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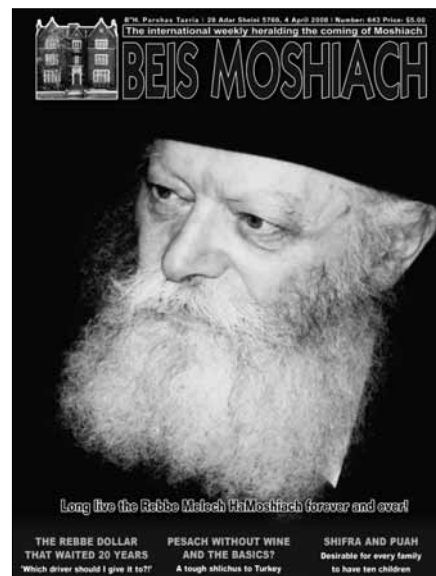
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USA

744 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409
Tel: (718) 778-8000
Fax: (718) 778-0800
admin@beismoshiach.org
www.beismoshiach.org

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:
M.M. Hendel

ENGLISH EDITOR:
Boruch Merkur
ed@beismoshiach.org

HEBREW EDITOR:
Rabbi Sholom Yaakov Chazan
editorH@beismoshiach.org

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IT'S NOT ENOUGH FOR IT TO BE 'IN PLACE' OF THE REAL THING

Likkutei Sichos Vol. 32, pg. 36-43

Translated by Boruch Merkur

[Continued from last issue]

4. Among the Torah concepts of which it is said that one “who is involved in the study, etc., it is as if he offered [a sacrifice],” the recital of the Order of the Pesach Sacrifice on the Eve of Pesach has a unique innovation. Namely, the Order of the Pesach Sacrifice does not entail reciting the portion of the Written Torah that deals with the Pesach sacrifice⁵⁰ (as is the case with reading the portion about the Tamid sacrifice or about the [other] sacrifices and the like (as per the statements made in Taanis and Megilla)), nor does it involve the study of the laws of offering the Pesach sacrifice in the Oral Torah (as is the case with the section of the Mishna entitled “*Eizehu M'koman*”⁵¹ (as per the statement in Menachos) and the like), rather, the Order of the Pesach Sacrifice entails **recounting** the actual process of its offering.

The reason this is so, we may assert, is because the study of the Order of the Pesach Sacrifice is literally like the act of offering the Pesach sacrifice, **as is the case** with

prayer [that it is considered like actually offering a sacrifice (as discussed at the end of Section 3)] through the act of praying.

With this thought in mind we can explain the wording that appears following the text of the Order of the Pesach Sacrifice in the book *Seider HaYom* (and quoted in *Shla*, *Siddur HaArizal*, and *Siddur Admur HaZakein*): “This⁵² is a very concise presentation of the matter. The person who fears and is in awe of the words of G-d must read it in its proper time, so that his recital will be considered in place of its offering. One must lament the destruction of the Temple and supplicate before G-d, the Creator of the world, that He should [re]build it speedily in our days, amen.”

The inference learned from the precise wording, “The person who fears and is in awe of the words of G-d must read it **in its proper time, so that his recital will be considered in place of its offering**,” is that reciting the Order of the Pesach Sacrifice following the Afternoon Prayer is not only because that is the time of offering the Pesach sacrifice (as suggested by the wording that precedes the Order of the Pesach Sacrifice) but because when the reading is **in its proper time**, “his recital will be considered in place of its offering.”

At first glance, explanation is required: One of the differences between the two laws – [a] the institution of prayers in place of the sacrifices, and [b] the reading of the Torah portion (and the study of the laws) of the sacrifices in place of offering the sacrifices – is that prayers must be specifically at the time of offering the Tamid sacrifices,⁵³ whereas the study of the Torah portion (and laws) of the sacrifice in place of its offering is not connected with the **time** when it must be offered.⁵⁴

(Indeed, that is how it is understood in the context of the segment at the end of Menachos on the topic, “Any person who is involved in the study of the law of, etc., it is as if he offered, etc.,” as explicitly stated prior to it regarding the verse,⁵⁵ “A song of ascents. Behold, bless G-d, all servants of G-d who stand in the house of G-d at night”: “What is the meaning of ‘at night’? Said Rebbi Yochanan, ‘That refers to scholars who study Torah at night. The verse considers it as if they were involved in

service [in the house of G-d].”

(Regarding what the Tur writes³⁶ about the Torah portion of the sacrifices, “It is better to recite it in the daytime, as it is in place of offering the sacrifice, which is done in the daytime” (and according to several opinions,³⁷ it must be recited standing [reminiscent of the sacrificial service in the Holy Temple, which was performed standing]) – a) the Tzemach Tzedek³⁸ writes, “That is, specifically regarding the concept of reciting these portions, which are connected to the prayer liturgy.”^{38*} However, regarding the concept of studying the laws of sacrifices, there is no difference³⁹ between [doing so in the] daytime or nighttime⁴⁰; b) also in this regard, it does not resemble⁴¹ the stringency of the obligation to pray in the proper time (which must be done precisely at the time of offering specifically the Tamid sacrifices³³).)

Thus, the words, “The person who fears and is in awe of the words of G-d must read it **in its proper time**, so that his recital will be considered in place of its offering,” are puzzling, for the fact that “his recital will be considered in place of its offering” is dependent upon whether it is read “**in its proper time**” [but, as we have discussed, the study of the sacrifices is not connected with the time when it must be offered].

The latter reasoning proves that the recital of the Order of the Pesach Sacrifice is literally considered like offering the Pesach sacrifice, and therefore, “The person who fears and is in awe of the words of G-d must read it **in its proper time**, so that his recital will be considered in place of its offering.”

This also explains the precision of the wording of *Shla* that appear prior to the Order of the Pesach Sacrifice. There the author mentions that the reason why prayers were instituted in place of sacrifices is because, “And let us render [for] bulls [the offering of] our lips,” and he continues, “Therefore, in order to accomplish, ‘**and let us render [for] bulls [the offering of] our lips**,’ it is proper to be involved in the study of the Pesach Sacrifice following the Afternoon Prayer,” emphasizing that a) the recital of the Order of the Pesach Sacrifice resembles the concept of prayer, b) the “and let us render [for] bulls [the offering of] our lips” accomplished through reciting the Order of the Pesach Sacrifices is dependent on whether it is said in its time, namely, “following the Afternoon Prayer.”

[To be continued be”H]

NOTES:

²⁰ 27b.

²¹ 31b.

²² Lech Lecha 15:8.

²³ Ibid 15:9.

²⁴ So it appears in Menachos ibid, “who are involved in the study of Torah” (without any further specification – see above, end of Footnote 17). However, in *Tur* and in the Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim, siman 50 (s’if 1)*, “who are involved in the **service**” (i.e., the laws of the service [in the Holy Temple]).

²⁵ See Footnote 25 in the original.

^{25*} See Footnote 25* in the original.

²⁶ See Footnote 26 in the original.

²⁷ See Footnote 27 in the original.

²⁸ Rather, only by means of adding in prayer, “May it be Your will that this is considered and received before You as if I offered, etc.,” especially when this is said in the context of one’s prayers (see *Tzemach Tzedek*, quoted later in Section 4), then it is considered as if it were an actual sacrifice, etc. – see Footnote 28 in the original.

²⁹ The Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch* ibid 98:4 from *Tur Shulchan Aruch* ibid. See *Eliyahu Rabba* mentioned in Footnote 41 – that this illustrates an advantage of prayer being in the place of a sacrifice.

³⁰ See Footnote 30 in the original.

³¹ *Tur Shulchan Aruch* and the *Shulchan Aruch* of the Alter Rebbe ibid *siman 50*.

³² Wording of the Alter Rebbe. A similar text appears, with slight variances, in *Seider HaYom* and *Siddur HaArizal*.

³³ See citations of Footnote 12.

³⁴ See *Likkutei Torah* BaMidbar 13a, end; *Maamarei Admur HaEmtza’i* BaMidbar Vol. 2, pg. 594; *Seifer HaMaamarim* 5655 pg. 34.

³⁵ T’hillim 134:1.

³⁶ *Siman 1*, also quoted in *Shulchan Aruch* (and in the *Shulchan Aruch* of the Alter Rebbe, First Edition) 1:1, 1:6 (13).

³⁷ Quoted in the Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch* ibid 14 ... *Eliyahu Zuta* on the *Uvush* ibid *os 8*.

³⁸ *Ohr HaTorah* Drushim L’Shavuos pg. 159, *Piskei Dinim L’HaTzemach Tzedek* (Kehos 5740) end, 79a (417) (74a (412) in the edition published in 5752).

^{38*} See above, Footnote 28.

³⁹ To note what is mentioned in *Ateres Z’keinim* on *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim* 1:5 – that it is permitted to say the Mishna of “Eizehu M’koman” before dawn.

⁴⁰ See Footnote 40 in the original.

⁴¹ See Footnote 41 in the original.

THE DOLLAR THAT WAITED 20 YEARS

An amazing story about the Rebbe's far-reaching vision

By Nosson Avrohom

R' Groner went to the Rebbe's room and came back with two dollars, which the Rebbe gave me, saying that one dollar was for me and the other dollar was for the taxi driver. I was a bit taken aback. What was that about a taxi driver? When should I give it to him? Which driver, the one who would take me to the airport or the one who would drive me when I arrived in Eretz Yisroel?

Rabbi Yisroel Feld of Sussia told me this amazing story that began twenty years ago with a dollar that he received from the Rebbe to be given to a taxi driver when he made aliya to Eretz Yisroel. The story came to its conclusion, with incredible hashgacha prat, three years ago in Yerushalayim before the fateful vote in the Likud party regarding whether they should support the expulsion from Gush

Katif.

R' Yisroel has related this story countless times in recent years, but each time, he says, he gets excited all over again by the Rebbe's vision. By the time he finished telling me the story, I had gotten swept up in his excitement. This is his first-hand account:

I began my t'shuva journey at the beginning of the 70's as a young bachur in the yeshiva for

baalei t'shuva in Morristown. That's when Chabad exploded on the world scene. At least that was the feeling people in America had. Today, looking back, those years in which I learned Chassidus and lived the Chassidic daily experience, the *dibbuk chaveirim* and above all else, the Shabbasos that we spent with the Rebbe in 770, made those years the best in my life.

I was still learning in Morristown in 1974. Some Shabbasos we brought Jewish high school kids from New Jersey to spend Shabbos with the Rebbe. I'll never forget those Shabbasos in which all of us in yeshiva went with these guys, Shabbason hosted by a Belzer Chassid who lived in Crown Heights by the name of Rabbi Trenk, a fabulous host.

We spent our time in 770, of course, davening and participating in farbrengens. Many became Lubavitchers, including many shluchim, who are now in cities across the world.

That year I finished learning in Morristown and decided to move to Eretz Yisroel. I was 24 years old. Before leaving, I went for a bracha from the Rebbe. I remember that it was Erev Rosh Chodesh. The Rebbe came back from the Ohel and it was dark already and they started Mincha.

Since my flight was that same night, I decided to take the opportunity and approach the Rebbe after Mincha. I was quite surprised when people tried to prevent me from doing so. Fortunately, the Rebbe noticed what was going on and he looked at me. I went over to him and told him I was about to fly to Eretz Yisroel and was making aliya and requested a bracha for a safe trip and a speedy acclimation.

The Rebbe asked R' Groner to bring him two dollars. R' Groner went to the Rebbe's room and came



back with two dollars, which the Rebbe gave me, saying that one dollar was for me and the other dollar was for the taxi driver. I was a bit taken aback. What was that about a taxi driver? When should I give it to him? Which driver, the one who would take me to the airport or the one who would drive me when I arrived in Eretz Yisroel?

No one I asked had an answer. Some said that if the Rebbe gave no

further instructions, he would let me know when to give the dollar.

I was preoccupied as I drove to the airport. I thought that the Rebbe surely wanted me to give the dollar to the Jewish taxi driver who would drive me in Eretz Yisroel, so I held on to the dollar.

I landed in Eretz Yisroel at two in the morning. I was exhausted. Thoughts about my move began to bother me. Where would I live?

What would I do? My Ivrit wasn't fluent and how would I manage?

When I left the terminal in Lud, a taxi from the Transit service was waiting. We were told that he was going to Yerushalayim and if you got on quickly, you would have a seat. Other people got in too. I was able to nod off a little. Everybody around me spoke Ivrit and many of them knew no English, including the driver. I felt overwhelmed.

I hurriedly left the taxi because everybody else rushed. I hadn't found the right time to give the driver the dollar. When the taxi drove off, I felt terrible.

At first I thought of locating the driver and giving him the dollar, but I pushed off the idea one day and then another. In the meantime, I was busy with all the details of finding my place in Eretz Yisroel, so I forgot all about the dollar, which remained in my wallet.

When my son Amishav became involved in Breslov and went to Rabbi Nachman's gravesite in Uman before he was inducted into the army, I gave him the dollar I had gotten from the Rebbe for myself, so that he would also be connected to the Lubavitcher Rebbe. In my wallet I still had the dollar for the driver. Every so often, when I got into a taxi, I was reminded of my shlichus, but I never had the feeling that it was the right time or the right person and the dollar remained with me.

Twenty years went by from the day I received the dollar from the Rebbe. Three years ago, Likud had to vote whether to support Sharon in expelling Jews from Gush Katif and the north of Shomron. Sharon promised that if they voted his plan down, he would honor their vote, a promise he did not keep, and he cruelly destroyed Gush Katif. Anyone who cared about Eretz Yisroel made a concerted effort to persuade the members of Likud to vote against this crime.

A few days before the vote, I went from my home in Sussia to Yerushalayim. I got into a taxi and noticed a picture of the Rebbe hanging in front.

A few minutes went by and then the driver, of course, began a conversation. He said, "I see that you're a settler. You know, besides being a taxi driver, I'm a member of Likud."

I sat to attention and I said: Surely you're going to vote against Sharon's plan to expel your brothers with such shocking defeatism?

I figured that if he had a picture of the Rebbe in his car, he surely knew about the Rebbe's vehement opposition to giving away parts of Eretz Yisroel to our enemies. I was quickly disabused of this notion.

"How can I vote against the prime minister?" he asked in surprise. "I gave him my word that I would vote for him and a word is a word, and as painful as it is, I can't renege on my promise."

This really bothered me. I could tell by looking at him that the driver was traditionally observant and it was only his naiveté and lack of understanding that would cause him to support a course of action that defied the Torah and halacha as well as basic morality. I said, "You have a picture of the Rebbe and everybody knows that the Rebbe opposed giving away land. He cried at farbrengens over the Jewish blood that was spilled as a result of these concessions. Doesn't that bother you?"

Then I suddenly remembered the dollar I had received from the Rebbe to give to a taxi driver. I said, "You know what? I have a dollar for you that I received directly from the Rebbe's holy hand." I told him the story and said, "Apparently the Rebbe meant you. For twenty years it has been waiting in my wallet so that I can give it to you today. Now, what is more important to you, a handshake of Ariel Sharon or a dollar from the Lubavitcher Rebbe?"

I'll never forget what happened next. He turned pale and I thought he was having a heart attack. He stopped the car on the side of the road and I had no idea what was going on. His forehead was beaded

with sweat and he looked in shock.

A few minutes went by and then he looked at me and said, "You don't know what happened just now." Then he told me his story.

"In recent months I have been getting more involved in Judaism through a Chabad Chassid. I learn with him and he gave me the picture of the Rebbe. I have been thinking about how I have to get my wife and children involved too, but they are not excited about this, as I am. All my attempts to get my wife to dress modestly have failed and this bothers me very much.

"When I left the house this morning, we had a fight that began after I commented about her lack of concern for kashrus. She really got angry at me. She said I am not the person she knew and that I went crazy.

"Until this morning she restrained her feelings somewhat, but today she told me exactly what she thinks of what I am doing and she heaped upon my head buckets of scorn and ridicule. She followed me out to the garage and one of the things she said to me, before I closed the door and left, was, 'Why are you enamored of the Lubavitcher Rebbe? He may have been an important person but he's no longer here and the fact is that I won't be able to get a dollar from him the way he used to give them out.'

"This was the first time I felt bad about my whole process of t'shuva. What she said struck home. And now, the very first passenger I take in my cab is you, and you offer me a dollar from the Rebbe that you received from the Rebbe himself to be given to a taxi driver."

* * *

It took him a long time to calm down, concluded R' Yisroel. I was quite excited myself. I gave him the dollar and he promised to give it to his wife.

Kupas Rabbeinu

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B"H 16th of Adar II, 5768

MO'OS CHITIM

To All Anash and Temimim שי

Sholom U'vrocho!

Throughout the years, during the Rebbe's Purim Farbrengen ("Thirty days before the Chag (Pesach)"), the Rebbe would customarily remind and urge everyone concerning the importance of contributing Tzedakah for "Mo'os Chitim."

It is well known that "Kupas Rabbeinu" endeavors to continue implementing all of the holy projects and activities which the Rebbe has established. Amongst these activities is the Rebbe's practice to extend financial aid to those families in need of their various Pesach necessities.

Accordingly, we are at this time urging and requesting each and every Anash member and Tomim שיחי to contribute generously to "Kupas Rabbeinu," in order to enable the administration to provide for these families and thus afford them with the opportunity to celebrate Pesach with contentment and joy.

Regarding this Mitzvah it is stated: "Whoever increases (in giving) is praiseworthy."

Unfortunately, the amount of families in need of this financial assistance is more than generally assumed. As such, the more generous your contribution to "Kupas Rabbeinu," the greater the number of families receiving assistance will be.

And since, with regard to all Mitzvahs we are instructed to act with Simcha and zest, it is all the more pertinent with regard to the aforementioned, as it is of paramount importance that the funds be received and distributed as soon as possible.

In the merit of Tzedakah which hastens the Geula, may we merit the true Geula Shlaimah, with the revelation of Melech HaMashiach - The Rebbe Nasi Doreinu, immediately, Mamash.

Chag HaPesach Kosher V'Sameach

Vaad Kupas Rabbeinu

P.S. 1) The traditional "Magvis Yud Shevat, Purim" can also be sent at this time, as well as all other Magvios.

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KIRYAT MALACHI – ISRAEL

‘SINCE IT CAME OUT FROM THE MOUTH OF THE REBBE’

By Rabbi Zalman Hertzfel

Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry

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

The Gemara (Sukka 32b) states the following:

What is considered “thick-leaved” [hadasim of the Four Species on Sukkos]? Rabbi Yehuda says: The existence of clusters of three leaves on one branch. Rabbi Kahana says: Even two and one. Rabbi Acha son of Rabba was strict about [using hadasim with] two and one, since it came out from the mouth of Rabbi Kahana.

The Gemara here tells that Rabbi Acha, the student of Rabbi Kahana, strictly took for his *Daled Minim* a “*hadas shoteh*,” i.e., a myrtle branch that has only “two leaves on one branch and one leaf below that spreads out and covers the [other] two” (ibid., Rashi’s commentary).

Why was Rabbi Acha so stringent about taking specifically such a “problematic” *hadas*? Because his rav, Rabbi Kahana, had declared that even such a *hadas* was perfectly fit for use on Sukkos (“Rabbi Kahana says: Even two and one” – is kosher).

In other words, while Rabbi Kahana said **even** two and one, whereas a *hadas m’shulash* (with clusters of three leaves) is certainly preferable (“three on one branch is **most definitely** kosher”), nevertheless, in order to emphasize his connection to his rav, Rabbi Acha **stringently** took specifically a *hadas shoteh* (“two and one”) – “since it came out from [his] mouth,” from the mouth of the rav.

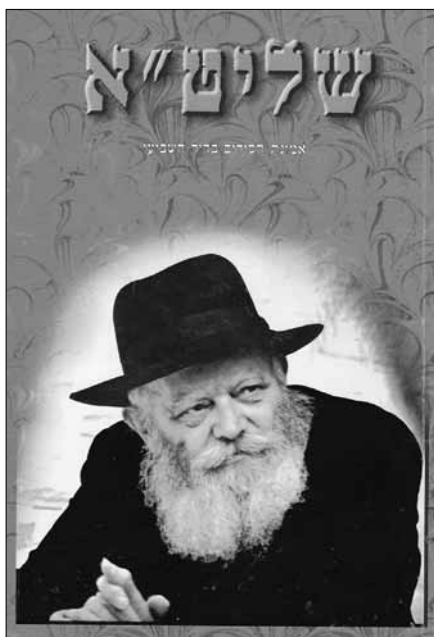
The question is asked:

What’s happening here? Was

Rabbi Kahana’s student **really** connected to him or not? Let’s look at it both ways.

If his student is acting as if he is to be considered (not just a student but) a “*m’kushar*” – i.e., a great chassid who copies the holy conduct of his teacher, Rabbi Kahana – he too should take a *hadas m’shulash*, with “three [leaves] on one branch,” as his teacher himself did. (NOTE: See *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. 19, pg. 282: “Even though the rav himself issuing the halachic ruling, Rabbi Kahana, was not stringent that it should be specifically ‘two and one.’”) And if he doesn’t deem himself to be a big chassid or *m’kushar*, but just an ordinary student, a good Jew like all the other “common folk,” he conducts himself as the rest of the Jewish People, and takes a *hadas m’shulash*. Why all the yearning and effort to go after a *hadas shoteh*, simply because Rabbi Kahana declared that such a *hadas* is fit for use in the Four Species on Sukkos?

Isn’t this something of an absurdity? “Since it came out **from the mouth** of Rabbi Kahana” – the **speech** of Rabbi Kahana brings the



student to practical fulfillment to the point of self-sacrifice, whereas “the **action** of Rabbi Kahana” – his personal conduct in holy matters – is considered irrelevant?

If we continue to illustrate and describe what’s happening here, we see something most peculiar: Rabbi Kahana came in for Shacharis on Sukkos with his meticulously chosen *Daled Minim*, including naturally an excellent *hadas m’shulash*, while there stands his student, the chassid Rabbi Acha, getting pushed among all the other students/chassidim and trying to follow after his rav’s holy conduct, while he holds in his hands his own set of *Daled Minim*, including...a myrtle branch of “two and one”? What kind of “hiskashrus” is that?

HISKASHRUS – NOT AT THE EXPENSE OF THE RAV’S WORDS

Yet, this Gemara teaches us an important lesson in the doctrine of *hiskashrus*:

When a chassid comes to copy his rav’s holy conduct, he must know that it is forbidden for this matter to come at the expense of

things stated explicitly from the rav’s mouth. (NOTE: See what Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Ginsberg writes at length on this matter in *Beis Moshiach*, Issue #22, pg. 11-12.)

This represents a clear case of *kal v’chomer*: If Rabbi Acha sees a way in *hiskashrus* by carrying out what his rav said (not as an order and an instruction but) merely as a possibility (“even two and one”), and specifically in this manner he reveals the nature and magnitude of his *hiskashrus* (despite the fact that at that moment he is neglecting the practical imitation of his rav), then when it is clearly heard from the mouth of the rav (in the form of an instruction) not to copy a certain action, there is surely no place for actually copying the rav.

To understand this concept, we will first quote a few excerpts from the Rebbe shlita’s teachings on “the *hiskashrus* doctrine.” We will begin by making it clear that this doctrine is lengthy, extensive, and many faceted. In a variety of sources, there is a need for greater clarity and precision to put things in proper perspective. For a fuller understanding of this concept, we must take a closer look at the sources cited here in connection with our discussion and elsewhere. (NOTE: See the beginning of *Seifer HaMinhagim*; the *kuntres “Minhagei HaMelech”* – Rabbi Menachem Teichman – ‘*Hiskashrus*’ section; “*Tzaddik L’Melech*” 6 – *Shaar Inyanei Hiskashrus*; “*Mishbachei Rabi*’, pg. 114, etc.)

ENCOURAGING CONDUCT ACCORDING TO THE REBBE’S CUSTOM

The Rebbe writes in one of his correspondence (*Igros Kodesh* Vol. 9, pg. 31):

And particularly between chassidim and their teachers, who

try in the style of their letters, and in their general comings and goings, to be like their Rebbeim.

In another letter, the Rebbe writes (*Igros Kodesh*, Vol. 3, pg. 31):

And regarding the degree of *hiskashrus*, its essential and established nature (and especially as no physical place is sufficient), all of us must especially gird and strengthen ourselves in adhering to the instructions of our Rebbeim, the leaders of Chabad, their customs and their movements with relevance to us (particularly those that belong solely to the nasi himself).

On Shabbos Parshas Eikev 5745, the Rebbe said (*Hisvaaduyos B’Lashon HaKodesh* 5745, Vol. 5, pg. 2762):

Publicize the relevant customs to all the members of the generation or perform them in a revealed manner, for then the matter will constitute an instruction in practical terms for all those who saw and heard this mode of conduct, especially according to the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov – that seeing or hearing something in the world



The chassid meticulously does all in his power to be connected to every utterance that emanates from the Rebbe's mouth. In other words, his hiskashrus is his hiddur!

constitutes an instruction in Avodas Hashem – and even more so regarding seeing and hearing a mode of conduct from the leader of the generation. It has reached the point that there are concepts that were not revealed in the preceding generations, yet when the time came, they were revealed through my revered and holy teacher and father-in-law, the Rebbe, leader of our generation.

On Shabbos Parshas VaYishlach 5743, the Rebbe said (*Hisvaaduyos B'Lashon HaKodesh* 5743, Vol. 1, pg. 585):

The purpose of publicizing these things is to emphasize that since there was such conduct from the leader of the generation, *this is an instruction for the whole generation*, for “the body goes after the head,” and therefore, since each person is a part of the “body” relevant to the leader of the generation (wanting and striving to be even more pertinent and connected), when we tell him about a custom of the leader of the generation, first and foremost, *he knows that he must also act in this fashion.*

On Shabbos Parshas D'varim 5742, the Rebbe said (*Hisvaaduyos B'Lashon HaKodesh* 5742, Vol. 4, pg. 1964):

There's a special zeal in acting according to the words of one's rav, even when this conduct is a leniency and there exists the possibility of being stringent.

On Acharon Shel Pesach 5712, the Rebbe said (*Hisvaaduyos B'Lashon HaKodesh* 5712, pg. 146):

Since he knows that this is the conduct of the Rebbeim, he doesn't have to look for hiddurim. On the contrary, he has to be meticulous specifically about this mode of conduct (“strict about [using *hadasim* with] two and one”)...the hiddur is to do according to the instruction of the Rebbeim.

(On the matter of the special care in following the custom of the Rebbeim, even when it demonstrates leniency, i.e., being the very expression of hiddur, it would be appropriate to note some examples of what it is explained at length frequently throughout *Likkutei Sichos*: a) in Vol. 21, the Rebbe explains in the second sicha on Parshas B'Shalach that the custom of our Rebbeim not to eat bread at the Seudas Shlishis on Shabbos is because they feel the lofty illumination that shines at that time (similar to Yom Kippur and the World to Come, which have neither eating nor drinking). Even the chassidim, who didn't feel this light – “yet they are connected to them, learn their teachings (for the purpose of doing), and walk in their path.” b) in the Sukkos sicha from Vol. 29, the Rebbe explains that the custom of the Rebbeim not to sleep in the sukkah is because they feel the “transcendent lights of Bina,” and therefore, they are simply unable to sleep in the sukkah (being exempt due to “distress”), as

are the chassidim, who “are connected to them,” etc. Furthermore, when “chassidim do not actually conduct themselves as much as possible according to the custom of their Rebbeim, this causes them distress – and someone distressed is exempt from the mitzva of sukkah.” See there at length.

(Thus, we have explanations that emphasize how much a chassid must be connected to his Rebbe, even in situations where he doesn't feel what his Rebbe feels, and all this is based upon the words of the aforementioned Gemara – “since it came out from the mouth of Rabbi Kahana” – the chassid meticulously does all in his power to be connected to every utterance that emanates from the Rebbe's mouth. In other words, **his hiskashrus is his hiddur!**)

In a sicha from the fifth night of Sukkos 5748 (*Hisvaaduyos* 5748, Vol. 1, pg. 244), the Rebbe discussed at length the conduct of the Rebbe Rayatz while holding the *Daled Minim*. This sicha shows us how far this concept can reach:

Those who contemplated [the Rebbe Rayatz's] conduct saw that after each shake, he would seemingly look at the esrog in order to determine whether it received a scratch (“kritz”).

Furthermore, it can be said that this is the reason why he didn't hold the esrog for the entire recitation of Hallel, rather only when necessary (for the *naanui*) – out of concern that it might get scratched, etc. Naturally, and quite simply, the more one holds the esrog, the greater the chance of scratching it, and therefore, he refrained from holding the esrog, except when necessary.

In addition, we saw this conduct in the later years when the state of health of my revered and holy teacher and father-in-

law, the Rebbe, was not its best, etc. (whereas in the preceding years, when his health was in proper order, we (at least I) didn't see this mode of conduct in the aforementioned matter).

Therefore, there was greater care in protecting the esrog by not holding it except when necessary (during the *naanuim*), as the esrog might receive a scratch when his hands were shaking, etc.

Thus, we find in the Gemara of "Rabbi Acha son of Rabba was strict about [using *hadasim* with] two and one, since it came out from the mouth of Rabbi Kahana"...and accordingly in our discussion: Since my revered and holy teacher and father-in-law, the Rebbe, actually accustomed himself in the stated manner (for whatever reason), many chassidim

who were exact in their contemplation of his conduct also began conducting themselves in this matter (taking only the lulav during the recitation of Hallel, and joining the esrog to it only when shaking them, and also checking the esrog after the *naanuim*, etc.), according to the custom of the Rebbeim.

(It should be noted that even though it seems that there is no order to "copy" the Rebbe's conduct in all matters, we have seen among the early chassidim that in those matters connected with the additional degree of care and precision that they had seen in the Rebbe, they would accustom themselves in this manner.) (NOTE: See the sicha in greater depth for more details on the subject of *hiskashrus*.)

Above all, these sichos bring out the greatness of the concept of *hiskashrus*, as expressed, among other things, in emulating the conduct of the Rebbeim and trying to be stringent about it.

Furthermore, (we learn from the aforementioned sicha from Sukkos 5748 that) it doesn't matter what caused the Rebbe to conduct himself in a certain way, as it definitely appears that the Rebbe's reason has no relevance whatsoever to the chassid (as in the example where the previous Rebbe's conduct stemmed from the state of his health, etc.), nevertheless, the very fact that the Rebbe accustoms himself in a certain fashion causes the chassid to try to emulate his actions.

On the other hand...

[To be continued be"H]

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‘YOU’LL PROBABLY SHOW COMPASSION’

By Rabbi Naftali Estulin, Shliach, Los Angeles, California

Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry

Every avreich should think to himself – outside of his time at work, how many hours per week of free time does he have, and how many of those hours are devoted to spreading the announcement of the Redemption and preparing the world to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu? And if we’re not fulfilling the Rebbe’s instructions as chassidim should – we should at least fulfill them as “good people,” and in the words of the Rebbe: “Since you’re good people, you’ll probably show compassion...and you’ll obey.”

The Gemara states that the destruction of the kingdom of Hoshea ben Elah, the last of the kings of Israel, by Shalmaneser, king of Ashur, was a punishment for the fact that “he removed the collar from his neck and placed it upon the neck of the many.”

Since the days of Yeravam ben Nebat, there were barriers on the roads leading to Yerushalayim. Yeravam was concerned that if

people would go up to Yerushalayim, where the king was from the House of Dovid, they would renew their loyalty to the House of Dovid, and he would lose his subjects. Therefore, he set up sentries to prevent passage into the territory of the kingdom of Yehuda.

Hoshea ben Elah, who ruled several generations later, decided to allow his subjects to travel to Yerushalayim. This occurred on the

15th of Av, as stated in the Gemara, “when Hoshea ben Elah abolished the sentries which Yeravam had erected.”

The Gemara brings that Rabbi Kahana asked Rav: How is it possible that Hoshea ben Elah did something so good, yet he was eventually punished with the exile of Ashur?

Rav replied: Because he removed the collar from his neck and placed it upon the neck of the many. That is, because he didn’t tell the entire people to go on pilgrimage to Yerushalayim. Rather, he merely said that anyone who wants could go up to Yerushalayim.

Our Sages, of blessed memory, established that Hoshea ben Elah’s positive deed showed how detached the Jewish nation was from its roots, thus making the destruction possible. Until then, the leaders had prevented the people from serving G-d in the Beis HaMikdash in Yerushalayim. But now, it had become clear that the people did not take advantage of the opportunity that they had been given to serve G-d, resulting in the decree of destruction.

In the Purim 5714 farbrengen, the Rebbe quoted the aforementioned Gemara, saying:

“When a Jew says words of reproach, if his words have the proper effect, it’s good for him and



good for those listening. But if not, this exemplifies the words of the Gemara in the matter of Hoshea ben Elah.

“In our discussion, when people sit and talk about the subject of kosher education, the study of chassidus, etc., if things have their proper effect, this is good for me and good for you. However, if not, *‘Vahs darf men sh tupn a gezunte kahp in a kranke bet?’* (why put a healthy head into a sickbed?). As my revered and holy father-in-law, the Rebbe, used to say: *‘Zahl er zitzn ba zich in katoch!’* (he should stay and sit in his ‘hole!’)

“Therefore, I request of you: Since you’re good people, you’ll probably show compassion...and you’ll obey: be involved in kosher education and learn chassidus!”

YOU’RE GOOD PEOPLE, YOU’LL PROBABLY SHOW COMPASSION...AND OBEY

I learned this sicha a couple of weeks ago, and I was shocked.

I recalled in the sicha from Chaf-Ches Nissan 5751, where the Rebbe placed upon us the task of doing everything in our ability to bring Moshiach Tzidkeinu in actual deed, and I thought to myself:

The Rebbe says that when he demands something from the

chassidim, and when the chassidim fulfill his demand, it’s good for him and it’s good for us.

However, when we don’t fulfill the Rebbe’s instructions, it’s as if we place the Rebbe’s healthy head into our sickbed!

Then, I read the Rebbe’s words again: “Since you’re good people, you’ll probably show compassion...and you’ll obey.”

Are we actually showing the Rebbe compassion? Let’s make a personal accounting, in heart and soul, and think: How much of our time are we devoting to activities in bringing the Redemption?

Every avreich should think to himself – outside of his time at work – how many hours per week of free time does he have, and how many of those hours are devoted to spreading the announcement of the Redemption and preparing the world to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu?

Even we, the shluchim, who are involved in the Rebbe’s shlichus by carrying out the various mitzva campaigns – how much do we instill the *nekuda* of Moshiach into all the mitvtzaim? How many of our friends and supporters know about Moshiach, and how many are actually preparing themselves to greet him?

And if we’re not fulfilling the Rebbe’s instructions as chassidim should – we should at least fulfill them as “good people,” and in the words of the Rebbe: “Since you’re good people, you’ll probably show compassion...and you’ll obey.”

(It is appropriate to note that on Purim 5747, when the Rebbe made known (similar to the sicha from Chaf-Ches Nissan 5751) that the task to hasten the Redemption has passed from the nasi to the people, the Rebbe again mentioned the statement of the Gemara about Hoshea ben Elah, establishing that we’re not talking here about shirking responsibility, but merely hastening the public to do another action to

bring the Redemption closer.)

THE TRUE OPINIONS ARE DRAWN AFTER THE REALITY

In continuation of that sicha, Purim 5714, the Rebbe establishes that the overall situation is in a manner of “a world upside down,” i.e., the running of the world is not according to logic.

The Rebbe relates how he was in France during the Second World War against Nazi Germany. There were strong reinforcements in France at the time, whereas the Germans had nothing, and nevertheless, they went to war against the French. When the Germans were asked how they could go out to war in such a fashion, they replied that this was a matter of fortitude that has no place in the realm of logic. In practical terms, however, the Germans vanquished the French at that stage of the war. After this “minor” German success (in their war against France), there was no logical possibility of ending the occupation, since there was no way of getting them out of there. Nevertheless, this too was achieved.

Similarly, the events that occurred afterwards in Eretz Yisroel were also not according to logic: the end of the British Mandate, the establishment and maintenance of Jewish sovereignty, etc. The proof of this comes from the fact that among the Jews themselves, there were those who claimed that they should not take control, since it wouldn’t last for long, etc. Yet, the modern Jewish state has existed now for nearly sixty years, and in a manner not dictated by logic, but through miracles.

Therefore, the Rebbe concludes, we find that the situation is in a manner of “a world upside down” – everything happening in the world has no place in the realm of logic.

The Rebbe thereby derives that in

We clearly see today that those shluchim who are vigorously active in the subject of Moshiach and the Redemption, and tell their friends and supporters that there is a Rebbe in Israel, chai v'kayam, continuing to provide guidance, instructions, blessings, and spiritual influence – succeed in bringing hundreds and thousands of Jews closer to Chabad and the Rebbe's teachings.

relation to the spreading of the teachings of chassidus, this is a tremendous quality:

Since the world is not run according to logic, there is no need to get into arguments about chassidus (similar to all the arguments that took place in the past, etc.). Instead, when someone comes with complaints against the teachings of chassidus, etc., the

reply is quite simple: What's the point to all these "opinions"? You know that the world is not run according to logic, and so instead of dealing with "logical interpretations," look at the reality and see what chassidus has brought about!

In years past, it was possible to be a proper Jew, even reaching the loftiest spiritual levels, without studying chassidus. However, in our times, the reality has proven that we must come to the teachings of chassidus, and there are many actual miracles in this matter. Therefore, what is the reason for all the logical explanations and elucidations – when we see the reality?

The Rambam writes: "The reality is not drawn after opinions, but true opinions are drawn after the reality." In other words, when a person has a certain approach and he sees the reality in a different way, he must change his opinion according to the reality, and not try to "cut" the reality to fit his opinion!

In addition, just as we see in worldly matters that it makes no difference if a certain matter is logical or not, rather we go with fortitude and self-sacrifice, etc., as in all the aforementioned examples, similarly, we find that when our involvement in the matter of spreading the wellsprings of chassidus is with fortitude and self-sacrifice, there is great success. Furthermore, this leads to the fulfillment of "your wellsprings will spread to the outside," thereby bringing the fulfillment of the concept of "the Master will come."

This is the essence of the sicha from Purim 5714, and it is no less relevant today:

Even in the last decade, there have been many incidents throughout the world that were totally irrational, foremost among them, the United States going to war in Iraq, leading to the capture and execution of the

bitter enemy, Saddam Hussein. With the rapid pace of current events, people are liable to forget that the reason that America went to war against Saddam Hussein was his development of weapons of mass destruction. To this day, the Americans have failed to provide adequate proof that Saddam was in fact developing such weapons. Yet, in the meantime, the war began, and the Iraqi threat that had hovered over Eretz Yisroel for decades had, thank G-d, been removed.

Thus, anyone who looked around him saw more countless examples of the world's superpowers acting in a manner of "a world upside down."

The Rebbe says that all this was designed to teach us that we must not be affected by such "rational" considerations. The reality operates in a totally different fashion...

There are those who convince themselves, while exercising much logic, that people today are simply not ready to accept the Rebbe's announcement of the Redemption in literal terms. They have placed a stamp marked "unacceptable" on all the sichos from 5752, refraining from learning and spreading the Rebbe's clear words in these sichos that we are now after the revelation of Moshiach's existence, and Melech HaMoshiach is already taking action in the world from his dwelling place in New York, etc. etc.

It stands to reason that while their arguments stand up to the test of logic, it is clear today that they don't stand up to the test of reality: They should go and visit shluchim who are actively involved in spreading the Rebbe's announcement of the Redemption, preparing their friends and supporters for the coming of Moshiach, and they'll see the type of success attainable when outreach activities are permeated with the concept of Redemption.

We clearly see today that those

shluchim who are vigorously active in the subject of Moshiach and the Redemption, and tell their friends and supporters that there is a Rebbe in Israel, chai v'kayam, continuing to provide guidance, instructions, blessings, and spiritual influence – succeed in bringing hundreds and thousands of Jews closer to Chabad and the Rebbe's teachings.

18 YEARS BETWEEN THE “VISITATION” AND THE REDEMPTION

The Gemara in Tractate Megilla relates that Belshazzar erred in his calculation of the seventy years of the Babylonian Exile. After he determined according to his computations that seventy years had passed and the Jewish People had not been redeemed, he thought to himself that they would never be redeemed again, and he proceeded to use the vessels of the Beis HaMikdash. Then, the hidden hand appeared and wrote the hidden writing that was later deciphered by the Prophet Daniel as a prophecy of the destruction of Bavel. In fact, on that very night, Belshazzar was killed, and the Persians conquered Bavel.

After Belshazzar, Achashverosh thought that he was a real smart guy who knew how to figure out the appointed time to the end of the exile. He calculated the seventy years in a different way, and came to the conclusion that they ended after two years of his reign. Therefore, he too

brought out the vessels of the Beis HaMikdash at the famous banquet.

Since both of them relied upon p'sukim of the Torah, the Gemara asks the question: “Nevertheless, the p'sukim have difficulty corresponding” – there is an apparent contradiction between two Torah verses, showing a difference of eighteen years!

The Gemara replies: “Rabba says, it's a general visitation,” i.e., the first pasuk which relates to the period eighteen years before the construction of the Beis HaMikdash does not deal with the Complete Redemption and the building of the Beis HaMikdash, but it is a general visitation.

The Maharsha explains: Despite the fact that the building of the Beis HaMikdash was prohibited during those eighteen years, nevertheless, there was a “visitation,” as some of the Jewish People settled in Eretz Yisroel.

If we cast the words of the Gemara upon our situation, we discover something truly marvelous:

Eighteen years ago, in 5750, the Rebbe proclaimed that this was “the year when Melech HaMoshiach is revealed,” thus beginning the great shturem on the coming of Moshiach. The Rebbe stated that there had already been the hisgalus of Moshiach's existence, and he was already having an effect in the world, etc. etc.

Eighteen years have passed since then, and we still haven't come to the long-awaited Redemption, the

building of the Beis HaMikdash, and the ingathering of the exiles. But most importantly, we are faced with the manifold darkness of not physically seeing the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, with our own eyes.

The Gemara in Tractate Megilla comes to teach us two things:

First, we cannot be stupid like Belshazzar and Achashverosh, who thought they understood the reckoning of G-d Alm-ghty, and when they saw that the Jewish People were still in exile, they decided that the announcement of the Redemption had been invalidated.

Even if we go through years that have not been so easy, even very difficult, we never lose our complete faith in the words of the Rebbe, even for a moment, doing everything in order to hasten that long-awaited moment when we will see the Redemption, and we will understand how all these years were vital stages in the process of hisgalus.

Secondly, in the year that the Rebbe proclaimed as “the year when Melech HaMoshiach is revealed,” there was a “Divine visitation” – the fall of Communism and the beginning of the emigration from the Soviet Union and other countries. Thus, in this year, eighteen years after that “Divine visitation,” we must intensify our activities in order that we shall merit the True and Complete Redemption in the Third Beis HaMikdash – immediately, mamash, NOW!

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IF HE BROUGHT US TO PESACH AT 1414, DAYEINU!

By Yisroel Yehuda

Shimi is a young Israeli who was niskarev by the shliach in his city. The shliach sent him to join the T'mimim in the dining room of 1414 President Street for Pesach. There, he met Zev and Mendy, two T'mimim, who prepared him for the seider and learned the halachos and customs with him, spicing their learning with interesting stories about Pesach in Lubavitch.

The story begins two years ago when I contacted the shliach in my city and slowly became more observant. I spent my first Pesach in the shliach's home, an unforgettable experience.

Before my second Pesach, the shliach called me to his office and among the piles of shmura matza and dozens of cartons for *kimcha d'pische* (food for Pesach for the poor), he found the time and place to sit down with me and talk. He said, "I also started becoming

observant as a young man, like you. At a certain point, I began learning in the yeshiva in Kfar Chabad and then I went on K'vutza, where I learned how to make a Lubavitcher seider with all the details and customs.

"It wasn't just me. Dozens of T'mimim learned how to make a proper Chabad seider during their year on K'vutza. That is why I am suggesting that you do the same thing. I'll assign one of the wonderful bachurim on K'vutza to



you. Zev is his name. And I guarantee you that you will want to go back there again next year.”

“Next year in Yerushalayim,” I quoted the conclusion of the Hagada, and the shliach smiled and said, “Believe me, even in Yemos HaMoshiach, the seider with the T’mimim on K’vutza (which will be in Yerushalayim) will be the most mehudar. You’ll take a bus to Yerushalayim and look for where the talmidim on K’vutza are sitting and join them for the seider.”

I won’t describe my arrival in New York or go on at length about my feelings and excitement of being in 770. The guys with whom I had already become a little friendly, described me as being *b’oros* (caught up in the intensity of the “lights,” the bright revelations), but it seemed to me that they would be happy to be *b’ratzo* like me.

LESSON #1 YOU DON’T JUST SAY THE HAGADA, YOU LEARN IT

About a week and a half before Pesach, Zev arranged to learn the Hagada with me. The truth is that I was taken aback by the idea. Learn the Hagada? You recite



the Hagada! You say it and sing it. Do you mean the tractate P'sachim?

However, Zev, as usual, flashed me his wonderful smile and left me wondering. It was only when we sat down and Zev opened two thick Hagados that I began to see what he meant. I saw the large letters of the text of the Hagada with lengthy explanations underneath.

"The Rebbe wrote this Hagada," began Zev. "The words of the Hagada have many explanations. Dozens, perhaps hundreds, of editions of ancient Hagados have been published by tzaddikim and gaonim, with explanations on every jot and tittle in the Hagada. The Rebbe, in his ingenious commentary, briefly condenses the important explanations on the Hagada. On the Rebbe's commentary alone, there has been much analyses and research. Perhaps we will learn that after Pesach! For now, we are simply going to learn what the Rebbe wrote on the words of the Hagada.

"You are probably surprised to learn that the Hagada is part of the Siddur that was edited by the Alter Rebbe. All the instructions are an integral part of the Hagada. Every word is written in the beautiful language of the Alter Rebbe and is utterly precise.

"If you are still not convinced, you should know that the Rebbe himself, during the seider of the Rebbe Rayatz, before everything he did, he would first read the instruction written in the Hagada."

I was amazed. After all, the Rebbe is a gaon and tzaddik and he surely knows everything he needs to know by heart. Why did he read the instructions?

"I don't know why the Rebbe did what he did, but as Chassidim, it is a lesson for us: Whatever it says in the Siddur and Hagada is holy, and every detail must be related to with the utmost seriousness. Even if we remember the instruction from the



previous year, it should be read again with the proper attention, as though reading it for the first time."

I commented that it was just like Krias HaTorah. Even though I heard it read last year, I have to hear it again this year.

Zev nodded his agreement. "Every day it should be as new in your eyes."

LESSON #2 THIRTY HOURS BEFORE PESACH

As part of my spiritual preparations for Pesach I read a lot of Chassidic stories about Pesach. I read an amazing story about a Tamim in Tomchei T'mimim in

Lubavitch. The Rebbe Rashab observed a certain coarseness on the bachur's face which was the result of unrefined character traits. In order to "cure" him, the Rebbe told his son, later to be the Rebbe Rayatz, who was the menahel of the yeshiva, to give this talmid all the heavy work to do in preparation for Yom Tov.

He was given a vital job in the baking of the matzos, then he was appointed to one of the tables of the talmidim during the seider, and the next day he had to review a long and complicated maamer of Chassidus! In the Rebbe Rayatz's description, we read about how this bachur was given more work than he could handle – and it helped! The Rebbe Rashab said that his face had

changed and he looked more refined.

That is why I am coming now from the kitchen at 1414, where I sifted salt. Apparently Zev decided I needed to work hard before Pesach, otherwise I don't understand why he insisted that I take a turn in the bachurim's kitchen. Some of the others tried to stop him from urging me to help out, saying I wouldn't last. "If he sees what they are preparing to eat on Pesach, he'll run back to Eretz Yisroel," they said, but Zev was adamant.

In order to understand how I got to sift salt, I have to explain. The feverish preparations for Pesach begin for the talmidim on K'vutza about three weeks before Pesach. Large quantities of food arrive (a ton of carp, for example). Most of the preparations and some of the cooking is done before Pesach and it is all done with maximum efficiency.

In order to be able to deal with the huge amount of work, each bachur has to take his turn and lend a hand to the kitchen detail. Every night, bachurim peel mounds of potatoes, onions, carrots, and even chicken.

Mussia runs the show. There is probably no bachur who was on K'vutza who won't smile at the name Mussia. Mrs. Mussia is a widow who is in charge of the kitchen that serves the bachurim on Pesach. Throughout the preparations for Pesach, Mussia's life revolves solely around the kitchen and what is going on there. The bachurim told me that she is utterly devoted to providing the bachurim with food that is kosher b'hiddur.

Someone told me that Mrs. Mussia refuses a salary for this. She says that the Rebbe's bracha is her salary. I did not find out yet what the Rebbe's bracha is, but I will check it out.

What the bachurim don't like to admit is that Mussia is more

particular than they are. They like to think of themselves as the *shpitz* of the world when it comes to hiddurim and kashrus, but to Mussia they are suspect, each one of them, no exceptions. Compared to her and her hiddurim and hekpeidos, they are like average people. So Mussia keeps a watchful eye on what is going on in the kitchen, gives orders, puts on all the pots and most importantly – makes sure that every stringency is adhered to. The reputation of a kitchen that is mehudar for Pesach is thanks to this righteous woman. Make no mistake about it, the bachurim are no slouches when it comes to kashrus, but here, in the kitchen, all are subservient to Queen Mussia.

Since Zev urged me to do it, I showed up at the kitchen at the appointed time. I was greeted by the delightful fragrance of cooking as well as a big commotion. People were rushing here and there. The oldest bachurim sat as a group, surrounded by garbage pails filled with potatoes and they peeled and peeled and peeled. As they did so, a peel flew off into a pot of lemon juice. The bachur turned pale, looked around and when he saw that nobody was watching (i.e., Mussia) he leaped over to the pot and removed the peel as he mumbled, "She would spill out the entire pot..."

When I asked him why she

would do that when it wasn't Pesach yet and chametz is nullified in sixty (I had learned some halachos), he said, "According to Mussia, if we followed the *Shulchan Aruch* we would have eaten chametz a long time ago."

The bachurim enjoyed this comment and I went off to my job, which is one of the hiddurim of the K'vutza's kitchen, sifting the coarse salt which is used for cooking before Pesach. Five piles of coarse salt were prepared, sifted like flour.

Bachurim generally show up in the dining room for a meal that is already prepared, and don't mix into what is going on in the kitchen. Preparing for Pesach gives them an opportunity to get a peek at and to experience the hard work that goes on behind the scenes. That is how I got to see the "varied" ingredients of a Pesach kitchen, which consisted only of: chicken, fish, lemons, a few fruits, horseradish, eggs, potatoes, carrots and onions. Maybe I forgot something but that's about all, or almost all. They did not use oil but *schmaltz* (chicken fat).

They said that the *memuneh* (the one appointed) over the kitchen, who was an older bachur with experience from previous years, always got Mussia's blessing and the following year her blessing was fulfilled, the bachur became a chassan. Mussia would also bring the memunim a special pastry made

THE REBBE'S VISIT

Yom Tov night, after the matzos were distributed, the Rebbe visited a few mosdos where public s'darim were held, including: the bachurim, the Russian immigrants at FREE, Hadar HaTorah, and Machon Chana.

The Rebbe entered the bachurim's dining room at one end, walked the length of the room, entered the kitchen, checked here and there, blessed Mrs. Mussia, and then returned down the other side (walking like a "U"), where he then stopped and blessed the T'mimim.

Sometimes the Rebbe would make some observations.

As heard from my father, Yaakov Yehuda.

“At one of the s’darim, Rashag asked the Rebbe why he took so much horseradish. The Rebbe answered that they said that in Chicago, the Rebbe Rayatz took a huge amount for maror. Rashag asked: Did the Rebbe Rayatz take the head of the maror, the root? The Rebbe answered: No, that’s my kuntz.”

with dough and honey, for Pesach Sheini.

Since this article was written after Mussia’s passing, I must mention her devotion to the T’mimim, both materially (food) and spiritually (hiddurim). She did it all for the T’mimim with dedication and modesty.

THE FIRST SEDER NIGHT HANDS ON LESSON IN THE HAGADA

Pesach night

There was excitement in the air. I walked with Zev towards the dining room of the yeshiva at 1414

President Street, where the seider for the bachurim was held. Along with the great simcha and holiday spirit I felt that Zev was somewhat serious. After learning the Hagada (and not just learning that we had to learn the Hagada), I understood Zev’s somber demeanor somewhat. Aside from this night being a holy and exalted night, the Hagada and its details are comprised of dozens of customs, which all have to be remembered and all have to go according to a precise order.

Aside from that, there are sichos, maamarim and explanations on every word in Maggid. Knowing Zev, he has to “live” with it all. It’s not that he managed to learn every last maamer and sicha, but what he did learn, he “lives” with. I relied on him for the seider, as that is the reason I went to Crown Heights, to learn the intricacies of the Chabad seider.

There were long tables with white tablecloths, set the length of the dining room. Unlike the rest of the year when the bachurim sit together, on Pesach, each bachur grabbed his “territory” over which he presided. It was like the dining room was divided into many small fiefdoms and each fiefdom had its laws with the bachurim as the local rulers.

Each Tamim set up his equipment, a *k’ara* (seider plate), matzos, wine, a *becher* (cup), etc. Each one closely guarded his area from *shruya* (liquids). I don’t mean that it was every man for himself. On the contrary, the bachurim generally sat and discussed the Hagada in groups, prepared their k’aros together, and recited the Hagada in unison, but each talmid watched over his matzos, wine and food, on the lookout for unwanted crumbs, each one according to his level.

We grabbed a corner of a long table. Since Zev is a well-liked bachur and there was also an inyan

of being mekarev me, a number of the chevra congregated around us. I anticipated that it would be lively.

Zev opened his bag and began setting up. I saw that his usual enthusiasm was starting to kick in. The noise level was intolerable and Zev had to raise his voice as he told me to start setting up. I confidently took out my new k’ara that the shliach had given me before I left, put it on the table and began to set it up. Judging by the smirk on the face of one of the bachurim, I realized something was missing.

“What did I forget?” I asked.

“Nothing’s wrong,” said Mendy. “It’s just that the way your k’ara is lying on the table, you won’t be able to be ‘shpitz,’” and the guys burst out laughing.

“What do you mean?” I wondered, having no idea what they were referring to.

“The Rebbe had a silver k’ara upon which he spread his k’ara which was a white cloth with no design. The Rebbe folded the material in half and then again, in half, and that is what he used. You’ll see what came next as we set up our own.”

“Where will I get a silver plate from?” And then I saw Zev take out two large plastic trays, one for me and one for him, and he put the plate under the k’ara. Okay, I was learning.

“Hey, tonight is a night of questions,” said Mendy teasingly, “so if you have any questions, feel free to ask.”

I took him up on his offer and said, “What is the reason that two candles are lit here?”

“The reason,” responded Mendy unhesitatingly, “has to do with a visit the Rebbe made here one year. The Rebbe asked Mrs. Mussia to lend the bachurim one of the candles she had lit, because while Kiddush is recited you are supposed to see the candles.

“The Rebbe said the candle should be placed on a tall chair so that all the bachurim could see it. Since then, candles are placed (apparently, candles that had the blessing recited on them) in the dining room so this halacha can be fulfilled.”

In the meantime, Zev had arranged his k’ara and mine. He prepared three matzos for each of us, being careful to choose concave matzos. I knew already that this is so that the matzos could contain something.

The seider began. We all stood and Zev read out loud while we murmured with him quietly. Whatever instructions he followed, we followed too. We put the matza of the Yisroel in first, then the Levi, and the Kohen, with the concave side facing upwards. Then we continued reading the instructions and carrying them out with each *siman* being a story in itself:

The z’roa looked bare and pathetic. Mendy explained that the Rebbe was particular about removing all the skin and meat. As for the egg, he put down a whole egg in the shell, the reason being, because the Rebbe did so.

“I don’t understand why you don’t put down small cloths or little plates under the *simanim*,” I questioned.

“The Rebbe put the *simanim* directly on the k’ara with nothing underneath them.”

“What about the charoses?”

“The Rebbe put that on the k’ara too. He would take a little bit of charoses with a knife and put it on the k’ara, and yes, it got dirty. I heard that on the second night there were stains on the k’ara that were from the charoses of the night before.”

Someone said that it was claimed that under the charoses were two napkins.

“Maybe because of shruya?” someone suggested.

“Can’t be. The charoses on the k’ara was not mixed with wine, so there’s no problem with shruya.”

We got past the eggs and moved on to maror, taking it from the main k’ara. I noticed a difference among the bachurim. Zev took a little bit of maror, wrapped it in lettuce leaves, and put it in its place on the k’ara. Mendy made a small pile of horseradish to the point that his eyes were tearing. I didn’t know which

way to do it and Mendy asked, “How much horseradish do you think you can tolerate?”

“I don’t think it makes a difference. I’m afraid to get involved between the ‘tall mountains who differ in Torah,’” I said, pointing at the two of them, happy at the opportunity to give them a little dig of my own.

“It actually makes a big difference,” said Mendy as he smoothed out his pile of horseradish, “and this is also the reason for the difference between us. The Rebbe takes several large spoons of horseradish, squeezes it with his hand and makes it into a pile the size of an egg. The Rebbe added a small piece of the root to this (from which the horseradish is made). The Rebbe covered this pile with lettuce leaves, over and under it.”

“The Rebbe ate all that?” I asked in amazement.

“Yes,” said Zev. “At one of the s’darim, Rashag asked the Rebbe why he took so much horseradish. The Rebbe answered that they said that in Chicago, the Rebbe Rayatz took a huge amount for maror. Rashag asked: Did the Rebbe Rayatz take the head of the maror, the root? The Rebbe answered: No, that’s my *kuntz*. The Rebbe also said that he had heard from the Rebbe Rayatz that if a person eats a large amount of maror, an amount he cannot tolerate, he has not fulfilled his obligation to eat maror!”

Now I understood the difference between the quantities of maror that my two friends had taken. I prepared an amount of maror that suited me.

For karpas the bachurim used onion. When I said that the shliach used potato, they said in unison that the Rebbe once said: Potatoes are for women. The Rebbe used an entire piece of onion with its peel still on!



FROM THEORY TO ACTION

Our k'aros were arranged according to all the details of law and custom. Mendy pointed out that the Rebbe would bring his Hagada to the table, *Hagada shel Pesach im Likkutei Taamim U'Minhagim*, as well as a *Siddur HaArizal* edited by Reb Shabsi of Rashkov. While the Hagada was recited, the Rebbe looked into both of them.

Zev sighed deeply at this point. I noticed that his eyes were a bit moist and that he glanced over at the door. The group quieted down and looked serious.

"In previous years," Zev said quietly, "the T'mimim would stop at this point and wait anxiously for the Rebbe's visit. Fortunate are those who were present..."

"Zev!" someone piped up encouragingly, "you are supposed to recite the Hagada **out loud, with much joy, and great concentration**, and although we are here this year, next year ... we will be free men..."

The sparkle returned to Zev's eyes even though he didn't look fully convinced by the words of encouragement. He looked into his Hagada and began to read. The instructions said that the simanim are to be read out loud and we all did so.

During the days before Pesach, I yearned to hear about the Rebbe's visit to the bachurim but Zev refused to tell me then, saying there would be time for that later. Mendy joked, saying that it was because "you do things to make the children wonder so they don't fall asleep," but when he saw my exasperated look, he explained that Zev himself hadn't experienced it. The time would come when we would all hear about that thrilling visit.

We began reciting Kiddush and in order to lean we arranged pillows on the chairs. Although the Rebbe sat on a chair without armrests, the

chair next to him had pillows for leaning on which he used.

At Urchatz, Zev read the instruction but Mendy pointed out that he should also read the instruction for Karpas since we wouldn't be able to talk after we washed. Afterwards, the remains of the karpas were not put back on the k'ara, and so only five simanim remained on it.

Yachatz, and I was lost. The guys did everything quickly and under the k'ara and I couldn't see what they were doing. "At Yachatz you break the middle matza into two parts under the napkin." I broke it. "You take out the bigger piece, put it into a cloth and divide it into five pieces." How was I supposed to know which was the bigger piece?

I took the piece out from under the k'ara and waved it in the air in order to get the opinion of the experts about which piece to put away for the Afikoman. Zev explained, "One of the Rebbeim once said that a piece about which you are unsure as to whether it's *gadol* or not, is not a *gadol*." An insight for life in general, I thought.

Zev guided me in preparing my Afikoman and we proceeded to Maggid. The Rebbe said most of the Hagada quietly, but he asked the reader to read out loud. I knew that. I also knew that each of the people sitting there says the Ma Nishtana and prefaces it with the introduction that I spent three hours learning, even though Zev said it was okay if I said it all in Hebrew.

What I didn't grasp was why they recited the Hagada so quickly. They read it with almost no explanation and I had assumed that Chassidishe bachurim like these young men would have plenty to say on Maggid. Mendy told me that the niggun with which the Hagada was recited at the Rebbe's table was passed down from the time of the Alter Rebbe, but that was about it for commentaries

except for another explanation or two.

Zev explained that on the first night the Afikoman had to be eaten by midnight and that is why they were rushing. "Tomorrow night we'll be up until late," Mendy promised.

These are the customs I learned in their "beis midrash" as the Hagada was recited:

At *Hei Lachma Anya* we do not raise the k'ara but the k'ara is uncovered so that all the matzos are visible. By the Rebbe, people observed that sometimes he moved the middle matza so that the part that was whole was visible.

When the bachurim raised their cups before *V'Hi Sh'amda*, they raised it like they did at Kiddush (with the cup on the palm). They did not stand for *V'Hi Sh'amda*. The Rebbe, even when he finished saying *V'Hi Sh'amda*, did not put down the cup until the reader finished what he was saying.

During the recital of the Ten Plagues, the Rebbe would pour into a bowl that was on the ground and there were differences of opinion as to whether it was chipped or not.

After the pouring, the Rebbe would refill his cup with three pours until the wine overflowed the cup, like at Kiddush.

While saying, *Rabban Gamliel haya omer ... Pesach, Matza, Maror*, the Rebbe looked at the matza and maror.

At *Lefichach*, the cup is raised until the words, *v'nomar lifanav hallelu-ka*, and here too, the cup is raised like at Kiddush.

We got up to Rachtza. Zev read the instructions for Motzi, Matza, Maror, and Korech. This was because we were not supposed to talk after washing until Shulchan Orech. These simanim went along with lots of "nu ... nus" in which the bachurim tried to remind me about what they had explained earlier, as follows:

At Motzi, you take all three matzos with your fingers separating between them. Then at Matza, you allow the bottom matza to drop and you recite the brachos. The Rebbe, of course, ate the matza while leaning, and used both hands, and apparently he was not particular about eating both *k'zeisim* at once, though the eating was continuous, without an interruption.

At Maror, some said that the Rebbe took horseradish from the wrapping of lettuce leaves and others say that he took horseradish off the k'ara (still wrapped within the leaves). He dipped it three times in charoses that was moistened with wine (not the charoses on the k'ara) that remained from the four cups, put it back in the leaves, and ate it. Then he dipped the un-ground piece of horseradish and ate it wrapped too.

At Korech, you dip the maror in charoses without wine (shruya).

We reached Shulchan Orech, which we began with an egg. Mendy said that when bachurim participated at the Rebbe's s'darim, that was their entire Shulchan Orech. We dipped the egg three times in salt water and ate it.

There isn't much to say about Shulchan Orech. We tried to fill up with food since the Afikoman is supposed to be eaten when satiated. An interesting discussion ensued about which way was preferable to eat the matza, on the table as the matzos were covered or within bags so that the crumbs were contained.

Mendy said that in his house they ate out of bags, but in order that each person would eat out of his own bag the entire Pesach (being anxious about shruya since young children inadvertently make shruya and if you use their bag it's a problem) each bag had a name. The little children had pictures drawn on their bags so they knew which belonged to them.

Shulchan Orech was over and Zev asked what time it was. Mendy smiled and instead of answering he told me that when it was time for Tzafun, the Rebbe turned around and asked one of the T'mimim what time it was. Mendy warned me to eat and drink enough since according to Chabad custom, there is no eating and drinking, not even water, after the Afikoman (except for the cups of wine, of course).

Before bentching, the third cup was poured as well as the Kos shel Eliyahu. To my surprise (for it says to pour Eliyahu's cup only after the bentching), they explained to me that the Rebbe did it this way and explained: Better to do it earlier than necessary, than later.

They also told me, to my surprise, that the Rebbe's cup for Eliyahu was made of glass, and I had always known that a silver goblet is used.

After Tzafun, Zev spoke at length about Eliyahu's cup. "You surely know that we go and open the door for Eliyahu HaNavi. One time, the Rebbe Rashab said to the Rebbe

Rayatz: When you open the door, ask for *ruchnius*, don't ask for *gashmius*.

"When the Rebbe had s'darim in the home of the Rebbe Rayatz, they would go out and open the door. This was also an opportunity for the bachurim who did not have the privilege of being at the seider, to take a peek.

"After 5748, the Rebbe would have the seider in his room in 770 and the bachurim would wait to see the Rebbe come out for *Sh'foch Chamos'cha*. It was a wondrous sight. I heard from one of the bachurim who saw the Rebbe come out holding a lit candle. The Rebbe recited the *Sh'foch Chamos'cha* out loud and with a tune, from the Hagada that he held in his hand."

The Hagada was recited until the end. When the Rebbe had the seider at the home of the Rebbe Rayatz, an amazing thing happened. The Rebbe, who up until now had read the Hagada quietly, to himself, began to read it out loud and with a tune. The Rebbe recited the Hallel sweetly and with d'veikus, with tears occasionally rolling from his eyes. The Rebbe read the Hagada with a tune that was partially comprised of notes that were similar to that used for the verses used before the shofar blowing on Rosh HaShana and were partly similar to the usual niggun used in Chazaras HaShatz.

Fortunate is the eye that saw all this... L'Shana HaBaa B'Yerushalayim!

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HOW DO YOU MAKE PESACH WITHOUT WINE AND THE BASICS?

*On Erev Pesach last year a group of tmimim went to Antalya, Turkey. The drama began from the very start, with the arrival at the airport, continued with customs, and lasted until the last minute before Yom Tov. The success of the s'darim showed them how it was all worth it! * Bentzi Sasson's diary of a difficult shlichus.*

THEIR TROUBLES WERE JUST BEGINNING

The members of our group began to appear at Ben Gurion airport early in the morning, close to six o'clock. After everyone had arrived, along with thirty cartons laden with equipment to make a seider, our convoy began to move in the direction of Security.

We attracted a lot of attention from passersby. The large number of luggage carts and the Lubavitcher

bachurim pushing them, made it pretty clear what was going on.

As we got on line, a Security employee appeared who introduced himself as the shift manager. He informed us, in no uncertain terms, that there was no way we would be allowed to bring dozens of boxes on to the plane.

For a moment, our hearts sank. Mendy Kramer's face (he was the one in charge of the entire operation) said it all. Even when he

nicely explained that this was being done with the knowledge of the company and it was all approved ahead of time, he said, "I am sorry, but there are new rules. Forget about it."

We saw we had no choice, so we left behind the stack of boxes. Each of us took along his private belongings and one box. That was all we were allowed to take. We continued on for the security check and then to check-in.

Time was not in our favor. It was almost time for the flight and we were still at check-in. Seconds before our passports were examined, we received the terrific news that all our boxes had been put on our flight!

"Boarding of passengers for Flight 750 from Tel Aviv to Antalya is now closing. Final passengers are requested to quickly go to Gate 6B."

Seconds before the plane took off, we got a few text messages from Mendy Kramer about the correct times for Yom Tov and other important details.

Once we were allowed to get out of our seats, we went up and down the plane, giving out flyers inviting vacationing Israelis to spend the seider at beautiful hotels in Antalya. Our appearance as well as the flyers generated a lot of interest among the hundreds of Israelis on the flight. We were busy responding to questions and informing people what they could expect at the seider, until the plane landed.

DELAY AT THE AIRPORT IN TURKEY

It took a long time in the Turkish airport before we got our luggage, some of it broken. Some of our luggage, however, never made it to our destination, and we headed out

of the baggage claim hoping it would be found.

Our convoy began to make its way towards the exit of the airport. This time different eyes were upon us, the eyes of the customs officials. They kept tabs on us throughout the time we were rushing about the airport.

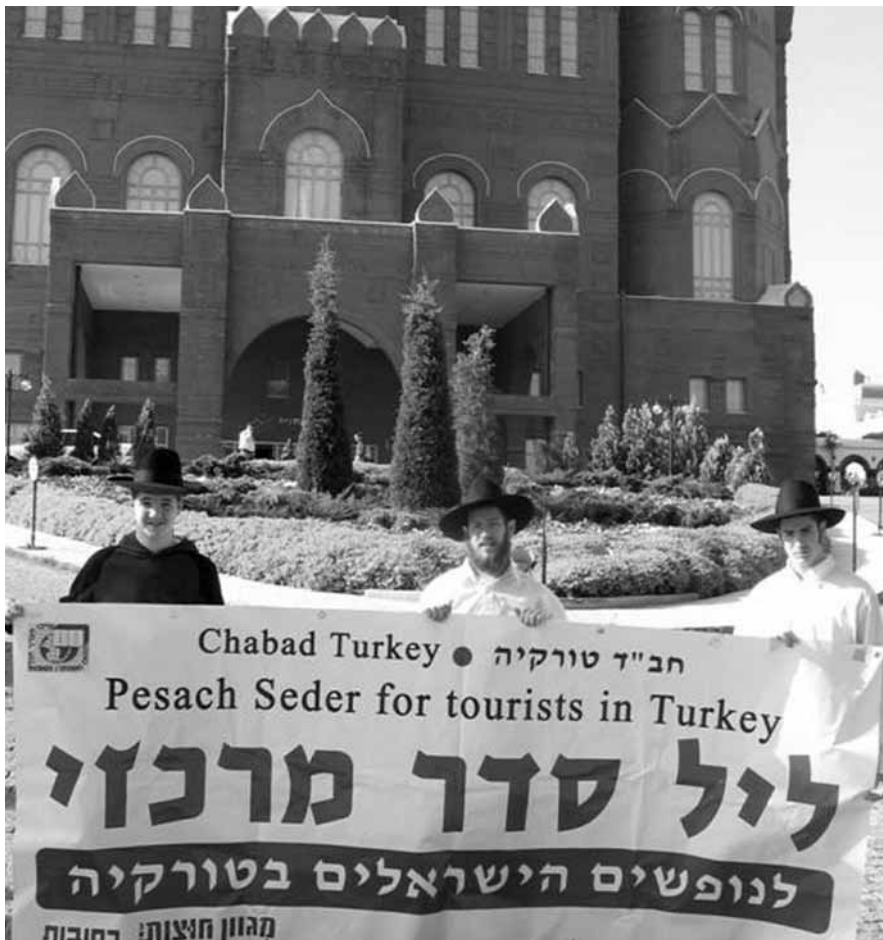
When we arrived at the customs counter, just as we feared, we were asked to stop and stand off to the side. The manager appeared. He had followed what was going on from the moment he realized that all the boxes belonged to us.

Before he began questioning us about the boxes, he asked us why we had spent so much time in the bathroom. I explained that some bottles of wine had broken and we

had cleaned the remaining bottles and transferred them to new boxes. Then I realized that the manager did not speak English. He was very curious and began walking towards the bathrooms, I accompanied him while trying to explain in many languages what we had been doing.

I showed him the broken bottles and the large quantity of paper towels stained with wine, and he finally relaxed, as did I. I thought we were finished and perhaps we could finally leave for the hotels we were supposed to be going to, but it turned out that our Turkish adventure was just beginning.

The ranking customs officer, as I mentioned before, did not speak English, and so one of the stewardesses who worked for the



Making due with what was available to make Pesach for tourists in Turkey



After a few minutes I found out that there was no hall for the seider. I felt I was going to collapse under the weight of all the disasters, those that happened, were happening, and were going to happen.

company we had flown, was recruited to help out. She explained that according to Turkish law we could not bring our boxes into the country.

We were shocked to hear this. We tried to explain and even to bribe, but there was nobody to talk to. The officer was not willing to listen or to deal with us.

When we saw that we couldn't get through to anyone, we began text messaging Mendy Kramer. He told us to contact Gil, the travel agent for the Magic Carpet company, who was supposed to be in the vicinity of the airport. We contacted one of his workers, who tried to use his connections, but to no avail.

It was two in the afternoon and the clock was racing. The fact that it would be Yom Tov in five hours made us panic.

After some time, the official at customs released 21 bottles of wine out of the 240 we had brought with us, as well as a bag of prizes for the children who would be participating,

and a few other things. The rest of our stuff was taken to the customs offices. There wasn't much we could do. We watched as they took our boxes into a large room and locked it.

After a lot of time had passed and nothing changed, we decided to send the members of the group to the hotels in order to begin preparing for the s'darim. It finally hit me that we would have to make do with what we had.

Our first stop was the Rassiya hotel that was located in Antalya, where they had stored a lot of equipment for Pesach the year before. That gave us some hope that we would be able to manage. Then we discovered that for some reason not everything we had been told about was in fact there, and even those things that were there, were in a pathetic state.

We went to the supermarket to buy vegetables and fruits for Yom Tov. The huge quantities we loaded into our carts motivated the store employees to help us and give us plenty of their attention.

TRYING TO MANAGE WITH WHAT WE HAD

We went to the Titanic hotel. I got out of the car with Moishe Pollack and Lazer Sonnenfeld, who were responsible for the seider there. For a few minutes I was speechless. It was hard for me to express what I felt and give them the inspiration and strength they needed to make something out of nothing.

Dividing the few items we had was hard, a few yarmulkes, a few Hagados, and five bottles of wine. That's what I had to give them. Our eyes met and the words came from somewhere. "Moishe, Lazer, we are shluchim of the Rebbe. What will be and what has happened – is his will. We can only do what he asks of us. It will be all right. Go all out and

I'm sure you will be very successful."

I left them after verifying that we had indeed gotten a hall in the hotel and arranging to meet at the Yom Tov meal.

From there we went to the next hotel, the Kremlin. It is magnificent. We began unloading our bags and the few items we had. Mendy and Yisroel Izevitz and Shneur Steinberg put their things on carts. The same scene repeated itself in which we tried to think about how to prepare for Pesach in the best possible way despite the problematic situation.

Then it was my turn. After a short drive the car entered the gates of the Topkapi hotel. It was 6:30. Eight hours after arriving from Eretz Yisroel, I finally got to the place where I was supposed to organize a seider. I was greeted by bellboys dressed as Turkish sultans. The Turkish motif was everywhere and indeed, it felt like I was in Turkey.

After a few minutes I found out that there was no hall for the seider. I felt I was going to collapse under the weight of all the disasters, those that happened, were happening, and were going to happen.

Then along came Tzvika, my chavrusa. The look on his face informed me that they still hadn't released our boxes. We got busy as Yom Tov was fast approaching.

Our appearance attracted many Israelis, who asked us about a seider. We hung up signs and gave out flyers.

After a brief talk with the program director, we were assigned a room. In the meantime, I began a round of phone calls to the other hotels to find out what was going on and to finalize the times we were going to meet.

Time was flying and the sun was beginning to set. As the rays of the sun shone into our room, they lit up our hearts and I felt that this seider

was going to be special.

THE DISASTER TURNS INTO AN EXPERIENCE

The appointed time arrived and the place was still not ready. For a moment I was afraid that the Turks also operated on Chabad time. I thought of telling them that only Lubavitchers can work that way. Within twenty minutes the hall had dozens of chairs set up around round tables with the table for the leader of the seider set up in the front of the room. The sight of the empty tables without bottles of wine, matzos, and seider plates was painful but then people started pouring in. Some of them were the people we had flown with from Eretz Yisroel.

When they found out what had happened to us, they couldn't believe it. They crowded around to hear the details of our misadventures. At nine o'clock the hall was full with more than 200 people. Old men and women, fathers and mothers, and children filled the hall.

The seider began with the story of what had happened to us that day. The crowd, which was shocked, fully agreed to the conclusion of my speech: "The

atmosphere, the simcha and just the very fact that we are here tonight, will dictate the success of the evening, and nothing else."

When I finished, the crowd began singing a song they had learned back in school about the great simcha that spring and Pesach have arrived.

The seider itself is very hard to describe but it was the way I imagined it would be. Instead of four cups of wine, they drank only half a cup. We didn't have most of the ingredients for the seider plate, so we just explained each thing. Shulchan Aruch was with great joy and song. The children sang the Ma Nishtana as the large crowd joined in, so that it looked like one big family. The smiles and joy of the participants gave me the strength to carry on and to take pleasure in the little that we had.

We ended the evening with the song "Who Knows One" with the crowd wildly enthusiastic. Before I began my concluding speech, someone got up and warmly thanked Chabad and the Rebbe. The crowd applauded for a long time.

After I thanked everyone for coming, for the experience they gave us, the crowd began singing Jewish songs. On their way out, they all stopped to thank us and

praise us for a special seider which made their Pesach.

I'll never forget those minutes after it was all over. The hall was empty. There were only the chairs and some empty bottles of wine. My friend and I looked at one another and we sighed in relief.

We felt the power of the meshaleiach, how great our z'chus was that here, of all places, where Jews went to escape all vestiges of their Jewish heritage, we had managed to ignite many souls. The seider that we made afterwards for ourselves is also hard to describe. Despite our exhaustion we sat until the wee hours and spoke about the Exodus from Egypt, as well as the exodus from the Egypt we had personally witnessed a few hours before.

Throughout this time I wondered how the other bachurim were doing and how they had managed. With that, I fell into bed after not sleeping for two days.

What I remember is that I woke up in the morning to the sound of loud knocks at our door. I was shocked to see our friends from a distant hotel standing there with big smiles. They described the wonderful seider they had had. I was simply amazed. Our spirits rose to the skies.

After immersing in the sea and some brief learning, we went to the second hotel, where we met the other bachurim. We saw them sitting on the lawn, learning from a D'var Malchus booklet. They had also had a wonderful seider despite the limitations.

THE NIGGUNIM ATTRACTED NEW VACATIONERS

It's hard to forget the Shacharis davening that day. We were on a high and this was apparent on the faces of the bachurim who, after all



our adventures, looked relaxed as they davened.

We got up to the Prayer for Dew and all the bachurim sang it together. It felt like the Rebbe was with us and that we were in 770. When we finished davening we divided our food and went down to where my friend and I had made the seider. There, in the pretty garden, we set the table, made Kiddush, and began our meal, which lasted a long time.

The sight of us sitting, singing, and farbrenging, caused many of the people from the night before to join us. Each one of our group described his seider experience. Every so often we all sang a niggun simcha that could be heard throughout the hotel. This wonderful seuda compensated, somewhat, for what we had experienced the day before.

GOING HOME

Sunday morning, four days after we arrived in Turkey, we left for



home. The many vacationers who saw us leave showered us with blessings and thanks. That is when we realized how worthwhile it all was, despite the difficulties and not being able to do it all as planned.

Nearly 700 people participated in the s'darim in Antalya. This was aside from the hundreds of people who attended s'darim in Marmaris and Istanbul.

It was an experience, all right, an experience in which we saw that despite all the efforts to prepare things weeks in advance, and despite the fact that all seemed fine from the outset, what was meant to happen happened. The Rebbe saved the situation and enabled everybody to view it differently. It was an unforgettable Pesach, for the participants and surely for us.

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‘NO JEALOUSY, NO COMPETITION, AND CERTAINLY NO SICK PEOPLE’

By Nosson Avrohom

*He was raised by communist parents in Uruguay, studied medicine, and searched for answers to existential questions. Then he met a shliach. Now he is a beloved pediatrician in Eilat, while his wife, a clinical psychologist, runs a seminary for women and girls. * The life story of Dr. Shabtai and Yehudis Tagar, who are raising a Chassidishe family and spreading the wellsprings.*

Dr. Shabtai Tagar will never forget the astonished looks he got when he first started working at the Kupat Cholim branch in Eilat. The shocked reactions were from both colleagues and patients. Preconceived ideas and the difficulty in getting used to a religious, bearded doctor abounded.

People preferred visiting the clinic on days he didn't work there. It was an awkward situation. While the lines for the other doctors were long, nobody was waiting to see him. Every so often his door would open to admit someone who merely wanted some papers stamped. Only a few people, mainly religious Jews,

chose him over the other doctors. "I guess my long beard scared them," reminisces Dr. Tagar with a grin.

At this point, it's hard to believe that this is how he started out. Five years have gone by and now Dr. Tagar is the most sought after doctor in the clinic, and no, this is not a journalistic exaggeration. It's a fact that is backed up by the largest list of patients, more than all the other pediatricians who work at the Kupa. Religious and nonreligious alike will do anything to become his patient.

"People realized that the fact that I am a religious Jew doesn't reduce the quality of the care I provide. On the contrary, my work is done professionally and with more devotion." It reached the point where the administration of the Kupa had to give him additional hours.

Dr. Tagar uses his direct connection with his patients to spread the wellsprings. Many of them who find cures for their medical problems learn about Hashem, the true Healer, about

basic Jewish concepts, and for those who take a greater interest – the times that classes take place at the Chabad house in Eilat.

Dr. Tagar is a member of the Chabad community in Eilat. He doesn't stand out, for he is a modest person. You might see him sitting at the D'var Malchus classes, listening closely, or sitting quietly in his place at a Chassidishe farbrengen at the yeshiva, listening without opening his mouth. Because of his introverted nature, few know his story and how he went from being a medical student in Uruguay to becoming a Chabad Chassid in Eilat.

Dr. Tagar is a difficult subject for an interview. He doesn't understand why his life story would interest anybody. When I asked him to be interviewed, it appeared to me that he blushed...

AN INTEREST IN JUDAISM INSPIRED BY HOLOCAUST RESEARCH

Dr. Shabtai Tagar was born 40 years ago in Montevideo, the capitol of Uruguay. Like many of his friends, he was born to a home where Judaism was only symbolic and historical. His paternal grandparents were religious Jews who even founded an Orthodox shul in Uruguay after emigrating there from Russia before World War I.

His maternal grandparents were entirely estranged from Judaism. While in Europe, before emigrating to South America, they were communists. In Uruguay they opened a furniture store, so their communist ideology was a thing of the past, but their antagonism towards Judaism and religion remained.

"A strong childhood memory that I have is going to shul with my father on a holiday, but nothing more than that. We could wear kippot and join the t'fillos and then do as we pleased. I didn't feel that in

going to shul there was something spiritual and genuine about it; it was just something we had to do because that is what our ancestors always did.

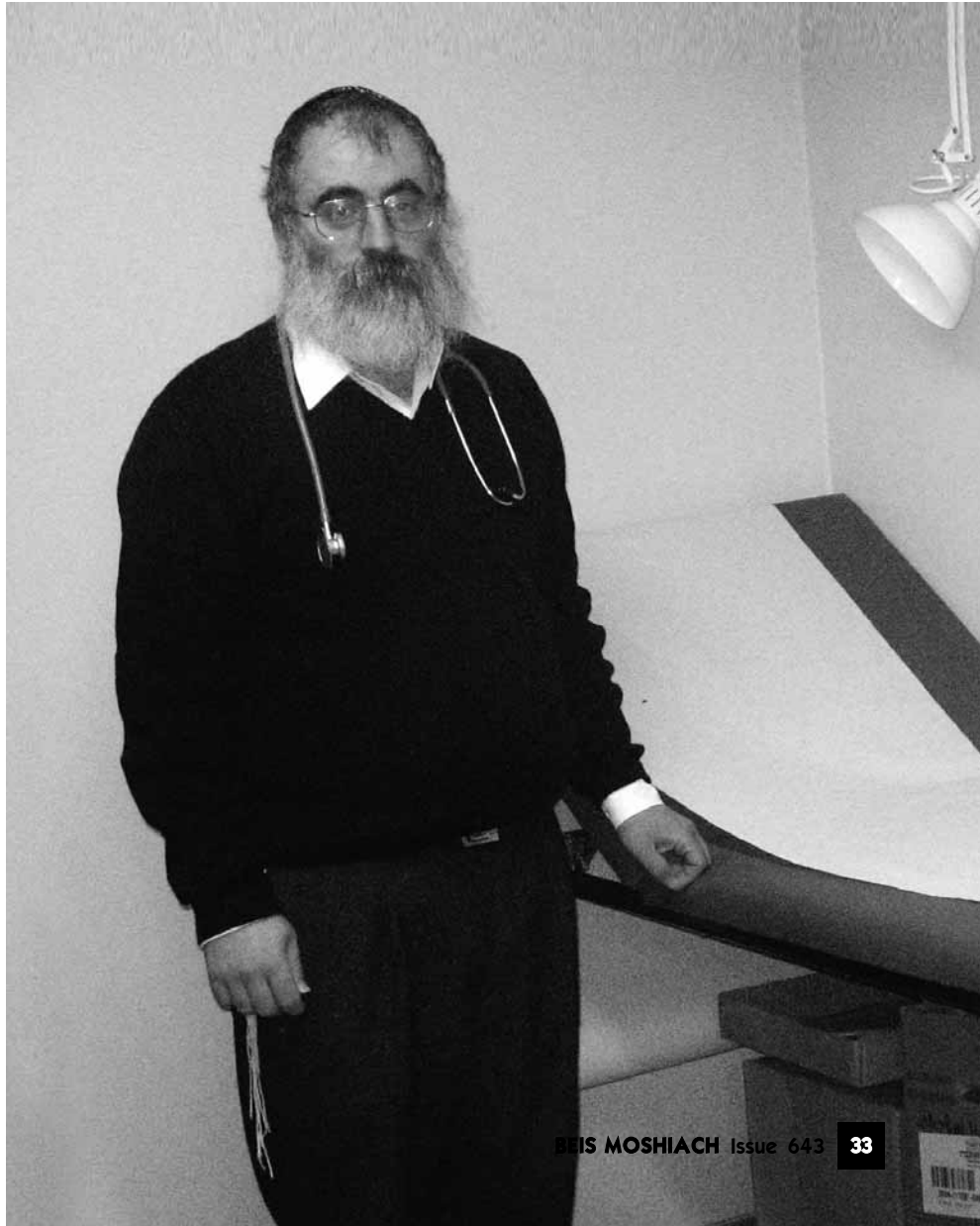
"The rest of the year there was no emphasis placed on our being different than our gentile neighbors. In my childhood I would attend the Jewish school in the morning and public school in the afternoon. I would wear a kippa to the Jewish school and then take it off. Judaism was just a symbol."

Shabtai was an introspective child from a young age. While the rest of his peers played soccer and other sports, he preferred playing chess. In tournaments of boys in his

city, he always won.

"It started when I was eight," he remembers with a smile. "That year, 1972, at the height of the Cold War between the US and the USSR, there was a chess match between the Russian contender, Boris Spassky and the American contender, a Jew named Bobby Fischer. The world held its breath and watched this very tense competition."

"I remember that they said that the Russian delegation knew that all the glory that the USSR had to offer was theirs and they made precise mathematical calculations anticipating all the moves the American Jew could possibly make. They prided themselves, saying



“The way I looked at it, just as Rabbi Levy was an admirable spiritual figure for me, he had an even bigger rabbi who taught him Torah. I didn’t understand the concept of Rebbe and Nasi HaDor. When I saw the Rebbe for the first time, I suddenly got it. It was Pesach 5751. It’s not explainable in words, but I saw G-dliness.”

Fischer couldn’t win, but as many certainly remember, Fischer won! He was simply better.

“From then on, my interest in chess grew to the point that I used all my free time for it. One time, Fischer announced that he wouldn’t play on Shabbos and it gave me enormous Jewish pride. The bookcase in my bedroom was packed with chess books.”

Shabtai was educated to excel in everything he did. This was not so much a result of his education as something that was etched deep in his personality. This was true for

chess and now in medicine. He doesn’t believe in cutting corners. Whatever he learns, he learns thoroughly, and he wants to understand it inside and out.

When he studied the Holocaust at an older age, he sought a reason for the fact that an enlightened, modern, intelligent nation committed such horrifying crimes against the Jewish people. “It disturbed my peace of mind. How does such a thing happen?”

“My parents bought me dozens of books from a wide range of schools of thought who had done research on the Holocaust as well as the period leading up to the war. I spent days and nights avidly reading these books about World War II. My Jewish identity was strengthened because of my reading of the horrors of the war.

“One night I was sitting at home when I came to the conclusion that there was no logical reason that our gentile neighbors persecute us. The Jewish people are in no small measure responsible for the advancement of the world in many fields. That is when the seeds of emuna were planted as well as the desire to strike deeper roots, following in the ways of my ancestors.”

Mrs. Yehudis Tagar, Shabtai’s wife, is a clinical psychologist. She listened to our conversation and added, “His knowledge of the history of World War II is profoundly extensive. He knows how many ships and tanks each of the armies had. When our daughter had to give a lecture to her class, he told her about the war from the knowledge he had amassed. Her lecture astounded her teacher.”

CHASSIDUS SUPPLIED THE ANSWERS

The fact that he felt different than his gentile friends, for no apparent logical reason, spurred

Shabtai to check out Judaism.

“I call what I felt then anti-Semitism with silk gloves. There were no incidents of physical violence but there was definitely verbal abuse. One time a girl came into class and said that her older sister had married a Jew and she began to rant about Jewish people. She didn’t know I was Jewish and when the class was over I went over to her and told her that I’m Jewish and asked her why she spoke that way. She was embarrassed and she apologized since she didn’t know I was Jewish. However, I had drawn my own conclusion.”

When Shabtai finished his compulsory education he had to decide what to study at university and this resulted in a fierce debate with his parents. His parents, like many good Jewish parents, wanted him to study law, which they thought would provide him with an honorable profession. Shabtai had other plans though. He had dreamed of becoming a doctor since he was a child, as he wanted to help people in their difficulties.

“At 18 I started attending the only university in my city and I began studying medicine. I devoted eight years to the study of medicine as questions about my identity and where I belonged grew from year to year. I needed answers. I wondered about life, why we came to this world and how we Jews are different than other people. These questions disturbed me as I tried to concentrate on my studies.

“In the final year of my studies, I heard from friends about a Chabad house run by Rabbi Eliezer Shemtov. At that time, he worked with Rabbi Shlomo Levy, who is now on shlichus in Buenos Aires. Rabbi Levy is a charismatic person with lots of Yiddishe chein. I was captivated by him at our very first meeting. I can’t describe it any other way.

“I met a Jew who reminded me

of the Biblical, authentic Jew I had read about, yet he spoke my language. One visit led to another until I became a regular visitor at the Chabad house.

"The teachings of Chassidus spoke to me. There are those things you learn and understand intellectually, especially medicine, which has rules based on reason. In Chassidus I found that even though many things are understandable intellectually, these are ideas that are way beyond intellectual understanding.

"I began to understand that the

outer and inner garb. He thirstily drank from Rabbi Levy's teachings and with each passing day he learned more about Torah and mitzvos.

"The really serious change took place when I went to the Rebbe. When I first heard about the Rebbe from Rabbi Levy, I didn't quite get it. Rabbi Levy himself was a role model for me.

"The way I looked at it, just as Rabbi Levy was an admirable spiritual figure for me, he had an even bigger rabbi who taught him Torah. I didn't understand the

Chassidim and farbrenging. Back then, it was with actually seeing the Rebbe. My friends in Uruguay tried to ask me what I saw that made me so enthusiastic, and I told them that just like you cannot explain the flavor of chocolate in words, no matter how eloquent you are, for you have to actually taste it to appreciate it – so too you can't explain what a Rebbe is; you have to go to 770.

"I spent two months in Crown Heights, spending some of that time learning in Tiferes Bachurim in Morristown with Rabbi Avrohom Lipsker. My hiskashrus to the Rebbe became much stronger.

"Before returning home, I went for 'dollars' and asked the Rebbe for a bracha for the Jewish community. The Rebbe said, 'bracha v'hatzlacha' and gave me three dollars.

"I soon felt that I had to leave Uruguay and return to Crown Heights. I felt I was sorely lacking a large religious community. In Uruguay I was alone and I felt that my spiritual excitement would dissipate. My mother was astonished by the changes in me. Even now, she believes that her son the promising doctor decided to live a primitive life. When I began growing a beard, she despaired."

After several months in Uruguay, Dr. Tagar returned to Crown Heights and learned in Hadar HaTorah. He studied for six months, broadening his knowledge of Chassidus and Nigleh. In 5753 he decided, with the advice of his mashpia, to complete his degree in medicine.

"There were some Jewish hospitals in the New York area and I decided to do a residency in one of them in order to become an MD. The main ones were Beth Israel and Columbia in Manhattan and Maimonides in Boro Park. I sent in these three names to the Rebbe and asked which hospital to choose.



Dr. Shabtai Tagar with his little children

feeling of something missing that I had constantly felt, even when I had everything, was the desire to connect to G-dliness. Chassidus touched me and slaked my thirst. I began receiving clear and straight answers to all my questions: What is our mission here in this world? How are we different than other people? I felt I had found the truth."

YOU HAVE TO GO TO THE REBBE!

Dr. Tagar soon changed his

concept of Rebbe and Nasi HaDor. When I saw the Rebbe for the first time, I suddenly got it. It was Pesach 5751. It's not explainable in words, but I saw G-dliness.

"When I returned to Uruguay, I told my friends at the Chabad house that until they went to 770 and saw the Rebbe, it's hard to understand what they're talking about when they refer to the Rebbe.

"In the darkness of today, we suffice with going to 770 and with associating with our fellow

FROM MACHON CHANA TO THE SEMINARY IN EILAT

When writing about Dr. Tagar, one must mention the seminary that his wife Yehudis founded. It's hard to believe but until recently, it operated out of their home.

The seminary opened three years ago with a few classes a week and became a byword in the city. Many women and girls attend it every day. Dozens of women participate in their farbrengens and the numbers grow weekly.

The municipality also heard about their success and they decided to give the seminary its own spacious building. Mrs. Tagar, who runs the school, gives all the credit to Machon Chana, where she was educated and where she received the guidance that has led to her great success.

"I was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Our only connection to Judaism was that my parents went to shul on Yom Kippur. Other than that, we lived secular lives although I was always drawn to Judaism. It was important to my parents that I study a profession. They constantly spurred me on. After years of work, I acquired a masters degree in psychology. However, the feeling I had for spirituality had not left me; it just grew."

Yehudis' constant search for answers to the countless questions that bothered her brought her into contact with Rabbi Shelo Mizraji, a Lubavitcher Chassid who was the rabbi of the Sephardic community in Buenos Aires.

Through him, she met other shluchim in the city, including Rabbi Yossi Benshimon, who now lives in Miami.

"I felt so connected that within two months I was in 770 and began studying at Machon Chana. I spent three years there, years of indescribable joy. I acquired all my principles in life which I try to convey to the students in my seminary. I, who studied psychology, know what Chassidus gives a person. It's another world, a more real and soulful one."

For many years, Mrs. Tagar felt she had to share what she knew with other women. For years it was a treasure contained within her and then, three years ago, she made her move. She spoke with her mentor in Crown Heights, Mrs. Gitta Gansburg and decided to open a school with the same format as Machon Chana. The name she chose for it is "Oholei Chaya Mushka."

The students are religious from birth, baalos t'shuva, single and married, Sephardic and Ashkenazic, from an array of backgrounds. Lubavitcher rabbanim in Eilat give the classes which include halacha and deep maamarim.

"All the women know what a Rebbe is and what Moshiach is. The secret is to teach them the Rebbe's sichos in the D'var Malchus. That way they arrive at

their own conclusions. You have to genuinely live it and this comes across. The greatest proof of its success is the enormous changes people make.

"There is a woman, a Sephardic baalas t'shuva who, when she first began coming here, did not wear a wig and did not understand the concepts of Rebbe and Chabad. Today she is a fiery Chabad Chassida. All her children were switched to Chabad schools. She writes to the Rebbe about every question she has. She began wearing a wig and not a week goes by that she does not learn the D'var Malchus.

"I'll never forget the first woman who came to the seminary because of our advertising. She came with long hair and wanted to study Judaism. Today she is a Lubavitcher.

"There are endless examples. There is a woman whose daughter was killed in an accident in which she too was involved and emerged barely alive. When she recovered, and discovered that her daughter had been killed, she fell into a deep depression. I was asked to visit her. I had some long conversations with her and I suggested that she come to the seminary. She began to come and with each passing day, you could see that she was recovering. In the classes she learned what a Jewish neshama is and this strengthened her.

"Another woman, a Breslover Chassida who began taking our classes, expressed her pain to me. Why hadn't they told her, when she became a baalas t'shuva, about the teachings of Chabad? Every day she teaches her children what she learned."

When Mrs. Tagar talks about her seminary, you can see that it's the realization of a dream that she's had for years.

"The motto that guides us is that we are not a university; we are not here to convey information in a dry format. We place a great emphasis on p'nimius. Sometimes we speak in a lofty way and we forget the point. It's very satisfying to see women who don't come from a Lubavitch background, talking about concepts like the animal soul and G-dly soul, etc.

"The day begins with the *HaYom Yom* and shiurim are given on 'Kuntres U'Maayan,' *Likkutei Sichos*, D'var Malchus, *Tanya*, *Torah Ohr*, and *Derech Mitzvosecha*.

"I get numerous encouraging answers from the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh*. Who would have believed that the municipality would give us a building, but it happened! Not only a building but they city itself renovated it from top to bottom. We just had to open it and start learning. We are presently fundraising to be able to buy s'farim for all the women so that we don't have to make photocopies each time."



Dr. Shabtai Tagar in his office

Generally, when a doctor wants to do an internship and residency, he sends his resume to many hospitals and sifts through the ones that he receives positive answers from until he ends up in the hospital where he actually works and learns. It takes time to receive responses from hospitals.

"The Rebbe gave a positive response about Maimonides. I went there for an interview and was shocked to be accepted then and there. The next day I started my internship."

MIRACLES AT THE HOSPITAL

Dr. Tagar lived in Boro Park near the hospital for a long period of time. He found two Lubavitcher families in this religious area who had also become Lubavitch in Uruguay. He spent Shabbos with them. At the end of the second year of his residency, he married his wife Yehudis, a baalas t'shuva from Argentina who studied at Machon Chana in Crown Heights.

For many bachurim, the more they distance themselves from the world of the yeshiva and enter the

big world, the colder they become to spiritual matters. For Tagar, it was the opposite.

"During my time there I heard countless miracle stories about the Rebbe in the hospital. These stories were not only from patients but from doctors and renowned heads of departments. When a famous doctor who is far from being a Lubavitcher Chassid is openly admiring of the spiritual powers of the Rebbe, you can't help but get caught up in it.

"A doctor told me that the first time he went to the Rebbe for 'dollars,' the Rebbe spoke to him in Russian. He was stunned. How did the Rebbe know he spoke Russian? He got up his courage and told the Rebbe that he had been born between Russia and Hungary, which is why he also knew Hungarian. So the Rebbe responded in Hungarian and he was floored.

"There was another doctor who went for 'dollars' with his brother and the Rebbe told the brother to check his t'fillin. The two went out and decided to send their t'fillin to be checked. Only the brother's t'fillin were pasul. There were hundreds of stories like this!"

THE REBBE RECOMMENDS GOING TO ERETZ YISROEL

When Dr. Tagar completed his residency, he became a pediatrician. He saw there were no open positions in New York and he heard about job possibilities around the world. This was after 3 Tamuz and so he wrote his question and put it in a volume of *Igros Kodesh*. The answer indicated he should go to Eretz Yisroel.

"That was the last thing my wife and I had thought of doing, but since the Rebbe had written it so clearly, we did it!"

Their first stop was Beer Sheva, where Dr. Tagar worked in the pediatric ward at Saroka hospital. He later received an offer to work in Eilat and after checking it out, the Tagars moved there and they have lived in Eilat till this day.

You said that at first, people were taken aback by your religious appearance.

"Yes, but that quickly blew over. People realized they had nothing to fear. Now I'm the doctor with the most patients. Today, for example, I was supposed to finish work at seven but I finished at 8:30. People give me a lot of respect. Many of them tell me, 'We will do as you say, Rabbeinu...'

"It's interesting that people ask me halachic questions that they don't feel comfortable asking a rav. They also ask where they can have their mezuzos checked and where to put them up and many other questions regarding family matters. I consider it a privilege.

"There is a doctor here at the Kupa who is anti-religious. Whenever we get into a conversation, he says, 'If only I had your faith.' I think his opposition to religion has significantly diminished since we became acquainted.

"In Eilat in general there is an enormous spiritual revolution taking

I won't pride myself and take the credit, but there's no doubt that when people see a religious doctor, it has an effect on them.

place. Many Jews are getting involved in Judaism and they prefer a religious doctor who can be more receptive to their needs."

The Rebbe says the world is ready for Geula. How do you see this at your clinic?

"In the field of medicine there are many things that are happening, especially in recent years, which oppose the classical rules of Western medicine. Previously, medicine refused to see a connection between body and soul. In recent years there is more awareness of this concept and in various hospitals they are recognizing it and using holistic medicine.

"In many Israeli hospitals and in hospitals around the world they have even started hiring clowns to cheer up the patients. Since the doctor treats the patient and the patient feels that the doctor is above him, there is a gap between doctor and patient. The clown's job is to get the patient to feel he is in the same

league as him and that is how he cheers him up. There are medical tests that require local anesthesia and instead of that, they use a clown to distract the patient. The understanding that the body is inseparable from the soul is a theory that has made many deep inroads in modern medicine.

"The most important thing to know is that there is a Rebbe and today too, we receive his blessings. There are many patients whom I advise to write to the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh*."

How do medicine and halacha work hand in hand in your daily life?

"It's generally clear. There are mitzvos in the Torah and there is the overriding mitzva which is that danger to life supersedes the Torah. There's the story about the Alter Rebbe that he took off his tallis and left shul on Yom Kippur to chop wood and cook soup for a new mother. One would think that the Nasi HaDor, whose prayers are for all Klal Yisroel, could have sent someone else to do that for her. The answer is that saving a life is no less important. People have to realize that sometimes it is forbidden to be too clever and you have to listen to the doctor, even if it's difficult emotionally.

"Personally, when I encounter problems with medicine and halacha, I use a vast array of solutions that we have today in the world of medicine. Today there are countless medical solutions that can be

employed on Shabbos without desecrating the Shabbos."

What extra dimension does Chassidus bring to your work in medicine?

"Dealing with the spiritual needs of a patient and knowing that the patient is not only a body but a soul, has you relating to the treatment altogether differently. When people see that you are a religious Jew with a beard, etc., it makes a great impact on them.

"Over the years, I remember many people who were not religious at first but became fully religious. I won't pride myself and take the credit, but there's no doubt that when people see a religious doctor, it has an effect on them.

"A few years ago I worked somewhere else for a few months. When I returned to the clinic the Rebbe's picture that had been on the wall had been removed by the doctor who had filled in for me. I didn't know whether to replace it or not. The patients didn't stop asking me where the picture is."

* * *

I concluded the interview as we walked to the Chabad house, where the weekly shiur on D'var Malchus was going to take place. Dr. Tagar is a regular participant.

"My dream is the same as that of every Chabad Chassid – that the Rebbe MH"M will appear immediately. With the Geula there will be no jealousy and competition and certainly no sick people."



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SHIFRA AND PUAH

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelewitz, Shliach, Beit Shaan

The Rebbe, the big Ohev Yisroel, knows how difficult it is for a new mother and he initiated this worldwide organization to support women and to support childbirth. One can never know how many women were willing to bring more Jewish children into the world thanks to this help and thanks to the N'shei Chabad.

We are all familiar with this wonderful organization, Shifra and Puah, which helps women who have recently given birth. This week I'd like to discuss how the organization was founded and about the wonderful work they do.

The women of Kfar Chabad, for example, and their husbands and children, are very familiar with the pampering that Shifra and Puah provides for new mothers. This includes meals, many hours of babysitting for siblings of the new baby, housekeeping services, and more. In other branches they provide diapers, a celebratory cake, baby formula, etc., depending on the contributions received at each of the dozens of branches, located all over the globe.

A FATEFUL MEETING ON YOM KIPPUR

The organization began with a meeting that took place in 770 between the Rebbe's secretary,

Rabbi Chadakov and Rabbi Shlomo Maidanchek, on Yom Kippur 5737 during the break between Musaf and Mincha. R' Chadakov told R' Maidanchek that he had just been instructed by the Rebbe that Kfar Chabad (and other places should learn from them) should have an organization to help new mothers, without differentiating between rich and poor so that everyone would feel comfortable receiving aid.

The Rebbe asked that this organization be called Shifra and Puah after the two midwives whose devotion in Egypt is described in the Chumash. Surprisingly, the Rebbe (almost) never mentioned this organization at farbrengens, but he definitely encouraged the women active in it, who reported to the Rebbe about their work and about the founding of new branches in more and more towns and cities.

During this period of expansion, from 5740 to 5743, the Rebbe spoke at many farbrengens about the importance of increasing the

birthrate and about his opposition to Family Planning, saying it would be desirable for every family to have ten children.

THE GOALS OF THE ORGANIZATION

Mrs. Levitin, shlucha in Givat Ada relates:

Some years ago, the Chabad house decided to form a branch of Shifra and Puah. We enlisted five women (plus myself, altogether three pairs) and we would make house calls to new mothers and help them out. One of the volunteers got more and more involved and she ultimately adopted the project as her own. She arranged a large program for women to benefit the organization and each woman was given a "Shir LaMaalos" card, which is used as a segula for a woman giving birth and afterwards, for the baby.

Although this volunteer was not that young anymore and her youngest daughter was in high school, she still hoped to have another child. She hung the Shir LaMaalos up in her house and went on to give birth to another daughter. She thanked those at the Chabad house and said that it was in the merit of her volunteer work for the organization that she had become a new mother herself.

Rabbi Shimshon Tal, shliach in Hod HaSharon, relates:

About five years ago, a local woman told us that her doctor said that the baby she was carrying would be born with genetic problems, short limbs and muscular problems. She

had already made an appointment for an abortion and then heard that the Chabad house helps new mothers, so she felt she had to consult with us.

My wife and I arranged an appointment for her with Dr. Shussheim, the director of the Efrat organization, which tries to convince women not to abort and provides aid. We jointly encouraged her and provided her with financial aid and she canceled her appointment for an abortion.

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Two years later, as R' Tal walked down the street, a woman approached him and said, "Do you remember me? I spoke to you regarding my baby... Here he is, in the carriage. Baruch Hashem, he is perfectly healthy. It is thanks to you that I have him."

In another case, the organization Ezer Mi'Tziyon in Raanana asked the Chabad house of Hod HaSharon about a woman who gave birth to twins. She needed financial assistance to provide the basics,

from formula and diapers to money and arrangements for a bris for the twins. R' Tal took on this project. In the end, the relatives of the new mother got involved and the Chabad house just had to oversee the details, which were all carried out in the best possible way.

**GIVING BIRTH IN
NATZRAT ILIT**

One of the big successes of the Shifra and Puah organization is the branch in Natzrat Ilit. The organizer there, Mrs. Rochel Kenig, has an army of volunteers who cook, transport and distribute the food, clean, and babysit. Each new mother receives a layette, a receiving blanket, and if necessary, monetary assistance.

"Each new mother costs us around 1300 shekels," says Mrs. Kenig. "I'm always amazed at how Hashem sends us surprise donations just as we need them."

The feedback from the new mothers pours in. They are most grateful for the tasty, nutritious breakfasts, and especially that everything is arranged so nicely and orderly. One new mother said, "It's great giving birth in Natzrat Ilit. I'm left with a good feeling all day from the nice meal. In the evening too, when I go to sleep, I wonder what surprise awaits me the next morning for breakfast."

Mrs. Kenig recounts, "Two years ago we found out about a woman in Natzrat Ilit who already had several children. She had found out she was carrying twins. Her financial situation was poor and they were planning an abortion.

"Two representatives from Shifra and Puah went to her home and we tried to convince her not to go through with it. It wasn't easy. We promised to help her, but we couldn't convince her. We finally told her that we guaranteed to adopt the children if she didn't want them,

one baby for the Kenig family and one for the Abelsky family. Then she agreed. She gave birth to such wonderful twins that she was willing to raise them herself. We helped the family as much as we could and baruch Hashem, they are being happily raised along with the rest of the family."

IN BEIT SHAAN

In Beit Shaan a few years ago we heard about a woman who had a bunch of little children, aged one to seven, who had just given birth. Her family awaited her homecoming and there was plenty of work waiting for her too. It was better to send her to a convalescent home for new mothers. N'shei Chabad subsidized it and the Chabad house of Beit Shaan paid the rest.

There was just one little problem, her husband said she should return home from the hospital and get back to work. In the end, he agreed that she should go to the convalescent home but he wouldn't take her. If Chabad wanted to, they could take her to the place.

My wife happily volunteered to spend a few hours doing this chesed. She took the mother and infant to the convalescent home in B'nei Brak.

* * *

In summary, it's a big mitzva. A new mother is weak and needs help. The Rebbe, the big Ohev Yisroel, knows how difficult it is for a new mother and he initiated this worldwide organization to support women and to support childbirth. One can never know how many women were willing to bring more Jewish children into the world thanks to this help and thanks to the N'shei Chabad.

And it's okay for husbands to do some "Shifra and Puah" and happily help their dear wives. After all, bringing children into the world hastens the Geula.