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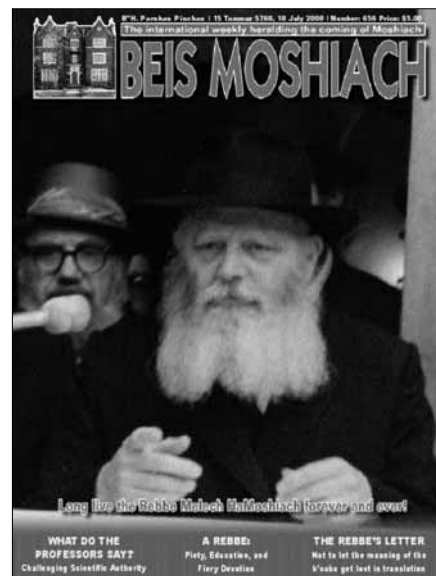
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OUR PORTION, OUR LOT, OUR HERITAGE

Translated and adapted by Dovid Yisroel Ber Kaufmann

The mitzva of inheritance is listed last in Maimonides's book of commandments. This indicates that the laws of inheritance complete the laws of the Torah. The laws of inheritance will only be fully applicable in the times of Moshiach, which completes the purpose of giving the Torah. There are three methods of dividing the land – by tribal size, by lot, by inheritance. Dividing by tribal size resembles a sale, where there is a rational basis for the exchange; assigning land by lot resembles a gift, where the apparently random selection reveals a deeper, non-rational relationship; dividing by inheritance reveals unity of being, a oneness between the generations. These three methods correspond to three parts of the morning Ashreinu prayer and the three stages of Jewish history.

This week's Torah reading contains the laws of inheritance. Maimonides, in his list of the six hundred thirteen commandments, places this as the last positive mitzva. This parallels a reference to the inheritance which occurs in the last Mishneh in the last of the six Orders. (Uktsin 3:12 begins: "Rabbi Joshua ben Levi said, "The Holy One, blessed be He, will at a future time cause all the righteous to inherit three hundred and ten worlds [and he quotes Proverbs 8:21].") The commentators explain that the six Orders of the Mishnayos end this way because that Mishneh speaks about the ultimate reward for learning Torah and observing mitzvos. Similarly, Maimonides concludes the listing of the six hundred thirteen commandments with the mitzva of inheritance because completion, or perfection, of the mitzvos is connected with inheritance, as will be explained.

In general, something comes last because it completes and culminates all that comes before. Just as the first object in a series comes first because it is the most fundamental element, the foundation and source for all that follows, so that which comes last concludes and perfects all that came before. In our case, the first positive mitzva is to know that G-d exists. This is the source for all other mitzvos and the most

important principle. By the same token, the law of inheritance comes last because with the observance of that mitzva, Torah – and thus Creation – is complete. The mitzva of inheritance is the final fulfillment of the Torah's purpose.

Now, we know that Revelation occurred for the sake of Redemption: G-d gave the Torah, so that the Jewish people, through their Torah-study and mitzva-observance, could bring Moshiach. With and through Moshiach comes universal recognition of G-dliness. Thus, if there is one mitzva that culminates and concludes the entire order and process, that mitzva must obviously have a connection to Moshiach and Redemption.

On the simplest level, the law of inheritance comes last because it is the last stage of Redemption.

Moshiach is the culmination of Jewish history. Inheritance is the culmination of Jewish law. Moshiach's ultimate purpose is to facilitate and enforce Jewish law. Inheritance, the last law, cannot be truly implemented until the pre-conditions – associated with Moshiach – have been truly met. Only after Moshiach successfully brings the Redemption, will the Jewish people inherit the land.

The final verification of Moshiach is gathering in the exiles. Moshiach's conclusive act will be to bring the Jewish people back to Israel. (After that, the rest of the world will automatically recognize G-d's sovereignty, and G-dliness will fill the world as the waters cover the ocean bed.) Obviously, the people cannot take possession of their land – they cannot inherit it – until they once again dwell on and occupy it. When the Jewish people return to the land of Israel, only then will the law of inheritance become finally and fully operative. Since bringing the Jewish people back to the land of Israel is the last thing Moshiach must do, the law of inheritance will be the last mitzva to be fully and properly observed.

However, the connection between inheritance and

Moshiach goes deeper: Moshiach is the culmination of Jewish history. Inheritance is the culmination of Jewish law. Moshiach's ultimate purpose is to facilitate and enforce Jewish law. Inheritance, the last law, cannot be truly implemented until the pre-conditions – associated with Moshiach – have been truly met. Only after Moshiach successfully brings the Redemption, will the Jewish people inherit the land.

Now, the laws of inheritance were instituted in conjunction with the division of the land. During the discussion of how the Jewish people are to divide the land of Israel, a problem arose. Z'lafchad, from the tribe of Menashe, had died without sons. His daughters came to Moses and asked, "Why should our father's name be removed from his family

because he did not have a son? Give us a portion of land along with our father's brothers." In response, G-d told Moses to instruct the Jewish people concerning the laws of inheritance.

Ultimately, the Jewish people would live in the land of Israel, where all the mitzvos could be observed fully and completely. The land itself had to be divided among the tribes and their families. As a natural consequence, the Torah had to establish the laws of inheritance.

But inheritance was only one of three ways by which land was acquired. Based on the description of the division and the response to the daughters of Z'lafchad, we learn that three methods

determined possession: inheritance, the size of the tribe or family and the drawing of lots. On the simplest or lowest level, there was a logical division to the land: the larger the tribe, the greater the area it received. There was also a division that went beyond logic and depended on a more fundamental relationship: the portions were chosen by lot, indicating a basic connection between that part of the land and that particular family. This connection had nothing to do with size or other rational considerations. It was an internal connection that could only be revealed in a non-rational, apparently random manner.

However, both of these methods involved transferring the property from one owner to another.

In this, they resemble a sale and a gift, respectively. That is, a sale occurs when the buyer pays the price for the item. Here, there is a logical exchange of value, initiated by the buyer's efforts. This corresponds to the division according to the size of the population. We can rationally evaluate the worth of the exchange.

A gift is apparently arbitrary, given without a logical reason. The giver simply has a desire to bestow something on another person. A gift thus depends on the will of the giver. This corresponds to choosing a portion by lot: the apparent randomness of the selection indicates a deeper, more fundamental relationship than logic allows.

Still, in both cases, there is a transmission, either from seller to buyer or from giver to receiver. Whoever initiates the exchange, there are two separate beings involved; whatever the nature of the connection, each participant stands apart from the other. The third method, that of inheritance, is different. Here, the inheritor stands in place of, and thus is unified with, the owner. In order for an heir to take possession, no transfer is necessary. Rather, succession is automatic and inherent, because the heir simply manifests the essence, the true nature of the one from whom he inherits. Inheritance indicates a unity of being, a oneness between the generations.

Interestingly, this distinction is recognized in the morning prayer service. In reference to the Torah and the relationship of the Jewish people with G-d, the following is recited: "How good is our portion, how pleasant our lot, and how beautiful our

heritage." The first phrase, "how good is our portion," corresponds to the logical division of the land of Israel; our "portion" we receive according to our efforts, the work we put into Torah and mitzvos. The second phrase, "how pleasant our lot," refers to the deeper relationship. We cannot earn "our lot" through our labors; G-d apportions it to us simply because He chooses to do so. Distribution by lot is only apparently random; lots are actually assigned according to G-d's Will.

The last phrase, "how beautiful our heritage," indicates that the Jewish people are united with the essence of G-d. As the *Zohar* expresses it, Israel and the Holy One, blessed be He, are entirely one entity. Moshiach makes this third level manifest.

These three concepts are connected with the three general periods of Jewish history. The first stage, before the giving of the Torah, corresponds to division by logic, "how good is our portion." The holiness and relationship with G-d came as a result of the personal efforts of the Patriarchs and their descendants. The second stage, beginning with the giving of the Torah, corresponds to G-d's choosing the Jewish people, simply as a matter of the Divine Will. "How pleasant our lot."

The third stage will occur with the complete fulfillment of the Torah and mitzvos. Then, "how beautiful our heritage." The third stage is the period of Moshiach and Redemption, when we will truly inherit the land, and the unity of the Jewish people with the Essence of G-d will be truly revealed.

(Based on Likkutei Sichos 28, pp. 174-181)



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THREE MIRACLE STORIES

By Nosson Avrohom

They've been on shlichus in Milan for 42 years now and have done much to promote and strengthen Judaism there. Rebbetzin Belinov is known for her shiurim and lectures, while Rabbi Belinov supervises the kashrus of many products that are exported from Milan to the rest of the Jewish world. * The following are three miracle stories related by Esther Belinov.

I won't readily forget my visit to the Belinovs of Milan. The special atmosphere was due to the warmth and soulfulness of the lady of the house, Esther Belinov. She had to leave in the middle of our conversation in order to bring some food she had prepared for a woman in the community who had been hospitalized.

In Rebbetzin Belinov's childhood in Zurich, she loved hearing stories of the Baal Shem Tov and his disciples, which she heard from her teacher, Rabbi Avrohom Yehuda Dzaloshinsky, who was in close contact with the Rebbe.

When she was 14, her father passed away and three years later she was sent by Rabbi Dzaloshinsky

to a summer camp that was organized by the shluchim in Milan. By the time camp was over, she knew that she wanted to lead her life by Chassidic values. When she was offered the job of a preschool teacher in Milan, and her mother and brother wanted her to attend seminary in Eretz Yisroel, she asked the Rebbe. The answer was to listen to her mother and brother.

That year she went to Yerushalayim and attended Bais Yaakov seminary. She did not hide her love for the Rebbe and Chabad, which led to quite a few run-ins with the administration of the school, especially when they discovered that she frequently went to visit Kfar Chabad.

Her husband, R' Yitzchok Belinov is a model of a Chassidic Rav of an earlier generation. Throughout my visit in their home, I saw him bent over a Gemara, getting up from time to time to retrieve a volume of one of the commentaries from his vast library. He is not a man of words, but a man of Torah study. The study of Torah is his life. Just hearing a brief synopsis of his life story made things abundantly clear, as he is the son of R' Shmuel Dovid Belinov, who was a shochet in France and known as a great Chassid and Torah scholar.

During my visit, the couple gave me the grand tour of the beautiful shul Beis HaLevi, which they built with much effort over many years. "We saw many incidents of Hashgacha Pratis and many miracles in establishing the shul," testifies Reb. Belinov. In this shul, many Jews of different backgrounds within Sephardic Jewry come not only to daven but to benefit from the wisdom of Rabbi Belinov.

They have spent the last forty two years in Milan as shluchim of the Rebbe, and in that period, they have accomplished a great deal in strengthening and fortifying Judaism. Reb. Belinov is known for her special lectures and classes, and Rabbi Belinov works, amongst his other activities, in providing kosher supervision for many products exported from Milan to the entire Jewish world.

It wasn't easy to get them to agree to an interview. "I am not a man of words," Rabbi Belinov insisted repeatedly as he pleaded with me to leave them alone. However, I couldn't very well leave without anything to show for my time, so I did manage to extract from them three amazing miracle stories that they experienced over their years of shlichus.

"There are many more stories,"

Reb. Belinov told me to my surprise, as I was on my way out. "Many people don't always know to open their eyes and discern the amazing events of Divine Providence that occur. Today, from the vantage point of my advanced age, I am able to see things from a long-distance perspective, seeing not only the beginning of the story but also the end," she proclaims. She also added a request to all the shluchim and

shluchos, "Don't give up hope, even if you don't see immediate results!"

* * *

The first significant incident where I merited to see the Rebbe's Divine vision in a tangible way took place two years after we arrived on shlichus in Milan. My husband was in Milan already before our wedding which took place in the middle of 5726/1966. I also had a connection with the city as two years previously,



I had attended a summer camp organized by Rabbi and Rebbetzin Garelik, who were also our matchmakers.

The story I would like to recount, happened in 5728/1968. One day, I began to feel pains in my stomach. Initially, I preferred to think of it as not particularly serious, and assumed they would pass with time. However, when that didn't happen, and the pains became more frequent and intense, I went for an exam.

The doctor that examined me was the world renowned doctor Dr. Montal, a Jew who was not observant. After a series of tests and x-rays, he informed me that based on the results, it was clear without a shadow of a doubt that I had a tumor in my stomach. The medical diagnosis terrified me. I was a young woman, and to hear such a diagnosis... I was completely thrown. The only glimmer of light in the doctor's prognosis was that the tumor was not malignant, but it was large enough that I needed to have an immediate operation before other complications set in.

The situation was both sudden and terrifying, but we still managed to shock him when we informed him solemnly that although we did not doubt his diagnosis and recommendations, we have a Rebbe, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, and we would act only upon his instructions. We explained to him that we would forward the results of the tests and his recommendation to the Rebbe's secretaries in New York, and we would do whatever the Rebbe told us.

He gave us a pitying look, and we promised to keep him informed of the answer. Before we left his office, he called out to me – perhaps to make me realize just how serious my condition was – “You need to remember that you are in great danger.”

In those days, it wasn't commonplace to just ring up the secretaries' office on the phone, as it became later. So, we wrote a letter to the Rebbe, knowing that we would have to wait days or weeks for a response. A week passed without any answer, and meanwhile the pains would come and go, but I remained firm – without an answer from the Rebbe, I would not agree to an operation.

When a full week passed and the doctor hadn't heard from us one way or the other, he picked up the phone himself. To tell the truth, it was quite a surprise to hear the doctor himself calling to inquire how I was doing. When I explained to him that I still hadn't received a response from the Rebbe, he nearly blew his top.

“What does that mean that you haven't received an answer from your Rebbe? I'm a doctor and I'm telling you that every day that passes in which you delay the operation to remove the tumor, you're putting your life in danger!”

However, I stuck to my position. I agreed to come into his clinic for another visit, but only for an exam. I made it as clear as possible to him that without an answer from the Rebbe, there was nothing to discuss regarding an operation.

After carrying out additional tests, he approached me with a very grave look on his face and announced, “If last week the tumor was the size of a Clementine, now it is the size of an orange. You are taking your life in your hands.” He asked to be absolved of all medical responsibility if anything happened to me. To him, at this rate, I was endangering my life.

Looking back, I don't know from where I drew the emotional strength to stand up to an eminent doctor and tell him the way it was. To me, it was clear as day that there was no way I was going to undergo an

operation without a bracha from the Rebbe.

It wasn't easy. On one hand stood the professional opinion of the doctor, on the other, the belief of a Chassid, a shlucha of the Rebbe, that such a situation requires the Rebbe's blessings.

Another few days passed until the Rebbe's written response arrived: to consult with another two expert doctors. The Rebbe concluded the letter with blessings for proper health. Exhilaration and joy replaced the feelings of fear and dread of the unknown, which had filled me for the previous two weeks. We rushed to carry out the Rebbe's instructions. We found two reputable doctors in the field and made appointments to be checked by them. Despite the many years that have passed since then, I find it hard to keep my emotions in check as I recall those days.

We entered the office of the first doctor and I told him the whole story. He agreed to administer the necessary tests. I was in great suspense as I awaited the results. I was totally shocked when he looked at the results and said with his hands spread apart in question that he has no idea what I came to see him for, as he sees no sign of any growth. He was sure that we were playing some sort of prank.

We left the doctor's office in shock, not yet having absorbed the extent of the miracle that the Rebbe had wrought with his blessing. When we left the office of the second doctor, who also could not understand why we came to him, we finally realized that the Rebbe had completely removed the tumor and the illness.

I could not assimilate the awesomeness of the miracle. It was simply mind-boggling. For two weeks I had walked around with the feeling that I had a tumor and am about to undergo an operation, and

after the bracha from the Rebbe, it disappeared. I returned to the first doctor, Dr. Montal, and I told him the entire succession of events.

He looked at me as if I was hallucinating, and he repeated all the tests. After he looked at the films and test results, he said that he also doesn't see anything. "It's impossible for such a tumor to

After carrying out additional tests, he approached me with a very grave look on his face and announced, "If last week the tumor was the size of a Clementine, now it is the size of an orange. You are taking your life in your hands." He asked to be absolved of all medical responsibility if anything happened to me. To him, at this rate, I was endangering my life.

disappear," he exclaimed in absolute amazement. Until this very day, he refuses to believe me that it was the Rebbe's bracha, and nothing else, which eliminated the growth...

* * *

The second story that I wish to share can be of great benefit to many young shluchim, or anyone involved in public works for that matter, who don't always see results in the short term, or get appreciation from those around them.

There was an incident that took place in Milan that I took very much to heart. This incident was the straw that broke the camel's back and I decided I wanted to leave Milan and go on shlichus somewhere else, or move to a large Chabad community where I could be more influential.

I wrote a long letter to the Rebbe and explained my feelings. I wrote from my heart, with lots of tears. I wrote that I feel that I am ineffective in Milan, and perhaps I could do more elsewhere. In addition, it was a pity that I was needlessly endangering my children's chinuch by remaining in Milan.

I sent the letter and felt I simply could not go on. Days passed and I received no response. I was beside myself. I decided that if I did not receive an answer, I was going to go to the Rebbe, have yechidus, and explain my feelings to the Rebbe.

In Tishrei 5739 I went to the Rebbe with my children. I explained to the secretaries that I had an important reason to see the Rebbe and could not be pushed off. They gave me an appointment for eleven o'clock at night. When I arrived at that time I was disappointed to see that it was a general-yechidus, the first of its kind in which groups of people were addressed by the Rebbe. Another twelve people went in with me.

I was so disappointed. How would I speak to the Rebbe in detail

about my situation when there were other people in the room? I didn't have many options and I entered *Gan Eden HaElyon* with everybody else for the general-yechidus, something new to all of us.

I first wrote another letter in which I detailed why the shlichus in Milan did not suit me. I wrote that there was a Jewish woman who left her gentile boyfriend and I tried to be mekarev her but whatever I did was unsuccessful. I also had a neighbor whom I tried to influence. I invited her to Shabbos meals and shiurim but nothing helped. I was frustrated.

During this yechidus, each person put his page of requests on the table. The Rebbe looked through the papers and then suddenly said that whoever is in a particular place should remain there. The Rebbe explained that a person being in a certain place has a purpose and nothing happens without reason.

When I heard that, I didn't know what to think. The Rebbe was answering me clearly. I could think and want what I wanted but apparently, my place was in Milan.

I returned to Milan with mixed feelings. On the one hand, I didn't want to remain in Milan. On the other hand, the Rebbe said that whoever is in a particular place has a reason for being there. I understood what the Rebbe meant a few weeks later.

On the phone was a woman who introduced herself as Claudia Levy. She said she was a kalla and she invited me to celebrate her shidduch with her.

"Who are you?" I asked, and she laughed and said, "You don't know me but I know you. Two years ago, you were with your family outside the city and you visited a little synagogue that was turned into a museum. I saw how you all behaved and your refinement, and my curiosity about you led me to

research Judaism.

“That’s how I met Rabbi Shmuel Rodal, shliach in Milan. I went to classes and programs and continued learning, as per his advice, at Machon Chana in Crown Heights. Today I am a Lubavitcher Chassid and I’m about to marry a Lubavitcher bachur. It all began when I saw you...”

When I heard this, I couldn’t help but be moved. The Rebbe’s words came to mind. Here I had been writing that I was unsuccessful in Milan, and the Rebbe said that if you’re in a particular place, there’s a reason for it. True, we don’t always see the immediate fruits of our efforts, but we have a principle that our work will not return empty-handed. We will never know the depth and power of our shlichus, particularly since a man’s emissary is like himself.

When she told me where she had met me, I remembered that trip. It was when we found out about a concert taking place at that shul and I told my husband we should go there since we might meet Jews that we could have an influence on.

During the concert, the hall was silent, so we couldn’t speak to anyone. We considered that outing a failure but two years later we were informed that we were mistaken.

The third story, which is really amazing, took place on one of the days of Chanuka 5763. One evening, I received a phone call from a group of non-Lubavitcher women who asked that I come to speak words of Torah on timely matters, in honor of a celebration that they were holding. They informed me that they had already made all the necessary preparations. When I inquired as to the nature of the celebration, they told me that one of the women had become pregnant after many long years of waiting, and they wanted to express thanksgiving to Hashem.

When I heard that this was the

reason, I became concerned. I knew that the Rebbe’s view is that one should keep the fact of pregnancy a secret, especially in the first months. When I tried to tentatively raise the issue, I realized that there was no point to any further discussion as they would not accept my views. They had decided to hold the event, no matter what!

So I decided that in addition to the Jewish and Chassidic content that I would incorporate into my speech, I would take one of the letters that the Rebbe had sent me during one of my pregnancies, make a photocopy and give it to the woman in question to serve as a segula for protection in the coming months. Naturally, I have a number of such letters, so I looked for the one that was best preserved and thus the most legible and I headed over to the nearby store to make a copy.

When I got to the store, I took another glance at the letter and tensed up. This was a letter I had received from the Rebbe for a pregnancy that did not make it to term... I copied the letter, but I was feeling torn inside. I did not feel comfortable that it was this particular letter that I was about to pass on to this woman as a segula. Who knows – maybe this was a sign from Above?

I didn’t have much time to think about the matter as I was supposed to head straight to the hall from the store. On my way to the gathering, I noticed another interesting thing that I hadn’t noticed before. This letter from the Rebbe, written for the pregnancy that did not carry to term, had arrived two years late(!), two days before the birth of my first daughter, Sheina Rivka! I realized this based on the date of the Italian postmark as compared to the date at the top of the letter.

Back then, I hadn’t paid it much notice. I had received the letter two days before giving birth to my oldest

daughter and had been preoccupied with the upcoming birth. When I saw this new fact, I reminded myself of everything that had happened at the time, and I felt much calmer. I entered the hall feeling quite calm, and after my speech, I announced to the crowd that I had a gift for the “woman of honor.”

Suddenly, I was informed that the woman had not been able to come as she was not feeling well, but she was being represented by her mother and mother-in-law. I asked the mother what was her pregnant daughter’s name, and she told me, “Rivka.” When I inquired as to her own name, she answered, “Esther.” It took me a few seconds to put it all together, but when it finally dawned on me, I was stunned.

You see, my name is Esther, and this letter arrived two days before the birth of my daughter, who is named Rivka. It turns out that the Rebbe doesn’t just send off letters that happen to arrive years late, and it was no coincidence that I had specifically chosen this letter. Apparently, as far back as twenty eight years ago, this letter was intended to reach this particular woman.

Reb. Belinov concluded the telling of this story in an emotional tone, “When the whole story became clear to me, I asked for the floor to address the women again and I recounted the whole chain of events behind the letter that I was holding in my hand. The two mothers were especially affected by the story. I told them that in light of everything I was confident that she would have an easy and proper birth in good health.

“A few months after the gathering, on Purim day, she gave birth to triplets, two girls and a boy, named Esther, Mordechai, and Chana.”

NOT TO LET THE MEANING OF THE K'SUBA GET LOST IN TRANSLATION

By the Grace of G-d
11th of Teveth, 5716
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Dear Rabbi :

In reply to your letter, after apologies for the unavoidable delay, in which I inquire whether, after reading the Kesuba in the original, according to the Din, it could also be read in English -

There are two points to be considered in connection with this question: (a) The question per se, and (b) consideration of local and environmental conditions.

With regard to the former, the idea of translating the text of the Kesuba in English, or whatever the spoken language may be, after reading it in its original, is not only permissible, but should be recommended, as unfortunately in many cases the Bride and Bridegroom do not understand the meaning of the text in Hebrew.

With regard to (b), care should be taken to preclude anything that might smack of reform and the customs of that movement, as they use every means of introducing their inimical ways and customs into orthodoxy, wherever they can, changing the traditional text of prayers, as well as of the Kesuba, for which their English versions offer an opportunity to do this.

Sincerely yours,

Secretary.

*From the t'shura printed in honor of the wedding
of Shmuel Simpson and Golda Chasdan sh'y*

REBBI GAVE HONOR TO THE WEALTHY

By Yisroel Yehuda

*To be “As rich as Korach,” means to be extraordinarily wealthy. Many people want to be rich. How does Chassidus look at wealth? How did Chassidim treat the wealthy? What “symptoms” did wealthy Chassidim “suffer” from and why did Rebbe give honor to the wealthy? * Part 2 of 2.*

[Continued from last issue]

PROBLEMS OF THE WEALTHY

Chassidim were successful in taking the “despised thing,” money, and using it for the Rebbe’s inyanim. Wealthy Lubavitchers, being Chassidim and baalei avoda, were for the most part charitable and generous. They certainly did not take credit and didn’t express an opinion about things they knew nothing about.

Nevertheless, rich Chassidim were suspect by the mashpiim of being too emotionally involved in their businesses or other outside interests, as well as having apathy – even if only on a very subtle level – for the ways of Chassidus and avodas ha’chassidus. The mashpiim always kept an eye on them and put the wealthy Chassidim in their place for every little thing, without being

partial to them because of their position. To their credit, the wealthy Chassidim accepted this rebuke with kabbalas ol.

“A rich man answers arrogantly,” it says, and this characteristic attached itself – even if only in a small measure – to those wealthy Chassidim. Their manner of talking and conduct bespoke their affluence. They had a particular inn in Lubavitch where they stayed. However, before the Rebbe they all stood in trepidation, though occasionally, they acted as the rich do, even before the Rebbe.

One year, on Simchas Torah in Rostov at the Rebbe Rashab, the wealthy R’ Shmuel Gurary and his son Nosson were present. R’ Shmuel donated a large sum and his son, who was still a young bachur, wanted to make a donation too. He whispered to his father that he also wanted to make a contribution and

he asked how much he should give.

R’ Shmuel, who was somewhat inebriated, responded loudly, “You’re a fool [*petoch* in Russian].”

The Rebbe asked, “What did your son ask?” R’ Shmuel told him. The Rebbe said, “Yes, of course he should give!

R’ Shmuel asked how much and the Rebbe said: Like the numerical value of the word *petoch*.

Then differences of opinion arose as to how to spell the word, with a *Tes* or a *Tav*.

Speaking of arrogance, when the Bolsheviks ruled Russia, they took all the money away from the wealthy and left them penniless. A sad joke went around that the Bolsheviks only took away the “wealth,” but they left the arrogance.

In 5619 there was a family simcha held by the prosperous Goldetz family in Shtzedrin. As was customary then, there was a farbrengen held in honor of the simcha. The main speaker was the mashpia in Shtzedrin, R’ Yisroel Moshe, who was known for his gifted tongue. He strongly censured the men in the wealthy family for being lax in having set times for Torah study and not coming on time to study Chassidus and to Chassidishe farbrengens.

The men apologized and said it was because they were preoccupied with business but the mashpia did not let up and spoke a lot on the verse, “and Hashem will bless you in

all that you do,” and “the blessing of Hashem is what makes you wealthy.” His words made an impact on the crowd and he concluded, “Why do you need to help Hashem? Better you should help yourselves!”

In the history of Chabad much is said about “dealing with the problem of wealth,” so that when the Rebbe Rayatz wants to describe the success of a particular Chassidishe activity he sometimes notes that a certain rich man was influenced by it. An example of this is a story about how the Rebbe Maharash once farbrenged at the Simchas Beis HaShoeiva. It was a short farbrengen. One of the guests was a businessman from Polotsk, by the name of Chaim Nemesov who was well-to-do. He left ripped to shreds by that farbrengen.

In another place it says that at a Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen the Rebbe Rashab spoke about wealthy men. “That night the Rebbe spoke about rich men and they all took off their *monishkes* and *manzhaten* [fashionable clothing items of that period] and threw them to the side.”

The Chassidim themselves worked on their fellow wealthy Chassidim in order to “warm” them

up with the fire of Chassidus. Sometimes it happened inadvertently.

The Chassid, R’ Shlomo Monaszohn was one of the Chassidim of the Mittlerer Rebbe. He was a g’vir the son of a g’vir and educated and guided by the Chassidim from the time of the Alter Rebbe. After yechidus he would farbreng with the Chassidim and join the yechidus dance, as was customary. But when it came to Chassidishe warmth, he was still one of the Chassidim described as “Chassidishe balabatim.”

R’ Shlomo, like other men in Shklov, would daven with enthusiasm, join the groups of Chassidim and farbreng as is customary among Chassidim. One time, during a certain farbrengen, R’ Michoel the lame melamed burst into fearful crying. He hit himself on the heart and head and said: Master of the universe, have mercy on me and help me feel the same pleased excitement while praying “illuminate our eyes with Your Torah and make our hearts cleave to Your mitzvos, and unify our hearts to love and fear Your name,” with the same pleased excitement that Shlomo Monaszohn has when he says “the

wealth and honor before You.”

R’ Michoel the melamed did not mean to disparage R’ Shlomo for he was thinking of himself and was dissatisfied with his level in avoda. However, what he said made a deep impression on R’ Shlomo, who went hastily to Lubavitch, had yechidus with the Mittlerer Rebbe and became a different man.

The Rebbe Rayatz writes of how to deal with the arrogance of the wealthy or those inflated with their own brilliance in Torah:

It can happen that the wealthy man of the town known as R’ Yaakov Nagid [philanthropist] even when not in his presence, goes to attend a Chassidishe farbrengen and the Chassid Mottel the Beggar who supports himself by collecting money for “bread for the poor,” “clothes for the naked,” and “bikkur cholim” says to him: Yankel, come here, and he seats himself near him.

Or when the rav’s son-in-law, the brilliant young R’ Eliezer Mechadesh [originator of Torah insights] of Shklov comes into the beis midrash with a group of Chassidim and the main speaker is Shlomo the Chassidishe melamed, Shlomo der Geller, or even Leybe Tzeites, and they announce with exaggerated gaiety, “Make place for Leizer’ke Mechadesh.” Such an invitation provides a general blow to the haughtiness of spirit that comes of wealth or the arrogance that comes of Torah knowledge.

The Rebbe Rayatz then goes on to say that following this “general blow” it is necessary to deal with the specific issues and that is where he goes into the explanation of the “good and bad in wealth,” which was quoted earlier.

The Rebbe MH”M told, in the name of the Rebbe Rayatz, about the wealthy Chassid, R’ Shmuel Michoel Treinin, who had connections with royal ministers and was generally a very orderly person



by nature. He was also a *mara sh'chora* (of a gloomy disposition) and therefore he was particular that his clothes be properly buttoned, each button in its proper buttonhole [this was before zippers on the fronts of pants – Ed.].

One time R' Michoel Bliner (Michoel der Alter) went to see him in order to try to help out a bachur who had to be released from the army so he could study Torah. He needed R' Shmuel Michoel to go with him to one of the nobles who

could help in this matter.

They had to pass the main street of Petersburg. R' Michoel Bliner walked in Petersburg in the same way that he walked in Lubavitch... And he hadn't davened yet and had just finished doing what it says in *Shulchan Aruch* regarding preparations for davening and so his fly buttons weren't closed properly.

R' Shmuel Michoel said to him with some trepidation, since he was afraid that he might "give it to him." "R' Michoel! Since we are walking

on the main street (which was called Nyeovski Profekt), how about closing your buttons?

R' Michoel's response was, "Gevald R' Shmuel Michoel, is that what you're into?"

FINAL CONCLUSION – BE RICH!

In Parshas Truma 5752 the Rebbe declares:

"First of all, we learn from this that Hashem paskens in His holy

THE REBBE MAHARASH'S WEALTH

The Rebbe related:

There is the story told by the Rebbe, my father-in-law, about his grandfather, the Rebbe Maharash. The Rebbe Maharash, even when the Nasi, was involved in business on the stock exchange in Petersburg. He remained in Lubavitch and from there he would send telegrams to his representatives in Petersburg to inform them which shares to buy and which to sell for him.

In those days there wasn't a radio from which you could get information about the stock exchange and decide which stocks to sell or to buy based on information received half an hour ago. Even when newspapers arrived in Lubavitch, they were old papers from years before, and in those days, the papers probably didn't have news about the market. Nevertheless, the Rebbe Maharash would send word to Petersburg every day about how to handle his business affairs.

That is how the Rebbe Maharash, throughout his nesius (and before that too, and it continued until he passed away) was very wealthy, according to the standards of those days, someone who possessed a great deal of money, stocks, and everything else.

Nevertheless, the Rebbe Maharash said that the five coins that a certain melamed in town gave, who was only able to give fifty coins a year for *maamud* (support of the Rebbe's household) or once in several

years, was especially precious. This was even though it was worth hardly anything. (Toras Menachem 5716 vol. 2, p. 60)

At the Purim farbrengen 5728 the Rebbe described the special conduct of the Rebbe Maharash. "The Rebbe Maharash's conduct was extremely ostentatious. All his utensils were made of gold and since his activities were in the capitol city of Petersburg and he

would act like a baal ha'bayis in government affairs (as we know several stories in this regard), he had two gold watches and as was customary in those days, he wore them in his vest, one on the right and one on the left and they had gold chains.

The Rebbe smoked cigarettes in a gold holder, his snuff was in a golden snuff box, his eating utensils were of gold, his coach was decorated with gold, his clothing were magnificent and even his walking stick had a gold knob on top.

When my grandfather returned to his town and related these aspects of the conduct of the

Rebbe Maharash, he was asked by one of his listeners: What was this for? Is gold something necessary that one cannot live without? Better that the Rebbe gave it all to tz'daka and he would suffice with bread and measured water as Jews do in galus!

"Fool, fool," said my grandfather. "Why was gold created in the world, for me and you? For goyim, l'havdil? The world was created for him!"

***"Fool, fool," said
my grandfather.
"Why was gold
created in the
world, for me and
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l'havdil? The
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for him!"***

Torah, the Torah that is eternal for all generations and places, that every single Jew is first and foremost connected to gold. Simply put, that every Jew must be rich, spiritually and materially – literally wealthy!

“From this we have the instruction that a Jew ought to try and become actually rich in all matters, starting with spiritual wealth – a person is wealthy only in knowledge – being wealthy in Torah and mitzvos, and also in material wealth so that he can fulfill Torah and mitzvos with peace of mind and peace of body.”

The Rebbe even referred to the nature of wealth regarding Yemos HaMoshiach. In the sicha of Acharei-K’doshim 5751, the Rebbe calms down the rich who are worried that all their wealth won’t be worth anything in the Days of Moshiach. The Rebbe explains that Geula includes all matters of galus in a way that elevates them to a state of Geula, and therefore, the rich have nothing to worry about Geula.

HE DIDN'T KNOW HIS WEALTH CAME FROM HASHEM'S BLESSING

In 5658, the Rebbe Rashab received two letters on the same day from Chassidim who were balabatim, by the names of R' S.B. of Vitebsk and R' A. L. Cohen of Borisov, whose businesses were doing badly. The Rebbe told his son, the Rebbe Rayatz, to write R' Yaakov Horowitz to help R' S.B. of Vitebsk and to tell Yosef Kahanowitz to help R' A. L. of Borisov.

A week later, a letter came from R' Yaakov Horowitz, saying that he followed the Rebbe's instructions about helping R' S.B. of Vitebsk. The Rebbe Rayatz described that moment, “The holy face of my father lit up upon reading the letters he received from R' Yaakov Horowitz.

“My holy father said to me:

Yaakov Horowitz is a pashuter Yid, but he was given a Chassidishe education. He grew up and was educated among Chassidim, he spent his youth in a Chassidishe beis midrash, he heard a Chassidishe story and saw a Chassidishe davening, he heard a Chassidishe chapter of T'hilim – all this made an impression on him that one must have Chassidic deference and obedience.”

A few days later, letters from Mr. Kahanowitz and the Chassid R' A. L. of Borisov came.

“Mr. Kahanowitz was a rich man who was Chassidically educated. As soon as he received the letter he took care of R' A. L. of Borisov, moving him to a good apartment and providing him with a grocery store and in addition he offered to buy a forest in partnership with him. The Chassid R' A. L. of Borisov said that Mr. Kahanowitz loaned him 200 rubles and an additional 170 rubles for two months' rent. He put 1200 rubles worth of merchandise in the store and he even offered to include him in the forest he bought.

“The Chassid R' A. L. wondered how Mr. Kahanowitz knew of his plight and why he came to his aid with such generosity of spirit. He hopes to pay Mr. Kahanowitz back down to the last penny but he wonders about it all since he only met him two or three times in Lubavitch. He recounted that the Chassid Rashbam said, “Better a Chassidic neighbor than a brother a Misnaged,” and indeed, A. L.'s relative, the wealthy P. of Minsk, did not respond to his request for a loan of several hundred rubles, while Mr. Kahanowitz was kind to him in a dignified way and in a generous fashion.”

Regarding this the Rebbe Rashab said to his son, “Yosef Kahanowitz is someone who received a Chassidic education, a proper young man, who davened, made a blessing on food, but didn't know that ‘the

“My holy father said to me: Yaakov Horowitz is a pashuter Yid, but he was given a Chassidishe education... – all this made an impression on him that one must have Chassidic deference and obedience.”

blessing of Hashem makes you wealthy,’ He accepted the world at face value, and was therefore totally immersed in business.

“The first time, six years ago, he came to me to ask for business advice. I gave him my opinion and censured him severely for not being particular about davening with a minyan on weekdays and for not learning an hour every day.

“Two or three years went by and he changed. He davened in a Chassidishe minyan, he regularly heard a maamer, he had set times to learn, became close with the Chassidim, he farbrenged occasionally with the mashpia of the minyan, and from one time to the next he absorbed more and more of the Chassidic way until he became a vessel, ready to carry out the avoda of genuine, Chassidishe Ahavas Yisroel.”

Sources: Otzar Sippurei Chabad, Binyan Adei Ad, Shmuos V'Sippurim, Igros Kodesh, HaRebbe Mesaper, Hiskashrus, B'Tzel HaChochma, D'var Malchus 5751-2

A REBBE: PIETY, EDUCATION, AND FIERY DEVOTION

The following encounter took place August 27, 1959/27 Menachem Av 5719. Addressing a group of Hillel directors, the Rebbe discusses the early history of Chabad in America as well as the importance of mysticism in Chasidic prayer and liturgy.

Rebbe: If I remember correctly, when we met last time it was discussed that everyone must always be going *mei'chayil al chayil* (from strength to strength). As a year has elapsed in between, probably every one of us is more efficient. I would like to hear *besoros tovos* (good news) about your achievements.

Question: “*Chayil*” also means a soldier of war. Is there any connection to going from “strength to strength”?

R: Yes, a soldier is forced to go to war; he must go higher even against his will.

Q: Why didn't the Lubavitcher movement choose to go to Israel instead of the U.S.?

R: The Lubavitcher movement came to the U.S. in 1940, when

the British Mandate was in full power. If you have a certain amount of energy and it is your intention to use it to a maximum of efficiency, you must apply it where it can be used to maximum efficiency.

Q: Do you mean that there are more Jewish people here that will be helped by your ideals?

R: There is more possibility to help more people in Brooklyn than in Tel Aviv.

Q: Is that why you chose Brooklyn, and not some other city, like Chicago?

R: The real reason is because my father-in-law wanted a place where he could influence a great number of students. And this can be done more easily in Brooklyn than in Baltimore or Chicago.

Q: If the British Mandate had not been in Israel, would he have chosen Israel?

R: I don't believe so; you do not have the possibilities there that you have in the United States.

Q: Did the entire Lubavitcher movement come to the U.S. at one time, or did they come as individuals?

R: Lubavitcher congregations were established in the U.S. over fifty years ago. They invited my father-in-law (the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe) as a political rescue from Poland, which was under German occupation. The Chassidim in the U.S. intervened through the State Department. They explained to the State Department the advantages of having his leadership here in the U.S., and through the American Embassy in Berlin they were successful in having him leave and come to the United States. But, I believe, that even had there been a choice between the two million Jews in the U.S. or the hundred thousand in Israel, where they had already established yeshivos and *Yiddishkait* (Judaism), he would have chosen the harder field to work with and not the most convenient. There was more challenge here in Brooklyn.

Q: Lubavitch is systematic, and the neo-Orthodox in Israel do not have some of the frustrations of the Jews in *galus* (exile).

R: It has no connection with being Orthodox or systematic. It deals with choosing a spot where you have no help or choosing a spot where you can rest twelve or fifteen hours a day. It doesn't depend upon the ideal but whether the human being is seeking an easy way out or seeking to accomplish something, and in a certain period of time. My father-in-law always sought something that was difficult to perform, that no one wanted to do voluntarily, and began by doing something revolutionary.

In 1940, Orthodoxy in the U.S.

was going down. In Israel, it was going up, and in Europe it was at the same level more or less. When my father-in-law first heard that the Chassidim were trying to bring him to the U.S., his first thought was that this is a place where his energies can best be applied. Neo-Orthodoxy is trying to fight assimilation while it is still only a seed, as it is much easier to annihilate something when it is beginning than after it is fully grown.

Q: Are you not concerned with assimilation?

R: That is our prime interest. Twenty years ago there were three reasons for assimilation: 1) escape ... 3) rescue. Now assimilation is

looked down upon by all three groups.

Q: Please state your attitude about *d'vekut* (Divine ecstasy).

R: Do you have a specific question in mind?

Q: No. I wanted to hear the Lubavitcher interpretation.

R: Every human being, by his connection with G-d Almighty, has no limitation to his possibilities, because he has in his store not only his own energy but an open channel to receive additional energy from above. To have this channel open is called "*d'vekut*." You can be a very long distance from the powerhouse and you can become closer and closer to entering the powerhouse itself. And you can become a part of the Being we call G-d Almighty. That is the maximum of *d'vekut*. It does not mean that the soul parts from the *guf* (body), because the body is also a creation. It becomes not only closer and closer, but it becomes forlorn in Divinity. And yet, soon after that, he can eat his *seudat Shabbat* (Sabbath meal) and go to his business after Havdala (close of Shabbat) – it is not like nirvana. In *d'vekut* you have no existence in yourself, but you are a part of G-d that is permeating all your being with His divinity. It is not in a hidden form, but it is functioning in your body just as your heart, leg, etc., are functioning.

It must permeate not only your actions but your understanding and intelligence. Performing a mitzva is the action itself – like putting the *t'fillin* (phylacteries) on your head – you can put it on your head and at the same time think about business or politics. That is called *machshovot zarot* – your thoughts are in another world. You can think about the *perush ha'milim* (meaning of the words) itself but it touches your



***Thus the saying of
the Baal Shem Tov
that every day
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he was afraid that
he may not come
out of this activity
alive.***

understanding only and goes no deeper. If you say the blessing with *hitlahavut* (enthusiasm), then it not only touches your understanding but your feelings also. If this *hitlahavut* goes deeper and much more, then it can bring him to a state of ecstasy till he forgets the environment around him. That is, it permeates all your faculties.

A mitzva can be performed limited and no more, but if you perform it to a maximum, then it brings you to ecstasy and even the movement of your head and involuntary movements are also under the impact of this mitzva. Thus the saying of the Baal Shem Tov (founder of Chassidism) that every day before his prayer he was afraid that he may not come out of this activity alive.

Q: Shabbtai Zvi and his followers used mystical Kabbala to break away from *halacha* (Jewish law), as they considered Kabbala the true procedure for themselves. Perhaps this way may be the reason the [18th century scholar] Vilna Gaon objected to Chassidic teachings?

R: As for comparing the movement of Shabbtai Zvi to the Chassidic movement – every movement that is started by someone of the Jewish people has

some common point because it was started by a Jew. Shabbtai Zvi also was a scholar not only in Kabbala but in *halacha*, but after a few years he deviated from the right *derech* (path). It became something that was not only deviant but just the opposite of Judaism.

Chassidism and Kabbala are called in the Zohar *p'nimiut* (inward). That includes that there must be something *chitzonius* (outward). Kabbala is not something that you can dissect and throw away one thing, because if you accept one part if it is a necessity that you accept the other part. When someone comes to a conclusion against *halacha*, he is deviating. If you are logical, you must come to the conclusion that Kabbala and Chassidism must exist; because without them there is something missing. The same thing if you accept Kabbala and negate *halacha*, you are negating something that is a part, and you are negating the basis on which you are standing.

The Vilna Gaon did not negate Kabbala, because he had his own group and he learned Kabbala. In his opinion, it was something not to be learned with a large group, but to be taught to only a select group, as the others are not able to grasp Kabbala and must be satisfied with *halacha*. But there must be a select group above them that learns Kabbala.

Shabbtai Zvi negated *halacha*. In the time of Shabbtai Zvi there was a group of Catholic priests that translated Kabbalistic manuscripts and studied Kabbala. But this is not considered Jewish Kabbala, as the Catholics did not put on *t'fillin*. It is just like someone in Sorbonne, Brooklyn College, or some other university who can learn Kabbala without putting on *t'fillin*. For true Kabbala cannot be separated from *halacha*.

The terminology of these two kinds of Kabbala is *p'nimiut* and *chitzonius* (true and false Kabbala): the body and the *neschama* (soul).

Q: How do you start with your students? Should I begin to talk to them about *hitlahavut* or just do the mitzvot?

R: Now is such an era that you must choose with every individual his own approach. If you can take him with *hitlahavut* or *d'vekut*, do it that way. But the main thing is the actual mitzva and you can choose your own approach. If you estimate your congregation or audience that it can be approached more effectively by explaining *hitlahavut*, then choose this way. The mistake is if he begins with one thing and then goes no further. If he begins with *maaseh* (actual mitzva), then he has the most essential part of it, and if the audience goes to sleep you have achieved the essential. But if you begin with *d'vekut* or *hitlahavut* and then they go to sleep, they will not know about the most important part: *maaseh b'poel* (actual doing).

Q: I came across a great amount of children who expressed bitterness against their parents. Can you suggest an approach to turn this bitterness into love?

R: Although there is no general remedy that will apply to each individual, nevertheless there is one common point. In growing up he must encounter difficulties and obstacles in his way – the world is changing, his body is changing, and this presents obstacles to him. He needs someone for a scapegoat, *ashma*. The only person who has been with him all his life is his parent, and if he has no strength of character to say to himself that he must overcome these obstacles – even if it is connected with the biggest event in his life – then he

must find someone to put the finger on. His road is not easy to go on. He must choose his father and mother to blame, because he knows his teacher only one or two years and he experienced these difficulties before that. If he can put his finger on his mother or father, he has a perfect excuse.

Explain to your audience the real reason they choose their parents for their accusations, but do not stress this point too hard. Tomorrow or the day after tomorrow they will be less bitter. Do not expect them to stand up on the first day and say “*ashamnu* (I have sinned).”

Q: How is it that I saw that the leadership of Lubavitch was transmitted through a daughter not through a son?

R: You probably mean after the son of the Alter Rebbe. He had two sons but they begged the son-in-law to take over the leadership.

Q: Is it ideals and not heredity that decides the leadership?

R: Only ideals. Only someone who has the aptitude in a certain direction. If you have a father who all of his life has consecrated himself toward certain ideals so that it permeates his very existence, it must also permeate his wife and children. If he is permeated by a certain idea, the first subjects to be impressed by it will be his son or his daughter. If the subject is Torah or Kabbala, the son is more adaptable than the daughter. (*Aside to the only woman present: “You will excuse me for saying this, as it is not my idea.”*) The reason for the leadership is not because he was his son, but because he has a maximum of piety, education, and *hitlahavut*; he received it from his father and his environment and thus has a bigger chance. The Tzemach Tzedek (third Lubavitcher Rebbe) was an

orphan from the third year of his life, and the Alter Rebbe took care of his education personally. Thus, he had more chances to receive this education than even the sons of the Mittlerer (Second Lubavitcher) Rebbe.

This is the answer for an intellectual. If you are a Chassid you must accept a more spiritual explanation: *Rebayus* (leadership) is not motivated by something accidental or monetary but by something above us. The son of the Mezritcher Maggid (successor to the Baal Shem Tov) was his successor for only five years. After that, he was *niftar* (passed away). It is not dependent upon something physical, but something spiritual and Divine.

I wish you a *k’siva va’chasima tova* (Happy New Year), and next year I will ask you more forcefully about your achievements.

Q: In *kamus* or *eichus* (quality or quantity)?

R: You know that Einstein said that *kamus* always transfers into *eichus* (mass into energy). There is an interesting quotation in Midrash Rabba that if there had been one Jew missing of the six hundred thousand at Sinai, G-d would not have given the Torah. Not a Jew like Moshe Rabbeinu (Moses) but even the Jew that had a *pesel Mika* (idol) in his tent – had he been missing, the Torah would not have been given. Nine Moses cannot make a *minyán* (quorum of ten Jewish men) to say a *k’dusha*, even though there would be a tremendous power of quality. But if you have ten in quantity, you can say *k’dusha*. Similarly, the Midrash says that in giving the Torah you must have six hundred thousand. That is the best proof that quantity and quality have a transformation from one into the other.

Source: From Strength to Strength: The Lubavitcher Rebbe Shlita Talks to Hillel Directors

THE FATHER

By Boruch Merkur

He sits, stooped over, trembling
His eyes covered, closed to the world,
Wife and children.

He is a son now, he listens
He can barely utter a word;
A syllable, a consonant
Sets him off, lunging forward, soaring
He grips the edge of the table
His feet anchor in the ground.

Father, father...

They take leave of him, his children
They run out to play.
He smiles and nods and pulls his tallis lower.

He is a son again and has no words
He claws at the earth until there is nothing left of him
The tears rain down from between his fingers
And he smiles with the faith of a farmer
Who knows his seeds will take root and grow.

I SAID 'NO WAY' TO THE TIBETAN MASTER

By Nosson Avrohom

Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry

Rabbi Dror Pirus is involved today in education, when he spends much of his time helping children progress through the use of the Kung Fu martial arts approach he learned in Israel and the Orient. During his stay in the Far East, he came to recognize his Creator when he rejected the offer made by the "religious" elder in the Tibetan teachings. Since then, he has slowly but surely made his way to the teachings of Chabad chassidus, but not before a great miracle that saved his life...

Rabbi Dror Pirus of Tzfas primarily devotes his time and energy to education, with a significant portion of that time set aside for children who need help in their scholastic progress. Rabbi Pirus draws on his knowledge of Kung Fu martial arts he studied for years, as well as the ancient Tibetan method of healing to locate the point of difficulty and trouble, but mainly his success come in virtue of

writing to the Rebbe via *Igros Kodesh*. Periodically, Rabbi Pirus maintains his involvement in physiotherapy, primarily with people suffering from chiropractic problems. "You clearly see G-d's hand in connection with bodily healing," says Rabbi Pirus. "You can do the same treatment on two different people, yet it will work for one, but not for the other."

Rabbi Pirus testifies to the fact that from the moment he entered

the thrilling world of Chabad in the Far East, all the answers that he is privileged to receive from the Rebbe through *Igros Kodesh* deal with education. As a result, he has not *ch"v* forsaken his talents, rather he has utilized them as a means of providing assistance to children in need of various forms of educational improvement. "We see the fact that the world is ready for the Redemption in all areas of concentration," Rabbi Pirus says decisively. "The approach today in the area of healing has changed, and we now see a clear process of bringing in more modern and natural healing methods. The world of healing today understands that there is a clear connection between the soul and the body; they are not separate entities. There has been great development among everyone. People are looking for spirituality."

Dror Pirus spent his childhood years living in Bat Yam. He classifies the traditions of his home as "make kiddush and run," i.e., on the one hand, making kiddush on Friday night, while on the other hand, desecrating the sanctity of Shabbos a few minutes later. As with most Israelis, the Pirus family showed respect for the tenets of Judaism, but not

much more than that. “I always thought that I was a good Jew, and I didn’t have to do things to prove my Judaism. Everyone conducted themselves in this manner, and I didn’t feel the need to look for anything.

“At a relatively young age, I began to learn a method of martial arts called Ling-Shu, a form of Kung Fu. I invested many days and weeks, and became completely involved in the subject. Later, when I grew older, I participated in self-defense competitions and tournaments, and won several prizes.

“After a period of intensive training, I received a teaching certificate in martial arts. Upon completing my military service, I studied computer programming while also learning healing approaches connected to martial

arts – if you know how to dislocate a shoulder, as a teacher, you have to know how to put it back in place. My efforts proved successful, and I began to treat people according to this approach, achieving much success in the field. As a result, I decided to go the whole route, and what I was lacking was knowledge of certain breathing techniques. When I asked my teacher in Eretz Yisroel to teach them to me, he said that this is something that he can’t teach. For that purpose, I would have to travel to Tibet or India to learn from more serious and experienced instructors.

“Tibet was out of the question due to the difficulty in getting there. The Chinese make problems for foreigners who want to come to Tibet and integrate with the local populace. After

searching a bit, I found that it was possible to learn this approach from reputable Tibetan teachers living in exile in Dramsalla, India.

“One fine day, I packed my bags and I went to Dramsalla. This was not the tourist season, and there were virtually no Westerners in the city. When I arrived, I bonded quickly with the locals, who told me about two teachers in the field, only one of whom was in the city at the time. That particular teacher sat in a monastery on the side of a mountain. The locals warned me that he didn’t like the idea of teaching this approach to others, and he even rejected native Tibetans. I would not be deterred.

“I discovered that he was a very high figure on the ladder of the Tibetan religion, and I decided to do everything possible in order that he would teach me. When I finally came to him, he asked me what I wanted. I told him what I had learned so far and now I wanted to continue my studies with him. He looked at me for a long time and was silent. Suddenly, he said that he’s not ready to do that. I would not relent. I said to myself that if I have come this far, I will urge him until he agrees. When he asked me where I was from, I replied that I was from Israel and I belong to the Jewish People. After lengthy efforts to convince him, he told me that he is prepared to teach me the entire methodology, on the condition that I remain with him for three years and also learn the idol worship aspect.

“Ask me today – I haven’t the slightest idea what led me to tell him that I have to think about it. Apparently, the Jewish spark within me was kindled, just as I also found it appropriate to point



out to him that I belonged to the Jewish People.

“Indeed, I did think about it for a very long time. Here was a golden opportunity to learn something that no other Westerner had ever studied, and when I would leave there, I could be a great master. Yet, despite all that, something within me was rejecting the whole idea. After I told him that I have to consider the offer, I left the hermit and went down the mountain. Upon completing my descent, I saw to my great surprise a pair of Chabadnikim. I was in shock. How did they happen to land on me? It turns out that they were looking for a store that sells computers, and I felt that I had an obligation to point them in the right direction. The two young men were Rabbi Dror Shaul and Rabbi Mendy Crombie (today the Rebbe’s shliach in Sri Lanka).

“They were most pleasant, and after I gave them some assistance, we went our separate ways. A few days later, I saw a Hebrew notice written with the words ‘A Healing Breath of Fresh Air According to Kabbala.’ I was overwhelmed. That is exactly what I wanted to learn from the Tibetan monk. Let’s see what Judaism has to say on the subject. If at first I thought that these ultra-Orthodox came to India to bother us and to get a few drug addicts to repent, now I honestly asked myself: How I can really ask to learn Tibetan wisdom before checking out Jewish wisdom? I decided to attend the Torah class conducted by Rabbi Dror Shaul. The gathering was highlighted by the singing of Chabad niggunim, and I felt good about myself – far better than what I felt with the Tibetan wisdom. I sensed that I had something here, and so I decided

to stay.”

The uncertain Dror remained at the Chabad House for several weeks in the company of his shluchim friends. In the meantime, two more Israeli youths coming closer to Yiddishkait joined the group, and the three of them represented the place’s growing saplings. The young shluchim were later replaced by Rabbi Shimshon Goldstein, who also contributed much to Dror’s spiritual development.

Yet, together with his tremendous progress in coming closer to the values and traditions of his forefathers, he had difficulty accepting the concepts of “chai v’kayam” and “Yechi Adoneinu,” which appeared to him as somewhat detached from reality. Today, as he looks back on that period, he explains his initial reaction as due to his Sephardic background and the fact that he didn’t want to be drawn into the movement that his two friends had joined. One day, Dror decided that if he had come all this way to the East, he had to learn something – and he traveled to China.

“There’s a place in China where you can learn a specific form of martial arts, and I decided to learn it before I returned to Eretz Yisroel, so I wouldn’t come back ‘empty-handed.’ However, it was also clear to me that when I returned to Eretz Yisroel, my entire perception of Judaism, due to the Chabadnikim – would totally change. I now understood that there was truth in Judaism. All of the many questions that I had in order to determine the depth of that truth had been solved, one by one. Yet, together with this, something within me didn’t want to be dragged in completely.

“When I arrived in Thailand via China, I came to the local Chabad House and saw a sign from a group of Jews from Hong Kong asking Israeli tourists to help make daily minyanim in exchange for assistance in covering their lodging and airline expenses.

“I saw that the people around me didn’t understand what a ‘minyan’ was. I decided to gather together a few of them and travel there. The physical conditions were indeed excellent, but this also marked the first time that I noticed the clear difference between the Chabad approach and the Sephardic approach. The rabbi there was constantly talking about Gan Eden and Gehinom, whereas at the Chabad House, they managed to instill much within me on mitzva fulfillment without threats. After a period of private seclusion, I participated in another seminar in Hong Kong, where I received answers to many of my questions on Judaism. I added something new each day, as I began putting on t’fillin and keeping Shabbos.

“Together with this, I did not abandon my desire to learn various martial arts breathing techniques in China, and I discovered that it could be done without the need to deal with the idol worship aspect. Yet, before arriving in China, I recalled that the Rambam wrote that it is forbidden even to enter a city that practices idol worship. I decided to call Rabbi Dror Shaul in India, and when I asked him if it was permissible to enter that monastery even if it contained no elements of idol worship, he replied with an emphatic ‘No.’ His opinion had an effect upon me, and I decided to pass up on the opportunity, traveling instead to Japan, where I worked for a

while in the sale of jewelry to earn some money so I could continue my journey. Despite the fact that I wasn't located in the best place for such commercial ventures, I succeeded in selling more than any of my fellow merchants. I would sit a whole day and recite T'hilim, and I felt my proximity to G-dliness.

"The sales manager was very impressed by this, but he first wanted to be certain that I wasn't selling anything besides jewelry. It didn't seem logical to him. However, it was all too apparent that when G-d wants something, anything is possible, and I felt the help of Heaven with me. He became very excited by his

I was traveling with a heavy motorcycle at a speed exceeding seventy-five miles per hour, without a helmet. When I saw the end of the highway, I made a sudden stop and jetted forward for a considerable distance. As I was flying in mid-air, it was clear to me that my life in this world was coming to an end.

discovery, and we traveled together to the shliach, R. Gaoni Maatuf, who was in Japan at the time. We learned a great deal and I became much stronger in my faith. Nevertheless, I apparently still didn't want to appear too Torah observant, and even while I was committed inwardly, I remained outwardly as I did at the beginning of my trek towards coming closer to G-d.

"While in Thailand, I experienced a great miracle that proved to be 'the final blow' in the t'shuva process. I was traveling with a heavy motorcycle at a speed exceeding seventy-five miles per hour, without a helmet. When I saw the end of the highway, I made a sudden stop and jetted forward for a considerable distance. As I was flying in mid-air, it was clear to me that my life in this world was coming to an end.

"The only thought I had at that moment as I flipped out of control, 'What will G-d stand to benefit if I die now just as I'm starting to come back to my Jewish roots?' After the final tumble, I lay on the ground for several long minutes, then got up slowly, and discovered to my great astonishment, and the astonishment of my companion who was traveling right behind me, apart from a few minor scratches, I had escaped without injury. This was an incredible miracle. My friend looked at me totally thunderstruck, and managed only to mutter, 'It's just like on television.' No one could believe that I came out alive after such an experience. I only recently found out that the young man who rode on the motorcycle behind me had become a baal t'shuva. I hadn't the slightest doubt that the seeds of closeness to G-d and His Torah began to

sprout after that miracle."

After that revealed miracle, Dror Pirus decided to return to Eretz Yisroel, leaving everything behind to start a deep and intense look into the true meaning of life.

When he arrived in Eretz Yisroel, he had a serious internal conflict over which yeshiva to attend. On the one hand, he felt a strong and deep connection to Chabad teachings, particularly in the area of Ahavas Yisroel, and to the personage of the Rebbe. On the other hand, however, he apparently still needed to go through the meat grinder a little more in order to have the privilege of coming to Lubavitch, and thus he found himself going to Torah classes conducted by a Lithuanian-brand rabbi. Dror would not agree to remove the kippa he had received from the shluchim in the Far East with the words "Yechi Adoneinu," although the rabbi would always make him turn it inside out...

"That rabbi would rebuke me all the time about Chabad and their strange ways and customs, but since I knew them from up close, I deemed his charges as totally baseless. I thought to myself: It is simply impossible that those Chabadnikim who had helped me so warmly and so generously, and who were stringent in all matters, great and small, could be any less religious than this rabbi.

"In the meantime, the two young men who had been with me in Dramsalla had also become baalei t'shuva, and they came to learn at the Chabad yeshiva in Ramat Aviv, headed by Rabbi **Yosef Ginsburgh**. Every once in a while, I would go over to the yeshiva and visit them, present them with the questions that the Lithuanian rabbi asked me, and then go back with their

responses. One day, they told me, 'Write to the Rebbe.' I already knew all about 'Igros Kodesh' and gave much respect to the whole concept, and so I agreed. In the letter that I wrote to the Rebbe, I got a bit bold and made some rather unpleasant and disparaging comments about Chabad.

"The answer that I received positively gripped me to my seat. The Rebbe wrote a stern letter to those who dared to speak slanderously against Chabad chassidus and even the general chassidic teachings, as revealed by the holy Baal Shem Tov. The Rebbe wrote to the addressee that he should tell the person who is speaking against chassidus to stop immediately or it might reach the point of lashon ha'ra. At the end of the letter, the Rebbe refers the person to several sichos and maamarim, writing that if he learns them, all the doubts and questions will disappear.

"After that answer, I understood that there is only one

leader to the Jewish People in this generation. Naturally, I stopped attending the classes with the Lithuanian rabbi and began studying in Ramat Aviv, which designed my path in chassidic life and developed my feeling for the Rebbe's shlichus. Since then, the 'Igros Kodesh' never leaves my side. Any time that I am worried that I or those around me are faced with a serious problem or question, I write to the Rebbe, and I also do so in connection with my work in education and healing.

"There are endless miracles and wondrous occurrences. I have long since come to the conclusion that the problem is with us. People accept the Rebbe and the whole subject of Moshiach in the simplest sense, as they see more miracles and wonders – it's just that we don't know how to advance the concept. There was a boy in Tzfas who was broken by his failure to bond well with other

neighborhood children. He didn't want to hear anything from anyone until he wrote to the Rebbe. In his letter, the Rebbe proposed a change of venue. He did so, and went to study in the Migdal Ohr School in Migdal HaEmek. Another boy who rebelled against everyone and refused to accept anyone's authority agreed when I suggested that he write to the Rebbe. He received an answer from the Rebbe that he should learn Chitas every day, and I quickly went and bought him a Chitas. A few days ago, I had an opportunity to speak with the boy's school principal, who told me that the boy's mother said that he never goes anywhere without his Chitas, arousing much admiration from his peers."

The Rebbe's influence is so tremendous, and we can utilize it with greater fortitude in order to hasten the Redemption and to spread the announcement of the Redemption in every location.

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WHAT DO THE PROFESSORS SAY?

By Prof. Shimon Silman, RYAL Institute and Touro College

Part 2 – Challenging Scientific Authority

In Part 1 (*Beis Moshiach* #647) we began to analyze the obstinacy and close-mindedness of scientists when it comes to discussing creation or even intelligent design. We found that a prominent theoretical physicist, Professor Lee Smolin, also complains about this close-mindedness in the scientific community (albeit for a different reason, his bias being in favor of one theory over alternative theories). In his recent book *The Trouble with Physics* he offers a rare insight into the inner workings of the scientific community, the “sociology of science,” as he calls it.

Now, in Part 2, we challenge scientific authority. We are not challenging good, honest science here, but rather, the position of authority that scientists have assumed for themselves.

SCIENCE OF ARROGANCE

The Rebbe MH”M once wrote a lengthy argument against something allegedly based on “pure science,” after which he

*commented, “It is the way of ‘scientists’ in our time that it’s impossible [for them] to approach a discussion on such matters without bringing proofs that professor so-and-so also thinks the same way.”*¹

The sociology of science, Smolin writes, “refers to the influence that older, established scientists have over the careers of younger scientists. We scientists feel uncomfortable talking about it because it forces us to confront the possibility that the organization of science may not be entirely objective and rational.”²

Many people are afraid to challenge the authority of scientists. They are in awe of scientists and feel that the scientists must know what they are talking about. Of course, many scientists claim this authority for themselves. But in fact this is one of the greatest impediments to the progress of science itself. The history of science is full of accounts of revolutionary ideas first being introduced by young scholars who challenged the authority of the scientific establishment and

their ideas. One of my own physics professors, who was lecturing in Quantum Mechanics, related that it was said that Neils Bohr, one of the originators of Quantum theory, was successful in doing this because as a graduate student he spent a lot of time riding his motorcycle instead of going to lectures so he was not biased by the opinions of the older scientific generation.

But “there is no scientist, not even Newton or Einstein, who was not wrong on a substantial number of issues they had strong views about.”³

Smolin devotes an entire chapter to discussing independent thinkers whom he calls “seers, who can see through unjustified but universally held assumptions and ask new questions.”⁴

Thus, it is usually the greatest of the scientists who repeatedly emphasize how much we don’t know and how much we must continue to doubt our scientific conclusions. Albert Einstein and Richard Feynman were famous for this. Feynman once said, “To make progress in understanding, we must remain modest and allow that we do not know. Nothing is certain or proved beyond all doubt.” Again, addressing the scientists, he said, “You have to permit the possibility that you do not have it exactly right ... This

freedom to doubt is an important matter in the sciences ... I feel a responsibility to proclaim the value of this freedom ... I want to demand this freedom for future generations.”

Scientists are free to investigate the entire universe – and in fact *must* investigate it – but at the same time they must understand that there are limitations on their methods and on their conclusions. Not everything is equally accessible to scientific investigation. Investigations into distant space or into the distant past are not as conclusive as an experiment done in a laboratory. And where there is more ignorance than information or where one extrapolates he cannot draw a valid conclusion. He may only make a conjecture and say, “It might be like this.”

But, as Smolin writes, “They seem to be confident enough of the truth of the conjecture to present it as fact.”⁵ And again, “When it comes to defending their belief in these unproved conjectures...[they] often note that something is ‘generally believed’ ...or that ‘no sensible person doubts that its true.’ They seem to feel that appeal to consensus within their community is equivalent to rational argument.”

There is a certain humility that a scientist must have. When dark matter was first introduced into discussions on cosmology, the cover of Scientific American read, “New observations have smashed the old view of our universe.” But you were so sure of your old view of the universe. And now you are so sure of your new view...

I often wonder about the fact that even with the most sophisticated scientific theories and the most advanced

supercomputers (I worked with them for a while) and with all the relevant data available, scientists cannot predict the weather accurately. One scientist involved in the global warming controversy said, “To think that we can predict what will happen 10 years from now when we can’t predict the weather 10 days from now, is utter nonsense”

(In the early morning hours of August 8, 2007, a sudden, unpredicted tornado hit Brooklyn, New York, several miles from my home with 135 mile per hour winds, emphasizing the point we are making in a most frightful way. It was totally unexpected and unforeseen. There was no tornado warning and no tornado watch. We have also seen the reverse. Several years ago they predicted a major snow storm in New York – “the storm of the century” – and the city was ready to shut down. As it turned out, there wasn’t even enough snow to cover the ground; just a few flakes.)

Yet they say with great certainty that *this* is how the universe began and *that* is what happened in the first few seconds, minutes and millennia, etc. Don’t they realize that this can only be called science fiction?

Indeed, we see that the inability of scientists to predict the weather implies the absurdity of their trying to describe the beginning of the universe. But the implication is even more far reaching. It actually forces them to accept the existence of the Creator and acknowledge his continuous involvement in running the world. This is explained by the Alter Rebbe, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, the first Rebbe of Chabad, in a discourse based on a couple of verses from T’hillim (the Psalms).

He writes the following:

“You have set all the boundaries of the earth; summer and winter – You made them. Remember this, O adversary who has taunted G-d, and the lowly nation which has disgraced Your name.”⁶ These verses express a triumphant response to those nations that taunt G-dliness. they are the enemies of G-d and are referred to as the lowly nation which has disgraced His name by their saying that G-d has abandoned the earth and the world is following a natural order only ... everything is running by itself following the laws of nature.

“So to counter this taunting by the nations, this verse is stated as a proof and a very powerful demonstration. By saying, ‘summer and winter You made them,’ it’s saying that from the character of summer and winter there is a strong proof for the creation of the world from nothingness, and its being sustained in a supernatural way. This is because all the scientists have become weary in their attempt to understand the cause of the intense heat in the summer and the extreme cold in the winter since, according to the science of Astronomy, the shift in the angle of the sun relative to the earth has no effect on this. The small size of the sphere of the earth relative to the sphere of the heavens is, for example, like a grain of mustard in a large hall. As the sun changes its angle in the sphere of the heaven, what effect could its heat have on the atmosphere of the earth to make it so hot in the summer, or to reduce the heat in the winter when it goes lower in the heaven, etc. Rather, this shows that this effect is a novelty, a creation from nothing, beyond the ways of nature.”⁷

Yet we say that they *must* investigate the entire universe. We say this based on a statement of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach. A famous Jewish professor of Microbiology was working for NASA looking for life in space, especially Mars, when he became a *Baal T'shuva* (an observant Jew). He asked the Rebbe MH"M if he could continue to look for life on Mars or perhaps this was against Judaism. The Rebbe MH"M told him that he should look for life on Mars and if he doesn't find it there to look somewhere else in space and if he still doesn't find it to continue looking elsewhere. Why? Because there is no reason to put a limitation on G-d by assuming that He could only create life in one place.

Furthermore, the Talmud says that if one has the ability to

investigate the paths of the stars and constellations and he doesn't do it, then the admonishment of the prophet Isaiah, "And he refuses to look at the work of G-d," applies to him.

But one should not be awed by "the scientists." One should not accept their conclusions based solely on their authority, but rather, examine them critically for the scientists are subject to the same laws of reasoning and logic that everybody else is. As Richard Feynman said, "If they say to you science has shown such and such, you might ask, 'How does science show it – how did the scientists find out – how, what, where?'... And you have as much right as anyone else, upon hearing about the experiments...to judge whether a reusable conclusion has been arrived at ... The experts who are leading you may be

wrong..."

MISSING THE BOAT

Global warming. It's the most controversial scientific topic of public interest today. Everyone agrees that climate change is taking place but the question is to what extent is it caused by human activity. Maybe it's just part of a natural cycle.

So we ask a basic, fundamental question: Climate change is happening right before our eyes. How can scientists be so sure about how the universe started "so long ago and so far away" while the events of the origin of the universe were not observed, yet they cannot determine the cause of climate change where all the phenomena are readily available for us to observe? Again, it is Science of Ignorance.

For the record, we are not taking any position on global warming and climate change. But we deplore the fact that here too, as in the case of evolution and other issues, the scientists who challenge the prevalent view are suppressed and their views are not given fair consideration. As Smolin writes, "we professors tend almost reflexively to reward those who agree with us and penalize those who disagree ... Intellectual fads are far too important, and people who ignore them have dicey academic careers."⁸

Now, in discussing climate change itself, most of the focus is on carbon dioxide, the most common greenhouse gas. But another gas, methane, has a much stronger greenhouse effect. One kilogram of methane warms the earth 23 times more than a kilogram of carbon dioxide.

What we will now present is the very instructive story of the



Prof. Shimon Silman

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discovery of the sources of the methane that is introduced into the atmosphere. It is instructive for us in that it illustrates certain deficiencies in the activity of scientific research:

- 1) Accepted scientific theory, taught in textbooks as fact may simply be wrong.
- 2) Scientists who believe in a particular theory are reluctant to consider evidence that contradicts that theory.
- 3) Errors of extrapolation are common. (See explanation of extrapolation later in this section.)
- 4) Even the greatest scientific authorities – the Nobel Prize winners – can be wrong.

These problems exist even in honest and careful scientific

research which is, after all, a human activity and as such it is not perfect. Our point is, however, that no challenge can be brought from scientific research, an inherently flawed human activity, against the Torah, the perfect word of G-d.

The story of the research on methane was reported by the researchers, Frank Keppler and Thomas Rockmann, in *Scientific American*⁹. They begin their report by asking, “What do you do as a scientist when you discover something that clearly contradicts the textbooks?” The accepted view was that only anaerobic bacteria (bacteria that thrive without oxygen) produce methane. They discovered, however, that all green plants also produce methane. Now they had to try to convince the scientific establishment of this fact. “Difficult as this discovery had been for us to accept,” they write, “trying to convince our scientific peers and the public was almost impossible.”

(This unwillingness of the established scientific community to accept new ideas is a major part of the problem we are discussing. Michael Merzenich was a pioneering researcher in neuroplasticity, the ability of the brain to reorganize itself. He did experiments with monkeys in which the parts of their brains that normally controlled certain actions were disabled. The monkeys’ brains were able to “rewire” themselves and assign control of these actions to other parts of their brains. Based on this he concluded that adult human brains could also rewire themselves. But he had great difficulty getting his colleagues in the research community to accept this. In reporting on this, the psychiatrist, Dr. Jeffery Schwartz

writes, “It appeared that the monkeys’ brains were a lot more adaptable than the research community’s.”)

How much methane were the green plants producing; how much would it contribute to climate change? The amount of methane produced by a leaf or a plant was actually very small, but the cumulative effect over the whole earth would be very great. “We knew, of course, that extrapolating global estimates from a limited sample of laboratory measurements was open to error,” they wrote, but they still came up with a very large number: “Between 60 million and 240 million metric tons of methane come from plants every year – this constitutes 10 to 40 percent of annual global emissions.”

After Keppler and Rockmann first published their findings in 2006, Paul J. Crutzen, a Nobel prize winner, and his colleagues reexamined measurements made in 1998 of air samples from the Venezuelan savanna and concluded that up to 60 million metric tons of methane could be released from vegetation in these regions, supporting Keppler and Rockmann’s results. Crutzen said that “looking back to 1998, we could have made the discovery, but accepting the general wisdom that methane can only be produced under anaerobic conditions, we missed the boat.”

SMOLIN’S SLOGANS

In the last pages of his book, Smolin concludes his analysis of the scientific community with the following admonition to his fellow scientists and to the general public.

To his fellow scientists: “If you are someone whose first reaction when challenged on your

scientific beliefs is ‘What does X think?’ or ‘How can you say that? Everybody good knows that...’ then you are in danger of no longer being a scientist. You are paid good money to do your job, and that means you have a responsibility to make a careful and independent evaluation of everything you and your colleagues believe. If you cannot give a precise defense of your beliefs and commitments, consistent with the evidence, if you let other people do your thinking for you (even if they are senior and powerful), then you are not living up to your ethical obligations as a member of a scientific community.

And to the general public: “Don’t believe most of what you hear. When a scientist claims to have done something important, ask to see the evidence. Evaluate it as strictly as you would an investment. Give it as much scrutiny as a house you would buy or a school you would send your children to.”¹⁰

Or, as Feynman said, “The

experts who are leading you may be wrong.”

Our conclusion from all this can be expressed by the following excerpt from a letter that the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach once wrote to an engineer:

“In total contrast to this is our holy Torah. Being the wisdom of the True Existence – G-d – it is necessarily absolute. It is absolute truth – both in its basic statements and in the ‘principles of the Torah’ that direct the manner in which the basic statements are discussed [the rules of reasoning]. Since this is the wisdom of the Creator of the entire universe, which includes man, it follows that all its conclusions compel man to act in accordance with those conclusions and in no other manner at all.

“This is one of the points that, as an engineer, should be embedded in your mind – that it is impossible to raise any question whatever based on science against the Torah since the Torah is absolute truth, and

science, according to the way it defines itself, is not absolute...”¹¹

Yechi HaMelech HaMoshiach!

For the 36th yartzeit of HaRav Moshe DovBer Silman, 17 Tammuz, 5768

NOTES:

¹ Igros Kodesh vol. 23, p.129

² Smolin, p. 267

³ Smolin, p.275. He mentions also, John von Neumann, one of the greatest mathematicians of the 20th century, who, in 1932 published a proof that there could be no hidden variables in quantum theory, a proof was widely quoted for three decades. But the proof was wrong as later demonstrated by the quantum theorist, David Bohm.

⁴ Smolin, Chapter 18.

⁵ Smolin, p. 277

⁶ Tehillim 74, 17-18

⁷ The Siddur with Ma’amorim, p. 605

⁸ Smolin, p. 265

⁹ “Can plants Cause Global Warming?” in Scientific American, Feb. 2007, pp. 52-57

¹⁰ Smolin, pp. 353-354

¹¹ Igros Kodesh vol. 6, p. 146



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THE TRACTOR CONTINUES TO ROLL

By Shai Gefen

THE TRACTOR TERRORIST ATTACK PARABLE

The tractor terrorist attack, in the heart of Yerushalayim, should be setting off warning bells. Today it is quite clear that the Old City is a powder keg liable to explode at any second. Ever since Olmert released the safety catch on the issue of the division of Jerusalem, that keg is a ticking bomb. From the time the Israeli government allowed the Arab population in the Old City to expand but did not allow Jews to settle there, it was obvious that this was in the works.

The tractor attack, coming after the massacre in Merkaz HaRav four months ago, just made it all clearer. In one of the Rebbe's sichos about Yerushalayim, he said that Hashem does not wait until the Jews wake up; He lets them know what's what. What happened last week is a lesson in what lies behind the decision to withdraw

from Jerusalem and divide it.

If we did not understand this after the expulsion from Gush Katif, Heaven is showing us the significance of that withdrawal: how the residents of Jerusalem will live if, G-d forbid, Olmert's wishes are carried out.

The tractor represents the government of Israel, which races forward towards the unknown and strikes its citizens with the agreements it makes. In order to stop it, the nation's wisdom is needed, the courage of the average citizen who knows how to stop it. What we need to do is wake up and go out to the streets and cry out so that this bloody government will be unable to trample us all and drag us down to the abyss.

Those who did not understand how serious the talks about the division of Jerusalem are can see it in these two terrifying attacks. The talks themselves, said the Rebbe, lead to danger, to the point that Jews are murdered, r"l. We see how daring the Jerusalem

Arabs are that the Rebbe referred to them as terrorists. When they see Israel's weakness, they immediately perpetrate attacks and atrocities in the heart of Jerusalem.

The question is whether anyone is going to learn the lesson. The answer seems to be no. If after the Gush Katif expulsion they didn't get it, what is the likelihood that they'll get it now?

The Arabs are loudly saying that they are defeating us and Israel is weaker than ever. The stalemate over the release of our captives and the uneasy quiet only serve to illustrate what state Israel is really in.

THOSE WHO ARE MERCIFUL TOWARDS THE CRUEL

Policemen, in the two recent attacks in the center of Jerusalem, did not kill the terrorists. The terrorist, in both massacres, remained alive and continued killing until "citizens in orange" did something about it.

In the most recent attack, the soldier who killed the terrorist (getting on the tractor to do so!) was one of the boys who fought in Kfar Darom, as a result of which the IDF did not want to draft him.

The explanation for this phenomenon is based on a maamer Chazal which states, "Whoever has mercy on the cruel, will ultimately be cruel towards the merciful." Security forces that were busy day and night fighting settlers and being cruel towards the merciful ultimately had mercy on the cruel.

You can't train people to wage war and simultaneously use that training against the settlers and against the Arab enemy. You can't



REMOVING THE SHAME OF KFAR MAIMON

It's been three years since the Kfar Maimon scandal, when tens of thousands gathered and planned on marching on Gush Katif to halt the destruction there. The end of the story, as we know, was that the Yesha Council caved in, thus enabling the expulsion to take place smoothly as rabbanim befriended those doing the expelling and informed everyone that they were all going home.

In the fight over Amona, they managed to remove some of the shame of Kfar Maimon as the youth put up a brave fight.

In a letter the Rebbe wrote on 24 Shevat 5741, he says: **If this protest was nonstop and extremely sharp, as the occasion warrants, it would ultimately succeed, and in the near future.**

It may not be pleasant or popular and they will scream that we are extremists; it's definitely not "we will win with love," but this is the way we have a chance to keep millions of Jews out of danger and we won't be forced to experience another cruel expulsion done with "sensitivity and determination."

The fight to save Eretz Yisroel has to be determined and without sensitivity. If we only dig in our heels now, we will be able to make up for the shame of Kfar Maimon. Let us hope that we have learned the lessons of the past.

have it both ways.

The trait of cruelty, like that of mercy, can only be used one way. Someone who has mercy on those who are cruel will automatically be cruel to the merciful. Will anyone in the government and in the army do a cheshbon ha'nefesh in light of the signs we keep on getting?

THE TERRORIST'S HOME VERSUS THE HOMES OF JEWS

The home of the terrorist, who murdered eight yeshiva bachurim in Merkaz HaRav, remains

standing. The government hasn't yet located the law that enables them to destroy it. At the home of the terrorist who perpetrated the tractor attack, they were able to get them to bring the mourner's tent indoors; wow, what an accomplishment for the State of Israel.

Somehow, in Gush Katif, the Israeli government was able to destroy thousands of homes with the permission of the Supreme Court and with the approval of all legal authorities.

The laws of S'dom and Amora made more sense.

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SO FAR, YET SO CLOSE

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelewitz, Shliach, Beit Shaan

In “V’Ata Tetzaveh,” the Rebbe’s last maamer, to date, which was edited, the Rebbe explains that the fact that Jews are in galus causes “crushing,” which leads to the revelation of the “light-source” with an increase in light and strength, to be strengthened in the service of Hashem with joy and goodness of heart.

When on shlichus of the Rebbe, each shliach in his city, there is the aspect of “crushed,” and consequently there is more “light-source,” more stories about shluchim and their children who achieve an incredible hiskashrus to the Rebbe, his teachings and to shlichus.

IS THE REBBE IN NEW YORK OR IN OFAKIM?

I was at a Kinus Sh’Kulo Moshiach sponsored by the Matteh Moshiach in Eretz Yisroel, which was attended by hundreds of Chassidim and shluchim. They came from all over the country to learn how to better internalize and disseminate the B’suras HaGeula. Rabbi Yisroel HersHKowitz, shliach in Ofakim, told a number of stories about life on shlichus.

Seminary girls from Kfar Chabad go to the Chabad girls’ school in Ofakim for a few months, as shluchos, to help teach. One girl started her shlichus at the beginning of the year, in Elul, went to the

Rebbe for Tishrei, and returned to continue her shlichus in Ofakim.

As soon as she could, she told her third grade students how wonderful it was to be with the Rebbe for Tishrei. “It was incredible! What chayus. We saw the Rebbe!” she said.

A girl asked, “How could you see the Rebbe in **New York** when I always hear, here in Ofakim, that the shlichus is so successful because we see the Rebbe in **Ovakim**?”

This demonstrates that we can see the Rebbe in 770, or anywhere when you are on his shlichus. When we adults live that way, it will be transmitted, naturally, to the children.

Rabbi HersHKowitz went on to say:

One day, I visited one of the Chabad preschools and I overheard a conversation among the children. They were discussing whether the Rebbe is really chai v’kayam. Then I heard my five-year-old say to his friends: What’s the question? My father went to the Rebbe several times recently, so of course the Rebbe is alive.

THE MORE “CRUSHED” THE MORE “LIGHT”

Sometimes, only after enduring the “crushing” do you see the “light.” Rabbi Levi Solomon, shliach in Kfar Yona related:

We arrived to Kfar Yona four

years ago and as we arranged things with the shliach, Rabbi Nechemia Schmerling, I focused on opening preschools. What can I tell you, it’s not easy. I experienced a lot of “crushing.” For nearly a year we tried to get a building or a permit from the local council to open a preschool, but were turned down. We tried to exert all our influence but nothing helped. We finally decided to go l’chat’chilla aribber and we had amazing brachos from the Rebbe in the *Igros Kodesh*. We began advertising in Kfar Yona that a Chabad preschool would open for the coming school year.

Parents came and registered their children. They asked where the school would be and we said, with Hashem’s help, it will be okay. We thought of getting a caravan or maybe renting an apartment, but there were difficulties with that too. We finally found an apartment but it needed a lot of renovations to make it suitable for a preschool.

After we signed a contract with the landlord, I suddenly realized what a big and complicated situation I had gotten myself into. It was a week and a half before school was supposed to begin and we had to complete the renovations, buy equipment, inform the parents, get permits, and other complicated and expensive details. Anyone who administers a school knows how hard, expensive, and complicated it is.

At a certain point I felt that with my own kochos there was no way I could go on. Throughout my years in yeshiva we learned all kinds of things but we didn’t learn how to open a preschool. I felt very stressed and worried. Like any good Chassid I sat down and wrote to the Rebbe.

We got enormous brachos from the Rebbe and the main thing is that the brachos were fulfilled in a

miraculous way. We worked on the renovations day and night, the best kind of equipment was purchased, and the school year began very successfully.

A year went by and Rabbi Schmerling and I decided that we had to open another preschool. By this time, the head of the city council couldn't ignore our presence and success. He told us that if we had twenty children registered for the new preschool, he would provide a building.

We had only fifteen children registered. We wrote to the Rebbe again and opened to an answer in the *Igros Kodesh* that you have to learn even from a thief, who continues to try until he succeeds.

We renewed our efforts at registering children and were able to present a list of twenty children to the head of the council, who provided us with a building. He found it hard to believe that we had registered so many children and on the first day of school he came to visit and see for himself.

Since then, our registration and success continue to grow and with Hashem's help we are planning on opening a third preschool.

This demonstrates that we shouldn't be fazed by difficulties. If you persist, you succeed.

AFTER A FIRE...

It seems that's how things work, "from the straits I called to G-d, He answered me in the expanse." First there's the "straits" and then the "expanse."

I have already related, in this column, that I also had a difficult financial situation and I wrote to the Rebbe about it and ended with, "I don't know from where my help will come." The Rebbe answered, "It says [from where] there in T'hillim." From that point on, I saw real improvement (though it wouldn't hurt to have some more improvements!) in the Chabad house's financial situation.

The Rebbeim say that after a fire, one gets wealthy. When you know this and truly believe it, it becomes easier. I recently heard that there was a fire in Beit Shaan and that the home of a friend of mine had gone up in flames. I went immediately and saw the fire truck finishing its job. The home owner paced near his house as curious onlookers shook their heads

pitiyingly.

I went over to my unfortunate friend who wondered what the rabbi could tell him already at a time like that. I shook his hand warmly and said: We have a saying that after a fire you become rich. He gave me a small smile and we parted.

He got back on his feet (maybe with the help of the insurance), bought a new, big house and since then, whenever we meet he shakes my hand, smiles and says: You should know that at that terrible moment, when my house had burned down, you were the only one who gave me hope. You told me something about wealth and you know what? It really happened!

(By the way, his name is Sharon Raviv. Readers are invited to think quickly – what is the gematria of these two words? Hint: the number is etched into the main door of Beis Moshiah-770.)

RUNNING ON AN EMPTY GAS TANK...

A fellow shliach told me that at a certain point he was in a financial pickle. He wanted to go to a certain friend in order to take the money from his pushka but he didn't even have the money for gas to get there. That is real "crushing."

He finally got enough money for gas that would get him to the home of the donor. He hoped to buy more gas with money he would get from the pushka.

He got several hundred sh'kalim from the pushka but there was a surprise in store for him. The man asked him to wait because on the second floor he had an envelope for him. The shliach gratefully took the envelope which contained 25,000 shekel in new notes. He made his return trip with a full tank as well as a heart full of joy and thanks to Hashem.



The landlord paced near his house which had gone up in flames.

FUNDRAISING IN THE ERA OF MOSHIACH

By Raanan Isseroff

*There are many theories shluchim bring about why this hasn't happened in the last 10 years of their mosad. Whatever the reasons, if a Beis Chabad wants to grow, someone must be aggressively plugging away for money. * Part 2*

[Continued from last week]

USING THE DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNT TO PAY FOR THE FUNDRAISERS BUDGET

A frequent Painful subject is how to fund the necessities for the fundraiser. Letter head, envelopes, stamps, travel expenses, extra staff he needs (such as telemarketers and the like), etc., all needs to somehow be paid for.

Usually, cash flow in a mosad is "straight-in and straight-out"! So money our fundraiser brings in is going straight to the mosad. Great!

But how is he supposed to pay for sundries that he needs to make money. Stamps, letter head, printer cartridges, staples, envelopes all cost

money and are needed right now, not next week to bring in more money. So money somehow must be diverted for our valiant fighter for funding to continue to operate.

Use the bank account like this: Leave a minimum of \$400 in the account at all times. Have an arrangement where either he pays you a check each week or month of all money over this \$400 or else you funnel off money and leave \$400 at all times.

For a mosad desperate for money, it is best to leave control of the money in this account with the fundraiser or you will have NO fundraising activity going on to be able to bring that little bit more in! Now, it is a "little bit more." After a year, it will be a LOT more.

So when you establish such an

account and you give the fundraiser some measure of control over buying his own materials (or else he will drive your secretary nuts with constant demands for funds), one has to resist the driving urge to drain that account and essentially end whatever work he is doing.

As a separate account, he will have no control over or access to your main accounts anyways. Plus, you as the director are always keeping tabs on what he is bringing in and can demand accounting at any time as you have the statements coming to you as well as to him. Since you are paying him out of your own account, so he will not be tempted to pull from this account for what he personally needs. In fact, it is best to sit down each week or month and go over the statements to correct any misunderstandings about what is deposited or withdrawn and for why.

If anything, this gives the fundraiser a measuring stick of positive progress and since he knows you are looking at his progress as well as what he spends, so he will be extra careful to try and impress you with what he knows you will see on the statement.

PAYING BY COMMISSION THOUGHTS

A final word about people who work for commission. Mr. Pay-by-commission has rent to pay, children to feed and yeshivas to pay. Unless he has been in the business for years and loves your theme and mainly loves you (and trusts you to be honest and up front with him) he will not stay very long.

This type of person is best used as a "Door To Door" program, which is overseen by the main fundraiser. Many of them are quite talented and if they love you, can pull in quite a bit of money. But, it means that you have to give back to them in terms of covering travel

expenses from what they pull in, trusting them to take from what they collect (less bother for you) and giving them perks like a cell phone, a desk, business cards, picture on your website, an important title and a personal phone extension.

PAYING A SALARY

How do we pay our fundraiser at least a normal 30 to 35 thousand dollars a year salary when we cannot even pay rent or for teachers?!

A great question.

The difference between paying for a teacher and paying for a fundraiser is that the teacher is a money-drain while the fundraiser is your big investor and promoter. He finds and encourages people to invest money in your operation. You have a choice to pay the teacher and the fundraiser, the fundraiser must come first! Ay! The teacher comes from bigger Geza and is even related to you, so you take from him to pay for her and then he leaves. Then because he is gone, she will leave as well.

So what do you have?

This is one of the great mysteries and secrets of fundraising.

With a fundraiser you only stand to gain.

Whatever you are paying him, you will get back much more. The first three months are not easy, but as someone once said: "When you go to get married, you don't have 10 kids at once!" It is the same with paying a salary. Thirty Five thousand dollars a year means that over 52 weeks you pay out roughly \$675 per week or \$100 a day.

Or think of it this way: Instead of putting together \$3000 a week, you instead put down \$675 a week for someone who in the beginning will only be able to help reduce your weekly budget, but eventually will help you to reduce your personal efforts in making this goal. You fundraise for him and he fundraises

that amount back to you in the first year of his being there and doubles that amount in his second year (to pay for his budget) and by the third year, he is paying for himself, his budget and your salary! All the while he is promoting you, your mosad, makes friends for your Beis Chabad, builds your image and respect for what you are doing (as he has to constantly explain and embellish your mission to solicit money from donors) and builds a general goodwill in your community.

The best way to approach this, is as a business proposition. Go to your biggest funders. Tell them that you have a plan to make their money make even more money for your mosad. Givers like this are usually business-minded people and will appreciate your concern for making

CORRECTION

We deeply regret that the pages of Part 1 of this article were not properly arranged.

money and relieving their burden.

Your plan is for them to pay for the fundraiser for one year.

They will just love the plan! Perhaps ask them to agree to pay this out weekly or bi-weekly straight to the fundraiser, perhaps even putting your person on their payroll as their employee. Why not?

I suggested this idea to a board member of one mosad whom I am close with. The answer of course always was: "How can we think of hiring someone extra when we cannot even pay present salaries?" Recently, after four years of hocking, a member of their board agreed to pay for a fundraiser for one year and they finally hired someone whom they are happy with!

Your Beis Chabad is a business! And when it comes to fundraising,

you only stand to gain!

ENSURING SUCCESS – MAKING A CONTRACT

The lack of a contract is a most painful subject that has been the cause of terrible fights disturbing the essential love we each have for each other. So many Gemara's are devoted to the subject of writing down contracts and monetary agreements. For some reason, (perhaps due to the great love and trust Anash have for each other) we dream that we are *patur* (exempt) from all the takanos of making a contract. Hence the terrible distrust that directors of Bata Chabad have for fundraisers and vice-versa.

Money is a very sensitive issue. Each possible problem and detail must be discussed and written down and signed in agreement by both parties. In the contract should be included details of how to renegotiate in the event of a dispute or some area that needs to be renegotiated. Details should include who will be the Rav or Beis Din that will handle the dispute.

As well, should be included what happens at the end of the contract time until the new contract is negotiated. The period for rehiring / renegotiating should be included as well and how the person will be paid until the new contract is finalized, so that nobody feels they are being taken advantage of. As well, should be included a clause that allows the mosad 30 days to find a new person in the event that the fundraiser should leave and that he will train the new person.

Contract will specify time of employment. How the fundraiser will be paid. How much and how often and in what form. (Cash or check) I am suggesting that he be paid once a week. Most mosdos are not solvent and it is easier to pay a guy \$650 one week than be stuck paying \$1300 the next week. As

well, there must not be any clause in the contract that stipulates that he will only be paid on condition that money comes in that week. (In other words, “buddy, you are paying for your own salary.”) This is not fair and takes advantage of a bad situation (your own!) on his back. It is not his fault that your fundraising efforts are not efficient! It will take him weeks, perhaps months to organize your donors and to create a basis that he can fundraise with!

To do a mailing seems simple, but try doing a mailing with no mailing list! (A topic for another article)

I was recently given a list of 600 names by a 10-year-old mosad to

Your Beis Chabad is a business! And when it comes to fundraising, you only stand to gain!

create a mailing form. The list was in the form of labels from their last mailing which (to their credit) they typed laboriously for weeks by hand one by one.

It took me half a day to convert that list into a useable spreadsheet. However, I know computers and lists inside out. When I started out, it would have taken me 3 days!!

I know another Shliach who subsists on door-to-door work and has no propaganda besides what he primitively created on a Xerox machine! (In two languages)

Creating outreach material with a theme and a message and pictures takes time. Then it needs to be

printed. More time. Thought has to go into designing an approach. This then is reflected in your website, theme, logo and literature. One cannot expect instant money from even the best in the field.

Give the guy a respectable title such as “Director of Development.”

In the contract, give him a desk, a phone, business cards, a cell phone (invaluable).

Spell out details of his access and use of the bank account. Define whom he may not fundraise from. I would give him a list of people whom you are close with to stay away from as part of the contract. Spell out monetary goals (I would advise you to make it only the amount of his salary). Spell out program goals. Which ones or how many. Or simply say: “Will develop new fundraising programs.” Do not ask that Pushkas be a program goal. This is a time consuming job by itself and he will spend this valuable time on a project that will waste his money making time and bring in relatively little money. Better to give him the job of getting someone else to do it. Pushkas go out and it is at least 3 months until they bring back money. You must have at least a thousand out to pay one salary, etc. Big time drain as will be discussed in a later chapter please G-d.

Cell Phone - A cell phone makes your man a walking business! He must have one.

Define: Website access, approval of designs and slogans, give him freedom to use your tax number and stationary to write thank-you’s and pledge letters and in fact any other letter he can think of to raise you money! Define travel expenses and how he will be reimbursed. Define a limit to door-to-door work if you feel he must do this. Define if you want him to be your personal secretary. Obviously, if he is playing your secretary, answering the phones, running errands managing

the Beis Chabad and doing hafatza, so he cannot be expected to raise the money you obligated him to raise.

Which brings us to a necessary next section:

USING YOUR SECRETARY / MERKAZ SHLIACH / SHLUCHA AS YOUR FUNDRAISING PERSON

This can a positive experience or lead you into pitfalls depending how you look at it. If someone is strapped and needs for the moment to get a mailing out or to do a dinner and is between fundraisers, so why not?

It is great experience for the bachur or bachura and you get the work done. If you plan for this to be your long-term answer to your fundraising woes, you are shortchanging yourself. They will begin programs, develop relationships, start projects and then leave. Leaving YOU to guess what they were doing and to lose out on what could have developed from what they started. Those who they developed giving relationships with will be upset at you that their favorite person left and leave you looking unorganized.

Use these people under the guidance of a fundraiser. This is the best way. They gain the valuable experience they will need for their future Chabad House and you get a lot of grunt work done at a saving.

Secretaries are great for mailings, donation maintenance, website updates, and dinners and that is about it! (Let’s hear it for the secretaries!) You need them for other more necessary things.

But hard-core fundraising? Forget it!

These are all half solutions that YOU lose out on administratively.

When a donor joins your board and is faced with an inexperienced (albeit enthusiastic) young person

who is "here today and gone tomorrow," he is not impressed that you have the commonsense needed to raise that million dollars you are bothering him about for your school or shul!

One organization I worked for needed a fundraiser. The best! I called the personnel departments of the biggest, ritziest, fanciest Orthodox Jewish organizations in New York City and found us three prize people.

One was an expert of experts in doing million dollar dinners and in

getting larger donations. The next was an expert in getting grants. The third was an expert in doing dinners, but nothing else. The first was a \$100,000 a year proposition (\$2000 / week). The second was in the \$40,000 range and the third was about 30 to \$35,000 a year.

These three people I could present to our board and know that they would be impressed with real professionals. This is important with a board, as it is a very big honor for someone to be invited to serve on the board of a charitable

organization.

This is ONLY an honor if the place has its act together and is going places. If it is completely unorganized, the person may stay on the board, but be embarrassed to invite his friends to join up with him.

It is crucial that your board feel confident in your mission, leadership abilities and ability to carry out your goals.

*Raanan Isseroff is Operations Manager / Administrator for the Shtetl Foundation.
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A CHABAD RAV, NO 'ORDINARY' RAV

Interview by Nosson Avrohom

*The concept of “Chabad rabbanim” has expanded over the years. If in the not so distant past, Chabad rabbanim were rabbanim of Chassidishe k’hillos, in recent years there has been a quiet revolution. More and more Chassidishe young men are being appointed to important positions as rabbanim of cities, yishuvim, neighborhoods, and even of k’hillos that are not necessarily Chassidic. * Beis Moshiach spoke with three Lubavitcher rabbanim who serve as rabbis of yishuvim and moshavim in the north and south of Eretz Yisroel, and discussed their work, the difficulties they have to contend with, and the challenges they face. * Part 1*

There was one point they all agreed upon – that the world today is ready for Geula. All sorts of people accept the Rebbe as Moshiach. “Our role is just to explain and publicize it.” All three also point to the fact that they are shluchim as well as rabbanim as the

secret to their success.

Tell us about how it was when you started out.

Rabbi Avrohom: When I finished learning on K’vutza, I returned to Eretz Yisroel and went to learn at the Machon L’Hachshoras Rabbanim in Yerushalayim. Back

then, Rabbi Dov Akselrod worked in settlements in the Sharon together with some T’mimim under the auspices of the Mobile Mitzva Tanks.

When they once came to spend a Shabbos in Yinov, one of the elders of the yishuv, R’ Daniel Zachut, a Tunisian émigré, like most of the members of the yishuv, asked them to help find a rav for the community. Rabbi Akselrod took their request seriously and since he knew me and knew I had finished studying rabbanus, he made me the offer. I went to visit the yishuv and got to meet some of the people. I liked the place.

That was in 5751. I went to visit a few more times until I became engaged. Then I went to the Rebbe and received his bracha to go on shlichus. I officially began serving as rav of the moshav in the middle of 5752.

Before I began working in rabbanus at the moshav, I consulted with one of the older Chabad rabbanim. He advised me that since the moshav was comprised of Sephardim, I shouldn’t emphasize the fact that I am a Chassid, because that could interfere with my work. So two weeks before I went there, I learned how to lein in Nusach Sfar.

Getting settled wasn’t easy. As a bachur educated in Tomchei Tmimim, it took me time to understand how Sephardic Jews regard a rav. They want a leader

PANELISTS

RABBI YOSEF CHAIM ROSENBLATT

Rav of the District Council of the Lower Galil and Yishuv Givat Avnei

RABBI TZEMACH AVROHOM

Rav of Yishuv Yinov in the Sharon

RABBI SHLOMO LIFSH

Rav of Yishuv Kfar Achim near Kiryat Malachi

who is involved in everything. Men who could have been my grandfather complained to me about why I didn't lead them and get more involved in their lives. To them, a rav is not just a rabbi but also a shochet and chazan, the one in charge of memorials for the deceased and one who speaks words of chizuk. They asked that I get more involved in interpersonal matters as well. They weren't exactly looking for someone expert in Hilchos Shabbos who knew how to give deep shiurim.

Rabbi Rosenblatt: We arrived in Givat Avnei at the end of 5752. We had gotten married the year before and lived in Tzfas. We planned on going on shlichus at the end of that year. The question was "where?"



Rabbi Tzemach Avrohom

One day of Chol HaMoed Pesach 5752, when we visited my father-in-law, Rabbi Yeshaya Hertz, who was the rav of Kfar Tavor and the Lower Galil at the time, he told me there was a new yishuv being established in the area and maybe we should live there as shluchim.

When we went there in order to form our impression of the place and the people, we saw a new yishuv with about twenty families. The infrastructure was still not completed and the roads were patchy. We decided it was a good shlichus option.

We wrote to the Rebbe. This was after 27 Adar and the Rebbe nodded as a sign of consent and so we went. The first challenge was the yishuv's absorption committee. We didn't attempt to hide anything; we openly said that we came in order to spread Judaism.

Without my father-in-law's advance work in the Lower Galil and the great love that the people had for him, there was no way I could have been accepted. The only request the members of the committee had was that we shouldn't turn Givat Avnei into Yavniel (a city considered by many as the home of a Chassidic cult).

Getting settled wasn't easy. As a bachur educated in Tomchei Tmimim, it took me time to understand how Sephardic Jews regard a rav...

As soon as we settled in, we began doing programs for Yomim Tovim and providing shiurim for men and women. Even before the residents themselves got to know one another, we were the ones who organized social activities. I remember that one entire shiur revolved around the shock of a lady who had come to the yishuv from kibbutz Mizra and saw the "Hichonu L'Bias HaMoshiach" sign. That was a great opportunity to talk about Moshiach from a broad, Jewish, historical perspective and from current events based on the Rebbe's sichos and the prophecy of the B'suras HaGeula.

There are various communal yishuvim whose connection to Judaism is very tenuous. Since no religious people ever go there, they never developed the atmosphere that attracted religious people. One of these yishuvim is Givat Avnei, where we began working. The fact that the shul now has 250 people present on a Shabbos night is not something you take for granted when the yishuv is not religious!

On Rosh HaShana 5753, our first year there, only a few traditional and religious families remained there. Most of them went to visit relatives. I decided to ensure that there would be a minyan so we could hear the shofar with a minyan. I found four men who would definitely show up at shul who had remained at the yishuv. I brought five bachurim from the yeshiva in Lud so we would have a minyan plus another bachur who learned with me in yeshiva.

Erev Rosh HaShana the davening was fine and very moving, but the next day one of the men did not show up. As the minutes ticked by and he did not arrive, I went and knocked at his door. I thought he had gone to sleep late and needed to be woken up. When I saw that nobody answered, I knocked louder



Rabbi Yosef Chaim Rosenblatt

That was a great opportunity to talk about Moshiach from a broad perspective and from current events based on the Rebbe's sichos and the B'suras HaGeula.

until he came to the door.

How taken aback I was when he told me that he would not be coming. When I asked him why, he said, "For me, it's not Rosh HaShana."

I wondered what had happened and then he explained that there is a piyut that Sephardim sing at the beginning of the Rosh HaShana davening, and since we hadn't said it the night before, he did not consider the day Rosh HaShana.

Of course I did not allow him to stay home and I took him with me to shul, but this incident taught me how that it can be complicated for a Lubavitcher to be the rav of a Sephardic community. You need to know how to lead and maneuver without offending others.

Rabbi Lifsh: My appointment as rav in Kfar Achim was in 5758. Until then, I had lived in Nachalat Har Chabad and was the mashpia in Achei HaT'mimim, which was in Kfar Chabad at the time. On Shabbasos I would walk to one of the shuls in Kiryat Malachi in order to "make gatherings on Shabbos." I would give shiurim and was happy to become friends with the congregants.

One time, one of the men came over to me and said that he was the

gabbai of the shul in the neighboring yishuv of Kfar Achim and the position of rav was vacant since the previous rav had left. I agreed to check it out and I went to the moshav and liked it very much.

At the end of the year we faced a dilemma. Should I take the job as a fulltime position or only on a part-time basis. I met with Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky from New York. He suggested that I be a shliach in Europe. At the same time, I didn't know whether I should leave my position at the yeshiva.

I wrote all this down and put it into a volume of *Igros Kodesh*. The answer I opened to was in volume 4, p. 271:

May you add in courage to be a proper vessel and channel to fulfill the shlichus of the Rebbe, my father-in-law which is to spread the light of Torah and the luminary of Torah, which is Toras HaChassidus, in the place and country where you are now, and then certainly all will be successful, with outstanding success.

There were additional amazing details to this marvelous response. The letter was dated 10 Iyar, my birthday, and in the beginning of the letter, the Rebbe wrote about

Chassidim who had certain obstacles in their path but it was nothing to be fazed about because in the end, the Chassidim have the upper hand, didan natzach.

What was amazing was that although the previous rav had stopped carrying out his job, he did not agree to relinquish his official position and therefore I worked for a while without formal recognition. On 5 Teives (didan natzach), this rav finally conceded to have his name officially removed from the position, which paved the way for my official appointment.

What are the challenges you face?

Rabbi Avrohom: A challenge is something that passes; you deal with it and move on. For example, when I arrived as rav of the moshav, it was obvious to me that on Simchas Torah you make Kiddush before the hakafos and you dance with unbridled joy. I discovered that they make Kiddush after the davening when everybody is already hungry and they hurry up the hakafos. Every hakafa went around once and it was all over within a short time.

As a bachur coming from 770, it was hard for me to accept this. It was a corruption of the way I had been taught that Simchas Torah is supposed to be. It took me time to change things and I had to do it with baby steps. The absolutely wrong thing to do is to go someplace and try and change people's customs.

In order to succeed in a rabbinic position when the entire k'hilla is of another background, you must have bittul to Elokus and not attempt coercion. You have to do things insightfully, slowly, and with long-range goals. The biggest challenge is to transform the moshav into a Chassidishe place where people conduct themselves according to Chassidic standards.

[To be continued be"H]