "prepared the cure before the blow," but the Chassidim did not understand anything at the time, or maybe they didn't try to understand. It was simply something that made no sense to them.

At the farbrengen for 13 Tishrei that had taken place ten days earlier, the Rebbe spoke about a letter that the Rebbe Rayatz had written after Yom Kippur 1929, the first after he was freed from Russia. In this letter, he asked that they be especially happy during the joyous days of Sukkos and Simchas Torah. The Rebbe said that this letter applied now too, and he asked/wished that it be a happy Sukkos.

The Rebbe added some perplexing statements: It is known that the doctors told the Rebbe Rayatz (around the year 1933) that they had despaired of his life, but he actually lived another 18 years! The Rebbe said not to listen to doctors who said to minimize the simcha, etc.

Nobody knew why the Rebbe was saying this when the Rebbe Rayatz had long since passed away. Which doctors should they not listen to?

Sukkos began with unusual joy, relative to those times. Years later, the tremendous simcha was already something expected, but back then, the Rebbe sufficed with encouraging the crowd by motioning with his hand. That year, when the Rebbe

approached the lectern, he put his siddur down and turned to encourage the crowd with great energy and clapping, which was unusual. Nobody understood the reason for the Rebbe's great simcha.

On Shabbos Chol HaMoed at Mincha, the Rebbe began singing "Ana Avda" and he turned around and began clapping vigorously.

The night of Shmini Atzeres, when the Rebbe had a heart attack and the best doctors were brought in, people began to realize what the Rebbe meant about not listening to the doctors who might despair of the life of the Nasi HaDor...

A real battle took place that night about whether to take the Rebbe to the hospital. The Rebbe refused to go, but the elder Chassidim, who listened to the doctors, wanted the Rebbe to go. His life was in danger, they reasoned. That's when they realized the Rebbe had been speaking about himself. Some felt that the great simcha on Sukkos was intended as compensation for Simchas Torah, when the Rebbe would not be present at the hakafos.

Where were you when it happened?

I was standing in my usual place near the aron kodesh, not far from the Rebbe.

When did you notice that something had happened?

When the Rebbe asked for a chair. He was very pale. I was standing nearby and I could see this.

In the diaries it says that they yelled to the crowd to leave so fresh air could get in, and only a hundred or two hundred people remained. I'm guessing that you were one of those few...

Let's just say that I was there almost until the end. I tried to be there as long as possible... I may not have been there for the final hakafa.

And?

At moments like that you don't

operate rationally. I don't know what I was thinking. Your mind doesn't work, only your emotions, seeing the Rebbe like that...

Aside from his being pale and the chair, the Rebbe tried to continue as usual...

Even before he asked for a chair, his clapping was weak. Then he stood up again. The doctors went over to him to check his pulse, but the Rebbe did not let them touch him. He didn't drink water either. Then they wanted to have the final

hakafa on the Rebbe's bima, but the Rebbe wanted it to be in the usual place.

We did not understand exactly what was going on. They thought the Rebbe wasn't feeling well, having stood all day, not eating, not sleeping... They didn't think of anything beyond that.

Only the Rebbetzin entered Gan Eden HaElyon. One of the people present, who stood nearby, saw how the Rebbe greeted her with a big smile and then

expressed his surprise that they had called for her. Later on, the Rebbetzin came out and said to R' Groner that the Rebbe assigns you the responsibility to take care of medical matters. This was the first time that the Rebbe agreed, in a roundabout way, to accept medical treatment.

A large crowd stood on the pavement outside 770 and waited anxiously to hear what was going on inside. Nobody knew what had happened, but everybody realized that it was not good. Many stood there in shock and fright.

The worst of all was Simchas Torah night, when the Rebbe did not come down for the first time since the nesius.

Simchas Torah is the highlight of the year, and Tishrei in particular. For the Rebbe, it was the peak day of giluyim between him and the Chassidim. Then came the time for hakafos and there was no Rebbe. His absence was horrifying.

Nevertheless, from the very beginning they saw how the Rebbe took charge and said to make the hakafos with great simcha. The Rebbe even told Rashag to sell the verses for the benefit of Tomchei T'mimim and said that he would give a dollar to anyone who bought a pasuk. The Rebbe even told R' Groner a d'var Torah to repeat in his name.

Yet everybody went home feeling despondent. They didn't know what had happened. In the morning they found out that there had been another heart attack, worse than the first one, and there was a discussion about whether to take the Rebbe to the hospital or not. The situation was serious.

That made people even more scared.

There was chaos. People were in shock. The fact that the Rebbe was not coming down to hakafos was serious enough. Yet the Rebbe



At moments like that you don't operate rationally. I don't know what I was thinking. Your mind doesn't work, only your emotions, seeing the Rebbe like that...

demanded simcha, to dance and rejoice as though nothing had happened. Everybody danced. Some cried and danced, cried because the Rebbe wasn't there and rejoiced because the Rebbe said it would make him well.

The fact that the Rebbe sent instructions every few hours was encouraging. We couldn't see the Rebbe but we knew that he was running the show. The instructions were surprising. To increase in simcha, to say a d'var Torah, to have a farbrengen. All this was greatly encouraging because it showed that the Rebbe was in command. The situation was one of opposites.

Midnight.

Most of the Chassidim had gone home to eat the Yom Tov meal, knowing only that the Rebbe was weak, but the real situation was far worse. The doctors among the Chassidim did not go home. They stood in 770 in confusion. The Rebbe did not allow them to examine him. One of the doctors dared to ask them to ask the Rebbe whether he could just ask a few questions. The Rebbe agreed and the doctor went in. He asked questions and the Rebbe answered.

At the end of their dialogue the doctor said emotionally: Rebbe, according to what you say, you had a serious heart attack. You need to be hospitalized immediately in order to have the necessary equipment at hand and the appropriate supervision.

The Rebbe negated this idea.

Other, greater doctors were called. All the top doctors were called. They immediately realized this was a serious situation and they tried to convince the Rebbe to go to the hospital.

Throughout the night they carried out extensive tests. One of the doctors asked the Rebbe whether he could give him a pain killer and the Rebbe said it wasn't necessary. One of the Chassidim said to the doctor: When you ask that way, of course the Rebbe will say no, since it's a holiday and according to halacha you can only give an injection if the doctor says it's necessary!

The doctor, now understanding the halachic requirements, went over to the Rebbe again and said: As a doctor, I order the Rebbe to accept this injection, because the pain endangers your wellbeing.

The Rebbe agreed and then rested for the next four hours. Later on, the Rebbetzin said: I don't remember the Rebbe ever resting for four hours straight.

The doctors concluded that the Rebbe had had a serious heart attack. One of the doctors asked the secretaries whether during the heart attack, during the hakafos, the Rebbe had moaned from the pain. When they said he had not, that he had only sat down, the doctor said that he had been a doctor for decades and had never heard of anything like that; the pain of such a massive heart attack being too

great for a human being to tolerate.

That first night, a group of Chassidim and T'mimim went to the Ohel to daven. In the morning, when people found out that it was a serious heart attack, another group went to the Ohel. Despite the secrecy surrounding the Rebbe, the Chassidim understood that the situation was bleak.

"I went with the third group to the Ohel," said Rabbi Chazan. "We left Shmini Atzeres afternoon for Queens and walked four hours each way. First we went on Tahalucha to make hakafos in Rabbi Sholom Ber Hecht's shul in Queens. From there we continued to the Ohel. We arrived and the place was locked. We had to jump over the gate in the dark. Angry dogs surrounded us and didn't stop barking. We went to the Rebbe Rayatz's gravesite and davened and then we walked back to Crown Heights. We got back there at 6-7 in the morning. It was an exhausting walk there and back and the entire ordeal took 18 hours. We knew already that the situation was serious, that there had been a heart attack, but we had no other information."

What did the bachurim think?

There was no difference between the bachurim and the balabatim. On Simchas Torah we were all bachurim. Nobody was working, of course; everybody was in 770 and close to what had happened.

At first, everyone was in shock. We could not believe this could happen to the Rebbe. The Rebbe was 75 and it was the height of the mitzva campaigns, the height of the fight for shleimus ha'Aretz. The Rebbe was fighting the wars of Hashem with Mihu Yehudi.

The feeling at that time was you were growing with the Rebbe from farbrengen to farbrengen. The Rebbe was physically conquering the world, another country on the map,

another big city, another leader of a country was coming to the Rebbe. The Rebbe's activities were increasing – and then boom! It took us days to absorb this.

Yet we saw how the Rebbe was in charge and we understood that this episode was beyond nature. The Rebbe took charge from the very beginning when he said the hakafo should continue, when he went up to his room and did not drink before Kiddush, his going out to the sukka, his determination not to go to the

hospital, the type of treatment he got by top doctors, his instructions that we continue with simcha, etc.

The fact that the Rebbe was constantly giving instructions about how to bring about his cure, encouraged us. That's when we realized that what the Rebbe was going through was not natural, and therefore, the healing would also be supernatural.

A day later, the Chassid, R' Shlomo Aharon Kazarnovsky entered the Rebbe's room and cried.

The Rebbe asked him why he was crying and he responded with the question: How could I not cry?

The Rebbe told him: If you want me to be healed, you have to be happy.

When you recall that period of time, what moment in particular comes to mind?

One of the special moments was when R' Leibel Groner came down to the farbrengen at the end of Simchas Torah, sent by the Rebbe, and brought wine from the Rebbe's cup to give out kos shel bracha. He said that after Maariv and before Havdala, a special announcement would be forthcoming from the Rebbe.

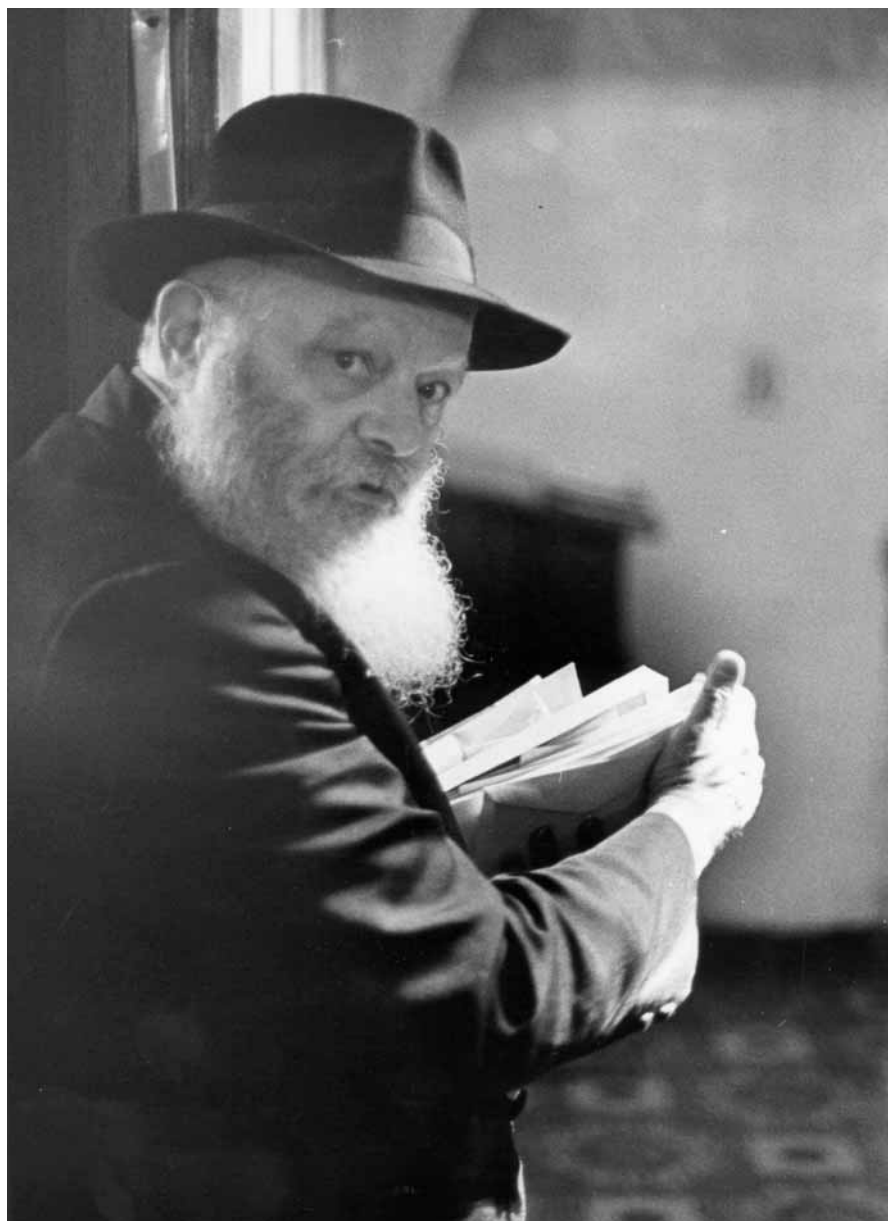
The tension was enormous and we all rushed to say the Birkas HaMazon and daven Maariv. Nobody thought it could be a sicha. Everybody knew that the Rebbe was in critical condition and that he had sat in bed for the Shmoneh Esrei. So when Leibel announced that the Rebbe would say a sicha, people were in shock.

There's a video of it. You can't imagine how 770 danced. I don't remember another dance that was so happy and emotional. It gave us enormous encouragement, such simcha! The sicha was broadcast to all Lubavitch centers around the world.

It's not like today when we have cell phones and the Internet and we can be updated minute by minute. Phone calls were expensive and not everybody had a line (in Israel).

And then you heard the Rebbe's voice ...

His voice was weak, different than what we were used to. The Rebbe coughed more than usual. He began by saying: "For a certain reason we are speaking now on Motzaei Yom Tov and it can be heard around the world..." The Rebbe did not say the reason, but everybody knew. The Rebbe spoke



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for about half an hour. Nobody believed that the Rebbe was in a condition to say a sicha, but he did.

Then came the period of concealment. The upper part of 770 was closed and things changed dramatically.

The situation was murky throughout. The Rebbe did not allow the doctors to say anything. The Chassidim only knew that the doctors said there was improvement, but we had no details. Very few people knew anything and they didn't tell us.

At ten in the morning a minyan of elder Chassidim gathered near the Rebbe's room for Shacharis Yom Tov morning. Despite everything, it was Yom Tov. For Krias HaTorah they went to Gan Eden HaElyon, where they read the Torah using the Rebbe's shtender as a reading table. They called the Rebbe for Maftir, as

they always did. With great effort the Rebbe sat on the bed and read the Haftora as clearly as he could.

During Musaf, the Rebbe encouraged the singing by tapping lightly on the bed. When davening was over, the Rebbe began to sing, "V'Samachta B'Chagecha," which cheered the Chassidim up a bit. The Rebbe asked that they pass by and wish a Gut Yom Tov and he thanked the Kohanim with a yashar ko'ach as usual.

The main minyan was held in the big shul without the Rebbe. Someone spread the news that the situation had improved and one of the shluchim got up and shouted that everybody agreed to improve and they asked Hashem to give the Rebbe good health.

You mentioned earlier the fact that the Rebbe, despite being the patient, was in charge. What did you mean?

From the very beginning, the Rebbe set the tone. If the doctors did not allow the Rebbe to say a sicha on Motzaei Simchas Torah, they ended up allowing five minutes and the sicha lasted half an hour. Then the Rebbe edited the sicha and also asked that they continue sending in the weekly *Likkutei Sichos* for editing.

Those who worked on the sichos, members of the Vaad L'Hafatzos Sichos, did not want to send in a sicha so the Rebbe would not have to exert himself, but the Rebbe demanded to know where it was. Then the Rebbe began editing the sichos that he said every Shabbos, which was highly irregular. For a while, the Rebbe said the mechitzos in 770 should be taken down and the place should be completely open. Every day they saw improvements. The Rebbe was with the Chassidim even if they didn't see him yet. You could sense clearly that

the Rebbe was in charge.

This is one of the reasons, apparently, that the Rebbe did not go to the hospital. It was for the reason the Rebbe said – that he did not want to cause his Chassidim pain, and also because in the hospital he would not be able to be in charge. He would be among many other patients. The main reason was that the Rebbe explained to the doctors about the holiness of the room and that the refua would only come here. From the first moment, the Rebbe demonstrated that it wasn't a typical illness.

The Rebbe did not make peace with the situation throughout. They saw how the Rebbe did things that according to the doctors and according to nature, he should not have done. But the Rebbe ruled over nature and nature did not rule him. Therefore, the Rebbe also did things that he wasn't accustomed to doing before, in order to show that he was in charge. That is the Rebbe's mode of conduct, way above the laws of nature.

The Rebbe himself took control over the matter in an supernatural manner.

Indeed, afterwards, from 5738-5739 and on, everybody saw that the Rebbe's work in leading the world increased tremendously in an open way. This included the sichos, the schedules and the farbrengens. In everything that the Rebbe did from then on, you could see an acceleration, which is not the experience of a normal person who had a heart attack and naturally begins to slow down.

Something symbolic perhaps, took place on one of the days of Chanuka 5738, when the Rebbe came down to daven Mincha with the congregation, which was not the norm for that time. After Mincha, the Rebbe said he wanted to distribute Chanuka gelt. What always happened, at various

distributions, was the secretaries remained until the end, and only then did they go over to get what the Rebbe had distributed.

However, it was different this time. At the very beginning the Rebbe called over Rabbi Chadakov, gave him a dollar, and told him to go up to his office and continue working. Then the Rebbe called R' Groner and R' Klein over, and then Rabbi Dovid Raskin, giving each a dollar and sending them off to work. The Rebbe didn't want them

standing there; he didn't want limitations. We saw quite openly that the Rebbe was in charge and breaking new ground in a supernatural way.

The Rebbe left no room for doubt as to how to behave on Simchas Torah. He called R' Groner and told him to tell the people not to forget to make Jews rejoice in shuls, and the main thing – mit a shturem! Those who want to improve my health should go and celebrate!



Yes, the Rebbe continued to be concerned about the Jewish people while his own condition was still not stable.

Hundreds and thousands of Anash and T'mimim went out to make Jews rejoice, doing so with pain in their hearts but with song on their lips. Word of the Rebbe's ill health had spread quickly throughout New York and thousands of Jews were saddened at the news. In many shuls the aron kodesh was opened and they said the verses "Ata Horeisa" but did not dance much.

Then, as their Yom Tov joy was diminished, in came the Lubavitcher Chassidim who began to rejoice. Are you crazy? The Rebbe doesn't feel well and you're dancing?

They were all surprised to hear that it was the Rebbe who ordered the Chassidim to go and celebrate as they do every year.

At that time, back in 770, the Chassidim who remained there started the hakafos dancing with great enthusiasm. It was easy to see that the simcha was forced and that people were sad inside, but they knew that the Rebbe said to dance and be happy. Even the doctor, Dr. Weiss, said that the more they rejoiced, the more the simcha would help the Rebbe's health. No wonder then that Anash began the hakafos with mighty singing and dancing, "Der Rebbe zol zain gezunt" (the Rebbe should be healthy).

Then they changed the words to "der Rebbe iz gezunt" (the Rebbe is healthy). People had tears in their eyes. They all wanted to put down their heads and bawl, but the Rebbe said they should dance – and dance they did, and cried too. Some held on to the tables and pushed themselves up, the main thing being to dance...

The Rebbe said then how to act in a situation of concealment. We thought we just had to cry and say T'hillim and the Rebbe said to dance and rejoice. How could dancing bring a refua? The fact is that it worked!

Thirty years have passed since then. We've gone through worse since then with the strokes on 27 Adar and then 3 Tamuz. What can we learn from 5738 if we can compare it at all?

I don't know if you can compare it, but one thing we learned from that episode: the Rebbe is always in charge! You know the sicha that the Rebbe said about the Alter Rebbe and the Rebbe Rayatz – that although they were imprisoned, it was with their consent. If they had not wanted to go to jail, it would not have happened, and the fact is that when the Alter Rebbe did not want to continue traveling Erev Shabbos, things happened that made it impossible to travel.

In 5738 we saw how the Rebbe is in control. When the stroke happened in 5752, although the situation was different, we knew that the Rebbe was in charge. On the one hand, the situation was grave and we needed Divine mercy, but on the other hand, we knew that the

Rebbe was in control in a supernatural way.

And when we don't see and hear the Rebbe now?

Today as well, we know that the Rebbe is in control of the situation. The heart attack in 5738 was the root of all later concealments and it is the root of the current situation too. The Rebbe said then how to act in a situation of concealment. We thought we just had to cry and say T'hillim and the Rebbe said to dance and rejoice. How could dancing bring a refua? The fact is that it worked! Not only that but the Rebbe said he wanted to hear the dancing downstairs up in his room and this is what led to his recovery.

When the Rebbe is not in good health, it is not like an ordinary person who is not well; rather, it is a spiritual matter. We don't know how to explain it, but that's the way it is. We need to remember that everything, including the situation today, is with the Rebbe's consent and under his control.

When the Rebbe had a stroke in 5752, we had experience and knew what the Rebbe said to do in 5738: not to despair but to go forward. Although we don't see or hear the Rebbe, the way to the hisgalus is according to the instructions he gave us. We also need to remember that even in a state of concealment, the Rebbe is in charge and it's not anarchy.

You can see this in Tishrei, when thousands of people continue to come to the Rebbe, to 770. Who dreamed this would happen back in 5755? People thought it was over and there would no longer be Tishrei with the Rebbe. Yet, from year to year we see more Chassidim coming to the Rebbe, how things are continuing and growing. You feel how the Rebbe continues to lead. Every Chassid wants to be here and every Chassid who goes back home tells about what he got

in Tishrei. Is this natural? This is the Rebbe's *nitzchius* (eternality) that leads the way just as he did in Tishrei 5738. You cannot explain it rationally. It's not just faith but a palpable sense.

The morning of Simchas Torah, the small minyan of Chassidim made hakafos around the Rebbe's shtender up in his room. At the Krias HaTorah, R' Mordechai Shusterman, the Baal Korei, began to say m'reshus to invite the Rebbe to be Chasan B'Reishis, but in the middle he broke down and cried.

Nobody knew how the Rebbe would go up to the Torah, but then, the Rebbe got up, although this required tremendous exertion on his part. One of the doctors sprang forward to ask the Rebbe to sit down, but the Rebbe smiled as though to say, don't mix in...

The doctors could not believe their eyes as they saw G-dly, supernatural things taking place before their eyes.

The physical life of a tzaddik is not like that of regular people. When you know that the Rebbe's entire life is dedicated to hastening the Geula, how can you understand what happened on 5738 as part of that process?

I don't think we can know. The verse says, "I thank You Hashem for being angry at me." The Rebbe frequently mentioned this verse, which is said in reference to Yemos HaMoshiach. The Rebbe said that then, in Geula, we will know that all the suffering in the time of galus was part of the Geula process, but now we have to believe it, even though we don't understand it.

I don't think there is anyone who can explain what part the heart attack of 5738 had in the chain of events leading towards Geula, but it is part of it. We have to believe this but not allow our faith to undermine the feelings of how difficult this time

is due to the concealments. When the Rebbe is revealed to us once again, we will understand.

Did the Rebbe say anything about this?

No, not that I know of. The Rebbe did say, right away on Shmini Atzeres your absence will be noted, i.e., that the Rebbe was not present with the Chassidim on Simchas

Torah should not diminish the simcha, and the Rebbe even gave an example from the tzimtzum that was done to create the world, which actually facilitated the later revelation.

Although the Rebbe did not explain the direct connection to the event, everybody understood the hint that a new era had begun in his

holy work, and indeed that was the case.

If we look at the Rebbe's first maamer, "Basi L'Gani," we see that the Rebbe says that since we went through what we went through, he will come and redeem us. Clearly, everything that we went through was part of the Geula process.

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HOW TO BRING OUT THE POTENTIAL OF A PROBLEM CHILD

By Rabbi Yosef Karasik, District Rav Bat Chefer – Emek Chefer

*Why did Yitzchok want to bless the wicked Eisav? Didn't he know what Eisav was really like? Was Rivka more realistic than Yitzchok? Who descended from Eisav? * A fascinating look at the parsha from the perspective of Chazal, Kabbala, and Chabad Chassidus.*

Parshas Toldos tells of the difference of opinion between Yitzchok Avinu and Rivka Imeinu. Yitzchok loved Eisav and wanted to bless him, whereas Rivka loved Yaakov and wanted the blessings to be given to him. She did all she could to make this happen, even to the point of endangering herself, when she said that if Yaakov's trickery was discovered, any curses would befall her, not him.

This is all very surprising. Eisav was evil. He fooled people and committed the gravest of sins, idol worship, immorality, and murder, while Yaakov sat and learned Torah. Why did Yitzchok want to bless Eisav?

Although Eisav flattered Yitzchok and tried to deceive him into thinking that he was pious (he would

ask Yitzchok questions like, "how do you tithe salt and straw?" items that are not tithed), he sinned publicly and Yitzchok must have known about it! The Torah states explicitly that Yitzchok knew that Eisav had married wives who were not of the highest caliber ("and they were a source of sorrow to Yitzchok and Rivka") and that the name of G-d was not constantly on his lips!

Yitzchok was a man of g'vura, one whose ability to critique was pronounced and developed. It's just not possible that a man of his nature could believe a liar and not see through to his rottenness!

THE POTENTIAL OF THE WAYWARD SON

In Chassidus it explains that

Yitzchok did not err when it came to understanding who Eisav really was. He knew the bitter truth about Eisav's low spiritual state and about his wicked behavior. However, he was also able to see deep into Eisav and recognize his hidden soul powers, and he saw enormous potential there.

In the Torah it says, "And the boys grew up." The Zohar says this refers to spiritual growth. Not only Yaakov, but Eisav also had tremendous spiritual power. Furthermore, as surprising as it sounds, Eisav's spiritual potential was greater than that of Yaakov! That is why Eisav was the firstborn, since there was superior potential within the root of his soul. Yaakov referred to him as "my master," because Eisav's spiritual level was indeed higher than his own.

Converts descended from the wicked Eisav who became great tzaddikim and g'dolei Torah, such as Rabbi Meir Baal HaNeis ("the source of the wisdom of the Oral Torah, for any Mishna not ascribed to an individual sage by name is from him"). The Arizal explains that the success of his descendants is sourced in Eisav's lofty spiritual source. His source is "a great power within chochma" (and this is the

secret of the verse regarding Eisav that he had “[the ability of] trapping in his mouth,” which refers to the sparks of holiness within him that were revealed in his descendents who converted).

Eisav was like an undisciplined, wild child, who seems foolish and incompetent at first glance. Or he was like a child with learning disabilities or behavioral problems who may actually be quite bright. His problem is his inability to control himself, etc.

Parents and teachers don’t know how to deal with him, how to direct him. It’s actually his amazing abilities that are the real problem, because rather than channel them in positive ways, he uses them all negatively.

Eisav used his great potential to do evil. Instead of making good use of his abilities, he wasted them on forbidden things. Yaakov, on the other hand, although not as gifted, used what he was granted to become

a great tzaddik. It is often the children who are not as gifted, who are not “wild geniuses,” who achieve far more in their lifetimes than those who are endowed with far more than they.

In Chassidus, Eisav is compared to gold and Yaakov to silver, because although gold is far more precious than silver, it is less useful. It is not used to buy bread in the store. It is the less valuable silver that is used in retail transactions.

So too, although Yaakov’s potential was inferior to that of Eisav, it was Yaakov who had the greater spiritual impact on the world – with Torah, mitzvos, and good deeds.

EISAV’S DEATH

The story of Eisav’s death is tragic. On the day that Yaakov was buried, Eisav was killed (as the Midrash says) and his head rolled into the lap of his father Yitzchok in the M’aras HaMachpella. There it

remained, while his body was buried outside the cave.

As with all events, Eisav’s death and burial were not by happenstance; they were directed by Hashem and reflected Eisav’s personality. His head represents the source of his soul and the powers he had in potential form, which were holy and very lofty. That is why it was buried in the M’aras HaMachpella along with the Avos and Imahos. His body, representing what Eisav was in this world, was corrupt, and that is why it was buried outside the cave.

THE VARYING APPROACHES OF FATHER AND MOTHER

The difference of opinion between Yitzchok and Rivka about who should receive the brachos, Eisav or Yaakov, is reflected in two different and opposite approaches in handling a wayward child.



The difference of opinion between Yitzchok and Rivka about who should receive the brachos, Eisav or Yaakov, is reflected in two different and opposite approaches in handling a wayward child.

According to Yitzchok, you need to encourage such a child and give him brachos, the tools, to motivate him to use his abilities. You need to assign him important jobs, appoint him to responsible positions, because this will inspire him to improve, and then he will utilize his gifts to carry out those tasks in the best way.

As surprising as it sounds, Eisav's spiritual potential was greater than that of Yaakov! That is why Eisav was the firstborn, since there was superior potential within the root of his soul. Yaakov referred to him as "my master," because Eisav's spiritual level was indeed higher than his own.

Rivka maintained that when it's a child with such prodigious powers as Eisav, giving him brachos is dangerous because he is liable to use them in negative ways – destroying instead of building, breaking instead of fixing. Indeed, Yitzchok's brachos were tremendously potent, like a

split atom whose energy can be used to build or destroy the world. Thus, Rivka said the energy and powers – i.e., the brachos – had to be given to the son who was *tamim*, a tzaddik. As for the difficult son, his tikkun needed to be done carefully, slowly, step by step, with much patience and after many years they would see changes. Ultimately, the child with less potential would get a boost from the brachos, and would be the one to bring about the tikkun in the problem child.

Rivka was of the opinion that a child like Eisav could not be educated one-two-three, because quick changes with him are unrealistic. You need to be cautious and give a great deal of thought about what to give him and what not to give him.

Even though Yaakov received the brachos, and not Eisav, we need to be very careful about the lessons we learn from this story. Only someone on the level of the righteous Rivka can say that a child should not be drawn close and blessed. A mechanech can and must draw out latent kochos in a child, even one who behaves like Eisav.

A QUOTE FROM P'NIMIUS HA'TORAH

The following is a description of the spiritual levels of Yaakov and Eisav as Chassidus puts it in *Torah Ohr* of the Alter Rebbe on this parsha:

Eisav is from a lofty, spiritual world, the world of Tohu. Yaakov is from a lower spiritual world that is called the world of Tikkun. Therefore, the Divine life force contained within Eisav is in exile, and even though he draws from the life force of holiness, he does not experience nullification to his source. On the contrary, he raises himself high like an eagle and is arrogant, because the spiritual life force is in the manner of an

encompassing light from above and it does not get absorbed within him and internalized.

Yitzchok wanted to bring about the revelation of the lofty spiritual lights within Eisav, and this is the idea of the added light in the brachos he wanted to give him, because in order to sift the good from the bad, much light needs to illuminate there so that all the sparks that are contained therein, will be gathered and absorbed.

Moshiach will reveal that which is hidden in the depths of the physical reality and the enormous and lofty kochos that exist within every single Jew. Moshiach will reveal the good within every Jew and within everything in nature. That is why, in Yemos HaMoshiach, there will be perfection in everything and all will be corrected, because Moshiach will reveal the good within everything.

Every child who is considered an outcast, will be gathered into the family by Moshiach, as the prophet says, "and you will be gathered one by one, all the Jewish people."

We were told by the Rebbe at farbrengens in recent years that all of the avoda needs to be permeated with the awareness that "all your days to bring to Yemos HaMoshiach," and this is particularly emphasized when being mekarev those who fell outside the camp. Moshiach will draw them into the Chassidic mainstream. That is why we, who are busy bringing Moshiach, need to dedicate our energy to these Jews and bring them back to Judaism and Chassidus.

May we speedily merit the true and complete Redemption through Moshiach Tzidkeinu with our king leading the way.

THE REBBE IS IN 770 WITH THE CHASSIDIM

By Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Pevsner
Prepared for publication by G. Mendelsohn

*It is specifically after the hardships of 5738 that we saw the Rebbe's additional closeness to us, and our closeness to him. In greater measure, this is true after 3 Tamuz. * That was a preparation for our situation today. The Rebbe is downstairs in 770 with the Chassidim.*



We see that after 3 Tamuz, not only is there not a weakening in the celebration of Rosh Chodesh Kislev, on the contrary, the day is more significant than ever. The month of Kislev is called the “Month of Geula” and a Chassidishe month. Many Chassidic holidays are celebrated this month.

In the order of the holidays we see a strange thing. At the end of the month, we celebrate Chanuka (which, by the way, is also considered a Chassidishe holiday insofar as it is the holiday of oil, symbolizing p’nimius ha’Torah). Many years later, the 19th of Kislev was established as a holiday. Some

years after that, the 10th of Kislev was established as a holiday, the Chag HaGeula of the Mittlerer Rebbe, and as of 5738, Rosh Chodesh Kislev became the Rebbe’s holiday.

In one of the sichos, the Rebbe asks a simple question. Since everything is by Divine providence, why is it that Chanuka, that was established as a holiday first, is at the end of the month, followed by the other holidays in descending order? Chanuka should have been at the beginning of the month, followed, in order, by the other Chassidishe holidays!

The Rebbe asks a similar

question about the new moon. We count the new month when we see the new moon. When we get to the middle of the month, when the moon begins to wane, how come we don’t count 14, 13, 12, and so on?

The question becomes stronger when we learn that the Jewish people are compared to the moon and count according to the moon. That’s the way it was in Jewish history – the moon was full in the time of Dovid and Shlomo, when everybody “sat under their vine and fig tree.”

Then there was the destruction of the first Beis HaMikdash and the second, which is why we say: don’t despair of the ups and downs because “in the future, they will be

renewed like it [the moon].” This is why most holidays are in the middle of the month: Pesach on the 15th of Nissan, Sukkos on the 15th of Tishrei, and Shavuot is celebrated fifty days from the first day of Pesach (Purim on the 14th-15th).

The waning of the moon symbolizes the descent of the Jewish people. So why do we continue to count upwards towards the end of the month, until 29 and 30, rather than downwards?

The Rebbe explains that the waning of the moon is not a real diminishment but part of the process of its completion which it attains at the end of the month. The Rebbe enumerates the qualities of the last days of the month: the 27th is *zach*

the hospital. This was after the Rebbe refused to go.

The Rebbetzin refused and said that they could not take the Rebbe against his will. When the Rebbe got up after resting, the doctors went over to him, all in agreement that he had to go to the emergency room, as his situation was critical. The Rebbe was not mistaken about his condition. He said to Rabbi Chadakov and Rabbi Groner, “If something has to happen, I prefer that it happen here.”

I spent Chanuka 5738 with the Rebbe. The Rebbe wanted to distribute Chanuka gelt to everyone. Until then, the Rebbe only gave Chanuka gelt to the T’mimim, so the Chassidim felt that the Rebbe

secretaries’ wanting to preserve the Rebbe’s strength, as it were, but the Rebbe meant what he said. The Rebbe received new life, and a new era and a new approach began at that point.

I didn’t prepare a precise list, but over the years, since that time, the famous “dollars” were added. This enabled anyone to approach the Rebbe. Another chiddush followed the court case with the s’farim – the idea that 770 belongs to the Chassidim. That was from 5745 and on. The Tzivos Hashem organization was started in 5741. Above all else, Mivtza Moshiach got a major boost starting in 5742.

This is the idea of continuing to count the days of the month upwards, even though the moon is waning. The more distant the moon is from the sun, the more of it is illuminated, until it becomes full. In other words, in order to receive the light of the sun, it is necessary to move away from it. From the 15th of the month we see the moon waning, but it is not **really** diminishing. On the contrary, because it is getting closer to the sun, it becomes more battul to the mashpia. This reaches a peak when the moon diminishes even more and achieves utter bittul, after which we see a sliver of moon once again.

It is specifically after the hardships of 5738 that we saw the Rebbe’s additional closeness to us, and our closeness to him. In greater measure, this is true after 3 Tamuz.

Some people wonder why we celebrate Rosh Chodesh Kislev, marking the Rebbe’s recovery. The answer is that the point of Rosh Chodesh Kislev is a new birth, Geula. We boarded the express train to the Geula shleima. True, we are in a state of darkness and don’t see the Rebbe, but we feel him more than before. We are in the second half of the month, so to speak, in a time of increasing darkness, but also in a

We are in the second half of the month, so to speak, in a time of increasing darkness, but also in a situation in which we are approaching the light, a closeness to the Rebbe that we never had before.

(pure), the 28th is *ko’ach* (strength), the 29th is Erev Rosh Chodesh, and Rosh Chodesh itself is the ultimate completion.

(The Rebbe tempered the custom of not marrying during the second half of the month. Thus, in some cases, there can be weddings throughout the month, even in the “waning days.”)

I remember that one year, Rabbi Groner came to Paris to attend a simcha. It was around Rosh Chodesh Kislev and that night he farbrenged and shared some inside information with us. He told us that at a certain critical point, the doctors tried to persuade the Rebbetzin to agree that the Rebbe should go to

wanted to compensate the Chassidim for not being with them at t’fillos and farbrengens for weeks.

The Rebbe stood in the lobby of the entrance to 770, near a small table. People entered from one end and exited via the other door. At a certain point, the secretaries put down a bench to block the path so as not to tire the Rebbe. When people stopped passing through, the Rebbe noticed the bench and said aloud so all could hear, “Hashem gave me additional days and years and you want to stop it?” The bench was immediately removed and people continued to pass through for hours.

You can understand the

situation in which we are approaching the light, a closeness to the Rebbe that we never had before.

Before 3 Tamuz we could sleep in bed while the Rebbe said sichos. Now, we represent him. Back then, the world looked **at the Rebbe**. Today, the world looks **at us**, and through us, they see the Rebbe. Those who never saw the Rebbe say, "I will look at a Chassid and see who the Lubavitcher Rebbe is ..."

On Simchas Torah 5738, a day and a half after the heart attack, a minyan was held in Gan Eden HaTachton. The door was opened to Gan Eden HaElyon so the Rebbe could hear the t'fillos, but the Rebbe asked them to close the door, saying, "I am with the Chassidim downstairs in 770 now" (the Rebbe said the door should be open only for hakafos and they went inside for hakafos). That was a preparation for our situation today. The Rebbe is downstairs in 770 with the Chassidim.

At the hakafos of 5738, the Rebbe said that although they don't see who sits on the chair, they should picture him sitting there. So too, those who come to 770 now say that they sense that the Rebbe is sitting in his chair.

This is the reason to celebrate Rosh Chodesh Kislev even after 3 Tamuz, and why it should be celebrated more than ever.

When they asked me to come and farbreng in honor of Rosh Chodesh Kislev, I hesitated to accept the invitation, being inordinately busy. But after some consideration, I decided to do it, if only because of

what I owe the Rebbe in connection with Rosh Chodesh Kislev.

At the time that the Rebbe remained closed up in his room after his heart attack, I was in 770. Despite the concealment, we lived with the Rebbe all day, every day. I was a young bachur learning in 770 and my parents lived in France. Trans-Atlantic calls were prohibitive and it was nearly impossible to speak every day. The Rebbe was the father and the yeshiva was the mother.

That was all good and fine, but what do you do when you have a sudden health problem? I didn't want to worry the Rebbe, even though he himself had said on Isru Chag that we should continue writing to him as usual. I didn't know what to do because I had to undergo an operation to have something removed.

I had Medicaid, health insurance coverage for people with low income, and having no choice, I went to the hospital. I underwent many tests that indicated that I needed the operation and I was told I would have to remove my beard first. At this point, I wrote to the Rebbe. I explained that I had not written until then because I didn't want to bother the Rebbe, but I was writing because I didn't know what to do about my beard.

The Rebbe told the secretary, R' Klein to get me an appointment with a top doctor at Beth Israel in Manhattan. The appointment was made under the Rebbe's name. Until this day, I remember how I was seen the next day and was treated with

great respect. The doctor looked at my file and finally told his assistant, "preserve Pevsner's beard." He explained that they would only have to make a tiny cut of a quarter of a centimeter.

Then the doctor asked me how I was paying. I innocently showed him my Medicaid card. The doctor didn't know whether to laugh or cry. He said that at Beth Israel they didn't accept Medicaid and the operation costs tens of thousands of dollars. The doctor laughed, but was at a loss as to what to do. He knew he couldn't be angry with me since I was so naïve. He left the room and a few minutes later he came back and said, "You know, the Lubavitcher Rebbe sent you to me and I consider you the Rebbe's son. I won't take any money for the operation."

This story took place between Simchas Torah and Rosh Chodesh Kislev 5738. I got the best treatment and care.

When I returned to 770 afterwards, I didn't think to write and thank the Rebbe. I simply wasn't aware enough of the importance of doing so. A short while later, R' Klein came into the zal and said, "Pevsner, the Rebbe sent me to see if you feel well," just like a father cares for his son. That's the kind of love we got from the Rebbe. Every Jew is like the Rebbe's only child and the Rebbe turns over worlds for him.

This is the reason why I decided to come and farbreng here today. Through this farbrengen I am saying thank-you to the Rebbe and I know that the Rebbe is listening.

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WHAT IS OUR SHLICHUS?

By Rabbi Shneur Zalman Liberow, Director, Chabad of Flatbush
Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry



Why did the Rebbe emphasize that the avoda of shlichus has been completed? If in fact we have finished the shlichus, what is our role as shluchim now? An in-depth look into today's shlichus, as based on the sicha of the Rebbe MH"M shlita at the 5752 International Conference of Shluchim.

We are now after the earthshaking sicha of Chaf-Ches Nissan 5751, after the sicha at the 5752 International Conference of Shluchim and all the amazing and wondrous sichos from that time period, after Chaf-Zayin Adar Rishon, after Chaf-Zayin Adar

Sheini, after Gimmel Tammuz, when "the sun stopped in Givon" – yet after all this, it still appears *r"l* that the Rebbe's words from Chaf-Ches Nissan have not penetrated our hearts!... Another surprising fact – **that ten (and many tens) of Jews gather together, and at a worthy time in relation to the Redemption, and nevertheless, they don't make a tumult to bring about the coming of Moshiach immediately.**

Without a doubt, if we would learn in-depth the sicha from the 5752 International Conference of Shluchim, we would know clearly what our job and our shlichus is

today!

While the sichos up until 5752 in connection with the International Conference of Shluchim dealt with the subject of shlichus, they did so in a general manner. In contrast, in 5752, the Rebbe emphasized and proclaimed what the purpose of the Shluchim Conference is in the avoda of shlichus from now on, something that apparently was not in place during the earlier years.

It is understood that behind this wondrous fact stands a special purpose that finds its expression in the content of the sicha. The Rebbe states that we have already completed the avoda of shlichus, and the only remaining avoda is to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu. When we consider and contemplate the nature of this sicha, we find some unusual expressions.

"The shluchim have already long since reached the time after the fulfillment of the **beginning** of the shlichus in spreading Torah and Yiddishkeit and the spreading of the wellsprings outward, and the time after the **middle** of the avoda of the shlichus – to the point that they have already **completed** the shlichus."

The Rebbe emphasizes here three points: **a)** they have already fulfilled the beginning of the shlichus; **b)** they have already fulfilled the middle of the shlichus; **c)** they have already completed the shlichus.

The question here seems to be: What is the need for this lengthy account? Couldn't the Rebbe have just said in brief that we have completed the avoda of shlichus? Another question: If we really have completed the avoda of shlichus, what are we supposed to be doing now? Have we stopped being "shluchim"?

When Yaakov Avinu went to carry out G-d's mission of spiritual elevation in Charan, G-d said to him, "And I will restore you to this land." The Rebbe asks: Since he's

currently in the middle of his shlichus, why does he have to know now that he will eventually go back? The Rebbe explains that even when we're in the middle of our shlichus, we have to know that when we complete the shlichus, we go back. Thus, since we've finished the shlichus, we have to return...

However, the Rebbe continues, since despite everything, the True and Complete Redemption has not yet come, "we must say that there still remains something to do in order to actually bring the Redemption." What is the "something" that we still have to do? The Rebbe says: "The only thing that remains now in the avoda of shlichus is **to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu in actual deed.**"

The Rebbe continues in the sicha to explain the meaning of this abstract saying as referring to an increase in Torah and mitzvos, studying the subject of Moshiach and the Redemption, and more. But first, before defining the current avoda of shlichus, the Rebbe brings

the following segment:

"According to the known premise that 'in every generation, there is someone born from the seed of Yehuda who is fit to be Moshiach of Israel,' 'one who is fit due to his righteousness to be a Redeemer, and when the time comes, G-d will be revealed to him and He will send him, etc.,' and according to the announcement of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, leader of the generation – the only shliach of our generation and the only Moshiach of our generation – that they have already completed the entire avoda, it is thus understood that the fulfillment of 'Send now with whom You would send' has begun, the shlichus of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe. And it is thus understood that the only thing that remains now in the avoda of shlichus is **to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu in actual deed**, in order that he can actually fulfill his shlichus and take the entire Jewish People out of the exile!"

At first glance, it is difficult to understand the connection between

this "introduction" and the conclusion that it draws? What is the connection between the fact that "in every generation, there is someone...fit due to his righteousness to be a Redeemer" and the definition of the current avoda of shlichus? Furthermore, why is it so important to emphasize that the leader of the generation is the only Moshiach of the generation? Couldn't we understand without this preface that there is no other avoda, and the only avoda that remains is "to greet Moshiach"?

In order to understand the necessity of this "preface," we must contemplate upon what the Rebbe derives as a result:

The Rebbe explains his intention by saying: "All the details in the avoda of the shlichus in spreading Torah and Yiddishkait and the spreading of the wellsprings outward must be instilled with this point: How will it lead to the greeting of Moshiach?"

The following words might sound rather sharp, but they



apparently speak the truth:

We derive from the sicha that while we were given the task of dealing with various mitzva campaigns during the early years without connecting them to the imminent Redemption, the 5752 International Conference of Shluchim represented a 180 degree turn in the basic outlook of mitzvaim. From now on, a shliach who carries out a certain activity without connecting it to the Redemption – this activity will apparently not stand in his merit as being the Rebbe’s shliach! For the will of the m’shaleiach is that **every activity** will be connected to the main point of “greeting Moshiach,”

order to greet someone, you have to know who he is...

The matter is explained in the Rebbe MH”M’s sicha: It must be said that there still remains something to do in order to actually bring the Redemption, and it is according to the known premise that in every generation, there is someone born, etc.,” as mentioned above. Can there be anything more clear than that? What else are people expecting the Rebbe to say?

It’s true that not every mitzva campaign can easily be connected to the subject of the Redemption, and particularly not the Redeemer, but with a little desire and concentrated effort, it is possible to come up with

request to the people of that city that they should prepare the city and make it befitting to serve as the king’s capital. Years passed, and the city is still not ready, but the king periodically sends ministers to get the townspeople moving. Only after a few more years does the king announce that based on the information he has received, the city is already prepared to be the capital of the kingdom. At this stage, he sends one of his most important ministers to proclaim the final royal consent to move the capital city, and he makes certain that the city’s residents prepare for the king’s arrival.

At the next stage, the king announces that he has already decided to come, and he is on his way at this moment. Now, it’s simply a question of time. How long will the journey take? In the meantime, even though the city is already fit to be the nation’s capital, it is always possible to spruce things up a bit. Now, however, when the king is already on his way, he wants all these activities to be done in a spirit of preparation for his arrival, i.e., it is evident that every activity is done for the purpose of greeting the king!

More years passed, the king has been delayed on his journey, and the townspeople have dozed off... In the meantime, the king arrives at the outskirts of the city. He expects to see a crowd of thousands of people waiting for him, but he doesn’t see a living soul. He observes the city, sees that it is immaculately clean, spotless, properly groomed, acting with justice and honesty, totally suited to be the capital of the kingdom. But no one is talking about the king. They conduct themselves with justice and honesty, fulfilling all the king’s commands, but no one knows that all this is with one purpose in mind – to greet the king...

The world is already purified, the avoda of spiritual elevation is over. The Rebbe is interested in seeing that all the activities done should from this moment on be in a spirit of preparing for his arrival, every activity should be done to greet the king.

and if not – this is not “shlichus.” It’s as if he decided on his own to do some mitzva – e.g., Netilas Yada’im – and he certainly can’t say that he’s doing this mitzva at the initiative of the Rebbe! Despite the fact that it’s one of the mitzvos and expresses the Will of G-d, it does not represent a “gateway” that the Rebbe opened!

Furthermore, not only must all Chabad activities be connected to the Redemption – they must be connected to the Redeemer, the Rebbe MH”M. This is because while the avoda in the past was to hasten the coming of Moshiach – today, the avoda is to **greet** Moshiach, and in

some amazing ideas and connect **every** mitzva to the Redemption and to the Redeemer! It is an established fact that a shliach who “lives” with all of these matters will succeed in finding the connection of every mitzva campaign to the Redemption and to the Redeemer – as this is our task: “All the details in the avoda of the shlichus in spreading Torah and Yiddishkait and the spreading of the wellsprings outward must be instilled with this point: How will this lead to the greeting of Moshiach?”

To what can we compare this? There’s a king who decided to move the capital of his kingdom to another city, and sent an announcement and

Is it befitting for the king to enter the city in such a fashion?

To pursue this point further, let's imagine to ourselves what a shliach would do if the Rebbe's secretary calls to inform him that the Rebbe is planning on visiting the Chabad House in his city. The shliach's activities go into full throttle, and when the call comes from the secretariat telling him that the Rebbe is on his way now, the shliach puts all his holy pursuits aside and stands waiting by the open door. Woe to that shliach if he should close the door and say that he's busy with his mitzvaim in spreading Torah and Yiddishkait, and he has no time *r"l* to greet the Rebbe.

That is exactly how it appears if *ch"v* we don't connect all activities to the Redemption and to the Redeemer. The Rebbe has told us that the Redemption will come in our generation, and we must be ready. Every few years, the Rebbe added another mitzva campaign through which we can prepare the world. The objective of these mitzva campaigns is to prepare the world to be fit to accept the indwelling of the Sh'china down here below.

After a few decades, we finished the avoda, and in 5752, the Rebbe informed us that the avoda of birurim has been completed. The world is ready now. The time has come to redeem the world; he's on his way!

The world is already purified, the avoda of spiritual elevation is over, and this time, the Rebbe says, he is interested in seeing that that all the

activities done should from this moment on be in a spirit of preparing for his arrival, i.e., every activity should be recognized as being done to greet the king.

The Rebbe is now standing behind the door and waiting. Let's imagine what he would see in the city if his shliach is engaging in activities, but does not connect them all to the Redemption and to the Redeemer. He sees good chassidim carrying out his orders, actively involved in all the mitzvaim, but failing to emphasize (in the best of circumstances) that all these preparations are for the coming and hisgalus of the Rebbe MH"M.

This is the current avoda of shlichus: to do **everything** so that all the mitzva campaigns will be instilled with the central point of greeting Moshiach Tzidkeinu. The Rebbe must see that we are waiting for him and preparing for his arrival.

In the meantime, he's standing outside. He's waiting. Furthermore, he said this explicitly to HaRav HaGaon Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu shlita: "As I have mentioned repeatedly several times, not only will the Redemption come, but the Redemption is already at the threshold, waiting for every Jew to open the door and drag the Redemption into the room!"

He'll already make certain that we'll prepare for his arrival, but why should we wait for all these various signs? Let's do it right now! It's an established fact that every shliach will fulfill his shlichus in an acceptable manner for the people of

his city, and he will remember that the m'shaleiach gives this instruction and he's also the one who grants the ability to carry it out!

In practical terms, it is incumbent upon every shliach to fulfill this holy obligation: Cry out, shout, and awaken the whole world!

At every shluchim conference, every shliach has an obligation to devote at least one whole day to in-depth study, studying in order to do what the Rebbe said in his sicha before the 5752 International Conference of Shluchim, which as mentioned above is an explicit instruction for our avoda today. We must discuss how we can bring about that "all the details in the avoda of the shlichus in spreading Torah and Yiddishkait and the spreading of the wellsprings outward must be instilled with this point: How will this lead to the greeting of Moshiach?"

And through the "stubbornness" to bring the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu immediately in actual deed, *mamash*, we will merit the true and complete gathering, the completion of the fulfillment of the appointed destiny of the ingathering of the exiles of Israel, the building of the Beis HaMikdash, as we bear witness to the revelation of His glorious kingship through the Rebbe MH"M shlita, and all of us, "sons of one man," instead of crying out "*Ad Masai?*" will cry out and proclaim: *Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach l'olam va'ed!*



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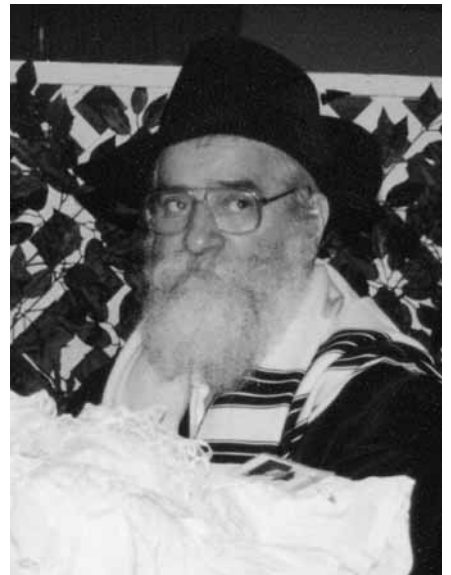
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FROM A MOROCCAN VILLAGE TO CROWN HEIGHTS

By Nosson Avrohom

He was born in Tailit in Morocco, far from the center of the country, in a Jewish-Moroccan traditional atmosphere, where people still wore the traditional Moroccan jalabiyas. That is where he first encountered Chabad and the Rebbe through the shliach who came on a donkey, wanting to start a Talmud Torah. The road from there to Kfar Chabad was long but smooth.



REPRESENTATIVE OF CHABAD IN A NON-CHABAD YESHIVA

Morocco is divided into three sections. One is called the Sephardic section. Another is called the French section, where French colonialism and its liberal culture has permeated all aspects of life there, adversely affecting Jewish communities. The third is more rural and retained its original Moroccan character, which is where I was born in the village of Tailit in the “Duds” region.

Near our village were another

Rabbi Saadia Dahan was recently appointed rav of the new Mishkan Menachem Shul that was founded in memory of R' Zalman Shagalov, who was his relative. R' Dahan is an experienced mechanech, a shochet, a sofer, and a learned man. He is also a warm, Chassidische person with a sincere belief in tzaddikim and hiskashrus to the Rebbe.

I interviewed him a few hours after Motzaei Rosh HaShana/Shabbos, when he was still inspired by the spirit of the large farbrengen that took place in 770 with thousands of people. The

emotion was apparent in his voice and he expressed it in his unique way by asking that I convey the message that we increase and strengthen our unity with brotherly love and mitzvaim, in order to bring about the hisgalus already.

He recalled life back in Morocco, learning in Chabad yeshivos there and in Kfar Chabad, about a personal miracle he had, and about an unusual instruction in the middle of a yechidus. He says that early on he knew that his neshama was connected to Chabad Chassidus.

two villages in which Jews lived, with our village being the main one. Many Jewish families lived in our village and we lived a full life of Torah and mitzvos with people excelling in a life of wholehearted faith in G-d.

Our parents, who ensured that we were given a proper Jewish education would bring an expert melamed from the outlying cities and shared the cost. His job was to teach us Torah and Mishnayos, reading and writing. In the village there were some knowledgeable people, some who knew how to learn and teach, but for whatever reasons they refused to teach us. Their excuse was that this entailed much responsibility and effort. Due to the need of importing melamdim from afar, they were frequently replaced and we did not have a proper curriculum and schedule. Nevertheless, our parents' example was more powerful than anything else and we learned from them.

The person who came and rescued our chinuch was Rabbi Shlomo Matusof, who came to Morocco on shlichus. He founded Talmudei Torah in all the villages

and cities and at a certain point he came to us too. He took one of the people of our village, Rabbi Yosef Emor (today of Ashkelon), who was a Torah scholar, paid him part of his salary, and the parents paid some more. That's how an organized, daily Talmud Torah was founded. We had learning contests with prizes and we became aware of the Lubavitcher Rebbe and Chabad, though in a superficial manner.

Till this day I remember the great excitement when Rabbi Matusof's emissaries came to found the Talmud Torah. We in the village were wearing our *jalabiyas* the traditional Moroccan garb. Everything was simple and primitive and we weren't accustomed to seeing men in suits and hats. Amongst ourselves we decided that these shluchim were geniuses. Whenever they came to visit, to arrange tests or to supervise, we would call them *gaonim*.

At a certain point we moved to Marrakesh, where I attended a non-Chabad yeshiva. One of the melamdim was Rabbi Moshe Ben Abu. Today he is the rav of the Gilo

As soon as I entered the main hall of the yeshiva, I decided this was my place. The atmosphere, the warmth, and the simplicity that shone from the faces of the T'mimim, captivated me.

neighborhood of Yerushalayim.

I was known as the "representative of Chabad" at this yeshiva. I don't know why, but apparently my neshama is connected with the Rebbeim. In those days, there were talmidim from Morocco who left to learn in Litvishe yeshivos



in France and England, and the timeworn debate between Chassidim and Misnagdim came to our yeshiva too. I was always the ultimate defender of Chabad and the Rebbe.

I remember how much I quaked when the rosh yeshiva in Marrakesh heard that I wanted to switch to a Chabad yeshiva in Maknes. He called me in and asked, “What do you need over there? Over there they have just T’hillim and *Tanya*...”

Nevertheless, I switched to the Chabad yeshiva in Maknes. The rosh yeshiva was a local Torah scholar by the name of Rabbi Yitzchok Sebbag. People davened from a Sephard Siddur and observed some Sephardic customs, but it was otherwise a Chabad yeshiva with mikva in the morning and shiurim in Chassidus. I was so connected to Chabad and the way of learning in Chabad that I found it hard to learn Gemara with a melamed in the yeshiva who came from a Litvishe background.

Later on I learned in the Chabad yeshiva in Casablanca, which was run by Rabbi Michoel Lipsker a”h. Around the year 5720/1960 Rabbi Shlomo Matusof sent me to be a melamed for a year in a town called Beni-Milel, and then my family made aliya to Eretz Yisroel and we settled in Ramat HaSharon.

BECOMING A CHABAD TEACHER

Two months after I arrived in Eretz Yisroel, Amram Yifrach, a childhood friend who came to Eretz Yisroel before me and went to Yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim, invited me to visit Kfar Chabad. As soon as I entered the main hall of the yeshiva, I decided this was my place. The atmosphere, the warmth, and the simplicity that shone from the faces of the T’mimim, captivated me.

In hindsight, the thing which drew me to Chabad was Chassidus,



which combines intellect and emotion and can bring a person to genuine spiritual heights as it places him in his true spiritual place. This attracted me back in Morocco.

I quickly acclimated to my studies in Kfar Chabad. R’ Moshe Naparstek was my mashpia, and he farbrenged a lot with us. I would bring him all my questions in Chassidus and soul matters and consult with him. He is a special person who treated me in a fatherly manner that you don’t see much of nowadays. You can feel that he truly loves you and desires to help.

While learning in yeshiva, I had my first experience with the Rebbe’s power when I sent him a letter with a request for a bracha. I had a medical problem which bothered me. At the time I thought it was a medical problem and now I realize that it wasn’t a problem at all, but back then I was preoccupied with it and didn’t know where it came from.

I wrote to the Rebbe about it and the answer was a bracha for a complete recovery and to check my t’fillin. I rushed to do so and discovered that the writing was faded. I bought new parshiyos and the unbelievable happened – the problem stopped bothering me.

One day I was sitting and

learning with another two T’mimim, Shlomo Fleischman and Zecharia Abadi, when I walked R’ Moshe Scheerson a”h. He conferred a little with R’ Moshe Naparstek and I saw that they were pointing at me. I had an idea what they were talking about and I said to my friends, “I won’t be a mechanech; it doesn’t suit me at all.”

A few minutes later the two of them came over to me and R’ Naparstek said they wanted me to be a mechanech in the school in Berosh. I was beside myself. Despite my earlier pronouncement, I said that if the Rebbe agreed, I would accept the job. I wrote to the Rebbe and the answer quickly came. It said, “Blessing and success for chinuch al taharas ha’kodesh.”

I worked for eight years at the school in Berosh and received many letters from the Rebbe, both routine letters for births and holidays and letters with specific instructions for me.

Regarding the birth of one of my daughters, the Rebbe wrote, “I double my bracha” about the birth being easy, which was not the usual wording of letters of this sort. After the birth, we understood the Rebbe’s bracha. They were anticipating a complicated birth but it turned out

to be the easiest.

FIRST YECHIDUS

When I finished my work in Berosh, I moved to Lud and from there, with the Rebbe's approval, I moved to Nachalat Har Chabad. I worked in the vocational school in Kiryat Malachi, the vocational school in Kfar Chabad, and also in Kiryat

Gat.

I saw the Rebbe for the first time in Tishrei 5734. After a month replete with *giluyim*, I had yechidus and emerged trembling with emotion. A yechidus with the Rebbe cannot be described in words. There were some personal matters and so I will only tell you that the Rebbe blessed me with success in the work of chinuch. As far as one of my children, the Rebbe asked me to

keep him another year in gan and not to rush to promote him to first grade.

* * *

Rabbi Saadia Dahan works as a shochet now. He hurried off to make the final preparations before his flight to the slaughterhouse in Iowa. He also serves as rav of the Mishkan Menachem shul that was recently started in memory of Rabbi Zalman Shagalov.



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ב"ה

DANCING IN THE STREETS OF VENICE

*The shluchim and T'mimim celebrated 72 hours of Chassidishe simcha. There among the houses of the Jewish ghetto, within the huge, magnificent shuls, above the canals and thousands of tourists, they met Jews who experienced Simchas Torah for the first time. * A diary by Rabbi Zev Crombie from 5765.*

TRAVELING TO VENICE

The sixth day of Sukkos, on the eve of Hoshana Raba:

Until today I still toyed with the idea of going to the Rebbe. Today I had to come to terms with the sad reality that we weren't going. My wife Nurit and I finally decided to accede to the repeated requests of our friend, Rabbi Rami Benin and our son Yosef Yitzchok and his wife, to spend Yom Tov with them in Venice.

We managed to find a cheap ticket to Milan five minutes before the travel agency closed and the next day, bright and early, at sunrise, we were at the airport. I recited the Hoshana Raba t'fillos by myself in the shul in the airport.

When I finished davening, I donated my Dalet minim (that were still fresh and green) to the Chabad stand at the airport. Before boarding the plane I had the satisfaction of seeing people using my (former) set of minim.

After a few hour flight, we could see Italy beneath us and then the pilot said we could not land in Milan. Instead, we would be landing in Venice. I thanked Hashem for shortening our trip and bringing us directly to Venice, saving us the ride from Milan to Venice.

I soon saw that my joy was premature. Hashem had other plans for me. After we got off the plane and saw Venice before us, the

pilot announced that we should get back on board for we were flying to Milan! Our pleading was to no avail. The pilot was a nice guy but he informed us that we had to travel with all the passengers to the predetermined destination. Disappointed, we got back on the plane and headed for Milan.

WHO IS LIKE THE JEWISH PEOPLE!

Our son was waiting for us in Milan with the car that the shliach, R' Benin had sent for us. Before we arrived our son told us that Venice is very close to Milan. It was actually a long, three-hour trip.

Since there are still no planes with sukkos on board, I nearly fainted from hunger. I was thrilled to see that our friend Rami had thought of us and had sent his mobile sukka along in the car. We opened the little sukka is one of the many roadside truck stops along the way. Among all the tractor truck drivers from Turkey and Germany, and all the other countries of Europe, we set up our little sukka so we could eat.

I stood in the sukka (even if I wanted to, there was no room to sit) and looked at the goyim who sat nearby and ate. I thought, who is like Your people Israel? They eat and drink like animals, but when we eat, we fulfill Hashem's command!

At the end of our long and tiring trip we crossed a very long bridge which was built right over the water, and we finally arrived in Venice. There is a large parking lot at the entrance to the city, where everybody leaves their cars. Beyond that point, there are no more cars. For the rest of our stay we walked wherever we wanted to go or used a boat (on weekdays).

It was a great relief not to hear the endless noise of vehicles that we are used to constantly hearing.



In Venice it's all boats: a boat-bus, a boat-taxi, a boat as a garbage truck, a truck-boat, an ambulance-boat, even fire engine-boats. Since water isn't lacking in Venice, the fire-boats consist of pumps on a boat that draws up water from the canal and sprays the fire.

We went to the "bus station." These boat-busses have schedules and routes. There's even a map, like the subway map in New York. Boat #42 floats down Grand Canal and then turns left onto Conergo Canal. We got off at the second stop on Conergo Canal and saw the Chabad sukka in front of us.

How exciting! The sukka was located on the banks of the canal, close to their restaurant. Not even two minutes went by and two Israeli tourists showed up. It was a bit hard for us to differentiate



A sukka on a boat in Venice

among the many tourists as to who was and wasn't Jewish, but we didn't have to look for them. Every Jew who passed by, whether a tourist from Israel, America, or any other place, reacted with amazement when they discovered the sukka, and came right over to talk to us. This phenomenon was our experience throughout our stay in Venice. An endless stream of tourists came to us day and night, and all we had to do was talk to them about Judaism.

Next to the restaurant's sukka we saw another wonder of Venice. In addition to the large sukka that was built near the restaurant, and the sukka next to the yeshiva, Rami had a sukka on his boat. This latter sukka is a real attraction and every Jew who passes by this boat takes a picture.

We had less than half an hour until candle-lighting and we hurried to our apartment so get ready for Yom Tov.

HAKAFOS IN THE JEWISH GHETTO

Shmini Atzeres night:

We went to the Chabad yeshiva. In Venice there aren't orderly streets. Explanations as to how to

get somewhere are something like, "walk until the second bridge, make a right and walk along the canal." The streets were full of gentiles and we got ready for Chag Simchaseinu.

The yeshiva was located in the oldest Jewish ghetto in the world. I could imagine how Jewish life once was. Jews lived here for hundreds of years, being born here, learning, marrying, rejoicing, quarreling, etc.

This is where one of the most important communities in the Middle Ages was established. Here is where important s'farim were written by distinguished scholars. Here is where the first s'farim were printed. The famous "Printed in Venice" refers to right here. I could feel the "fluttering of the wings of history."

In the center of the ghetto is a statue in memory of the Jews who once lived here who were murdered by the Nazis, may their name be erased. Near the statue is an ancient water faucet from which water never ceases flowing. When we wanted to wash our hands, we used this faucet. The water is good for drinking too. Nobody seems concerned about water conservation here.

When I returned home, my

friend Uri told me that his father had been born in this ghetto. During the war, his entire family hid in a chicken coop and only came out at night to look for food. His grandfather was an engineer and he built bombs to blow up the German trains.

The yeshiva opens into the ghetto square. Whoever comes to the ghetto (and we saw that every tourist who comes to Venice, visits the ghetto) comes to the yeshiva. Apparently, the ghetto is number one on the list of tourist attractions. The number of people who came to gawk at the sukka continued to grow. They thought they had come to Venice to see the canals, but we knew the truth, that they had come to learn about Judaism at the Chabad house of Venice. Jews, who you couldn't talk to about Judaism back where they came from, were happy to sit down and hear what we had to say.

Hakafos Shmini Atzeres night:

We were particular to take a l'chaim only in the sukka but the guests were not mehader in this, and so we made sure that each one said a proper l'chaim before they danced with the Torah or said a pasuk from "Ata Horeisa." Some were shy and stood at a distance and watched until a smiley bachur helped them join the circle of dancers. Many of them entered the yeshiva with their cameras and hesitantly asked, "Can we take a picture?" Some of them have no idea how inappropriate the question is.

HISTORY AND THE PRESENT

Shmini Atzeres day:

In the morning, when I woke up, all I could think of was how to recover from the abundance of mashke I had had the night before and which still flowed in my veins. "If only I could use a mikva now,"



The restaurant's sukka on the banks of the canal



Shliach Rachamim (Rami) Benin putting t'fillin on with a tourist



In the Talmud Torah Chabad of Venice

I thought.

When I arrived at the yeshiva I told Rami what I wished for and he laughed. To my surprise, there was a mikva in Venice. Past the square, near the bridge, within a small niche is where I discovered the Venetian mikva. Perhaps it wasn't the most beautiful I've ever seen, but it was a kosher mikva since the water in it touches the waters of the sea. I immersed and felt better.

Throughout the davening new people kept coming in. Some came in for five minutes and others stayed longer.

Simchas Torah night:

After davening in the yeshiva, we went to bring joy to the Jews in the "big shul" of Venice. In Venice there are five ancient shuls, hundreds of years old. The shuls are open for davening only a few times a year. The rest of the time

they are part of the museum tours which are organized by the tourist department of the municipality. Simchas Torah is one of the days that they daven in them.

They told me that every Yom Tov they daven in a different shul in order to keep them all active so they don't get taken over by the municipality. There was a guard at the entrance. For security reasons, those who enter have to stay until the end of the davening.

The shul was old and magnificent. You were still able to see the beauty that once was. I could imagine the Jews who davened there on Simchas Torah years ago. In my mind's eye I could picture the wealthy Jews along with the simple folk, all rejoicing together on Simchas Torah. The shul has a very high ceiling and around the walls there is ancient heavy furniture with elaborate wood carvings.

The houses in Venice are crowded together and connected one to the next. The shul is also connected to the homes of goyim.

On the walls are plaques dedicated to Jews who donated money hundreds of years ago to the shul. The Venetian community is unique and it has unique customs. The people circle the bima with twelve ancient Torah scrolls with covers of old fabric with ancient bells. After every hakafa they put the s'farim on special stands that are attached to benches in the shul. Each hakafa has special niggunim that go back generations.

TAHALUCHA OVER THE GRAND CANAL

At the end of the hakafos in the big shul we went on Tahalucha. About ten Lubavitchers went and sang on the streets of Venice. The Rebbe taught us not to be fazed by the world and we did this b'hiddur.

The streets were packed with tourists and we looked like madmen to them. We sang Rabbi Levi Yitzchok's hakafo's niggun and I thought about what a great distance this niggun had traveled since Rabbi Levi Yitzchok had sung it in Alma Ata.

Many tourists photographed us. In general, wherever I went, I was

***She told my wife
that in her
parents' house
they said the
blessing for bread
but did not wash
their hands. My
wife commented
that you can't
always make
shortcuts. The
woman thought
about this for a
while and then
said, "Okay, I'm
going to wash my
hands."***

an attraction. People were surprised to see such a weird sight – a man wearing a long, black coat. Maybe they thought I was one of the costumed revelers that walked around the streets of the city, someone leftover from the local carnival.

On the way we met a couple

from Israel who were touring in Venice with their little boy. When we suggested that they come to hakafo's, their young son schlepped his parents all the way to the yeshiva, a walk that takes three-quarters of an hour. As we walked they explained: We have three older sons who have already toured the world. Wherever they went, they visited Chabad and they told their younger brother about it. Now, when our youngest son hears that Chabad is in Venice too, he's getting us to follow him to the yeshiva.

We got to the big bridge, Rialdo, which is built over the Grand Canal, the main canal in Venice from which the minor canals branch off. On either side of the bridge were expensive shops for tourists. We walked on to the bridge and did an enthusiastic Chassidic dance there. All traffic stopped in amazement and everybody took photos of us.

Yossi Mendelsohn went on the shoulders of one of the bachurim and spoke in English to the crowd that had gathered round, about the Seven Noachide Laws. It was hard for me to tell if there were any Jews in the crowd, but Yossi identified some Jewish tourists. He took out a bottle of wine and while still on the bachur's shoulders he made Kiddush in a loud voice.

We could hear several people responding with "amen" which told us that indeed, there were Jews in the crowd. We invited them all to come to hakafo's at the Chabad yeshiva in the ghetto – families with children, young couples, those whose Jewish spark inspired them to drop their shopping expeditions and to take part in our traditions.

We continued on the winding streets until we reached the main square. Hundreds of people from all over the world stood in awe of the ancient buildings while a group

of Lubavitchers entered the square with song. Once again Yossi went on a bachur's shoulders and explained to dozens of tourists about Simchas Torah and the Seven Noachide Laws.

When he was finished, he invited them all to hakafo's at the yeshiva. We rushed back to the yeshiva in order to welcome our guests.

Hakafo's on Simchas Torah day:

Many tourists came to the yeshiva and every one of them danced with the Torah. Some were shy and they sat outside near the refreshments. We noticed an American Jewish woman with a gentile husband. She seemed uncomfortable, probably because of her non-Jewish husband, but she came anyway. She told my wife that in her parents' house they said the blessing for bread but did not wash their hands.

My wife commented that you can't always make shortcuts. The woman thought about this for a while and then said, "Okay, I'm going to wash my hands."

JEWISH SOULS IN VENICE

Shabbos B'Reishis:

Today everybody is eating at the restaurant. One of the special things about the Chabad house in Venice is the restaurant it operates. It is located on the edge of the canal (actually, every place in Venice is on the edge of a canal!). During the week it serves the tourists who want kosher food (as well as many gentiles who enjoy the good food).

On Shabbos and Yomim Tovim the food is free. Dozens of tourists partake of the meals without paying. The atmosphere is special, as Jews from all over the world enjoy Shabbos, the day which is ours. We eat, sing, and hear divrei

Torah.

Near us sat a traditional couple from Yerushalayim. They brought food with them for the rest of the week, but on Shabbos they wanted to enjoy the special atmosphere and so they came to the restaurant. The husband, originally from England, told us about his uncle. This uncle was a famous doctor who lived for many years in an exclusive neighborhood of London. He was the only Jew in the neighborhood.

One night, the local priest called him and told him that the greengrocer of the neighborhood had died. "He's one of yours," said the doctor. It was a cold and snowy night and the uncle had no interest in leaving his house for the funeral of a Christian. He was the family doctor of the greengrocer and of the entire extended family for more than forty years. He knew the family well as old-time family doctors once knew their patients.

"No," said the priest. "He's a Jew."

It turned out that the greengrocer had lived all his life as a gentile but he did not want to be buried among goyim. He had asked to be buried among his fellow Jews whom he had abandoned decades before. Since he knew that nobody would believe that he was a Jew, he had left the key to a box with his will. When they opened the box they discovered his parents' k'suba and saw that he was actually

Jewish.

It was touching to hear this story about a wayward soul whose pintele Yid was not entirely extinguished.

We looked at two Israeli couples approaching us hesitantly. It looked as though they had come directly from northern Tel Aviv (though not from Rabbi Ginsburgh's yeshiva!). They were discussing amongst themselves what to do since Rami had invited them to the Shabbos meal.

We heard one of them say, "Me? To Chabad? Even if they paid me I won't go in!" We smiled. Not five minutes went by and the two couples sat down at a table. "It's just because of my wife," the husband excused himself. "I simply could not refuse her." And once again, I thought to myself, "who is like Your people Israel?"

Knesset member Yossi Sarid (a Left-wing, anti-religious former Israeli politician) came to the old shul on Shabbos. When they asked his name and insisted he stay until the end of the davening as the condition for entering the shul, he refused and instead, he went to the yeshiva. Turns out it was his birthday and our chevra were happy to make him a party with Kiddush! When I heard this I was amazed – Yossi Sarid in the yeshiva!?

Motzaei Shabbos:

Before we left Venice, we visited

the Chabad school, which is attended by six Jewish children. The children receive a very high level chinuch. We were impressed by the devotion of Mrs. Shachar Benin.

* * *

The following Friday our son Sholom Dovber went on mitzvaim to his usual place in Israel. When he put t'fillin on with one of his regulars, a woman came over and told him excitedly about her marvelous trip to Italy. "The highlight of the trip was Simchas Torah in Venice. You can't imagine how moving it was. Here we don't pay attention to the holidays but in Venice it was really something special."

When she finished describing everything they had seen, my son said, "The people you met in Venice were my parents!" What a small world.

Hearing about the shluchim and their work is nothing compared to seeing it in action. It was amazing to see what shluchim can accomplish. How so many neshamos can be ignited. It's just unbelievable. Only the Rebbe, Nasi HaDor, can empower his Chassidim, the shluchim, to such an extent. We saw that just being shluchim endowed them with prodigious powers. They work devotedly to fulfill the Rebbe's vision that "nobody will be pushed aside." Fortunate are they!

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THE REBBE'S LETTER

By Nosson Avrohom

The thoughts of repentance that came to me occasionally, mainly around the Yomim Noraim when I remembered my visit to 770, vanished shortly thereafter. They did not bring about a change in me. Then one day, something happened that changed my entire way of thinking...

Every Friday afternoon, a t'fillin stand is set up near the boardwalk close to the beach in Eilat and bearded fellows put t'fillin on hundreds of Jews who pass by on their way for a swim. They stand in line, young and old, simple folk and intelligentsia, students and professionals.

"The Lubavitcher Rebbe is the prophet of the generation," said someone with a heavy French accent. Before the Lubavitchers manning the stand could recover from the surprising announcement, the man continued, "You don't even know who sent you here," as though goading them into asking him to tell his story.

* * *

My name is Shimon Levy and I live in a suburb of Paris. Although, unfortunately, I don't wear a kippa, I feel that I am a Chassid of the Rebbe. When you hear my story,

you will understand why.

Like many French Jews, I was born in Casablanca, the capitol of Morocco. As a boy, I became acquainted with the Chabad movement and its leader, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, through his faithful shliach, Rabbi Yehuda Leib Raskin. To us he was a role model and someone to admire. I learned Gemara and Chassidus from him and I was impressed by his personality. He was a very special man.

At the age of seventeen I emigrated to France with my family and we moved to Strasbourg. Although in Morocco I had attended a Jewish school with a strong orientation to observing Torah and mitzvos and our tradition, in France I attended a secular Jewish school.

Despite my spiritual descent, I would go to the Chabad house in

the city and visit with the Chassidim and shluchim. During summer vacation I attended seminars that shliach, Rabbi Shmuel Azimov held, and later, although I wasn't actually a Chabad Chassid, I would go with the shluchim on mitvza t'fillin.

While attending school in Strasbourg, the shluchim connected me to the Rebbe and I was caught up in the great enthusiasm that characterized their work. On various occasions I even wrote letters that I sent to the Rebbe, but to my sorrow, I did not get a reply. The Chassidim cheered me up and explained that just sending the letter meant that I had given the matter over to the Rebbe. They said that the Rebbe read every letter.

Every time I went on mitvzaim with the Chassidim, every time I attended a farbrengen, each time I learned the Rebbe's teachings, it connected me more and more to Chabad. I eventually changed my way of dress and wore a kippa.

The atmosphere at the Chabad house warmed up as Tishrei 5743 approached. Chassidim planned on going to the Rebbe. A relative of mine, Rabbi Yaakov Bitton, a shliach in Sarcelles, helped me and we went to 770 together that year. I spent six weeks in 770, which was the most moving and extraordinary period in my life. It is engraved in my memory and every time I recall it, I tremble as I see the Rebbe enter 770 for the first time. My heart nearly stopped.

Throughout those weeks I didn't miss an opportunity to spend time in the Rebbe's presence. It was very uncomfortable with the pushing, but I made every effort to be close to the Rebbe and to watch him. Whoever did not see the Rebbe, would definitely not understand my excitement. He was simply an angel of G-d.

I remember how sometimes I was able to accompany the Rebbe's brother-in-law, Rashag, to his

apartment on the third floor. He was elderly and every day I would help him.

After a month and a half packed with spiritual inspiration, I was convinced I had to be a Chabad Chassid. When I returned to France I bought a hat and dark suit and I went to the Lubavitcher yeshiva in Brunoy.

At first I did well there. I loved the staff of mashpiim and maggiddei shiurim and I was involved in the farbrengens, but after a few months I felt a spiritual descent. I think the reason was that I didn't find a chavrusa to learn with me. At first I tried joining other learning partners but it didn't work, and my spiritual descent began. I tried to stop it, but as the days went by I found myself davening less and learning less. On the one hand, I was sad about my plight, and on the other hand, I didn't seem able to control it.

Another thing that disturbed me was the fact that I saw that other bachurim had received letters from the Rebbe, answers to their questions and brachos, while I had written several letters and had received no reply.

After half a year in Brunoy, I returned to Strasbourg. At first I joined the Chabad house team and I went on mitvta t'fillin nearly every day. I also joined the shliach in visiting homes and koshering kitchens. When someone wanted his mezuzos checked, I was sent to take them down. I don't understand how it happened but at the same time that I did these holy activities, I was dropping out of religious practice.

At a certain point I stopped working at the Chabad house and looked for a job where I could make nice money. Ironically, I took a job as a mashgiach for the rav of Strasbourg. The work was seasonal and so before Pesach I supervised the matza baking. Sometimes I supervised wine production and other sorts of kashrus-related jobs.

I was still wearing tzitzis and a kippa at the time. I removed them when I left the kashrus job and began working with non-Jews.

I remember that one day I made a spiritual reckoning and I was shocked at where I had gotten; recently I had been religious, I went to the mikva every day, I learned Chassidus and davened with concentration, and now I was living disconnected from any religious practice.

It was hard for me to get back on track and I mostly made peace with the situation. The thoughts of repentance that came to me occasionally, mainly around the Yomim Noraim when I remembered my visit to 770, vanished shortly thereafter. They did not bring about a change in me.

Then one day, something happened that changed my entire way of thinking. As I said, I had written to the Rebbe many times but did not get a reply. One morning, as I was busy at work, someone came in and said that he was sent to me by the shliach of Strasbourg, Rabbi Shimon Samama. Without saying another word, he put a sealed envelope on the table. I looked at the envelope and saw it was a letter from the Lubavitcher Rebbe to me.

I began to tremble. Why had the Rebbe written to me? I hadn't written to him in a long time.

I opened the envelope and read the letter. I saw that it was in response to the letter I had sent to the Rebbe three years before, even before my trip to 770, when I was attending the school in Strasbourg. In the letter, the Rebbe asked me to be an "illuminating candle" to my friends and to behave in the way of Torah and mitzvot.

You can imagine how I felt. I burst into tears and cried for some time. The Rebbe's letter illuminated my neshama in an instant. It was as though beams of light had



illuminated a dark room.

I couldn't work that day. The letter made me feel ashamed and deep regret.

Later on I found out why the letter had been delayed for three years. The letter had been sent in reply shortly after I had written my letter. It was sent to the school in Strasbourg that I attended, but I had left the school and went to yeshiva. The principal of the school tried to locate me, but as he could not find me, he sent the letter back to New York.

The Rebbe's secretary, Rabbi Groner, was told to send the letter again, this time to the home of the shliach in Paris, R' Azimov. R' Azimov gave it to the shliach in Strasbourg. The letter remained at the Chabad house for a while until the shliach found out where I was, and he sent it to me.

What can I tell you? Although I have not completely returned to a life of mitzvot, the letter shook me up. I went back to putting t'fillin on daily. I wear a Chabad tallis and in Paris, I daven at the Sephardic shul of Rabbi Shimon Dahan, a Lubavitcher. The Rebbe's letter stopped my deterioration and put me back on track, though I still have a ways to go.

THE PRICE OF SHLICHUS

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelewitz, Shliach, Beit Shaan

This is the price of shlichus that we pay happily and proudly. We only pray that we be worthy of this privilege that the Rebbe help us be mekarev Jews and bring the Geula.

A shliach (who wishes to remain anonymous) told me, “You can’t imagine how much I yearn for a Shabbos when I can sit by myself in peace and daven for a few hours like I used to do in yeshiva. It just isn’t possible on shlichus.” There are many shluchim like him in Eretz Yisroel.

This shliach went on to say, “As soon as I started learning in yeshiva in Kfar Chabad, I loved to *daven b’arichus* (pray at length). I remember a debate that I had (when I was in shiur Alef) with an older bachur (from shiur Gimmel) about t’filla. I said that it was acceptable and good that I enjoyed davening at length, whereas he maintained that it was bad if I enjoyed it because then I made davening into another enjoyable activity.

“The debate continued and we went together to the mashpia, R’ Berel Kesselman a”h to present our views. I remember that the mashpia censured the other bachur, saying: ‘You’re not ashamed? **This** is your problem – that a bachur enjoys davening? Instead of being bothered

by how the bachurim are immersed in their food and when the chulent pot comes to the table in the dining room the bachurim get up to make sure they get a portion, that *doesn’t* bother you? Let him enjoy it; the main thing is that he davens.’

“I continued davening at length throughout my years in yeshiva. Now I am on shlichus and every Shabbos I have to be the chazan at the Chabad house. Sometimes I visit other shuls before davening at the Chabad house in order to say divrei Torah (mainly in honor of simchos of mekuravim). I usually have guests waiting for me at home and I have to welcome them right after the davening, or there is a farbrengen after the davening. I’ve almost forgotten what it means to daven b’arichus.”

YICHUDA ILAA WITH THE SHOEMAKER

This problem is familiar to every shliach in some form or another, but we are not complaining. We thank Hashem and the Rebbe for

the privilege of being shluchim.

We were raised on the story about the mashpia, R’ Michael der Alter, who was in the middle of davening in the zal of yeshiva when a shoemaker walked in. This Chassidishe mashpia stopped davening, went over to the shoemaker, and by motioning to him he directed him to one of the T’mimim whose shoes were torn and indicated to him that he wanted the bachur’s shoes fixed.

After the davening they asked the mashpia how he could have stopped in the middle of the brachos of Krias Shma to get involved with shoes. The mashpia answered, “You don’t understand? To the bachur they are shoes, but for me (in my role in which I look after the T’mimim) it is *yichuda ilaa* and *yichuda tataa*” (the higher and lower Divine unifications alluded to in the Shma).

That’s what we were taught. That being on shlichus is the highest elevation of all our avodas Hashem. It is the ultimate perfection of our davening, of our Torah study, and of our hiskashrus to the Rebbe for all eternity.

I am not going to pasken halacha for everybody here. I wasn’t given the smicha to do so. Every shliach has to ask his rav or mashpia, but generally speaking, this is what the Rebbe taught us. It is permissible and a mitzva to sprinkle ashes of the red heifer and purify someone, even though the Kohen himself becomes impure and cannot enter the Mikdash until nightfall. The goal is to purify and be mekarev another Jew.

TEARS DURING THE HAFTORA

We shluchim sometimes feel that we are “soiled” by our shlichus. There are shluchim who daven almost the entire year without a minyan because there just isn’t a

minyan where they live or within 500 kilometers. We know shluchim who have a minyan but throughout the davening they have to circulate and show people the place and turn pages for them in their siddurim.

There are many shluchim who, if they lived in Kfar Chabad or B'nei Brak, would surely be mehader not to carry on Shabbos, but on shlichus they must rely on the eiruv and carry food for the Mesibos Shabbos or flyers about an upcoming Chabad event. Some shluchim run a public seider that lasts for hours and only afterwards do they have a hurried seider of their own so that they eat the afikoman before midnight.

Rabbi Yitzchok Lifsh, a shliach in Tzfas, tells of one year when he planned on going to the Rebbe for Simchas Torah. He had already bought a ticket and made sure that things would go smoothly in his absence. Then he opened to a letter in the *Igros Kodesh* saying that a neshama comes down to this world for seventy years in order to do a favor for another Jew, and therefore he should "remain in his place."

Rabbi Lifsh canceled his ticket and began to think about what favor the Rebbe could be referring to. The end of the story was that he devoted himself to a certain bachur and was mekarev him. Following that, this bachur went to a Chabad yeshiva and he established a fine, Chassidishe home.

There are endless examples of compromises that people make for the sake of the shlichus. Every year, when I read the Haftora of Parshas Nitzavim, the three-four verses about Hashem being willing to have His garments soiled with blood, the main thing being to redeem His people, tears come to my eyes. They are not tears of sorrow but tears of being uplifted, of cleaving to the Rebbe. This is the price of shlichus that we pay happily and proudly. We

only pray that we be worthy of this privilege that the Rebbe help us be mekarev Jews and bring the Geula.

Shluchim have two spiritual accountings to make, one as any Jew – what have I done and what more could I have done? – and one as a shliach – what did I sacrifice and what more could I have done?

MUSING INSTEAD OF STORIES

I guess I should apologize to the readers of this column because I don't have amazing stories to tell this week. No exorcising of demons or unexpected huge donations. Not

the Rebbe's mitzvaim. I heard from Rabbi Shmuel Gruzman, shliach in moshava Migdal, in the name of his father, Rabbi Meir Tzvi, about the early years of mitzvaim. There were Chassidim who thought that mitzvaim could be done at the expense of t'filla and/or learning. The rabbanim emphasized that all the horaos from the Rebbeim in *Kuntres HaT'filla* and *Kuntres HaAvoda* were still in force.

The question was sent to the Rebbe. The Rebbe said that obviously good things are not abolished, that there is only an increase in holiness, but not at the

'This is your problem – that a bachur enjoys davening? Instead of being bothered by how the bachurim are immersed in their food and when the chulent pot comes to the table in the dining room the bachurim get up to make sure they get a portion, that doesn't bother you? Let him enjoy it; the main thing is that he davens.'

even touching "neshama" stories, although you can definitely find many stories of heroes here, precisely as many as the number of shluchim and shluchos.

Understand the spiritual mesirus nefesh that every young couple makes the moment they leave the "hothouse" of kollel and the community, the Chassidishe farbrengens, the minyanim, the shiurim, the rav and chavrusa. They go to a life of compromise and sacrifice, with every t'filla or meal, with every step they take.

Of course, nobody is permitted to take halacha lightly in order to do

expense and not instead of learning diligently and t'filla b'avoda.

R' Shmuel Gruzman told about a farbrengen with R' Leibel Groner. R' Groner related that the Rebbe heard a rumor about the lack of tznius and separation between boys and girls in Kfar Chabad. This was before the girls' schools were moved to Kfar Chabad Beit. The Rebbe reacted strongly, with tears, and clear instructions. R' Groner said he had never seen such a strong reaction before, over this lack of care regarding halacha and the ways of tznius.

WELCOME FOR SHLUCHIM STUDENTS AT BEITAR ILLIT

There was great excitement at the Machon (Institute) for Rabbinics, *Dayanus*, and Training of Yeshiva Educators of *Bais Moshiah* 770 in Beitar, Israel, as the *shluchim* – the nucleus of leading senior students – arrived here. These graduates of the 5767 *kvutza* (Israeli students who have studied during the past year at “770” in Crown Heights, New York) will be studying Rabbinics – *Yoreh Deia*, *Hilchos Issur V’heter* – for which they will take the examinations of the Israeli Chief Rabbinate. They will also disseminate the wellsprings of *Chassidus* outward in Beitar Illit and the surrounding region.

When they arrived here on Thursday, 13 MarCheshven, they were welcomed by the Institute’s *hanhala* and students at an impressive event held at the Institute.

At the welcoming event for



the *shluchim* students, the Institute’s *Rosh Hacollel*, Rabbi Yisroel Shvartz, *Av Beis Din* of Tel Tziyon, spoke about how much the new arrivals will contribute to the Institute and to the entire Torah community of Beitar, for the Institute spreads Torah light throughout the city and its environs. The *mashpia*, Rabbi Avrohom Pressman, made a profound impression on everyone with gripping stories and Chassidic insights about *shlichus* and *hafotzas hamaayonos*. Rabbi Rafael Tzikvishvili of Yerushalyim, a member of the Yeshiva’s *hanhala*, elaborated on the special privilege of serving as *shluchim* at the Institute, which, during the few months since its establishment, has succeeded in accomplishing a great revolution, and, with *Hashem*’s help, they will further advance this from strength to strength. The Institute’s *meishiv* (students’ consultant for study questions), Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Silberman,

gave the *shluchim* his blessings and spoke about the great significance of serving as *shluchim* of the Rebbe, *Melech HaMoshiach*, in a Torah community such as Beitar.

The chairman of *Beis Moshiah* 770 in Beitar, Reb D’niel HaLeivi Goldberg, told about the amazing miracles that have happened since the Institute’s establishment – as a result of the holy blessing of the Rebbe, *Melech HaMoshiach*, that has accompanied the Institute at every step. The *shluchim*, he said, will have a deep positive influence on the youth of Beitar and its environs, and cause a breakthrough in *hafotzas hamaayonos* in the city. He announced that, as a result of the Institute’s success, more *shluchim* students will be added during the school year, and he expressed his wish that *Beis Moshiah* 770 in Beitar Illit will soon have the privilege of welcoming the Rebbe, *Melech HaMoshiach*, *shlita*, with great joy and gladness.

