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A TRUE PERSONAL REDEMPTION: ATTAINING WHAT IS BEYOND OUR REACH

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 31, pg. 23-27
Translated by Boruch Merkur

[Continued from last issue.]

5. This is also the eternal lesson for every single Jew, applicable even in the time of exile:

It is known²⁵ that every single individual is able to attain the state of redemption and salvation in his spiritual service, even prior to the general redemption of the Jewish people (when there will be the complete redemption and salvation, literally in the physical sense, as well).

That being so, it is possible that a person might have difficulty discerning whether he remains in a state of “exile” or whether he has merited to attain a state of “redemption.” Indeed, it is conceivable that he would surmise that since he has overpowered his Evil

Inclination and is dedicated and devoted to the study of Torah and the fulfillment of the Commandments, and even his optional, permissible activities [i.e., those that are not obligatory nor prohibited] are done “for the sake of Heaven,” he has surely merited [personal] spiritual salvation and redemption already.

It is in response to this conjecture that the Torah informs us that “I appeared to Avrohom, etc., but My name Havaya, I did not make known to them.” For it is possible to serve G-d even at the level of the Divine Chariot, even serving G-d by means of each of the “three pillars” – Torah study, the service of prayer, and benevolence – and having **perfected** them all, nevertheless, all the while that one does not experience the revelation of the Divine name Havaya, which transcends nature, he still has not left Mitzrayim and has not attained a state of redemption.

6. How then does one know if he has merited the revelation of the name Havaya in his soul? Rashi answers this question in his commentary on the words, “but My name Havaya, I did not make known to them” – “I was not recognized by them with My attribute of **truth**, whereupon my name is called Havaya.” For without the revelation of the name Havaya to the Patriarchs, “I was not recognized by them with My attribute of **truth**.”²⁶

The nature of the attribute of truth is the absence of change, as stated in the Yerushalmi,²⁷ “The seal of the Holy One Blessed Be He is ‘emes (truth),’”²⁸ as seen in the three letters that comprise the word: Alef, Mem, Sav. The first letter of the word, Alef, is the first letter in the alphabet; Mem is the median letter; and Sav is the final letter of the alphabet, [thereby expressing a quality that is characteristic of G-d Himself] as it is written,²⁹ “I am the first, I am the last, and other than Me there is no deity.” That is, the concept of truth is that it is omnipresent – at the beginning, middle, and end, **equally** and invariably –

as it is written,³⁰ “For I, G-d, have not changed.” (Thus, the meaning of, “other than Me there is no deity (*ein Elokim*),” is that there is no concealment or hiding³¹ resulting from the Divine name Elokim, the attribute of judgment and constriction [of Divine revelation].)

The test then to determine whether one has achieved a state of true departure from boundaries and limitations is when his service transcends change. That is to say that it makes no difference at all what matter he is occupied with, be it Torah study, the service of prayer, or the performance of a Mitzva, or [even] his optional, permissible activities done for the sake of Heaven. His service of G-d in each of these areas is with the same absolute self-nullification to G-d’s will, may He be blessed, without variation.

The power to do this is by means of the revelation one receives from G-d’s name Havaya, “My attribute of truth” (“I am the first, I am the last, and other than Me there is no deity”), for this affects in a person such a self-nullification that he is not contained within or confined to the particular forms of Divine service. Rather, in all of them his self-nullification to G-d shines forth, transcending limitations and change.

(The latter echoes the teaching of the Baal Shem Tov³² on the verse,³³ “I have placed G-d (Havaya) before me constantly”: “‘I have placed (*shivisi*)’ is etymologically linked to the word ‘*hishtavos* (equating)’” – that “All is equal to him” and he serves G-d “with all his ability” and “in all ways.”³⁴ This manner of a person finding things to have equal value results from the fact that “**Havaya** (is) before me constantly,” for when the name Havaya shines upon a person in a revealed manner it results in the perception of equality in all his concerns.)

7. Just as the above applies to the exodus from Egypt, so it applies to the Future Redemption. That is, the concept of redemption signifies not only a physical redemption, nor just a regular spiritual redemption (redemption from the Evil Inclination), but **the revelation of the name Havaya**.

The latter also expresses the profound significance of Rambam’s concluding his work with a description of the state of the world in “that time [of the Future Redemption],” “[when] the sole occupation of the entire world will be to know G-d alone. Therefore, the Jewish people will be great sages, knowing esoteric matters and grasping knowledge of their Creator according to the capacity of man, as it is said,³⁵ ‘for the earth shall be full with the knowledge of G-d as water covers the ocean’”:

In the beginning³⁶ of his work *HaYad*, when Rambam elucidates the Mitzva of [Attaining]

Knowledge of G-d, he does not explicitly mention the name Havaya,³⁷ writing only “to know that there is a **primordial Being**,”³⁸ whereas here Rambam emphasizes “to **know Havaya**,” also quoting the verse, “the earth shall be full with the **knowledge of Havaya**,” the reason being because then [in the Future to Come] there will be knowledge of the name Havaya. In particular, there will be knowledge of the most lofty level of the name Havaya (in the lexicon of Kabbala and Chassidus, “the Supernal Name Havaya”¹⁸), resulting in absolute self-nullification.

Thus, Rambam concludes with “(for the earth shall be full with the knowledge of G-d) **as water covers the ocean**” – the revelation of the name Havaya results in a person’s not seeing the earth as an independently existing entity at all, for it will be utterly nullified in the face of the intense revelation of G-dliness, to the extent that it will be covered over with the “knowledge of G-d as water covers the ocean.”

(From the address of Shabbos Parshas VaEira 5721)

NOTES:

25 See *Tanya Igeres HaKodesh* Ch. 4

26 See also *Panim Yafos* Parshas VaEira, beg. (quoted in *Ohr HaTorah* VaEira, pg. 194 beg.).

27 Sanhedrin 1:1; as well as in B’Reishis Rabba 81:2, D’varim Rabba 1:10, Shir HaShirim Rabba 1:9(1). See Rashi on Tractate Shabbos 55a.

28 Shabbos ibid, where it is discussed; citations in the previous note.

29 Yeshayahu 44:6, cited in the Midrashim (and Rashi) of Footnote 27, but the Yerushalmi ibid cites a different verse.

30 Malachi 3:6.

31 *Likkutei Torah* Matos, beg., among several other places.

32 *Tzivas HaRibash*, beg. (*siman* 2).

33 T’hillim 16:8.

34 *Tzivas HaRibash*, ibid *siman* 3, etc. – see Footnote 34 in the original.

35 Yeshayahu 11:9.

36 Regarding the following explanation in the text, also see “*Hadran al HaRambam*” (*Seifer HaSichos* 5748 Vol. 1, pg. 207-8, pg. 215 ff.)

37 Except in the form of an acronym, “**Yesod ha’yesodos v’amud ha’chachamos** (The foundation of the foundations and the pillar of wisdoms)”.

38 Only in the continuation of the matter (Law 4 and Law 6) does he cite writings that mention the name Havaya.

FRUITS OF ERETZ YISROEL

By Menachem Ziegelboim

I met two farmers, Shimon Friedman and Shimon Ben-Brit, both Lubavitchers. As we spoke, among the avocado plants and orchards, I heard their life stories and about agriculture, as well as their view about man being “a tree of the field.” * Presented for Chamisha-Asar B'Shvat – Rosh HaShana for Trees.

The scent of citrus trees laden with orange fruit is what assailed my senses when I visited the citrus orchards in the Sharon. Visiting the orchards in Shevat when it is still winter, but shortly before the revival of the trees on Chamisha-Asar B'Shvat, is a special experience, especially for a city boy like me.

It was wonderful going out to the orchards with R' Shimon Friedman, a farmer in his heart and soul. He grew up in Chibat Tziyon in Emek Chefer, not far from Chadera. We had arranged to meet in the fields and there he was on his tractor, loading a box of oranges that stood out for being especially juicy.

I spent hours in the field as I accompanied Shimon Friedman, a Lubavitcher Chassid as he did his work, and Shimon Ben-Brit, also a

farmer from this moshav. Both of them work the earth and are connected to the earth and mekusharim to the Rebbe.

* * *

Moshav Chibat Tziyon was founded in 1933 by an organization of Zionist Jews from Russia. They were joined by Jews from Central Europe and had their numbers augmented by the various aliyot from the Sephardic countries. The moshav is 4500 *dunam* (a *dunam* is 1000 square meters). The main divisions of the yishuv are: plants, flowers, and chickens.

Shimon Friedman was born in Chibat Tziyon, a village of 100 families, some religious, some not. They all lived together harmoniously. His childhood was spent on the moshav and later on

he went to the yeshiva in Kfar HaRoeh which is nearby. After serving in the army, he began working in farming, having gotten his grandfather's farm. He began in the chicken section and learned the job until he acquired his own farm.

After he married he lived in Chibat Tziyon and it was only natural for him to continue in the area of farming that he is occupied with till today. He is better with his hands than with interviews; it was difficult getting him to talk about himself or his work. What others would consider a topic for an article is for him daily life.

What do you grow?

Citrus, some avocados, pecans.

How do you decide what to grow?

Hashem matches you up with the plants that suit you. Each person picks that which appeals to him and seems right.

Are there more busy seasons of the year or are you busy farming year-round?

“I am busy all year, each fruit-picking season in its time. We are now at the end of the Clementine harvest.”

Shimon has ten *dunams* of citrus (three different kinds). He also has two *dunams* of Shamouti oranges (commonly known as Jaffa oranges) and thirty-five *dunams* of pecans. He has five *dunams* of avocados and six *dunams* of red grapefruits.

“Nothing grows just like that; you have to work with each thing. Last year I made plantings of grapefruits and little oranges and this year I need to plant a new crop of avocados.”

It’s hard to hear Shimon’s voice over the tractor, and not because of the noise as much as his low voice. In a quiet conversation that we had later in his house, while eating a late lunch, I saw that Shimon is a man of measured words, orderly thoughts, and with the trust in Hashem of a farmer.

As I said, Shimon was born, raised, and lives till this day at Chibat Tziyon. Nevertheless, the Rebbe burst the bubble that surrounded him and managed to touch his neshama. This took place through a mobile mitzva tank that visited the moshav every Thursday, made the rounds of the place, and spread Judaism and Chassidus.

We go back seventeen years to when the tankist, Moshe Stern a”h, would come in his tank towards evening.

“I went to Maariv and when I returned home, they called me from the tank to join them and learn. At first, I didn’t. I simply hadn’t heard of the Rebbe until then. I didn’t feel a connection, but in the end, I went in and joined the shiur in *Likkutei Sichos*. We would sit in the tank for half an hour and learn.”

The shiurim had an effect. When I asked what he liked about *Likkutei Sichos*, Shimon said, “I was unfamiliar with this kind of learning before and I liked it.”

When the tank stopped coming, Shimon continued to travel to Rabbi Shaul Akselrod, shliach in Givat Olga in Chadera. Every morning they learned D’var Malchus together and that led to Shimon’s becoming a Lubavitcher.

He began writing letters to the



Right: Shimon Friedman

MY MIRACLE

On my visit to Chibat Tziyon, Shimon Friedman introduced me to Eliyahu Kramer and his son Liron Chai. We met in the yard of the shul between Mincha and Maariv.

"Twenty years ago we had no children and we went to the United States for special and expensive treatment. We met my wife's cousin at the hospital, Shmuel Hahn, a Lubavitcher Chassid who heard that we were coming and suggested that we get a bracha from the Rebbe. 'Before you go through with this complicated and expensive treatment, come and get a bracha from the Rebbe.' He came on Sunday and took us to the Rebbe.

"As we passed by the Rebbe, my wife asked for a bracha. The Rebbe gave her a dollar and said, 'for bracha and success.' To tell you the truth, we didn't quite understand it. We went back to the house with our cousin and I asked him to explain the bracha. He said he didn't know exactly, but if the Rebbe said it, we had to believe it and expect good news.

"We used the time we had to wait for our appointment to tour and my wife became pregnant naturally. This raised another problem. My wife had been pregnant before but then had toxemia.



Eliyahu Kramer and his son Liron Chai

She gave birth to a premature baby girl who died after a day. This time too, after six months she had toxemia. The doctors did a Cesarean when the baby weighed a little over two-and-a-half pounds and the tiny baby proceeded to lose weight. A few days later his condition worsened and the doctors said they didn't know what would be with him.

"We made some calls from the hospital to our cousin the Lubavitcher in America and he sent in a request for a bracha to the Rebbe. He wrote, 'Rebbe, you gave them a bracha and she had a son, but he is in critical condition.' The Rebbe gave a bracha and that night, when we went to the NICU at Belinson hospital, the doctor said that a miracle happened and everything was fine, without medication.

"The baby remained there for another two months and then was released. At his bris we named him Liron Chai. He grew up here on the moshav and Shimon always tells me that he is the Rebbe's child. He's 20 now and we have a lot of nachas from him. He is strong in his Judaism and his studies and he does a lot of chesed.

"My wife is the director of a place that distributes food to the needy in Chadara. She gives out about 100 portions a day and about 200 portions a week to large families."

Rebbe on various topics and even received oral responses via Rabbi Segal from Afula. He did not keep the answers.

"I didn't know I should save them," he explains.

The same applies for now. When he writes to the Rebbe these days and opens a volume of *Igros Kodesh*, he doesn't save the answers. "When I need to, I write to the Rebbe. I get answers and carry on. I don't keep the answers for the experience or because I'll have a story to tell."

Still, I try to extract a story from him about something special that happened to him with the Rebbe. Shimon says, "That which comes with thunder and lightning fades away with the same speed. Something that is built with consistent work is built strong."

Nevertheless, he tells me the following:

"At a certain point I was a partner with someone, and together we wanted to go into the soil business. I wasn't sure about it and as always, I wrote to the Rebbe. The answer was negative. My friend continued with his plans while I remained in farming. The Rebbe saved me. My friend was unsuccessful and went bankrupt after a year."

In 5753, Shimon went to the Rebbe with a group that was organized by Rabbi Aharon Eliezer Tzeitlin of Tzfas. He spent Shavuot in Beis Chayeinu. When I asked Shimon why he went to the Rebbe, he said, "Apparently, the Rebbe called me, not because I wanted to or because I was interested. If you would have asked me before I went into the mitzva tank, I would have told you that I barely knew who the Rebbe is and what he looked like."

What did your friends on the moshav think of your becoming a Lubavitcher?

"There was no special reaction.

They may not have said anything since people tend to be polite.”

After learning in the tank for a while, the shiur began moving from house to house on the moshav.

“The Rebbe gathered all kinds of people from all sorts of places to learn his teachings,” said Shimon with a note of surprise in his voice as though he just made this amazing discovery. “We tried to have a shiur in every yishuv. These days, the shiur is regularly at Amit Ronen of Kfar Chaim.”

Shimon, his wife and family became sort of shluchim of the Rebbe. “Although I don’t devote enough time to it,” he sighed. “Before Pesach we distribute shmura matza to all the homes in

amazing answers and miracles from the Rebbe. Before I visited, Friedman told me to meet Ben-Brit too.

Shimon Ben-Brit was also born at Chibat Tziyon, 52 years ago. He has grown flowers for export, citrus fruits, vegetables, and pecans. 15 years ago he sat down to review whether it was still profitable due to the changes in price. Also, the Intifada caused the Arab workers to stop coming and he had to deal with foreign workers.

Now, Shimon has 23 dunams plus many other dunams that he leased for ornamental trees.

“My brother-in-law, a well-known agronomist, and I wanted to get into garden design with

Shimon got his seeds from open nature. First, he gets them to sprout and then tends them stage after stage, until they reach the desired strength and size. Since it was almost the New Year for Trees, there is no one more suited than Shimon to talk to about trees. And he loves to talk about them.

“Since this a long-range project, you need lots of *siyata d’Shmaya* (help from Heaven) as well as professionalism and intuition so that you are unique on the market. Professionalism in growing trees is the most important thing of all, since in nature a tree is something that grows in the ground and not something that is moved. Growing trees for sale needs to be done with the utmost sensitivity. You can’t just come and pluck out a tree that has roots in the ground! That gives the trees a shock which will cause complications when you later try to transplant it.”

Man may be likened to a tree of the field, but still what do you mean by the tree experiencing shock?

“Trees grow in nature and each tree grows according to its desires and comforts. It has the ability to send out roots towards a source of water, for example. I am interested in selling these trees that I grow without shocking them, so that they quickly adapt to their new location. In order to do that, I use agro-technological approaches to acclimate them to another place.

“When they reach the right size, a special tractor with a large blade cuts under the roots, deep in the ground, and it removes the tree along with the earth and the roots. The tree remains with the earth for another year or two while being watered properly. In this intermediate stage, the root system gets arranged in a circle.

“Then we put the tree into a sack. The tree stands within the

Shimon can certainly relate to the idea of man being like a tree of the field. Just as you don’t suddenly remove a man from his home, so too, you don’t irresponsibly remove a tree from the field.

the moshav and in neighboring yishuvim. On Lag B’Omer we make parades. On Shabbos we have activities for children. Between Mincha and Maariv the children are told stories of tzaddikim. On Chanuka we have a big menorah in the center of the moshav.

“Before my daughter got married, she helped with the children learning *Tanya*. Now we hope to bring a madricha here to do programs during the week too.”

* * *

There is another Shimon on the moshav, Shimon Ben-Brit (Boldheim), son of a German father and a Yemenite mother. He also has farming in his blood. He has had

decorative trees for the public and private sector. We picked oak trees, which are known for their strength and sparing consumption of water.”

Public entities like the Jerusalem municipality buy his trees, which they plant in gardens, squares, and on the streets of the city.

Shimon has a lot of patience. He grows trees that take between ten to fifteen years until they mature and only then does he sell them. It’s a long-term investment but one that is worthwhile.

“Other plant nurseries grow their trees faster and they rush to sell them before the proper time because they need the money quickly.”

sack with its roots and earth as a compact mass, which is not the way it is in nature. The tree continues to acclimate to that until it is ready to be moved, with a minimum of shock to its system. This work is like domesticating animals of the wild.”

Shimon can certainly relate to the idea of man being like a tree of the field. Just as you don’t suddenly remove a man from his home, so too, you don’t irresponsibly remove a tree from the field. Shimon also picks the right season. “Now the

“I’ve reached the point where I feel an energy connection to trees.”

I dared to ask him how far his anthropomorphizing of trees allows him to “understand” them and does he even talk to them. “I don’t speak to them verbally, but I know that trees have a powerful energy force and I am convinced that they give me a lot, as far as my health and spirit are concerned.

“A tree is a purifying force of Hashem’s creation. Just as the sun and earth give off positive energy, so do trees have a good influence,

time:

“There was Chabad programming in Chibat Tziyon that was done by Mrs. Tova Lerner a”h. She was connected to the Rebbe and she made sure that the *Tanya* was printed here and went all out to get the people living here in touch with the Rebbe. She made sure the mitzva tank came here every week. Later, she became seriously sick and she died. We had a connection and so when my daughter was sick, I asked for her advice and a bracha.

“I wrote to the Rebbe and received answers of blessing. Our communication generally took place through the Mobile Tanks of Natzrat Ilit. I conveyed my questions through them and the answers came through them too. To my request for a refua shleima, I was told, ‘bracha l’refua shleima.’ I was very moved that a man who did not know me, was speaking to me, supporting me, and giving me a bracha.

“We went through a lot over several years. There were days that I had to make fateful decisions regarding my daughter. At one point, we reached a dead end in her treatment and we had to decide on another approach. I wrote to the Rebbe but did not get an answer. My older sister suggested that we consult with a family practitioner, a friend of ours who was a pediatrician. I did as she said and based on his advice, our daughter went through a new sort of treatment. My heart was torn to pieces.

“Then they called me from Chabad and told me that the Rebbe’s answer was to speak to a doctor friend and take his advice. That was just what I had done and I realized that Hashem was directing me on the right path.

“I was in the hospital during the treatment. As expected, her immune system was compromised and she

“From this I learned that we are actually always living a test. We are tested from Above and often, you need a lot of strength to get out of your routine of life in order to understand the message.”

tree is sleeping or hibernating until mid-March, which is the right time to pull out the roots and acclimate anew.”

There you go again, using human terms – like sleeping – for a tree. Why?

“This time of the year, the tree sleeps through the winter and amasses strength before it blossoms. In the months of Adar-Nissan it begins to wake up. Like a person who needs aggressive medical care who is put to sleep, so too with the tree. I need to wait until it sleeps and then I can handle it properly. A tree is a living thing and you can’t deal aggressively with a living thing in the wrong time.”

Shimon Ben-Brit is very attached to trees, roots, branches, and leaves as well as to the earth and orchards. He has the sensitivity and he’s had it since he’s a child.

but a tree is on a higher level than something inanimate, for it grows. A plant is a living thing.”

* * *

Shimon doesn’t wear a Chabad “uniform.” He wears a large knit kippa, but is a Chabadnik through and through. He is one of the guys who schlepped Shimon Friedman into the tank to learn Chassidus. “I was in touch with the Rebbe when my older daughter, Keren, was very sick. She was only nine years old when she was sick with leukemia. We went to many hospitals and had an extremely hard time. It hit us out of the blue and that is when I connected with the Rebbe.”

Shimon stopped near a large rock in the center of the field. A clear winter sun looked down upon us and only the whispering of leaves could be heard in the background. Shimon went back twenty years in



Shimon Friedman on his tractor



Shimon Ben-Brit

was in danger. The doctors said they didn't know what to say except that her condition was critical. When you stand in front of Dr. Zeitsov a"h of Belinson and you see her worried face and hear her say it's critical because her immune system is down to zero, you feel utterly helpless. According to the medical literature, it takes at least ten days for the immune system to recover and get back to normal.

"The brachos I had requested and gotten, as well as the support from the Chassidei Chabad, made me suddenly think differently. I impulsively told my wife to stay with my daughter while I went out. I wasn't raised as a Chassid who spread Judaism and light, and I don't know what got into me. I began looking for people to do tz'daka with them. I met a poor man and gave him tz'daka. Then I went from bed to bed and

encouraged the patients. This wasn't a rational decision on my part.

"After a few hours of this, a nurse asked me to rush to the office of the head of the department. We went and she looked at us openmouthed. Neither she nor the entire staff could explain what had just happened, but my daughter's immune system had suddenly reached normal levels.

"From this I learned that we are actually always living a test. We are tested from Above and often, you need a lot of strength to get out of your routine of life in order to understand the message.

"That's when I understood the answer I had gotten the week before from the Rebbe of 'think good and it will be good, I will mention it at the gravesite.' That is the force that moves us and then you begin to act. Positive thinking

attracts forces to transform the bad to good.

"Keren is now 28 and she is married and happy with a little girl. She is living with me until their new house is built."

* * *

At a certain point the two Shimons and I meet to uproot a tree that had already been grown in a sack for the purpose of transferring it. Shimon Friedman was on the tractor and Shimon Ben-Brit stood and lovingly supervised the work. When I asked whether they were uprooting a plant they said, "G-d forbid. We are just transferring the tree somewhere else."

At the end of a complicated job, the three of us leaned on the tractor and the two Shimons reminisced.

"When I was well along in my connection to the Rebbe," said Ben-

Brit, "Shimon [Friedman] would laugh at me. He was still wearing a knitted kippa and had no connection with Chabad. I dragged him to all the shiurim and to the programs we did in shul."

Friedman nodded his head and his beard was ruffled by a breeze. Both agree that at a certain stage, there was an underground Chabad movement throughout the yishuv and throughout the yishuvim of

Emek Chefer.

"It began with Mrs. Lerner, who drew in Ben-Brit, who drew me in to Chabad. Each of us connected other Jews to the Rebbe and that is how a sort of community was formed within all neighboring yeshivum. R' Shaul Akselrod continued this work and each time we held a shiur in one of the homes of the members of our group at various moshavim.

"The Rebbe reached many Jews in the area even though nearly all of them remained with their outward appearance as it was before. The changes were within."

Both Shimon's nod in agreement.

Ben-Brit and I continued our tour among the beautiful, green fields. We got to the Rosacea trees, which produce beautiful green branches that are for export. We also saw the baby oak trees that are five years old. They still had another five to seven years left in Shimon's nursery. Near them were plants large and small.

"All were planted on the same day," said Shimon as he motioned broadly with his hand over the field. "Nevertheless, some are only a few centimeters tall while others are a meter and more. That's genetics for you, each plant with its genetic makeup, just like children born to one family."

Shimon was also proud of his silvery evergreen trees. This unusual tree has a trunk that is soft like a sponge. Some like them in their private gardens or near a pool. It's a tree that creates atmosphere.

I could see Shimon's love for the trees, for plant life and for his plants and I couldn't refrain from asking whether someone who was not sensitive could work in farming.

"He can, but I am a big believer in someone who is sensitive and who has the ability to express that energy will have a beneficial

SHIMON'S CAREER CHANGE

Four years ago, Shimon Ben-Brit began to feel that he wanted a change. He felt that his daily work load was physically too taxing on him. At the same time he felt an inner spirit that wanted to break loose, that wanted to help people.

"Things didn't move along at just the rate that I was used to and I did some introspection. I realized something was going on here and I asked Hashem to explain to me what He wanted me to do, what my goal was in life.

"Some people asked me for help in checking their mezuzos and primarily to listen to them. I began to feel that I was able to help people, that I was like a shliach of the Rebbe to strengthen people's faith. It wasn't something obvious, but that was what I felt.

"In the course of life, it often happens that Heaven opens doors for us and closes them. A Jew has various opportunities to act and make progress but it's his choice whether to take the opportunity or to miss it. If he is attentive and his level of awareness is sharp, he will use it to progress, to grow and take action.

"So I asked Hashem to let me know what I should be doing and I began getting opportunities to help people. I was directed by Heaven to study bio-energy treatment at a center in Slovenia, a unique approach that has nothing comparable in Israel. It's about checking the balance of a person's energy aura, and providing energy treatments based on each person's individual need.

"I asked the Rebbe whether I should go to Slovenia and study this or not, and the answer I opened to in the *Igros Kodesh* was: **I was glad to read your letter and that you write about your visit to various places and your work in a unique field. Since "all hearts seek out G-d," certainly in this work too you will increase your efforts. May Hashem give you success so that through ways of pleasantness, as in the Alter Rebbe's aphorism that loving your fellow like yourself is the vessel for loving Hashem, your G-d ...**

"I saw that the Rebbe referred to a trip, 'your visit to various places,' and about the uniqueness of the field that deals with helping another Jew, and how the Rebbe goes on to talk about loving one's fellow.

"I studied this method with Mr. Domancic, who is well regarded in Europe. He is devotedly training a generation of therapists who will use his method. I told him about the Rebbe's letter and bracha and he was happy to hear about it.

"I hope that we will soon be able to open a bio-energy treatment center."

Note: This box is in no way intended as an endorsement for this treatment. Readers should consult with their rav or mashpia.



Shimon Ben-Brit and Shimon Friedman

influence on the trees.”

Trees know the difference?

“Yes, of course. Every living thing feels. If you learn Chassidus you know that everything has a life force, even inanimate things.”

What do you consider a blessed year?

Friedman: “A blessed year is one with a good yield for which we get a good price. Sometimes, it can be a good harvest but the market is soft and the profit is miniscule.” Shimon pointed upward and said, “He’s in charge.”

“Chassidus says that a farmer has more emuna because without emuna, you can’t be a farmer. A farmer is strong in his faith. After a down year, he hopes and prays that the following year will be better.”

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THE REBBE'S NOVEL APPROACH TO TORAH STUDY

By Rabbi Zalman Hertzel

Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry

Beis Moshiach Magazine is pleased to present the next installment from the seifer Shlita by Rabbi Zalman Hertzel, discussing the faith of Lubavitcher chassidim in the seventh generation.

At a farbrengen on Chaf Menachem Av 5710, the Rebbe shlita conducted a siyum on Tractate Kiddushin. He prefaced the actual siyum with the following words (*Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 16, pg. 533):

In the ways of study in general, there are numerous methods. There is the way of deep analysis and explanation, which is the Lithuanian approach to study, and study in the way of polemics and debate, which is associated with [the approach adopted in] Poland. But the approach of precise textual and stylistic analysis is not employed.

And the reason for this is probably due to the constraints of time. A further reason is because of the difference

between the Written Torah and the Oral Torah, for in the Written Torah the letters are the main thing, as we find that there is a whole chapter in Talmud [derived] from a single letter in the Torah. In the Oral Torah, on the other hand, the concept is the main thing, as explained in *Likkutei Torah*.

However, it is quite obvious that even in the Oral Torah, the language is most precise, to the point that from the precision in language we can derive scores upon scores of Torah concepts.

One of the great chassidim of the Alter Rebbe, R. Nechemia of Dubrovna, was precise even in the language of the Taz and the Magen Avraham, deriving practical halachic rulings from it.

Thus, we find that at the beginning of his leadership, the Rebbe had already defined his approach to learning: the approach of textual and stylistic precision.

There are other more conventional approaches, and even these we have found in the Rebbe's teachings. However, the guiding approach in the Rebbe's teachings is the approach of precision.

THE EXACTITUDE LEADS TO THE ROOT OF THE MATTER

To understand the differences in the aforementioned approaches to Torah study, we will provide a brief explanation (see Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Ginsberg's article in *Beis Moshiach*, Issue 290 (Hebrew section), for a more lengthy discussion of the issue):

When we are involved in the understanding of a particular concept, there are several methods of study. We can expound on the matter and develop an explanation of the subject we are learning and then present an opposing line of reasoning or we can find a proof

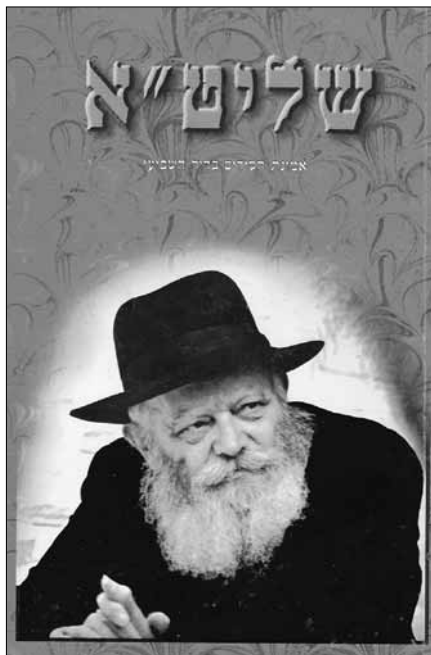
from another source. Afterwards, we try to refute that proof in a variety of ways, etc. This method of study is the way of polemics and debate.

Another method is to deal more with analysis, to explain the differing sides of the issue being studied in a rational and thoughtful manner. In other words, we must delve deeply into the matter and try to ascertain the underlying rationale of the person presenting his argument. We must consider what the logic is that leads him to say what he does. By the same token, we must try and understand the underlying logic behind the opposing opinion, which differs with the first. When this second opinion is considered logically in the mind of the person learning, he can now try again to understand the reasoning of the first argument in light of the alternative approach. And so it goes. This method of study is the way of deep analysis and explanation.

The approach that the Rebbe introduces seems to be novel. When we investigate its nature, we reveal a new dimension in Torah study. When we are precise in the words and letters, we reveal a new depth of understanding.

For example: If Rashi chose to express himself in his commentary in a particular way, it is because specifically through precise textual and syntactical analysis can we attain the depth of its meaning and a clear understanding of the commentary on the pasuk. If *ch"v* we relate to the words in his commentary as merely a means of expression – i.e., Rashi seized upon a few words “*stam azoi*” in order to express what he meant, and just as he chose these words, he easily could have picked similar words (as we find among different orators who repeat their

words in a variety of flowery styles) – in many cases, we are liable to come to an erroneous interpretation of what we have learned. In the best of circumstances, we will reach a very superficial understanding, and we surely will not be able to attain the depth of its meaning. Anyone who has been educated in the Rebbe’s approach to the study of Rashi on the Torah is aware that learning Rashi incorrectly is liable to lead to contradictions to explicit concepts from other



sources, etc.

This new approach has a direct consequence upon other aspects of understanding the Torah, e.g., studying in a way that through a single explanation, many questions are answered. Such a situation can be attained only through the precision approach. The precision in language and style leads to **the root of the matter**, the central and most fundamental underlying concept. Furthermore, when the root is

uncovered, all those pertinent details are subsequently brought to light, which sometimes could otherwise cloud the central point. This is the Rebbe’s approach to study – the precision approach.

EVERY WORD IN TORAH IS TOTALLY ACCURATE

The Rebbe’s approach is to be precise. On countless occasions (without exaggeration!), the Rebbe has said that since every word in Torah is the ultimate of precision, there is a teaching and instruction from every word.

Similarly, we find regarding the teachings of our Rebbeim. The Rebbe emphasized many times (far too numerous to mention) that the Rebbeim never said anything unintentionally *ch"v*. We saw the special attention in the Rebbe’s teachings given towards things the Rebbe Rayatz said. Upon every word or portion of a word of the Rebbe Rayatz, the Rebbe shlita built “mountains of halachos.”

It’s enough for us to mention, in the form of a mere example, that the Rebbe begins his **first** maamer with the words (quoting the previous Rebbe): “Let us understand the **precise use of the expression**, ‘*ikar Sh’china*’ (the main manifestation of the Sh’china).” Furthermore, the Rebbe explains at length in this very maamer the status of the seventh generation regarding the six generations that preceded it, based upon what the previous Rebbe wrote in a merely incidental fashion and in parentheses: “**(And all sevenths are beloved).**”

In fact, all the s’farim are filled with this matter, and according to the well-known saying, “Let’s open a seifer and look it up.”

Thus, the main key to understanding the Rebbe’s

approach to Torah study is the basic distinction of the precision approach.

THE TORAH IS THE INHERITANCE OF ALL

The Rebbe did not assign the work of precision in the teachings of the Rebbeim merely to the honorable few. He has demanded that all chassidim toil and be exacting in the teachings of the Rebbeim. This is in accordance with the way of the Torah, a general inheritance, regarding which it is said, “a heritage of the congregation of Yaakov,” i.e., **every Jew inherits it completely**

speaking. We must be precise in every detail, including something that was seemingly said in an incidental manner, during a trip or the like – we must be precise and learn something from every single word. (NOTE: The Rebbe also demanded precision in other portions of the Torah, even saying “Yasher Ko’ach” to those involved in them, such as the study of Rashi’s commentary, etc. This matter appears in numerous places, e.g., in a sicha from Shabbos Parshas Shmini 5746 (*Hisvaaduyos B’Lashon HaKodesh* 5746, Vol. 2, pg. 815): “It is appropriate to express a Yasher Ko’ach to those who have drawn

In the *Beis Moshiach Magazine*, Issue 269, an interesting story was publicized about the “Vaad L’Hafatzas Sichos,” as written in the name of its members:

“The Rebbe once wrote a footnote to a sicha, and we weren’t sure if we had succeeded in getting what the Rebbe meant. As a result, we put in writing what we had understood, stating that this appears to be the meaning. The Rebbe replied to us in these words: **“There are several meanings here...”**

Go and take a look at the various sichos about “K’vatzei Haoros U’Biurim,” how much the Rebbe demanded and encouraged precision in his sichos. In addition, even when they asked the Rebbe himself about things that he had said, he never disregarded (real) questions, nor did he ignore them. Rather, he declared that he would try to relate to those who were being exact in his teachings. For example, in a sicha from Yud-Alef Nissan 5745 (*Hisvaaduyos B’Lashon HaKodesh* 5745, Vol. 3, pg. 1727), the Rebbe said:

There is the “Hadran Al HaRambam” where the explanation was once stated at length, and printed now more extensively with added cross-references, etc... so at their rest-time and the like, they too can (if they want to do me a favor, to do a favor to someone else, to do a favor to themselves) peruse the “Hadran.”

And if there will be some citation or even a question, etc., may they be blessed, and if this is a real question, then when they write the question down, I will try, *bli neider*, to the best of my powers and in my humble opinion, to find an answer to it.

A chassid is naturally inclined to be concerned that maybe he didn’t properly understand what the Rebbe meant, and maybe he is interpreting things in incorrectly r”l. The Rebbe ...demands from chassidim toil and precision in his teachings.

(without the need for mediators to explain “the inner meaning” of the matter...).

For example, in a sicha from Shabbos Parshas Korach 5748 (*Hisvaaduyos B’Lashon HaKodesh* 5748, Vol. 3, pg. 554), the Rebbe says:

We most certainly learn from this *how much we must be precise in the words of my revered teacher and father-in-law, the Rebbe, leader of the generation*, in every detail. This applies not only to his teachings, his maamarim, and sichos in the literal sense, but also his talk on the level of “mundane conversation,” relatively

attention to those matters requiring explanation in Rashi’s commentary, and to hope that those who will toil will surely find, discovering explanations and clarifications regarding the precise wording of the text and difficulties that arise therefrom.”

A chassid is naturally inclined to be concerned that maybe he didn’t properly understand what the Rebbe meant, and maybe he is interpreting things in incorrectly r”l. The Rebbe also relates to a situation such as this, and he continues to demand from chassidim toil and precision in his teachings.

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BOGDAN KHMELNITSKY IS TURNING OVER IN HIS GRAVE

By Chani Nussbaum

Shlucha Menuchi Raskin of Khmelnitsky (Prokhorov) in the Ukraine tells us about her shlichus. She describes the extremely difficult beginning, her work around the year, her disappointments and her nachas.

How did you get to your place of shlichus?

When I first met my husband, Yehoshua Raskin, we spoke about going on shlichus. He told me that he wanted to go on shlichus in America or Russia. He saw that I was taken aback and he asked me why. I told him that I could not see ever leaving Eretz Yisroel.

We thought maybe it wasn't worth continuing to meet but he suggested leaving it up to Hashem, "He will lead us to where He wants us to go." Seven months after our wedding, we went on

shlichus to Ofakim. We were there for two years with Rabbi Yisroel Hershkowitz and we learned a lot from him.

At some point we felt we wanted to be independent. Just at that time, I heard that Rabbi Shlomo Wilhelm of Zhitomir, Ukraine was urgently looking for shluchim. We contacted him and went to the Ukraine for a week to see what it was like. Rabbi Wilhelm took us to Khmelnitsky, three hours away from Zhitomir and suggested that we be shluchim there.

When Rabbi Wilhelm asked us if we liked Khmelnitsky, we didn't understand his question. He laughed and explained that going on shlichus is just like a shidduch. You have to love the city, even the superficial aspects of it and feel that there is a chemistry. We spoke about the challenges that we knew we would have to face.

My husband sat down to write to the Rebbe and included our concerns. The answer he opened to in the *Igros Kodesh* amazed us. The Rebbe said you need to work in ways of pleasantness and peace with all the Jewish organizations in the city, and "in a place where there is no man, you have to be a man." The Rebbe said that Hashem gave him the talents he needed for this and if he didn't do it, then nobody would do it ... At the end of the letter, the Rebbe wrote mazal tov on the birth of a son (at that point we had no children yet).

My husband called his mashpia

who told him that after such a clear answer from the Rebbe, why did he have any doubts? That is what my mashpia told me as well. From that point on it was clear to us that this was our place.

Within a month we had sold our furniture, packed, and flew to Khmelnytsky. We went without a house, without the language, without food, without family, without friends. Alone. Just us and the Rebbe!

What did you find when you arrived there?

We arrived on 11 Kislev 5761 and we immediately understood what the Rebbe meant about working peacefully with everybody, for there were many Jewish organizations there already. In addition, there was a Litvishe rav there, a local baal t'shuva. He was there with his wife and he was disturbed by our arrival. In the shul, my husband was just one of the people who davened there while the Litvishe rav was the chazan and he held the other

rabbinical positions. He did not want farbrengens and did not want Chabad's presence in the city.

My husband is a peaceful person; even if you want to fight with him, it's not easy. He gave the man the respect due him as rav of the city and constantly reassured him that we had come to work with the Jewish school.

At first, the city was not at all developed. We came lacking almost everything since all our things were in a container on a ship on its way to the Ukraine. We lived in a hotel for the first two weeks on broken beds that you could barely sleep on. There was hot water only on Shabbos and Sunday.

A few months before we arrived, Rabbi Shlomo Wilhelm opened an Ohr Avner school in Khmelnytsky but he was having a hard time running it long distance. We took charge of the spiritual aspect of things. The children and parents warmly welcomed us. They were very excited. They all

held national flags and sang their anthem. Their ignorance was so vast that the teacher of Judaism sang and danced and the girls were not dressed modestly and they also sang and danced. My husband had to leave the hall a few times. As the head of the community, he addressed them, but he spoke to them in Yiddish, which was translated into Russian.

Then they honored us with a meal but we did not rely on their kashrus and to their sorrow, we didn't eat any of it. I saw that we had hard work ahead of us and I asked the Rebbe, in my heart, to give us the strength.

After the two-week nightmare in the hotel, we rented an apartment but this move was just going from the frying pan to the fire. The apartment was a horror. Black water came out of the kitchen faucets. The shower had no water and we had to bathe by pouring cups of water over us. We had no gas. We bought a small electric hotplate and I cooked on that. The apartment had a few pieces of old furniture and two rocking chairs. We had no phone at first. Several times, when I was alone in the apartment, the gentile landlord suddenly came in. He was an old drunk who waved his cane at me and yelled.

I didn't know Russian and had no idea what he wanted. He went over to our closet and began rummaging there. I refused to remain alone in the apartment and went everywhere with my husband. He knew a little bit of Russian and could communicate with the help of a dictionary. (The Jews in the community recently told us that they were sure that a woman also had to go to shul three times a day).

I won't deny that the first year on shlichus was miserable, mainly because of the language, the

KHMELNITSKY – HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Khmelnytsky is in the southwest of the Ukraine and has a population of 270,000 with about 4000 Jews. About fifty years ago, the communist government changed the name of the city from Prokhorov to Khmelnytsky in honor of nationalist hero Bogdan Khmelnytsky who was responsible for the murder of hundreds of thousands of Jews in the slaughter of 1648-1649. This is why the Jews of the city continued to use the original name and refused to use the name Khmelnytsky. However, the young generation of today doesn't know who the city is named for.

Until the Revolution, the city was quite Jewish with 25,000 living there (out of 50,000 residents). 16 shuls operated there. In the archives it says that 167 sifrei Torah were confiscated during the Revolution.

After the war only two shuls remained. Many of the Jews in the city have Jewish knowledge and the older Jews know Yiddish. Many of them learned in chadarim and yeshivos in their youth and can read Hebrew from a siddur.

In 1944 the Nazis came and with the help of the Ukrainians, they butchered about 15,000 Jews. There are three mass graves in the city and another 64 mass graves in the area. Hundreds of Jews are buried in each of them. Every year, the Jews of Khmelnytsky daven and say Kaddish for their fellow Jews.

different mentality, and the loneliness. There were many nights that I cried and wanted to leave and go back to Eretz Yisroel, but the Rebbe did not let us leave. I kept on getting encouraging and amazing answers in the *Igros Kodesh*.

Despite the difficulties, I began to teach Ivrit in school, with the help of a dictionary, pictures and charades. I wrote every new word of Russian that I learned in a notebook. I started a club for young girls and women. We cooked and baked Jewish foods together like challa and

***Kyril went from
boy to boy in
school and
convinced them to
have a bris too.
Little first and
second graders
began begging
their parents for a
bris.***

Hamentashen. My husband was my interpreter and we taught kashrus.

How did you overcome the difficulties?

I really have no explanation other than the Rebbe. Until this day, I don't understand and cannot explain how a young couple managed to make a spiritual revolution and without the language! It's truly a miracle. There is no other way of describing it. Even when we

discuss it with the local Jews they say, "It's incredible... You have made a revolution here!" We know, however, that it was the Rebbe who did.

What is the city like today, materially and spiritually?

Now, seven years later, the city has changed a lot. As shluchim, we know that when spirituality blossoms, the material aspect of things blossoms too. There are big stores now, supermarkets just like in Europe. We don't lack for anything. We have the biggest market in the Ukraine which contributes a lot to the development of the city.

From a spiritual perspective, we have a preschool and a school with fifty Jewish students who get the best of what we can give them. There are minyanim three times a day. My husband is now the official rav of the city. Chassidic holidays are marked with farbrengens. Many children have been circumcised, had bar mitzva celebrations etc. A large percentage of the Jews here fast on Yom Kippur, including young people.

The shul is full on the holidays in Tishrei. My husband invites people for yartzaits, birthdays, holidays etc. Many women lit Shabbos candles. Jews know what is permitted and what is forbidden according to Judaism and the abysmal ignorance is a thing of the past.

Tell us about your work.

There is a preschool and an elementary school. I supervise the Judaism in the schools, the learning of Judaism and Ivrit, the davening, brachos, tznius for the girls and kippa and tzitzis for the boys; Yomim Tovim, Chassidishe Yomim Tovim, maintain contact with the parents and host people on Shabbos. Many of the Jews here have been our guests and

have seen what an authentic Shabbos looks like. We also make many house calls and they contribute to our closeness with the people here.

How many Jews live in Khmelnitzky?

There are 4000-5000 Jews. Many left for Eretz Yisroel or Germany and unfortunately, the assimilation rate is high. We have made personal contact with most of the people here. We have shiurim for all levels, for young boys, girls, young women and older women, and even for grandmothers who want to learn Torah. I give shiurim to the women and my husband gives them to the men.

For the meantime, we do this all alone. There were times that we brought girls from Beis Rivka to help us but it was hard since they didn't know Russian. Then we got help from the girls in Beis Chana in Dnepropetrovsk.

For Rosh HaShana we rent a large hall with tables set with the special holiday foods. The children from the school sing and perform something about the holiday. My husband discusses the holiday and blows the shofar and then they all go to the river for Tashlich.

For Shavuot we set up a mechitza and my husband reads the Aseres HaDibros. There is a contest and prizes are given after Yom Tov. 300-400 people attend. On Pesach we have huge public s'darim in restaurants. Every year we sell a thousand tons of matza!

On Chanuka and Purim there are big concerts and of course there are the mitzvos of the holiday. There are also the lighting and selling of menoros, giving out doughnuts and mishloach manos.

There are the year-round activities, like bar mitzva preparation, chuppos, aid for new mothers, bris mila, and funerals.



In the ulpan



Rabbi Yehoshua Raskin with the mayor of Khmelnytsky

We are looking for another couple to come on shlichus here.

Do you see results?

There were times that we complained to our mashpiim that we wanted to see more fruits of our labors, and the answer we got was that our job was not to seek fruits. I once opened to a letter in the *Igros Kodesh* that our work is to sow and Hashem sees what is in the heart. We don't know or see everything, which is why the Rebbe never asked a shliach: Tell me, how many chozrim b' t'shuva are there in your city? Or: How many grew a beard?

Even if a child graduates from the Jewish school and has not adopted a Jewish way of life, we don't know how he was affected by his Jewish education. The fact that he ate kosher every day, said brachos, davened and learned about Judaism is vastly important. Maybe, thanks to this, he will marry a Jew.

Tell us some success stories.

A few years ago, two new students came to our school, a brother and sister. This was surprising since we didn't know them and they were older already

and had shown up in the middle of the year, which doesn't fit with the Russian mentality. When we asked the mother how she got to us, she said she was sitting at a beauty parlor and met her friend, who praised our school which her son attends.

She decided to switch her children to this good Jewish school. She knew nothing at all about Judaism. All she knew was that her mother and grandmother were Jewish and she showed us her papers that proved it. Her son, Kyril, tall, thin, and blonde, went to eighth grade and his sister, Alona, to sixth grade. He turned out to be an especially smart boy and it wasn't easy for him to accept the Jewish ideas he was hearing. He did not want to wear a kippa and he didn't want to learn Ivrit or about Judaism. None of our explanations helped.

One day, my husband decided to start a Sunday school and wonder of wonders, Kyril showed up regularly and asked lots of good questions. He once surprised my husband with a request to be circumcised like Avrohom Avinu. He said that he wanted to do it as

soon as possible because his Jewish grandmother would never allow him to do it.

Kyril went from boy to boy in school and convinced them to have a bris too. Little first and second graders began begging their parents for a bris.

Eight children ended up having a bris at the hospital and Kyril took the Jewish name Dan. He was given t'fillin and a mezuzah and we arranged for his bar mitzva celebration. He was happy, but not for long.

He continued attending my husband's classes and began making his parents crazy. On Chanuka he lit a menorah and nearly burned his room down. On Pesach he went with his family to his grandmother in Russia and ate only matza, fruits, and vegetables. He slowly began keeping Shabbos and going to shul. The hardest thing for him was kashrus. His mother panicked and was offended that her son, who used to like her cooking, suddenly didn't want any of it and bought kosher food from us.

We had to calm her down and my husband was great at this.

They came to an agreement that Kyril had to take care of his own kashrus needs. He bought new utensils and immersed them in the river. We bought him an electric hotplate and took care of him as we would our own son. We didn't have many kosher goodies at the time so it was real mesirus nefesh to part with so many things.

Dan didn't graduate from our school. He felt that the level was too low for him and he went to the Chabad yeshiva in Moscow. He is 19 now and is a real Chassidishe bachur. Last Pesach he came to Khmelnitsky to help us with the

s'darim. He and my husband proudly walked with their beards and "funny" hats and the Jews of the city said, "He's the rabbi's assistant." I have a lot of nachas when I see them learning maamarim and sichos every night. My husband finally had a chavrusa.

Two years ago, Dan's mother had an open miracle with the Rebbe. She discovered a lump and she began chemotherapy. Her hair fell out and I bought her kerchiefs and hats from Eretz Yisroel. She had to undergo an operation and was very nervous about it. She

came to us and wrote to the Rebbe and mentioned the good hachlatos she made. The answer was: Refua shleima b'karov mamash, so that you can return to work quickly and with joy.

The day before the operation, we went to the hospital to cheer her up and I gave her one of the dollars that the Rebbe gave me personally. I didn't have to explain its significance since she knew a lot about it from her son. She kissed the dollar and began to cry. Baruch Hashem, the operation was a success and she was cured. Within a short time, as the Rebbe had blessed her, she returned to work, where she told everybody that the Lubavitcher Rebbe had cured her and gave her new life as a gift.

Here's another story. We have a Jewish secretary working at our school who is not religious. Although we tried to convince her and her husband to come to shul, at least on holidays, nothing helped. Work was the most important thing to them and the main thing was money.

Their daughter is a modest, simple girl who came to shul and asked for a Jewish name, Golda. She attended shiurim and even told us that she lights Shabbos candles, but it wasn't out of the question for her to marry a non-Jew.

Rabbi Meir Holtzberg suggested one of his mekuravim for her for a shidduch. He was a baal t'shuva and a widower. We had our doubts about this idea because we didn't think a baal t'shuva who was a widower with children was suitable for her. To our surprise, she agreed to meet him. After a few months they decided to get engaged with her promising him to keep kashrus, Shabbos and family purity. We hosted the l'chaim.

79 IS NOT TOO LATE

Mrs. Raskin tells a story that illustrates that it's never too late:

R' Moshe, the head of the Jewish community in our city, was an older man who was married to a Jewish woman. Their daughter too, was married to a Jew. When we arrived, he was more Zionist than religious. He championed the learning of Ivrit even before Judaism, admired Zionist leaders, and was very knowledgeable about the history of the State of Israel.

My husband began learning Torah and Chassidus with him. He came to our Shabbos meals with his wife nearly every Shabbos and was exposed to more mitzvos and Jewish concepts each time. His wife said that he no longer allowed her to buy meat and chicken; just kosher fish.

When my father-in-law, Rabbi Shlomo Raskin from Tzfas came to visit, he convinced him to grow a beard and to always cover his head, even outside. From then on, R' Moshe did not touch his beard and he did not remove his hat, even on the hottest days. He began conveying messages of Torah and mitzvos in his speeches and he convinced

other Jews to return to their heritage. His wife said we changed her husband and he was no longer the same man.

One Shabbos in Sivan this past year, he came to Shacharis and Musaf in shul and then had the meal with us, together with his wife. After the meal he returned to shul and davened Mincha and Maariv and heard Havdala. On Motzaei Shabbos he went home where he fell. His wife took him to the hospital, where he died a few hours later.

The city was in shock. He had an authentic Jewish funeral and his family sat Shiva and kept saying that they wanted to do everything the way it was supposed to be done.

The age of 79 is not too late to do t'shuva!





The community watching a video of the Rebbe

Then the problems set in. Golda's parents began urging the chassan to get rid of his beard and to eat whatever they served. They also wanted a wedding that would be mixed, men and women, and didn't want their daughter to be compelled to keep kashrus and Shabbos. The couple withstood the pressure but we feared the wedding would be cancelled.

We wrote to the Rebbe and received brachos. We had long conversations with the parents and explained the significance of a Jewish wedding. We encouraged the couple to stick to their guns and not to compromise on halacha.

Baruch Hashem, the chuppa took place in Adar. We put a lot of work into the wedding and it was magnificent, touching, and special. My husband and I were the *shushvinin* and my husband was the *mesader kiddushin*. We arranged Sheva Brachos for them every day in a different place and felt as though we were marrying off our own children.

Today, her parents are happy and love their son-in-law, even with his beard and funny hat. Thanks to him, they have begun keeping some mitzvos.

When I think about Golda I tell myself that I would never have

thought or expected her to marry a baal t'shuva and start keeping mitzvos. Hashem thought otherwise and he makes matches. There are surprises in life.

What are some of the moving moments for you on shlichus?

*The nicest and most touching moments are when a woman calls and wants to know when to light candles or what bracha to say when lighting candles before a holiday. Or when people call and want to buy mezuzos or kosher food or ask a halachic question. I find it very touching when they take the initiative to do this.

*When the girls in our school all came to shul one Shabbos and my husband gave them the Jewish names they had chosen. I was so touched.

*Five years ago, my husband and I organized a seminar on family purity for Jews in western Ukraine together with Rabbi Shlomo and Esther Wilhelm. We invited Rochel Pressman to lecture. It was very touching to hear the warm feedback after the seminar.

*A most touching moment was when I stood in front of 1000 Jewish women at a seminar on the topic of kashrus, Shabbos, and chinuch that took place in Khmel'nitsky. It was amazing to

see so many women who had traveled about ten hours in order to participate. I organized the event with the help and guidance of Esti Wilhelm. After the event I was moved when I heard from some women that they had decided to light candles every Friday.

*This year, on my birthday, I invited about 25 businesswomen to my house. My birthday was on a Friday and I was thrilled when so many women lit candles in my house and blessed me and wished me mazal tov with all their heart.

*I met one of the Jewish women here with her baby. As I got closer I was pleasantly surprised to see the Shir HaMaalos hanging on the carriage and the mother told me proudly that she refused to have a Cesarean section without the Shir HaMaalos that I had given her for protection.

*I am very moved when the children in school daven nicely and wholeheartedly ask for Moshiaich and proclaim "Yechi Adoneinu."

*When we make house calls at the homes of our students and see their rooms, I am always amazed to see the pushka, siddur, Chumashim, s'farim and the Rebbe's picture.

What about disappointments on shlichus?

I can't deny or ignore the fact that there are many disappointments on shlichus. I'll give you one example. A young man became interested in Judaism through my husband and then one day, he told my husband he was going to marry a non-Jew. Of course, my husband explained the severity of such an act, but it fell on deaf ears.

One day, my husband decided to write a letter to the Rebbe with him and to give the young man a

dollar from the Rebbe that he had gotten. He explained that the dollar from the Rebbe would give him the strength to withstand the test and to leave the gentile woman.

Two weeks later the man returned the dollar to my husband and said he could not give her up and he was going to marry her. Of course, we were heartbroken over this. His Jewish parents were also opposed to this marriage and begged us to save him. We were sure that after all the conversations as well as the dollar, he would leave her, but it didn't happen. He is married to her and has a non-Jewish child. At least he didn't cut himself off entirely and continues to come to shul. We can only help and pray and be mekarev him to Torah and mitzvos with love.

We often expect more Jewish behavior from our students at school. It's very easy to say, "Where is all the work we put into them?" and to find fault or despair. Despair is enervating and

doesn't allow one to continue working. This is our test as shluchim.

What is your message to shluchos?

My message is that even when there are tests and disappointment, we can't throw up our hands. There is no shliach who does not have difficulties. As soon as you do something, there is opposition. Everybody has their own test that Hashem sends her. At the same time, we cannot forget that we are just shluchim of the Rebbe and he is the one who gives us the kochos to carry on.

We can learn from a doctor how to handle disappointments and failure. A good doctor treats many patients and might see many of them die (in an emergency room, for example, or ICU). If he took each death personally, he would blame himself and despair and would be unable to go on working.

How does a doctor have the strength to continue treating other patients? It's because he knows

that many more patients need him and there is work to do and every minute wasted is a pity. Despite our hardships and setbacks, we cannot allow it to interfere with our work on shlichus. We have to carry on and treat our patients who are spiritually sick.

I would like to thank my devoted parents, Rabbi Tzvi and Rivka Hartman who raised me to be a giver and to be devoted and love every Jew. My in-laws, Rabbi Shlomo and Esther Raskin have supported us throughout our shlichus. May Hashem give them good health and long life and may they see Chassidishe nachas from all their children. I would also like to thank Lev Leviev and the Rohr family for their support of shlichus in the CIS and all those who work so hard to help the shluchim in the CIS, as well as Rabbi Shlomo Wilhelm for his ongoing assistance. May all those who provide for communal needs faithfully be repaid by Hashem and may we all soon see the Rebbe MH"M in Yerushalayim!

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‘EXAGGERATED HONOR’ GIVEN TO THE REBBE?!

By Rabbi Sholom Dovber HaLevi Wolpo
Translated By Michael Leib Dobry

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

In his seifer *Eved L’Aydei Hashem*, Rabbi Meir Mazuz, shlita, writes:

“In general, the exaggerated honor that Chabad chassidim customarily give him leads to a second extremism. I heard in my youth how they called the Rebbe the Baal Shem Tov of the generation, and afterwards the Rambam of the generation, the Moshe Rabbeinu of the generation, and then writing about him ‘the one and only in Heaven and on earth and in the four directions of the world’ (*r”l*). When I was at an assembly of Chabad chassidim in Tzfas in 5750, I told them what I had heard from the

gaon R. Abba Mari, of righteous memory, in the name of the Yavetz...who said about chassidim in his generation that they exaggerated the descriptions of their Rebbeim: ‘Sing a new song to Hashem; (because) His praise (as it has been up until now, they have stolen it) [is] in the congregation of the pious (chassidim)’... Furthermore, during Tammuz 5751, I saw in South Africa in the home of my host, a decent and respectable Jew, a ‘*Shivisi*’ plaque with a picture of the Lubavitcher Rebbe on it. I was totally shocked, and I asked him to take it down.”



1. THE REBBE SHLITA IS INDEED THE MOSHE RABBEINU, THE BAAL SHEM TOV, THE RAMBAM, ETC. OF THE GENERATION

Rabbi Mazuz starts by saying: “The exaggerated honor that Chabad chassidim customarily give him leads to a second extremism. I heard in my youth how they called the Rebbe the Baal Shem Tov of the generation, and afterwards the Rambam of the generation, the Moshe Rabbeinu of the generation.”

First of all, it’s difficult for me to understand the expression “**exaggerated** honor,” when we’re talking about the tzaddik and leader

The Rebbe has explained many times that the leader of the generation is the “successor” to all the leaders of generations past, and therefore, he must possess all their qualities, as he fills their position in its fullest sense.

of the generation. For even regarding an ordinary rav, the *Shulchan Aruch* rules (Yoreh Deia 242:1-2) that a person is obligated to give honor to his rav more than to his own father, and compares the matter of the four ways of honoring one's rav to honoring the Sh'china. The *Shulchan Aruch* further states (ibid. 242:16) regarding a prominent rav that one neither offers greetings nor responds to his greetings (which, by the way, only Lubavitcher chassidim fulfill as practical halacha), as our Sages, of blessed memory, were not concerned about “exaggeration” on the matter of honoring one's rav, and there is surely no relevance to exaggerating in the honor given to the leader of the generation, *Moshiach Hashem* (G-d's Anointed One).

Furthermore, on the matter of saying that the Rebbe shlita is the Baal Shem Tov, the Rambam, and

the Moshe Rabbeinu of the generation – what's the problem with that? Surely it's all quite correct, and the only difference is what point of his greatness is being discussed at the time. If we're talking about the spreading of the study of chassidus, its guidance, and its leaders, then the Rebbe is “the Baal Shem Tov of the generation.” If we're talking about the writing of a literally marvelous arrangement of innovative scholarly Torah texts for young and old, then the Rebbe is “the Rambam of the generation.” And if we're talking about self-sacrifice for every Jew, even the most remote, and for the unprecedented spreading of Torah, then the Rebbe is “the Moshe Rabbeinu of the generation.”

Similarly, it is possible to come and enumerate more and more wondrous characteristics, because when we're discussing the fact that he is the only one standing to warn

the Jewish People about the destruction *r"l* caused by concessions to the Arabs (when not a single Torah leader joined him and **some even ridiculed him**), this shows that the Rebbe is “the Prophet Yirmiyahu of the generation.” And if we discuss his prophecies of the Redemption, he is considered “the Prophet Yeshayahu of the generation,” etc., etc. To put it simply, there is no exaggeration and extremism here, **rather the mere establishment of a true and clear fact.**

As is explained frequently throughout the Midrash (e.g., B'Reishis Rabba 56:7, 74:3), **there is no generation** that doesn't have someone comparable to Avraham, Yaakov, Moshe, and Shmuel, **and the tzaddik and leader of the generation to whom everyone is devoted.**

Also, the Rebbe has explained many times that the leader of the generation is the “successor” to all the leaders of generations past, and therefore, he must possess all their qualities, as he fills their position in its fullest sense (in addition to his own essential quality). Thus, the leader of our generation is surely on the level of Moshe Rabbeinu, the Rambam, the Baal Shem Tov, and all the tzaddikim who preceded him.

[To be continued be”H]

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A DAILY DOSE OF MOSHIACH & GEULA

Collected and arranged by Rabbi Pinchas Maman; Translated by Michael Leib Dobry

11 SHVAT: MOSHIACH TZIDKEINU WILL BE REVEALED IN 770

In simple terms, Moshiach Tzidkeinu will come immediately and be revealed here, in the four cubits of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, leader of the generation, where he spent the last ten years of his life in this world – davening, learning, and proclaiming “Immediately to Redemption.”

And so it will be with us, “immediately” in the literal sense, and particularly since many decades have already passed since the proclamation of “Immediately to Redemption,” with an even greater intensification in matters of Torah and mitzvos.

Thus, the time for the True and Complete Redemption has surely arrived already in actual deed, immediately mamash.

(Shabbos Parshas Haazinu 5749)

12 SHVAT: GEULA PROCLAIMED FROM CHUTZ LA'ARETZ

“Melech HaMoshiach...stands on the roof of the Beis HaMikdash and announces to the Jewish people, saying, ‘Humble ones, the time of your Redemption has arrived.’” (Yalkut Shimoni – Yeshayahu 499), as was and continues to be proclaimed, especially as of late.

We note the precise language of the Midrash, “stands on the roof of the Beis HaMikdash. The roofs were not sanctified, and this alludes to the fact that the proclamation of ‘Humble ones, the time of your Redemption has arrived’ comes from the Diaspora, which was not sanctified with the holiness of Eretz Yisroel (demonstrated by the difference between the roof of the Beis HaMikdash and the inside of the Beis HaMikdash itself).

(Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sara 5751)

13 SHVAT: THE MOST LOFTY CONCEPTS IN HUMAN TERMS

In relation to G-d’s revelation of the reasons and secrets of the Torah, “there will come forth from Me” – even though the level of Torah is one that cannot be revealed by man, rather by G-d Himself (“from Me”), in any event, it will come down to earth, in the understanding and comprehension of human intellect.

...this means that “the new Torah” that will be revealed through him (Moshiach) in a manner of prophecy will be drawn down and clothed in human intellect as well, and “he will teach the entire people,” who “will be great chachamim and know hidden matters, and they will attain the knowledge of their Creator, according to the capacity of a human being. In other words, even the loftiest concepts of the “new Torah” will be attained and instilled within human intellect.

(kuntres “Torah Chadasha M’Iti Teitzei” 5751)

14 SHVAT: BARREN TREES WILL BEAR FRUIT

...Then, there will also be the concept of “a tree of the field” in its fullest sense – “even barren trees will bear fruit in the Future to Come,” as “in the days of Adam HaRishon,” when barren trees will turn into fruit-bearing trees, signifying the elevation of transforming darkness into light.

Furthermore, there is its model in the avoda of man, namely, “man is [comparable to] the tree of the field” – the ultimate level of t’shuva, in a manner of transformation – “his intentional transgressions become merits,” reaching the avoda of t’shuva for tzaddikim: “Moshiach comes to bring the tzaddikim to repentance.”

(Seifer Hisvaaduyos 5748, p. 350, muga)

15 SHVAT: PRECIOUS STONES AND GEMS

“A land of wheat and barley and vines and pomegranates; a land of olive oil and honey.”

(D’varim 8:8)

The Jewish People are compared to a land where precious stones and gems have been hidden, only that there is a need to look for them, an intensive search (since they are located in special places in the earth). One must dig deeply in the earth (since in most places, they are not on the face of the earth, rather within its depths) – as compared to the work of plowing.

...except that there is a need for far greater toil (and since the toil is greater, so too the find – “you toiled and you found” – is greater)... (and) thus the elevation is made all the greater, according to the distinction between the toil of plowing to make things grow and the toil of digging ...

We must utilize the time of “the Rosh HaShana of trees” to increase and be strengthened in all matters of the avoda of “a land of wheat and barley and vines and pomegranates; a land of olive oil and honey,” whether in relation to ourselves or in relation to activities with others ...

May it be G-d’s Will that the good resolution in all the aforementioned (that “G-d sees into the heart”) will immediately and speedily bring the reward – that “we will go with our young and our old” (and we will travel with “Clouds of Glory”) to our Holy Land, the whole Eretz Yisroel (not only the land of the ten nations), “a land of wheat and barley and vines and pomegranates; a land of olive oil and honey” (“to eat from its fruit and be satisfied from its goodness,” and to bless “on the land and on its fruits”),

and a land filled with precious stones and gems. And in Eretz Yisroel itself – to Yerushalayim the Holy City, to the holy mountain, to the Beis HaMikdash, to the Kodesh HaKadoshim (where there is also found the Even HaSh’iya, “from where the world was founded”).

(Chamisha Asar B’Shtat 5752)

16 SHVAT: ALL INVOLVEMENT IN THE FUTURE TO COME WILL BE IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF G-D

“And the whole world will have no occupation other than to know G-d.”

(Rambam, Hilchos Melachim, Chapter 12)

The precise wording, “The whole world will have no occupation other than to know G-d,” even negates such pursuits that are obligatory according to Torah in these times, according to the ruling of the Rambam in Hilchos Talmud Torah (3:9) – that one whose profession is Torah must work “a little each day for his livelihood.” Thus, in the days of Moshiach, there won’t even be a need for this minimal occupation.

(Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 27, p. 238)

17 SHVAT: A REVELATION OF A NEW LIGHT

The inner purpose of the Exile is the revelation of new light. And as we approach this revelation of new light, the influence of G-dly revelation becomes more distant. Therefore, as this process continues, as we approach the Redemption, as we get closer to Moshiach, the more intense the Exile becomes.

(Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 2, p. 362)

THE CHASSID FROM SYRIA

By Nosson Avrohom

He escaped from Syria and ended up in Beirut. From there he managed to get to the Holy Land. * He became acquainted with Chabad and became a Chassid, while filling senior positions as an engineer working with fighter planes and spy planes for the Air Force and for the Intelligence services. * A fascinating profile.

Many people in Kfar Chabad know R' Yom Tov Gindi, a quiet Chassidishe Yid. Every morning R' Yom Tov goes to the Kollel in the 770 of Kfar Chabad, where he learns with his chavrusa. In general, a lion's share of his day is devoted to learning. His life is one of utter *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe. Most people are unaware of his past history. Even after a lengthy interview, I feel as though I only got part of his story.

R' Yom Tov worked for over two decades in senior positions in the aircraft industry, directing projects around the globe and being involved in security intelligence. In his last job he engineered quality upgrades for existing planes, a complex and important position in the aircraft industry. Till this day he gets

requests from senior officials who want to consult with him.

He was born in 1957 in Chalab, Syria, and like his brothers he was given a Jewish education. His father, R' Yaakov, was an outstanding figure in the community. Whatever he said was accepted unquestioningly. He was one of those who arrived among the first to shul and left last.

"The Jews of the community, big and small, called him 'Yaakov Diknish' from the root *"dikna kadisha"* (lit., holy beard). The origin, according to family tradition, comes from an ancestor who was a Kohen in the Beis HaMikdash. He would sweep the floor with his long beard," says R' Yom Tov.

Life in Chalab was good until the police began hounding them.

From day to day the Jews began feeling the growing hatred of the Syrian police. One day it was decreed that they could not study Judaism for more than an hour a week. After school, the children would go to the shul and study secretly with one of the *chachamim*. When the police came, the children would run into the shul and start reciting *T'hillim*, for that was not forbidden.

It wasn't only the police who made their lives difficult. As time passed, the Jewish children suffered from the taunting of the Arab children in the city.

The spiritual life in the community was oppressive. Previously, there had been a Jewish print shop that printed Jewish books, but from 1946, when the Syrian police were given the authority to make decisions about state matters, the printing shop was closed. They had to import their *s'farim* and this was allowed only after the censor approved them.

Not surprisingly, more and more Jews chose to leave Syria, but it was very difficult. Syrian Intelligence knew the names of the members of the community and followed every suspicious move in the attempt to escape.

Their estrangement from their neighbors was even greater during the State of Israel's wars. "When the Six Day War broke out, there was a terrible feeling. Our neighbors informed us that in a little while they would slaughter all the Jews and some of them began planning how to divide our property. But Hashem helped and Israel's victory was so stupendous that the Arabs treated us with respect."

Nevertheless, the feeling was that nobody knew what tomorrow would bring and they had to leave



Yom Tov Gindi in his youth



The Gindi home in Syria from which they fled

as soon as possible.

The Gindi family tried to leave Syria for the first time in 1964. The year before, the Baath party had taken over the government and since then, life for the Jews there was even more difficult. The Gindi family wanted to leave before it was too late. They experienced a miracle when they decided to postpone their trip. It was after they had paid the local smuggler and had prepared, physically and mentally for the trip.

Shortly before they left, late at night, Rav Shasho, one of the rabbanim in the community, came to their house. He had found out about their plan and he censured their father for not thinking about his brother who would be arrested shortly after they left.

“My father listened to him and with his faith in chachamim he did not even try to argue with him. He simply canceled our trip. I’ll never forget how he got undressed and put on pajamas. I looked at him and cried. I had dreamed of

leaving and knew that now we would remain in Syria. With each passing day life grew more difficult, which is why we had decided that we had to flee, no matter the danger.

“It was only a few days later that we realized what a miracle had occurred. One of the families that had decided to flee with that same smuggler was caught. The smuggler had become a police agent, for he hoped that in this way he would be saved from punishment. This family faced accusations of treason and a slew of other crimes and were tortured in jail. This event postponed our leaving for nine years.

“The decision to leave was made in 1973, when I was 17, and it was decided that only my two sisters and I would flee. I arranged our leaving with the local smuggler. In the first phase I brought him only 100 Syrian liras.

“In the evening we went to the local market and when it was completely dark we met the smuggler, a husky Syrian who

wore sunglasses. We were terrified of being caught and our fear grew by the second. He gave us Arab identity papers and we studied our new names. We walked through central thoroughfares bustling with people. Our fear that we would be identified was enormous. Our terror increased at one junction when an evil policeman walked towards us, someone who knew us well. I said Shma Yisroel and prayed that he wouldn’t notice us.

“Our trip continued for several hours until we arrived at the border with Lebanon. At the border, the smuggler told us to feign sleep. The car was opened by the border guards and a strong beam of light blinded us. I prayed that all would go well. My teeth chattered in fright and my body trembled and had Goosebumps. I had never been so afraid in all my life.

“The routine search went well and after a few hours we arrived at the shul in Beirut. I was ecstatic. The next day, the

smuggler left a sign at my father's store to indicate that the smuggling had gone successfully and we were alive and well.

"It was 4:30 in the morning and there were some Jews in the shul who welcomed us warmly and promised us that we would soon go to Eretz Yisroel. The local regime in Lebanon did not bother Jews; they enabled them to daven as they pleased. The next day was Shabbos and we had the Shabbos meal in the home of the heads of the community. They told us about the community and its customs.

"We spent the night in one of the halls of the Talmud Torah. We hoped that all would go well, but that Sunday morning was especially chaotic. We found out

that the previous night, a Sayeret Matkal commando team had penetrated into Lebanese territory, advanced to the Palestinian neighborhood, and killed some leading terrorists and kidnapped several others. The terrorists blamed the Lebanese army for ineptitude and fighting broke out among various factions. The local police lost control and dozens of people were shot and killed on the streets by armed people from different terrorist organizations.

"Like the other members of the Jewish community, we hid in our room for a month. Due to the lack of hygiene, we all became sick. Our only consolation was that a few dozen more Jews had successfully escaped from Syria and were in the shul in Lebanon.

"It was only after a month in hiding that things quieted down somewhat and I began working for a Jew while waiting for the opportunity to continue further. The community helped us with pocket money and clothing.

"With the money I earned, I bought books to teach myself Hebrew. I also bought clothing for myself and my sisters.

"When the number of Jews who had fled from Syria and were staying in Lebanon grew significantly, we feared that the local government would turn us over to Syria. What increased our fear was the fact that a young Jew who had tried to flee Syria, was caught and put in the Tadmor prison, which was infamous for being located in the middle of the desert and for its torture.

"We were afraid that in his interrogations it would be discovered where we were headed. This led the community in Beirut to collaborate with the Mosad to organize a way out for us. At first we were taken to a safe house in the city and from there we were

put into a shipping container.

"The Jews who arranged this warned us that we couldn't make sound. The container was loaded onto a truck that drove past the refugee camps, including the infamous Sabra and Shatilla camps. We were silent the entire time. We felt like we were choking and all had trouble breathing.

"After a long and arduous trip, we arrived at the airport, where we boarded an Air France plane that took us to Paris. When we landed, we were welcomed with great joy by the Jews there. Those who wanted to travel on to Eretz Yisroel had to register in one of the side rooms. After a few hours we landed at the airport in Lud. The wonderful feeling we had upon our arrival in Eretz Yisroel is indescribable."

R' Yom Tov was 19 years old. His brother Ezra, who had made aliya before him, was learning in Yeshivat HaKotel and he came to visit him.

"When he asked me what I planned on doing in Eretz Yisroel, I told him I wanted to study engineering, a childhood dream of mine. He said, 'What? Now you're going to go to Tel Aviv?'

"I didn't know what he wanted of me. I didn't know that in Eretz Yisroel there were Jews who did not abide by Torah and halacha.

"I met Chabad early on. It was Chanuka and they came to the school, where I was studying Hebrew, with musical instruments and they brought the joy of the holiday to us.

"The next time I encountered Chabad was in Cholon. I was walking down the street and noticed a sign that said, 'Beis Chabad.' I went in for no specific reason and kept on visiting as often as I could. The Chassidim, R' Levi Wilmovsky, R' Yossi Lieder, and R' Yossi Roitblatt, led

KIRUV FROM THE REBBE

In 5750 I gave the secretaries a bottle of mashke along with a letter in which I asked for blessings for various people in the aircraft industry. The secretaries did not like my request but I insisted.

A few days later, at the farbrengen on Shabbos, I stood on the pyramid of benches, far from the Rebbe's table, and saw the Rebbe giving out bottles of mashke. Each person announced who he got it for.

I don't remember exactly what happened but I suddenly found myself standing in front of the Rebbe with him smiling at me. The Rebbe poured me some mashke and gave me a bottle and I announced that it was for the employees of the aircraft industry. I cannot describe the feeling I had ... I recall it whenever I engage in introspective thought.



Family patriarch R' Yaakov Gindi and his sons, in Kfar Chabad

me to understand, each in his own way, that truth could be found in Chabad.

“Thanks to my meeting them, I visited the yeshiva in Kfar Chabad, where I enjoyed the wonderful world I was exposed to. The bachurim spoke to me about emuna and Chassidus and I was greatly enthused. A few months later I met a friend who had become a baal t’shuva and I decided to become a Chassid.”

R' Yom Tov was drafted into the army and was seconded to the air force. He tried but failed to make it into the officers' course. He left the army and went back to the yeshiva in Kfar Chabad. This time, it wasn't a one-time visit but a long stay. One of the roshei yeshiva, Rabbi Meir Gruzman, took him under his wing, and he joined the other talmidim in their studies.

After learning in Kfar Chabad, R' Yom Tov went to New York and spent a few years with the Rebbe. Throughout this time he missed his family, who had remained back in Syria. It was 1979 when he asked the Rebbe for a bracha

for them to get out, but he did not receive a response. Later, he found out that his family had tried to get out that year, via Turkey, but the attempt had failed and they were caught and jailed.

A few years later, in 1983, R' Yom Tov sent another letter to the Rebbe, asking for a bracha for his family. Within a short time he received the brief answer, “blessing and success.” He managed to convey this bracha to his family and they immediately prepared to flee.

Although the family was under surveillance since they had previously tried to flee the country, which included a guard post opposite their house, they believed in the Rebbe's bracha. On the day they left, they bought new curtains and one of the children even went out to buy challoos, all to reassure the guard that all was as usual.

On Thursday of that week, the family left the house, one by one, and met in a prearranged location. It was a particularly rainy day and the guard went into the guard post. After a few hours they

miraculously crossed the border and arrived in Istanbul.

After R' Yom Tov returned to Eretz Yisroel, he lived in Cholon and attended university while still living a Chassidic life. When his family arrived, he wanted to bring them to live in Kfar Chabad, where they would live the life of Chassidim. The temporary residence for new immigrants in Kfar Chabad was perfect for them and he asked the official at the absorption agency to permit bringing his family to Kfar Chabad. At first the official offered alternatives but he saw R' Yom Tov's determination and he gave his approval.

So R' Yom Tov's family arrived in Kfar Chabad and were warmly welcomed at the immigrant hostel. Chassidic personalities, such as Rabbi Simcha Gorodetzky, the rav in the residence, made an impression on them and that is how they all became Chabad Chassidim. R' Yom Tov married a young lady from Kfar Chabad a year later. On Chanuka of that year he was back with the Rebbe again.

“Every day of Chanuka the Rebbe gave out dollars and I received 13 dollars,” said R' Yom Tov with great satisfaction.

After he married, he worked in the aircraft industry and that is when a new chapter began in R' Yom Tov's life. He had various responsibilities in the aircraft industry, most of them involving the technical end of developing spy equipment for planes, whether for the air force or military intelligence. He was sent to countries around the world in order to share and confer with those governments regarding the latest breakthroughs in various technologies with military applications, such as improving spy planes and the like. Despite

his important job, he was particular about his religious observance and spread Judaism among his colleagues who saw him as the key to the success of the entire venture.

When the Rebbe began talking about the need to prepare for Geula and that it is imminent, R' Yom Tov proudly spread the word among his colleagues and even among the most senior managers.

"One time, when I was in Chile, I was given the position of electrical engineer on a project to improve the F5. At that time, the Rebbe spoke a lot about Geula. This was publicized in all the newspapers and goyim knew about it too. One day, an

employee who worked in the plant came over to me, a local gentile, and since he saw that I was an Orthodox Jew he asked me about this message the Jews were promoting that Moshiach is about to come.

"I explained it to him and told him who said it and what the signs are. He wondered what would happen when Moshiach comes and I spent a lot of time talking to him about it. A few hours later he left, greatly excited, and I went back to work. That evening, a member of the Israeli team brought me a picture of the Rebbe, which I hung up in my office.

"The next day, when I arrived

at my office, the gentile was already sitting in my office. He pointed at the picture and said, 'That's Moshiach?' and he was very excited about it. I answered in the affirmative and he said that from the Rebbe's face you could see that he was somebody outstanding. This is what the goy said on his own and he had never seen the Rebbe before and I had not told him who Moshiach is."

R' Yom Tov had a great influence on his colleagues. Many of them became more involved in Judaism and some became full-fledged baalei t'shuva.

"In 5750/1990, on the first day that I came to work as an engineer in the large plant, I didn't know where the shul was and I davened Shacharis in the department in which I worked. When the other employees came, they began circling me in amazement, some of them with angry, venomous looks.

"There was a Jew there who was very interested in what I was doing and after I removed my t'fillin he asked me why I had put on two pairs. I explained it to him. When I saw that he was very interested, a conversation developed and he told me that he had grown up in a religious home.

"After a few weeks, they transferred both of us to another department where we sat near each other and could easily talk. He was very enthusiastic about topics in Chassidus that I told him about and he slowly returned to his roots. First, he started washing his hands before eating and then he began to say brachos.

"I invited him to my home in Kfar Chabad for Shvii shel Pesach. He came and together we attended R' Berke Chein's farbrengen. Although we did not understand a word he said, since he spoke in Yiddish, his

CHECK OUT THE TREES

A story went around the aircraft industry which was an amazing miracle story of the Rebbe. A female employee told this story about her daughter who was married to a boy from a very wealthy home. They bought a home in a yishuv in the Shomron, surrounded by a well-tended garden. They bought the house from an old man who was leaving it for a senior citizen's home. They did extensive renovations.

Their joy did not last long when the daughter gave birth to a baby who died soon after. The same thing happened with their second and third child. The doctors could not find a reason for the sudden deaths of the babies.

The grandmother, who worked at the aircraft industry and heard about the Rebbe from me and about his blessings, decided to fly to New York, to 770. On Sunday, she passed by the Rebbe for dollars and she told him about the tragedies her daughter and son-in-law were experiencing.

The Rebbe looked serious and he told her to check out the trees that had been cut recently in their garden. The woman left without understanding the connection. Many weeks after she returned home, she still did not understand it. Her daughter did not understand the connection either.

The Rebbe's instruction came up time and again and then one day, they understood what had happened and were amazed by the Rebbe's answer. While fixing up the garden they had uprooted three large trees that had been planted in the yard. They found out that these trees had been planted by the previous owner, who, since he did not have children, considered the trees his children and had even given them names.

The old man had since died and the couple went to his grave and asked his forgiveness. Since that time, they have had healthy children.



R' Yom Tov Gindi (left) learning in 770 in Kfar Chabad

appearance and heartiness captivated him. He eventually did t'shuva and has a frum family today."

One of the issues that R' Yom Tov identifies with the most is preserving the holiness of Shabbos. Till this day there are managers of various departments in that company who are careful not to desecrate the Shabbos, even if they are working under time pressure on big projects. They have learned, the easy way or the hard way, thanks to R' Yom Tov, that it doesn't pay to desecrate the Shabbos and that working on Shabbos will not further the project in the slightest. On the contrary, it can only hurt it.

"One of the big projects we worked on in the aircraft industry was called 'Sympatia' and it involved improving Boeing 747 planes and converting them into spy planes by attaching the necessary gear. When I arrived at work every Sunday, I was told

that they had worked on the planes on Shabbos. I pleaded with the manager not to work on Shabbos but to no avail. He always pushed me off but I persisted.

"One week he admitted to me that the four weeks they had worked on Shabbos, they had discovered unexpected glitches that occupied them all Shabbos and delayed their progress on the project. He said he decided they would not work on Shabbos. What happened? All the problems stopped cropping up and the work carried on as it was supposed to.

"After a few weeks I found out that they were continuing to work on Shabbos in the hangars. All my requests that they stop were ignored. Once again, they learned about keeping Shabbos the hard way.

"After the project had ended, a team from the Spanish army came and there was a ceremony in the course of which the new plane was displayed. Then something

unexpected happened. One of the members of the Spanish team went up to one of the planes while holding a screwdriver. He removed some parts from the upholstery in the pilot's cabin, rubbed the metal undercarriage and saw it was rusty. He yelled that the company had tried to defraud the country of Spain and sell them a rusty plane. It was very uncomfortable. The company apologized. They removed all the added equipment from the plane and painted it again. The loss amounted to 15 million shekel.

"On the other hand, there were stories that showed that keeping Shabbos brought the industry much success. When I worked in the planning department in the military sector of the industry, the US government announced it was accepting bids for engineering and planning the F-38, a training plane. The Israeli aircraft industry also participated and submitted a bid. At that time, I was working really hard and I would return

home on Fridays late in the afternoon.

“One day I noticed the fellow responsible for presenting the formal bid enter the office. I asked him what was going on and he told me that since Fridays and Saturdays were a bit quiet, he wanted to work on those days in order to be able to word the proposal just right.

“I asked him whether he wanted to just be the guy who got to word the proposal or to be manager of the entire project. He said he really wanted to manage the project. I told him that if he worked on Shabbos, I was absolutely sure that his proposal would not be the winning bid. At first he reacted cynically, but since he knew me well, he finally listened to me and did not work

on the proposal on Shabbos.

“After a few months, he came over to me with the good news that out of seven countries bidding, the US government dropped four and we were among the three who continued to the next stage. I told him, ‘Continue keeping Shabbos and promise that you won’t work on the project on Shabbos, and then you will surely be the final winner.’ He made the commitment and a month later he told me he had gotten it.

“People looked at me differently than they did the other religious employees. There were other men who wore kippot but in the best of circumstances, they looked out for themselves alone. When you are a Lubavitcher, you are constantly worrying about the Jews around you and it’s not

enough that you yourself are religious.

“Now too, a number of years after I left the aircraft industry, I go every year, a few days before Pesach, to the managers of the branches and I give them shmura matza. Many of them are touched and they tell me that these matzos are in the center of the table Seder night.

“I’ll never forget the days before the Gulf War. One of the employees gathered about a hundred people to drink in honor of the occasion of the birth of his daughter. The stress that was felt by the average Israeli at that time was at its peak. I asked to speak and was given the floor. I said there was nothing to worry about. I told them what the Rebbe had said two days earlier at the farbrengen - that Eretz Yisroel is the safest place. Some smirked at what I said while others believed me and were happy. After the war, many people came over to me and conceded that the Rebbe was right.

“In general, on nearly every subject they would come over and ask me for the Rebbe’s opinion. They all admired the Rebbe, believers and cynics alike.”

R’ Yom Tov raised a Chassidishe family in Kfar Chabad. When I visited him in his home to interview him, he told me about an open miracle.

“It was in the Shnas HaBinyan (Year of Construction) when the Rebbe asked everyone to enlarge their home and to even lay a cornerstone as a vessel for the blessing to receive the means to do so. Since we were registered to receive a plot of land, my wife and I decided to write up a contract with the contractor that day, but since we still didn’t have our own plot of land, I decided to lay a stone on the outskirts of the Kfar.

COMMUNICATIONS DEVICE

The capture and subsequent hanging of Israeli spy, Eli Cohen, created an upheaval among the Jews in Syria. I was ten years old at the time and we found out the terrible news on Lag B’Omer, which we

celebrated in a limited way, by lighting candles in the shul. Each candle was associated with the name of a Tanna and we danced around the candles in honor of the Tanna Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. The rejoicing stopped when someone came in and sadly told us that Eli Cohen had been hanged.

A few days later, hundreds of Syrian police came to the Jewish ghetto in search of spying apparatus. When one of the policemen entered our house and found t’fillin, he was sure he had found what he was looking for. He put his mouth to the head-t’fillin and began shouting, “Hello Israel,

***When one of
the policemen
entered our
house and found
t’fillin, he was
sure he had
found what he
was looking for.***

do you hear me?”

All my mother’s attempts to convince him he was in error and that these were t’fillin and not a communications device failed. As a child standing off to the side I thought – these really are a communications device with which a Jew speaks to Hashem...



R' Yom Tov Gindi at the entrance to 770 in Kfar Chabad

"After the lottery was held, I discovered, to my amazement, that the place where I had put the stone was the land awarded to me."

Today, after leaving the aircraft industry, R' Yom Tov learns in the kollel in the 770 replica in Kfar Chabad.

He concluded the interview with a lesson in avodas Hashem that he learned from the many hours he spent working on planes.

"A plane can have a body and wings but without an engine, it will not be able to fly. Similarly, a Jew can have love and fear, which are wings, and he can have a body which consists of thought, speech, and action. With all this he can, perhaps, run on the runway but in order to fly he needs the engine, which is the midda of serious (alacrity) to do mitzvos."

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TIFERES BACHURIM

By Shneur Zalman Berger

In addition to the network of underground yeshivos that the Rebbe Rayatz founded in Russia, he also established a network of yeshivos called Tiferes Bachurim for young men who were working or in university and wanted to remain connected to a Jewish-Chassidic learning atmosphere.

**** The two yeshiva networks were very successful and influential. * An overview of Tiferes Bachurim, presented for the Yom Hilula of Yud Shvat. * Part 2 of 2***

[Continued from last issue]

Tiferes Bachurim expanded and branches were opened in other cities where bachurim and married men who worked for a living in the morning were able to learn after work. One of the outstanding branches was in Kiev, where the Chassid, R' Mordechai Lifschitz learned, as he recounts in his memoir *Gulag*.

"There was a period of time when the government allowed Jews to gather together and to work from home in various crafts like making pottery. The law allowed boys over the age of 16 to work in this way which was called *koster*. In 1932, I turned 16. My father was very sick and I

had to help support the household. I worked in a *koster* that melted down broken metal items. After work I attended shiurim at Tiferes Bachurim.

"After the yeshiva in Kiev closed, very few bachurim remained. R' Binyamin Lippman, who had remained in the city, suggested that we look for work while also joining together within the framework of Tiferes Bachurim so we could learn after work hours. R' Binyamin himself found a job binding books and in his free time he taught us in Tiferes Bachurim.

"When we looked for a suitable place to learn, we saw that it wasn't easy to find. We

couldn't learn here and they didn't let us learn there. Having no choice, we kept moving from place to place. You can imagine what kind of conditions we learned in then.

"Aside from shiurim, we had farbrengens from time to time. The Chassidishe niggunim, which were accompanied by dancing, greatly strengthened our spirits. We knew that it entailed great danger lest the neighbors hear us, but how could you farbreng without dancing?

"Occasionally we received special messages from the Rebbe Rayatz, who encouraged the students of Tiferes Bachurim to unite and be strengthened. A number of years passed. They were very difficult years but we still managed to study Torah."

* * *

Another main branch of Tiferes Bachurim operated in Leningrad until 1938. One of the founders of this branch was Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib, the Rebbe's brother, who arrived in Leningrad in the summer of 1924, and registered for academic classes. Students and young men attended daily shiurim.

Graduates of schools, like those of Anash who worked in the morning, convened in shul to learn together.

"The bachurim from Leningrad: 1) Yeshaya of Krasnelok and 2) Eliyahu Chaim [Roitblatt] of Nevel, who came by way of Kiev...described for us the

branch of Tiferes Bachurim that operated there in an exemplary manner,” wrote R’ Binyamin Lippman in a report that he sent to the Rebbe Rayatz on Erev Shabbos Parshas Naso 1934.

The gaon and Chassid, Rabbi Nachum Trebnik a”h (later rav in Kfar Chabad) was in charge of Tiferes Bachurim in Leningrad for a long time, as was Rabbi Avrohom Yeshaya Swerdlov (may Hashem avenge his blood) who was called “Avremke Beshankovitzer.” They learned in the large shul in the city.

About twenty bachurim and young men learned Nigleh and Chassidus twice a week in the afternoon. Rav Trebnik gave the shiurim in Gemara and *Shulchan Aruch* and the Chassidus classes were given by Rabbi Chonye Morosov.

Rav Trebnik disseminated Torah with great mesirus nefesh despite the bitter suffering of those years. In later years, the shiurim took place in different places and on different days, in order to confuse the enemy. The persecution did not scare Rav Trebnik off from teaching Torah. On the contrary, he started classes for Chassidishe girls too.

These shiurim continued until 1938 when the NKVD began arresting many of the Chassidim who lived in Leningrad. One of the first names on the “black list” was Rav Trebnik, who, after interrogations and torture, was sentenced without being present at the trial to ten years in Siberia.

How did the NKVD discover the Chassidim and talmidim involved in Tiferes Bachurim? We read about this in the memoirs of

the Chassid, Rabbi Nachum Shmaryahu Sossonkin:

“In Leningrad there were about ten bachurim from Yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim who worked at home. When they finished work, they convened in the Kupetzkesha Shul to learn Torah together, Nigleh and Chassidus, along with others. The maggid shiur was Rav Nachum Trebnik.

“Among the bachurim was a bachur from Minsk. He participated in the learning as well as the farbrengens, but we had our doubts about him. We couldn’t send him away. In fact, we needed to be mekarev people like him. He got engaged and bought a fine woolen tallis and conducted himself as everyone else.

“We ultimately discovered that he was an informer and had



A yeshiva in Moscow in the 1930's

snatched on all of us. It is possible that he could not withstand the pressure of the NKVD and maybe this explained his bitter tears on Yom Kippur, for having been forced to hand over these precious, innocent souls to despicable murderers. But that was the fact.

“As a first step, they arrested the maggid shiur, Rav Trebnik, and exiled him from his home for three years. They were sure that this would instill fear in the rest but seeing that life went on as before and the shiurim continued, they decided to arrest everyone.

“One evening, the angels of destruction came and arrested the entire holy group, including my two sons, Chaim and Moshe, and they were sent to distant Siberia

Every one of these homes served as evidence of the powerful influence our group had as well as the power and devotion of its members. This was despite the fact that hardship and danger, temptation and self-sacrifice, stood in the way of these families maintaining a Jewish lifestyle.

for ten years.

“These pure souls, the finest of Russian Jewry, could not withstand the horrific conditions in the labor camps and died of starvation and thirst and the cold. Their whereabouts are unknown till this day. May Hashem avenge their blood and bind their pure souls in the bond of life until Moshiach comes.”

From the written accusations against some of the Chassidim who were arrested, we can see what “crimes” they were accused of:

14.3.38 [11 Adar II] file 39753. The accused: Morosov, Elchonon. Pevsner, BL [R’ Chonye Morosov had a passport with the name Pevsner]; Raskin, Yitzchok; Altheus, Pinchas; are guilty under law 58 [treason]...a group of nationalist counterrevolutionaries...their particular activity involved organizing nationalist counterrevolutionary activities with religious youth. The organization is called Tiferes Bachurim...they received assistance from abroad.

* * *

R’ Emanuel Michlin goes on to describe the organization in Moscow, of which he was a part:

“We made connections with young men in other towns who were ready to organize branches of Tiferes Bachurim in their area and who were fit to be leaders. The reputation of our Moscow organization among Jewish communities encouraged the founding of branches in other cities. Thus, they organized these groups in Leningrad (through R’ Leib Schneersohn, the brother of the Lubavitcher Rebbe), in Minsk (through Ropps) in Vitebsk (through R’ Dov Medalia), in Homil (through Dovber Karasik), in Vetka near Homel, in Poltava,

Nevel, Smolensk, Samarkand, etc.

“Due to this expansion, a national committee was formed (in addition to the Moscow committee) which was led by R’ Yaakov Landau and his secretary was my brother Gershon. Representatives of the branches would sometimes make personal visits: R’ Yaakov Landau once traveled to Minsk, and the directors of branches would sometimes go to Moscow. We knew that these activities were very dangerous but this did not stop us.

“Hundreds of bachurim were part of the organization in all these cities and nearly all of them, despite the difficulties and dangers in maintaining a religious life, remained staunch Jews and raised upstanding Jewish families with children and grandchildren involved in Torah and mitzvos. Many of them, who still remain alive – may Hashem grant them long life – I saw here in our land and in America, living under the spiritual leadership of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

“Still and all, don’t err in thinking that all of Tiferes Bachurim’s work and influence was limited and concentrated within its framework and among its members. On the contrary, every member had an influence on his entire household and family, on his circle of acquaintances and friends, on the youth in town, and the extent of his influence was far reaching. The number ‘hundreds’ absolutely does not convey the true value and significance of the Tiferes Bachurim groups that were founded throughout the Soviet Union.

“Let us go back to the main group in Moscow. Over the years, some of our single members



Emanuel Michlin

married and built Jewish homes. Every one of these homes served as evidence of the powerful influence our group had as well as the power and devotion of its members. This was despite the fact that hardship and danger, temptation and self-sacrifice, stood in the way of these families maintaining a Jewish lifestyle, especially those who lived in shared apartments with several neighbors, as the prophet says, “the enemies of man are the members of his house.” Trials and tribulations were the lot of our student members.”

We can see the influence that Tiferes Bachurim had on its students from a letter written by Efraim ben Sarah Rivka to the Rebbe Rayatz on Lag B’Omer 1934:

“In 1927, I arrived in Moscow and joined Tiferes Bachurim, with R’ Yaakov Landau and I lived with R’ Boruch Sholom Cohen. R’ Yaakov Landau, Tiferes Bachurim and living with R’ Boruch Sholom Cohen implanted in me Chassidishe warmth for Torah and Judaism.”

R’ Emanuel Michlin goes on to relate:

“I must add a few lines about



Rabbi Nachum Trebnik

how our members managed their work obligations. In the early years of Tiferes Bachurim, which began during NEP (the New Economic Policy) in 1924 or 1925, some of our members organized a small joint enterprise for metal parts in order to make a living and to avoid the hardships in keeping Shabbos and Yomim Tovim. This business was made possible for them only thanks to the generous help of representatives of the Joint in Moscow, which gave them all the machines and equipment they needed, as well as money for all organizational expenses.

“When the period of NEP ended, that was the end of the business, of course, and each of the partners had to make his own way. The problem of Shabbos and davening in shul was constant and their lives hung in the balance. This is a snapshot of the tribulations of young and old who insisted on observing Shabbos and Yomim Tovim. How heroic were those who withstood the test for many years, years of darkness.

“In 1928, there was a sharp change in the lives of our branches. About a year after the

Lubavitcher Rebbe left Russia and moved to Latvia, R’ Yaakov Landau also left Russia and moved to Latvia. He settled in the city of Libova, where he became rav. It was hard to part from them. For us it was ‘a lack that cannot be measured.’ We were orphaned, but we knew, without a doubt, that we would continue to stand rock solid about every detail of our way of life and the life of the organization, as long as it could last under the conditions of the Soviet police.

“We noticed that they were watching us. We knew one of the agents personally. It was Moreph, a member of the Yevsektzia and a writer for the newspaper *Emes*. He would occasionally show up in the Lubavitcher shul and look around, paying special attention to us. We tried to avoid meeting him and soon dispersed.

“However, the authorities, with the help of the Yevsektzia, began persecuting religious observance in Moscow. They closed the Lubavitcher shul and many others shuls, one after the other. We still continued to meet and learn but we did it apprehensively. One of our members stood guard outside, taking turns, so that in the event of danger or suspicion, he would give us the signal to disperse.

“There were false alarms when we dispersed and then reconvened and continued to learn. However, when they began to wreak havoc among the Jews and to place distinguished people under arrest, elders, Torah scholars, those who disseminated Torah in public, like R’ Mendel Leib Abramson and R’ Yosef Gutner, and many Lubavitcher Chassidim, we saw that it was time to stop our activities and close down the organization.

“We brokenheartedly made the

decision and even after dismantling the organization, we continued to remain in touch, though not officially, of course, and not regularly. Nevertheless, we took the spiritual baggage that we acquired in our group and it sustained us. This book [the author's memoirs], the work of my old age, is a faithful witness to the great influence the organization had on me, after I left to make my way in life."

* * *

In one of the letters that the Rebbe Rayatz sent the Joint, requesting aid, he describes the great poverty along with the aid that was necessary for Jewish activities. The Rebbe referred to Tiferes Bachurim, among other things, and said it was "like air for breathing" for Russian Jewry:

"And we think it superfluous to point out the great necessity of the organizations for [Torah] study that are mentioned in the list of the budget: the various yeshivos, the beis midrash for rabbanim that presently exists and creating another institution like that, the shiurim for the youth groups of Tiferes Bachurim, and more; like air for breathing, all these are necessary for Judaism in Russia..."

We will end the story of Tiferes Bachurim with R' Emanuel Michlin's personal story as he relates it in his memoirs [written when Rav Yaakov Landau was still alive]:

"To each of us it was clear that in order to remain Jews and to live a religious life, we had to leave Russia and make aliya. We knew this already back in the 20's or at the beginning of the 30's. Just as we were devoted to our organization, which was, without a doubt, dangerous, and to the

fulfillment of Judaism in our personal lives, so too, we were devoted to the idea of aliya to our land.

"The ways of realizing this goal were different for each of us. Some of us realized their dream in those years while others did so after many years. Some were fortunate and easily attained their dream while others, like Dr. Boruch Shilensky, whom I have already mentioned, Shmuel Liboshitzky and others, were sentenced to 25 years and went through the seven levels of hell. But most of them, those who merited it, arrived in our holy land and we met them here with

mutual joy. They are all G-d fearing and all established families, devoted to our Torah, our land, and our people.

"My meeting with Rav Yaakov Landau Shlita was especially emotional. He was an elder in wisdom, outstanding in Torah and yira, respected, esteemed, may Hashem lengthen his days and years. I didn't imagine that after 44 years we would meet again, with Hashem's kindness and in the land of our Fathers, and that we would renew our friendship."

Sources: Igros Kodesh Admur Rayatz, Zichronosai, HaGacheles, Beis Moshiah

DESERVING OF KIRUV AND LASHES

It was Purim Katan 1927 at the famous event in Moscow when the Rebbe Rayatz said the maamer, "V'Kibel HaYehudim," in the face of the GPU agents. The Rebbe was well aware of their presence and he spoke forcefully about the need to preserve Jewish life, to learn Torah, and fulfill mitzvos, even when it required mesirus nefesh.

Here is a paraphrase of a fascinating letter that the Rebbe wrote ten years later (Kislev 5697), in which he himself describes that singular occasion:

Among those present at the farbrengen were about thirty youth, most of them university students and members of Tiferes Bachurim who had set times to study Torah thanks to the influence of Rabbi Yaakov Landau. During the farbrengen, R' Itche Masmid (may Hashem avenge his blood) addressed their presence and told the Rebbe that these youth needed to be drawn close for they sacrificed to keep Shabbos and fulfill mitzvos and also had set times to study Torah. Another Chassid, one of the elders of Anash in those days whose name was R' Peretz, who was aware of the suffering of these students, said they should be kissed.

What did the Rebbe say? His heart told him, said the Rebbe, that these youth, members of Tiferes Bachurim, certainly deserved kiruv but ... they also deserved lashes, for in truth, they should have been talmidim of yeshivos. If they would have been within the walls of a yeshiva, they certainly would conduct themselves completely differently, and it was only because they turned to other vineyards (i.e., other pursuits) that the fact that they were observant of Shabbos and other mitzvos and also had set times for Torah study, earned them praise ...

However, one may not forget the true purpose, namely the proper purpose of every young Jew, towards himself and towards his obligation to influence others...

MEDIA BLOOD LIBEL

Right after the mass gathering for shleimus ha'Aretz that recently took place in Tel Aviv, which was organized by the Organization to Save the Nation and the Land, the Israeli media attacked Rabbi Wolpo for his sharp message, which they proceeded to distort. We asked Rabbi Wolpo for his response.

What was the fuss all about?

The media looks for action, that's their parnasa, and they distorted what I said in order to have a scoop.

They claim that you said that Olmert and certain ministers should be hanged.

There were thousands of people present and there is a recording of the entire event, so what I said can be heard by anyone who wants to know the truth. What I said was that the crime that the prime minister and ministers are perpetrating is so serious that Israeli law says the death penalty can be applied. I stressed that if we were a legitimate state that acted according to law, the **legal authorities** would judge the prime minister and ministers based on this law.

What does the law say?

In the 1977 Penal Law, paragraph B it defines a traitor as one who provides aid to the enemy

during wartime and says that he is to be sentenced to death or life imprisonment.

The Israeli government provides aid to the Palestinian enemy in the form of money, weapons, freeing terrorists, uprooting settlements, and giving our land to our enemies. This is all provided for an enemy who does not disguise his intention, which is to annihilate the Jewish people – men, women, and children. Indeed, it is actively pursuing this objective through its policemen and soldiers, as we see for ourselves. Therefore, the Israeli government should be put on trial.

Some of us think that we need to speak in terms of ahavas Yisroel.

That's what a certain rabbi said on Motzaei Shabbos on Radio Moreshet. He was one of the members of the delegation who went to shake Arik Sharon's hand a few days before the expulsion,

and he was the one who promised Sharon, "Whatever you do, we remain one family." Today, he continues talking about so-called ahavas Yisroel, which is actually rabbinic collaboration with the abandonment of our security.

Some Lubavitcher was quoted on television as saying that the Rebbe never spoke that way.

Nor did the Rebbe go out and demonstrate, but he told us to do so. We have to work with the tools that we have, which do not oppose halacha and, *l'havdil*, the law. When it hurts – you cry out loud. Notice how the complaints come from those people who don't do anything about shleimus ha'Aretz.

Nevertheless, to say that someone is collaborating with the enemy is quite a serious allegation and is not exactly how Chabad talks.

I took this definition from *Sichat HaShavua* (17 Elul 5753), where it says that the Israeli government ought to be judged according to the law of treason (they also cite the definition of the word "treason" as defined in the dictionary). All I added in my speech was the punishment, according to Israeli law.

Aren't you afraid of being arrested for what you said?

I didn't say that a person is allowed to take the law into his own hands; only that Israeli law states that this is the punishment for the crime that they are committing. I didn't incite anyone to do anything.

Look at the absurdity. The government claims it can do anything – enable more cities to

be within Katyusha range, throw Jews out of their homes and destroy their lives, give armored cars and weapons to an enemy that wants to destroy us, etc. – but we are not allowed to point them out as traitors. The only thing we are allowed to do, according to the Attorney General and the Supreme Court, is to stretch our neck out for slaughter.

How do you explain the silence on the part of the public in light of the critical situation?

The public is a puppet of the media, so as long as Katyushas haven't fallen on your house, you don't care what's going on in Sderot. It's as though it's happening in another country.

What is your organization

going to do following the mass gathering that was recently held?

To appoint representatives in every city to stand at major junctions and distribute literature, etc. The Rebbe said that our job is to protest and when we do what we can do down below, Hashem will help from above.

What do you think is the most important thing people can do right now?

This might not be what you expected to hear but the most important thing to do now is to help financially. It costs hundreds of thousands of shekels for ads on buses, billboards flyers, and CD's. The lack of money prevents us from doing what we need to do.

We promised that whoever

signs to contribute at least 100 shekels a month, will get a dollar from the Rebbe (that we will get from Anash) and a letter signed by three rabbanim that in the merit of tz'daka, Hashem should fulfill all the requests of the donor for good and bracha. In addition, he will get a framed picture of the Rebbe.

There's no question that the Rebbe will win the Wars of Hashem. The question is only – with which soldiers will he do so. I am sure that all your readers want to be from the "soldiers of the house of Dovid" who will lead us to victory in these final, difficult moments of Galus.

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