

Wishing all our readers a kosher and joyous Pesach! The next issue is due to be printed be"H for Parshas Emor.

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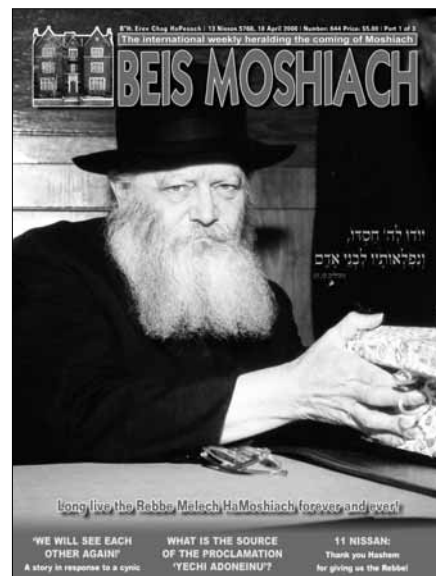
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IT'S NOT ENOUGH FOR IT TO BE 'IN PLACE' OF THE REAL THING

Likkutei Sichos Vol. 32, pg. 36-43

Translated by Boruch Merkur

[Continued from last issue]

5. However, notwithstanding the above, we must look more carefully into the words of the Alter Rebbe in his Siddur, insofar as his text diverges from the text of *Shla* discussed above (Section 2), although he quotes the words (that appear following the liturgy of the Order of the Pesach Sacrifice), “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.”

Simply speaking, we may respond that this variation is in order to be concise, especially insofar as the work *Seider HaYom* also omits⁴² the lengthy wording of the *Shla*.

However, this omission may also be explained in greater depth. Namely, that the intent of the Alter Rebbe here is that there is a virtue in reciting the Order of the Pesach Sacrifice that even surpasses the

fact that the prayers were instituted in place of the sacrifices.

Regarding prayer, the **overt** connection with the act of offering a sacrifice is not readily apparent. Rather, our Sages, of blessed memory, elucidated and revealed that the (speech) act of prayer⁴³ is considered like the act of offering a sacrifice. That is, the person is not ostensibly⁴⁴ involved in the concept of offering a sacrifice (for it is not even like “one who is involved in the study of the law of the Sin Offering, etc.,” where the person is openly involved with the study of the law of sacrifices).

But this is not the case in the topic at hand, the recital of the Order of the Pesach Sacrifice, recounting the details of the order of offering the sacrifice as it was **actually** done in the Holy Temple (which surpasses the study of the laws of the sacrifice, as they appear in the Oral Torah, as mentioned above). That is, the person here is actually involved in the concept of offering a sacrifice, albeit just in speech and not in action. From this point it is understood that when **this** speech is considered as the deed of offering a sacrifice, it surpasses the act of prayer; it is considered

as if he stands in the Holy Temple and actually performs all the details mentioned in the Order of the Pesach Sacrifice – literally the act of offering a sacrifice.⁴⁵

For this reason the Alter Rebbe does not quote the words of the *Shla* mentioned above, the inference of which is that the “And let us render [for] bulls [the offering of] our lips” accomplished through reciting the Order of the Pesach Sacrifice is similar to how prayers were established in place of sacrifices, for [the Alter Rebbe maintains that] the recital of the Order of the Pesach Sacrifice is actually even loftier.

6. According to the above discussion we can also explain the fact that there is an especial obligation that “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.” Namely, since the complete act of offering a

Pesach sacrifice entails offering it in the Holy Temple, therefore, in order for one's reading [of the Order of the Pesach Sacrifice] to be considered in place of the actual offering of the sacrifice, he must know that notwithstanding the positive quality of his reading being in place of offering a sacrifice – “And let us render [for] bulls [the offering of] our lips” – it still falls short of being a complete sacrifice, and he “must lament the destruction of the Temple and supplicate, etc., that He should [re]build it,” for **then** he will achieve the complete manner of offering the Pesach sacrifice. And the result⁴⁶ of his combined lamenting and supplications (“and supplicate”) is that his reading should be in place of the actual offering of the sacrifice.⁴⁷

Upon this foundation, the conclusion, “But if the Pesach sacrifice is discovered to be *treifa*, it is not counted until he brings another one,” is readily understood. The conclusion of the Order of the Pesach Sacrifice emphasizes the intent of **all** this recital (as the saying goes, “everything goes according to the [concluding] seal”⁴⁸). Therefore this law – “But if the Pesach sacrifice is discovered to be *treifa*, it is not counted until he brings another one” – is said, for it underscores that the act of the person, the subject, alone is insufficient. Rather, there must be – and the principal factor is – the actual object of the sacrifice. Thus, if the sacrifice is

disqualified, it does not count for the one who offers it and he must bring another one (which goes well with the innovation discussed above – that the one who is involved in the recital of the Order of the Pesach Sacrifice must be in a state whereby it is relevant to him that he should perform the actual sacrifice, not only attaining the result of offering the sacrifice or the advantage gained by the person's act [in reading that section], which is considered like offering an actual sacrifice).

[To be continued be”H]

NOTES:

⁴² The text is quoted above in Footnote 10.

⁴³ To note the discussion in *Likkutei Torah* Parshas Pinchas, beg.

⁴⁴ However, according to the inner dimension of the matter, the significance of prayer is the concept of sacrifices (*korbanos*), namely, offering the animal (the Animal Soul) within the person and drawing it (*kiruv*) towards G-d.

⁴⁵ See Footnote 45 in the original.

⁴⁶ See Footnote 46 in the original.

⁴⁷ See Footnote 47 in the original.

⁴⁸ Brachos 12a.

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'WE WILL SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN!'

By M. Shmuel

“Even before the Rebbe became Rebbe he was already a saintly and holy man and performed miracles, as I can attest to with an incident that happened to me personally,” Reb Getzel responded...

We would like to share a story which was told by R' Sholom Jacobson during a Simchas Beis HaShoeiva farbrengen in Baltimore this past Chag HaSukkos 5768.

As he related, he heard this on Shabbos Rosh Chodesh Tammuz 5767, from Rabbi Mordechai Goldberg (of Boro Park) (who is the son-in-law of Reb Getzel Beck). Also many others who were acquainted with Reb Getzel and his children heard this story from them.

By way of short introduction:

In the winter of 5707 (1947) the Rebbe's mother, HaRabbanis HaTzidkanis Rebbetzin Chana, arrived from the DP camps in Pocking, Germany to Paris, France. In the end of the month of Adar, the Rebbe flew there to meet her and arrange for her emigration to the USA. He stayed in Paris for almost 3 months, returning with his mother

to America on 28th of Sivan.

It was during that period that Reb Getzel Beck became acquainted with the Rebbe in Paris, and this story took place.

* * *

On a Yud Alef Nissan, some years ago in a Chassidic shul in London, some Chassidim were making a l'chaim for the Rebbe's birthday. There were two individuals in the shul who were very cynical about celebrating a birthday. Where does this custom come from? they questioned. Is there a source in Torah for celebrating a birthday, or does this come from "outside" influences, perhaps?

One of the participants in this farbrengen was a chassid by the name of Reb Getzel Beck. He was a very prominent Belzer Chassid. Remembered very fondly by many in London.

When Reb Getzel heard these snide remarks, he was upset, and he responded to those two individuals: I can assure you, that if the Rebbe said it, there is a source for this in every part of Torah, whether in nigleh (the revealed part) or in nistar (the esoteric part), whether in Kabbala or in Chassidus!

But those two cynics were not yet convinced. Naw, they said, it's most probably from the "secular" influence in university when he was a student...

"Even before the Rebbe became Rebbe he was already a saintly and holy man and performed miracles, as I can attest to with an incident that happened to me personally," Reb Getzel responded.

Reb Getzel Beck was a very prominent Belzer Chassid. He had escaped Vienna, Austria in 5699 (1939) just ahead of the German occupation, and was constantly on the run from the Germans. The escape was a very close call. The Gestapo was making arrests in Vienna; the Anschluss was already taking place there.

Reb Getzel was very concerned about what lies ahead. He made emergency plans with his family. He told his wife that if anyone comes looking for him, she should convey this information to him in his place of business.

Indeed that was what happened. One day, while Reb Getzel was at his shop, there was a knock on the door, the Nazis were looking for Reb Getzel. His wife immediately sent their young daughter to the place of business to notify Reb Getzel that they came looking for him...

Reb Getzel told his young daughter: I am not coming back home! Go tell mother that she should pack two valises with worldly possessions and take all the children and go immediately with a taxi to the train station. I will meet you all

there.

They took the next train to leave Vienna and arrived in Berlin. From there they booked passage and traveled to Switzerland, where they were interred in a refugee camp till 1944.

Interestingly, in 5698 (1938) with the ominous clouds of war descending on Europe, Reb Getzel asked the Belzer Rebbe if he can go to America to escape the fate of the European Jewry. The Belzer Rebbe told him not to go.

Reb Getzel countered: I know you are against going to America because it is a land where people forget their Yiddishkait and stop observing Torah and mitzvos, but now it's a case of *pikuach nefesh* (life threatening circumstances)! Is this not a different case?!

The Belzer Rebbe answered: "You and your children will be saved anyway!" (implying that he need not travel to America to be saved) and these prophetic words of the Belzer Rebbe were actually fulfilled as



predicted. Reb Getzel was constantly a step ahead of the Nazi invaders until after the war. After several years in a refugee camp in Switzerland, he finally made his way to Paris. He was in Paris from 5704 (1944) until 5708 (1948).

And this was what Reb Getzel related in response to those skeptics:

From 1944 till 1948 I lived in Paris, and I had a small kosher restaurant, where many observant Jews would come to have something to eat. Many of the visitors wore the Chassidic *levush* (garb), and it was obvious that they were prominent observant Jews.

I saw many great tzaddikim and G'dolei Yisroel, when I was living in Vienna before the war, and among my customers, although they were dressed in Chassidic garb, I sometimes sensed that their conduct was not consistent to the impression their *levushim* displayed. One of the people who came into my restaurant was a young man dressed in 'modern' clothes. Although he was dressed in modern garb, and outwardly did not show any indication of his piety, however, his face radiated with holiness and sanctity and his impeccable observant behavior demonstrated to me that this was a very holy man. Somehow I felt that beneath the modern clothes a very holy man was hiding, and in a very inconspicuous way. Something which impressed me to no small degree.

One day this young man called me aside and very discreetly asked me: Who caters here? Who prepares the food? I told him that the food is all homemade; it's all prepared by my wife and I.

"So then I want to ask you a second question," the young man said: "Does your wife cover her hair?"

Yes! I responded. Certainly!
To which he said: Then I can

have something to eat here whenever I need to.

And who are you? I asked the man.

He didn't give his name, but after I persistently asked him several times he only gave his first name; he refused to give his family name. What's the difference what the family name is? he said.

I observed his holy and G-d-fearing conduct and found it to be superior to all my other customers, even those who were prominent rabbinic and Chassidic personalities. When I scrutinized his conduct, the way he ate, and how, after eating something, he took out a siddur from his pocket to make a *bracha achrona*, my admiration of him grew each time. As I watched his behavior, I was amazed and intrigued by his holiness and purity.

One day he entered with two elder Chassidim who were dressed in Chassidic *levushim* and they had a aura of piety about them. They sat at one side of the table and he sat on the other side facing them. He was speaking and they were listening very intently, swallowing his every word with such great respect and admiration that my initial supposition of his holiness and sanctity was reinforced; I realized that they, too, saw in him what I suspected and assumed so often – this indeed was a holy man. Seeing that they shared my observation, I thought that this was my opportunity to find out his name.

As they were leaving, I approached one of the elder Chassidim, and began to ask what was this young man's name, but before he had a chance to answer me, the young man took the elder Chassid by the sleeve and they left the restaurant.

One day, he came by and said that he wants to say farewell and thank me for everything as he is

leaving the next day to America. I told him that he doesn't have to thank me because he paid for everything I served him...

However he responded, that it seems, according to a Rashi, that even when you pay, one should also say thank you!

Our conversation segued to other topics in Torah (maybe it was on the topic of *hachnasas orchim*), and I mentioned a quote from a seifer (perhaps a Chasam Sofer). The young man commented that he doesn't remember that quote to be in that seifer...

As we were saying goodbye, I asked him, can you finally tell me who you are? What's your full name?! But he maintained that his name is irrelevant, "However, I will tell you a story," he said: There was once a Jew who asked the holy Ruzhiner what his name was. He evaded him by saying that "it makes no difference who I am, but we will still meet again and then you will know!"

And the young man paraphrased the holy Ruzhiner, and told me: "*m'vet zich noch zehen*" (we will see each other again), and with this the young man left.

I saw some significance in the comparison of the young man and the holy Rizhiner.

Reb Getzel continued:

I moved to London, and 22 years later, I was in New York for a family simcha. I took ill and was hospitalized. I was diagnosed with pneumonia, and the doctors were treating it with a certain method, but that medication had an adverse effect on me, the medication caused me to go into a life threatening state. The doctors didn't know how to reverse the effects of the medication they had given me. They were clueless.

Seeing that there was no medical solution and the grave situation I was in, I sent my son to various

rebbees in the city to ask them for a blessing and prayers. He went to the Bobover Rebbe as well as many others. My son returned from the rebbees that he visited and said that all the rebbees gave a bracha for a *refua shleima* (complete recovery), however, the Lubavitcher Rebbe said: "Tell him not to worry, everything will be fine. And we will see each other again!"

My situation was deteriorating and there was no hope in sight from a natural/medical perspective. Several days later, a professor came to the hospital and examined me. He told me that he is trying a new method to heal me, and after a few days of his treatment, I felt much better. When he came to see me after several days, I thanked him profusely for saving my life. However he responded that the thanks and credit are not due to him but to the Lubavitcher Rebbe!

"You seem to have close connections to the Lubavitcher *hoif* (court), because I usually don't work in this hospital. I received a call from the Lubavitcher Rebbe's secretariat, who outlined your condition, that the medication and treatment went wrong and they did not know how to reverse it. The Rebbe suggested an alternate method to rectify the mishap and asked that I go to treat you. Thank the Rebbe that it succeeded!" the professor concluded.

After I left the hospital and recuperated, I went to visit the Rebbe. As soon as I entered his yechidus room, he said: "*Nu, m'treft zich nochamol... vi m'hot opgeredt...!*" (Nu, we meet again, as we had arranged).

To my great surprise, when I saw the Rebbe's holy face I realized that this was the young man whom I encountered (and admired so much) in Paris several decades ago. But this time I did not have to ask his full name!

If I had any doubts if this was he, they were put aside, when without hesitation he continued: "As for the quote from that seifer which I questioned its veracity – there are several editions of that seifer, most do not have the quote that you cited. However, there is one edition of that seifer which has that quote in a footnote."

After 22 years, he was putting me at ease. It was as spontaneously as if he had only spoken to two people in all this period of time.

Reb Getzel concluded to those two cynics: So you can be certain that even before he was Rebbe he was a saintly and holy man and I benefited from the miracle which he performed. Anything the Rebbe says and does – you can be sure, doesn't come from a "secular" source, but it's deeply rooted in Torah and k'dusha and comes from On High!

Very often Reb Getzel would refer to the Rebbe as a holy man, a *baal moifess* (a miracle worker)!

* * *

May we all merit that the Rebbe should immediately take us all out of galus to the true & complete Redemption.

* * *

When mentioning the ignorant remarks that some make, it should be made clear that they stem from ignorance of Torah, as the Chazal tell us (Yerushalmi Peia 1:1) on the pasuk: "It [the Torah] is not an empty matter for you" – but if you regard it as empty, that emptiness is "from you," because you do not toil in Torah.

And the Rebbe himself addressed all these issues, regarding the sources in Torah, and it is cited and published in many places, one of which is the sichos of 25 Adar & Acharon shel Pesach 5748, printed in *Seifer HaSichos* 5748 vol. 1 p. 332; vol 2 p. 398.

THANK YOU HASHEM, FOR GIVING US THE REBBE!

Interview by Yisrael Yehuda

*What is the point of a birthday in general, the birthday of the Nasi HaDor in particular? How does this affect everyone? Is there an inyan in bringing gifts to the Rebbe? How did the Rebbe react? When did Chassidim begin to mark the Rebbe's birthday and what does the Rebbe himself say about his birthday? * Rabbi Moshe Orenstein, mashpia in yeshivas Chabad Lubavitch in Tzfas spoke to us about the significance of 11 Nissan.*

THE EARLY DAYS OF CELEBRATING 11 NISSAN

Nowadays, Yud-Alef Nissan is a special day in the Chassidic calendar. Was it always like this? When did it start?

11 Nissan began *m'l'maala*

l'matta, with the Rebbe himself. In the early years of his leadership, Chassidim did not make a big deal about it. Nor did we see that the Rebbe regarded it in any special way. Here and there were small farbrengens made by the Chassidim,

but it was not a holiday.

There is a yechidus of the Rebbe Rayatz, which is printed in the maamarim of 5709, where it says that this sicha was said on Sunday, 11 Nissan 5709, on the last 11th Nissan of the Rebbe Rayatz's life. In this yechidus, the Rebbe Rayatz says that there is an "inner core, essential aphorism: Shmura Matza is referred to by two names that express its innermost essence – food of faith and food of healing." The Rebbe Rayatz explains that this aphorism was transmitted from generation to generation by the Rebbeim, from the teacher of the Baal Shem Tov, Achiya HaShiloni, and he concludes, "and it is transmitted personally and with elucidation from Rebbe to Rebbe!"

Already in the early years, Chassidim knew of this yechidus and noted that the Rebbe Rayatz chose to convey this idea which was transmitted "from Rebbe to Rebbe" on 11 Nissan 5709, which is how people became more aware of the importance of this special date.

However, although things like this were revealed in connection with 11 Nissan, the day still did not become a special day. It was, rather, in 5712 that this date was first publicized, to a certain extent. That evening, the three members of the Vaad HaMesader (organizing committee) went to the Rebbe and the Rebbe said a brief sicha to them about reviewing Chassidus. At 9:00, twenty people entered the Rebbe's room, including some bachurim, based on a list that Rabbi Chadakov read. The Rebbe said the maamer, "Hashem s'fasai tiftach" on chapter 51 of T'hilim.

It was first in 5722 that a big farbrengen was held in honor of the Rebbe's 60th birthday. Two maamarim were said as well as a siyum, and in the next farbrengen, on Pesach, the Rebbe referred to 11 Nissan. He explained the verses of



the corresponding chapter of T'hillim, etc., but celebrating the Rebbe's birthday was still not "established."

11 Nissan as it is marked today began in 5731. That day, the Rebbe went to the Ohel and when he

returned, he announced that there would be a brief farbrengen. There was a farbrengen between Mincha and Maariv. The Rebbe began the farbrengen by requesting the shluchim from Australia to say l'chaim and then, without a niggun,

he began to say the famous maamer, "B'Yom Ashtei Asar Yom," in which verses from chapter 70 are mentioned. The Rebbe explained the reason for the farbrengen, saying it was because he was entering his 70th year.

We all waited for hours outside until the distribution was over and it was over at six in the morning! At 7:30 the Rebbe came out for the Torah reading, he went home around eight o'clock, returned at eleven, went to the Ohel, and as soon as he returned he presided over a farbrengen for 13 Nissan!

The following year, 5732, people knew ahead of time that there would be a farbrengen. That year, 11 Nissan was on a Sunday. There was a farbrengen on Shabbos and the Rebbe said two maamarim, and on Sunday night there was a big farbrengen. Since then, 11 Nissan has become a day of celebration on which we have a big farbrengen. That year was exceptional in that the Rebbe farbrenged that Pesach on the first day, second day in the afternoon, the seventh day, and (as usual) on Acharon shel Pesach. At these farbrengens he continued to

explain verses from his new chapter of T'hillim.

Do certain 11 Nissans stand out in your mind?

There were a few outstanding ones, the most famous one on 11 Nissan 5732 when the Rebbe was 70 and he began his 71st year. There was a big farbrengen and the Rebbe surprised us by asking for 71 new mosdos to be founded that year. For those days, a request like that was nearly impossible – to found 71 mosdos within a year?! There weren't many mosdos at the time and that huge number seemed out of the question.

However, if the Rebbe asks, you do. A committee was formed whose job it was to organize the effort worldwide.

There were other years in which the Rebbe spoke negatively about going to 770 for 11 Nissan. In 5732 for example, the Rebbe said that those who considered going for 11 Nissan should be absolutely sure to be with their families for Pesach. Another year, the Rebbe said that those who planned on going to 770 should take half the money that the trip would cost and use it generously for Pesach expenses, and use the other half for Maos Chittim.

In 5742, the Rebbe said people should not go to 770 for 11 Nissan. I had another reason to go and with that excuse, I attended the farbrengen.

That farbrengen was unique. The Rebbe began with blessings and thanks for the brachos, etc., and he said that we should bless and acknowledge the American government for the new law they had just passed – that 11 Nissan would be Education Day throughout the US. The Rebbe spoke about this at length.

There were many non-Jews at that farbrengen and I noticed an interesting thing. Throughout the years, the Rebbe used wine which he

poured from a bottle that was wrapped in such a way that you couldn't see the bottle. At this farbrengen though, the Rebbe used mashke at the beginning of the farbrengen and only later, when the goyim left, did he use wine.

Towards the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe made a siyum on Rambam. In the 60th and 70th year, the Rebbe made a siyum on the tractate P'sachim, but this time, the Rebbe postponed it for Acharon shel Pesach, and he made a siyum on Rambam at the farbrengen. This was before the Rebbe's *takana* about learning Rambam daily, but even before the *takana*, the Rebbe made siyumim on Rambam on a number of occasions.

Towards the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe said: As I said at the beginning of the farbrengen, it is necessary to be thankful from the bottom of my heart to all those who made the effort to attend this farbrengen, which takes place for a few hours. Especially to those who connect it with the honor of so-and-so the son of so-and-so, when in fact it is an inyan that is connected with the totality of the Chabad movement and its activities. As mentioned before, the activities are generally carried out by the foot soldiers and not by the generals... On the other hand, since there is also the element of so-and-so's honor, there must be the inyan of expressing personal gratitude...

Then the Rebbe announced the distribution of *Tanyas*. Within each *Tanya* was a dollar for tz'daka. The Rebbe said that first they would be distributed to men and then to women. The Rebbe also mentioned that the goal is to "to learn it until the pages become worn out."

It was very cold that year to the point that the airport was closed. Nevertheless, we all waited for hours outside until the distribution was over and it was over at six in



the morning! At 7:30 the Rebbe came out for the Torah reading, he went home around eight o'clock, returned at eleven, went to the Ohel, and as soon as he returned he presided over a farbrengen for 13 Nissan!

You could sense the difference between the farbrengens. The 11 Nissan farbrengen was more official and "official" things were said that suited a farbrengen that was broadcast and heard throughout the world. The 13 Nissan farbrengen was warm and family-like. The Rebbe did not appear in the least bit

tired despite his exhausting schedule.

At the 11 Nissan 5745 farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke a lot about it seemingly being the opposite of humility for people to come "in the honor of so-and-so" [i.e., himself], and regarding pride it says not to have even the tiniest amount, even an eighth of an eighth is forbidden. However, since the Rebbe Rayatz is up Above and he needs feet down below, therefore, surely they come to fulfill the instructions that need to be followed.

The Rebbe went on to explain that it really is no honor at all [the fact that the Rebbe is the successor]. "Authority I give you?! Servitude is what I give you!" As it says, "You will be a servant to this nation." In any case, the Rebbe explained that the reason that guests come for the 11 Nissan farbrengen is because the farbrengen is an inyan of hafatza, but to make it "interesting" they connect it to someone's birthday and that's why guests come, etc.

What are some of the things that took place over the years in connection with 11 Nissan ?

In 5730, following that 11 Nissan, when for the first time, they presented a niggun on a verse in the Rebbe's new chapter of T'hillim, "Ki Elokim Yoshia Tziyon," they saw that Rebbe obviously enjoyed this niggun and he encouraged the singing of it. This became the "niggun of the year," and it was sung at the beginning of every farbrengen and sometimes at the end too.

Four niggunim were composed for the 70th year: "Becha Hashem Chasisi," "Avo B'Gevuros," "Teranena S'fasai," "K'Mofes Hayisi L'Rabbim," and from then on, each year a niggun was composed to the Rebbe's chapter.

There was also a farbrengen, of course, and at this farbrengen or at those that followed, the Rebbe explained verses from the chapter of T'hillim of that year. In addition, elder Chassidim would bless the Rebbe and at some point they began adding the priestly blessing. 11 Nissan wasn't formally established as a holiday to begin with. Rather, more and more details were added until it became a Chassidishe Yom Tov.

We saw that from 25 Adar the Rebbe went nearly every day or every two days to the Ohel, more than during Slichos. The Rebbe did not receive people for yechidus until

after Pesach and in letters and responses it said, “due to the pressures of the holiday.”

Did the Rebbe ever refer directly to his birthday?

There were some references, like, for example, when he emphasized the “Shnas HaTzaddik,” as the year between 5751-2 was called, when the Rebbe turned 90. The Rebbe would refer to verses in the new chapter in the maamarim and he also spoke about the topic of coming to the 11 Nissan farbrengen, as I described.

THE SIGNIFICANCE AND SPECIAL QUALITY OF THE DAY

How do you explain 11 Nissan in Chassidische terms?

The topic of a birthday in general, is a broad one, and it's hard to encapsulate it in an Erev Pesach interview. In any case, we can look at Moshe Rabbeinu's birthday. Moshe was born on 7 Adar and he passed away on 7 Adar. The Rebbe spoke about this at length in sichos – the fact that Moshe was born on 7 Adar is what makes the month a happy one, “its mazal is healthy.” It is also the reason for the miracle of Purim, as it says in Chazal, “The day of birth is worthy of atoning for the day of death.” Moshe was born a little more than 1000 years before Purim. Nevertheless, his birth **in that month** caused the enormous miracle of Purim and is the reason for the great joy of Adar for generations to come with all its laws and customs.

All the more so when we have the birthday of the Nasi HaDor, the Moshe of our generation, Melech HaMoshiach, surely the impact is far greater!

We can see the special quality of the day from another source. We know from sichos the great quality of 18 Elul, the birthday of the two great luminaries, the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe. In addition, we saw that the Rebbe attributed importance to the birthdays of our Rebbeim and there was usually a farbrengen on each of these days, although not always on the yom hilula.

For example, on 2 Nissan, the yom hilula of the Rebbe Rashab there were no farbrengens (although there was the famous sicha of “Yechi HaMelech”), but on 20 Cheshvan, the birthday of the Rebbe Rashab, there were often farbrengens. So naturally, the Rebbe's own birthday is very significant, especially when the Rebbe himself attributed importance to this day and held farbrengens and said Chassidus.

Just as with Moshe Rabbeinu, where the entire month of Adar is one of mazal, since Moshe's birthday affected the entire month for all time, surely the birthday of Moshiach affords a special quality to the entire month, as Chazal say, “In Nissan they were redeemed and in Nissan they will be redeemed,” and

On a birthday, a Jew thanks Hashem for bringing him down to this material world so he can do mitzvos. If a private person ought to thank Hashem and celebrate, all the more so a Nasi HaDor, whose birthday should be celebrated. We should thank and praise Hashem for giving us the Rebbe.

especially on the birthday itself.

What should we feel on this day for it to have an effect on us?

There's the famous sicha in *Likkutei Sichos*, volume 32, about the sacrifices of the N'siim (leaders of the tribes). The Rebbe explains the concept of the eternity of the N'siim. Even though the dedication of the altar was a onetime occurrence, and this was just for the Mishkan and not for the Battei Mikdash, which were more fundamental, we still see that this one time occurrence which is connected with the N'siim of 3000 years ago, affects the entire month for years to come. We do not say Tachanun in the month of Nissan, as it says in *Shulchan Aruch*.

If we think about it, we'll notice an amazing thing. It is customary to “say the Nasi” every day of the first twelve days of the month of Nissan. What do we say in the Yehi Ratzon after the Nasi? “That all the holy sparks that are included in the holiness of this tribe be illuminated in me ... to understand and comprehend Your Torah and the awe of You, to do Your will all the days of my life – me, my children, and my children's children – from now and forever, amen.”

The Rebbe analyzed each detail of this prayer, and derived from this that a Jew is connected to the Nasi by saying the verses associated with that Nasi, and through this hiskashrus, he asks for great things.

Think about it! If hiskashrus like this, through reading a few verses that takes a few minutes, about a Nasi who lived over 3000 years ago who brought a



sacrifice on that day, can cause the sparks of holiness to be illuminated in me, etc., all the more so when we speak of a Chassid whose entire life is mekushar to the Rebbe, who fulfills his instructions and learns his teachings – surely, this auspicious day has all the levels and spiritual elevations. It's not that we're looking for a reward but "from its reward, we know what it's about."

If these matters pertain to every Jew (as mentioned in connection with Moshe), all the more so is this true about our Nasi. Surely, this special day is a time of Geula, of brachos, and all lofty matters.

A BIRTHDAY IS NOT ONLY FOR CHILDREN

Birthdays are most often celebrated by children. Isn't a birthday celebration for a Rebbe inappropriate?

As I mentioned before, the subject of birthdays is a broad one. In order to appreciate the importance of a birthday, we as Chassidim have to look at what

significance the Rebbe accorded to birthdays. Long before the Rebbe announced Mivtza Yom Huledes in 5748, Chassidim knew that a birthday enabled you to arrange a yechidus with the Rebbe even when the secretaries limited yechidus.

Those who lived far away, received a letter in honor of their birthday, and from this we clearly see how the Rebbe treated birthdays as days of great import. So if the Rebbe regarded birthdays as important days, to the point that this was a reason to have a yechidus with him, then obviously it is a special day of great importance.

On a deeper level, one of the Rebbe's mivtzaim is Mivtza Yom Huledes. The Rebbe made a big deal about birthdays and he made it one of the mivtzaim. We see the vast difference between those who have learned Chassidus and those who haven't. Those who haven't learned Chassidus ask: Where do we see that birthdays should be a Yom Tov? Some say it more cynically: Where do we see a birthday mentioned in the Torah? Pharaoh's birthday! And

Chazal say, "it would have been better for man if he wasn't created," so what is the simcha on a birthday all about?

If you learn Chassidus, the question is the opposite: What does it mean, "It would have been better for man if he wasn't created?" Hashem created the world "because He desires kindness," as it says, "and Hashem saw what He had made and behold, it was very good." In other words, the entire world is a product of Hashem's kindness and love, and "better is one hour of repentance and good deeds in this world than all of the world to come." So how can Chazal say that man would be better off not having been created?

The Alter Rebbe explains: "It would have been better for man if he wasn't created" – indeed, it would have been better and easier not to have been created. It is far more comfortable for the neshama beneath the Throne of Glory, enjoying the rays of the Sh'china. However, true good entails descending to this world with all its trials, and refining one's share of the world. This enables man to attain a far higher level, as Chazal say, "better is one hour of repentance and good deeds in this world than all of the world to come."

So the joy on a birthday is understandable. On a birthday, a Jew thanks Hashem for bringing him down to this material world so he can do mitzvos. If a private person ought to thank Hashem and celebrate, all the more so a Nasi HaDor, whose birthday should be celebrated. We should thank and praise Hashem for giving us the Rebbe.

How should a Chassid treat this day?

Any Yom Tov is an auspicious time when powers are conferred, when lofty revelations are drawn down which give a Jew the ability to

One time, the Rebbe said that he doesn't want material gifts, for, "one who hates gifts will live," but spiritual gifts are perfectly fine. The 71 mosdos was the Rebbe's explicit request for a "birthday present."

make good resolutions, and he is given Divine assistance to fulfill those resolutions on this day, far more than on ordinary days.

On 11 Nissan, an auspicious day and a Yom Tov, every Chassid who is mekushar to the Rebbe is given special kochos. The Rebbe connected 11 Nissan with the founding of 71 mosdos. Why?

The answer is that on an ordinary day, they could not have achieved this, but at an auspicious time like this, unlimited kochos are given and extraordinary goals can be achieved. This is what a Chassid receives on 11 Nissan – special kochos in order to be able to commit to an increase in Torah and mitzvos, an increase that goes beyond one's natural abilities.

On 11 Nissan, should a Chassid carry out the birthday customs like making a good resolution, making a spiritual accounting, etc., or is that only for

one's personal birthday?

Certainly he should. In the 60's, a big deal wasn't made of 11 Nissan, as I mentioned, but Chassidim farbrenged about the *HaYom Yom* of 11 Nissan. In this *HaYom Yom*, the Rebbe writes about the significance of a birthday: A birthday is a time for a person to spend time alone and reflect; those that need correction and t'shuva, should do so.

The *HaYom Yom* was written in the lifetime of the Rebbe Rayatz, and so why wasn't the significance of birthdays written for the *HaYom Yom* of 12 Tamuz which is his birthday? From this we learn that 11 Nissan is a day of spiritual accounting and making good resolutions for each one of us.

GIFTS FOR THE REBBE

Is giving the Rebbe a birthday gift a *hergesh* (personal feeling) or something that came from the Rebbe?

Both are true! The fact that the Rebbe spoke about gifts (even if he did so in a negative way – i.e., negating material gifts) means that the idea is a proper one and that this is what the Rebbe wants. At the same time, a Chassid has a *hergesh* to give the Rebbe a gift. The stronger the feeling, the more precious a gift the Chassid wants to give, but the gift has to give pleasure to the recipient, a spiritual gift.

On Rosh HaShana it is customary to make a good resolution since Rosh HaShana is a time that kochos are drawn down for the entire year, and similarly it is customary to make a good resolution on one's own birthday. Certainly, when it's the birthday of the Nasi HaDor, there is a big inyan for a Chassid to make a good resolution as a "gift."

What did the Rebbe say about gifts?

The Rebbe referred to gifts

several times in different ways. One time, the Rebbe said that he doesn't want material gifts, for the *Shulchan Aruch* quotes the verse, "one who hates gifts will live," but spiritual gifts are perfectly fine. The 71 mosdos was the Rebbe's explicit request for a "birthday present."

Does the spiritual gift a Chassid gives the Rebbe have any effect on the Rebbe?

It's hard to speak about this briefly, but generally speaking, the bond between Chassid and Rebbe is a very strong, essential bond, more than that between father and son and a teacher and his students, and the nature of this bond is such that a Chassid does have an effect on the Rebbe.

As the Rebbe once explained, we see that Hashem told Moshe, "I only gave you greatness because of Yisroel," which is why, after the sin of the Golden Calf, Hashem said to Moshe, "Go down – descend from your greatness." What did Moshe have to do with the Golden Calf that he was demoted in this way? The answer is that when Yisroel sinned, it affected Moshe, to the point that the Arizal says that Moshe's level was diminished by "one thousand lights" (though on Shabbos, he returns to his former level).

So yes, a Chassid affects the Rebbe and if we say this regarding something negative (like the Golden Calf) then all the more so with something positive. Surely, every good resolution and every spiritual gift to the Rebbe has an effect. So every Chassid who holds the Rebbe dear, who knows that nachas ruach for the Rebbe is nachas ruach for Hashem, and nachas ruach for the Rebbe means hastening the Geula – should look for a precious gift and give it happily and with the greatest enthusiasm to the Rebbe.

What kind of gift should we give?

It is difficult to set out strict



guidelines. Chassidim should have a mashpia and each should consult with him about choosing a suitable gift. This is especially important for those who are heads of families, since a person can fool himself and make a smaller commitment than he is capable of – “a rich man who brings a pauper’s sacrifice did not fulfill his obligation.” On the other hand, a person can commit to something too big for himself or his family and it could adversely affect them.

There is no specific time to give the gift. It can be “thirty days before the holiday,” or even after 11 Nissan as it was with the 71 mosdos which were established after the birthday. The general rule is that when it comes to doing a good thing, the Rebbe always urges speed. Again, this is something to discuss with a mashpia so that it is done properly.

In conclusion:

A birthday is a time when all a person’s inner qualities are revealed, his very life force, his faculties, etc. This is true for one’s own birthday, and when it’s the Nasi’s birthday all these things are revealed in a more general way.

The month of Nissan is the month of Geula and the ideas are wonderfully connected. The inyan of Nissan is “from Above to below,” which is unlike Tishrei when the avoda is “from below to Above,” the avoda of t’shuva. In Nissan, Hashem was revealed and redeemed the Jewish people. The Jewish people were immersed in the 49th level of impurity in Egypt, and Hashem extricated them from the lowest level and raised them up to a level on which they witnessed G-dly revelations, like the splitting of the sea and the giving of the Torah.

The Rebbe’s role is to redeem the Jewish people. The Rebbe knows what a low level we are on and he

exhorted us for years about very basic matters, such as shleimus ha’Am, shleimus ha’Aretz, and about the low state of avodas Hashem, etc. At the same time, the Rebbe demands the greatest of things! The Rebbe demands Torah study in the greatest possible way (to the point of dreaming divrei Torah, as he demanded in the last yechidus with the T’mimim), and he even demands that every Jew be a tzaddik gamur.

This is the special quality of Nissan and the special quality of the Rebbe, Nasi Doreinu, Moshiach of our generation. The inyan of a Nasi is “to bring to Yemos HaMoshiach.” Not to reckon with the terrible situation, with the darkness, but to go l’chat’chilla aribber. The Rebbe extricates us from galus in a way of “from Above to below,” and will bring us upright to our land, speedily, now mamash.

MATZOS SAMARKAND

By Avrohom Reinitz

*When we sit today and listen to the memoirs of Chassidim and how they baked matzos in Samarkand sixty years ago, we can't help but be amazed. Not just for the mesirus nefesh which the baking of matzos entailed, but also for the ingenious solutions and creativity. When faced with difficult circumstances, hidden powers come to the fore! * Shortly before Pesach, I sat with R' Hillel Zaltsman and R' Yitzchok Mishulavin, who told me about how they baked matzos in Samarkand, from the harvesting to the baking.*

AN EXPERIENCE FOR ALL OF ANASH

Chassidim and those who are particular in their mitzva observance are careful to bake matza only from wheat that is guarded from becoming chametz from the moment it is harvested. In Russia back then, when wheat fields were owned by the government, a complicated and secret operation was necessary to obtain flour.

"During our first years in Samarkand," said R' Zaltsman, "we were little children. It was during World War II and the city was full of thousands of refugees from Poland and Hungary. During the famine that prevailed at the time, it wasn't possible to think about shmura matza and other hiddurim."

"Having no choice," continued R' Mishulavin, "they would buy wheat in the local market, making

the maximum effort to buy the cleanest kernels. Then we would sit to check them for worms and chametz. Since there was no electricity in the house, we checked the wheat by the light of an oil lamp, just like the tractate Sukka describes the women checking kernels by the light of the lamps during Simchas Beis HaShoeiva.

"After we checked the wheat we had to grind it. Outside the city was a mill that was operated by a nearby waterfall. Of course it was government owned, like all the flour mills in Russia, and it was illegal for private people to grind wheat, certainly not for religious purposes. However, the man in charge, an Uzbeki by the name of Osman Aka, allowed us to grind the wheat for a day or two after we bribed him. More than half the time we had the mill was used for scrubbing it and the millstones, and the remaining time was used to grind the wheat.

"The day we kashered the mill was a big event. Many of Anash, the bachurim and even the children would go to the mill to help kasher it," recalled R' Mishulavin nostalgically. "They took the children in order to be mechanech them in mitzvos," he emphasized.

"Cleaning the millstones was complicated work," said R' Zaltsman. "The mortar and pestle, the two millstones, were large stones, each of which weighed about 500 kilograms. Together, with great effort, we took them apart and scraped them with small sticks and a special brush. Since the stones had thousands of grooves, it took hours of painstaking work to clean all the cracks and crevices.

"In Samarkand there was someone named R' Feivish Genkin. He was very punctilious about mitzvos, so that even R' Berke Chein, who did not eat at every Lubavitcher

home, agreed to eat in his home. As a builder of ovens by profession, R' Feivish had a torch which operated on gasoline. He would come to the mill with the torch and after they finished scraping out all the holes, he would go over the grooves in the stones and burn any remaining particles of wheat.

"The Uzbek stood off to the side and begged us to leave the stones alone already. He was paid for the cleaning as though the mill was being used, but he was always nervous that we would damage the millstones."

"After the war, when the refugees left Russia, and many Lubavitchers left too, pretending to be Polish citizens, a new era began in Samarkand. The Chassidim called this era, 'the post-evacuation era.'"

"This period was very difficult because the great Chassidim had left Russia and we were only a few left who had to deal with daily life under a government that persecuted any religious practice. I remember that when I left Russia and went to the Rebbe at the beginning of the 70's, R' Yehoshua Dubrawski, who had left with the great escape in 1946-7, said to me that he was sure that after they had left, none of Anash remained in Russia. Yet later,

hundreds of Chassidische bachurim and men came out of Russia who were punctilious about mitzva observance. He was astonished.

"On another occasion, when I visited the Bobover Rebbe and told him about the Jewish life we had led in Samarkand, he said in amazement: We were under the yoke of the Nazi conqueror for two years and had difficulty maintaining Jewish life, but the Lubavitchers managed to raise generations with this mesirus nefesh. It is unbelievable!"

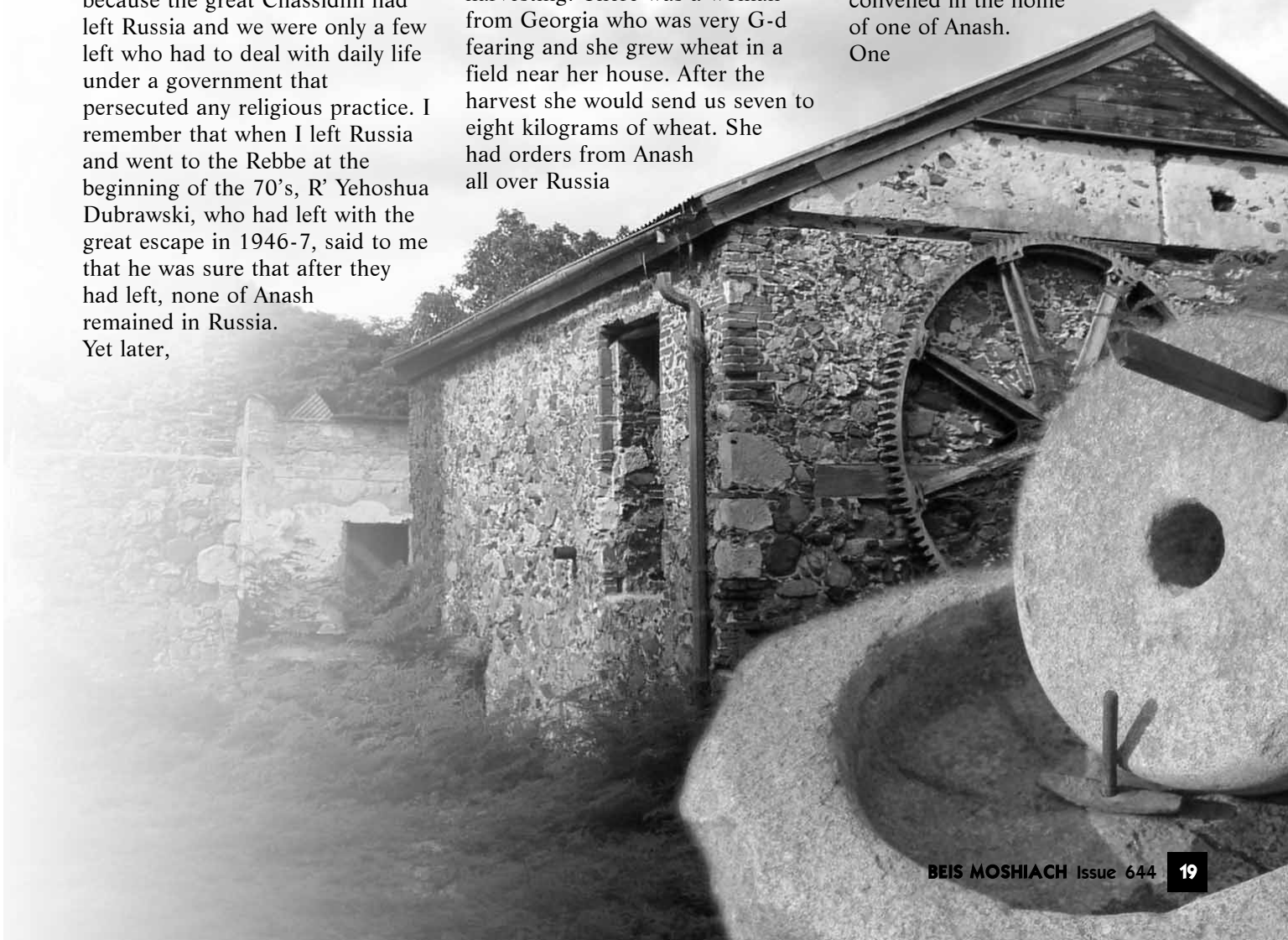
THE MATZOS OF R' CHAIM

"It was only in the fifties," added R' Zaltsman, "that we were able to obtain some wheat that was watched from the time of harvesting. There was a woman from Georgia who was very G-d fearing and she grew wheat in a field near her house. After the harvest she would send us seven to eight kilograms of wheat. She had orders from Anash all over Russia

and she sent each area a little bit. She would wrap the wheat in paper sacks, wrapped very well, and send them by mail. We usually got the package after the Yomim Tovim of Tishrei.

"In order to grind these kernels we bought a coffee grinder and a millstone made of iron, and that's how we ground the wheat. We had to grind the wheat many times in order to get flour, and each time we would tighten the metal disks until they were closer together, until finally, out of the eight kilograms of wheat that the Georgian woman sent us, we got about five kilograms of sifted flour.

"Since the grinding of wheat by hand took tremendous physical exertion, we divided the work over several weeks. Every Thursday night some bachurim convened in the home of one of Anash. One



would grind the wheat and the others would learn and farbreng. After a quarter of an hour, the bachur grinding the wheat would grow tired and another bachur would take his place. It was a very slow process and every week we would grind one kilogram of wheat. That is how we spent long winter Thursday nights until we finished the eight kilograms.

“Of course, we used this precious flour only for the matzos mitzva that were used for the seider night. A few people did not want to eat the regular matzos throughout the rest of Pesach and so they only ate the required amounts of matzos mitzva and no more.

“Due to the fear of the authorities, we did not want others to know about it and only a small number of people were in on the secret. Most of Anash were not aware that there were matzos baked with shmura wheat that had been ground by hand. Even the bachurim that learned in our houses and heard the words ‘hand grinder’ here and there in connection with special matzos, did not know what this was about.”

“Out of this wheat we baked about five kilograms of matza and they were for the seider only, for matzos mitzva. For the rest of Pesach we had two to three matzos per person.

“One time, I had only two matzos left for the rest of Pesach and I went to Michoel Mishulavin and asked him whether he had an extra matza so I would have lechem Mishna on Shabbos Chol HaMoed. He told me that he had only one matza left and so I gave him one of the matzos that I had.”

MOTORCYCLE MOTOR AND A COFFEE GRINDER

“The slowness really troubled me and I tried to come up with creative solutions. In those days,

each of us had a motorcycle. It was the most convenient form of transportation between different parts of the city. I remember that when R’ Mendel Futerfas came to Samarkand and saw all of us using motorcycles, he called us, ‘Motorcycle Chassidim.’

“I suddenly got the idea of connecting the motor of a motorcycle to the hand mill which was nothing but a coffee grinder. I changed the knob on the grinder to a wheel and I connected the wheel to a motorcycle motor. This enabled me to turn the disks of the grinder very quickly.

“I put it all together at the Mishulavin’s who had volunteered one of their rooms for this purpose. Their house was chosen because 1) they were one of the trustworthy families in Samarkand, 2) using the grinder with the motor would be noisy and would arouse the unwelcome curiosity of the neighbors. The Mishulavins lived at the end of a street and the walls of the house faced the cemetery. We didn’t have to be worried about quiet neighbors like those...

“I was thrilled that my idea worked and the mill ground the wheat quickly. The problem was that the motor began to heat up and we had to pour water over it in order to cool it off. Since we were afraid that the water would come in contact with the wheat, we had to stop every so often and wait for the motor to cool off. Despite the glitches, within a short time we were able to grind nearly all the wheat and we were ecstatic.

“Our joy was not long-lived though. The motor rotated the handle too quickly and towards the end, it suddenly broke and the grinder stopped working. We were happy that at least we had ground most of the wheat, but we needed a new and better plan for the following year.”

WATCHED FROM THE HARVEST

“In the meantime, it occurred to us that in Samarkand it does not rain in the summer and so we could arrange for large amounts of wheat that was guarded from the harvesting so that all the matzos we made would be made from that kind of wheat.”

“R’ Refael Chudaitov contacted local farmers,” said R’ Mishulavin. “He knew their language and how to befriend them. I went with him a few times in order to get wheat.

“The kolkhoz where they grew wheat was thirty kilometers from Samarkand. When we got there, the Uzbeks were in the middle of drinking their afternoon tea, but as soon as they saw Refael with his long, white beard, they got up and honored him by inclining their head and treating him with much respect.

“Refael bargained with them over the price, both over the wheat and the bribe, for the wheat was also government property and a bribe was needed so they would agree to sell us government property. After the money matters were arranged, we sat on the combine and began harvesting. The combine cut the wheat, winnowed it and sorted it, and put the kernels of wheat into new bags that we had brought with us. The first time I saw a combine I was amazed by how the wheat flowed through in huge amounts, straight from the field into the sacks.

“Within a short time we had several sacks of wheat; about 200 kilograms. Now we had a problem because we couldn’t travel with sacks full of wheat by train. It took a long time until we managed to get a truck driver who agreed to take our merchandise to its destination.

“Refael would sit near the driver and I sat on the sacks in order to guard them. One year, while traveling, I felt drops of water. The



From right to left: Hillel Zaltzman with the brothers, Michoel, Dovid, and Eli Mishulavin



Lubavitcher children in Samarkand resting by the flour mill after they finished kashering it

skies were clear so I yelled at Refael to stop so we could check where the dripping was coming from.

“The driver didn’t want to stop because he was afraid the police would catch us, but I banged on the roof until he stopped. It turned out

that on the roof of the truck was a container of water which was for cooling the motor. The water was in a large rubber bowl, and due to the bumpiness of the ride water was spraying on the wheat. Having no choice, I traveled while standing as

I held the sides of the rubber bowl. The driver was terrified but we trusted in Hashem to save us from any misfortune.

“Naturally, the punctilious among us did not want to use the sacks that were on top which had had water dripping on them. We made signs so that we would know which sacks were more protected from the dripping water.”

REAL MILLSTONES

“Now that we had a large quantity of wheat guarded from the harvest, I decided to build a real millstone. I thought that if I would be able to put together real grindstones, we would be able to grind all the wheat on our own, with the greatest hiddur. It would also be cheaper and much more mehudar.

“At the water mill we were never 100% sure that we had managed to clean out all the nooks and crannies in the stone. In addition, since the grinding worked with water, there was moisture and that, combined with our wheat, was very problematic. One time, we even found actual dough around the bottom millstone. Although we covered the bottom stone with several layers of paper, you couldn’t compare that to millstones that were made especially for Pesach.

“I went to the mill to closely watch the grinding process and carefully observed how it worked. Then I went to the place where millstones were manufactured. I introduced myself as a chemistry student who needed small millstones in order to grind various compounds and they agreed to sell me a set of millstones with a diameter of 60 centimeters. They were natural and new stones, each of which weighed about eighty kilograms. That was heavy enough to grind a large quantity of wheat.

“After they had prepared the

stones for me with the necessary grooves including a special hole in the edge of the upper stone so we could stick in a piece of wood in order to rotate the stones manually, I went to an old Jew who was a carpenter by profession and asked him to make me a sturdy table. I put the stones on the table in a separate room of the courtyard, just as I had seen in the mill, and we began to grind.

"It was a bit hard to turn the stones and we had to work in pairs, with each one pulling the stone a half-rotation, but within a short time we had managed to grind about twenty kilograms of wheat, relatively easily, and with the greatest hiddur: it was done by hand with new millstones.

"Despite our success, I wasn't satisfied. First of all, after all the turns of the mill with one pulling here and someone else pulling there, the table nearly broke. More importantly, my goal had been to grind all the wheat for the Chabad community with our millstones so we would all have enough shmura matza for the entire Pesach, and that was beyond our abilities.

"I decided to try attaching a motor again, the following year, to the millstones, but to buy a real motor this time. When I told my friends of my plan, they didn't think I would be successful and they also said it was an entire machine, which cost a lot of money. I told them that I wasn't asking anyone to chip in towards the cost, that I would try to arrange it myself and only if I was successful, would I divide the expenses among us.

"It sounds simple; you just go to the store and buy a motor. But in Russia of those years, it wasn't possible to buy a motor in a store. Even a factory had to provide a reasonable explanation for the purpose of the motor.

"I went to a huge factory which

fixed train compartments and there, after providing a bribe of course, I was able to buy a small, 1.5 horsepower motor. Since the motor made 1800 revolutions per minute, I had to build a mechanism with gears that would reduce the number of revolutions to 70 per minute.

"I built a strong device out of metal to mount the stones and over the stones I arranged a special container out of metal for the wheat, in such a way that when the stones began rotating, the container of wheat opened from the vibration and kernels slowly began to pour into the grinding space.

"After long weeks of concerted effort and work, the long-awaited moment finally arrived. I turned on the motor and everything worked perfectly! The motor moved the gears and the gears rotated the stones and the wheat entered between the stones and the flour entered the sack.

"I called my friends to come and see it and they were suitably impressed. Within one hour we were able to grind fifteen kilograms of flour and we finished grinding all the flour for all of Anash of Samarkand in one day. I cannot describe to you how thrilled we were. We burst into song and dance."

SPECIAL HIDDURIM IN "PADRIAD"

"After we finished grinding all the wheat, we went to bake the matzos," said R' Mishulavin. "In the early years we would bake in Padriad, the matza bakery of the Bucharian community in Samarkand. We rented the place for a day or two and did all our Chabad hiddurim.

"Every year we bought new wooden slats for the tables and we spread rolls of paper over the tables and changed these coverings every fifteen minutes.

My brother, Eliyahu a"h, was a great p'nimi and very stringent, and he was the mashgiach. He was especially particular about cleaning the rolling pins that we used to roll out the matzos (which we literally peeled with sharp pieces of broken glass). He would examine very carefully the bowls in which they mixed the flour and water. It happened more than once that after everybody checked and said it was clean, he would find a miniscule crumb of dough that we had all missed.

"How R' Eliyahu would cry when he found that a certain detail hadn't been done in the most mehudar way," recalled R' Zaltzman. "Oy, he took the hiddurim so to heart. If something untoward happened, he would literally cry with copious tears. Every year he would make a list of all the things that required correcting so that the following year he could do better. And every year he would cry over not having achieved perfection.

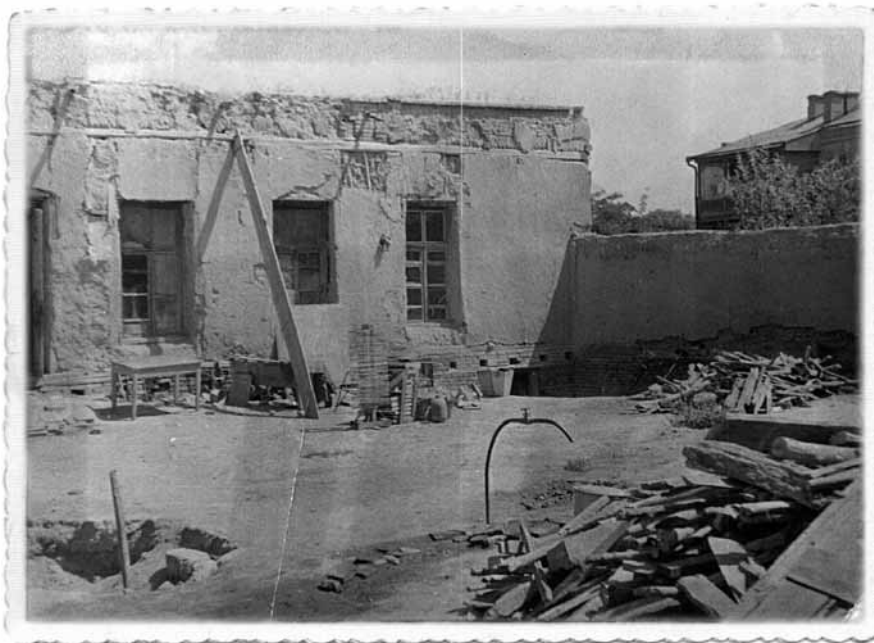
"The local bakers would use a wooden rolling pin in which small nails were wedged, to perforate the matzos. Of course it was very hard to clean this rolling pin. We would use steel brushes, but when we tried torching the nails, the wood nearly burned up.

"Then we decided to manufacture serrated wheels of steel so we would be able to kasher them through fire," continued R' Mishulavin. "R' Hillel eventually made a wheel with some gears so that the perforating time would be quicker and the matzos would sit around for less time.

"Since we always lived in fear that someone would tattle about the religious commotion taking place in the bakery, we looked for someone who would be willing to rent us their house for a few days so we could bake matza with all the



Hillel Zaltzman with his motorcycle
(the small motor is in the center)



The yard of R' Eliezer Mishulavin and R' Feivish Genkin in Samarkand

Chabad hiddurim. There were years that we baked in the home of R' Yitzchok Chai Ledayev, a talmid in the underground Tomchei T'mimim in Samarkand.

"Most years the bakery was at Binyamin the Fisherman's house. That is what he was called even

though he never caught fish from the sea or even the river. He would just buy from the fishermen and sell his merchandise in the market.

"Binyamin had a large yard with an oven for baking matzos. The Bucharian ovens were constructed like ovens in the time of the

Gemara. Unlike today's ovens, when the fire burns on the side and you place the matzos on the floor of the oven, in the Bucharian ovens the fire was below and you had to stick the matza dough to the walls of the oven – on top, and on the two sides (three matzos in all) – until the matzos were well-baked.

"You had to be an expert in order to stick the matzos properly so they wouldn't fall into the burning coals. At first, we didn't know how to do this and we asked the Bucharian bachurim to do it for us, but as time went by we learned how to do it, and our bachurim replaced them.

"In the early years, the older bachurim did this work, like my brother Eli, Yaakov Lerner, Mordechai Goldschmidt, and of course, Hillel Zaltzman. Later on, when we grew older, we youngsters also began getting involved in the matza baking, and Yosef Volovik and I also did it.

"The problem with the local workers," explained R' Zaltzman, "was that they did not grow accustomed to our stringencies and hiddurim. For example, as Itche Mishulavin said, the Bucharian ovens required particular expertise to stick the matzos to the walls of the oven. As part of the process, they put a vessel full of water near the oven and before inserting the matzos they would dip their hand in the water and touch the matza!

"The water made it easier for the matzos to stick to the walls and it held them in place. That was one of the first things we eliminated because they used that water throughout the day and it was close to a certainty that particles from the first matzos remained in the water and had become chametz.

"Since we baked the matzos without smearing them with water first, we had to forcefully get the matzos to stick to the walls of the

“Within one hour we were able to grind fifteen kilograms of flour and we finished grinding all the flour for all of Anash of Samarkand in one day. I cannot describe to you how thrilled we were. We burst into song and dance.”

oven and that caused the oven to break. That gave us an additional hiddur because every year we had a new oven.

“In order to get the matzos to stick to the walls of the oven, we used a round cushion. We placed the matza on one side and on the

other side there was a kind of pocket. We put our hand in the pocket and stuck the matza on the wall.

“The problem was that when you use the same cushion for all the matza, remnants of matza that remain after eighteen minutes become chametz! At first we cleaned and scraped the cushions with a special brush but that wasn’t enough. Also, because of the speed needed for cleaning them, we weren’t sure they were sufficiently clean and also, since the cushion had become heated each time it went into the oven, we were afraid that this hastened the leavening of the matzos.

“I finally came up with an idea of attaching a piece of paper to the cushion and putting the matzos on the paper. This way, the matza didn’t touch the heated cushion and it was unnecessary to clean the cushion every time because we changed the paper with each matza.

“At first the idea was rejected because they said you couldn’t put paper into the oven, but after a few attempts we managed to put the cushion with the paper quickly in and out of the oven before the paper would burn. We prepared large quantities of paper and two or three cushions. We attached the paper to the cushion with a safety-

pin. A bachur would stand there and attach paper to the cushions and after every use he would change the paper.

“From the time we ground all the wheat ourselves, until I left Russia in 1971,” said R’ Zaltzman, “we were able to grind all the shmura wheat, every year, with our special millstones that were used just once a year for the grinding of shmura wheat. And we baked them in a new oven. It was the best of the best.

“In those years, we began receiving packages of matzos from Eretz Yisroel and America. When we first got them, in the package with the hechsher of Chabad rabbanim, it was hard for us to believe that they could bake such large quantities mehadrin min ha’mehadrin.

“When R’ Simcha Gorodetzky left Russia, we asked him to check it out and report back to us about whether these matzos were made with hiddurim we were accustomed to. After a while, he informed us that he had visited the matza bakery in Kfar Chabad and it had all the hiddurim we were particular about, but ‘you are better off continuing to eat the matzos you make yourself because there is nothing better than that.’”

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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.

2) All funds should be sent to the following address only; Donations are tax deductible

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KIRYAT MALACHI – ISRAEL

WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF THE PROCLAMATION ‘YECHI ADONEINU’?

By Rabbi Shloma Majeski, Director, Machon Chana Institute, New York
Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry

The sicha of Beis Nissan 5748 has been recorded in the annals of Lubavitch as the sicha in which the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, laid the foundation for the holy proclamation of “Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V’Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach L’olam Va’ed.” As we commemorate the twentieth anniversary of this sicha, this is a most appropriate time for a proper discussion about the inner content of this holy proclamation.

This week, we commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the extraordinary sicha from Beis Nissan 5748, in which the Rebbe, Melech Moshiach shlita, first laid the foundation for the holy proclamation of “Yechi Adoneinu.”

In this article, we will attempt to bring a theoretical discussion into

practical terms, founded on the sichos, instructions, and guidance of the Rebbe MH”M shlita.

In general, two central points are raised on this matter: a) In the Beis Nissan 5748 sicha, the Rebbe spoke about the importance of proclaiming “Yechi HaMelech.” But where is the source for changing the

proclamation to “Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V’Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach L’olam Va’ed”?

b) Even if we can say that this proclamation is based upon a reliable source, where do people derive the faith that even today, after Gimmel Tammuz, there is room to suggest that we should continue this proclamation?

WHAT DOES THE REBBE SAY?

For the purpose of our discussion, we will bring here a portion of this sicha, and we will try to get a closer look at its inner meaning:

The closeness between the king and the people is not only in relation to the continuation of the vitality of the people, who receive their life-force from the king, but also the reverse, that the existence of the king depends upon the people, “*there is no king without a people*,” in other words, even though they are called an “*am*,” derived from the word “*omamus*



(dimmed)...distant from the level of the king,” yet together with this (in fact, due to this), they bring about the sovereignty, the king.

Furthermore, as emphasized in the coronation of the king, when the people proclaim “*Yechi HaMelech*” (as we also find in connection with the kingdom of the House of Dovid) - this also emphasizes that the actions of the people affect the *life* of the king.

Accordingly, it is also understood in our discussion – “*chaim*” (the sixty-eight) years of the leadership of the nasi of our generation:

In addition to all the aforementioned on the matter of increasing the aspect of life (year by year, and all the more so in the year of “*chaim*”) in all the people of the generation through the leader of the generation, the people of the generation also bring about an increase in the aspect of life within *the leader of the generation*, as mentioned above on the concept of the proclamation of “*Yechi HaMelech*.”

To put it simple terms:
After the culmination of “*chaim*” (sixty-eight) years of the leadership (action and avoda) of the nasi of our generation, there must be an essential increase in the concept of life (also) through the action of the people who proclaim “*Yechi HaMelech*,” insofar as the meaning of this proclamation is that the time has already come for “*Arise and sing, those who dwell in the dust*” – my revered teacher and father-in-law, the Rebbe, leader of our generation – until “*Arise and sing*,” Dovid Malka M’shicha!

(Furthermore, there is the well-known observation regarding the Rebbe’s wording here, in that he meticulously writes “*those who dwell in the dust*” in reference to the Rebbe Rayatz, whereas in connection with “Dovid Malka M’shichei,” he writes only “*Arise and sing*,” the concept of merely revealing the concealed. Sufficient for the wise.)

What is the simple meaning of this sicha? The Rebbe comes with the innovation that by the same

measure that he can and does bestow us with life and vitality, so too we can add life and vitality to the Rebbe, and since we’re talking about the life and vitality of the **king**, we add to his sovereignty with this proclamation.

Thus, when the Rebbe’s sovereignty is in a state of concealment, the people’s proclamation brings about the aspect of “*Arise and sing*,” i.e., revealing the concealed.

Here, the child asks the question: What is the source for the variation in the proclamation from “*Yechi HaMelech*” to the revised version of “*Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V’Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach L’olam Va’ed*”?

The truth of the matter is that even without knowing the clear source for this change, the clearest source is the “*maaseh rav*” of the Rebbe, Melech Moshiach shlita, who vigorously encouraged this new version on virtually a daily basis for more than a year!

However, since there is also a clear source in the sichos for this

nusach, we will now bring some main points.

NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN

It is well known that the Rebbe MH”M was stringent about citing sources on every subject and every saying that appears in the course of a sicha, because inspecting the sources adds to the understanding of the entire concept, and sometimes one footnote sheds a totally new light upon the overall subject.

Similarly, we find in our discussion: The Rebbe indicates that the use of the phrase “Yechi HaMelech” was customary at the coronation of the kings of the House of Dovid, as stated explicitly at the coronation of Shlomo HaMelech (Melachim Alef 1:34-39).

A quick look at the sources teaches us that the people proclaimed “Yechi HaMelech **Shlomo**” at the coronation. This means that the people did not settle for the anonymous proclamation of “Yechi HaMelech” without identifying the king. Rather, they spelled out which king they meant – Shlomo HaMelech!

As it was with Shlomo, so it was with Dovid – and so it was with every king. The expression “Yechi HaMelech” is the common denominator in the proclamation of all the kings of the House of Dovid. Together with this, it is clear that at each coronation, the people added the king’s specific name after the generic phrase.

So it should also be with the Rebbe. However, since we don’t call the Rebbe by his given name, to the point that even when the Rebbe is called up to the Torah for an aliya, we don’t mention his holy name, saying instead “Adoneinu Moreinu V’Rabbeinu,” therefore, we add these words to the term “Yechi HaMelech.”

Even the concluding words of

“L’olam Va’ed” have their relevant sources, as the Rebbe notes in the sicha of Beis Nissan and explains in great detail in the sicha from Shabbos Parshas Toldos 5752:

Last week’s Haftora concludes with the proclamation of “Yechi Adoni HaMelech Dovid L’olam” – the eternity of the sovereignty of Dovid that continued with the sovereignty of Shlomo, its culmination through Melech HaMoshiach, who is “from the House of Dovid and from the seed of Shlomo” – for the essence of this proclamation is the revelation of the existence of Melech HaMoshiach. Afterwards, as a result, his hisgalus comes for all to see through his activities, etc.

The Rebbe states clearly that the essence of the proclamation – the revelation of the existence of Melech HaMoshiach – is not limited just to the phrase “Yechi HaMelech.”

We derive from this that the **only** word that we added that is not found in Torah sources is the word “Moshiach,” and we even find the source for this word after another look at the sicha. The Rebbe writes:

This proclamation also possesses the concept of coronation, “Yechi HaMelech,” thereby bringing about the coming of Dovid Malka M’schicha...and it should be added that in Melech HaMoshiach, his connection to each and every Jew is further emphasized (in addition to the fact that every king is “the heart of the entire Jewish congregation”). Thus, every single Jew possesses the strength and ability to bring about the concept of “Yechi HaMelech.”

Therefore, since our whole purpose is to add in the sovereignty of Melech HaMoshiach, we must emphasize this fact to point out the connection of the essence of the proclamation to the Rebbe MH”M in particular.

DID HE ACTUALLY ESTABLISH THEM UPON TWO?

Sometimes, we tend to forget certain basic things agreed upon by all. Therefore, it would be appropriate to stop and think for a minute.

This moment of contemplation can lead us, for example, to the dozens of children’s rallies and holy farbrengens starting from 5736-5737, when the children proclaimed in the presence of the Rebbe: “Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V’Rabbeinu.” Would it cross anyone’s mind that the holy sicha of Beis Nissan 5748 was designed to detract from the wording of this proclamation, on the level of “he came and established them upon two [words] – ‘Yechi HaMelech’?”

No! It is clear to all of us that the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, came to add, not detract *ch”v*. Therefore, even after the famous sicha of Beis Nissan 5748, they continued at every rally to say the proclamation according to the accepted language.

The Rebbe taught us that when we add to the concept of the king through this proclamation, we increase the vitality and sovereignty of the king – and so we added.

MAASEH RAV

For over a year starting with Simchas Torah 5753, the Rebbe MH”M encouraged the holy proclamation of “Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V’Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach L’olam Va’ed,” on numerous occasions before the television cameras of all the major networks, broadcasting to millions of homes throughout the world. We simply can’t ignore such a clear and compelling “*maaseh rav*”!

This is particularly so regarding what is known about the Rebbe’s most recent (for the time being) customs and instructions, which obligate us with even greater force,

in accordance with what the Rebbe MH”M said about the instructions and conduct of the Rebbe Rayatz during his final years.

And this is the main support for the holy words of “Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V’Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach L’olam Va’ed” – since the Rebbe encouraged this proclamation for over a year, almost on a daily basis!

IT IS FORBIDDEN TO CHANGE

After the Rebbe Rayatz’s histalkus, the Rebbe spoke with the greatest possible force against any inclination to make changes. Towards this objective, he devoted entire farbrengens to the subject, in which he rejected any changes as a result of the histalkus of the Rebbe Rayatz.

One of the most famous letters on this subject was from the 20th of Shvat 5710, just ten days after the Rebbe Rayatz’s passing(!), where the Rebbe writes among other things: “It is clear that it was the holy desire of my revered teacher and father-in-law, the Rebbe *hk”m* – and so it is today – that there will not be *ch”v* weakness in some avoda that existed under his leadership, and that all those connected to him should strengthen themselves and make efforts with greater might and greater fortitude in the fulfillment of the task that he placed upon them, etc.”

Just as he conveyed this message in letters, similarly, we find in his

sichos. Entire sichos were devoted to the reinforcement of this point: It is forbidden to make changes. For example, the Rebbe said in the sicha of Shabbos Parshas Shlach 5710:

“From the instructions that we must learn from the story of the spies, not to change anything – even the order of the words of my revered teacher and father-in-law, the Rebbe, the extension of Moshe in our generation, for in a slight deviation from the Rebbe’s words, it possible to err similar to the mistake of the spies.” (See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 4, pg. 1314, and at greater length in *Sichos Kodesh*, Parshas Shlach, where in this connection, the Rebbe speaks about those who say after the Rebbe Rayatz’s name various titles indicating histalkus and change – *nishmaso Eden*, “whose soul rests in the hidden treasure houses of heaven,” and the like – and rejects it.)

Thus, we who made the holy proclamation in his holy presence with the vigorous encouragement of the Rebbe MH”M shlita, and with the greatest of publicity in a fashion unparalleled since the Rebbe assumed the leadership – can make no changes in the wording of this proclamation!

ADD – DON’T DETRACT

In general, the Rebbe MH”M’s instructions have always been in the direction of increasing, not *ch”v* detracting. As the Rebbe expressed himself in one of his general letters: “...and consult with the askanim of Anash, those who truly are

askanim and truly are Anash...and anyone who says, ‘Best not to do it,’ or demonstrates a relaxation in one of those activities conducted in the spirit of my revered teacher and father-in-law, the Rebbe, is not in the realm of being an askan whatsoever, and naturally is not among the Anash of my revered teacher and father-in-law, the Rebbe.” (*Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 19, pg. 620).

Here we see how the Rebbe writes about those who weaken activities conducted in the **spirit** of the Rebbe, and therefore, we surely must add and not detract in those activities done with the **fervent encouragement** of the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach shlita, despite the fact that it requires – in the physical sense – supreme efforts!

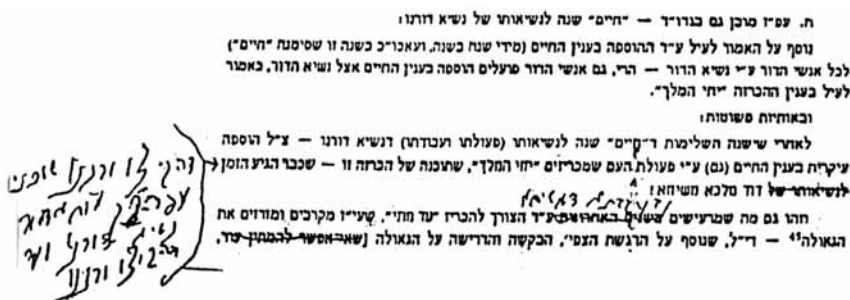
NOW MORE THAN EVER

Anyone who carefully studies the sicha of Beis Nissan 5748 draws a clear conclusion: Today, more than ever before, we must continually proclaim at every opportunity the holy proclamation of “Yechi Adoneinu,” as the sicha brings how this proclamation causes a increase of the life of the king, to the point of “Arise and sing, Dovid Malka M’shichei” (and as mentioned above, not “those who dwell in the dust,” rather only “Arise and sing,” the concept of revealing the hidden).

Is there a chassid who doesn’t want an increase in the eternal life of the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach shlita? Is there a chassid who doesn’t want a revelation of the state of concealment where the Rebbe MH”M shlita has been placed for nearly fourteen years *r”l*?

We want to see the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, here and now, and therefore, we proclaim loudly and clearly:

Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu v’Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach l’olam va’ed!



The Rebbe’s proofreading notations on the Beis Nissan 5748 sicha

MAKING PESACH IN THE FAR EAST

By Mendel Tzfasman

*From year to year the phenomenon of shluchim and T'mimim going to the Far East to organize public s'darim for thousands of Israeli tourists, as well as local Jews, has grown. * The shluchim must contend with endless logistical problems. * Some highlights of the "Time of our Freedom" in exotic locales.*

DOESN'T REMAIN IN DEBT

Where we will get all the money we need to fund Pesach s'darim for hundreds of people? Every shliach asks this question. And the answer? G-d has the answers; we have to do the work!

Rabbi Betzalel Kupchik, shliach in Poona, India, has this to say about the question and the answer:

Five years ago I got a phone call from a bachur who was working in Goa's Chabad house at the time. He asked that we organize manpower, matzos, and wine for Pesach. I decided to travel to Goa with my wife in order to see what was going on there, what was lacking, and how to best prepare for the Yom Tov.

When we arrived in Goa, we saw that we had to do everything, from

A to Z. There was absolutely nothing in place for Pesach, certainly not for the seider. Utensils had to be bought, gas ovens, food, matza, wine, everything! It would cost at least \$1000.

If that's all we needed, that would be fine, said R' Kupchik with a smile. The problem was that it landed on us at just the wrong time. Pesach was our most expensive time of year, where aside from the many expenses incurred by the preparations for the seider, we had to fly the entire family out of India in order to renew our Indian visas. We also had to renew our rental contract, another \$2000, and the list went on...

We already had a \$35,000 deficit and our sources of income had dried up. We decided to send our son Chilik to Goa along with the

T'mimim, Menachem Peleg, Mendy Dickstein, and Yaakov Bar Sela, who helped us at the Chabad house to get ready for Yom Tov. As for the money... Hashem would help!

That night, we slept at a hotel in Goa and before going to sleep I said to my wife, "I'll go check the e-mail, maybe someone wrote us that he wants to help."

The Internet in the hotel was in the lobby. On the other side were some slot machines. When I entered, a local Indian turned and greeted me in Ivrit with "shalom." I nodded and responded politely. It wasn't the first time that an Indian has said shalom. It's probably the most common Hebrew word.

To my surprise, the man showed me his Magen David chain. "I'm Jewish!" he said. I got into a conversation with him. His name was Jeffrey. His father was a non-Jewish Indian and his mother was Jewish. He was the only Jew living in Goa. I was happy to meet him and invited him to join us for the seider in Poona. After seeing nothing interesting in my e-mail, we parted amiably.

Jeffrey showed up to the seider and took an active part in it. Someone present translated for him. He wanted to make a contribution to the Chabad house, saying, "My mother would tell me, Jeffrey, when you earn money, it's not all yours; a tenth

belongs to G-d.”

I told him that I couldn't take money on Yom Tov and that he could leave it in a box if he wanted to, pointing to the tz'daka box. His answer surprised me. He said, "It won't fit in the box."

You have to understand that we had a very large pushka with an opening to match, so I was quite surprised. I told him he could leave his envelope behind the refrigerator (at least he wouldn't be carrying it).

On Motzaei Yom Tov I moved

the fridge and found a thick envelope with 100,000 rupees (about \$2000)!

AND FOR ISRAEL IT WAS LIGHT IN THEIR DWELLING PLACES

How do you host hundreds of tourists in one place and have them follow one "conductor"? The answer is easy.

In India, as is the custom, mats have a place of honor and they

obviate the need for upholstered chairs. So we erected a huge tent and laid out wooden slats perched on top of stones to serve as low tables, alongside of which we placed mats and rugs from wall to wall. The leader stood on the side and next to every table stood a shliach who conveyed what the leader said to the people sitting there.

Everything was fine, said Yossi Weissman. We had some Indians construct the tent and we spread out tables and rugs. We looked forward anxiously to Pesach, for which we had worked so long. After burning the chametz, as we were cooking and getting ready for Yom Tov, strong winds began to blow. A few minutes later we heard a big bang. We ran outside and saw that our tent had collapsed.

Fortunately, we hadn't finished paying the Indians and they came back to quickly set the tent up again. That night we had a volunteer stand next to every pole. Their job was to hold the pole as the wind blew.

In Rishikesh, the municipality economizes on electricity and often there is no electricity during the day, just at night. The night of b'dikas chametz, 24 hours before Pesach, there was no electricity. We were very nervous about what would take place the next night. That's all we needed, to have the electricity go off in the middle of the seider! The tourists tried to calm us by saying that that only happened rarely.

We inquired as to how much a generator would cost and we learned that it was the equivalent of about eighty shekels, so we decided not to take a chance and to buy one.

Pesach night we had only gotten up to Kadesh with all our guests when the lights went out. The Indians quickly attached the cables to the generator and we had light! It



It was an amazing sight because the entire town was shrouded in darkness and “for the Jewish people it was light in their dwelling places.”

was an amazing sight because the entire town was shrouded in darkness and “for the Jewish people it was light in their dwelling places.”

Afterwards we found out that aside from the special atmosphere, our light served as a lighthouse which attracted the tourists who had come to town last minute and didn't know where the Chabad house was.

A REDEMPTION DANCE FOR MAROR

T'mimim Mendy Crombie and Yossi Weissman relate:

There is a wonderful unity among the shluchim who operate in Chabad houses in the Far East. If any one of them lacks something, shluchim in other areas of this huge country help him out. The packages are sent, as always, with tourists who move from place to place.

So when we saw that we couldn't obtain apples and pears for the charoses in Rishikesh, as well as maror, we asked the shluchim in New Delhi to send some to us with one of the tourists. Sure enough, Erev Yom Tov he showed up with the “mishloach manos” from Chabad in Delhi. The package had pears and apples and lettuce, but no horseradish.

We contacted rabbanim in Eretz Yisroel to find out if we could use only the lettuce for maror. The

answer was No. We prepared the charoses and the other things we could prepare, and hoped for the best.

In the middle of the seider, one of the tourists went over to Yossi and said, “Here is maror from Delhi.” Yossi, who was very tired from pre-Pesach preparations, and after many nights with minimal sleep, put the maror on the side and forgot about it completely.

When the public seider was over, the shluchim gathered for their own Chassidishe seider in the Chabad house. When they got up to maror, Yossi exclaimed, “I got maror today. I'm sure of it! Someone gave me maror today!”

The shluchim went outside and began looking for the bag with the bitter herbs. Some Indians joined in the search. After many minutes the maror was found and the shluchim danced for joy for finding the herbs, bitter as exile.

The Indians could only conclude that they were crazy...



FROM THE PLANE TO THE YECHIDUS ROOM

*Stories from the inner sanctum. * Notes taken at a fascinating farbrengen with the Rebbe's secretary, Rabbi Leibel Groner, which took place on 29 Tishrei 5742/1981. * From a T'shura for the Kurant-Racklenstein wedding.*

YOU'RE A SCIENTIST

A few weeks ago, a respected Jewish scientist came to 770 and gave in a letter for the Rebbe in which he wrote that his father was seriously sick with an illness for which the doctors had no cure. The doctors had given up hope.

The Rebbe responded: You are a scientist and you know that even though yesterday they had no cure for this illness, today they may have discovered it. As for your personal life, start keeping Shabbos, kashrus, and the laws of family purity.

The man didn't know what the Rebbe was referring to. When he spoke with the doctor, the doctor told him to see his friend who was an expert in diseases of this type, perhaps he could help. When the scientist went to that doctor, the doctor said to him in amazement,

"I just discovered a new cure for this disease today!"

The scientist immediately realized how precise the Rebbe's answer was and knew he had to do as the Rebbe had told him regarding his religious observance. He called the shliach in his city and told him what had happened and he asked the shliach to meet him at the airport.

During the flight, he spoke at length with his wife about the changes he wanted to make in their personal life. When the plane landed, a number of important people came to meet him as well as the shliach. He ignored all of them and went right over to the shliach and told him that he wanted to learn with him so he could make progress in his religious observance.

BETWEEN A BIBLICAL MITZVA AND A CUSTOM

Someone was told by the Rebbe to observe the laws of family purity (he was a simple Jew who didn't know much). This man recited the Rebbe's chapter of T'hillim with the same enthusiasm that he had for the instruction he had received.

The Rebbe asked, "Did they explain to him the difference between the two matters?" (i.e., between the laws of family purity, which is a Biblical requirement, and saying a chapter of T'hillim, which is a custom).

A similar thing happened with a couple from Chicago who did not have children. Rabbi Tzvi Shusterman brought them to yechidus with the Rebbe. During the yechidus, the Rebbe told them to observe the laws of family purity and to say chapter 71 of T'hillim (the Rebbe Rayatz's chapter at that time).

Some time later, R' Shusterman had yechidus and the Rebbe asked him, "Did they explain to them that there is a difference between family purity, which is a Biblical commandment, and saying chapter 71, which is a custom?"

R' Shusterman said it had not been explained and they were doing both things only because the Rebbe

told them to do so. The Rebbe smiled and said, “Let it be so...”

THE CHILD SHOULD BE TOLD TO SAY “AMEN”

The Rebbe once told me that for three days he had noticed that a certain child did not answer, *Baruch Hu u'varuch shmo* and “amen,” and he described how the child looked (apparently, this was during Chanuka, when Mincha was davened downstairs in the big zal, and the Rebbe was seen turning around several times to look at the children, nodding his head and loudly saying, “amen” and “amen, yehei shmei rabba”). He asked why the child did not answer.

“Around the child,” said the Rebbe, “were dozens of bachurim and none of them told the child to answer amen, etc. I wanted to get up from my place and go over to the child and tell him, but that would have created a furor. It was a pity on the child.”

Then the Rebbe asked me why I didn't go over to the child to tell him to say amen.

EACH NAME HAS A LETTER

Someone wrote to the Rebbe about his two sons who were sick. The Rebbe said the mezuzos should be checked.

When they checked the mezuzos they found a p'sul in two letters. The two letters were the initials of my sons' names!

FARBRENGEN – NOT AN ATZERES!

One Shabbos Parshas VaYishlach, the Rebbe spoke heatedly about Eretz Yisroel. The next day, the Rebbe complained that he had heard that the Chassidim were all enthused about the sicha about Eretz Yisroel but

they hadn't paid attention to the vort from the Baal Shem Tov, from the Maggid, the Alter Rebbe and the like. The Rebbe motioned with his hand and said, “That is the main point of a farbrengen. If the entire farbrengen was for Eretz Yisroel, it didn't have to be a farbrengen, but an *atzeres* (public gathering).”

As for Eretz Yisroel, said the Rebbe, whatever was said was intended for those who were involved in it, but not for the Chassidim.

IS HALF A GARMENT SUITABLE FOR SHABBOS?

In one of the first years of the Rebbe's leadership, the Rebbe said to me, “I saw that some men, in the first year of marriage, wore a long garment on Shabbos and Yom Tov, and now they wear a regular suit.”

I said perhaps it was due to poverty and the Rebbe said, “I remember in Yekaterinaslav there were people who wore Shabbos clothes with patches, one on the right sleeve, one on the left, and one on the front, but it never occurred to anyone to switch from a Shabbos garment to a short garment!”

I said, “In America, a garment with patches is not a Shabbos garment.”

The Rebbe replied, “And half a garment is for Shabbos?” He asked me to tell them that it's fine to wear a garment with patches!

WATCHING TELEVISION IS THE OPPOSITE OF TZNIUS

The Rebbe once said, “Is it because farbrengens and such are seen on cable television that people think it's acceptable to bring this machine into their house?

Absolutely not!”

(At one farbrengen, the Rebbe mentioned those who watch television and said it was the opposite of tznius.)

SIRTUKS THAT ARE NOT BLACK

As for those who wear a sirtuk with a color other than black, the Rebbe said, “Did they learn in *Shaar HaG'vanim* (the “Gate of Colors” in the *Pardes Rimonim* of the kabbalist, the Ramak) which color coat to wear and from that they concluded that they can wear blue, etc.?”

ENCOURAGING THE TANKISTS – NOT AT THE EXPENSE OF TORAH STUDY

Someone asked the Rebbe how to explain to his students the fact that the Rebbe gave dollars to the tankists, suggesting that more importance was given to mitzvaim and less to Torah study.

The Rebbe replied, “Apparently they didn't understand this at all. How could someone think that the tankists are more important than Torah study?”

The reason dollars were given to tankists was because their inyan is **spreading the wellsprings**, and since the reason for giving out dollars is in order to give to others (shlichus mitzva to tz'daka), which is like hafatza, therefore I want to give to those involved in similar activities carried out by the tankists [unlike if dollars were given to those who learn Torah, which is an obligation].”

AND HE GOT UP ...IN THE MORNING

Sometimes, when the Rebbe went to the Ohel, he would stop at the home of the Admur, Rabbi

Moshe Twersky-Schneerson (when the latter requested it), and would take him along to the Ohel.

When R' Moshe wanted to go along, he would call at eleven in the morning and ask when the Rebbe was going to the Ohel. One time, the Rebbe left at three and R' Moshe said he thought he had been forgotten.

The Rebbe replied, "I heard from the Rebbe, my father-in-law, on the words, 'and Avrohom rose in the morning,' that he actually delayed and delayed [in preparation] and by the time he left it was well past noon. This was despite having woken up early in the morning."

"WHEN THEY DAVEN HERE – THAT'S THE TIME"

When the Rebbe davened as the

chazan after Yud Shvat 5710, he would begin the *chazaras ha'shatz* once there were ten men who had finished Shmoneh Esrei. After he finished Shmoneh Esrei he would look over at me and ask whether he could begin.

On Yud Shvat 5711, they returned late from the Ohel and Rabbi Moshe Twersky-Schneerson was there. When the Rebbe asked me whether he could begin, R' Moshe thought the Rebbe was asking whether it was **permissible** to daven (because the hour was late), so he said, "When they daven here – that is the [correct] time [to daven]."

THE MEZUZOS WERE PASUL

A rav from Eretz Yisroel whose wife was sick, had a dream that he was at a festive gathering with the

Rebbe, and when he went over to ask for a bracha for his wife, the Rebbe told him to check his mezuzos. Then the Rebbe said: Perhaps you happen to have the mezuzos here? He said that he did and gave them to the Rebbe.

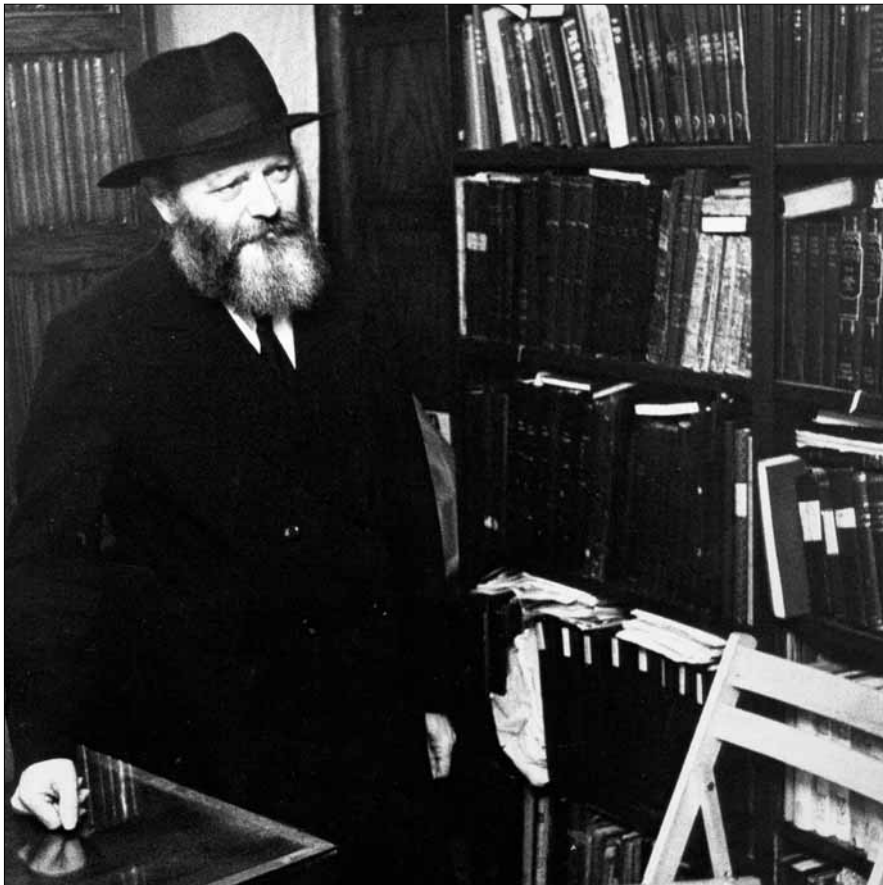
The Rebbe said: Let us check them now. The Rebbe examined them and in one of the mezuzos he saw that the "thorn" on the letter Shin in the words, "and you shall teach your children" was touching the crown on the letter Nun. The Rebbe showed the rav the problem and he said to the Rebbe that *b'diaved* (lit. after the fact, i.e., as per the minimum requirements) they were kosher. The Rebbe said: A rav's mezuzos should be mehudar, not b'diaved.

They looked at the mezuzos some more and found that one of the mezuzos was pasul in the letter Lamed of "and you will eat." The Rebbe finally told him to give the mezuzos to a Lubavitcher scribe in his city for checking.

The rav woke up and went to one of the kabbalists in Eretz Yisroel to ask whether to rely on the dream. The mekubal said: When the tzaddik of the generation announces a campaign regarding a particular mitzva, there are angels that fly all over the world in the form of the tzaddik in order to inspire as many people as possible to fulfill the tzaddik's request. You should certainly rely on the dream.

The rav went home, removed the mezuzos, and gave them to a scribe. After checking them, the scribe found the identical problems that the Rebbe had pointed out in the dream! After changing the mezuzos, his wife recovered.

Some time later, the scribe, as well as Rabbi Yaroslavsky, who heard this story from the scribe, told me what happened and asked



me to tell the Rebbe. After asking permission from the Rebbe to do so, I told the story, and when I was finished the Rebbe smiled and said: The main thing is that the woman recovered.

A PITY ON R' AHARON

The Tzemach Tzedek once had to send an emissary to Petersburg for a communal matter and he sent one of the Chassidim by the name of R' Aharon. Before he left, he asked the Rebbe: If I don't know how to proceed, what should I do?

The Rebbe answered: Think for a moment and whatever comes to mind first, that's what you should do.

At that time, the Tzemach Tzedek had a daily study session with his son, later to be the Rebbe Maharash. One day, in the middle of the shiur, the Tzemach Tzedek closed the book he was learning from and said: It's a pity on R' Aharon, he doesn't know how to decide.

After a few moments the Rebbe said: Yes, yes, do that!

The Rebbe Maharash immediately wrote down the time and date and when R' Aharon returned to Lubavitch he asked him: You remember the advice the Rebbe gave you? Nu, how did it work out?

He said that generally it always helped except for one time when the governor told me that I should decide on the spot, yes or no. I didn't know what to do. I sat and thought and thought and couldn't arrive at a final decision. Then I sat down again to think and arrived at a certain decision.

The Maharash asked him whether he remembered when this happened and R' Aharon told him. The Maharash went to get the note he had written and it was precisely the time that the

Tzemach Tzedek had said, "It's a pity on R' Aharon..."

FOR THE REBBE, NOTHING IS HEAVY

In the first year of the Rebbe's leadership of Chabad, at one of the farbrengens, he asked for a tractate Sanhedrin. After looking inside it, he put it on his knees. R' Moshe Gurary sat next to the Rebbe and he offered to hold the Gemara.

The Rebbe asked him: Why?

R' Gurary answered: So it shouldn't be heavy for you.

Said the Rebbe: However you look at it; if I am... [the Rebbe did not want to say explicitly, "if I'm the Rebbe"], then nothing is too heavy (i.e., difficult) and if you think that something is heavy/difficult for me, then it's a shame that you're wasting time sitting here.

LIKE A LADDER

The Rebbe Rayatz once said that just like a ladder is comprised of rungs and in order to climb it you have to go from rung to rung and you can't skip a few, so too, every Chassid who wants to reach the Rebbe, has to have an *eltter* Chassid (older Chassid) as a mashpia so he doesn't jump immediately to the Rebbe. (The Rebbe once said that Chassidim nowadays are lacking because they do not grow up among the elder Chassidim.)

QUIET DANCING

In the winter of 1945, the Rebbe Rayatz had a heart attack and he had to rest in his room. The Chassidim were careful to be quiet when they were in the building and since the shul was on the floor beneath the Rebbe's floor, the Chassidim made sure not to make noise in shul.

On Shmini Atzeres and Simchas Torah they asked the Rebbe what to do about the dancing, for they were accustomed to dancing all night on Simchas Torah. The Rebbe told them to dance all night and to sing, "Sha sha." That is how the Rebbe danced all night and he always danced with one or two Chassidim.

T'HILLIM INSTEAD OF YECHIDUS

Someone wrote to the Rebbe that he wanted to come for yechidus (he lived very far away). The Rebbe told him that instead, he should use the time he would have taken to travel and instead say T'hillim and give the money the trip would have cost to tz'daka.

TZADDIKIM, UNLIMITED BECAUSE OF THE POWER OF TORAH

A young girl and boy visited the Rebbe. They came to ask him how to lead others. Then the girl asked how all the miracle stories could be true.

The Rebbe said: Surely you are referring to all the stories about tzaddikim and the Baal Shem Tov.

The girl said: Let's say so... (although she meant to ask about the Rebbe).

The Rebbe asked: Do you believe in G-d?

The girl said: Yes, of course!

The Rebbe said: Do you believe that He created the world?

The girl said: Yes, of course!

The Rebbe asked: Do you believe that G-d gave the Torah?

The girl said: Yes!

The Rebbe asked: Do you believe that the Torah is unlimited?

The girl did not understand the

question because she assumed that mitzvos were limited, t'fillin have to be made of animal skin, etc.

When the Rebbe saw that she did not understand, he explained: Do you understand that the Torah is not limited by time and space?

The girl said: Certainly, because it makes no difference if a Jew is in one country or another.

***Said the Rebbe:
However you look
at it; if I am...
[the Rebbe did
not want to say
explicitly, "if I'm
the Rebbe"], then
nothing is too
heavy (i.e.,
difficult) and if
you think that
something is
heavy/difficult for
me, then it's a
shame that you're
wasting time
sitting here.***

The Rebbe went on to explain: Tzaddikim are connected to Torah, meaning that they keep the Torah in all its details. Therefore, with the power of their Torah, which is unlimited, they have powers that are unlimited by time and space.

The girl said she understood.

A BRACHA ON THE REBBE'S ACCOUNT

When R' Itche der Masmid was in the US, he visited Boston. A woman said that if R' Itche would come to her house with his utensils and drink tea in her house, she would give a very large sum towards whatever he was fundraising for.

R' Itche agreed and drank tea in her house, tea that was prepared with his personal utensils. She gave him a donation. Before he left, he asked the woman whether she was in need of a particular bracha. The woman said she wanted a bracha for children.

R' Itche said: Since I am a Chassid, which means I am connected to the Rebbe, therefore I have the Rebbe's kochos, which means that I can bless with the Rebbe's power of blessing. So I bless you that you should have a son.

Immediately afterwards, R' Itche sent a telegram to the Rebbe Rayatz, who was in Poland at the time, to inform him that he had given a bracha on the Rebbe's account. He asked the Rebbe to make sure the bracha was fulfilled. A year later, the woman had a son.

When R' Itche returned to the Rebbe Rayatz, the Rebbe said: Next time, don't do these tricks...

TO BE PROPERLY MEKUSHAR

At a farbrengen during Teives 5711, the Rebbe said that when you are connected to the Rebbe it's like the locomotive of a train which pulls all the other cars. Of course, the cars have to be connected properly, because only then can the locomotive pull them. If the connection isn't strong enough then a car can break loose and then, the locomotive

continues but the car doesn't get pulled along.

The same is true for hiskashrus. If you are properly mekushar to the Rebbe then the Rebbe will pull you along, but you must be constantly and properly connected with the strongest possible connection so that you don't detach.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

After the Rebbe blessed a woman in yechidus, he asked her about her health problem. The woman didn't understand what the Rebbe was referring to.

The Rebbe said that a few months before, her husband had written that she had a problem with her leg and since then, he had not been updated about it.

She said that she had since recovered. (Afterwards, she told me in amazement that she herself had forgotten that she had had a problem, whereas the Rebbe had thought about it and remembered it!)

IS THERE NO LIMIT TO CONCEALMENT?

Before the nesius, and even in the first year that followed Yud Shvat 5710, the Rebbe always gave the gabbai of the shul, R' Yochanan Gordon, money for the shul and he would say to write on the receipt, "anonymous." The Rebbe always did this until the middle of 5710, during the period when he refused to take over the Chabad leadership. When he handed over his usual donation, R' Gordon wanted to write the Rebbe's name.

The Rebbe said: Surely you remember the contract between us!

R' Yochanan said: "Is there no limit to concealing yourself?!"

YOU DON'T ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT S'FIRAS HA'MALCHUS

One time, when Rabbi Yolles came out of yechidus with the Rebbe, he told me that he had asked the Rebbe about a certain practice that he had seen the Rebbe do. The Rebbe said: You don't ask questions about S'firas HaMalchus!

EVEN AN ANGEL CAN'T

Someone sent the Rebbe a report of his activities and the Rebbe showed it to me and said: Could he have done what he wrote here? Even an angel couldn't do so much, and even though a neshama is higher than an angel, a neshama in a body is limited by the body.

Yet the Rebbe responded to the report by saying: It was received in a timely manner and thank you.

THE REBBE TRAVELS WITH THE SHLIACH

My brother Yitzchok Dovid had to make a difficult trip to the Far East. During yechidus he wondered how he was going to fulfill this shlichus.

The Rebbe responded to his thought and said: Why are you worried? I go everywhere with you.

THE T'FILLIN THAT SAVED THE FOOT

I heard this from the photographer, Levi Yitzchok Frieden, who heard it from the person it happened to:

The daughter of a Poilishe Chassid burned her leg and the doctors said it had to be partially amputated. Her father sent the Rebbe an express letter and asked for a bracha. A few days later, before they did the operation, the Rebbe wrote him to change his t'fillin. He did so and by the next day the girl's condition had improved somewhat, and by the day of the operation it had improved to the point that an operation was no longer necessary. The doctors merely gave her some medication and it healed.

The doctors said it was a miracle and they did not understand how it had happened.

CHASSIDIM USED TO RUN!

When R' Nissan Nemenov first went to 770 he traveled on the most modern jet plane, one that had just been put into service. At a farbrengen where he was asked to speak, he said that during the flight he asked a Jew there what advantage this plane had over its predecessors.

He explained that first of all, this plane flew faster and second,

the lift-off was quicker.

R' Nissan learned a lesson in avodas Hashem from this exchange – that everything that once took time now goes faster and you reach a more elevated level much faster.

R' Nissan also said that Chassidim used to run away from the Rebbe and did not want the Rebbe to see their faces, but today, people push to see the Rebbe.

The next day, the Rebbe asked me about R' Nissan's farbrengen and asked me to tell him what R' Nissan had said. I repeated those two points and after the second point the Rebbe said: He is right.

FROM THE PLANE TO THE YECHIDUS

One night when there was yechidus, I received a phone call with an urgent question which needed an immediate reply. I went in to the Rebbe between appointments and asked the question.

The Rebbe said: People used to go weeks and months on foot to Lubavitch, and then they began traveling by wagon, etc. Today you go by plane and from the plane you want to come to this room immediately. As the Rebbe said this he raised his hand and brought it down as a plane lands (i.e., people want instant results without having to work for it as they did in the past).



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ALL ABOUT MATZA

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

Our ancestors ate matza for just one day, on 15 Nissan, the first day of Pesach, as Rabbi Yosi HaGlili says. So why were we commanded to eat matzos for seven days? * A look at the Yom Tov of Pesach through the eyes of the Midrash, Kabbala, and Chassidus Chabad.

We celebrate Pesach to remember the miracles that happened for our ancestors when they left Egypt. Since “their dough did not have a chance to leaven,” and they ate matzos, we are commanded to eat matzos.

But our ancestors ate matza only on one day, on the 15th of Nissan, the first day of Pesach, as Rabbi Yosi HaGlili says in the tractate of P’sachim 28b, “The Pesach of Egypt, the prohibition against chametz was observed for one day.” So why were we commanded to eat matzos for seven days?

Some say that our ancestors also ate matzos for seven days but it was only the first day that it was a mitzva not to eat chametz. The rest of the days they didn’t eat chametz because their dough didn’t rise, not because Hashem had so commanded them.

Another question: The fact that their dough didn’t rise seems to be a side point, because the main point was their release from bondage, and not the matza that they ate when they left Egypt. If they had left Egypt and didn’t eat matza but some other food, would something have been lacking in their joy? Surely not. So why were future generations commanded to eat matza as a central mitzva of the holiday of Pesach to commemorate the miracles of the Exodus?

OUR HEARTS ARE SWAYED BY OUR ACTIONS

What sort of commemoration is preferable – that of the heart or of action? For example, when a couple is celebrating their

anniversary, do they prefer to express their joy emotionally, even without any actions, or do they prefer receiving a gift, flowers, etc., even if they are without any accompanying emotion?

Normal people prefer heartfelt emotions over objects because an action devoid of emotion and love is empty. The main thing is genuine happiness. Emotions supersede actions.

Why then, does the Torah emphasize our remembering the miracles of the Exodus with certain actions (eating matza, a korban Pesach, etc)? What purpose do they serve when they are secondary to our remembering Hashem’s love for us?

The *Chinuch* explains, “hearts are swayed by actions.” A person is comprised of body and soul and one of the ways of arousing the emotions (of the animal soul) is through physical actions, just as giving a gift arouses love.

We were commanded to do mitzvos with our physical bodies because they are the means by which we arouse our emotions. In order for a Jew to feel inspired by joy and excitement on Yom Tov and remember and “live” with the miracles that were done when we left Egypt, Hashem gave us physical mitzvos to do. This is because our nature is such that doing something physical arouses emotions and thoughts. True, the physical action is secondary to the love, which is primary, but it is the means to inspire the soul. When we give a tangible gift, it generally arouses a heartfelt response.

TO INCLUDE THE BODY IN THE JOY AND HOLINESS

One might think that a person who was able to arouse his emotions without doing a physical

action, would be exempt from practical mitzvos just as a person who can love without a gift would seemingly be exempt from giving a gift. Halacha says otherwise. Even a perfect tzaddik, who loves Hashem with all his heart, must do physical mitzvos in all their details.

The reason for this is that there is something special about a physical act, and not merely as a means to arouse the emotions:

When does a person achieve perfection in the fulfillment of mitzvos? This is only when he performs the mitzvos utilizing all the components of his personality, with his body and his soul. It's not enough to rejoice only with one's heart and soul. The physical body must participate in the joy. The physical inclinations must also be elevated to the holiness of the day. We need to love both with our heart and in our actions.

Therefore, on every Yom Tov Hashem gives us two types of

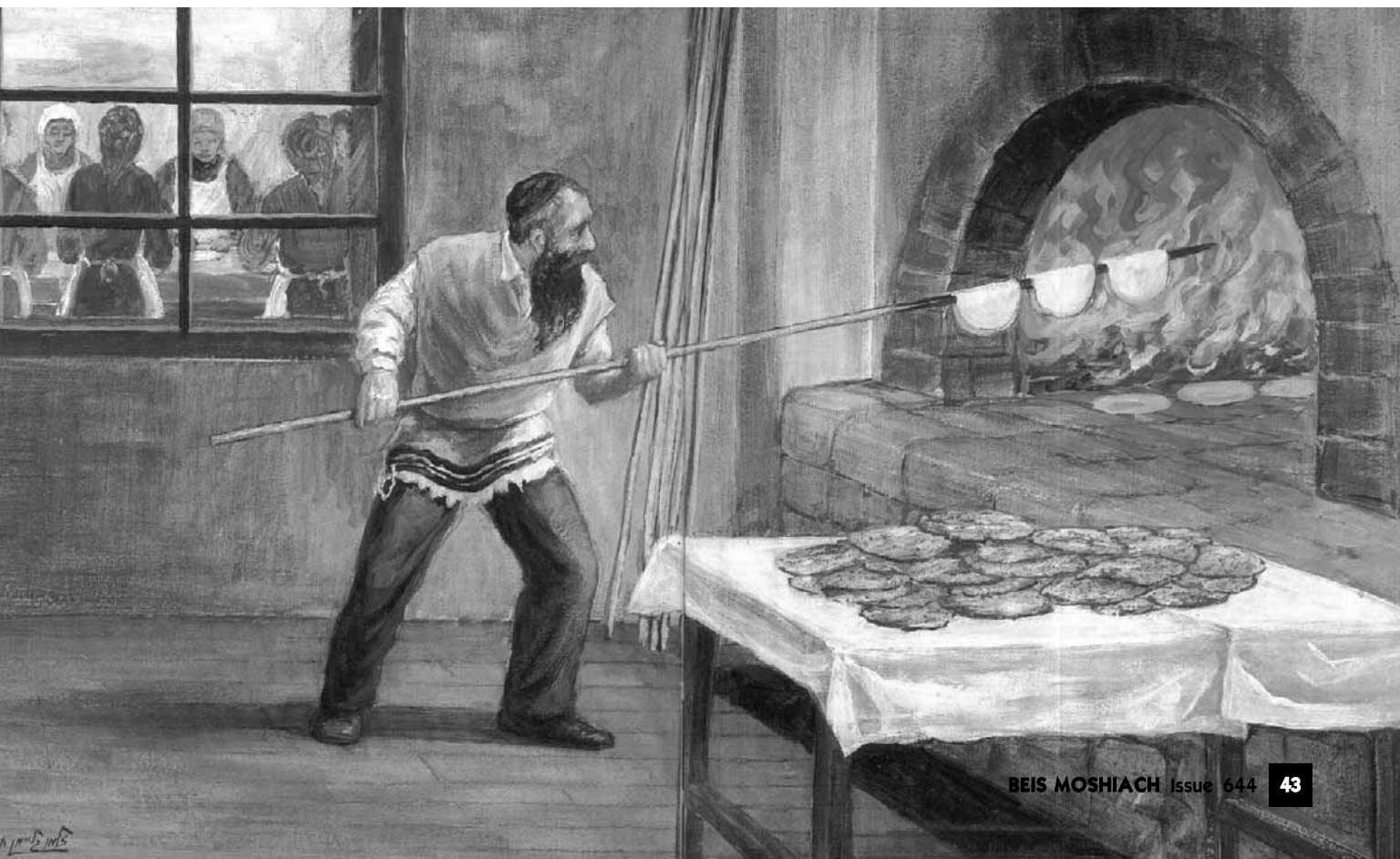
mitzvos: 1) those that are done in our hearts 2) those that are done with our bodies – so that we connect to Hashem with both our bodies and souls. On Pesach there are mitzvos that are done in our minds and hearts – t'filla, reciting Hallel, etc. – whose goal is to unite our minds and heart to Hashem. Then there are mitzvos like eating matza and the korban Pesach, drinking four cups of wine, etc., whose goal is to unite our bodies to Hashem. In this way, the holiness of the Yom Tov permeates all components of man.

WHEN EATING MATZA, ONE EATS HOLINESS

In Kabbala it explains that the physical mitzvos like eating matza, sanctify not only the body but also the neshama, because the physical act of a mitzva has the ability to sanctify the spiritual soul (not only the animal soul but the G-dly soul too).

The matza on Pesach is called “matzos mitzva” because it is holy, and the Zohar explains that within matza lies mighty spiritual and holy powers and sparks from the supernal realms. In fact, the spiritual source of matzos is higher than the spiritual source of the holy neshama! When you eat matza on Pesach you affect (not only the body but) the soul. By eating matza you add holy energy to the holy G-dly soul!

When a Jew eats matza on Pesach, it is like he is consuming/absorbing G-dliness because at the same time that one ingests the physical ingredients of matza, which are digested and become part of one's body, one also “digests” the holy qualities contained within it. Therefore, the Zohar says that matza is “food of faith” and “food of healing.” When eating matza you heal the physical body and increase your faith, adding holiness to the G-dly soul.



MATZA IMPLANTS FAITH IN THE BODY TOO

One might think that these effects are divided so that the physical body is nourished only by the physical part of matza (“food of healing”) while the G-dly soul is nourished by the spiritual and holy part of matza (“food of faith”). However, the Rebbe Maharash (*hemshech V’Kacha* 5637) says this is not the case. The physical body is also strengthened in its faith in G-d through the matza, as he puts it:

The physical matza itself is a Mitzva and “a G-dly substance,” and therefore, by eating it, the physical body too, and the animal soul and Evil Inclination, receive their life force from food that has a G-dly substance. Therefore, they change for the better and are strengthened in faith in G-d and enable the G-dly soul to believe with complete faith in Hashem and not conceal as much as they did before the eating of matza.

This tremendous effect takes place only with the matza on Pesach not with other mitzvos of eating because although there is a mitzva to eat on other holidays, the food that is eaten is not inherently holy; it’s just a mitzva to eat it (just like there is a mitzva to give *tz’daka* to the poor, and you do the mitzva with money, but the money is not holy per se).

With the mitzva of matza on Pesach though, the matza itself is a mitzva, a G-dly substance and a holy object! Eating matzos mitzva also arouses and intensifies the spiritual power of thought and the knowledge and belief in our Father in Heaven, and it also draws holiness within the body.

This is why the Torah emphasizes the mitzva of eating matza as a way to remember our Exodus from Egypt. We are not celebrating the holidays just to

remember a miracle that took place 3300 years ago. Rather, every year, there is a supernal holiness on a holiday which is like the holiness that prevailed at that original time. The power of the miracles which were bestowed upon the Jewish people when they left Egypt that year, are renewed every year on Pesach! This is what is meant by, “these days are remembered and done” – that not only are those days “remembered,” but they are “done,” and are happening now, with the same spiritual strength as back then.

How do we get the sanctity of Yom Tov to rest upon us? We accomplish this by eating matza which draws the sanctity into the body and soul.

THE HOLIDAY CONTINUES FOR 7 DAYS

Now we can understand why Pesach is seven days long:

Sukkos is also seven days and Shavuot has the “seven *yemei tashlumim*.” Why are holidays seven days?

Each day of Yom Tov is a day of spiritual influence. A person who fulfills the mitzvos of the holiday on a weekday (for example, eating matza in Adar), will have no spiritual benefit. It’s only when you do the mitzva on the designated holiday that one is bestowed with G-dliness.

A Jew has seven soul powers: *chesed*, *g’vura*, *rachamim*, *netzach*, *hod*, *yesod*, and *malchus*, and the goal is for all of man’s spiritual powers to be “good and radiant,” i.e., a person should not be led by the base desires of his Evil Inclination but only by the Good Inclination. The ability to do this is a consequence of eating matza.

A person can be a believer and recognize the Creator, but his faith does not permeate all his soul powers. His power of *chesed* is not

permeated with belief in Hashem; his power of *g’vura* is not permeated with belief in Hashem, and so on.

An extreme example of this is a thief who before committing his crime prays that G-d help him. How could he do such a thing? If he believes in G-d, how does he sin by stealing? The answer is that his faith is theoretical and does not permeate his entire being.

Similarly, one can attain the holiness of Pesach and Matza but the sanctity won’t fill and permeate all the soul powers: Hashem did a great kindness with us that the holiday lasts seven days so that each day that we eat matza, we add holiness to another one of our soul powers (on the first day to *chesed*, on the second to *g’vura*, on the third to *tiferes*, etc.), so that all of man is full of this G-dly sanctity.

Yet the eating of matza all seven days is not an obligation. Our obligation to eat matza is on the first night (or the first two nights outside of Eretz Yisroel) and the rest of Pesach we are enjoined not to eat *chametz*, and from this alone we affect all seven *middos*.

ONE DAY IN EGYPT

So why was the Pesach in Egypt just one day? The *Pri Tzaddik* explains that on that night, they eradicated the Evil Inclination completely from their hearts, as it says, “in the evening you shall eat matzos,” and so the prohibition of *chametz* was just for one day, but later generations need seven days.

How were they able to do in one day what it takes us seven days to do? The Alter Rebbe explains, “Since Moshe and Aharon were there,” they enabled it to happen in one day.

‘AND IT WAS AT MIDNIGHT’

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelewitz, Shliach – Beit Shaan

Stories that happened at midnight as told by shluchim, presented for Pesach when the tenth plague happened precisely at midnight.

The Torah emphasizes that the Plague of the Firstborn took place precisely at midnight. In the Hagada (not *nusach* Chabad), there is a liturgical poem about many miracles that took place for our nation at midnight.

At Chabad houses history repeats itself and things happen at midnight, and sometimes two hours before that or two hours later. For the enjoyment of our readers who are interested in hearing about work that takes place at unconventional hours, I compiled several stories as follows:

SECRETS FROM THE EDITOR’S OFFICE

At this point, I will share with you some “professional secrets” and tell you – more or less – how my fellow shluchim help me prepare my articles. First, I try to come up with a specific Chassidishe theme, story or something from the weekly sidra. Then I start to look for stories that are connected to my topic. Sometimes this entails many phone calls to friends and sometimes I write about things that happened in Beit Shaan or that I once heard.

My luck, just as I decided to

write about stories that took place in the middle of the night at various Chabad houses, the Kinus HaShluchim in Eretz Yisroel took place and I was able to meet many more shluchim. I asked a number of them for stories that happened in the middle of the night. This is also the reason why this article is longer than usual, because of the stories I heard at the Kinus HaShluchim.

I discovered an amazing thing when my fellow shluchim first reacted to my question, even before they told me their stories. One shliach said in surprise, “What’s the question, every night there are stories. Shiurim or farbrengens that last into the night, bored (or curious) young men who come to the Chabad house and remain for a few years, house calls that last into the night, shalom bayis talks etc.

“What you need to ask,” concluded the shliach, “is whether there are ever nights without stories, because *that* would be a story!”

A shliach cannot allow himself to look at his watch, to stop or to choose those hours that he prefers. The work sometimes takes place in the middle of the day and sometimes in the middle of the night, and

sometimes ... all day and all night!

One shliach said: What’s the question, every morning that I get up it is still in the middle of the night. We have to get up at dawn in order to get the children ready for the two hour drive so they get to the nearest Chabad school on time.

BEIT SHAAN, ATLIT AND DIMONA

In Beit Shaan, which is located on Junction 90 between Yerushalayim, Tzfas, and Teveria, it often happens that we get knocks at the door at 12 or 2 in the morning. Sometimes it’s a Chassid from Tzfas who felt a terrible toothache as he was driving and wanted Tylenol.

Sometimes they’re yeshiva bachurim who missed the bus and there is nobody to hitch with so they want to rest for a few hours and continue their trip in the morning. Sometimes it’s the truck from Kfar Chabad that travels throughout the north and distributes mishloach manos or material for Lag B’Omer and the route brings the driver to Beit Shaan at midnight. So we get up, prepare a cup of coffee and then tell him the way to Menachemya, Metulla, and Rosh HaNikra.

Here are some more examples (my own and those of other shluchim):

Whenever I have to get to the center of the country, to a wedding in Kfar Chabad, to fundraise, or any meeting, Kinus, shopping, visiting a child in yeshiva or to take a course – each trip takes two hours there and two hours back. I don’t get home before midnight. Sometimes, and it’s not unusual, it is just at that time when a series of activities take place which must be completed by morning like distributing parsha sheets at the kibbutzim, hanging up flyers about the upcoming event, etc.

Dimona is located somewhere in the Negev and the shliach, Rabbi Yisroel Gliss, doesn’t miss an



Rabbi Yisroel Gliss



Rabbi Shimshon Tal



Rabbi Aharon Shifman

opportunity to disseminate Judaism and be mekarev Jews. “Recently,” said R’ Gliss, “I got a phone call at midnight from a principal of a Chabad seminary who was on a trip near Dimona. He asked whether I could come and farbreng with the girls. Of course I agreed and from the farbrengen I went directly to Shacharis and the rest of my day.”

R’ Gliss:

It often happens that I miss some sleep in order to help out a shliach. I got a call recently from the shliach in Beit Shemesh, Rabbi Eliezer Viner. He told me about a reservist soldier from a Chabad community who was serving near Dimona and did not have kosher food with the necessary hechsher. I told R’ Viner I was busy but at midnight I would go to the base and provide the soldier with some of the fine food produced by the “Chabad House catering service.”

That is just one example that has

repeated itself a number of times and is familiar to every shliach scattered throughout Eretz Yisroel and the world.

In Atlit the following interesting story took place. One night a woman called Rabbi Moshe Akselrod with an urgent request that he come to her house despite the late hour since her husband was hitting her. She explained that her husband preferred that she call the police than the rav since he was very ashamed that the rabbi know, but she knew that only the rabbi could help.

R’ Akselrod quickly got dressed and went to the couple’s house but the husband, being so ashamed, hid in the bathroom. R’ Akselrod slowly, slowly convinced him to come out and talk to him. He explained the severity of his actions, brought shalom to this husband and wife, and then went home.

READING THE MEGILLA AT 2 IN THE MORNING

Rabbi Aharon Shifman works for the Rebbe in a number of settlements in the Upper Galilee, but not only at settlements. There are some hidden hills around Tzfas and there among the trees, some people have built makeshift homes and tents and they invite guests and sometimes carry on bizarre gatherings and activities.

Since some of our fellow Jews are there, mitvtzaim and shiurim can take place.

“One Purim night,” I got a call from one of the hill people who told me that he had hundreds of people there celebrating and it was possible that they hadn’t yet heard the Megilla. Due to previous commitments (reading the Megilla and Simchas Purim at Kibbutz Parod) we agreed that I would get to the hill at 12:30 that night.

“When I arrived, I was taken aback by the type of dancing and music but they immediately stopped everything. It took another half an hour to round them all up and another half hour to explain what was going on. Then they all listened to the reading of the Megilla.

“When I was done, we heard the band switch to Chassidic songs that could be heard throughout the area and followed us as we drove the winding roads to Tzfas.”

A MIRACLE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

There are stories that start at 2 or 4 AM, deep into the night, but continue for many years afterwards. Rabbi Shimshon Tal, shliach in Hod HaSharon, relates:

“A few years ago, the phone rang at 4 in the morning. In my sleep I heard the voice of a woman speaking English rapidly. Since at that hour I don’t do very well with English, I hung up the phone. The woman was persistent and called back, the next morning, at four a.m.

“It turned out that she gave out Moshiach cards in New York and while doing so, she had met a couple from Hod HaSharon. The couple told her that they did not have children and the three of them went to the Rebbe to daven and ask for a bracha. Now they needed to learn the laws of Family Purity.

“The woman had agreed to this while the husband had not. In the end, they both began to learn and today they are raising twins in a fine, frum home.”

NOW FOR THAILAND

At the Kinus HaShluchim last year, Rabbi Yosef Chaim Kantor, shliach and rav in Bangkok, related:

“For a number of years I wondered whether I am a shliach of the Rebbe or not. I wasn’t sure because there is a big difference between the kind of work that I do

as rav of a k’hilla and the work that shluchim do, sometimes without a salary, sometimes 24 hours a day.

“My doubts were resolved in the middle of the night. It happened when I was called by the embassy to go and identify a dead person so he could be buried according to halacha. When I got out of bed and left the house, I knew that I am a shliach because shlichus is work with no boundaries. It has no set hours and you can’t begin to assess the spiritual rewards. You work for the Rebbe, for the shlichus.”

THE POWER OF A NIGGUN AT NIGHT IN THE SUKKA

Rabbi Nechemia Shmerling, shliach in Kfar Yona, relates:

“A few years ago, some fellow shluchim came to farbreng on Chol HaMoed Sukkos. Since these were shluchim who work hard most of the day and night on Mivtza Sukkos, the farbrengen began late.

“A few hours went by and the farbrengen warmed up more and more, and at two in the morning the entire neighborhood was able to enjoy a selection of Chabad niggunim that rang forth from my sukkah. The truth is that I was a little nervous by the neighbors’ reaction but to my delight, I got positive feedback. One old neighbor who met me a few days later, told me she had enjoyed hearing the beautiful singing so much that she wanted to know when we would do it again!”

A FARBRENGEN ON AN IRONING BOARD

Rabbi Yigal Kirshnzaft, shliach of the destroyed community in Gush Katif:

“A year ago, when we lived in a hotel after the expulsion, it was the night of Yud-Tes Kislev and I returned to the hotel after a farbrengen in one of the caravillas. It

was past midnight and there in the corridor, near my room, I met young American boys who lived in the same hotel as part of a project to encourage aliya to Eretz Yisroel.

“I still had some mashke and mezonos with me from the farbrengen and so I offered to farbreng with them in honor of the Chag Ha’Geula. They enthusiastically agreed. We had no table and so I took an ironing board from my room and set it up in the hallway, put out the refreshments, poured the mashke and the farbrengen began.

“A few days later, I heard from a friend, also an expellee, who maybe looks something like me, that he met these two boys at the Kosel. They thought it was me and they hugged and kissed him and said that out of their entire trip to Eretz Yisroel, the most moving experience was the farbrengen with the man they had just met who took out delicious food and farbrenged with them half the night.”

RESCUE FROM THE MISSIONARIES IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

There was a young man who was ensnared by a missionary cult somewhere in the world. He became more involved until he was actually talking about converting. As part of the missionary activities of the group the members went on trips to various countries.

Said the young man:

One night we got to a port city in Europe and looked around the marina. I noticed a candle burning in the window of a yacht anchored in the harbor. I was curious about it and when I went to look, I saw it was three candles. Near them sat a small family eating a meal. I could tell it was a Shabbos meal.

This sight struck me hard, as I had disconnected from and forgotten everything Jewish. I didn’t



Rabbi Yosef Chaim Kantor



Rabbi Moshe Akselrod



Rabbi Nechemia Schmerling

even remember what day it was, but then I saw this scene. This created turmoil within me. I felt that Heaven had sent me a sign that the time had come to do t'shuva.

As he saw more signs (that are unrelated to this article), he decided to return to Judaism and Chassidus. He learned for a while in a Chabad yeshiva and now he is in close touch with a shliach in the center of the country. Today, he saves many Jews from falling into the clutches of missionaries.

EXCLAMATION IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT: I AM A LUBAVITCHER!

Twice a year, a group of bachurim from Litvishe yeshivos visit Beit Shaan as part of Yad L'Achim's work, or as they call themselves nowadays, Lev L'Achim. The bachurim, about fifteen of them, come during *bein ha'z'manim* in

Nissan and Av, and register children in religious schools.

When we meet each year, I make it my business to get to know them and I invite them to an "Oneg Shabbos" at my house, Friday night after the meal. They have never refused and the visit always turns into a Chassidishe farbrengen which lasts into the night.

I usually teach them a Chabad niggun and we all sing it again and again with d'veikus and enthusiasm. One year I taught them, "Prazos Teishev Yerushalayim." The atmosphere warmed up and we sang it again and again.

That year, the farbrengen was more successful than usual. The bachurim admitted that they were in B'nei Brak for twenty years and didn't know that Chabad has such spiritual wealth, such depth, such power. During the farbrengen, one of the bachurim got up and exclaimed, "I am a Chabadnik!" and

they all applauded.

Two months later, one Thursday night, I got home late and there was a note on the table. My wife wrote that two Litvishe bachurim had been looking for me and left this note on the table. This is what it said: We are two bachurim from the group of activists who spent time with you. You should know that we will never forget the fantastic Oneg Shabbos you made for us, or the niggun that you taught us.

We taught the entire yeshiva the niggun and now everybody calls our group the "K'vutzas Prazos." At every simcha for a chassan in the yeshiva, we sing "Od Yishama" to the tune of "Prazos Teishev Yerushalayim." We wanted to meet with you but you weren't home. Thank you, two T'mimim (that is what they called themselves) from "Prazos."

Yet another event that took place "at midnight."

ALWAYS HAPPY

By H. Ben Yishai

She endured poverty and a difficult childhood, a visit from the KGB at her wedding and that's not all, but you will always see her with a smile. * Miriam Gurfinkel, activist in Beitar, tells us how she handles life's difficulties with simcha.

You can readily identify Miriam Gurfinkel by her bubbly laughter, her constant simcha, and her tireless devotion to the Rebbe MH" M and his mitzvaim. She runs the Matteh Moshiaich Beitar with her family. Miriam radiates joy as though she was born with a silver spoon in her mouth. She is a living example of someone who is b'simcha.

When you look a little deeper you realize that there is no secret or segula here but a lot of hard work and thought about "and behold, Hashem stands above him and fills the entire world with His glory, and looks at him and examines his innards and heart, whether he serves Him properly." The avoda is to do what needs to be done with simcha that comes from the depths of the soul. This requires strenuous working on oneself.

Is it possible that this unique simcha was cultivated specifically after living a hard life when nothing came easily?

Miriam, tell us a bit about your life.

I was born in Moscow. My

maternal grandmother was the granddaughter of the Admur of Tolchin and was born in Tolchin in the Ukraine. During the Second World War, she went to Russia and that is how her life was saved, for the Germans gathered all the Jews of Tolchin in the shul and burned them. My grandmother was the sole survivor of her family and her town.

My maternal grandfather wasn't religious but came from a religious family. He had thirteen children, but only four survived; the others died of starvation and the diseases of that time. My grandparents had tremendous inner strength that sustained them, for nearly everything they had was taken from them.

Despite their losses, you couldn't tell anything by looking at my grandfather. He was a happy man who worked a lot and didn't speak much, but he radiated simcha, accepting all he had endured and having no complaints.

My mother was born when my grandfather was 58 and my grandmother 48. When my mother was seven years old, they took all of

my grandmother's property away and put her in jail for seven years! My mother went to live with her sister, who was twenty years older than her, and she raised her.

After Stalin died, all political prisoners were freed and my grandmother was released, but she was a broken woman. My grandparents were given an apartment which consisted of a six-meter room in which we all lived – my grandparents, my parents, me and my younger sister. Everybody had folding beds, a table and closet, and work space for my grandfather who was an expert shoemaker. He got the work through the window and returned it that way too.

The highest value in our home was to remain alive, at the most basic level of survival. The next value was love. The amazing thing was that despite the pain that my grandparents endured, their love for the children, for everybody, was very great.

When I was born, their circumstances were so bad that they sent me to an orphanage from the age of six months until I was about seven. I only went home for weekends. It wasn't bad at the orphanage, there was minimal food, but at home there was nothing. It was abject poverty.

At the orphanage, every week everybody stood in a circle and said their name, their parents' names and their grandparents' names. I remember not liking this as it was embarrassing for me because the names were long and Jewish and they always laughed and knew that I was Jewish.

I didn't miss home because when I went home, it was so hard. My mother was always away, working and studying, and my grandmother was sick and hospitalized every so often. The only person I had was my grandfather, who was always happy. Whatever he had, as well as what he didn't have, he shared with others, Jews and non-Jews, and they all loved him and he loved me very much. The tiny home was open and people were always coming to have their shoes fixed.

How did you become a baalas t'shuva?

After elementary and high school, at the age of 17, I studied to be a paramedic on an ambulance. On Shabbos, classes ended at twelve and every Shabbos I would encounter 20-30 strange people standing outside, near the shul. I was curious because despite the odd clothing and incomprehensible behavior, there was something familiar about them.

I asked myself: Who are they?

Why are they standing outside? My neshama was drawn, I can't explain why, but I felt that this was a place I was connected to.

That is what happened the first Shabbos, the second Shabbos, and the third. The tenth time, I entered the shul in order to see why they stood out there all Shabbos, and that is where my t'shuva process began. I was exposed to a new and magical world that I was attracted to without understanding why.

On Motzaei Shabbos, other young people would come and divide into groups and they would go to the forest singing all kinds of songs. I went from group to group.

During summer vacation, the Jewish youth would rent a large dacha in the countryside for the entire summer. I joined them. Everybody learned, and in addition to paying for the living quarters each person worked at a job and we shared the expenses. I worked in the kitchen and I studied whenever I had free time.

At the end of the summer I went

back to school and on Yom Tov I met my husband. He was an old timer in the world of t'shuva and already learned and taught Gemara. I was keeping whatever mitzvos I knew.

We got married in 5744/1984. A chuppa was illegal and we couldn't have a Jewish wedding in a hall. Our wedding took place in my mother's house (we had three rooms by then) and it was all secret so that outsiders wouldn't know. We had to prepare the wedding ourselves.

I cooked for more than a hundred people and my husband ran to the mikva to immerse the dishes and utensils. We didn't have tables and we took off the doors and made them into tables. We had kosher food which we prepared ourselves: we baked the bread, made the wine, and cooked the salads and potatoes. We had no chicken or fish because we had no money, but I baked cakes.

Various guests came to our chuppa, some of whom we knew



The Gurfinkel's wedding in Soviet Russia

Okay, I accept the decree of the “gadol.” If he says that I’m a Chabadnik, then I’ll go to a Chabad yeshiva. And thanks to him, we became Lubavitchers.

and some of whom we didn’t know, including Jews from England and the US who heard there was a wedding and someone brought them. Some elderly people made the chuppa. In the middle of the chuppa someone looked out the window and saw teams of KGB agents standing outside. Chaos ensued.

The guests from abroad were terrified and hid under the tables. There were knocks at the door and I went in my white dress and veil and said we were having a wedding. It wasn’t illegal to get married! They apologized and left.

Afterwards we figured out that in the same building lived someone from the KGB who saw strangers coming and singing weird songs and he called the KGB. In those days it was illegal to have gatherings of more than three people, but for a wedding it was allowed, and so in the end the wedding was very joyous.

Right after the wedding we organized shiurim, a Purim shpiel, and all kinds of Jewish activities in our home. My husband taught Gemara and Ivrit and we always had people over. We weren’t

Lubavitchers, but we were baalei t’shuva. In Russia people weren’t divided into groups like they are in Eretz Yisroel, and all Jews were either religious or not. There was a wonderful unity among all religious Jews.

When were you able to leave Russia?

Life in Russia was always hard. We became “refuseniks” when they didn’t let us leave. Then, in the middle of 5745, my family received a letter which said: leave within three days. I was pregnant at the time and we were the first people that had to leave. They all told me: You must go!

Of course I was very happy, but we had one little problem. I did not have a civil marriage, just a halachic marriage. We had to arrange our papers and we were told that we all had to leave as a family, or we all had to stay. I decided to try. I took along my k’suba and a note that stated I was pregnant, and I said: Do what you want, I’m sitting here. According to G-d I am married and the bureaucrats said: There’s no such thing; according to the law you are not married.

Hashem gave me courage because according to the law, we weren’t allowed to have had a chuppa, and there I was announcing that we had violated the law! They could have put me in jail, but Hashem had mercy and after I sat there for a few hours they decided to allow my family, my parents and sister, to leave without me and to let me stay.

I had to sign that I was leaving the apartment we lived in to the state and was moving to where my husband lived, in a small room he shared with someone else. Only then did they issue a visa and within a few days my family had left and I remained in Russia with my husband.

In the end, I did not give them my parents’ apartment. On the

contrary, I hosted 15-20 people every Shabbos and in the meantime, we arranged our civil marriage.

A few months after my family left, I lost the baby in a premature birth. We decided to take a vacation at the seashore so I could get back to myself. I was very weak. We went somewhere where there was no phone, no communication, a forsaken place near the sea.

Wednesday night, my husband went to the local postal branch where they told him: We got an urgent telegram, looking for Alexander Gurfinkel, identifying features are a cap, beard, and suit. The message was that he should call back immediately. The telegram was sent from my parents to my husband.

When we called them, we found out that a visa from Russia had arrived and we had to be back in Moscow by Monday. If we didn’t leave within a few days, we’d lose the opportunity.

After a series of miracles, we left Russia with \$180 in our pockets and all the belongings we could fit into three boxes. We decided we wanted to live in Yerushalayim.

* * *

A surprise awaited the couple at the airport in Eretz Yisroel. Jews coming from Russia were so rare that their arrival was announced on the radio. As soon as they exited the airport, they saw dozens of people, all wearing hats and jackets and speaking Russian, looking at them. Each of them tried to woo them, promising that if they went with them, they would get a refrigerator, a washing machine, etc. Most of them were Litvish, but there was one Lubavitcher, Shai Gisser.

Before we could figure out what was going on, they had put our things in the car and R’ Shai Gisser took us to his house. We were very taken aback by the atmosphere here. In Russia there was no difference between one yarmulke



The Gurfinkels arrival in Eretz Yisroel

and another, and the polarity here shocked us. We tried to figure out what was going on and where we should study.

My husband chose to learn in a Litvish yeshiva called Shvus Ami. He sat and learned Gemara all day, from eight in the morning until eight at night, and he became a talmid chacham. In the evening, he went to the yeshiva of SHAMIR – Shomrei Mitzvos Yotzei Russia – a Lubavitcher organization. He wasn't

a Lubavitcher at the time but he learned Chassidus.

They were fond of him at Shvus Ami and after learning there for two years, the hanhala decided that he had acquired enough knowledge that he could be taken to a certain "gadol" in B'nei Brak so the latter could see what a Jew from Russia had attained.

When he went in, the "gadol" began asking him what he learned and what his s'darim were, etc. My

husband innocently told him that he learned until eight at night in Shvus Ami and then in SHAMIR, where he learned Chassidus. The "gadol" shouted: a Lubavitcher spy in our yeshiva!

That scared us off. We realized that here in Eretz Yisroel you can't just be an observant Jew; you have to belong somewhere. My husband thought about it and said: Okay, I accept the decree of the "gadol." If he says that I'm a Chabadnik, then I'll go to a Chabad yeshiva. And thanks to him, we became Lubavitchers.

How did you support yourselves?

Our financial situation in those early years was difficult. We barely got anything from the yeshiva. I was very happy that my husband was learning and I felt it was all worthwhile, but it wasn't easy. We didn't tell anybody about our poverty either, since we were ashamed.

I was confined to bed during the pregnancy of our oldest son and there was no food at home. Someone once came to visit me and I couldn't get up and she sat for half an hour. I felt uncomfortable, knowing I had to serve something, but there was nothing to serve. Then she got up and said: If you came to see me, I would at least offer you tea or coffee... And she left. You can imagine how I felt and how unpleasant it was.

Miriam, you say all this with a smile. What's the secret to your simcha?

I know that in the most difficult circumstances, only simcha can save you. In every situation you can and must find the silver lining. Even in something that seems to us to be a very great challenge, we can find the good. There is nothing that is utterly bad. In the end, everything is good and if good always pushes aside bad, then the situation as a



Rabbi Gurfinkel with the mayor of Beitar Ilit, Rabbi Rubinstein

whole, cannot be bad. If you look for and find the good point, you will immediately turn it into something positive, and that which appears as not good, simply dissipates.

I also think I was born with this trait, but I remember that I always worked to find the good point in every situation. Sometimes, at first, it's hard. You feel like a ton of bricks fell on your head, but think a moment and find the solution.

What techniques did you develop for yourself in order to see the good in everything?

I always told myself: You are looking at the thorns; you must see the roses. If you want to be satisfied, you have to always look for the good and that is the only way you will get out of the difficulty. I thought this way back in the orphanage, when I was a child.

What can I tell you, in my life there were very few good points but I always found some opening for hope, and maybe because I had such a difficult life, I had to develop this approach.

The wonderful example of my grandfather, who was the best man in the world that I knew, probably guided me, without words; just by personal example. He lived it.

The difference between then and now is that it used to be intuitive, but the moment I started learning Chassidus, it became something intellectual. I learned to work with my mind; Hashem decides what the reality is, but you can look at it differently and then accept it differently. Sometimes, you can even change it. I realized that the way I viewed the world was not only the way it would appear to me but the way it would actually be.

How did you get to Beitar?

We looked for an apartment and heard that there were apartments in Beitar. We went there and stood on the hilltop and looked. Rechov Baal

HaTanya was still on paper but we knew that this street suited us. We had only one requirement, a large living room so we could host many people. Whether in Russia or here, when we lived in Ramot in a tiny, fifty-meter apartment, we always had people over.

* * *

Miriam said: We always wanted to be like everyone, simple Jews who live quietly without problems, but it didn't work out that way.

Why is that? I asked her, and this is what Miriam told me:

It all started with our eighth child, Ayala. Until she was born, life was different, seemingly easier, but now it's much better.

When I was pregnant with her, the doctors found a problem with the fetus. At first they said it was Down Syndrome. We wrote to the Rebbe but did not receive a bracha. I gave birth with a heavy heart. The tests results weren't good and they said there was a tumor in the brain.

To our delight, our daughter was normal, beautiful and sweet, with no problems at all. It was a wonderful surprise and I thought: how can this be? The Rebbe did not give a bracha! Or did I simply not understand the Rebbe?

Then, when she was three, the tumor suddenly emerged. It was huge and it could not be removed. We went to many hospitals for half a year and nobody knew what it was. When she was eight months old we found a doctor who said that it wasn't terrible, it was just a Myoma (a benign fibroid tumor) and Ayala began taking steroids, but instead of shrinking it, it grew. Something went awry because of the wrong medication and it turned into a rare illness.

It wasn't a known disease, so we did not get national health insurance. Nor was there any known treatment for the illness. In

fact, there isn't even a department that deals with this type of illness. Just nothing. Ayala has been getting injections for four years now and nothing covers it. The medications just keep the growth together so it doesn't spread. But we are always happy with her and she is a happy child.

Ayala Chaya is six years old now and she is in first grade. She knows she has an illness and that she was born to do big things in the world, and that all our work began with her. We could have lived with the pain and medical tests, but we chose to rejoice with the test and to grow from it. All our children are involved in doing and all feel it's a gift from Heaven. We were given a blow so we would wake up and that is how Matteh Moshiaich in Beitar came to be.

Tell us about it and what your daily life is like.

My husband always learned and taught a lot and he also translates the D'var Malchus into Russian and writes articles in Russian. I manage a lab in Yerushalayim and work fulltime. Like everyone else, I wanted it to be nice at home, for the children to be successful, and that we should have guests.

When Ayala was born, we spent a year running with her nearly every day, from doctor to doctor and from mekubal to rav in order to get yeshuos and segulos and whatnot. There were other children besides her and a house and work and a difficult financial situation along with worries. It's like everything was caving in until I said: That's it. This is where we stop, and we start over.

And that's when you started Matteh Moshiaich Beitar?

Yes. First we made a farbrengen for women. We made a good hachlata and said that Chaya Leah bas Miriam should be well. A year and a half ago we added the name



Rabbi Gurfinkel speaking at a shleimus ha'Aretz event
made by Matteh Moshiah of Beitar Ilit



The Gurfinkel living room full of guests

Ayala and decided that we would go every Friday and give out candles. The very next morning, the doctor from the oncology department called us to come and get an experimental drug. This is the drug she has been getting for three-four years now. It stabilizes her illness. I saw with my own eyes how the moment I committed to something the Rebbe said it would be good. "As you increase your activities, the illness will disappear."

We began going on Mivtza Neshek every Friday and now we give out nearly 1000 candles every Erev Shabbos! Aside from that, every Rosh Chodesh and on every special Chassidic date we have a farbrengen for men and women, separately. Three times a week there is a shiur for ladies and it's all in our house. Every Friday night we have a Chabad minyan with learning and singing, activities that bring a lot of bracha to the house.

Slowly, as things came together, we ended up with five main projects. First, we started the organization **Isha L'reusa** for new mothers and for families, where the mother has to suddenly leave with a child and the rest of the family needs to be cared for. We send girls to help with the children and buy disposable goods and give them out. We cook, dividing the preparation among many families who participate in the organization, and I collect the food by car.

Second is **help for simchas**. It happens that a family has to prepare a bris, bar mitzva, or Sheva Brachos and they have no money and no extended family for help, and so we get involved. We make everything, from beginning to end. We have an average of one or two simchas a month. We Lubavitchers divide the work, which is physical, financial, and emotional for the family members.

Third is **hafatzas ha'maayanos**.

There were several stories with women who had never lit candles and they said: We don't want. You and your religious coercion! But in the end, after softening them up, they committed to lighting candles.

I make many trips at night to the hospital, lectures, shiurim, anywhere women have to go, and most of them are not Lubavitch. During the trip I always have an opportunity to talk about Chabad and the Rebbe. Women who get a ride with me always want to come back with me too, because it greatly interests them, especially about the Rebbe and Moshiach. This is U'faratzta and I enjoy it tremendously.

There was a time that once a week we visited hospitals and gave out literature on mezuzos, t'fillin, etc., but it didn't last. We cut it down to Yomim Tovim and special occasions. On Purim we give out mishloach manos to soldiers in the hospital, and last year we gave out more than 1000. We also organize a Lag B'Omer parade.

For Chanuka we set up a menorah at the security checkpoint and gave out candles and doughnuts to the soldiers. For Sukkos we built a sukka in Sacher Park in Yerushalayim and had the four minim. Lots of people came in

and said the bracha on the lulav, had something to eat, and took reading material.

Fourth is **shleimus ha'Aretz**. We make rallies here. In the past, we went to Gush Katif to offer moral support to the people there. Afterwards, we arranged buses to all the demonstrations. After they threw out the settlers, we went to all the hotels and arranged buses and rides for people to visit and talk to them. We brought along a psychologist so they would also get that kind of support. Today, we continue to have large gatherings once a year for shleimus ha'Aretz.

Fifth is work **with the children**. It starts with small things like Tzivos Hashem every Shabbos, T'hilim, and the P'sukim and then there are special activities. On all the big Chabad dates we have a program for children with attractions, like a play, clowns, a musical performance, etc.

Where does the money come from for all this?

Before I make a hachlata there isn't a cent, but the moment I make the hachlata it comes from all sorts of unexpected places. We set up a non-profit corporation and a year later, when we had to do the accounting, we saw the amount that had accumulated and couldn't believe it. We said: It can't be, because although each thing required only a relatively small amount, it added up to a huge sum. How did we get it? Miracles! There's no need to ask where it came from. Hashem has His ways.

What feedback do you get?

Something interesting and surprising always happens. When we give out candles, Bracha Pevsner, who is an "expert" in this, goes along with us. There were several stories with women who had never lit candles and they said: We don't want. You and your religious coercion! But in the end, after

softening them up, they committed to lighting candles.

We had a very sick friend and one time I gave out candles in his merit, that he should feel well. I gave the name and women lit in his merit. One time, a woman who accepted candles began to cry. This had never interested her before but she suddenly felt she had to do it. She had a vision of her grandmother 60-70 years ago and since then, she comes to me every Friday and asks for candles and said it brings light into her life.

At a certain mall we had a hard time that proved to us how important our work was. A few times we nearly ran away because the manager of the mall called security and threatened us, "If you come back here with candles..." Women didn't want to go there anymore, but we made some good hachlatos and since then, nobody says a word to us. The crisis passed. It's all miraculous.

We give out about 1000 candles every Friday. There are always endless expenses and it all ends up coming miraculously. I look back and don't understand how it happened. The ko'ach of the Rebbe!

How do you manage with all these responsibilities?

If I wanted to micromanage everything, that would be impossible, but I learned how to delegate to others. What's important is to trust people. My nature is such that it's hard for me to ask, because who am I to ask? But I learned that there is no choice because it's impossible to do everything yourself. I want to include as many women as possible.

In critical moments, and there are moments like that, I think of how to proceed and I tell myself: There is tomorrow. Because if I think of today, I will break. But tomorrow everything can change and be much better.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH OPAL?

In issue #639, in the article about gemstones, it said that the Tzemach Tzedek says that the opal has negative powers, causes a person to sin and then publicizes his sins, and even having it in your pocket is forbidden.

The Rebbe says to be careful when printing something in the name of our Rebbeim. In this case, the Tzemach Tzedek is misquoted. The stone the Tzemach Tzedek is talking about is the "Ofel stone" which is mentioned in Iyov 28:3 (as the Tzemach Tzedek himself says). That's "ofel" with a "Fei," not opal with a "Pei."

R' Avrohom Ibn Ezra and the Metzudos explain

on that verse that it means the earth, because the word "stone" means "primary" and "ofel" means darkness, since the earth is the primary element of darkness (or according to Rashi "stone" means "source of harm" and "ofel stone" is not referring to a literal stone at all) Even the Malbim who says it means an actual stone, describes it as a magnet and says it is called "ofel" because of its dark appearance.

Most importantly, the Tzemach Tzedek explains that this is a reference to "malchus of klipa" and explains that this is

what the verse means when it says, "do not have a stone and a stone in your pocket," because by simply having **incomplete weights** in one's pocket (not the opal) this leads to sin through the aforementioned "klipa."

Uri Lemberg

Kfar Chabad

P.S. Perhaps the quote in the article meant that one should not adorn oneself with laziness and sadness, which is "malchus of klipa" (see the commentaries on *Tanya*, the end of chapter one) nor put them in one's pocket. If so, he is right.

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