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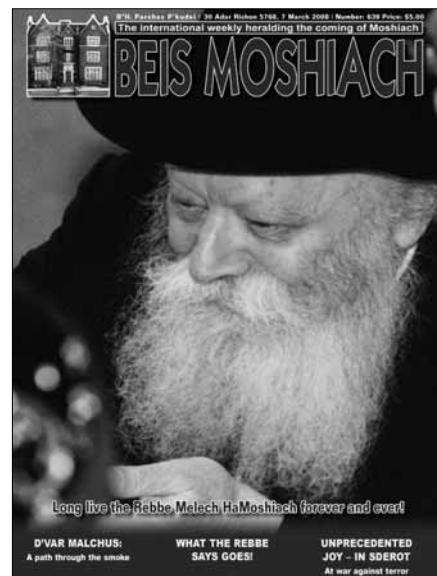
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WILL WE ALL DON THE EIFOD IN THE FUTURE TO COME?

Likkutei Sichos Vol. 31, pg. 156-164
Translated by Boruch Merkur

[Continued from last issue]

From the above it is understood that although Rambam writes that the disciples of the prophets would wear linen *EIFODS*, “attesting that this person has risen [beyond his status as a prophet] to the height of a High Priest, who is inspired to speak with the holy spirit,” his intent is only **in general** (as he writes in Laws of the Foundations of the Torah regarding prophets, “the holy spirit immediately rests upon him”). But in particular, prophets are actually **greater** than the High Priest, who speaks with the holy spirit.

At first glance, this is a profoundly novel claim, but it is nevertheless apparently necessary to say. For Rambam explains at length there,³⁸ in the Laws of the Foundations of the Torah, that prophecy requires many conditions and preparations – “Prophecy is only bestowed upon a very wise sage of a strong character, one who is never overcome by his [natural] inclinations in any regard ... He must possess a broad and correct perspective ... His body must be [in] perfect [health] ... He must sanctify himself and proceed to separate himself from the ways of the nation at

large ... He must spur himself forward and train his soul not to entertain thoughts on anything insignificant ... His mind should constantly be directed upward...to comprehend the holy and pure primordial forms, etc.”^{41*} (as Rambam elucidates there) – but none of these qualities are prerequisites for appointing a High Priest. Rather, we find only that “A High Priest must be greater than his brothers, the Priests, in terms of physical attractiveness, strength, wealth, wisdom, and presence.”⁴² The latter description does not even approach the conditions required of a person who wants to attain prophecy (which is indeed⁴³ the concept of “disciples of the prophets” – that they conduct themselves according to these conditions in attempt to attain prophecy).⁴⁴

We may assert that this is also the reason why the disciples of the prophets wore specifically a **linen EIFOD**. Namely, to allude

to their superiority over the High Priest, “who is inspired with the holy spirit to speak according to the **EIFOD** and the **BREASTPLATE**.” For the breastplate and the *EIFOD* are among the High Priest’s **EIGHT** required garments, the **GOLDEN** Vestments, whereas the “**linen (EIFOD)**” is like the “**Linen Vestments**” of the High Priest, the white garments, he would wear upon entering the **Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur**.⁴⁵

(To note from the words of Rambam at the end of Laws of the Sabbatical and Jubilee Years: “[The aforementioned] is not restricted to the Tribe of Levi. Rather, any single individual from any background whose spirit is devoted [to this task] and whose mind has come to understand [the great virtue in] separating himself [from the masses] to stand before G-d to minister to Him and serve Him, to know G-d ... and he casts off the yoke of the concerns of the masses, the pursuits of mankind, from upon his neck – this person is sanctified as being **Holy of Holies**.” That is, he reaches not only the height of the Tribe of Levi or the height of the Priests, but the

height of the **High Priesthood** (which is signified by the expression “Holy of Holies,” said specifically of the High Priest: “And **Aharon** was separated, to be sanctified ‘Holy of Holies’”⁴⁶). And within this category itself, he attains the height of the High Priest in connection with the “Holy of Holies,” the level to which the High Priest rises on Yom Kippur upon entering the Sanctuary in his white vestments.⁴⁷)

However, it is understood from many narratives in the Books of the Prophets (and the teachings of our Sages, of blessed memory, on these narratives) that the actual manifestation of prophecy may take place even when one has not attained the aforementioned state that Rambam describes (“a very wise sage...[whose] body is [in] perfect [health] ... [who does] not entertain thoughts on anything insignificant [but rather, whose] mind is constantly directed upward”). Thus, we must say (although it is somewhat contrived)⁴⁸ that Rambam is speaking about the manifestation of prophecy in its complete state. (And even then, when the prophet would be in a state of sorrow, prophecy would cease (temporarily) – to note what our Sages, of blessed memory, say⁴⁹ [regarding the cessation of Moshe Rabbeinu’s prophecy]: “All 38 years, etc.”) **But this is not the proper forum for a thorough analysis of the matter.**

7. According to what was spoken about above (Section 2) – that the disciples of the prophets’ wearing the linen *eifod* is discussed in the context of Torah **law** [i.e., they wore the garment to identify themselves as prophets, capable of assisting their fellow Jew by communicating to them knowledge of future events] – curiosity is aroused as to what the law will be in the Future to Come, when the promise will be fulfilled,⁵⁰ “I will pour out My spirit upon all flesh and your sons and daughters will **prophecy**.” For at first glance, according to what was discussed above, they will all need to wear the “linen *eifod*,” as did the disciples of the prophets.

Perhaps we may propose that since this promise will be fulfilled in all Jewish people, there will be no need to “**attest** that this person has risen to the height of a High Priest.” However, there is still room for debate on the matter. For simply speaking, also in the Future to Come there will be varying degrees of prophecy, as Rambam puts it,⁵¹ “There are various levels of prophets ... one prophet surpassing another prophet” (as it is explicitly mentioned in Scripture⁵² – that also in

the Future to Come there will be a distinction between “their least significant” and “their greatest”). Of consequence, we may submit, that also then there will be the need to ask questions of a greater prophet,⁵³ and there will, therefore, be the need for them to wear the linen *eifod* [to identify themselves as “greater prophets”].

May it be G-d’s will that through delving into the study of the laws connected with the Priestly vestments, including the “linen *eifod*” of the “disciples of the prophets,” a Priest will be seen at Tziyon and we will soon merit the fulfillment of the promise, “I will pour out My spirit upon all flesh and your sons and daughters will prophecy,” “for the earth shall be full with the knowledge of G-d as water covers the ocean.”⁵⁴

(From the address of 15 Tamuz 5747)

NOTES:

41* [Based in part on the translation of Rabbi Eliyahu Touger.]

42 Laws of the Temple’s Vessels, Ch. 5, beg.

43 See Rambam’s Laws of the Foundations of the Torah, *ibid* Law 5.

44 See Abarbanel on Parshas Tetzaveh (in response to the eighth question – see there), where he explains the purpose of the Urim V’Tumim, which is to “make it easier to attain the level of the holy spirit, akin to the level of prophecy. Thus, prophecy required time and the appropriate preparation, whereas regarding the Urim V’Tumim, the Priest who was designated for the task required no more than a nominal meditation and preparation to attain the response [from On High], which is not so with regard to prophecy.” To note what it says in Sota 48b; *Iyun Yaakov* on Ayin Yaakov *ibid*.

45 Laws of the Temple’s Vessels 8:3; Laws of the Service on Yom Kippur Ch. 2, beg.

46 Divrei HaYamim 23:13.

47 See Footnote 47 in the original.

48 See Footnote 48 in the original.

49 Taanis 30b, end; Yerushalmi *ibid* (3:4), among others; cited in Rashi’s commentary on the Torah on Parshas D’varim 2:16. See *A Guide For the Perplexed* Vol. 2, Ch. 36.

50 Yoel 3:1.

51 Laws of the Foundations of the Torah 7:2.

52 Yermiyahu 31:33.

53 See Footnote 53 in the original.

54 Yeshayahu 11:9.

D'VAR MALCHUS: A PATH THROUGH THE SMOKE

By Rabbi Yisroel HersHKowitz, Rav of the Chabad Community of Ofakim, Eretz Yisroel
Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry

At times, the question is asked: How do we live with the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach? The clear answer: When we live with the sichos of D'var Malchus from 5751-5752, we live with the concept of Moshiach and the Redemption, and thus we live with the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach!

In this regard, I would like briefly to bring a point from the Rebbe's sicha on Parshas Mishpatim. At the conclusion of the parsha, it states, "And the appearance of the glory of G-d was like devouring fire on the top of the mountain," and afterwards, "And Moshe entered into the midst of the cloud." Rashi comments that "this cloud was like a kind of smoke, and G-d made a path for Moshe in its midst."

The Rebbe asks, since it is stated here "cloud," why did Rashi choose to interpret that we are talking about smoke, adding that there is a need for a path to walk through? The Rebbe explains that besides the cloud, there was something additional on the mountain, "like devouring fire" – and when there is devouring fire, there is a cloud of smoke and black soot. Since Moshe

Rabbeinu was now ascending to speak with G-d on Mt. Sinai, it would not be appropriate for him to come covered with black soot. Therefore, G-d created for him a path within the cloud so that he would not become dirty *ch"v* as he approached G-d's holy abode on his way Above.

The Rebbe derived from this the lesson that when the leader of the generation sends shlichim in the seventh generation to the lowliest of places in order to create a fire of Redemption that will burn and destroy the lowest of all exiles and bring it to a state of yearning and thirst for G-d, there exists a danger that the shliach himself can *ch"v* be burned by the glowing fire or *ch"v* fall and become sullied by the soot of the world that surrounds him. Therefore, he must know that if he walks in the path that the Rebbe had outlined, there will be no problem or mishap *ch"v*, and the Rebbe will lead him along the path until the top of the mountain.

The Rebbe has clearly outlined for us how to bring the Redemption and how to live with Moshiach, and when we walk in the path of the Rebbe MH"M – the sichos of D'var

Malchus from 5751-5752 – not only do we live, we **enliven**!

In 5741, I was on "k'vutza," learning for an entire year in Beis Chayeinu – 770. One Friday afternoon, when I was returning from T'fillin Campaign activities, I met a friend on the subway who told me that he was on his way to submit a note to the Rebbe. This was the year that the Rebbe founded Tzivos Hashem, and at one of his regular stops, the storeowner told him that his son had *r"l* been seriously injured in an automobile accident. "I put t'fillin on the father," my friend said, "and I told him that he must immediately register his son in Tzivos Hashem and report it to the Rebbe in request of a bracha."

The father agreed, and a note to the Rebbe was given in that Friday.

To my friend's great surprise, just half an hour later, while he was still in 770, he was informed that the secretary was looking for him because the Rebbe had given an answer on the matter: "Elevate him in rank in Tzivos Hashem and thereby the health of his body will be elevated." Naturally, the Tzivos Hashem offices gave the boy an

immediate promotion, and they saw salvation in a manner higher than nature.

We see how the Rebbe indicates that when his present-day concept is Tzivos Hashem, such that it is what draws forth the flow of salvation and blessing at that time, “and thereby [it] will be elevated” – it is thus understood that now when the Rebbe’s life-force is in the campaign to bring and reveal Moshiach, this is specifically where we find the key to success and blessing, and this must be our main involvement.

Regarding the acacia wood [used in the construction of the Mishkan], Rashi states, “And from where did

they have [this] in the wilderness?” and the Rebbe explains: Yaakov Avinu, Yaakov the first nasi, the symbol of the eternal Rebbe, Yaakov Avinu who did not die, wants his children in Egypt to be like him and not feel the exile in Egypt, knowing that the Redemption that he announced is eternal and is about to take place. And how do we do this? We take physical action. We plant a forest of cedars, guarded by a group of “stubborn people,” and the inquisitive child asks his father, “What is this?” The father explains that these are the cedars for the construction of the Mishkan, and these stubborn people will build it at

the imminent Redemption. The child thereby sees how the concept can be perceived in real terms.

After all of these explanations, the Rebbe asks: Why did they take the cedars specifically from Eretz Yisroel? Couldn’t Yaakov have simply bought them in Egypt (or anywhere else) and have them ready and prepared for the Jewish People whenever they needed them?

Answer: Yaakov Avinu did not die – symbolizing the eternal Redemption, and he brought them specifically from the place of the Redemption, Eretz Yisroel, from the place to where they will eventually return.

All of you gathered here, you are the cedars, the testimony given and standing ready to be fulfilled that the prophecy of the leader of the generation exists and is eternal. You are the stubborn ones who will build the Beis HaMikdash!

I would like to say one more thing: By Divine Providence, I participated today in a meeting, and one of the concluding items on the agenda was the presentation of the documents for the Estates Committee for 2009, which included “Designated Estates.” Requests can be made for these estates, and they will be honored only upon fulfillment of the conditions for which the funds were assigned. Towards the end of the list of estates, there appears an estate of 280,000 shekels for the building of the Third Beis HaMikdash!

We can be certain that if you submit the request, you will be privileged to receive the estate, for each person sitting here, through his vitality in matters pertaining to Moshiach and the Redemption, is building the Third Beis HaMikdash!

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

Delivered during a special panel discussion at the annual conference on spreading the announcement of the Redemption.



LOST IN THE SUBWAY SYSTEM ON PURIM NIGHT

By Nosson Avrohom

Picture the scene – two bachurim in costume with colorful wigs and hats, standing helplessly in the busy train station. True, New Yorkers are used to all sorts of bizarre scenes, but still, it was hard to ignore us.

Yosef Yitzchok Hershkop relates:

This story took place the night of Purim 5764. I was in 770 that year on K'vutza. That year, Purim was on a Sunday and my friend Menachem Ezagui and I planned our Purim mivtzaim. The plan was to read the Megilla at a large restaurant belonging to an Israeli in Manhattan. The restaurant attracts lots of customers, especially young Jews. We went to the restaurant every Friday and put t'fillin on with the owner. Over time, we developed a nice relationship with him.

The restaurant is not in the best neighborhood and those that frequent it are not exactly upper class. Artists, musicians of all sorts, spiritual seekers, and wild youngsters from around the world frequent the stores and many clubs that are on that street. The

restaurant is popular mainly with Israelis looking to have a good time. We took the subway there every Friday, a trip that took an hour and more.

So we wanted to leave right after the reading of the Megilla in 770 in order to get there before the restaurant officially opened, when the place was empty. We knew that if we got there later, the owners wouldn't have a free second to hear the Megilla, and in any case, we didn't want to be there when the partying started. In addition to a Megilla, we took along a bottle of vodka.

After the Megilla reading in 770 we went to the subway as we always did. A few minutes after the train started moving, we heard an announcement. It wasn't the usual announcement about the next stop

and we knew something was amiss. The problem was, our command of English wasn't great and we didn't understand the message. Truth is, even if we knew English well, it would have taken some talent to be able to make out what the announcement was!

We were talking about this and that when we noticed that the train went right by the stop where we usually got off. Our hearts sank as this express train passed station after station without stopping.

In my broken English, I asked a fellow passenger why the train wasn't stopping as usual. The man shrugged and pointed at a small sign hanging on the wall. It took us quite some time to decipher the sign and in the meantime, the train was flying down the tracks, passing more and more stations.

We began to digest the fact that we were very far from our destination. The sign said that due to renovations being made at certain stations, work that would take place on Sunday, a day off in the US, the train would not stop at certain stations, including the stop we had to get off at.

We were still wondering what to do when the train finally stopped at 34th Street. We hoped that at this



central station we would be able to get directions to where we wanted to go. We tried asking some people how to get to the Lower East Side, and discovered that most of the people in the station did not know the area and certainly not how to get there. We examined a large map in the station and tried to figure out which train would get us closer to our destination.

Picture the scene – two bachurim in costume with colorful wigs and hats, standing helplessly in the busy train station. True, New Yorkers are used to all sorts of bizarre scenes, but still ... it was hard to ignore us.

After many failed attempts to figure it out, we thought of returning to Crown Heights. Maybe we could get to Manhattan the next day and read the Megilla then. As I stood there deliberating, I noticed a tall,

tough looking American soldier. He was also an unusual sight in New York. To lighten up the atmosphere I said to my friend out loud, “See, there are other people dressed for Purim.”

A few minutes later I began feeling uncomfortable in the proximity of the soldier. It seemed as though he was keeping an eye on us. I realized that our costumed appearance and our confusion had aroused his suspicion. As time passed, my feeling became stronger and I saw that the soldier was actually following us.

We knew we had little time to work with and that we had to get to the restaurant before it opened to customers; otherwise, we would be unable to read the Megilla. A final attempt to approach the information booth or to ask for help didn’t help

us. Either people said they had no idea what we wanted or they laughed at our costumes.

Without knowing why I did so, I asked the soldier for help. Instead of answering me, he went over to some policemen in the station, and conferred with them for a few minutes. I realized I had made a mistake and we would soon be arrested. After the attack on the World Trade Center, there is a lot more nervousness and suspicion of foreigners.

We were about to leave when the soldier returned and in Ivrit with a heavy American accent, he began explaining how to get where we wanted to go. We were stunned. I can’t begin to tell you how astonished we were. We were shocked to hear the soldier speak to us in Hebrew. And he was so

My friend and I were so taken aback by what had happened. We saw how Hashem runs the world and how the long trip and the delays we had experienced were not in vain. We had to wake up a slumbering soul.

pleasant, contrary to his tough appearance, as he patiently explained what to do.

Being Lubavitchers, we didn't leave him so fast. Once we had the directions, we got into a conversation. It turned out he was waiting for us to talk to him. He said that he had learned in the Mirrer yeshiva in Yerushalayim and when he returned to the US he had chucked religion and enlisted in the army. He seemed very excited to meet us.

"You have no idea what you did to me," he said with a sigh, "when you stood there in the station with your costumes. You brought me back to my childhood, to my days in

yeshiva, the days that I want to forget. I was supposed to get on the train and go back home, but I waited, in order to watch you."

We told him where we were going, and he offered to join us. "It's not a nice place to walk around in at night, especially not for bachurim who are obviously dressed up for the holiday. In any case, I need to go in that direction."

We had to change trains three times and in the course of this long trip, he continued to tell us his life story, how he grew up in a religious neighborhood and about the Purim that he once loved. He had wanted to forget this but our costumes and our Megilla reminded him.

We finally got to the restaurant and the soldier said goodbye with tears in his eyes. I invited him to come to 770 and he nodded. It was obvious that it was difficult for him to express what was in his heart. He didn't want to go into the restaurant. He only agreed to take some hamentashen we had brought along. He said the bracha with great feeling, as one who was familiar with how to say it, and then he went off into the night.

My friend and I were so taken aback by what had happened. We saw how Hashem runs the world and how the long trip and the delays we had experienced were not in vain. We had to wake up a slumbering soul.

I have no idea what happened to that soldier, but he was certainly inspired that night; if only we were

that inspired at N'ila on Yom Kippur.

The surprises of that Purim night were not yet over. Since we were so late, the restaurant had been open for a while already and was packed with people. We figured that since we were there anyway, it paid to go inside and see whether the owner could listen to the Megilla reading despite the busyness.

We went to the manager's office, sure we had missed the opportunity to read the Megilla that night, though consoled with the surprising and touching meeting with the Jewish soldier. On the way to the office, we heard loud voices talking in Ivrit. We weren't surprised by that since we knew there were Israelis there, but what *did* surprise us was someone stopping us and asking loudly, "What? You Chabadnikim have come here too?! Kol ha'kavod!"

It was a birthday party that an Israeli was having. He had invited his friends and he asked us to read the Megilla for all his guests. So that Purim night, it wasn't just one man who heard our Megilla reading, as we had originally planned, but dozens of people! We were utterly overcome by how things had worked out. If we had shown up earlier, who knows?

I'll never forget that Purim. My friend and I felt that we had experienced a "G-dly revelation." Fortunate are we that we merited to be born Chassidim and to go with the light of the Rebbe's Torah and his mivtzaim.



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WHAT THE REBBE SAYS – GOES!

By Rabbi Zalman Hertzel

Translated By Michael 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.

A FARBRENGEN WITH R. ZUSHA – “THE PARTIZAN”

Between Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur 5747, just a few days before his passing, R. Zusha Wilimovsky, of blessed memory (the Partizan), made a farbrengen with a group of older bachurim and many avreichim. R. Zusha opened the farbrengen with a question on a certain matter and began to move on to other seemingly different subjects.

“R. Zusha,” one of the bachurim inquired, “what about an answer to the question you asked?”

“What are we? Misnagdim?” R. Zusha cried out. “Misnagdim have a method of questions and answers – first a question, and then an answer is given immediately thereafter. For example, a misnaged asks about the existence of G-d, and immediately receives a response in the form of some proof. He looks for a proof that Torah is from Heaven, and is immediately given a certain proof, as

we find in other circles the concept of an evening of questions and answers.

“Among chassidim, however, it is totally different – a whole Torah unto itself. Torah explains various concepts at length, bringing

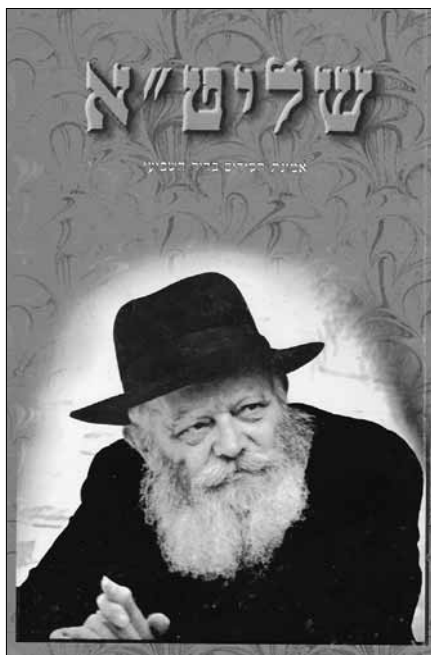
parables, clarifications, etc., as we have seen in all the chassidic maamarim. A maamer in chassidus opens with a question, and you come to the answer only after a lengthy discussion lasting several chapters. Throughout the extent of the maamer, it appears to explain various concepts and only afterwards does it go back and respond to the initial question.” (This is not the place to discuss the *whys and wherefores of this specific approach.*)

In fact, in order to reach a clear answer to the question asked at the outset, there can be no avoiding the clarification of different concepts first. Of course, we can’t bring an introduction to every vital subject in this format, however, we must (and will) bring a few general prefaces.

“WHERE DID THE REBBE SAY THAT?”

There are those who have been raising objections as of late start with a question: Where did the Rebbe say such-and-such?

Naturally, the edited sicha does not satisfy these people (as we have seen with our own eyes how with a strange and totally irrational stubbornness, they cleverly explain it not according to its simple interpretation). Thus, they feign sincerity and innocently ask: “Where did the Rebbe say that?”



The chassidim didn't carry out these activities because these ideas popped into someone's head, who then decided that they are successful means of taking action or excellent methods of outreach. They obtained these ideas from the Rebbe himself, whether at farbrengens or at some other event when the Rebbe spoke before the chassidim.

After describing the farbrengen experience of latter years (see previous chapter), it is understood that this question has no place in the world of intellect. For as all chassidim, we left those farbrengens with the absolute knowledge and clear feeling of a sharp and obvious message, a message that must surround and take hold of our whole existence, which we must publicize – as we were instructed – to the entire generation, all over the world.

THE REBBE LET US UNDERSTAND WHAT WE ACTUALLY UNDERSTOOD

At these farbrengens, the Rebbe let everyone understand what they actually understood:

The Rebbe let all the thousands assembled who participated in the farbrengen understand that he is the leader of the generation!

The Rebbe let all the thousands assembled who participated in the farbrengen understand that he wants us to bring Jews closer to him!

The Rebbe let all the thousands assembled who participated in the farbrengen understand that one of the ways to get closer to him is through telling stories about the miracles that he did!

The Rebbe let all the thousands assembled who participated in the farbrengen understand that he wants and is interested in our bringing people on Sunday for “dollars distribution,” particularly special people who hold important positions!

The Rebbe let all the thousands assembled who participated in the farbrengen understand that part of the process of developing a Jew's *hiskashrus* to him is by writing letters to him!

The Rebbe let all the thousands assembled who participated in the farbrengen understand that he is the prophet of the generation!

The Rebbe let all the thousands assembled who participated in the farbrengen understand that the entire generation – including the nations of the world – must obey him, heed his advice, etc., in all that he instructs them!

The Rebbe let all the thousands assembled who participated in the farbrengen understand that he is Melech HaMoshiach!

The Rebbe let all the thousands assembled who participated in the farbrengen understand that he lives

eternally in a physical body, according to its simple interpretation, without any interruption!

THE CHASSIDIM CARRIED OUT WHAT THEY HAD HEARD FROM THE REBBE HIMSELF

The best proof of the above is the fact that the chassidim did just that. The chassidim faithfully carried out all the aforementioned. They announced to the whole world that this generation has a nasi and leader who does wonders and miracles. They proclaimed and publicized that this leader is the prophet of the generation and is the supreme embodiment of all generations – Melech HaMoshiach. They brought tens of thousands of Jews closer to him through his miracle stories, suggesting and explaining the importance of writing to the Rebbe, and convincing people to come to the Rebbe. They announced to the Jewish People that the Rebbe MH”M lives eternally without any interruption until (and including) the True and Complete Redemption.

The chassidim didn't carry out these activities because these ideas popped into someone's head, who then decided that they are successful means of taking action or excellent methods of outreach. They obtained these ideas from the Rebbe himself, whether at farbrengens or at some other event when the Rebbe spoke before the chassidim.

The chassidim declared to the Jewish People that the Rebbe MH”M will live eternally, for **they came out of the farbrengen with this absolute knowledge** – even if they can't indicate (in practical terms) where these words appear in the edited *sicha*. This stands in comparison, for example, to the fact that they can't clearly point out where the Rebbe told them to bring

people on Sunday for dollars, in which sicha did the Rebbe exactly say that he simply is the leader of our generation (and not the previous Rebbe, as in the well-known language: "leader of our generation, my revered and holy teacher and father-in-law, the Rebbe").

I once heard about a very "simple" Jew from Europe, who as a Lubavitcher chassid, participated in many of the Rebbe's farbrengens. After one such farbrengen, he came out a bit emotional, and shared his feelings with his son. "According to what we have apparently just heard from the Rebbe, the **previous** Rebbe is in fact the Moshiach."

"Nu, nu," he added in a tone of some disappointment, "I had always thought that the Rebbe will be the Moshiach..." yet he accepted what the Rebbe had said with complete "kabbalas ol."

This manner of perceiving things with the notion that "the tzimtzum is meant literally (*Tzimtzum*

k'p'shuto)" doesn't appear to exist much anymore among chassidim (thus showing the need for a chassid to also be a Tamim), unlike the strange and seemingly innocent conduct that has overtaken certain "smart alecks" in the chassidic ranks...

EVEN THE MISNAGDIM UNDERSTOOD WHAT THE REBBE SAID IN SIMPLE TERMS

Another proof comes from the fact that various groups opposing Chabad have unceasingly quoted expressions from the Rebbe's sichos, as they point "an accusing finger" in the direction of "**the leader of the movement**," writing explicitly: See, it's not the chassidim who say that he's Moshiach; he says it himself.

Several years ago, a Satmar booklet publicized that Lubavitcher chassidim say that their Rebbe is

Moshiach, and its editor rushed to point out the chassidim simply couldn't have said this on their own, bringing proof from numerous instances where the Rebbe himself encouraged his chassidim in this direction.

In 5752, the *Yated Ne'eman* newspaper brought several quotes from recent farbrengens on **the identity of Moshiach**. The reporter emphasized how these sichos prove that we can see clearly how the Lubavitcher Rebbe says that he is the Moshiach.

Thus, they realized that they had a good reason to understand the Rebbe's words that way. They interpreted what the Rebbe said according to its simple meaning. They didn't try to water things down and take them out of context, as many still try to do. And perhaps this is why the Rebbe referred to them, in his well-known answer after Chaf-Ches Nissan 5751, as the "**New opponents who have arisen**."

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THE REBBE SAID: I AM MORE THAN SATISFIED

By Rabbi Hillel Zaltzman

Prepared for publication by Avrohom Reinitz

*“Does the KGB know the name Chamah?” asked the Rebbe. When Moshe Nisselevitz answered that only a few of the members of the organization knew of the name, the Rebbe said, “Continue to use the name Chamah, and there is no need to operate under the name of Chabad.” * The Rebbe was especially fond of Chamah and continued to send monthly support. * This chapter is about the founding of Chamah, R’ Moshe’s yechidus with the Rebbe, and the Rebbe’s involvement with Chamah. * Part 5 of a series on Chamah.*

[Continued from last issue]

THE NEWSPAPER AT THE REBBE’S HOUSE

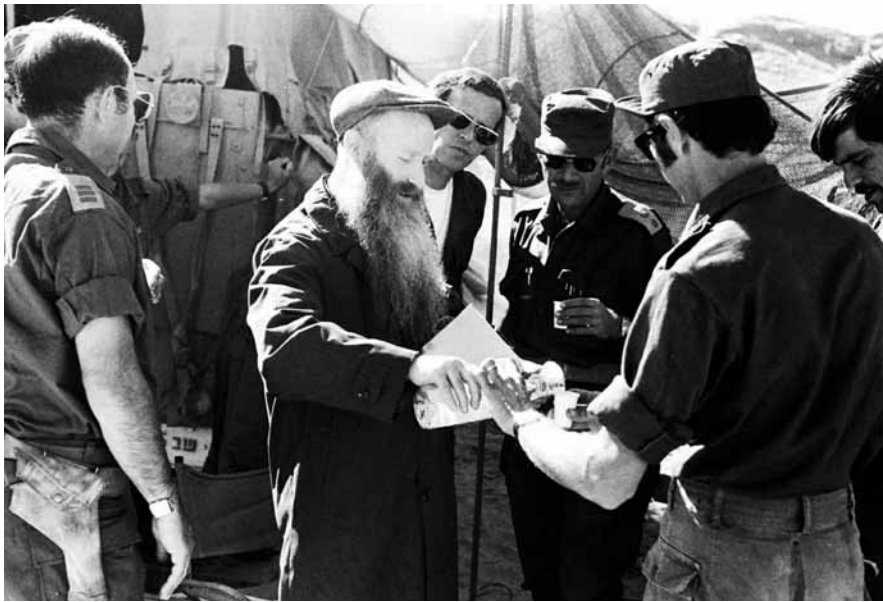
When R’ Moshe returned to Eretz Yisroel, he told us about his

yechidus. R’ Yehoshua Raskin then went and bought an office desk and put it in the branch of Tzach in Tel Aviv. We began working as a division of Tzach for Russian immigrants.

After a month and a half, when we saw that working from the Tzach office made life difficult for us, we turned to the Rebbe and after we received his consent to open our own office, we rented an office in Tel Aviv on Rechov Nachmani 53.

At that time, I saw a full-page ad in *Yediot Acharonot* with the heading, “Know your Judaism.” I told R’ Moshe that we should copy the idea for new Russian immigrants. We translated a sicha of the Rebbe’s and publicized it as an ad in the Russian language weekly. We sent a copy of the paper to the Rebbe.

A week later, R’ Efraim Wolf called us and said that the Rebbe had sent 600 liros to participate in the cost of the ad. All we knew about the Rebbe was what we had heard from the older Chassidim in Russia about the Rebbe Rayatz and the Rebbe Rashab, and we had never heard that the Rebbe sends money for activities. We asked R’ Wolf what this was about and he explained that it showed that the Rebbe had enjoyed our work and was encouraging us with his monetary participation. Naturally, we continued to publicize a sicha of the Rebbe’s every week, in Russian,



R' Moshe Nisselevitz reaching out to soldiers

and we sent a copy to the Rebbe.

In 5742, we arranged a shiur for Russian immigrants. The maggid shiur was R' Ben-Zion Robinson, a very talented young man. One time, he was quite sick and had to go to the hospital. He was disappointed that he would not be able to give the shiur and since he was also a talented writer, he wrote the shiur in the hospital and asked us to send it to the members of the shiur. Unfortunately, he had to remain in the hospital for several weeks, and each week he tried to improve his written shiur.

The readers loved his writing in fluent Russian and after he left the hospital he continued with his weekly shiur though still continuing to write so we could send it to other people. Within a short time, the page became a weekly page in an important journal that began being published bi-weekly under the name *Alef*.

Once, when R' Robinson went to the Rebbe and brought the newspaper into the office, Rabbi Chadakov pointed out that a newspaper ought to be either weekly or monthly. Every two weeks was neither here nor there. We made the

effort and turned the bi-weekly publication into a weekly.

After the big waves of Russian immigrants came in the 90's, and dozens of weeklies in Russian were published, we thought about how we could make our paper stand out from the rest. At the same time, we received requests from Russia proper for the newspaper, and in its weekly format we were unable to get it to the subscribers on time. So we decided to make it into a monthly and we profited in two ways. We published a color magazine on quality paper instead of newspaper paper and it was published simultaneously in the US and Russia, so we were able to send it on time to all our subscribers. Today, this monthly publication reaches hundreds of points on the globe, in nearly every area that has a concentration of Russian immigrants.

The Rebbe reviewed the first editions from the first page to the last and even gave instructions and editorial comments. In accordance with the Rebbe's instructions, we kept a balance – the paper wasn't overly religious in nature so as not to turn off the nonreligious readers

but it had fascinating Jewish messages that inspired the soul.

We included the Rebbe, of course, in our file of subscribers and the Rebbe received the paper both in 770 as well as at home. When I went to 770 with the newspaper, some bachurim asked me: What is that paper? It turned out that they had seen the Rebbe leave his room several times with it. And those who worked at the Rebbe's house also said they saw the paper there. When we wrote to the Rebbe that we were raising the price from \$1.25 to \$1.50, the Rebbe sent us \$20.

Once in a while we send a questionnaire to our subscribers enquiring about the age of our readers and their areas of interest. We learned that each paper gets passed around and several people enjoy it aside from the subscriber. Many of the subscribers even bound the paper into books.

When a subscriber doesn't pay, after two warnings his subscription stops automatically. One day I was horrified when I remembered that a few years had passed since we had put the Rebbe on the subscription list since his subscription must have run out. I looked into it and I was devastated to see that I was right. The computer did not differentiate between the Rebbe's subscription and that of thousands of others, and after two reminders without a response, the subscription had been cancelled.

Of course, I immediately renewed the Rebbe's subscription with an instruction that it should continue for an unlimited period of time. We also sent the Rebbe a letter of apology. The only consolation we had was that the Rebbe saw that our office was organized and there was no fooling around – if someone didn't pay, they didn't get the paper.

On a related note, the Rebbe once told us not to give out books for free, but to ask for a nominal

The Rebbe once told us not to give out books for free, but to ask for a nominal fee. When you get something for nothing, you don't appreciate it, said the Rebbe.

fee. When you get something for nothing, you don't appreciate it, said the Rebbe.

ALL LIMITATIONS WERE REMOVED

R' Binyamin Malachovsky went to the Rebbe for Yud Shvat 5732. He had a yechidus and the Rebbe told him regarding Chamah: There has to be order. The Rebbe went on, "One month, two months, three months. How much longer? There must be order!"

We did not understand precisely what the Rebbe was referring to when he said this. We consulted with friends and they said that the Rebbe wanted a monthly report from every institution. From that point on, we sent the Rebbe an update at least once a month.

As the work grew, the limitations that the Rebbe had imposed on Chamah became more constraining. In Tishrei 5733, R' Moshe went to the Rebbe and in yechidus he asked the Rebbe: Perhaps the time has come to remove the limitations and to take on additional employees and additional cars? The Rebbe said: All limitations have been removed.

R' Moshe returned to Eretz Yisroel with the good news. We began seriously thinking about a

building for Chamah and about additional projects that required outlays of money. When we reported to the Rebbe, we received a long and detailed answer in which the Rebbe responded to additional questions that we had sent him at that time:

This letter and those that preceded it were received, thank you.

As I have already communicated, the limitations were abrogated (of hiring many people, etc.), except:

1. Not to borrow money for the purposes of askanus, even if someone will say that after a short time he will give him money to pay off the debt. This is based on prior experiences (several times, etc.).

2. In matters where there is even a remote concern that it is connected with parties or politics and the like – follow the advice of discerning members of Anash who have been in Eretz Yisroel for several years, and as mentioned earlier, even if there is merely a doubt.

3. Surely all askanei Anash and our mosdos will help one another as much as possible. Needless to say there should be no war (not even "for the sake of Heaven") among them.

4. The budget from here for now is \$1000 a month. When there are actual programs that require more money, and a report is received about it, it will be decided here (whether to grant a limited increase).

5. The wording on the stationary and the like is to be decided by the administration on the scene.

I will mention the contents of your letters at the gravesite again.

You can't imagine our joy over this answer from the Rebbe. We began to think about how to bring our big plans to fruition, without

getting into debt.

We planned on putting up a building in Nachalat Har Chabad, the Rebbe's town, to serve as a center for all our work. We knew two wealthy Bucharian brothers who lived in Yerushalayim for many years, and since we worked a lot with Bucharian immigrants, they were willing to donate land for construction and to take part in building the center. After we informed the Rebbe of this, the Rebbe expressed doubts about the matter and hinted that they did not intend on donating "for the sake of Heaven."

When one of the brothers was in New York, he had a yechidus with the Rebbe. The Rebbe asked him what he wanted in exchange for his donation and he said he would not

The Rebbe's handwritten answer to Chamah



**Chamah's work with immigrants
on Chanuka**

mix into Chamah's work and the only thing he asked was that the property should be registered in his name, or at the very least, a square meter of the property on which the building would be erected. The Rebbe did not agree and the plan fell through.

Our friends in Ezras Achim in the US heard about our plans to build a center of Chamah, and they decided to help out. R' Yisroel Duchman a"h, a member of the committee of Ezras Achim, went to the wealthy R' Yosef Vosner and asked for a donation to buy land. That was \$9000 at the time and it was considered a large sum of money. R' Yosef Vosner said: Believe me, if my fortune was half what people imagine it to be, I would give double what you're asking.

R' Yisroel convinced him to join him for a yechidus with the Rebbe and to discuss it there. In the yechidus, R' Yisroel told the Rebbe what R' Yosef had said and the Rebbe said to R' Yosef: If you give double what they ask for, you will have double what they estimate you have!

R' Yosef was convinced, and he sent us the full amount we needed to buy the land.

When we asked the Rebbe under

what name to buy the land, the Rebbe said either Agudas Chassidei Chabad or Chamah.

CHAMAH IN NEW YORK

R' Mendel Futerfas, who had come to Eretz Yisroel in the meantime, took a great interest in our work. We spoke about the financial difficulties prohibiting us from carrying out our plans and R' Mendel wanted to know more about the work we did. He listened to all the details and said: You are not operating properly. Some of you need to go to the US to fundraise and the rest should remain here and do the work.

At first, I didn't accept what he said. I told him that we were lacking \$1000 per month and it wasn't worth going to the US for that amount. R' Mendel said: You'll never have enough money. You will always be lacking!

I said: Thanks for the bracha! Why do you think \$1000 won't be enough?

R' Mendel explained: Because when you will have more money, you will increase your programs and once again you will be lacking money, and this will keep happening. You, Hillke, have to travel to America and sell your mesirus nefesh to the wealthy people there. Tell them what you did in Russia with the goal that they give you more money.

I was surprised by what R' Mendel said and I replied: Back in Russia you told me not to take pride in our work, saying, Hashem is the one who remembers all that we forget!

R' Mendel said: That was in Russia, but here it is different.

We began to seriously think about opening a Chamah office in New York. Like good Jews, there were several opinions about this. The opinion to go ahead with the idea is understandable, but there

was another view complaining about the burden of adding another salary to the payroll paying for someone to work in New York, at least for the first year, and there would be office expenses too.

Another consideration was that the Rebbe would probably continue to send \$1000 every month but if we opened a New York office then the monthly support from Ezras Achim would stop.

I said to R' Moshe that these calculations reminded me about the poor man who had an opportunity to go into business and earn a lot of money, but he was afraid to get involved since he would have to spend money on a new suit and other accoutrements that a businessman requires. The main issue that held him back was that people would stop giving him tz'daka.

We ultimately decided to open an office in New York on condition that I would go there myself, and only if the need arose would R' Moshe go. The plan was for my family to remain in Eretz Yisroel while I remained in New York until I set up the new office there and got it running.

I arrived in New York for Tishrei 5734. I went to R' Moshe's friend from his days back in Tomchei T'mimim in Kutais, R' Moshe Morosov, and asked for his help in starting the new mosad. He organized a group of men who helped me a lot. They were R' Yehoshua Dubrawsky, R' Nachum Volosov, R' Hirsh Meilich Spalter, R' Berel Levy, R' Yitzchok Barber. On the committee were also Rabbi Yehuda Kalman Marlow and R' Berel Junik.

I met with R' Moshiah Chudaitov who came from Eretz Yisroel the year before and worked in Ezras Achim's office. Since he had been involved with Chamah back in Samarkand, I convinced him

to join me in founding Chamah's new office.

We consulted a lot with Rabbi Chadakov. I asked him where to rent an office and he said it didn't make a difference but it would be a good idea that the official address be in a neutral place, like Manhattan. He explained that the official address told people who the organization belonged to and if people saw a Crown Heights address, they would associate it with Chabad. An address in Boro Park would make people associate it with certain religious groups and an address in Williamsburg would make people associate it with Satmar. Manhattan didn't belong to a particular group.

We rented an office at 15 Park Row in Manhattan and began to work. As R' Mendel had suggested, we divided the work so that the office in New York dealt primarily with fundraising and the office in Eretz Yisroel dealt primarily with outreach.

We learned from R' Moshiach's experience in Ezras Achim and began organizing appeals in shuls. Nobody had heard of Chamah and our stories about our underground work fell on deaf ears.

We informed the Israeli office about this and they went to great rabbanim – such as Rabbi Yaakov Landau, Rabbi Shmuel Vosner, and Rabbi Sholom Elyashiv – and got recommendations from them for our work. In the US we received approbations from Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky, the Debrecener Rav (Rabbi Weissmandel), and others. These recommendations greatly helped our cause.

It was extremely hard work for we often had to leave the house early in the morning in order to meet with a rav or gabbai of a shul. We would leave the office and go home late in the evening and sometimes we were at meetings that



The Chamah Community Center in Nachlat Har Chabad

went on until midnight.

The work became easier after we met someone who did us a big favor and gave us a list of wealthy people. We established good connections with many of them and in this way, R' Moshe Nisselevitz's dream of having contacts with rich people and fundraising, was realized. All the money Chamah received for many years was thanks to the man who gave us the list.

After a few months, as Pesach approached, I wanted to return to Eretz Yisroel and spend Yom Tov with my family. R' Moshe Morosov, R' Yehoshua Dubrawsky, and other members of the committee said that if I left at that point, everything would be ruined. I asked the Rebbe what to do and the Rebbe answered: Remain here as the members of the committee advise.

I informed R' Moshe and he worked to arrange for tickets for my family. They came for Purim and the plan was for them to stay until after Pesach. Pesach passed and the members of the committee still opined that I needed to remain in the New York office. Another week went by and another and my family remained in New York.

After a few months we realized that we had to stay in New York

indefinitely. My wife wanted to buy a house. I wrote to the Rebbe that I saw a house for sale and R' Zalman Blesovsky recommended the house to me. The Rebbe's answer was to negotiate but to buy it.

“PLEASED AND MORE THAN PLEASED”

At the end of the 70's we got involved in an unpleasant matter. The director of a certain mosad, who considered our work to be infringing on his, complained to the secretaries about us. From the answer that he received from the Rebbe, he understood that he was supposed to call us to a din Torah.

That is how R' Moshe Nisselevitz received a summons to a din Torah and he was told that the Rebbe said to take us to a din Torah. This menahel claimed that the Rebbe gave him the authority to call us to a din Torah in his [the Rebbe's] name.

You can well imagine how awful we felt when we heard that the Rebbe had said to take us to a din Torah. R' Moshe went to the Rebbe to find out what was going on. When he arrived in New York and met with his friend, R' Moshe Morosov, he said: Are you crazy? You can't go to court with a Nasi



R' Hillel Zaltzman in the NY office



R' Hillel Zaltzman (right) and R' Moshiach Chudaitov (left)

Yisroel!

They agreed that they had to inform the Rebbe immediately that we were subservient to the Rebbe's opinion and would do whatever the Rebbe said. If the Rebbe wanted it, we would close Chamah and give the keys to the Rebbe, without going to a din Torah with the Rebbe.

In the meantime, we secretly consulted with R' Binyamin Gorodetzky in the hopes that he could find out from the Rebbe what was going on. R' Binyamin said that when he had the opportunity to speak to the Rebbe about communal matters, he would try to bring up this topic too, but he could not see the Rebbe specifically about this.

Since time was pressing and every additional minute was torture, we went to R' Chadakov to get some

clarification. We began talking to him and telling him that we were called to a din Torah in the Rebbe's name. From the expression on his face it was apparent that he had no idea what we were talking about. When had the Rebbe called us for a din Torah?

After we finished telling him all the details that we knew, he said dismissively: Apparently they complained about you and we told them – as the Rebbe always instructed us to say in these situations – that we do not mix in to differences of opinion among mosdos in Eretz Yisroel and if you have complaints, summon them to a din Torah. If you had been the ones complaining, you would have received the identical response. There was certainly no instruction

from the Rebbe to call you to a din Torah, and this is certainly not the Rebbe's din Torah!

We left R' Chadakov's office in great relief.

Before R' Moshe returned to Eretz Yisroel, he had yechidus with the Rebbe. He told the Rebbe about the drama concerning the din Torah. He expressed his pain over the fact that certain people were placing obstacles in Chamah's way and had even called them to a din Torah.

The Rebbe dismissed it all and said: Nu, go to a din Torah and afterwards, surely everything will quiet down.

R' Moshe asked: Are there *kitrugim* (Heavenly accusations) against our work?

The Rebbe said: Up Above there are no accusations, nor are there any here. When you go to Eretz Yisroel and there will be a din Torah, it will all work out in the best way.

R' Moshe asked: Perhaps the Rebbe is not satisfied with our work?

The Rebbe answered: Satisfied and more than satisfied.

And the Rebbe said again: After the din Torah, it will all work out, with Hashem's help.

TO KNOW HOW TO HELP

The official treasurer of Chamah in New York, was R' Berel Levy a"h. He made many trips to Russia before the fall of communism and had yechidus with the Rebbe after every trip. He told us that at one yechidus he said to the Rebbe: I am on Chamah's committee here and I give them advice, but they don't accept it.

The Rebbe said: When it comes to askanus, they know themselves how and what to do. What they lack is the knowledge how to fundraise, and it is in this area that you should help them.

REVEALING THE SPECIAL PROPERTIES OF PRECIOUS GEMS

By Mendel Tzfasman

The twelve gems in the High Priest's breastplate were stones of special qualities. * Rabbi Uri Lifsh of B'nei Brak has made some amazing discoveries about stones and their powers. In an interview with Beis Moshiach, he tells us all about it. * Presented for Parshas P'kudei.

In the Torah portions of Tetzaveh and P'kudei, we read the description of the Priestly garments. One of these garments, the choshen, had twelve stones in four rows of three. The names of the stones, which are enumerated in the verses, won't mean much to most people. What we know is that they were twelve stones of different colors, each of

which represents one of the tribes.

According to Rabbi Uri Lifsh, who teaches in Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Kiryat Shmuel and in the Kollel Erev in B'nei Brak, these verses are rich and profound. He visualizes the individual stones, their colors, their names, as well as their special qualities.

On a visit to his home in the

north of B'nei Brak, I saw that the stones of the choshen, as well as other colorful stones, beautify his living room. R' Lifsh took stone after stone, examined it, turned it this way and that, and told me what was special about each of them.

"This is a stone that helps reduce pain and heals illnesses. This is a stone that helps the barren to conceive." He also has stones that get lazy people moving and improves concentration and learning abilities.

* * *

R' Lifsh (age 41) was born and raised in Kfar Chabad. His father is Rav Elozor Lifsh. His great-grandfather on his mother's side, Rav Dovber Moshe Shmotkin, was one of the witnesses who signed on the Rebbe's k'suba. On his father's side he comes from Radziner Chassidim. His grandfather, R' Yosef Yehuda Lifsh, did not learn in Tomchei T'mimim yet the Rebbe Rayatz chose him to be one of those who founded Kfar Chabad.

Chassidim hardly had anything to do with segulos, certainly not stones, and this is why my first question to R' Lifsh was: Why is a Chassid, son of a Chassid, an intelligent man such as you, interested in the magical properties of stones?

The answer was as follows:

Three years ago, the Lifsh's expanded their house to accommodate their growing family. At the time, the yeshiva where he was working was having financial trouble and months went by without him receiving his salary. When he wrote to the Rebbe and asked for guidance and a bracha, he kept on getting answers that said, "Success in the stones business."

"I thought the Rebbe was talking about precious stones and diamonds, but I had no idea what that had to do with me."

Even when he consulted with knowledgeable friends, he did not get an answer that satisfied him.



One day, as he was learning the Tzemach Tzedek's *Derech Emuna*, he noticed the following words, **"And he gave the sapir to Yisachar because they were great in the Torah of wisdom, and also because t'cheiles is the color of humility..."**

If you know R' Lifsh, you know that he loves to understand and dig deeper, and these words were

puzzling. What sort of explanation is this as to why the sapir stone was given to Yisachar? Assuming that the Tzemach Tzedek was quoting from Rabbeinu Bechayei, R' Lifsh began looking for references to the stones of the choshen in Parshas Tetzaveh, and he discovered an amazing and hidden world.

As it says there in Rabbeinu

Bechayei's commentary, inanimate stones have qualities that characterize them. Furthermore, they have the power to **influence and change!** For example, it says there that the sapir stone helps one learn, and even the color of the stone, which is t'cheiles, has an effect on the soul, endowing a person with humility.

This was R' Lifsh's first discovery, which led to other discoveries. One day, he was late in getting to the train from Kiryat to B'nei Brak. He had to wait three quarters of an hour and he used this time to learn in the Kollel in Kiryat Shmuel, opposite the train station. In the Kollel he met R' Eitan Pizem, who works with R' Avi Taub in searching for precious stones and pearls in the Chaifa area. The two got into a lively discussion.

This encounter led to a cooperative effort between R' Lifsh and the Shefa Yamim company, owned by Avi Taub. By delving into the sources within Torah, Midrash, the commentaries, and the teachings of the Rebbeim, R' Lifsh discovered amazing natural properties that caused geologists to look at him as though he was crazy. Ultimately though, they admitted that the Torah is correct.

The string of "hashgacha pratiyos" led R' Lifsh to retroactively understand what the Rebbe meant when he wrote, "success in the stones business." He began to seriously research the stones of the choshen and their qualities. First, he looked into Torah sources and later on, he was aided by professional literature on the subject.

"Moshe Rabbeinu asked the spies to check out the land and its people.

It wasn't only to find out whether the people were strong or not but also to see what the properties of the land were. A geographical location influences its inhabitants."

Meaning?

"Each tribe has a special connection, sometimes revealed and sometimes concealed, to its portion of Eretz Yisroel. Hashem implanted the qualities of the tribe within the stone of that tribe (or perhaps it's the reverse, they were given that stone in order to underscore their uniqueness)."

It wasn't long before the stones went beyond a hobby and a collection to a profession. R' Lifsh, as is his nature, looked into everything thoroughly. He did not want to entertain fantasies, and checked each thing out personally.

"I got home one day, tired and with a headache and dizziness, as well as other symptoms. The source was a toothache that affected my entire body. I made an appointment with a dentist and I also looked into the effect of different stones. I held a few sapphire stones of different colors (in order to cover all possibilities) and when it was my turn, I told the dentist that I wasn't sure he would be able to find the problem since the pain had vanished!"

The doctor examined him and

readily identified the problematic tooth. He first tapped it lightly but got no reaction. Nor was there any reaction when he tried other ways of checking the nerves in the area. It was only when he reached deeply into the tooth with a sharp instrument that R' Lifsh winced.

The astounded dentist said to R' Lifsh that this was the only time in which he saw a reaction like this. "The tooth is decayed and the nerve is completely exposed. Under these circumstances, when people feel metal directly on the tooth, they are in agony."

When I asked R' Lifsh whether the stones could be described as painkillers like aspirin or other medicine, he said, "The Tzemach Tzedek writes that wherever the Torah mentions a healing by Hashem, the word 'refua' is written with the soft letter *Fei*. When it refers to the healing of man, it is written with a hard letter *Pei*. This teaches us that man's healing is harsher and leaves an imprint. The stones are not like human medicine; they don't penetrate the body and don't leave any aftereffects."

R' Lifsh emphasized that the stones also have negative qualities! According to the Tzemach Tzedek (*Likkutim, erech even* p. 65-7), opal, for example, has very negative characteristics, causing severe physical and spiritual damage.

"Just like the Evil Inclination, it causes the person who holds it to sin and later on it 'sees to it' that the sin is publicized, thus taking revenge on the person."

I'll admit, this was beyond my understanding. I had a hard time going along with these beliefs, which most people would simply dismiss out of hand. However, R' Lifsh was adamant. He didn't try to convince me, just sufficed with a small smile like that of a man who is confident in his view and knows he is right.

"I arrived at these conclusions by

We know that Hashem, in His kindness, created in our world healing plants with various properties. He also created stones in which He implanted wondrous properties and we can be helped by using them.



studying the holy sources,” he said, as he removed a volume of maamarim 5711 of the Rebbe Rayatz and opened it to p. 139. There it says:

So too, in the inanimate kingdom, among stones, there is a plethora of different types – from ordinary stones, which consists of many different types, to precious gems and stones with various special properties, like stones for *chein* (charm) and success and stones for wisdom and intellect, and the opposite, stones that cause tribulations and suffering, Heaven forbid.

“Here you see that stones have special qualities. I didn’t make it up.”

How can you be sure that it is talking about the stone that you call an opal?

“In the Tzemach Tzedek’s writings we find an unusual expression on the verse, ‘you shall not have in your pocket a stone and a stone.’ The simple meaning is that this is the prohibition against fooling people with weights and measures. However, the Tzemach Tzedek adds that this is also talking about the opal, which a person should not

even keep in his pocket!”

How do you know that the prohibition and influence is not just spiritual?

“First of all, when there are several explanations to a verse or topic, there is a connection between them. It is not for naught that this prohibition relates to fraud in measurements. Second, some people told me that the Tzemach Tzedek is referring to the spiritual plane, however, in my research I learned that it also has a physical effect. This topic is mentioned in nature books on the subject.”

In our s’farim there are no pictures or drawings, so how do you match the name of the stone mentioned in the Torah with the stone that you say represented a certain tribe?

“The truth is that I haven’t identified all the stones of the choshen. I don’t know the names of some (although I might be familiar with those stones), and others I am still researching. As to your question, although there are no pictures in the s’farim, the color and shades are described (for example, the green of Tanach is not what we call green. *Yerakrak* is a strong

green, and *yarok* in halacha might be yellow, blue or our green).

“When you learn the characteristics of the tribes, it’s easier to identify the stone. For example, the stone attributed to Asher has a very oily appearance, and Asher is described as ‘immersing his foot in oil.’

“In addition, many names of stones from earlier times are still in use with their names in Latin, French, or Greek mentioned in our sources.”

Can you give an example?

“In the *Seifer HaMaamarim* 5663 of the Rebbe Rashab, the Bechayei is quoted as saying that the *tarshish* stone is the color of *t’cheiles*, and some translate it as ‘face of the sea.’ In fact, that is what the stone looks like when it is not polished. In addition, the translation of its name into Greek is ‘face of the sea.’”

R’ Lifsh has far more than 12 stones in his collection. He has not only the 12 stones of the choshen (or those assumed to be) but also various stones that you can also find in galleries for mystically inclined tourists in Tzfas and Yerushalayim. R’ Lifsh explained:

“All the stones with natural powers are sourced in the stones of the choshen. Just like there are twelve tribes and they divide into



countless groups, so too with these stones – they all derive their properties from the stones of the choshen, even if they are not actually the stones of the choshen. At the same time, the stones of the choshen themselves are especially potent and effective, and work more quickly and effectively.”

Still, the whole business sounds like some kind of “false belief” system...

R' Lifsh wasn't fazed by my comment. He agreed and even bolstered what I said. “An involvement with stones can be not only in the realm of ‘false beliefs,’ but even something dangerous!

“In Chassidus it explains that even though Hashem created the constellations and the heavenly hosts, etc., the origin of idol worship in the world is that people attributed power to the constellations, as though they have free choice to endow man and the world with goodness or not. This theory is heretical, of course, and denies the oneness of G-d.

“Today as well, there are people – and it is because of them that people tend to stay away from the whole issue – who attribute powers to the **stones themselves**, as though it is the stone that influences and heals. We know that Hashem, in His kindness, created in our world healing plants with various properties. He also created stones in which He implanted wondrous properties and we can be helped by using them.

As we spoke, R' Lifsh took out one stone after another and spoke of the praises of each one. I learned that no two stones are alike, just as no two faces are alike. Each stone has its shape, color, shades, and variations.

R' Lifsh arrived at this amazing discovery in learning what the Rebbe Rayatz says in the continuation of the quote referred to above, a discovery that researchers make after years of research:

Also within every one of the categories, in all the multiplicity that there is within each category, one is not like another – within the same category ... and this is ‘how manifold is Your work, Hashem’ – that there is a multitude of creations, an endless number, and all are supervised with particular supervision.

“When I came across this information, I understood the famous line that the Rebbe said to the woman who asked him how he could stand there all day, giving out dollars for tz'daka. The Rebbe's answer was, ‘When you count diamonds, you don't grow tired.’ The Rebbe, as the Rosh B'nei Yisroel, sees in each Jew not only the ‘diamond’ within, but also his uniqueness as compared to others.”

It is only in recent years that they have gotten a lot of exposure. The reason for this, explains R' Lifsh, is that we are approaching the Geula and according to the Zohar, G-dly wisdom and, l'havdil, secular wisdom, will be revealed to the world.

In the course of his work of helping people with his stones, R' Lifsh has amassed some amazing stories:

Mr. Ben Chur, an accountant in the yeshiva where R' Lifsh works, asked R' Lifsh, half seriously and half jokingly, whether stones could help one's finances. R' Lifsh gave him some stones and told him to put them in his pocket as he worked. Within a short time, the amazing transpired and his accounting business took off. He even began to easily find errors others had made in some of the different places that he worked.

After a while, he told R' Lifsh about a relative who had a bad case of diabetes. The doctors wanted to place her in a geriatric center. He decided to give her the stones that he had in his pocket, figuring they couldn't hurt. She soon regained 90% of her functioning, to the amazement of the doctors.

In another instance, R' Lifsh heard that his mother had pains in her legs. Doctors diagnosed it as an inflammation of the cartilage and it made it difficult for her to get around the house.

R' Lifsh tried a number of stones with an oily appearance, but they didn't help. Finally, he gave her a bracelet with stones associated with the tribe of Asher. A few days went by and the color of the stone changed from t'cheiles to white! The bracelet was changed for another one and it too changed color. After using a third bracelet, along with a matching necklace, which also changed color, she was healed and she walks without any problem.

When R' Lifsh speaks with gem merchants, researchers and healers, some of whom are not at all religious, he makes sure to tell them about Judaism. He tells them about the Rebbe and his prophecies, and



about being able to write to him today, through the *Igros Kodesh*.

As a Chassid, he doesn't focus on the differences but looks for what they have in common or, shows them that they actually do believe. For instance, he met a businessman on Sukkos and before buying stones, R' Lifsh asked him to say the bracha on the lulav.

The man refused, saying he did not believe! R' Lifsh said, "You, of all people, are aware that there is a spiritual power. You see for yourself how all these amazing powers come from the Torah." The one-sided argument ended with the man giving in.

Despite the many mentions in Torah sources, the topic of stones and their properties was not well known for many years. It is only in recent years that they have gotten a lot of exposure. The reason for this, explains R' Lifsh, is that we are approaching the Geula and according to the Zohar, G-dly wisdom and, l'havdil, secular wisdom, will be revealed to the world.

Interestingly, the topic of stones and their properties are in the s'farim of all the Rebbeim except

that of the Rebbe's. "The Rebbe refers to the stone that illuminated Noah's ark, a stone mentioned in a number of sources as the carbuncle and there are other sichos about precious stones, but I did not find any mention about their properties."

The mystical aspect of stones that comes up even in simple research shows that not only doesn't the material contradict the spiritual, but the spiritual gives enormous powers to the physical, and to the inanimate. For example, it has been proven that when someone being treated takes care of his spiritual life as well, objectively, the treatment is more effective.

Furthermore, as it says in Rabbeinu Bechayei, if someone immerses in a mikva, the properties of the stones will have a quicker and stronger effect. Researchers have discovered that which appeared in the Midrash years ago – that stolen stones have no effect!

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, R' Lifsh's main occupation is chinuch. He does not see the study of stones as something that interferes with his work, but something that complements it.

A student in yeshiva had a hard

time concentrating and he was absent from classes with various excuses. As expected, he failed his tests. This bachur had trouble reading and writing even in his third year in mesivta!

R' Lifsh decided to help him. He gave him certain stones and told him to start working hard with his chavrusa. The treatment helped and he soon began teaching his chavrusa!

"It's not only stones that have an effect but colors too. The color red, for example, which is associated with Reuven, represents impetuosity, as Rashi explains. If there is a 'hyper' child who is impulsive and gets angry, the color red should be removed from his wardrobe and replaced with blue.

"Another tip for your readers – a diamond is associated with withholding. It can 'lock' a healthy person into his condition or 'close a deal,' but it can also work that way with a sick person.

"In *Taamei HaMinhagim*, it is brought in the name of Rabbi Chaim Vital, the holy Arizal's closest disciple, that a diamond should be removed before giving birth because it prevents birth. I advised a woman who had trouble conceiving, to remove her diamond jewelry. For the same reason, diamonds should be removed before going to give birth (and not only to prevent robbery).

"In conclusion, may we have the immediate hisgalus of the Rebbe MH" and see the High Priest in all his glory, with the choshen on his chest. In the meantime, as the Rebbe says in the sicha of Parshas Truma, every Jew ought to be rich, and may we see the fulfillment of the prophecy of the Geula, 'I will make your windows of agates...', as the Midrashim elaborate, that our everyday items will be made of precious stones and window frames will be made of precious gems."

SAYING ‘AL HA’NISSIM’ IN CHEVRON

By Aliza Karp

It’s over. I knew it would end. When was the last time two and half weeks lasted forever? Memories and a few pictures – those will last. But the experience is behind me, left to be cherished and hopefully processed into something productive.

I chose the timing of my trip to Eretz Yisroel so that I could participate in the Menora lighting on top of the hill known as Abu Sneh.

All year round, in my work with Chabad of Chevron, I record and publicize the Rebbe’s Peulos, Judaism strengthening projects, in and around Chevron. Each and every activity makes me wish I was on location to cover the story. I love the Rebbe’s work and I love Chevron. There are times when it is painful to be so close (knowing all the details) and yet so far (operating from Crown Heights). But how can I complain? I try to minimize the ‘so far’ and I thank Hashem and the Rebbe for being ‘so close.’

Of all the activities of Chabad of Chevron, the one that attracts me most is the Menora lighting on Abu Sneh.

For most of my two and a half week trip I stayed with my friend

Shaena in Yerushalayim. I know that the road from Yerushalayim to Gush Etzion experiences delays for odd and sundry reasons (e.g., high alerts with backups at checkpoints), so I wanted to get to Chevron early in the day. I was not taking the chance of jeopardizing my Abu Sneh lighting because of road problems.

I arrived in Kiryat Arba just before noon. I had arranged to use my time to tour the new Beis Chaya Mushka Chabad House currently under construction. Beis Chaya Mushka Kiryat Arba – Chevron is a joint project of Rabbis Danny Cohen, Victor Atiyah, and Yossi Nachshon of Chabad of Chevron.

The project manager and the onsite foreman showed me around and answered my questions. The concrete for the roof had just been poured. They explained to me how they made a wooden structure supported by metal. They made it sound simple, but to me it was fascinating. The shell of the building was reaching completion.

On the second floor there will be a Shul. It was nice to see a completely separate entrance and outdoor landing for the women to enter the building on the level of the third floor and go directly to the

woman’s gallery. The space where the third floor is open, overlooking the Shul below, will have a skylight above it.

In front of the building there is a large plaza. Knowing Victor’s ‘Pied Piper’ reputation for drawing a crowd to his programs for children, I could picture the plaza filled with happy Neshamale’s. In the center of the plaza there will be a stone mosaic depicting 770. The exterior of Beis Chaya Mushka is not a replica of 770, but its design strongly resembles the 770 design.

After the tour I stopped by to visit Sara and Boruch Nachshon. Beis Chaya Mushka is very close to their home. It is being built in memory of their granddaughter, Chaya Mushka Atiyah, who perished in a fire on the twentieth of Chaf Av, 5766. It seems to me that she has a lot of Zechusim, merit, because the building is coming along so beautifully.

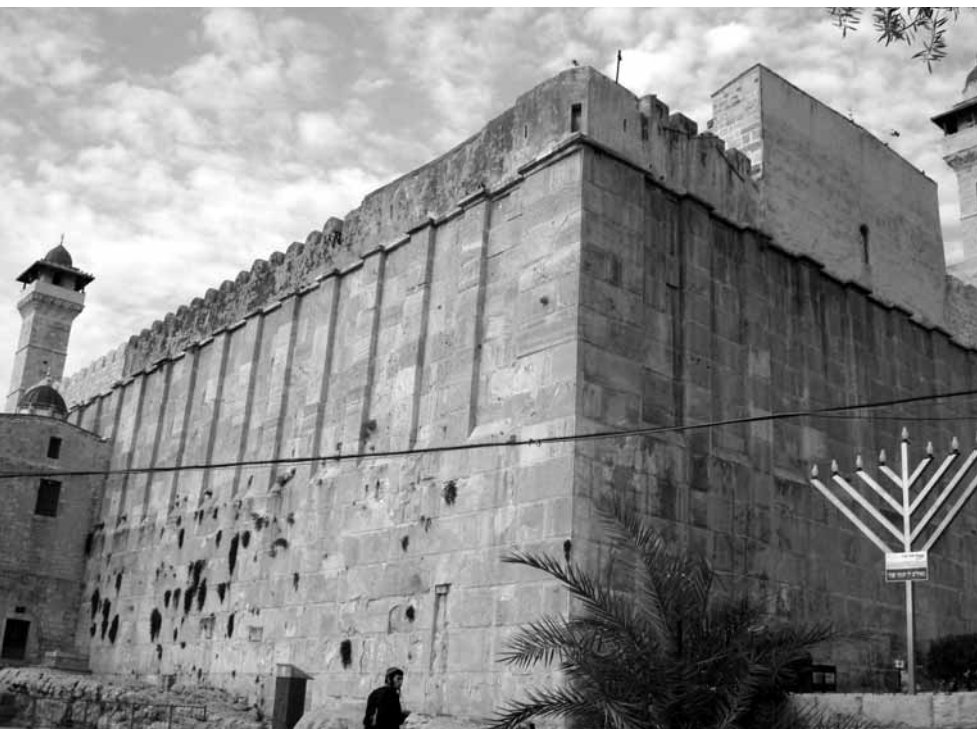
Once at the Nachshon’s home, I used the opportunity to look at some of Boruch’s works of art. There was one I really related to. It showed a single Chassid standing on the ground. Well, not exactly on the ground, but he was grounded, as opposed to some of Boruch’s paintings where the Chassidim seem to be floating. The Chassid was facing upwards, with one arm extended and the other holding a tambourine. The colors above the Chassid were warm colors, fiery oranges and yellows. Without words this painting described to me a Chassid bridging the material and the spiritual worlds through prayer and Simcha.

I have noticed that some of Boruch’s paintings have names, so I asked if this one had a name. He said he will call it “Aliza.” “Aliza” means joy.

We sat down for some tea and Boruch started enumerating the inconsistencies, fallacies, and evils



Chevron Mivtzaim champions:
Saadia, Menachem, and Eli



of the government in Eretz Yisroel. I had found that most people I had come in contact with on my trip did not want to talk about the dangers being initiated and reinforced by the political powers. Boruch's insightful and cutting comments were said without emotion. At intervals he would look Heavenward and he would say 'Baruch Hashem.'

The hours were passing. It was time to complete the last part of my journey to Chevron. I could use the expression 'it's a stone's throw' to describe the distance between Kiryat Arba and Chevron, but on this route 'a stone's throw' could mean something else, so I'll skip the expression and say it was a short ride. I had a T'hilim, *Tanya*, Siddur, and a Pushka in the car – the very things the Rebbe said would be a spiritual protection – and I had remembered to say T'fillas HaDerech, the prayer for travelers, when leaving Yerushalayim. My personal feeling is that Hashem is everywhere, especially in the land where "Hashem's gaze is upon it from the beginning of the year to the end of the year." I take all precautions and I feel safe. If Hashem gives a person a Nisayon, a challenge, it could be in Crown Heights, Kfar Chabad, Chevron, or anywhere. So we pray we should be blessed with revealed good and that Hashem should redeem us through Ahava, love.

One time I had a passenger who was worried about safety. I told her to sing. She chose the song that goes with the Pasuk in Parshas VaYechi: "HaMalach HaGoel Osi..." In the Chumash, it is Yaakov saying, "May the angel who redeems me from all evil, bless the lads, and may my name be declared upon them and the names of my forefathers Avrohom and Yitzchok, and may they reproduce abundantly like fish within the land." Without giving a complete commentary, I

find this Pasuk very appropriate because it speaks about the Avos, whom are buried in Chevron, and the angel that was sent by Hashem to guard Yaakov from all perils. And one more thing, if they have a Bracha to reproduce, they will be safe... as the Pasuk says, 'within the land.'

When I arrived in Chevron, Danny and Eli Eichenblatt – a Bachur doing Shlichus in Chevron – were connecting the large electric Menora in front of M'aras HaMachpella, known as the Cave of the Patriarchs, burial place of the patriarchs and matriarchs of the Jewish nation. That done, we took two, meter-high, freestanding Menoros and placed them at strategic corners where soldiers are stationed.

Then Danny and Eli ran to Mincha and I locked myself in the caravan office/guest room for a much needed power nap.

At 5 pm I went to the Cohen apartment, where they were lighting their Menoros. Our Rebbe has molded his Chassidim to be all encompassing in the most wonderful ways. On one hand, Chabad Chassidim light their Menoros in interior doorways in contrast to others who place their Menoros on the windowsill to publicize the miracle – and then the Chassidim put Menoros on their cars and parade around, and they light giant Menoros together with public figures.

In the Cohen home, the one large Menora lit by Danny, surrounded by the smaller Menoros lit by his sons, created a special Chanuka atmosphere. The children

were excited with their new Dreidels that lit up as they spun around. The youngest child was not yet skilled enough to spin a Dreidel, so he had a remote control. Really. All he had to do was press a button and his Dreidel dutifully began to spin.

Before it was time to start the evening's Mivtzaim, Danny's wife Batsheva served us homemade lentil soup. Being that she is a gourmet cook, she apologized for the modest fare. But I could not think of anything better in preparation for venturing to a barren hilltop on a chilly evening.

I first heard of the hilltop Abu Sneneh in the early months of 2001. That was a year of increased terror attacks throughout Eretz Yisroel. In particular, the Jewish community of Chevron was targeted with intense gunfire. Miraculously, the bullets seemed to fly between the people. Or, as the Chevronim like to say, they were walking through the bullets in the Z'chus of Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel, who walked between raindrops.*

As deaths and injuries were mounting all over Eretz Yisroel during the 2001 Intifada, Chevron was spared for many months, until the day when ten-month-old Shalhevet Pass suffered a direct hit while in the children's playground of the Avrohom Avinu neighborhood. The bullet came from the abandoned building atop the hill called Abu Sneneh. This hill is part of the Holy City of Chevron, part of the Holy Land, but after the death of Shalhevet, Abu Sneneh came to represent darkness and evil. The name Shalhevet means flame. A flame brings warmth and light.

From Abu Sneneh, Shalhevet, a pure Jewish Neshama's earthly presence, was extinguished.

An hour after the Cohen's lit their Menoros, I went with Danny and his eldest son Menachem Mendel, 'Menni,' to the meet up with the bulletproof van designated to take us to the crest of Abu Sneneh.

Our meeting place was Gross Square, the junction nearest Avrohom Avinu. Earlier we had placed a Menora on this corner. Now that it was dark we took the opportunity to have the soldiers on guard light it and say the three Brachos of the first night of Chanuka.

Jewish civilians are restricted to very specific, limited areas of Chevron. Abu Sneneh is not within the permitted boundaries. Each year Danny negotiates with the army to bring guests with him when he lights the Abu Sneneh Menora. The army insists we travel in a bulletproof vehicle with an army escort.

Once the Menora in Gross Square was alit we climbed into our van and pulled up behind the army Jeep that was positioned in front of a checkpoint/roadblock. The roadblock was moved aside and our two-vehicle convoy crossed over to the 'occupied' area of Chevron. As we began to negotiate the rough, windy roads we passed unkempt streets with homes and stores and barber shops. Men on the streets turned to watch us. Their expressions were of suspicion and hostility. My eyes saw darkness; my heart felt it.

When I lived in Crown Heights

*Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel was the daughter of the second Lubavitcher Rebbe. She was the matriarch and spiritual leader of the Chabad community in Chevron from 1845 to 1888, when she was buried in the Chabad cemetery in Chevron. At the time of Menucha Rochel's departure from Russia to ascend to Eretz Yisroel, she was concerned about road conditions because it was the rainy season. Her cousin the Rebbe the

Tzemach Tzedek gave her a Bracha to travel between the drops. Her trip went smoothly and from that time she could go out in the rain and not get wet. The wagon driver who took Menucha Rochel to Chevron reported that road conditions on his return trip were very difficult due to rain, but on the way there he did not have any problems.



Soldiers participate with Rabbi Victor Atiyah at the Chanuka party on an army base in Chevron

in the 1970's, homeowners were putting bars on their windows and venturing out at night with extreme caution. I used to think of it as the good people being locked up behind bars while the criminals roamed the streets freely. Now, on our ride up to Abu Sneneh, we wouldn't dare stop the van and get out. We were prisoners locked in our van, with our army escort guards, traveling through the city of our forefathers, in the land that was promised to Yitzchok and Yaakov – not to Yishmoel!

We reached a clearing at the top of the hill. There I saw an army mini-fortress and a pillbox lookout and our Menora!

The Cohen's came to Chevron in Elul of 2002. Their first Chanuka in Chevron, they worked hard to get permission to erect and light a large Menora on Abu Sneneh. At that time it was erected on top of the abandoned building used by the sniper to murder Shalhevet.

That year I asked Chevron community spokesman David Wilder his reaction to seeing the

Menora. He answered:

"A terrorist sniper sited 10 month old Shalhevet Pass from the hills surrounding the Jewish community in Chevron. Those hills, also known as Abu Sneneh, are now called Givat Shalhevet. Shalhevet means flame... Chabad has always been at the forefront of enlightening people. It is fitting that Chabad should be the ones to initiate the placing of a giant Menora on Givat Shalhevet."

I spoke to one of the soldiers who guarded the Menora that first year. He was an American who came to serve for eighteen months. His name was Shlomo. He was a redhead with a sparkling smile. He told me that one day a fancy UN car drove up to the Menora while he was on guard duty and the UN'ers told him that the Menora should be taken down because it was an insult to the Arabs. Shlomo did not hesitate to let the UN'ers know that the G-d of Israel gave this land to the children of Israel. And the children of Israel light Menoros on Chanuka.

This attitude that Jews doing Mitzvos offends the sensitivity of Arabs reminded me of the story about Boruch Nachshon being taken into custody because he offended the Arabs by bringing a bottle of wine into M'aras HaMachpella. He was making a Bris for one of his sons. It was the first Bris in the Maara after the Six Day War. Who knows how many hundreds of years it had been since Jews made a Bris in the Maara. Avrohom Avinu, who not only purchased the Maara, but is also buried there received this very Mitzva from Hashem – in Chevron! The police made their valiant, chivalrous, cunning attack mid-ceremony. The Mohel quickly finished the Bris without completing the Brachos and ran away. Boruch was arrested. The bottle of wine was taken as evidence. Luckily for Boruch, the policemen at the station did not realize the wine was incriminating evidence. They drank the wine. Later that day Boruch was released for lack of evidence. The end of the story may be a comedy, but essentially the story is a tragedy. The baby was named Avrohom.

In 2003 Chabad of Chevron erected a larger Menora on Abu Sneneh and began bringing guests to the lighting, fresh donuts to the soldiers, and individual Menoros for them to light. Each night there was singing and dancing with the Rabbis, guests and soldiers. The Abu Sneneh Menora became a yearly tradition.

On the eighth day of Chanuka in 2005 the Arabs struck back. They vandalized the Menora. For eight nights Chabad of Chevron had brought light, joy and fun to the otherwise lonely army outpost. Now this. Danny discussed the situation with the army personnel. He prevailed on them that a stronger, more permanent Menora was needed.

When we pulled up to the clearing two years later, it was the clearing that the army had made for the Menora the year before. Not only had they given their approval for a more permanent structure, they had brought in bulldozers, cleared away the abandoned building, creating the small plaza, and placed a large concrete block to serve as the base of a twenty-five foot post designed to be the center shaft of a Menora, to which branches could be attached.

The day before we came up to Abu Sneneh, Chabad of Chevron had sent a team of Menora builders to set up the branches of the Menora, place giant globes atop the branches and connect the electricity. Transparent plastic tubing with lights inside was placed to outline the shape of the Menora so it could be seen from the Jewish communities below.

The Menora was electric. No Bracha would be said.

Danny invited me to flip the switches. I would be the first one this year to shatter the darkness of Abu Sneneh with the holy light of a Chanuka Menora – a giant Menora – a concept that became a reality solely and exclusively because of my Rebbe, my teacher and my personal savior.

I ran my fingers over the white box of circuit breakers on the Menora shaft. I wanted this moment to last forever. Danny showed me the switch for the first Licht. I looked up at the glass globe and saw it light up as I pressed the switch. The same with the Shamash. I felt a glow inside that could match the illumination of the glass globes above my head. I can't imagine any Lubavitcher atop a cherry picker lighting a Menora at city hall, together with a state governor or movie star, being as happy as I was at that moment.

I turned around and saw M'aras

HaMachpella below. M'aras HaMachpella. The purchase of M'aras HaMachpeila by Avrohom, the first Jew, is the first recorded real estate transaction in the history of mankind. It is a transaction that has never been refuted. M'aras HaMachpeila is the cornerstone of the connection of Am Yisroel to Eretz Yisroel, the people of Israel to the land of Israel.

The Menora was at the front edge of the clearing, just behind a spiral fence of barbed wire edging a steep drop into darkness below until the lights of the top row of Arab buildings. At the foot of Abu Sneneh I could see the ribbon of Jewish neighborhoods in the valley underlining the hills of the greater city of Chevron across from where I was standing. But my hilltop was the highest and I had just lit the Menora to publicize the miracle of Chanuka for all of Chevron.

While I was still meditating on the hilltop, Danny and Menni were gathering soldiers and climbing the spiral stairs inside the pillbox lookout with a Menora and candles. I managed to catch up in time to hear one of the soldiers reciting all three Brachos and his fellow soldiers answering Amen.

Our stash of Sufganiot, Israeli donuts, had not yet arrived. Danny told me that the next night he would be sure to have them on time and then he would sing and dance with the soldiers. It seems Sufganiot are the key to stimulating song and dance – at least that is how it is on Chanuka.

I had wanted to do one more Chanuka Mitzva while on Abu Sneneh, so I asked which direction was Yerushalayim and took out my Siddur to say Maariv, the evening prayer. In America we face East when we Daven. In Eretz Yisroel we face Yerushalayim.

It turned out that Yerushalayim was the same direction as the

Maara. I stood off to the side of the Menora, just inside the barbed wire. Across from me were the Maara, the lights of Chevron and in the distance, out of sight, Yerushalayim Ir HaKodesh with the Har HaBayis.

This was my first chance this Chanuka to say Al HaNissim, the special paragraph inserted into our prayers on Chanuka and Purim. My intention was to add another Mitzva and it seemed to me that Al HaNissim was appropriate. That was my intention, but the results were unexpected.

In front of me were the lights of the Maara and the tiny Jewish community. I noticed how they were dominated by the vast lights of the Arab occupation. As I said the words in Al HaNissim: "You delivered the mighty into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few, the impure into the hands of the pure, the wicked into the hands of the righteous, and the wanton sinners into the hand of the who occupy themselves with Your Torah," Chanuka became real. Battles of Chanuka were fought right here in the area of Chevron. Hashem made miracles in these days in their time – in Al HaNissim we ask Him to make miracles for us in these days in our times. Today, as in those days, we are the weak, we are the few, we are the pure and the righteous, we occupy ourselves with Torah. Please Hashem, only You can deliver them – the mighty, the many, the impure, the wicked, the wanton sinners – into our hands.

The Rebbe bears the responsibility to hasten Moshiach on his shoulders, but he gave us the task to bring Moshiach with our hands and feet. I was barely finished Davening when I got back into the van where the others were already seated. Tonight was the first night of a series of parties of different army bases on the different nights of Chanuka. Chabad of Chevron is



The Menora at Gross Square with soldiers, Danny and Eli – the Abu Sneneh Menora is far above

part of the universal Chabad network pushing the switches to turn on the era of Moshiach.

Once we crossed the security line, we left the bulletproof van and – adding Shai, Cohen child number two, to the group – we climbed into the Chabad Mitzva Mobile/Van. We passed by Gross Square and the soldiers flagged us down. Their windproof wicks had blown out and it was important to them to have their Menora lit. We relit the flames and hoped for the best as we drove towards the army base nearby. On the way we turned a lively Niggun on the loud speaker system. It really gave a feeling of holiday Simcha. As we passed each group of soldiers on guard duty they greeted us by dancing to the music and cheering us on. We didn't yet have the Sufganiot. But on the return trip we were able to give them out to all the soldiers along the way.

The base we arrived at was the same base I had been to the week before with Batsheva. One night a week Batsheva goes to two army bases and gives a Shiur, Torah class, to the girl soldiers. She also brings homemade food which the girls love. It seems many of the girls are not 'into' army food. Then

before Shabbos, Batsheva goes to these, plus a third army base to give out Shabbos candles along with a Shabbos treat.

The base we went to after Abu Sneneh was one of the bases where Batsheva gives her weekly Shiur. Soon after we arrived we were joined by Yossi Nachshon, Victor Atiyah, Menachem Porter, Eli Eichenblatt, and Moshe Langer. While they were assembling the soldiers and starting the program, I went to speak to the girls I had met the week before. They told me how they would never have come to Chevron had the army not sent them, but now they see it is a good place to be – and a necessary place for the army because terror attacks in other locations throughout Eretz Yisroel often originate in Chevron. The army presence in Chevron provides surveillance – the preventive medicine to impede terror attacks. The girls told me that since they have been in Chevron they have found the community to be friendly, but – they told me – Batsheva is different from everyone else they have met. They feel she really cares about them. They are right!

Two of the girls came with me to

the party. The others were on duty in the office.

When we arrived, Danny was speaking. This particular army battalion was the same sub-unit that he had served in fifteen years ago during his active duty in a combat unit. I could see he was speaking to them with an extra measure of familiarity and affection. And Hey! They responded! There was a lot of lively interaction.

Danny first spoke about a modern day miracle of Chanuka. He explained that the Maccabees were fighting against decrees forbidding Mitzvos, so Chanuka actually celebrates the freedom to observe Mitzvos. And the modern day miracle is that so many people who otherwise do not observe Mitzvos, keep Chanuka – the celebration of being able to observe Mitzvos!

"And when you get out of the army and travel to the Far East, and it is Chanuka, where will you go?" Danny asked. "Beit Chabad!" the soldiers answered in unison as if they had rehearsed.

Then the commander of the base said a few words. The vibes I picked up from him were serious and compassionate. He is a young man, still in his early twenties. He did not show any signs of being religious but he spoke about the unusual perspective of Chabad to accept all Jews: Ashkenazi, Sefardi, young, old, rich and poor. He welcomed and thanked the Chabadnikim who were making the party. It is important to him that his soldiers experience Judaism.

The soldier who was a rank below the commander, but senior to the other soldiers, had been helpful with both the party and the Abu Sneneh lighting. He was called forward to light one of the meter high Menoros that Yossi had brought in. The soldier was shy at first about saying the Brachos in

front of everyone, but soon he warmed up and was beaming by the time he had completed lighting the candles.

The soldiers sang HaNeiros Halalu and Maoz Tzur. They enjoyed singing together. It was beautiful.

The donuts arrived! They were still warm. Yum!

Menni and Shai gave out pocket sized versions of the Segula L'Shmira: the T'hillim, *Tanya*, Siddur and Pushka that the Rebbe said will give spiritual protection. The soldiers all took one. The Segula is just the right size to fit into one of the pockets on their uniform and despite its size, it's very readable. It makes them feel safe and they appreciate that Chabad, and the Jews in America who sponsor the Segulot, care about them.

The next night when Saadia HersHKop was handing out the Segulot at a different base, one of the soldiers said that he still had one that was given to him during the Lebanon war. He said his had the same Chabad of Chevron logo. This was amazing. According to Danny, Saadia, together with Eli, were the only ones who were giving out Chabad of Chevron Segulot at the northern border that summer.

Saadia and Eli had gone right to the border with Lebanon to take T'fillin, the Segulot, Coca Cola and encouragement to the soldiers who were camping out waiting for their orders. The boys told me about the deserted towns near the border and how the army came in and set up however best they could. The days Saadia and Eli visited the soldiers turned out to be very crucial days. The first day they went they felt a charge in the air. High morale and energy, ready to fight and win. But two days later things changed. The politicians declared a temporary cease fire. The moral died and, as

expected, the war became a disaster. But each day the boys came to do Mivtzaim, the soldiers greeted them, thanked them and lined up to put on T'fillin. One soldier for sure held onto his Segula since he received it a year and a half ago – and he brought it with him to Chevron.

When Menni and Shai were confident that all the soldiers had their Segula L'Shmira, the entertainment began. Victor is a magician. He does amazing tricks. The soldiers were intrigued. I wish I could find a word to describe Victor, but I can't. The Yiddish word '*eidel*,' approximating the meaning of the English word 'refined,' would apply to him, but still it does not describe him. He is tall and slender with kind eyes. He has a presence that is both comforting and powerful. His magic show is very entertaining. With each magic trick that he does – he gives a D'var Torah.

Victor became interested in magic a number of years ago as a way to entertain children at rallies and to become familiar with soldiers so they would be receptive to Mivtzaim. After the tragedy that took his daughter Chaya Mushka's life, he upgraded his magic tricks. He is now invited to events around the country to give his shows. His show is fascinating and funny as he warms his audience's disposition towards Torah and Mitzvos.

It was only about 9:30 pm when we got back to the caravan. Danny decided he would try to make it to the Kirshanzhaft wedding in Kfar Chabad. The Kirshenzhaft's were the Rebbe's Shluchim in Gush Katif. Danny had stayed with them during the weeks before the Disengagement. He had stayed until the end. It's still important to solidarity with the Kirshenzhaft's. They were robbed of their home! Before leaving Danny asked me to write a few emails for Chabad of

Chevron and gave me a tray of donuts to give to soldiers I would encounter on the way back to Yerushalayim.

Danny never made it to the wedding. He got a flat tire in Kiryat Arba. I considered it a small miracle that it did not happen when he was in the middle of 'nowhere.'

I finished the emails and wrote to my family. I was in a bit of a daze after all my experiences in one day, and was not watching the time.

It was after 11:30 when I left Chevron. I set out to drop into the Chanuka party at the home of Meir and Miriam Rhodes in Bat Ayin, roughly half way back to Yerushalayim. The problem was that I did not know how to get to the Rhodes's house once inside Bat Ayin and I doubted that at such an hour there would be many people to ask.

On the way I stopped for gas and there was a Jeep full of soldiers who were happy to take donuts. Back in the car I turned off the road to Beit Shemesh onto the road to Bat Ayin. At the corner stood a young boy – I guessed about eleven years old – signaling he needed a ride.

When he got into the car I noticed his English was better than the typical religious boy living in Bat Ayin. Although there are many families in Bat Ayin with at least one American parent I instinctively knew this one was a Wolfson. I was right. I was amazed at the timing and my good fortune to have a guide. I hesitate to call this a miracle, so let's just say it was an unlikely coincidence. As such we call it Hashgacha Pratis, Divine Providence, although we know everything is Hashgacha Pratis. The Wolfson boy told me he had been at a Chanuka party in his Yeshiva in the settlement nearby. The Wolfson's live right next door to the Rhodes.' I was able to see my young



Farbrengen at Beis Lubavitch Bat Ayin – thanks to the Rhodes family

charge make it home safely and get expert instructions to my destination. There were two soldiers at the Bat Ayin entrance. They both took donuts.

By the time I arrived at the party, most of the guests were leaving. I came in anyway for a few minutes to chat and eat up the leftovers. Meir makes great chicken wings. Miriam was putting things away, she does not like to leave things until the morning. There were two young men with their backs to me. They were each at a kitchen sink, washing dishes. Let me clarify, they were happily doing

dishes. The Rhodes' home is a magnet for English speaking youth attracted to the lifestyle in Yehuda and Shomron.

The ride from Bat Ayin to Yerushalayim went smoothly. At the final checkpoint there was a group of soldiers who finished the last Sufganiot from the tray.

Thursday morning began my final day after my two and a half weeks in Eretz Yisroel. Shaena came with me for an early morning Minyan in the Maara. The second Lubavitcher Rebbe stressed the teaching from the Gemara that all prayers are gathered in Chevron and

from there rise on high. This was my final opportunity this trip to offer my prayers from a front row seat. The Shmoneh Esrei is always an emotional prayer when said at the Maara. The first paragraph mentions our fathers who are buried in the Maara, Avrohom, Yitzchok and Yaakov, and asks Hashem to remember their Middos, their righteous personalities. In their merit we ask to be redeemed in a loving way. With heightened awareness I struggled to stay focused on the words I was saying. Ata Gibbor – Hashem you are mighty; Mekalkail Chaim – You sustain the living; Ata Kadosh – You are Holy; Ata Chonein L'Adam Daas – You bestow knowledge; Hashiveinu Avinu – return us, Our Father; Slach Lanu – pardon us... see our afflictions... heal us... bless us... gather us... restore our judges... crush our enemies... be merciful to the righteous... return us to Yerushalayim... reinstate Dovid, Your servant... have compassion on us... look upon us with favor... return to Zion...

Near the end of the prayer I came to Al HaNissim. My consciousness was transported back to my prayer at Abu Sneneh. It had been an abstract experience. But now a day had past and I felt the inspiration and elevation become internalized, fusing into an overflow of emotion.... and tears.

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FROM PROTEGE OF LEONARD BERNSTEIN TO CHASSID OF THE REBBE

By Nosson Avrohom

*As a child, when he was being beaten by his Russian classmates, he dreamed of being a world renowned conductor. When the renowned conductor, Leonard Bernstein invited him to a series of performances, he felt he had reached the pinnacle of his career, but then, when he emerged from the subway outside 770, his feelings changed: * The fascinating story of Israel Edelson. * Part 2 of 2.*

[Continued from last issue]

THE GREAT MAESTRO CALLED OUT OF THE BLUE

In order for a conductor to gain expertise, he has to have a large orchestra to work with. Edelson

was accepted to an exclusive training course with ninety musicians after taking a test in Paris. In his wildest dreams he didn't imagine that his teacher for the course would be none other than his childhood hero, the celebrated conductor, Leonard

Bernstein.

"Only someone involved in classical music can appreciate how excited I was that he would be my teacher. He was one of the greatest conductors, composers, and pianists of the 20th century, a person of universal talents who comes along once in a lifetime.

"During the first days of the course, due to my great esteem for Bernstein, I would sit in class like a log. As the days passed, the ice broke and I was able to express my talents. There was a good chemistry between us and when the course was over, I joined him in conducting the concert in Tanglewood, with me conducting part of the overture.

"At the end of the summer, after the excitement and dizzying success, I sat at home and began to feel down. Like a mountain climber who reaches his destination, and as he descends the mountain he is bereft of goals and challenges. Once again, I began to think about the meaning of life. You have to



understand that to be a direct disciple of the most esteemed conductor in the world is to reach the pinnacle, and that is why questions about who I am began to bother me again.”

A few days later, the phone rang and it was Bernstein, who surprised Edelson by asking him to join him in a series of performances throughout the US with the Viennese Philharmonic orchestra, one of the most prestigious in the world: “I nearly fainted. I had made a good impression on him, to the

point that he wanted to work with me beyond the classroom.”

They spent three weeks together and collaborated professionally in many performances. The audiences enjoyed them and applauded, and then Edelson returned to New York. How ironic that Bernstein, who later asked Edelson to stay away from Jewish observance, was the one who unwittingly caused him to take his first steps towards Jewish tradition.

“Unlike other Jews in the music industry who hid their Jewish background, Bernstein was proud of it. In all his interviews he proudly spoke about being a Jew. I heard him tell the story that happened in his youth, when he was a student of one of the big conductors, an apostate Jew by the name of Sergei Koussevitzky. Koussevitzky told him that he had tremendous potential but he should change his Jewish name to that of a typical American. This was in the 1940’s, when diversity wasn’t the American byword.

“Bernstein said that he tossed and turned all night and in the morning he went back to his teacher with reddened eyes and said, ‘I will not change my Jewish name.’

“He would tell this story with obvious Jewish pride even to audiences of thousands of non-Jews. So looking back, I can say that he set me on the right path.”

VISITING CROWN HEIGHTS

After a series of exclusive performances alongside the maestro he so greatly respected, Edelson found himself spending his time in a rented room in New York, pondering questions about his identity. One day, a friend suggested that he visit a religious neighborhood. He did so and was astonished to find intellectual

people there.

By Divine providence, it was a few hours before Shabbos when he emerged from the subway opposite 770. That evening he was supposed to meet with Bernstein in Manhattan and he figured that he had enough time to check out the Jews of the neighborhood first.

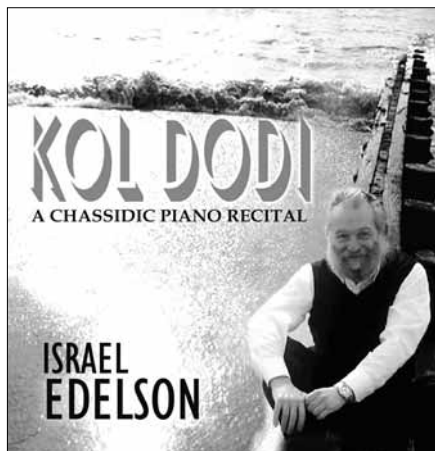
“When I left the train station, my first feeling was one of shock. Men dressed like penguins [i.e., black and white] were rushing about with towels on their shoulders. Now I know that they were going to the mikva before Shabbos, but at the time, it looked strange to me. I didn’t think that I would see in America what I was used to seeing in the Old City of Yerushalayim.

“I thought, ‘Where did all these Chassidim come from?’ My friend introduced me to some people in Crown Heights, including Avi Piamenta, with whom I could talk about music. His smile and sweetness won me over.

“Later, when the Chassidim went to shul and the women made their final preparations for the Shabbos meal, I accompanied my friend to meet ‘someone special,’ as he put it. His wife welcomed us graciously and I was able to speak to her in Russian. As we spoke about the Rebbe and Chabad, an impressive looking man walked in, whom I later learned was Rabbi Yoel Kahn.

“The thing that drew me to Chabad and the Rebbe was that Shabbos meal. R’ Kahn barely spoke at the meal and it was his silence that captivated me. The Chassidic niggunim that he sang with d’veikus were refreshing. I, who knew a thing or two about music, had never heard such moving tunes. The melodies penetrated the depths of my soul. I melted.”

Nevertheless, Edelson still went



“The power of the niggun entered me and lit up my soul. I listened to the tape over and over again and then burst into tears. It was a hysterical crying like I had never cried before. The crying released a lot of blockages. When I tried to calm down, I wasn’t able to. I felt that I was not in control. I felt that I was at a fateful crossroads in my life.”

to meet Bernstein that Friday night.

“I stayed with the maestro till dawn. We spoke about music and I told him that I was getting involved with spirituality. I described my visit to Crown Heights. He didn’t react. I don’t think he realized how my exposure to the Chabad way of life would take me away from him.

“When I left Manhattan, I knew I wasn’t going back to my house in Queens. I decided to return to Crown Heights and wait till the day got started so I could continue with the special experience I was having there.

“The first one to notice me that morning was Avi Piamenta. He was happy to see me and took me along with him to the mikva, for the first time in my life.

“When I look back at my journey towards Chabad, as someone who came from an atheistic background, it makes sense to me because the process was so natural, as though I was born to it. The people’s amiability and the wisdom and depth of Chassidus, drew me to this way of

life. I wasn’t asked to do mitzvos, but I started doing some of them on my own. I found real people as well as a life of spirituality and holiness, a life of serenity. This drew me in and made me want to be like them. The next stage was when I rented an apartment in Crown Heights.”

* * *

Edelson was accepted as a participant in an exclusive competition for conductors that took place under the auspices of the BBC in London.

“I had to prepare most intensively for this competition. R’ Kahn didn’t try to deter me. He told me to stay in the neighborhood and devote several hours to my music and to use the rest of the time to absorb the atmosphere in the community and to study Judaism.”

Edelson had chavrusas who learned Chumash and *Tanya* with him and told him about the Rebbe. They suggested that he write to the Rebbe before the competition and ask for his bracha. He did so, writing in detail about his family

and his life story, but did not get a response.

“I was disappointed. I had put so much time and effort into writing several pages to the Rebbe. I found no solace in the bachurim’s attempts to explain to me that even if the Rebbe did not answer, it did not mean he had not read the letter.”

Several months passed and the bachurim suggested that he write another letter before the competition. Maybe this time, he would get an answer.

Edelson wrote a short letter saying that he was traveling to participate in a competition for conductors, the hardest and most highly regarded in this field, and he was asking for a bracha for success. A few hours later, he got an answer through R’ Yoel Kahn, who explained it to him. The Rebbe told him to check his t’fillin and said he would mention him at his father-in-law’s gravesite. The Rebbe also gave him five pounds sterling for tz’daka.

Edelson went to the competition in London, nervous and excited. The bachurim had promised him that after receiving the Rebbe’s bracha he could go with peace of mind. In London he lived in the same place he had lived when he had studied there. He was pleasantly surprised to discover that there was a Chabad house a few blocks away with some energetic shluchim, including Rabbi Avrohom Glick, Rabbi Tali Leventhal, and Rabbi Moshe Katzenellenbogen. He liked them and became a regular guest.

“I was happy to hear that the competition would take five days, from Sunday until Thursday, so I wouldn’t have a problem with Shabbos. The Rebbe had given me five pounds and I saw it as one pound for each day of the competition.

“The hardest part of a



competition is that you don't know ahead of time what type of composition you will be conducting. When you are on the stage, you cannot be stressed out, but have to function at your best, conducting whatever piece of music you are asked to present. The first day was not particularly difficult; they were known compositions and I moved on to the next phase.

"I barely slept due to nervous tension and my preparing. The next competition was in another city, Cardiff, the capitol of Wales, which we went to by train. On the trip there they told us the program and the order of performances as well as which compositions we would conduct.

"That day some more conductors were dropped from the competition. On my way home I was very nervous, but to my great joy, the judges told me that I had made it to the half-way mark. In the midst of all my tension, I had great bitachon that the Rebbe was with me. I felt this every time I went onstage.

"The next phase was conducting the BBC's orchestra. To my consternation, all the compositions they asked me to prepare were ones I had never conducted and did not know. I prepared an entire night and by six in the morning I had to go to the BBC studio. My heart beat quickly as I left my room. I stood near the mezuzah and kissed it, and asked for Heavenly assistance. I knew this was the hardest part of the competition.

"It was a composition I did not know, but when I stood there, at the conductor's podium, I was amazed by the beautiful harmonies I heard, the likes of which I had never heard before.

"I remember thinking that I really wasn't there and the orchestra was playing on its own. It just couldn't be my hands that were causing those incredibly magnificent sounds to be heard. It was an open miracle. Those performances were later played on the radio as they mentioned the name of the young conductor. I laughed because I knew good and

well that it wasn't my talent.

"At the end of the round, we were all called to the judges' chamber to hear who had advanced to the next phase. At that point, only three of us remained and the judges said that only two would go on to the final phase. I felt tremendous relief upon hearing that I had made it. I was beside myself with excitement.

"The next evening, at the conclusion of the public concert, in the course of which we both conducted, they told us the judges' decision that we had both won and the prize would be shared."

As part of the prize, Edelson appeared as the conductor at an exclusive performance with the BBC orchestra, where he received a very warm ovation by the audience of thousands.

PASSING THE SHABBOS TEST

The competition was over and Edelson returned home, but as always, with a disquieting feeling. "What will I do with all this success?" he wondered.

"It's a hard feeling to describe. On the one hand, you have succeeded in yet another stage in your career. On the other hand, you feel a great emptiness."

All Edelson's attempts to push aside this feeling were unsuccessful. The next day, at noon, he was still sitting lost in his thoughts when he noticed a tape that R' Kahn had brought him before he left.

"It was only then, after two weeks of work, that I had the time to check out the tape. I put it into the tape recorder and I heard the Rebbe's voice singing, 'Tzama Lecha Nafshi.' I remember that my neshama was wracked with emotion. The power of the niggun entered me and lit up my soul. I listened to the tape over and over again and then burst into tears. It

was a hysterical crying like I had never cried before. The crying released a lot of blockages. When I tried to calm down, I wasn't able to. I felt that I was not in control. I felt that I was at a fateful crossroads in my life.

"The emptiness overpowered me. I didn't think of myself in terms of professional advancement. I looked at myself from the sidelines, confused, not quite understanding where I was heading, if I was heading anywhere at all. I wrote to R' Yoel Kahn about my success and I sent letters to some friends as well as to my beloved maestro, Bernstein.

"In the Chabad community in London I was a curiosity. Where had this famous conductor landed from? I didn't know what I should do next. I felt as though I was in a movie and that I was being led."

Edelson received a letter from Bernstein full of praise and blessing. He even invited him to collaborate with him on a conducting project in Germany. Edelson looked at the calendar that came with the information of the performance and saw that some dates were problematic, like rehearsals that took place on Pesach and Shabbos. He wrote about his dilemma to the Rebbe and the answer was: "It is a public desecration of Shabbos."

"It wasn't easy for me to disappoint Bernstein, but I already felt that the true leader I would follow through fire and water is the Rebbe. I told Bernstein that I would have to be absent on those days. They were willing to have me nonetheless. Apparently they themselves did not believe how determined and serious I was.

"When Shabbos came and Bernstein asked that I play, I refused. They had no choice but to bring a different pianist to replace me. I participated in two parts of

the project, but I was told, before the third part, that they had found another assistant conductor. That was the last time that I conducted alongside Bernstein. He had no idea what had come over me and tried to persuade me to drop this madness. I, who already saw myself as a Chabad Chassid, did not dream of going against the Rebbe's clear answer, nor did I want to argue with Bernstein, so I simply avoided him."

NIGGUNIM AT FARBRENGENS

Edelson returned to Yerushalayim, where he got married and continued to work on various musical performances. He conducted with most of the orchestras in Eretz Yisroel and with his excellent reputation, he was asked to be a guest conductor for any orchestra that wanted to put on a really professional production.

He was confronted with tests there too, but they were few in number. For example, he was asked to accept the position of musical director of the orchestra of

kibbutzim that appeared on Shabbos. They pleaded with him to accept the position and said, "What happened to you? You became religious?" These were the reactions of colleagues who did not understand what made him do t'shuva, after having reaching such heights of professional success.

"What could I tell them – that I had begun a process in which I was led and did not lead?

"The thing that got me to fully commit to Chabad was the farbrengens that I attended in Crown Heights and Eretz Yisroel. I had attended many musical performances with choirs and symphony orchestras, but the niggunim that came forth from the neshamos of people at farbrengens, those moving melodies with such emotion and depth – I had never heard this before. I felt that the niggun was coming out of the mouth of the person sitting next to me and entering my heart. That is the power that lies in niggunim, especially those of Chabad.

"Bernstein had always spoken to me about the need to submit and unite with the conducting, and





Israel Edelson with Rabbi Naftali Roth

when I learned Chassidus I understood these concepts in a deep way. When you play music, you cease to be you, and you become someone else, more elevated and spiritual. Someone who comes from the world of classical music, where they aspire to reach such 'lofty heights,' can understand how this is nothing

compared to a group of Chassidim singing a niggun d'veikus. The niggunim always touched me and I knew that I would do something with them.

"In 1990, Rabbi Naftali Roth asked me to form a Tzivos Hashem choir in Yerushalayim. It was very successful. We sang at the Chanuka Live satellite at the Kosel, as the

Rebbe watched us. We produced two tapes of songs.

"Over the years, I was involved with many different musical projects but I knew that I hadn't realized my dream. I moved back to the US and began writing concert pieces for niggunei Chabad. This involved taking a niggun and presenting it in a more classical form. It combines two worlds, taking a niggun which is the neshama and giving it a beautiful outer form that doesn't negatively affect the p'nimius of the niggun. I gave some of the niggunim a slight touch of jazz. If you are musical, you'll identify it easily.

"I have recently produced my second CD of niggunim and baruch Hashem, people are very eager to hear it. I hope that my future CD's will appear in stores with the coming of Moshiach."

CONDUCTING IN THE BEIS HA'MIKDASH

Students with musical talent come to Edelson for him to teach them. He has recently participated in some large performances after many years of anonymity. The only difference is that instead of the conductor's tuxedo and big ego, he has a beard, a Chassidic suit and hat and lots of modesty and humility.

When I asked Edelson what he wished for, for himself, he smiled and immediately said, "I am sure there will be an orchestra in the Beis HaMikdash. All music is a gilgul of the songs of the Levites in the Beis HaMikdash, which for years, has been wandering in exile and waiting to be restored to its source. There will be dozens of musicians as the s'farim describe and they will need a conductor. I'd be thrilled to volunteer for this sacred work."

"That was the last time that I conducted alongside Bernstein. He had no idea what had come over me and tried to persuade me to drop this madness. I, who already saw myself as a Chabad Chassid, did not dream of going against the Rebbe's clear answer, nor did I want to argue with Bernstein..."

UNPRECEDENTED JOY – IN SDEROT

By C. Katz

In a week of unprecedented terror in the border town of Sderot, the shluchim countered the devastation in the way they knew best – unprecedented joy.

Malkie, the daughter of HaRav Moshe Ze'ev and Sima Pizam, was married to Menachem Mendel Reizel of Lod this past Wednesday night, "davka" in a kibbutz five minutes from the embattled town.

"If they can't come anymore to Sderot, then soon they won't come anymore to Ashkelon -- and then Tel Aviv," said Rav Moshe Ze'ev, explaining why the family chose to bring the wedding guests to Sderot.

Tzvi Hirsch Popack, brother-in-law of the kalla, described the event, attended by more than 600 guests, as "absolutely unbelievable."

"Friday night, Shabbos, there were ten alarms just that night. No one slept because the alarm went off every 25 minutes. Everyone came to shul with red eyes the next morning and the children were panicked. We had around 150 people here for the Sheva Brachos and in the middle there was a "Color Red" Alarm. We heard the boom and saw the smoke and saw a big hole in the ground. It was incredible."

There was also an alarm in the middle of the Kabbalas Panim, which was held at the Sderot Beis Chabad.

"Every time we heard the Color Red we'd sing and dance," said Popack. "We knew we had to show

the people that even though it's a tough situation, we have to be happy and have hope. It was an

unbelievable Shabbos."

Popack's wife, who grew up in Sderot, was surprised and frightened

NEW MITZVA TANK STRUCK BY KASSAM ROCKET

The Shrapnel of a Kassam Rocket struck a brand new Mitzva Tank Saturday night in Sderot, Israel.

The picture below shows the new Mitzva Tank as it arrived to Sderot Thursday just 2 days after it was released from Israel Custom's and Import Tax Department. This is reminiscent of the first Lebanon War 26 years ago when 2 new Mitzva Tanks had just arrived to Israel and were immediately sent to the fighting front to boost the morale of the soldiers in the IDF. At that time the director Rabbi Dovid Nachshon accompanied the vehicles into Lebanon.

Other pictures, viewable on www.chabad.info, were taken Saturday night and show the shrapnel penetrations into the body of the Mitzva Tank. The shattered glass on the floor of the vehicle resulted from the shrapnel penetrating the window and striking the glass door of the rotisserie appliance that is mounted inside the vehicle just above the counter and sink. The miracle being that the Mitzva Tank was previously crowded with people who were standing inside the Mitzva Tank as part of a Melaveh Malka celebration.

Other pictures on the website show different places where the shrapnel hit the new Mitzva Tank, Moshe Nachshon, the director's son, just finished his tour of duty in the IDF and was eager to boost the morale of his fellow soldiers who are still inside the IDF and stationed in Sderot. He chose to be amongst the first Mitzva Tank soldiers who were sent out by his father on the Tank's first mission to help the soldiers and citizens of Israel. 3 married men and 3 students left their homes Thursday to be with Moshe Nachshon on this courageous mission.



by the drastic increase in the number of rockets that rattled the town. At points over the past seven years, the estimated 5,000-plus missiles that fell there had fallen sporadically. This past week the rockets rained down in deadly volleys of three or four at a time. At its worst point, there numbered more than 50 in one day. "Then they had them every two, three days. It's real mesirus nefesh to be here. It's hard," he said.

The wedding came one week after the massive attacks took their toll on the children of Sderot. One eight-year-old child lost a leg in the attack as he tried to run for cover when a missile landed just feet away from him. This happened very close to the Beis Chabad and the Pizam's 18-year-old son, Asher, was the first on the scene, helping the boy from whom Mrs. Pizam said "blood was rushing like from a faucet." Another child was also severely injured in the shoulder by shrapnel pieces and a 47-year-old father of four was killed by an exploding missile. This past week also saw unprecedented attacks in neighboring communities, including the major port city of Ashkelon, where homes suffered

direct hits for the first time.

It was against this backdrop that the wedding took place, attended by hundreds of out-of-town guests as well as many hundreds of mekuravim of the Beis Chabad, each strengthening the other.

Sima Pizam said that several of their mekuravim from Sderot were unable to attend the wedding because they had been hospitalized after they suffered from shock by the incoming missiles

But Rav Moshe Ze'ev said that even though the guests had been a little hesitant to come to Sderot, the fact that they did, left a major mark on the whole community. Shabbos afternoon – sirens and rockets and all – a group from the wedding party paraded around the various neighborhoods in Sderot. "The people saw it and were sameiach," he said.

* * *

On Motzaei Shabbos, a mitzvah tank, sent into the area by Rabbi Dovid Nachshon, was out on mitvzaim when a rocket landed six meters from it, sending the tank into

the air, but fortunately not causing any injuries to those manning the tank, including Rav Moshe Ze'ev's son.

The situation in Sderot is more dire than ever, and yet, now that the wedding is behind them, the Pizam's are focusing their full attention on Rosh Chodesh Adar and Purim. Among the many projects they have planned is providing each of the 800 kindergarten students with a Purim costume. Also, students from Chabad schools all over Eretz Yisroel will be sending Shalach Manos packages to the students in Sderot.

"The matzav is very difficult, people almost don't go out on the street. Today only 30 percent of the students came to *gan* (kindergarten)," says Rav Moshe Ze'ev.

G-d willing, the dedicated shluchim of Sderot and the residents there who are staying with their last drops of mesirus nefesh, will immediately see their tears and fear turned into the ultimate joy with the complete revelation of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach.

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