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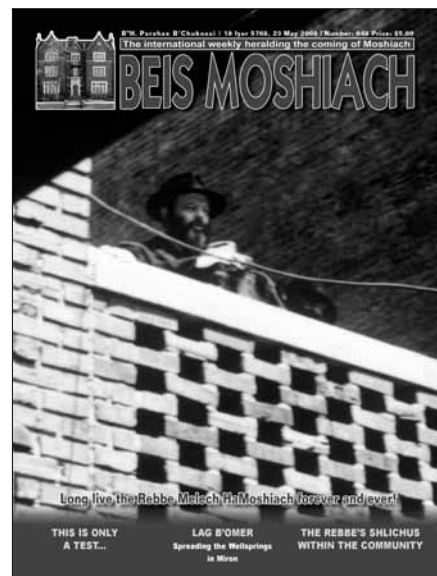
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FROM ABOVE TO BELOW TO ABOVE

Translated and adapted by Dovid Yisroel Ber Kaufmann

The last Torah portion of VaYikra, like the first, speaks of sacrifices. Here, the discussion centers on the first-born animal, which represents an arousal from Above, and the tithing of the tenth animal, which represents an arousal from below. Both are a necessary part of the process of transforming the world, preparing it for the times of Moshiach.

The inner connection between sections of the Torah can teach us much about our own connection with Redemption. This is logical, since the ultimate purpose and fulfillment of Torah is Moshiach. The Jewish people alone were given the Torah and it is our Divine mission to bring Moshiach, the era of Redemption when the whole world will be filled with knowledge of G-dliness. Indeed, the very question this raises, why our mitzvos are necessary to bring Moshiach, is addressed in the structure of VaYikra.

There is a well-known principle that the “end is linked to the beginning, and the beginning is attached to the end.” The portion of *B’Chukosai* is the last portion of VaYikra, or *Leviticus* as it’s called in English. Thus, we should find a special connection between the end and the beginning both of the portion and of the book of VaYikra as a whole. As with every aspect of Torah, this connection reveals an

important lesson in our Divine service of preparing the world for Moshiach.

There is an obvious connection between the beginning of VaYikra as a whole and its conclusion in the portion of *B’Chukosai*. Both speak of sacrifices. Of course, there’s an immediate, superficial connection, since with the coming of Moshiach and the rebuilding of the Temple, we will again be able to offer sacrifices. However, there is a deeper lesson, one that tells us how to get there.

VaYikra begins with the instruction, “A person, when he will bring from you a sacrifice to G-d.” The book concludes with the laws of two sacrifices, the first-born animal and tithing of animals.

These two offerings, discussed last, illustrate general concepts indicated at the beginning of VaYikra. It is well-known that sacrifices epitomize and symbolize the nature of man’s Divine service. There are two types of Divine service, illustrated by these two offerings. One is a response to an arousal from Above. Recognition of holiness compels us to act according to the Divine Will. This is the service of the first-born, automatically sanctified from the

moment of birth. Its holiness comes with it, so to speak, given from Above. No human action makes it holy.

The other type of service is an arousal from below. Man takes the initiative to fulfill G-d’s commands, bringing G-dliness into the world. This is the service of tithing animals. The dedication, and thus holiness, of the tenth animal depends completely on human action.

The very beginning of VaYikra alludes to these two types of service. VaYikra begins, “Adam, when he will sacrifice from you.” In Jewish mysticism, the form of man reflects the structure of the spiritual worlds. “Adam” thus refers not just to a person, but to the Supernal Man or *Adam HaElyon*. This human-structured spirituality is the first and highest manifestation of G-dliness, forming and influencing

every aspect of creation.

Thus, “Adam, when he will sacrifice from you,” indicates that *Adam HaElyon*, the highest level of G-dliness within creation, arouses a person to sacrifice, or draw closer, to G-d. This parallels the sacrifice of the first-born animal: the holiness is already there, forcing us to recognize its presence. That recognition arouses a desire to be elevated, to become closer to G-dliness.

Next the Torah states, “From the animal you will bring your sacrifices.” This corresponds to tithing animals. Here, man’s actions – his counting – determines the holiness of the animal. He must sacrifice – labor and struggle – to bring his inner animal, the animal nature, closer to G-dliness. It requires effort and exertion to refine and sensitize our desires and inclinations, thus elevating ourselves.

At a deeper level, the sacrifice of the first-born refers to man’s first spiritual attribute. This attribute, *Chochma* or Wisdom, differs from all others. All other spiritual attributes develop within man; as such, one must work to reveal them. *Chochma*, coming from above, is an inheritance to every Jew. The first spiritual attribute does not depend on our actions, but expresses the essence of the soul, its innate connection with G-dliness. Therefore, it is the source of a Jew’s self-sacrifice, his willingness to dedicate his entire being to sanctifying G-d’s Name and making the world a dwelling place for G-dliness.

Since self-sacrifice is innate, a Jew’s essence, his holiness is manifest throughout history. Similarly, the first born remains sanctified even now.

The sacrifice of the tenth, on the other hand, refers to the other spiritual attributes. These ten soul-powers depend on man’s activity. They require effort to be fully developed and expressed. Thus, changing conditions affect our ability to express or develop them completely. When the Temple stood, and G-dliness was openly revealed, the ten soul-powers could be fully activated. The offering of the tenth animal represents complete dedication of the ten soul-powers. Now, in the time of exile, when G-dliness is concealed, the ten soul-powers are likewise limited in their expression. Hence, the tenth animal cannot be made holy. We will not have that ability again until the times of Moshiach.

This helps us understand the connection between the beginning of the Torah portion and the end. From the beginning of VaYikra we learn that the sacrifice of the first born animal, which is always holy and always in force, indicates an arousal from Above. The presence of holiness – such as the birth of a first-born animal – forces us to recognize the presence of

holiness and thus be elevated. Both our awareness and our daily activities become more spiritually oriented, more attuned to the G-dliness innate to the world. This is an obvious prelude to the times of Moshiach, when such awareness will be fully manifest.

The second type of spiritual service, that of tithing the animals, represents man’s own efforts to elevate himself, an arousal from below. In this way we take the initiative to refine our natures, to transform the animal within us into a vehicle for holiness. Through our mitzvos, we make the world a dwelling place for G-d.

The beginning of the Torah portion reflects this dichotomy. It begins as follows: “If in My statutes you will walk, and My commandments you will keep.” Statutes (*Chukim*) are Divinely ordained mitzvos, without an apparent reason. Walking indicates continual motion – an unlimited movement. Such a Divine service has infinite potential. Being motivated to fulfill the Torah’s commands from Above arouses a desire to be elevated. Nevertheless, this “walking,” this unlimited arousal, is missing something.

Whatever elevation occurs as a result has no permanence. Even the greatest self-sacrifice, aroused from Above, does not permanently transform the individual. For the rest of the soul-powers to be affected, the person must act. The Divine soul comes into the body so that man here below, with his animal soul, becomes a vehicle for G-dliness. Thus, there must be as well an arousal from below, the service of “My commandments you will keep.” By using one’s own soul-powers – the tenth, the animal, to perform the mitzvos, one becomes a vessel for keeping and maintaining the unlimited revelation of G-dliness. This revelation until now has been apparent only occasionally and temporarily. Yet the ideal is for this arousal from Above – the first-born, *Chochma*, “If in My statutes you will walk” – to be visible openly to one and all.

That state arrives with Moshiach, brought on by the arousal from below – the tithing of animals, the ten soul-powers, “and My commandments you will keep.” It is our actions, performing the mitzvos in response to a recognition of G-dliness, that transforms the world, gives G-dliness itself a permanent home here in the physical realm.

This explains why the coming of Moshiach depends on each and every one of us, our personal activity and Divine service.

(Based on Likkutei Sichos 17:332-339)

SPREADING THE WELLSPRINGS IN MIRON

By Shneur Zalman Berger

An overview of Chabad's work on Lag B'Omer in Miron, work that began 56 years ago and received many horaos from the Rebbe.

The tens of thousands of people who make the pilgrimage to Miron on Lag B'Omer know that the Lubavitchers are there in force. Even before all the organizations and stands that are there now, Chabad Chassidim saw the potential in this holy place and in this auspicious occasion.

Chabad's outreach in Miron began back in 1952. It was one of the first activities to spread the wellsprings organized by Tzach in Eretz Yisroel. It was mostly about promoting the study of p'nimius ha'Torah, which was revealed by Rashbi, but they also took advantage of the opportunity and reached out to all types of Jews who visited Miron.

Dozens of married men and T'mimim went to Miron every year in order to be mekarev Jews. The Rebbe closely followed the preparations made for this trip and urged them to spread the wellsprings of Judaism in general

and Chassidus in particular. The Rebbe regularly asked for reports of the work they did there.

In 1957, the Rebbe paid for some of the expenses, as he wrote to Tzach in Yerushalayim:

From this is also understood the reply to your question regarding Lag B'Omer, that it is obvious that those who are capable have to arrange transportation to Miron, and bli neider I will participate to a certain extent in the expenses that it entails. (*Igros Kodesh*, vol. 13, p. 50)

THE BEGINNING

R' Leib Zalmanov, member of the hanhala of Tzach in those days, tells us about outreach in 1952:

"In those days, Tzach began developing various activities to spread the wellsprings, as the Rebbe instructed us. We decided to travel to Miron on Lag B'Omer and to do whatever we could to spread

the wellsprings.

"R' Yisroel Leibov a"h and R' Leib Cohen a"h, both of the hanhala of Tzach, worked to arrange the special trip. A number of cars went from Kfar Chabad in a convoy to Miron, where they set up a loudspeaker on the roof of the Tziyun. Their speeches were heard by the crowd who had gathered there. Likewise, Chabad niggunim were played, contributing to the joyous atmosphere.

"A 14-year-old Yemenite bachur made quite an impression when he reviewed a maamer Chassidus clearly and articulately. On the way to Miron and back, we stopped in several places and there too, people spoke and inspired the crowd to mitzva observance."

That year, a booklet printed just for the outreach in Miron was distributed. It had a diary entry from the Rebbe Rayatz and a letter from the Rebbe MH"M. The hanhala of Tzach reported afterwards to the Rebbe about their work and received a response, which included instructions for the future:

I was very happy about what you wrote regarding your good work on Lag B'Omer. A pity – as you wrote – that on your return

trip, there was no opportunity to tarry in the places that you passed through. It is a well known custom of the Chassidim in the time of the Mitteler Rebbe, as related by the Rebbe, my father-in-law, that he instructed them to stop in all the places they passed through on the way to their homes from Lubavitch and to review Chassidus. (*Igros Kodesh* vol. 6, p. 132).

CONVOY OF BUSES AND CARS

The following year, the Rebbe's instruction was carried out. Lag B'Omer fell out on Motzaei Shabbos and the large convoy spent Shabbos in Tzfas, and then proceeded from there to Miron. On the way back from Miron, they stopped in Teveria, where the travelers spent a long time carrying out outreach activities. This outreach was described in *Bita'on Chabad* (Elul 5713):

"This is the second year that Anash and T'mimim have gone to Miron in large numbers

and made their way there in a convoy of buses and cars which bore signs: 'Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim Lubavitch Lud,' 'Tzeirei Agudas Chabad in Eretz Yisroel,' 'Tzeirei Chabad Yerushalayim,' etc.

"That year Lag B'Omer fell out on Motzaei Shabbos and many of Anash went to Tzfas Erev Shabbos. This Shabbos was used to the fullest by Anash for Chassidishe farbrengens, where they reviewed Chassidus in several shuls in the city. Before Kabbalas Shabbos, R' Nochum Shmaryahu Sossonkin reviewed a maamer in the Chabad shul, which was packed, and the next day, talmidim of the yeshiva reviewed maamarim in a number of shuls. In the morning, inspirational words were said by the older students of our yeshiva.

"The city of Tzfas was greatly impacted by the presence of the Chabad Chassidim who came to spend Shabbos in their city. On Motzaei Shabbos, after Maariv, they left Tzfas for Miron. Upon their arrival there, they visited the holy places and then put a loudspeaker on the roof of the *Tziyun* (gravesite) and one of the T'mimim, R' Yitzchok Gansburg, spoke about spreading the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov. After his passionate speech, Chabad niggunim

were sung by a group of singers of Anash.

"Afterwards, one of the talmidim of Tomchei T'mimim Lud reviewed a maamer.

"After Shacharis, the broadcasts from the loudspeaker began again. R' Zushe Wilyamowsky spoke to the large crowd that had gathered there and listened to what he said about strengthening Torah and Judaism in our times. When he finished, Avrohom Lisson, addressed the crowd.

"In the afternoon the convoy went to Tzfas and Teveria. Upon their arrival in Teveria, they visited the holy sites. Then they convened in the center of the city, where a large crowd gathered, and after a brief speech they all danced for a long time.

"The convoy left Teveria in the late evening on its way back to Tel Aviv. We received positive feedback from various groups."

In reaction to a report of activities that year, the Rebbe wrote to the hanhala of Tzach:

It is surprising that on Lag B'Omer in Miron they bring many children for their first haircut and you do not mention anything about using this opportunity to have an influence on chinuch by giving out booklets or Alef-Beis with your address on the other side, and some

The work of Tzach of Tzfas in Miron



statements that pertain to the parents too. (*Igros Kodesh* vol. 7, p. 274).

This instruction was followed the next year. The letters of the Alef-Beis were printed on attractive charts. They were given to parents along with candies and honey to smear on the letters, as is customary when children are first learning the letters. The amazement of the visitors to Miron is described in *Bita'on Chabad* (Tamuz 5714):

“A nice new thing which Tzach

impressive when the children rode on their father’s shoulders to the traditional dances that take place there, as they waved the Alef-Beis charts.”

HAIRCUT IN MIRON

It is a Jewish custom to give a three-year-old boy his first haircut in Miron. The Rebbe wrote about this in Iyar 5714 (and on other occasions):

As to your informing me that on 3 Iyar your son Yitzchok will turn three, may it be Hashem’s

and all, we rely on the Jewish custom to give children haircuts in Miron on Lag B’Omer, as is brought in a number of places.

Obviously, not all who are having their hair cut were born on this precise day, yet they associate this inyan with an auspicious day. This can be explained based on what is brought in the writings of the Arizal and the *Pri Eitz Chaim*, etc., about the connection of cutting the hair with the days of S’fira, from which we see that obviously, there is a hiddur of a haircut on Lag B’Omer ... Therefore, it seems to me that the haircut should be done on Lag B’Omer and may it be in a good and successful time. (*Igros Kodesh* vol. 9, p. 58)

A TIME TO DO FOR HASHEM

Even the bachurim learning in yeshivos went up to Miron on Lag B’Omer and participated in the activities there. The administrations of the yeshivos were not quick to give their approval. Should they allow the T’mimim to join the trip to Miron? It was also customary to have long farbrengens in yeshiva on Lag B’Omer.

In a letter from the year 1956 to R’ Shlomo Chaim Kesselman, mashpia in Tomchei T’mimim in Lud, the Rebbe wrote:

Regarding the question about traveling to Miron on Lag B’Omer, since this was the practice in previous years, it should not be cancelled ... On the other hand, it is not necessary that the entire yeshiva go, and all the teachers and roshei yeshiva, etc. It is surprising that you write that they will miss out on an entire week of learning for in such matters it’s not the quantity that is primary but the quality. (*Igros Kodesh*, vol. 11, p. 61)



Mobile Mitzva Tank in Miron

did this year was to print charts with the Alef-Beis as a gift for the little children who are brought for their first haircut at Miron at the gravesite of Rashbi. Each child who comes for a haircut is given an Alef-Beis chart and a bag of candy.

“This project made an enormous impression on the crowd of celebrants in general and on the parents of the children in particular, who appreciatively noted the nice custom that Tzach sought to uphold. It was enormously

will that you and your wife raise him to Torah, chuppa, and good deeds in good health and peace of spirit and body ...

P.S. Regarding what you wrote about doing the haircut, I have already written my opinion about this – that even though according to Toras HaNigleh [halacha] it is permissible [to delay giving a child his first haircut after his third birthday if it falls out during s’fira] and more so based on what is explained in *Shaarei T’shuva* to *Orach Chaim*, siman 531, still

A year later, R' Shmuel Elozor Halperin, menachel ruchni of Yeshivas Toras Emes in Yerushalayim (today, the rav of the Beis Yisroel neighborhood and director of the society of descendents of the Alter Rebbe) encouraged his students to go to Miron. He himself went with a group of students and he wrote about this to the Rebbe. The Rebbe responded:

Obviously they did the right thing in allowing the talmidim to travel to Miron on the special day of Lag B'Omer, for a number of reasons, and it is also for such situations that it says, "It is the time to do for Hashem, etc." (*Igros Kodesh*, vol. 15, p. 172)

That year, Lag B'Omer fell out on a Sunday and a few groups of T'mimim left for Miron before Shabbos. A group headed by R' Halperin, spent Shabbos in Rosh Pina, where they farbrenged with the locals at night and on Shabbos too. Another group spent Shabbos in Tzfas.

On Motzaei Shabbos, when the T'mimim went to Miron from Rosh Pina, they were happy to meet R' Nachum Shmaryahu Sossonkin, one of the distinguished rabbanim and mashpiim in Yerushalayim. He had arrived in Miron Erev Shabbos because he knew that groups of T'mimim were spending Shabbos in Miron, but to his dismay, he didn't see any Lubavitchers there. He didn't know that they were spending Shabbos in nearby yishuvim in order to spread the wellsprings on their way to Miron.

R' Shmuel Elozor Halperin related:

"When we came from Rosh Pina we met R' Sossonkin, who excitedly told us how wonderful Shabbos was. 'On Friday, when I arrived in Miron, I expected to meet our fellow Lubavitchers who came to Miron for Shabbos, for

who is the mechutan of Rashbi if not Chabad? To my dismay, I saw groups from various circles who came from all over the country, but no Lubavitchers. I was sad about this for I knew that I would have to remain in Miron for Shabbos as it was too late to return to Yerushalayim.

"Having no choice, I decided to join the t'fillos and meals of the Stoliner Chassidim. When I sat down next to them to daven with them, they all got up and moved away. When the davening was over

me sit with them and sat me in an honored place.

"After they served the food, they began to sing Shabbos z'miros. When the Chassidim sang '*Mei'ein Olam HaBa*' with great fervor, I whispered to the Chassid next to me that just as we are singing this song here below, the angels up Above are singing '*Mei'ein Olam HaZeh*.' He was surprised by this and asked me to explain my surprising statement. I did not want to respond since I had said that I would not talk.



Mobile Mitzva Tank in Miron

and they sat down to the meal, I sat at their table and once again, they got up and moved.

"Then I realized that they knew me from Yerushalayim as a Lubavitcher mashpia and they were afraid that I would talk Chassidus Chabad to them and they would be influenced by this. I went over to them and said, 'I understand how you feel and so I decided that I won't say a word this Shabbos. I only want to hear what you have to say.' When they heard this, they let

"He told his friends about what I said and they all decided that I had to explain it, but I insisted that I had resolved only to listen. After a lot of pressure from them, I agreed to explain and what I said was:

"Every morning, we say in *Boruch Sh'Amar*, 'Merciful Father ... praised and glorified.' 'Praised' – these are the praises of the angels, but since they are inherently good and don't do spiritual avoda, Hashem is only

***“My dear Shmuel,
you should know
that if I had
insisted on
speaking
Chassidus from the
outset, they would
have chased me
away. Sometimes
you have to know
when to be quiet
and then you can
farbreng all
night.”***

praised. In order for Hashem to be glorified, the prayers of the Jewish people are needed, for they are constantly involved in spiritual avoda and only they can praise Hashem in a manner that He will be glorified. That is why I said that the angels are singing ‘Mei’ein Olam HaZeh,’ because they envy us for our avoda p’nimis.

“After the Chassidim got a taste of Chassidus, they wanted to know more and more. I continued to farbreng all night.

“My dear Shmuel, you should know that if I had insisted on speaking Chassidus from the outset, they would have chased me away. Sometimes you have to know when to be quiet and then you can farbreng all night.”

MIVTZA T’FILLIN 1957

The numerous T’mimim who went to Miron, as the Rebbe wanted, came up with something

new. Most of the people who went to Miron in those days were traditional Jews or nonobservant and so they decided to put t’fillin on with them.

Pairs of T’mimim circulated among the crowd with t’fillin and put t’fillin on with more than 1000 people. It was an amazing sight to see lots of men standing in line, waiting to put on t’fillin. Many of them promised to put t’fillin on every day, and this was ten years before Mivtza T’fillin was announced.

R’ Yosef Hartman, a talmid in Yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim Lud at the time, tells about their trip:

“By way of preparing us for the trip to Miron, R’ Shlomo Chaim Kesselman would farbreng with us the night of Lag B’Omer and explain that before going to holy sites we had to go to the mikva, make good resolutions, etc. In the morning we left on buses that looked like trucks and had long benches inside. During the long trip some T’mimim reviewed Chassidus for the rest of the passengers and the rest of the time we sang Chassidishe niggunim. The T’mimim arrived in Miron in the afternoon.

“In 1960 I went with the ‘lead battalion,’ a group of T’mimim and Anash who left in the evening, Erev Lag B’Omer, in order to start working in Miron at night. We left in R’ Yisroel Kook’s van. He was the yeshiva’s driver. R’ Berel Karasik joined us. He was in charge of the sound system that we brought to Miron for those who would be speaking. First we traveled to Petach Tikva where we picked up Rabbi Dovid Chanzin a”h and then we went on to Miron.

“When we got there, we arranged stands and loudspeakers. When it was time for Shacharis we immediately began putting t’fillin on with people. As the Rebbe

instructed, we distributed Alef-Beis charts with honey and candies. During the course of the day, speakers addressed the crowd. The outreach was multiplied ten times over when our friends from Lud joined us.”

In the 70’s a sort of Lag B’Omer parade began to be organized in Miron (back then, parades took place only near 770). The parades were different than they are today. Groups of Lubavitchers from Tzfas stood at the bottom of the mountain and distributed signs that had the words: Mezuza, T’fillin, Tz’daka, etc., written on them, to people going up. The celebrants carried the signs up and near the Tziyun were Lubavitchers who took the signs from them. The signs were returned to the Lubavitchers at the bottom and the process was repeated.

DROPPING ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM A PLANE?

Rabbi Yisroel Leibov, director of Tzach, suggested that for Lag B’Omer 1967 they throw announcements from a plane or from a car. He also suggested that the announcements have advertising which would cover their expenses, but the Rebbe said no:

In response to your letters: A plane on Lag B’Omer in Miron – out of the question. So too with throwing announcements, even from cars. And don’t include advertising in the announcements (and the like) for this day.

This instruction was given specifically for this day, Lag B’Omer, but on other occasions, the Rebbe approved of throwing announcements from a plane, such as on Purim.



R' Zushe Wilyamowsky rejoicing in Miron



Giving a 3 year old a haircut in Miron

LIVE BROADCAST IN MIRON

In 1976 people in Miron were surprised to hear the Rebbe's voice, live from the parade. This was

apparently the Rebbe's initiative.

Usually, the Rebbe went out to the parade only when Lag B'Omer fell out on a Sunday, when there was a large crowd of participants.

That year, Lag B'Omer was on a Tuesday. The Rebbe did not say he would participate but some guessed that he would, especially when the word leaked out that the Rebbe had



Marking the Rebbe's 75th birthday in Miron

asked that a telephone hookup to Miron be arranged.

The following is an excerpt from a diary of a Tamim that was written that year:

“All week we were busy with the parade, and baruch Hashem, it looks like it will be very successful. We don’t know for sure but the Rebbe will probably address the children, especially when we found out that he asked for a hookup in Miron near the Tziyun of Rashbi.”

The Rebbe did indeed attend the parade and his speech was broadcast live to the Tziyun of Rashbi in Miron. Hundreds of

Writing to the Rebbe in Miron

thousands of people heard the Rebbe.

In the ensuing years, the tradition continued and those who went to Miron were able to hear the Rebbe at the parade. Since there is no telephone at the Tziyun, the broadcast went through the home of Rabbi Stern, the rav of Miron. His telephone was connected to the amplifier near the Tziyun so the crowd could hear it.



THE SUEZ CAMPAIGN ON LAG B’OMER

In the period preceding the Yom Kippur War, the Rebbe undertook a number of spiritual activities that were meant to be the “cure before the blow.” One of the unusual activities that was done with IDF soldiers took place on the Lag B’Omer that preceded the war.

The Rebbe wrote a “general letter” for Lag B’Omer that was highly unusual. On Erev Lag B’Omer, an urgent order came from the Rebbe: visit the Israeli soldiers on the borders “the length of the Suez Canal and the length of the Jordan,” and give them the “general letter.”

Many Chassidim rushed to fulfill this instruction. Anash went from Tzfas to bases in the north; from Yerushalayim to bases in the Jordan Valley; from Kfar Chabad and Nachalat Har Chabad to the Egyptian border.

The mashpia, R’ Avrohom Meizlich of Kfar Chabad went to the Egyptian border and he reported:

“Thousands of copies of the Rebbe’s letter were printed. Women from the Kfar quickly baked cakes for the soldiers and a large quantity of mashke was bought for this mitvza. The cake and mashke were loaded into cars and right after

the bonfire was lit in Kfar Chabad, we left for Nachalat Har Chabad, where we picked up more people and continued towards the Suez Canal.

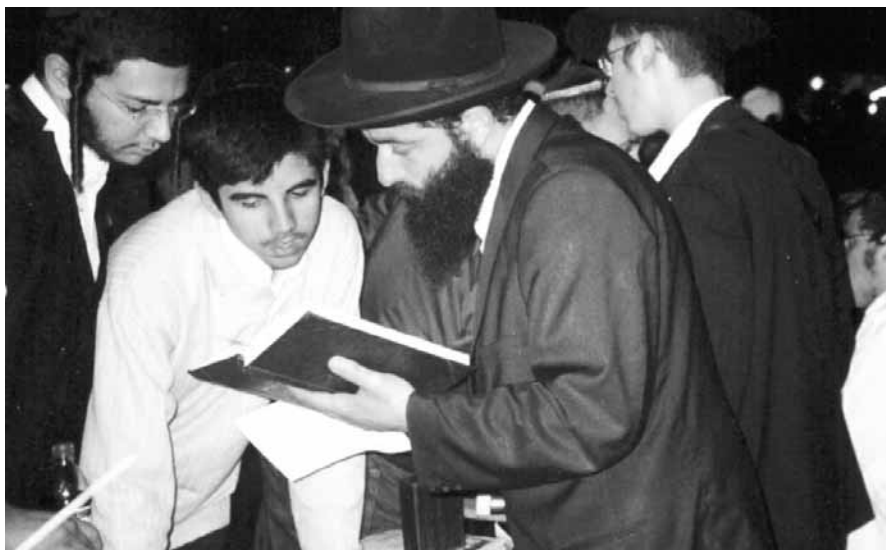
“It was early in the morning when we arrived there. We went to the command center of the Canal and met with the deputy commander, an officer with the rank of Colonel. We told him that we had come on the Rebbe’s order to visit the soldiers stationed the length of the Canal.

“He looked none too happy and said he would gladly let us do so but the night before an Egyptian cell had infiltrated a stronghold on the banks of the Canal. The cell had managed to take down the flags at the entrance to the camp and it was only by a miracle that our soldiers had managed to chase them off. Because of this incident, they were in a high state of alert and he could not allow us into the area. He warned us that it was very dangerous.

“We tried to convince him and explained that we weren’t

out for adventure and that we all had large families and our children waited at home for us, but since this was the Rebbe’s order, we had to

“Don’t tell anyone that you were there. I see that the commander in charge of the area is the Lubavitcher Rebbe and not me...’ he said with a smile.”



Talmidim of the yeshiva in Tzfas helping people write to the Rebbe

THE TZFASIM AND THE MOBILE TANKS

1977 is when the talmidim of the newly founded yeshiva in Tzfas began to do outreach in Miron. As they lived in nearby Tzfas, they could get to Miron early and begin well in advance. They put t'fillin on with people, gave out reading material, and sold works of Chassidus and *Talks and Tales* for children at subsidized prices. That year, the Chabad Mobile Tanks also

carry it out.

"He thought for a moment and then put his hand on his stripes and said, 'These stripes have, on more than one occasion, issued orders to go to battle, and they did not all return alive. But to send civilians to the Canal? If something happened, I would not be able to sleep at night.'

"Each of us tried to convince him of the importance of our visit to the soldiers but he remained firm. We left his office and decided that we had to do what the Rebbe wanted, no matter what. We went to the quartermasters and told them that we were going to the Canal. Without asking us to explain, they gave us helmets and body armor. When we left the quartermaster we saw a convoy of vehicles and I told my friends that it might be heading towards the Canal. In fact, it was.

"We distributed the Rebbe's letter at strongholds and positions the length of the Canal, as well as cake and mashke. We went from one position to the next and the soldiers were surprised and happy to see that Chabad Chassidim had come to visit, even as they were on high alert.

"At one outpost, one of the soldiers said that he knew we would come. 'On *Kol Yisroel* they reported that Chabad Chassidim were distributing letters of the Rebbe to IDF soldiers.' We gave him a letter and when he began to read it he was disappointed. 'It says here, "To B'nei and B'nos Yisroel," and not to the soldiers!' We told him, 'The soldiers are the Rebbe's children.'

"After we finished our work at the last outpost,

we began our return trip in the open army vehicle. A strong wind began to blow which covered us with sand. The trip was slow and we only arrived back at headquarters in the evening.

"After a quick shower and Mincha, we were called to the deputy commander. 'I received reports that you visited the outposts near the Canal even though I forbade you from doing this. In any case, kol ha'kavod to you. You insisted on carrying out a positive activity.' Since he was in a good mood, he moved aside a green curtain that covered the wall behind him. On the wall was a map of the Suez Canal and it was marked with all the IDF positions.

"He explained a little about what was going on and when he showed us the last outpost that was the furthest from headquarters, we told him that it was 'Motzav Tempo.' He was stunned. 'How did you know the name of this secret outpost?' We told him that we were there.

"Don't tell anyone that you were there. I see that the commander in charge of the area is the Lubavitcher Rebbe and not me...' he said with a smile.

"We left for the long trip back home. On the way, we met a bus driver and we suggested that he make a l'chaim. He said l'chaim and asked, 'Why aren't you in Miron?' We told him about our mission to the soldiers. 'Ah, I heard about that on *Kol Yisroel*. They said that there were hundreds of thousands of people in Miron, but I am sure Rashbi was with you.'"

began working in Miron. The tanks were stationed on the incline leading up the mountain and attracted many people.

Since then, the talmidim of the yeshiva in Tzfas, along with the Chabad Mobile Mitzva Tanks do amazing work on Lag B'Omer in Miron. Over the years, their work has greatly expanded. In recent years, they have put up huge video screens that show the Rebbe nonstop for 48 hours. There are *Igros Kodesh* stands where hundreds of people write to the Rebbe and ask for his brachos as the T'mimim help them out.

In 5762, for the first time, an enormous picture of the Rebbe was hung up so that everybody who visits Miron sees it clearly. A picture is worth a thousand words, so they say, and when it's a picture of the Rebbe, who can measure its impact? Menachem Mendel Ezagui, one of the heads of Igud Talmidei HaYeshivos, said this about it:

"At first it looked as though everything was going smoothly. We had been given an informal okay by the heads of the police to set up a stand and to put up a huge picture of the Rebbe, but three days before Lag B'Omer difficulties arose. Two days before Lag B'Omer we still did not have the permits. We wrote to the Rebbe and in the answer we opened to, the Rebbe promised that things would work out and at the last minute it would change for the good.

"We decided to go l'chat'chilla



Selling books in Miron



Rabbi Dovid Nachshon, director of Chabad Mobile Mitzva Tanks, and his staff in Miron

aribber. A few bachurim went to Miron with a cherry picker and under the watchful eyes of the police the huge sign was hung and nobody said a word."

Another miracle occurred with the *Igros Kodesh* and t'fillin stand. Boruch Sholom Gruzman tells us about it:

"During the Pesach break, we arranged with someone in Miron to rent a private, five meter area, for a nice fee, so we could set up our stand there. At the same time, we worked on raising the money, but a day before Lag B'Omer we still

didn't have the money we needed.

"When the bachurim went to the place Erev Lag B'Omer in order to set up the stand, the police asked them to leave, saying that all the permitted stands were concentrated in one area. Having no choice, we folded the equipment we had already opened and went to the main area where, to our amazement, we got a central location, fifteen meters with no charge!"

During Lag B'Omer, the bachurim worked intensively. Some of them stood near the *Igros Kodesh* stand. Others distributed material about Moshiach and Geula, and some went from one parade to another and helped out. A t'fillin stand opened the morning of Lag B'Omer and the T'mimim put t'fillin on hundreds of people. The bachurim's work was apparent to the thousands of celebrants. You could not go to Miron and miss them.

Hundreds of people went over to the *Igros Kodesh* stand and after a brief explanation about writing to the Rebbe, people wrote their requests. There were many amazing stories.

Since 1980, when the Rebbe said to have Lag B'Omer parades all over the country, many Lubavitchers devote their time on Lag B'Omer and the days preceding it to organizing a parade. The go-getters among them make time to go the Tziyun as well as to help out with a parade in honor of the Yom Hilula of the G-dly Tanna, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.

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THIS IS ONLY A TEST...

By Rabbi Zalman Hertzel

Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry

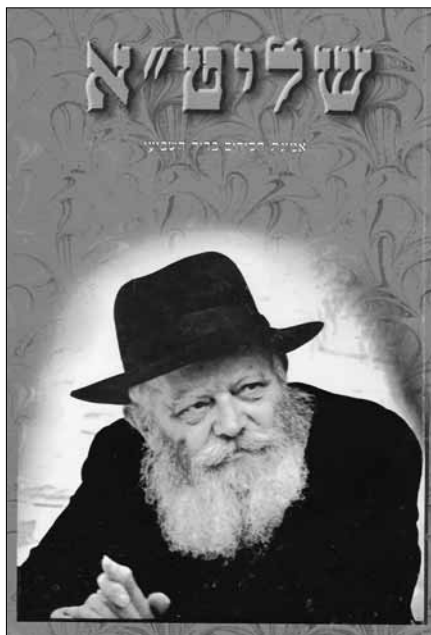
Beis Moshiach Magazine is pleased to present the next installment from the seifer Shlita by Rabbi Zalman Hertzel, discussing the faith of Lubavitcher chassidim in the seventh generation.

SICHOS IN “OPPOSING” STYLES

However, the above raises a “tremendous question”:

The Rebbe spoke on numerous occasions about the histalkus of the previous Rebbe and his yahrtzait on Yud Shvat. The Rebbe himself printed s’farim and pamphlets, headed with the titles “of righteous and holy memory,” “his soul rests in the hidden treasures of Heaven,” and “may his merit protect us,” in reference to the previous Rebbe. In general, we see a clear and explicit approach stemming from the Rebbe’s sichos that the previous Rebbe had undergone a departure of his soul from his body. Therefore, how does all this fit in with what is written above at great length? How can we simply close our eyes and ignore all the holy sichos that establish the fact that there was a histalkus? Can we disregard the Rebbe’s customary mode of conduct of the day of the previous Rebbe’s yahrtzait, which he

brought chassidim to follow as well? Isn’t all this included in the concept of “since it came out from the mouth of Rabbi Kahana” (and “the actions of the son of Amram” and “the words of the son of Amram,” as mentioned in the previous



chapter)?

In my humble opinion, it is most difficult for people of our stature to give a clear and sharp answer that will reconcile this apparent “contradiction.”

As a means of illustrating how far this contradiction can “reach,” we will bring here two seemingly contrasting examples of what the Rebbe said in reference to the previous Rebbe.

Regarding the saying of Kaddish, the Rebbe said (Hisvaaduyos 5710, pg. 16):

We still need an explanation and clarification of the fact that according to Torah, we have to say Kaddish now, etc.

This means that in practical terms, despite the fact that it is not understood, we have to say Kaddish.

Yet, with regard to inheritance, the Rebbe said (sicha, the 15th of Tammuz 5745):

No rav and no lawyer – no one can alter the simple and clear fact that there simply cannot be a concept of inheritance whatsoever *ch”v ch”v*, since he is still living, and there is no relevance to speaking about inheritance when he is alive. (NOTE: See also at length on this subject in Beis Moshiach, Issue #285.)

What is the difference between the two? If we say Kaddish, there is a concept of inheritance, and if inheritance is irrelevant, because the Rebbe is actually alive, then why do we say Kaddish?

And who among us knows the secret of G-d? (NOTE: We see here again a case of the Rebbe’s conduct, “Rebbe’she zachn,” i.e., that which pertains only to him, similar to his rejection of the words “from the source of mercy” in the pidyon nefesh, even though he used them himself, as mentioned in the previous chapter.)

Certain chassidim learn from this that the Rebbe spoke then in his prophetic vision about our situation today, a situation of hiding and concealment in which the leader of the generation, who has yet to complete his mission, hides and conceals himself, and then literally returns immediately to complete and fulfill the indwelling of the Sh'china in this physical world with the True and Complete Redemption. This interim situation is most definitely a trial.

BOTH ARE TRUE!

Nevertheless, it remains clear without the slightest doubt that both cases are true – since it came out from the mouth of he who is true and whose teachings are true!

We derive from this that it stands to reason that there can be a situation classified as histalkus, and therefore, we have to say Kaddish, etc. Nevertheless, at the very same time, it would be proper to use the title “Shlita” regarding that person. Furthermore, as we have seen explicitly in sichos, the Rebbe not only justifies this approach or accepts it as a fait accompli stemming from a chassidic feeling, **he encourages this conduct with all his strength and fortitude!**

Getting to the heart of the matter, there are many chassidim who detect a clear hint – even more than a hint – in the Rebbe’s sichos from the period immediately after the previous Rebbe’s passing in connection with our present-day situation. There are those who prove from the Rebbe’s words that this is all merely a test. As the Rebbe said in a sicha from Shabbos Parshas Truma 5710 (Hisvaaduyos 5710, *ibid.*):

The event that occurred, etc., is merely before our flesh eyes and is nothing more than a test (one of the trials of the birth pangs of Moshiach that must take place prior to the arrival of the Righteous Redeemer), the entire concept of which is to hide and conceal the truth.

This doesn’t seem so clear: Why does the Rebbe categorize the passing of the previous Rebbe as a trial? What trial? When a tzaddik completes his avoda, his time comes to rise to the heavens. On the contrary, this is a tremendous spiritual elevation for him and for his students, etc. At the time of the passing of a tzaddik, another

tzaddik reveals himself with a new task for a new generation, etc., as the pasuk states, “The sun rises and the sun sets.”

Why do we define such a situation as a test, expressing that the matter is not real and is apparent only to our physical eyes, etc. Furthermore, the reality then was that the previous Rebbe passed away and there came the generation of the Rebbe shlita, the seventh generation. What trial do we see here?

Certain chassidim learn from this (and from other sources) that the Rebbe spoke then in his prophetic vision about our situation today, a situation of hiding and concealment in which the leader of the generation, who has yet to complete his mission (that he proclaimed upon accepting the leadership), hides and conceals himself, and then literally returns immediately to complete and fulfill the indwelling of the Sh'china in this physical world with the True and Complete Redemption. This interim situation is most definitely a trial.

(By the way, this sicha was one of the sichos that constituted a source for the halachic ruling issued by the rabbinical authorities who gathered in Beis Chayeinu – 770 for the holiday of Shavuot 5755 that all references and terms of histalkus should be omitted from the title page of *Likkutei Sichos*.)

Even if we don’t accept this explanation, it is clear that writing the title “Shlita” is something extremely positive from the Rebbe’s point of view. Writing “Shlita” is not the figment of the imagination of some lunatic *r”l*; it is an integral part of the Torah of Truth of Moshe Rabbeinu, and anyone who *ch”v* fights against it is fighting directly against the path that the Rebbe outlined for us.

THE SIMPLE MATTER AND THE INNOVATIVE MATTER

For the purpose of greater clarity and illustration, we ask the question: What is the simple matter and what is the innovation?

When we write the term “of righteous memory” about a tzaddik who has passed away, is there any innovation here? No, it is a longstanding, well-known, and accepted custom.

When we write the term “Shlita” about someone who has passed away, is this an innovation? Absolutely – no doubt about it!

Now, when we see that the Rebbe does both, what is the unique matter that should naturally attract our attention? Here too, the answer is clear.

When we see how the Rebbe constantly engages in “battle” against accepting the concept of histalkus, when we see how the Rebbe stubbornly declares “Shlita,” “zahl gezunt zain,” “that’s the truth” and that we should stop being

embarrassed about it, similar to that chassid who put aside his embarrassment and said the truth, what conclusions are we supposed to draw from the Rebbe’s words?

However you interpret the concept of histalkus, as far as you are concerned, the Rebbe must be “Shlita,” even if we were to say that there was a histalkus in its simplest sense.

This matter also explains the fact that the Rebbe never encouraged the chassidim to write titles such as “of righteous and holy memory,” “his soul rests in the hidden treasures of Heaven,” and “may his merit protect us”! The Rebbe merely instructed to use them in the preface to his holy s’farim (even though the Rebbe himself (in his correspondence and his sichos) did not write such titles all the time).

(NOTE: We have found many such instances, e.g., in reference to his parents in the text on their tombstones and the preface to his father’s s’farim, where the Rebbe did not write “of righteous and holy

memory,” “may his merit protect us,” and the like. Similarly, he did not do so when he mentioned them at a farbrengen, despite what is brought in Shulchan Aruch under such circumstances! No need to elaborate.)

It is thereby understood that anyone who wages war against this mode of conduct, even for reasons of “holiness,” is literally warring against the Rebbe’s approach. Furthermore, in a manner of “greater is the attribute of good,” anyone who encourages this approach has adopted the method by which the Rebbe has guided us, and walks in the path that Melech HaMoshiach has laid for us.

However, everything that has been said so far is in reference to the leader of the sixth generation. But in the case of the seventh generation, not only is this mode of conduct, as described above, legitimate and positive, it is simply not appropriate to act in any other fashion, as we will bring in the next and final chapter.

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RABBI HASKELEVICH PUBLICIZING THE GEULA

By Avrohom Ber

Russian born Rabbi Berel Haskelevich left Mother Russia at the age of 18 but wanted to return there in order to spread Judaism and Chassidus. When the Iron Curtain lifted, he returned and traveled from city to city and did just that. Before Pesach he returned from a five-month lecture series in the CIS. He shares his experiences with us.

The following incident took place in 1972. A Zionist activist who worked on behalf of Soviet Jewry had yechidus with the Rebbe. The Rebbe spoke to him about the danger in making demonstrations on behalf of Jews in Russia.

At a certain point, the Rebbe could be heard clearly from behind the door and Berel Haskelevich, who speaks fluent

Russian, overheard what was being said. To his surprise, he heard the Rebbe say, "If I was able to, I would send back all those who left."

"I heard the Rebbe say it. The Rebbe was speaking sadly about how the influence of religious Jews was waning because they were leaving Russia. I felt as though the Rebbe was speaking to me!

"Two weeks later, a friend of that activist had yechidus. He was also a Zionist. When he came out, he said that the Rebbe told him that if his friend had remained in Russia and reminded ten Jews of their being Jewish, he would have accomplished something. 'What is he doing in Eretz Yisroel? A generation will pass and they won't know who is a Jew,' said the Rebbe in sorrow.

"From the time I heard the Rebbe say that, my goal was to return to Russia and work with my fellow Jews."

MILLIONS OF PEOPLE LISTENED TO "SICHAT HA'RAV"

Rabbi Berel Haskelevich was born in Russia in 1947. He left the country in 1965 with his parents and settled in the United States. He married in 1973. He was sure that one day he would go back to Russia, yet years passed without being able to do so. The country was sealed. A few people went there and smuggled in Jewish items but they were foreigners who were visiting.

Then one day, an opportunity presented itself. It was when he was asked to give a Russian language weekly radio broadcast on Radio Liberty, a broadcast that could be heard throughout the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

R' Haskelevich was happy to accept and he did the radio show for years. His program was called *Sichat HaRav* and he had 18-22 million listeners!

"Till this day, I meet people who tell me that their path to Judaism began by listening regularly to these radio programs."

TRAVELING FROM CITY TO CITY

In 1993, after the Soviet Union was dismantled, R' Haskelevich began visiting Russia. He has since visited there numerous times, yet he still yearned to settle there. In 2005 he began to seriously consider returning to live in the CIS. When he asked the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh*, he opened to an answer which told about the Alter Rebbe's father, who went from town to town and this was his greatness.

"I understood that I was supposed to travel from city to city and farbreng and publicize the Besuras HaGeula wherever I went."

R' Haskelevich went to Paris and from there he continued to Vienna, to his hometown of Chernovitz, and then to Kiev. It took him several weeks to get to Moscow.

"In Moscow I was warmly welcomed and I was made a terrific offer, to be an official peripatetic shliach, traveling from to city to city, lecturing, farbrenging, giving shiurim in Chassidus, recruiting boys to Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim and girls to Machon Chaya Mushka in Moscow."

Since then, R' Haskelevich has traveled a lot to the CIS. "Just this winter I was there from Kislev until Pesach and taught Judaism, Chassidus, and the Besuras HaGeula."

Where did you go?

It's hard for me to remember all the places I went to. I was in: Grodna, Minsk, Petersburg, Vladivostok, Niezni-Novgorod, Chavrovsk, Perm, Tolyatti, Ulyanovsk, Kazan, Samara, Novosibirsk, Veliki Novgorod, Mohilev, and small towns such as Kaminetz-Uralsk and many

others.

When you arrive, how do you start talking about Chassidus and Moshiach when Jews know

nothing about Judaism and what a Rebbe is?

"I told them that it was 40 years since I first met the





Rabbi Berel Haskelovich farbrenging with young Jews in Perm

Lubavitcher Rebbe (on 7 Adar) and from that point on, I spent all my time in his presence, and I wanted to share what I learned. That is how I begin and I go on to farbreng with them, as time allows and to the extent that people understand.

“Obviously, we don’t know what a Rebbe is but as we can understand it, the bottom line can be expressed in one word: Moshiach. All his qualities, his wisdom in all areas, his leadership, his righteousness and the righteousness of his emissaries and the amazing work he does, all are in order to extricate the Jewish people from galus so that no Jew remains behind.

“In Nizhni-Novgorod, where there are many intellectual Jews, they asked me: How does traditional Judaism fit with the modern world with its developments in science and society?

“I have to build a bridge between my message, the message of Moshiach, and their world so I can provide them with a satisfying answer to the question that arises from their worldview. I tell them the Zohar that the Rebbe quoted

about how in the 600th year of the 6th millennium the windows of heaven will open and the wellsprings of the deep will burst forth. In other words, there are two things happening, from above and below.

“The Zohar is talking about a time in which there will be enormous developments in the field of science. Today, anybody can go to libraries and read what he needs to know in science books. The same is true for Chassidus. Nowadays, anybody can learn as much as Chassidus as he wants. I explain that the recent scientific developments not only do not contradict Torah, they support it.

“For example, Professor Karl Skorecki of the Technion in Chaifa, was able to demonstrate that all Kohanim have the same origin. The article was printed in *Nature*, a prestigious publication in the world of academia. Every article that is printed in it is carefully reviewed. This discovery sent shock waves throughout the scientific community.

“I refer to several important research studies that were publicized recently that aroused

surprise in the scientific community and fit nicely with what it says in Tanach and contradict scientific estimations about the origin of the universe. When you show them these discoveries, it makes a big impression and it enabled me to explain to them that even those things that we still don’t understand, will be scientifically proven in the future.

“From that point I move on to how in our generation we have merited to have a spiritual leader like Shlomo in his time. He knows all wisdoms yet makes no compromises to bend even the smallest detail of Torah before modern science.”

Are there questions about the Rebbe and our belief in him?

“Of course. That was my main goal in traveling there, and it naturally generated many questions on the part of the audiences.”

How do you explain the Rebbe’s work in the world to Jews who barely know what Judaism is about?

“I spoke about Bar Kochba whom they all know as a warrior who fought the Romans in order to liberate the Jews, and the Sages, at least at first, thought he was Moshiach. However, unlike Bar Kochba, in whose battles hundreds of thousands of people were killed, the Rebbe fights and wins without sacrifices!

“For example, the Rebbe’s shluchim lit a public menorah in Pittsburgh. Some lawyers said it was against the Constitution. The Supreme Court ruled that if there is a symbol of the Christian holiday on government property, a menorah can be there too!

“Public menoras began in the US and spread to the entire world, to the point that in 1991 there was a public menorah lighting

in the Kremlin that was broadcast live to 770. What happened on the last day of Chanuka of that year? The Soviet Union dissolved without a bullet being shot, whereas the Revolution of 1917 entailed millions of deaths!

“The Messianic freedom of foreign rule is something we see in Russia today as the government makes sure that Jews can pray in shul. Prime Minister Putin, then the president, was in a town and didn’t see a shul. He said publicly, on television, ‘How is it that there is a mosque, a church here, and no shul?’

“When Rabbi Lazar thanked Putin, Putin didn’t see any reason to be thanked. ‘I believe in this,’ said the Russian president.

“I heard that a certain shliach had a problem getting a school building. Just at that time, he was received by Putin among a delegation of shluchim. All Putin wanted to know was the name of the mayor of that city. The next day, the shliach’s phone rang and it was the mayor. ‘The building for the school is yours,’ he said.

“You have to understand that what to us looks natural and

simple, to the Russians is a dream. I remember that when I was in Moscow in 1993 and I went on Shabbos from Marina Roscha to the Bolshoi Brunia Synagogue, Rabbi Yitzchok Kogan’s shul, which was quite a long walk, I walked in the streets with my tallis on. I wanted Jews to see me and drop their fears. After all, a Jew can walk in the street with a tallis!

“Rabbi Kogan told me that he got a phone call from the Interior Ministry. The secretary wanted to arrange an appointment at his convenience. (Just 20 years ago, it would be unheard of for the secretary of the Interior Ministry to ask for an appointment with a rav at his convenience!) When he showed up for the appointment, it turned out that she wanted information about Jewish holidays so that ‘the Jewish police officers would be able to celebrate their holidays as their religion requires.’

“For Russian Jews, these stories suffice. They understand the cataclysmic change and how the world has progressed towards the era of Geula.”

KIRUV

Over the years, R’ Haskelevich has brought many Jews to a life of Torah and mitzvos. And over the years he has met with thousands of young people and has spoken to them and been mekarev them. He brought many of them to Yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim in Moscow.

What have people thought of their sons going to yeshiva?

“It’s not easy. I tell them that these days, in the era of Geula, the most sought after position is rabbanus! We need to raise up the spirits of the Jewish people through our spiritual leaders, rabbanim who have graduated from yeshivos. A doctor can be a non-Jew, but not a rav!

“To one of the boys who asked me about his financial future, I told him about shluchim who are honorably supported and who run multi-million dollar projects. A rav is a leader of his community. He is a dayan, a legal expert, a psychologist and a family therapist. The rav is everything!”

What are people’s reactions to your lectures about Moshiach?

“Someone said to me that he doesn’t understand why I talk about Moshiach. In his opinion, you have to learn the entire Torah until the end of the Rambam, the halachos of Moshiach. I told him that in *my* opinion, we have to begin with inyanei Moshiach! This is because Moshiach is about knowledge of Hashem, which is the foundation, and also because the first thing Moshe Rabbeinu told the Jewish people in Egypt was, ‘the time for your redemption has arrived.’

“We have to tell Jews: Get out of galus. We need to accustom them to doing mitzvos, like t’fillin, lighting Shabbos candles,



Rabbi Haskelevich speaking to members of the Jewish community of Veliki-Novgorod

"I have to build a bridge between my message, the message of Moshiach, and their world so I can provide them with a satisfying answer to the question that arises from their worldview."

mezuzah. Then we can move on to more complicated subjects like intermarriage.

"One of the shluchim told me that he didn't think you could speak about Moshiach in a way that would appeal to people. There was a Jew, a relative of the head of state, with whom the

shliach asked me to put t'fillin on. I did so, and then I told him to say 'Yechi' in Russian. The shliach, not a 'Meshichist,' just sat there quietly.

"One of the shluchim asked me how I tell bachurim who know nothing, who barely know that their grandmother was Jewish, that they have to learn in order to become rabbanim. I answered him: On the contrary, by telling them that they can be rabbanim, I lift their spirits and give them hope so that their attitude is completely different.

"In general, the shluchim gave positive feedback, which you can see in the advertising for the lectures on their Internet sites."

Have you had any problems with the various governments?

"When I was supposed to go to Belorussia, the KGB there inquired as to whether I was Bush's emissary and why was he opposed to Lukashenka, the president of Belarus. They said I was giving religious lectures, which were illegal there.

"I explained to them that I was merely giving lectures on Jewish history and that they could attend

the lectures and see for themselves."

Did they come?

"Not only did they come, but they sent the local television to interview me. In the middle of the lecture, someone asked why Bush opposed Lukashenka and I answered that the fact that I am an American citizen does not mean I have to agree with everything the president says and does. Furthermore, I said, Belarus is not a country known for its material wealth, as Saudi Arabia is. But what it is famous for is its spirituality. It is known as the birthplace of Toras Chassidus Chabad Lubavitch.

"The next day, the head of the k'hilla told me that the community as well as the KGB enjoyed my lectures very much, especially this specific response.

"I hope that this lecture tour I was privileged to make is another positive action to hasten the Geula. What I can definitely say is that when you spread the Rebbe's Besuras HaGeula as the Rebbe wants, you can publicize it to everyone."



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WHY THEY CALL THEM T'MIMIM...

An inspiring story of a young bachur's early experiences with mivtzaim as told to Natan Katz by Shalom Dovber Bar Zohar, a Tamim in Shiur Aleph at Tomchei T'mimim – Krayot

Every Friday, I went on mivtzaim at the Checkpost in Haifa. In the first week it was very hard, but slowly, slowly in the first week, I put t'fillin on two people, baruch Hashem — a week later, with five people, and every week after that I tried to increase the number.

One Friday, I went to a store and asked the person who sells there if he wanted to put on t'fillin and he said “No.”

Every Erev Shabbat, before we go out on the mivtzaim of the Rebbe MH”M, we learn a sicha so that we will have Torah words to share. That particular week we learned that the Rebbe says that if a Jew doesn't want to put on t'fillin it's because you don't approach him with all your heart, but if you approach him with all your heart he will surely agree.

In the same week, the bachur thought, “When I go to the same store where the vendor didn't want

to put t'fillin on the week before, I'm going to go to him with all of my heart...”

When I got to the store, I came to him with a happy face and I asked him how he was doing, etc., and — do you want to put on t'fillin?!

Again he declined.

I almost felt as if there was nothing more I could do, but I said in my heart: at least I will do mivtzaim for those who came to buy in his store!

Then I saw someone in the store and I asked him if he wanted to put on t'fillin, but he too declined. Then I asked another person, and he said, “for sure!” When the one who said “no” saw his friend put on t'fillin, he also did so. Then, seeing the others put on t'fillin, the vendor also followed suit.

When he was done and he took off the t'fillin, he said to me, “from the age of Bar Mitzva I didn't put on t'fillin.” He didn't remember how to

put them on and I helped him and he said (a heartfelt) “thank you.”

And so it went that every week when I finished mivtzaim, I went to the store of that person and talked about Moshiach and also about the importance of t'fillin. In one of the times I talked with him, he said to me that all his life he has pursued nothing but “money” and he doesn't even have the time for Ahavat Yisroel with friends. I opened the *Tanya* with him to *Igeret T'shuva* and I started to learn with him and baruch Hashem from day to day he gets stronger in his emuna in Hashem and in the Rebbe.

* * *

Because of the success at Checkpost, I wrote to the Rebbe about a Mivtza Purim that I wanted to do and the Rebbe wrote back ‘Bracha v'hatzlacha (blessing and success). I also wrote to the Rebbe that I'd need help from a lot of bachurim and Anash to help with the mivtzaim, dancing, reading the Megillot and giving out Mishloach Manos — and in the end of the letter I wrote that I wanted to make a minyan for Mincha at the Checkpost (a very busy commercial center in Haifa).

When I opened the *Igros Kodesh* the Rebbe answered me: “In connection with the Beit Knesset that you want to open, I'm giving you a bracha hatzlacha...” And in the end of the letter the Rebbe explained how I could be successful by doing more in the area of spreading the wellsprings.

At first, I didn't get the connection between “spreading the wellsprings” more and the success of starting the Mincha minyan. And as it was Purim time and I was very busy with making Purim plans, I put the thought out of my mind.

After Purim finished — with a big hatzlacha — I remembered what the Rebbe said about adding to spreading the wellsprings, so I made

***All this was on
account of the
'nes' of the Rebbe.
So if someone
doesn't know what
the connection is
from what the
Rebbe says to do,
do it with
Kabbalas Ol!***

a commitment that when I finished
my mitzvaim every Friday and

wanted to go, that I would stay until
I worked with one more person.

That same Friday, when I was going
to a store, I looked at my watch and
saw that I needed to return to the
yeshiva, but before I went I
remembered that I needed to put
t'fillin on one more person because
of the hachlata...

I went back and saw a vendor
sitting outside his store and I asked
him if he wanted to put on t'fillin
and he happily agreed.

He brought me inside his store
and said, before he put on the
T'fillin, that he had a question. He
didn't have tzitzit or a kippa (yet) he
told me that for a long time he had
wanted to start a minyan for
Mincha, but he didn't know how...

I told him about the letter to the

Rebbe and explained to him that I
didn't understand the connection
and now I knew what the Rebbe
meant by further spreading the
wellsprings outward.

Baruch Hashem, after a little
time, we opened a minyan in his
store. In the beginning it was hard to
get a minyan, but after a little time, a
minyan came every day.

All this was on account of the
'nes' of the Rebbe. So if someone
doesn't know what the connection is
from what the Rebbe says to do, do
it with Kabbalas Ol!

And to this day, people from the
minyan have also taken upon
themselves to put on t'fillin and go
to hitvade'ut and Bezrat Hashem we
will be successful to daven with the
Rebbe MH"M in the Third Beis
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THE BOY WHO SENT ELIYAHU TO RASHBI

By Rabbi Yosef Karasik, Rav Bat Chefer-Emek Chefer

Rashbi was in a cave for 13 years and it was only a note sent to him by a child that caused him to cry. * Is there any connection between the “Kabbala Centers” and the teachings of Rashbi? * What secret did Eliyahu HaNavi reveal to Rashbi in the cave and how is it connected to Geula?

On the way to Tel Aviv from my home in Bat Chefer, I gave a lift to someone who was hitching a ride and we got into a conversation. I told him that I was going to Tel Aviv in order to speak to a gathering of Jews who were going to learn about Yemos HaMoshiach and the era of Geula. I asked him, “What do you have to say about Moshiach?”

He answered, “I’m a simple Jew. The country is burning and

we just need to pray for Moshiach.”

On the way, we saw a boy selling the thorny cactus type fruit native to Israel known as sabras. The hitchhiker said, “You probably never picked sabras...”

I said, “I actually did. At the entrance to Kfar Chabad, where I grew up, there were sabras and we would get a lot of thorns in our hands.”

The man laughed and said, “I’ll tell you the secret of how to

pick sabras. Early in the morning, before the sun beats down, is the best time to pick sabras because you won’t get pricked. Later on, as it gets hotter, the thorns harden and then your hands get full of them and it’s hard to pick the sabras.”

I said, you’ve taught me a wonderful lesson about preparing for Moshiach’s coming, so I benefited in giving you a ride. The lesson is that in order to overcome the thorns of this prickly galus, we have to get up early before the sun, the Evil Inclination, beats strongly and sharpens its thorns. When the heat of galus is burning strongly, the thorns are hard. That is our test, to hurry and bring the Geula before the big fire of galus consumes us.

OUR SPIRITUAL TREASURES

In recent years, Kabbala has become extremely popular among the masses, among religious Jews and not-yet-religious Jews, and even non-Jews. Kabbala institutes and courses abound. Unfortunately, many of them have nothing to do with actual Kabbala, but are courses on psychology. They have good lecturers who know how to keep their audiences spellbound. The shluchim, on the other hand, try to save Jews from these phony courses.

So the first thing we have to know is that we have the richest, deepest treasures of pure Truth. Toras Chabad is the clearest explanation of the teachings of Kabbala, but we have to fill ourselves with these treasures. It’s a holy obligation on every Lubavitcher, especially those who spread the wellsprings, to study as much Chassidus as possible, to delve into deep maamarim, such

as *Hemshech* 5666 and *Hemshech* 5672, the Rebbe's maamarim, etc. This way we will have the tools we need to counter the modern disseminators of "Kabbala."

We have to conquer the entire world, including the animal soul of the world, and not only the G-dly soul. We have the ability to present shiurim that counter all the "Kabbalists" out there, but we have to know our stuff. It doesn't come from sitting with our feet up and arms crossed, but from delving into Chassidus day and night.

We need to study the sichos and maamarim of the Rebbe. We have treasures, especially in recent years, when *Likkutei Sichos* was translated into other languages. We can take the sichos, study them in depth, and enrich our knowledge, endeavoring to understand what is the p'shat and what does Kabbala add, and how it is explained in the teachings of Chassidus.

The Rebbe teaches us that every phenomenon in the world is connected to us, the Jewish people. Every phenomenon that takes place in our generation is connected to Geula. Even a disgusting trend (not to mention that it might fall into the category of idol worship), like discussing Kabbala with people and in places that are completely unsuitable, and using unacceptable approaches, is a sign of Geula.

The Rambam explains that even false ideologies, like Christianity and Islam, have a share in preparing the world for Geula and the belief in the coming of Moshiach. Those religions taught their masses about the concept of a Messiah but they talk about a false Messiah, a false prophet, and we speak about holiness and the True

Moshiach.

Similarly with Kabbala – why is the world taking an interest in this subject? Why is mysticism "in"? Because there is an abundance of material possessions and the emptiness in it makes people seek something more spiritual. The Rebbe teaches us that the reason is actually because people thirst for the teachings of Moshiach, the teachings of Kabbala and Chassidus.

So let's take advantage of this tremendous interest and give them the teachings of Moshiach!

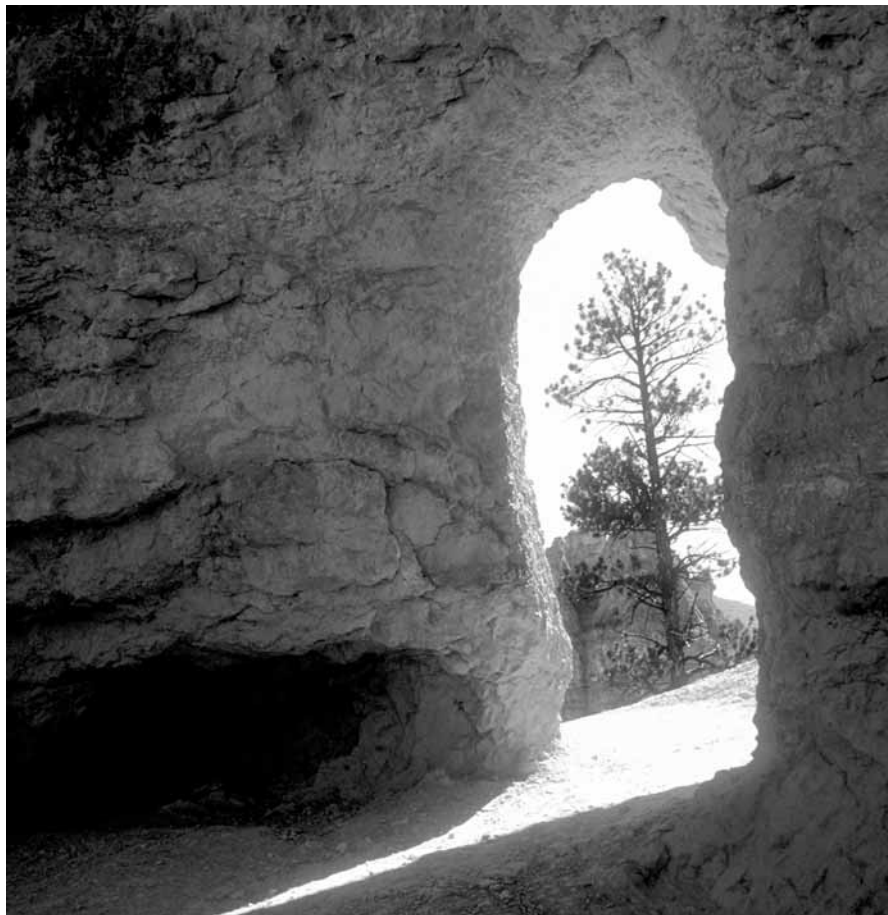
This is one of the major signs of Yemos HaMoshiach, when a nonobservant Jew hears that there is a lecture on Kabbala and he attends. Why does he attend? What attracts him to Kabbala?

The answer is that he himself

does not know how much his neshama yearns for the teachings of Moshiach. This is because he is not spiritually refined and he thinks it's a modern, cultural thing, but he is unaware that the *real* reason that he is attracted to it is because his soul wants p'nimius ha'Torah.

We are to blame if we don't provide him with Chassidus and take advantage of his interest and direct it to the Truth.

Today's generation thirsts for Kabbala, for something that speaks directly to the soul. That is Chassidus, p'nimius ha'Torah, whose source is the holy Zohar. Today people want a taste of the Future because that is where their soul is drawn. The Rebbe says that our job is to disseminate p'nimius ha'Torah to the world on the basis of "...when your



R' Yehuda bar Ilai took it to heart and said, "Woe to us on the absence of Bar Yochai, we lack him and nobody has information regarding his whereabouts, and even if someone did know, they would not be allowed to reveal it."

wellsprings spread outward."

The difference between Chabad teachings and all the rest is that Chassidus doesn't come to make the Torah fit the world but shows how the world fits with Torah. If there is a clash between the world and Torah, that doesn't change the reality of Torah; our perception of the world is wrong, not Torah.

One of the basic concepts that the Rebbe taught our generation is the connection between the spiritual and physical worlds. When people complained to the Rebbe about health problems, for example, the Rebbe told them to check their t'fillin or mezuzah. But if a person had a heart attack, it's because the blood vessels that carry blood to the heart are blocked! If a person has high cholesterol or his blood pressure is sky high, what do his

t'fillin have to do with his health? However, the Rebbe taught us that the physical and spiritual worlds are connected. A person's heart condition, for example, has to do with his mezuzah. These ideas are alluded to in the Gemara and Midrash but the Rebbe made it everyday reality.

So too with Kabbala, we need to know that the attraction to it has its roots in a spiritual longing. We can't give merely external reasons for it.

There is an enormous difference between True Kabbala and that which is taught in the "Kabbala institutes." Our goal is to teach p'nimius ha'Torah in order to believe in Moshiach, to be mekarev Jews to Torah and mitzvos and to uplift people, whereas their teachings corrode the soul.

So when we notice an ad for a lecture on "Kabbala," we can have two reactions. On the one hand, we can think that if there is a thirst for Kabbala, this indicates that people are thirsting for the teachings of Moshiach. On the other hand, we have to castigate ourselves and ask why we didn't provide a lecture that would attract the same people and give them a taste of the teachings of Moshiach.

DRAMA IN THE BEIS MIDRASH

The following is an excerpt from the Zohar from Parshas Ki Savo. This excerpt deals with one of the most difficult eras for the Jewish people when the Rebbe of that time, Rashbi, was not present. Or to be more precise, he was not seen.

Rashbi hid in a cave after he fled from the Romans. The rest of the chachamim were in the beis midrash. They were incredibly great men, each of whom could

even resurrect the dead, and they were accustomed to hearing the teachings of Rashbi. But Rashbi was in hiding.

He and his son Rabi Elozor were in the cave for 13 years and Eliyahu HaNavi came and taught them Torah. We don't have information about what precisely took place during those 13 years when Rashbi was absent from the beis midrash, how the chachamim managed without their Rebbe, but we have one amazing story.

One day, one of the chachamim (the Ramak says it was Rabbi Yehuda bar Ilai) said, "I remember something that our Rebbe once taught us." It wasn't written in *hanachos* and not in *reshimos* either, just something that their Rebbe once taught them.

He said that Rashbi said that the curses appear twice in the Torah to correspond to the first and second destructions of the Beis HaMikdash. In the curses that appear in Parshas B'Chukosai, which corresponds to the first churban, the Torah also promises that Hashem will remember his covenant with Yaakov, etc. But in the curses in Ki Savo, which correspond to the second churban, there are no promises or assurances of consolation. One could be left thinking that there would not be a Geula after the churban Bayis Sheini.

R' Yehuda bar Ilai tried to explain it, as did the chachamim, but to no avail. They were very saddened by this. What about a Geula? The first Beis HaMikdash was destroyed and seventy years later Ezra HaSofer came and built the second Beis HaMikdash. But now it was 150 years after the churban of the second Beis HaMikdash and there was no salvation and no hope on the

horizon.

R' Yehuda bar Ilai took it to heart and said, "Woe to us on the absence of Bar Yochai, we lack him and nobody has information regarding his whereabouts, and even if someone did know, they would not be allowed to reveal it."

His young son, R' Yosi, took it hard. What would be with Moshiach? When would the Geula happen? When he saw that his father was upset, he was upset too and he decided to do something about it.

He got up in the morning, probably ran to the mikva, and then wrote down his question for Rashbi: Rashbi, you told my father that Parshas Ki Savo contains the curses regarding the second Bayis, so when will Moshiach come?

Of course he didn't know Rashbi's address, so he went outside the beis midrash and waited. He saw a dove fly after a flock of birds and he said, "Dove, dove, it is proper and fitting for you to go and do an errand for me to Ben Yochai wherever he is."

The dove took the note and flew hundreds of kilometers and brought it to Rashbi who was in the middle of Krias Shma at the time and couldn't accept the note from the dove. She left it for him on the corner of his garment.

When Rashbi read the note, he cried. This was the first time in thirteen years that Rashbi cried! Thirteen years hidden away in a cave, suffering terribly as the Gemara describes, eating carobs (or dates) and with wounds all over his body from the sand. It was a miserable existence physically and spiritually, he was without his colleagues and could not daven with a minyan, etc. Yet what did he cry about? The note

sent by the young boy Yosi, later to become Rabi Yosi.

First, he cried about not being with his colleagues in the beis midrash. Second, he was pained about the worry over galus and Geula. He cried "about those things that are not revealed to them. What will future generations do when they look at these verses?" It will be pitiful for future generations who will say there is no Moshiach because in Parshas Ki Savo it enumerates the curses and there is no Besuras HaGeula that follows it.

At this point, the Zohar describes what took place in Heaven. Hashem sent Eliyahu in order to appease Rashbi. Eliyahu was occupied with Heavenly matters yet Hashem had him stop what he was doing in order for him to go and console Rashbi.

Eliyahu appeared to Rashbi and explained it as follows: The first curses, which consist of 32 verses, correspond to the pathways of Torah, the pathways of Chochma. The second curses have 53 verses which correspond to the 53 parshiyos of the Torah. With the first galus and churban, the Jewish people transgressed these 32 hidden pathways in secret, therefore their sin wasn't as great and so their Geula was foretold. With the second churban, they transgressed the 53 portions of the Torah in a revealed way, and so their sin was greater and therefore, the End was hidden from them and does not appear in the parsha.

Before Eliyahu could reveal the Besuras HaGeula, however, the Satan intervened and a storm wind separated Eliyahu from Rashbi. Rashbi burst into tears and fell asleep. Then Eliyahu appeared once again in order to tell him about the Geula.

Rashbi learned from Eliyahu

where the Besuras HaGeula can be found in Ki Savo. Look it up to see it at length. I will only bring a synopsis of what Eliyahu said.

Within every bad thing there is good. What seems to you to be a churban is actually good news. What seems like war to you contains within it the Besuras HaGeula. If there is a sickness, this is good because it reveals the person's strength to deal with illness. If there is poverty, this is good because the rich can sustain the poor. Thus, Eliyahu explained how all the verses in Ki Savo are actually the Besuras HaGeula and you just need to peel away the externals to reveal the good within, to learn Chassidus and reveal the Besuras HaGeula within everything.

When Eliyahu finished revealing the Geula within the curses, Rashbi wanted to send word back to his colleagues and students. He sat towards evening and composed his response. The dove came and took it.

Yosi, the young boy who wrote the note to Rashbi, waited all day for the dove to return. He was a believer! The Ramak says in amazement: This boy is the one who brought Eliyahu to Rashbi, the one who brought the Besuras HaGeula to Rashbi! Just a child! When he saw the dove he said, "Dove, how faithful you are, of all birds of the heaven."

He took the note and ran to the beis midrash to the sages. He could have opened the note out of curiosity but he did not. Although he had dared to send a note to Rashbi, he was modest enough not to read the response. Who was he, after all?

He told the sages the story and they were dumbfounded. We have been waiting thirteen years for our Rebbe and don't see him,

Thus, Eliyahu explained how all the verses in Ki Savo are actually the Besuras HaGeula and you just need to peel away the externals to reveal the good within, to learn Chassidus and reveal the Besuras HaGeula within everything.

and as soon as you write a note, you get a response!?

His father, R' Yehuda cried and said, "Even though we don't know where he is, wherever Ben Yochai is, his colleagues are with him and are inspired by and learn from him."

THE STORY AND THE PLAYERS

Let's look at the five personalities who appear in this story. The **talmidei chachamim** sat for thirteen years and did not know what Rashbi said about Moshiach until **R' Yehuda** told them about the Besuras HaGeula of Rashbi regarding the two parshiyos of curses. R' Yehuda bar Ilai cried, believing Rashi's teachings but not finding the Geula in Ki Savo. He knew that everything his Rebbe said was precise.

His son saw his tears and yearning for his Rebbe, and this had an effect on him. He wanted to know the end of galus and did a seemingly futile act but relied on it bearing fruit.

Rashbi did not cry for thirteen years. He cried for two things: being distant from his students and about future generations and who would prepare them for Moshiach. Rashbi was upset for some Kabbala institute would repeat what R' Yehuda bar Ilai said about the curses in Ki Savo with no mention of Geula, and they would conclude that Moshiach is not coming.

Eliyahu came again and again in order to bring the Besuras HaGeula.

We can learn a lot from this story, about the faith in the Geula that we all must have, about longing to know when the Geula will happen; about the longing of a little boy for Geula to the point that he does something in order to find out when it will be. We can also learn from the longing of the talmidim-Chassidim to be with their Rebbe, for their Rebbe to teach them Torah, and also, how much their Rebbe yearned to be with his talmidim-Chassidim so that all his suffering didn't cause him to cry but his yearning for his talmidim did. And especially after having informed them about the end of the galus, surely he wanted to be with them to see his Besuras HaGeula brought to fruition.

We have the ability to bring the Rebbe's Torah to the world. We have to toil and delve into it in order to merit to be the ones that bring the light of Moshiach to the world.

(From a lecture at a Yom Iyun in Inyanei Moshiach and Geula held by Matteh Moshiach in Eretz Yisroel)

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SHLUCHIM AS PEACEMAKERS

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelewitz, Shliach, Beit Shaan

The more Chassidic we are – the more refined, with less ego, less focus on self – the more we will merit a happy home, a happy family and children engaged in Torah and mitzvos and shlichus. Don't forget, with ahavas Yisroel we will bring the Geula.

In the course of shlichus work, shluchim often counsel couples who have problems with shalom bayis. I am currently taking an in-depth course on the subject, which takes place in Kfar Chabad. I will relate some examples of this type of work. The stories are a bit strange, some of the sort that “we don't recommend you try at home.” For obvious reasons, I changed some identifying information, but the stories actually took place in Beit Shaan or with my fellow shluchim.

THE BAAL SHEM TOV'S MIRROR APPROACH

A few years ago, I was asked to go to a certain home to intervene and mediate a big fight. The husband had harsh things to say about his wife with his main complaint being that she shouted and cursed at every opportunity.

I asked him, “Tell me the truth.

Do you ever shout or curse?” The husband was taken aback and asked how I knew that. His wife chimed in, telling me all his misdemeanors in this area.

So how did I know? It's very simple. The Baal Shem Tov taught us that if you see a fault in someone else, it's a sign that you have that fault. Since a person doesn't readily perceive his own faults, Hashem reveals them to the person through his perception of someone else. (See *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 10, p. 26)

I realized that if the husband saw this flaw in his wife, he had the same flaw, though perhaps in a subtler or overt form. If it angered him to this extent, this indicated that it was found within him in such a way that it caused him to be angry. I explained to them that they both needed to improve their speech. They agreed, and since then things have been smoother.

HE DOESN'T ISSUE A GETT

There is a shliach, a rav of a community and a dayan in a beis din, who makes every effort not to take part in writing a *gett*; he has always managed to bring the couple together again.

One day, a very nervous man came to the beis din and insisted on a *gett* then and there. All the rav's efforts to calm him down failed. The husband did not want to hear any explanations, he wanted a *gett*!

The rav was able to push him off until the next day, albeit with difficulty. The man agreed to leave the beis din but only after the rav promised him that at eight the next morning, they would sit down and write a *gett*.

Indeed, the next morning at 7:55, the couple was waiting in the entrance to the beis din. The rav brought them into his office, prepared the parchment, the ink, the witnesses, and everything else. In the meantime, he went over to one of his young assistants, spoke to him privately and told him to come into his office in another ten minutes and to act as though he was whispering something to the rav for a few seconds. The rav warned him not to be shocked when he yelled at him.

The assistant didn't know what was going to transpire but an order is an order. He waited ten minutes while the rav spoke to the couple,

asking his name and her name and other details. Then he walked in and whispered for a few seconds to the rav.

The rav got up in a fury and began to shout at him, "Aren't you ashamed? Is that how you talk? I don't believe it! Get out of here!" The rav did such a good job of feigning anger that the husband tried to calm him down.

The rav said to the husband, "You are trying to calm me? This whippersnapper just asked me to hurry up with the *gett* because he wants to marry your wife as soon as you divorce her!"

As soon as the husband heard this, he paused and began to wonder whether he really wanted a divorce. He finally said to the rav that he wanted to push off the divorce for the meantime and think it over.

Once the husband was unsure about getting divorced, the rav was able to talk to him. This time the husband was receptive and the couple ended up going home appeased and united. I hope that they too are living happily ever after.

DON'T ENTER PLACES YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO GET OUT OF

The lesson to be learned from all the stories is as the Rebbe writes in the *Igros Kodesh* (vol. 9, p. 100): "A precarious peace is better than a

fight, even a minor one or a good one."

There is a well known anecdote about a professional thief whose expertise was entering houses through the chimney. One day he decided to rob the rav of the city. He waited for the middle of the night, climbed up the roof, and eased himself down through the chimney into the rav's living room. The only hitch was that he hadn't taken into account that the rav would be learning Torah there at that hour.

The rav looked up and what do you know, there was a thief landing in his living room. The rav asked his guest what he was doing in his home at that hour and the thief thought quickly and said he had come to ask the rav a question.

"What is your question?" asked the rav.

"How do I get out of here?" replied the thief.

The rav made it clear that in the future he should try not to get himself into unpleasant situations from which it would be difficult to extricate himself. So too with us, in order not to need advice and help in shalom bayis, it is preferable to live in peace from the outset.

The more Chassidic we are – the more refined, with less ego, less focus on self – the more we will merit a happy home, a happy family and children engaged in Torah and mitzvos and shlichus. Don't forget,

with ahavas Yisroel we will bring the Geula.

SHALOM BAYIS EVEN AFTER THE DIVORCE

Rabbi Chaim Sholom Diskin, shliach and rav in Kiryat Ata, is known as a shliach who is involved in shalom bayis and chinuch. Several years ago, he heard about a nine-year-old boy who learned in a Chabad school whose parents had divorced half a year earlier. The boy went back and forth from his mother to his father and from his father to his mother. Wherever he went he heard complaints about the other parent. Naturally, this had a negative effect on him and it reached the point where it adversely impacted on his everyday functioning.

Rav Diskin called the two parents and explained to them what they were doing to their child. He also hinted that the chances of either of them starting new families were not high and that it would be best for the three of them if they considered remarriage to one another. Rav Diskin was able to speak to their minds and hearts and he asked them to think about it.

A few days later the couple returned and said they were interested. Rav Diskin didn't ask for shadchanus but the remarriage took place and the two are raising their child together.



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THE REBBÈS SHLICHUS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

Interview By Michoel Leib Dobry

Beis Moshiach spoke with Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Nesanel Gafni, head of the Kollel Avreichim Ohel Moshe – Chabad, in the Holy City of Tzfas.

In Tzfas' Canaan neighborhood, there lives a sizable portion of the city's Chabad community, including primarily young families headed by rabbinical students who were only recently studying in full-time in yeshivos. It is known that the Rebbe shlita MH"M said, "I have a desire that young men should learn Torah..." and similarly, there is the Rebbe's well-known instruction that the first year or two after the wedding should be devoted to Torah study, particularly halachos applicable in our daily lives. In addition, we have the Rebbe's instruction that every young married man should obtain rabbinical ordination (especially the Laws of Shabbos and the Laws of Issur and Hetter) and the necessity

to prepare shluchim knowledgeable in halacha. We therefore have the essential need for a study framework called a kollel.

On this basis, there was established the Kollel Avreichim Ohel Moshe – Chabad, headed and operated by Rabbi **Yosef Yitzchak Nesanel Gafni**.

The kollel is located in the middle of a residential neighborhood (Shikun Canaan) in a local shul, the Shivas HaBanim Synagogue, a site allocated for kollel activities by the shul's presiding rav, Rabbi **Avraham Ochanuna** (reserve colonel in the Israel Defense Forces and former chaplain of the IDF Northern Command).

As alluded to in its name, a

kollel "*koleil ha'kol*" (includes everything), as Rabbi Shneur Zalman Gafni once mentioned at a farbrengen held in the kollel. In other words, the study and participation in kollel pertain to all areas of life, and bring a blessing to everyone, including the community itself and the entire city.

In general, we are inclined to inquire more about the Rebbe's shlichus conducted in some remote and distant outpost filled with great miracles and wonders. However, the truth is that Rebbe's miracles and wonders take place right under our noses, and the Rebbe's will is expressed through a variety of institutions, all with one common cause: working to bring the days of Moshiach in actual deed. *Beis Moshiach Magazine* has decided to look into how such an institution came into being and operates, and what the rosh ha'kollel has to deal with in the framework of the local shlichus that the Rebbe shlita has placed upon him.

* * *

Rabbi Gafni, please tell us a little about how things were at the beginning. How did you start your shlichus as rosh kollel?

I arrived in Tzfas seven and a half years ago as a rabbinical student after my wedding for the purpose of establishing a proper Jewish home. Since then, my wife and I have been blessed, thank G-d, with two children *sh"y*, Menachem Mendel and Rivka Iris. I knew that I had to do something with my extensive background in halacha, having served previously as a teacher in the kollel in Rechovot and as a counselor and examiner in the yeshiva, and I looked for a shlichus that would properly utilize my qualifications and express the will of the Rebbe.

The opportunity came in the form of a proposal to handle the

spiritual needs of the Ohel Moshe – Chabad Kollel in Tzfas, which had already been established for a few years prior to my arrival. I asked the Rebbe in *Igros Kodesh* and received a very serious bracha. I began my work on the overall spiritual administration of the kollel: establishing and maintaining the daily learning schedule, giving classes, conducting examinations for rabbinical ordination (in cooperation with local rabbinical

authorities), farbrengens, organizing trips to holy gravesites throughout the Galilee region, participation in informative rabbinical conferences, and more.

At a certain point, some three years ago, the kollel director on material matters moved to a different shlichus, and it was agreed that I would accept the responsibility of the institution's physical maintenance as well. I soon began the task of acquiring

the necessary resources for kollel activities, including the monthly stipends for our rabbinical students.

This was a bit of a shock for me, as my strong points are mainly in the more spiritual realm. But as they say, the Rebbe “placed this upon me” with his well-known expression of support: “The fact that Divine Providence has placed him in this role demonstrates that he possesses the required strengths for this purpose, and he merely has to bring them from the potential to the actual...” Thus, I found myself administering the kollel's spiritual responsibilities on the one hand, while obtaining its necessary material resources on the other. I have seen numerous miracles and assistance from the Rebbe these past three years, when funds literally came from totally unexpected sources, sometimes at the very last minute. However, I can't say that this has all been easy, as surely any shliach can identify with and understand what I'm talking about.

Give us a little something on the content: What do they learn in kollel? Who are the young men who study there?

There are about fifteen young men learning in a full-day study framework (from morning until evening with an afternoon break). The schedule begins with an in-depth class in *Shulchan Aruch*, the Laws of Shabbos – *Tur*, *Beis Yosef*, all the commentaries, and of course, the Alter Rebbe. Experience has shown that learning the subject in this manner causes the halacha to be acquired by the student in the best possible way, becoming an actual part of him. As a result, the study is on a very high level and enables the students to be prepared for examinations for rabbinical ordination by local chief rabbis, and even for testing by the Heichal



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Shlomo Institute in Yerushalayim for those who wish. In addition, one of our students is currently learning the Laws of Marriage.

Study of the Laws of Shabbos continues in the afternoon, together with those laws pertaining to a specific time, e.g., Hilchos Yom tov, Pesach, S’firas HaOmer, etc., followed by study in chassidus, which is presently concentrating on the Mittler Rebbe’s seifer *Shaarei Ora*. Similarly, the kollel conducts a weekly class each Thursday

evening in *Tanya* with the well-known mashpia, Rabbi **Moshe Mordechai Ehrenstein**.

Our kollel students are mainly young newly married men who learn for a variety of needs, e.g., knowing the basics for running a home according to Torah, preparing for rabbinical ordination, going out on shlichus, acquiring professional training as a practicing rabbi, and more. Many of our kollel graduates serve today as successful shluchim in Eretz Yisroel and throughout the world.

Does the kollel also operate on a social/community level?

Absolutely. The kollel also serves as a community center and source of support. For example, the kollel holds a Gemara class each weeknight led by one of the rabbinical students, designed for baalei battim who don’t have the time available to learn during the day and want to set aside regular time for Torah study. Similarly, the kollel makes farbrengens open to the general public with prominent mashpiim for auspicious days on

the Chabad calendar. Other general activities conducted by the kollel include monthly trips each Erev Rosh Chodesh to the gravesites of tzaddikim buried in the Galilee region, where kollel and community members participate in prayers of the personal needs of the kollel's friends and supporters. In addition, as a result of the natural and prevailing need to offer support and guidance to new families undergoing personal and financial hardships, I have obtained personal and regular assistance for these young people. Together with Rabbi **Yaakov Ochanuna**, I have initiated the establishment of a center for marriage counseling within the kollel framework to provide necessary services on this matter for kollel members and the community at-large.

A center for marriage counseling? That sounds revolutionary! Please tell us a little about it.

That's exactly what it is! A center for marriage counseling. This is something so essential in Chabad today, particularly in a community that has many young couples. Rabbi Ochanuna has been involved in the field of education for nearly thirty years, during which he has acquired a great deal of experience and has noticed problems in the education of children stemming from problems in their family's life. Rabbi Ochanuna is certified in handling domestic problems among married couples, and he came with the idea of combining this counseling center within the kollel schedule. This center will provide counseling services and treatment for singles and couples, educational workshops for parents (The Hadarim Method), workshops on helping couples bond with one another, locating problems in children's education and more.

Rabbi Ochanuna says that just as people learn professions such as how to be a ritual slaughterer, a scribe, etc., they also must learn how to build a strong connection with their spouses and children, and also how to educate their offspring properly. This can potentially serve as a form of preventive medicine before existing problems get completely out of hand, resulting in a most undesirable situation for all concerned. In my opinion, merging the counseling center with the kollel program is most essential

and resources for all this?

Indeed, this is no easy task. We have a lot of ideas and also a desire to accept more students and expand the kollel, and all this requires money. There are contributors who can easily be called upon to support our institution, with the knowledge and understanding of the great importance attached to Torah study, domestic harmony, and the brachos that come to those who support it (besides the prayers offered at the gravesites of tzaddikim for our donors). Yet,



Rabbi Shneur Zalman Gafni of Kfar Chabad farbrengens at the kollel

and vital, as some of our students already participate in the education workshops that Rabbi Ochanuna conducts at the kollel to give them the tools they need to deal with educational matters at home. This is also an excellent way to get kollel wives involved and to provide an overall answer for a chassidic home in both the realm of Torah and the realm of education and interpersonal relations.

That really sounds wonderful, but where do you get the strength

there are also contributors who are less connected to our programs and prefer to invest their money elsewhere.

I can safely say that obtaining these resources is neither easy nor simple. However, I can say that the Rebbe helps because he knows how serious I and our kollel students truly are, and the help comes in the form of open miracles. For example, a woman wrote to the Rebbe via *Igros Kodesh* that she was looking to provide financial

I am not in competition with anyone; I'm simply fulfilling the Rebbe's will and expressing myself in the field that best suits my nature, and with G-d's help, Torah institutions and those who support them will increase in number.

support to a Chabad learning institution in Tzfas. She came to me with a request that our students should learn Mishnayos for her success in a variety of matters, and made a sizable monetary contribution – one of many such occurrences.

However, in the final analysis, it is by no means an easy task to work simultaneously on two fields – material and spiritual administration – and I need help. We recently established a non-profit organization, enabling us to accept contributions via standing bank orders and receive funding from more official sources, and this has proven most helpful. Similarly, I am always open to suggestions on how to obtain further material assistance, whether through contributors interested in Torah study on behalf of their family members or for their personal success, mentioning their names at

the gravesites of tzaddikim buried in Tzfas and the surrounding area, or through professional fundraisers who want to help by taking an active role in Eretz Yisroel and out.

The Rebbe somehow always gives me the necessary strength and connects me with the right people to assist in the kollel's material and spiritual growth and maintenance, and with G-d's help, he shall continue to do so in the future.

Don't you seem to be lacking the aspect of shlichus outside the community?

I thought about that once, but the truth is that we really don't lack anything. The Rebbe wants each person to produce results to the best of his ability in his respective place and to contribute towards the overall objective of Chabad, and in my specific case, that is exactly what I am doing now. My kollel creates shluchim who afterwards may leave the community to go out on shlichus, and it is most important to me that they are given the necessary foundation on a halachic and a personal level.

There is a well-known principle that the closer you are, the more difficult it is to have an influence. It is far easier to influence supporters, as opposed to the members of your own community or your own household. Thus, from the point of view of running an organization specifically within the community, I am faced with a great and even more serious challenge than someone who goes out on shlichus. I see the problems that confront many of our young men from up close, particularly in the role of their personal mashpia. As the pasuk states, "He shall make the Torah great and glorious," i.e., the more possibilities and opportunities that exist for Torah study, even within the same

community, the greater and more glorious G-d's Name is made. I am not in competition with anyone; I'm simply fulfilling the Rebbe's will and expressing myself in the field that best suits my nature, and with G-d's help, Torah institutions and those who support them will increase in number. In my opinion, support for Torah study must have top priority, as chassidus teaches that the study of Torah sustains the world – the small world (man) and the world at-large.

How do you think an institution of the Rebbe should be run?

I believe that the Rebbe represents the concept of the lights of Tohu in the vessels of Tikkun, and how everything must be for the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu. In this light, I believe that an institution of the Rebbe must be highly professional and dynamic on the one hand, and with the ability to have great influence in both quality and quantity on the other – all instilled with the light of Moshiach.

What exactly do I mean? For example, I think that in our kollel, where the learning must be at the most fundamental and deepest level possible, every student representing the Rebbe and Chabad can demonstrate his knowledge in halacha, showing how Chabad is not just all slogans with external meaning, as perceived by many people who make such claims against it. A Lubavitcher young man must possess the tools necessary to represent the Rebbe honorably anywhere in the world before any type of group. On the one hand, he must be instilled with awareness of halacha and *Shulchan Aruch*, while on the other hand, he must be able to convey that he is a chassid, involved in the coming of the Moshiach, filled with Ahavas Yisroel, and spreading the Rebbe's

vital messages to the world. He must utilize his lofty abilities in an acceptable manner, and in the ways of pleasantness and the ways of peace, as the Rebbe wants. He must develop his ability to learn intensely, to the point that what he

studies becomes an intrinsic part of him, together with the ability to give over a proper message to others and to function in a family environment.

An institution of the Rebbe must be infused with the central

point of Moshiach, motivated by calmness, depth in learning nigleh and chassidus, reaching the wellsprings and spreading them to the outside world, with the knowledge and understanding that this is how we bring Moshiach and the Redemption. It is a true avoda to be a chassid, an avoda of one's inner middos that are purified through intense Torah study, following the advice of mashpiim, walking in the path of the Rebbe – all in a manner of real shlichus.

The Rebbe's mosad provides these tools and produces true chassidim. Naturally, there is also the concept of kabbalas ol, adhering to a daily schedule of in-depth learning, examinations, etc., but all this must be instilled with the general outlook of the Rebbe's objectives and of Chabad as a movement. Without true hiskashrus to the Rebbe, it is impossible to run one of his institutions, and in order to connect to the Rebbe in the truest sense, a chassid must go on the Rebbe's shlichus and act according to the tools that G-d gave him and which the Rebbe showed him how to use.

Do you have a special story in connection with the Rebbe and the Ohel Moshe Chabad kollel?

I can think of many stories, as can most shluchim in their place of shlichus, but there's one specific story that immediately comes to mind. On Simchas Torah 5730, my father [Rabbi Shneur Zalman Gafni, director of Yeshivas Ohr T'mimim – Kfar Chabad] was in 770 with the Rebbe. We're talking about twenty-three years before the founding of the Kollel Avreichim Ohel Moshe – Chabad, and yet the Rebbe already prophesized about it!

The story goes as follows: As is known, it is extremely crowded in 770 during Hakafof on the night of Simchas Torah. The first row



Rabbi Gafni speaking to the kollel members during a trip to one of the holy gravesites in the Galilee



Kollel members praying at one of the holy gravesites in the Galilee region

(closest to the Rebbe's bima and for the Hakafos) was generally reserved for very prominent people. My father never stood in this row, especially since everyone knew that it required a lot of strength to stand there. That year, my father was pushed forward and somehow found himself in the first row. The Rebbe came down for his hakafa holding Moshiach's Seifer Torah, and when he passed by my father, he gave him a look, as if to say, "How did someone as scrawny as you get up here?" The Rebbe then smiled and said, "*Zahl zain a simcha far der gantzer kollel!*" (there should be joy for the whole kollel)" At that moment, my father couldn't hear what the Rebbe said, but the person behind him repeated the Rebbe's words for him. My father had no idea what the Rebbe meant, as he was a *rosh yeshiva*. It was only when I assumed my current position as the head of Kollel Avreichim Ohel Moshe – Chabad that my father told me this story, saying that he now understood what the Rebbe was talking about. It's also possible to connect this with the fact that the kollel was founded in memory of Rabbi Ochanuna's father, Rabbi Moshe Ochanuna, who passed away on **Chaf Zayin Adar Rishon 5752**, during the month of simcha and on the well-known day of what occurred to the Rebbe. Thus, I am certain that the Rebbe knew about this kollel long before its founding and even then he gave it a bracha for simcha.

The Rebbe is involved in the life of every Jew, in the lives of Anash, in the lives of his shlichim, and we see how the Rebbe is personally concerned that institutions should be established that fulfill the need for studying Torah and chassidus, and provide an answer and a blessing in all areas of a Jew's life. The Rebbe replied to me on more than one occasion that he is sending me material assistance "...from my personal fund..." Therefore, we see that the Rebbe is involved personally in all of his institutions long before they are even founded.

Do you have a vision or a message for the future?

Indeed, I do. I would be most happy if the kollel would grow and meet all its objectives, i.e., providing the necessary tools for maintaining a chassidic household, both from a personal and a Torah aspect. Similarly, I would be happy to know that other communities are emphasizing intense Torah study together with personal support in education and for new couples. Naturally, all this will lead, G-d willing, to our ultimate goal – the True and Complete Redemption through the revelation of Moshiach Tzidkeinu. With each passing day, the world recognizes G-d's sovereignty more and more, and we



A Tanya shiur with Rabbi Moshe Mordechai Ehrenstein



Rabbi Avraham Ochanuna

must prepare institutions and the correct tools to provide an answer in the days of Moshiach for the growing need in Torah study. There is much work to be done and we must have complete faith in G-d Almighty that He will give us the necessary spiritual and material resources for this purpose.



REBBE, I DON'T WANT GENTILE GRANDCHILDREN!

By Nosson Avrohom

Mrs. Esther Dizada is known in the Persian community in Ashdod as a woman who uses most of her money and time to help others, even people she doesn't know.

It is not surprising then that when I called to hear about the miracle she experienced from the Rebbe's bracha in 5745, she asked me whether I knew anybody who would be interested in contributing towards a poor kalla's wedding.

The founders of the Persian community's shul in Ashdod know good and well who they have to thank. For several years, the construction of the shul was delayed until Esther got involved. She raised a large amount of money in order to pay for the building's completion. When I asked her about this, she hides behind her modesty.

She takes great pride, however, in the Torah scroll she arranged to be written, a seifer Torah designated to hastening the Geula.

"When we bought the house in Ashdod a few years ago, we felt that nothing was going right. Our son Yitzchok, who had become a baal t'shuva and a Chabad Chassid, advised us to write to the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh*. Since I had seen the Rebbe, I found it bizarre to write to him in such a

manner, but he explained what it was about and told me amazing stories that had happened through the *Igros Kodesh*.

"We wrote and the letter we opened to was about writing a Torah scroll. I didn't understand the connection to us. Writing a Torah is very costly and by us, it is the Torah scholars who write Torahs.

"After a long time when matters did not improve and the difficulties mounted, we wrote to the Rebbe again, as our son advised. To our surprise, the letter we opened to was, once again, about writing a Torah scroll. I was stubborn again that time and didn't pursue it. It just didn't seem right that a Torah should be written for me. According to my outlook and the way I was taught, I am not on the level to have a Torah scroll; it's a privilege for those who study Torah.

"The third time we wrote and the Rebbe's answer was once again, about writing a Torah scroll, I gave in and decided to have one written. I went to the United States to my brothers, raised the money, and had it written in Tzfas. The procession passed the gravesite of Rashbi and entered our shul."

When Mrs. Dizada tells her story, you get the feeling that she is

reliving something that happened a few days ago:

"I had the privilege of passing by the Rebbe more than once, and I thank G-d for that. I twice experienced his G-dly power in the course of a visit I made to New York in 5745. I'll tell you what happened.

"My extended family, my brothers and uncle, emigrated from Iran to the United States. We were the only ones of our family who went to Eretz Yisroel. One of my nephews was getting married that year and the family wanted me to attend the wedding and knew that we didn't have the money. They called and offered to pay for our tickets.

"At that time, one of my sons was in Switzerland, where he sold books and pictures on the street. I asked my relatives whether they could arrange the tickets so that I could stop over in Switzerland and see my son, whom I hadn't seen in a long time.

"I looked forward anxiously to seeing him, but when I finally arrived at his apartment I was devastated to discover that my dear son was living with a gentile woman. I had never urged my children to live a religious life but living with a non-Jewish woman was out of the

“The Rebbe did not remove his gaze from me. When I finished, he made a dismissive motion with his hand as though to say there was nothing to worry about...”

question, as far as I was concerned.

“That was one of the blackest days of my life. When I gently spoke with my son about it, his reaction was that he didn’t know what I wanted from him. Everything I said about preserving the spark of Judaism in Iran with self-sacrifice and about the strong stand against assimilation for hundreds of years didn’t impress him. He explained that that was in the past, but nowadays, in free countries, there was no problem since the world was more open and free.

“Based on his reaction and observing his relationship with her, I greatly feared that he would marry her. My heart broke.

“Throughout the flight from Switzerland to America, I sobbed. I couldn’t hold back my tears. People around me, as well as the airline crew, were polite and tried to soothe me, asking how they could help, but how could I explain to them that my son was bent on uprooting himself from the Jewish people?

“When I left the terminal in New York, my relatives were there to greet me. The sorrow that I tried to contain within me burst forth. It took me a long time to calm down and explain to them that my crying

wasn’t due to the excitement at meeting them but to the pain over my son.

“That was a Friday morning. My brothers told me that I could stop worrying. According to them, there was a big tzaddik in New York whose brachos were fulfilled, and many were rescued upon receiving his bracha. He was the Lubavitcher Rebbe, the leader of Chabad Chassidim worldwide.

“During that Shabbos, I heard many miracles stories from my relatives and others about the Rebbe’s greatness. This gave me some hope.

“On Sunday I stood in line with thousands of people, all sorts of people, young and old, well-to-do and blue collar workers. I was amazed. Just seeing the line was enough to warm my heart. My brothers instructed me to choose my words since I would be rushed along.

“After two hours of waiting, I was in front of the Rebbe. At first I trembled; the Rebbe’s presence was so overpowering. He looked otherworldly and this frightened me, but I quickly remembered why I was there. I cried, ‘Rebbe, my son is about to marry a goya. What should I do?’

“I cannot describe to you how I felt as I stood there. It was something like a dear father from whom you can ask anything and not have to hide anything. For a minute and more I pleaded with the Rebbe and cried. I repeatedly said that I didn’t want non-Jewish grandchildren. Just the thought of it made me shiver.

“The Rebbe did not remove his gaze from me. When I finished, he made a dismissive motion with his hand as though to say there was nothing to worry about. He repeated his bracha, ‘Blessing and success,’ and gave me another dollar.

“When I left the Rebbe I felt

relieved. It’s hard to explain. The only one who was able to calm me was the Rebbe, because when the Rebbe gives a bracha, you feel confident that it will be fulfilled. Even a simple Jew who never studied Torah could discern that he’s a man of G-d.”

The next day, Esther’s son called her.

“After some small talk, he said that the day before, the day I had seen the Rebbe, he parted from his girlfriend and he had decided to leave Switzerland and continue on to Germany.

“I certainly hadn’t expected the Rebbe’s bracha to be fulfilled so quickly but ‘a tzaddik decrees and Hashem fulfills,’ and there was no delay. Today, after many years spent traveling the world, this son married a Jewish woman and he became a baal t’shuva too. He lives in the vicinity of Yerushalayim and has eight children. I have much nachas from him. Another son from whom I have much nachas is Yitzchok. After a long stay in Australia, he met the Rebbe’s shliach and became a Lubavitcher himself. He is married and lives in Eilat.”

Mrs. Dizana concluded with another interesting experience she had with the Rebbe at “dollars” before returning to Eretz Yisroel.

“I decided to pass by the Rebbe and get dollars for my three sons. Having seen the power of the Rebbe’s bracha, I freed up the entire day and thought I would go past the Rebbe time after time until I received three dollars.

“What actually happened was, I told the Rebbe we were returning to Eretz Yisroel and he gave me five dollars. I was stunned. The Rebbe had given me dollars for myself, my husband, and my three sons without my having said how many people were in my family. All I had said was that we were returning...”