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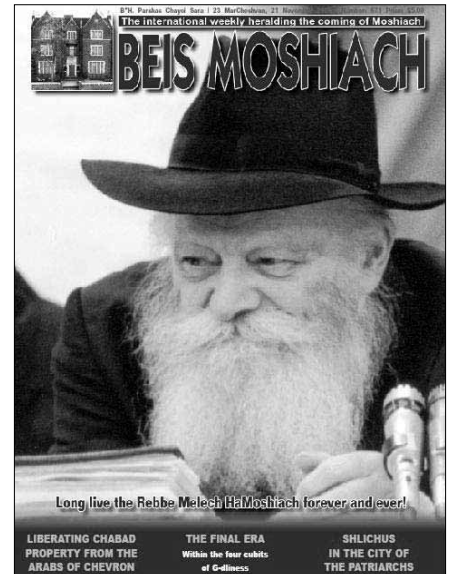
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Shlichus | Nosson Avrohom



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INFLUENCING THE NATIONS

Translated and adapted by Dovid Yisroel Ber Kaufmann

The miraculous birth of Isaac enabled Sarah and Abraham to influence the nations of the world. The two ways they influenced the world anticipate how Moshiach will affect the world.

After the death of Sara, the Torah tells us that Avrohom took another wife, K'tura, who bore him six sons. There is something rather puzzling about this. We know that the birth of Isaac – which occurred when Avrohom was one hundred years old – was a miraculous event. In fact, the Torah goes to great length to emphasize the miraculous nature of Isaac's birth, repeating on several occasions the wonderment of Avrohom and Sara when told the news, the advanced age of Avrohom and Sara, etc.

Yet, when Avrohom has six more sons – forty years later – there is no indication that it's a miracle or at all unusual. If the birth of Isaac when Avrohom is one hundred is a miracle, how much more so the birth of six more sons when Avrohom is one hundred forty! We would expect some indication – either from Avrohom's perspective, as when he laughed when told of Isaac's birth, or from the Torah's perspective – that this too is unusual. But there is nothing beyond the statement of the fact.

We must therefore ask: why doesn't the Torah focus on the miraculous nature of the birth of K'tura's children? Why only Isaac, the son of Sara? The answer, surprisingly, includes an important insight about the times of Moshiach.

When Isaac was born, Sara remarks that others will rejoice with her. Rashi, foremost of Biblical commentators, explains that the blessing and miracle of Isaac's birth brought with it many blessings and miracles: many barren women were remembered with Sara, many sick people were healed on that day, many prayers were

answered, and there was much joy in the world. The birth of Isaac brought salvation and rejoicing to the world at large.

Because Isaac was born, Sara became the agent for and source of miracles and blessings for many other people. In the same way, the miracle of Isaac's birth caused Avrohom to experience other miracles, namely, the birth of six more sons forty years later.

There is another parallel which, as we shall see, is very significant. Those who benefited from Sara – the multitude that shared in her miracle and blessing – were not Jewish. In the same way, the six sons of Avrohom from K'tura – who were born as a result of Isaac's birth – also were not Jewish. In other words, the birth of Isaac, the link to the Jewish people, enabled his parents to influence and benefit the rest of the world.

Still, there are essential differences between Sara and Avrohom in this regard. The first difference is *when* the world benefited. The extension of Sara's blessing and miracle occurred immediately. When she gave birth, other previously barren women also gave birth; on that day the sick were healed, etc. The extension of Avrohom's blessing and miracle to the nations of the world was delayed. In fact, it happened forty years later, with the birth of the six non-Jewish nations.

The second difference is *how* the benefit came about. In Sara's case, the effect was automatic, requiring no further action on her part: as she was blessed, so automatically the nations were blessed. They benefited as a natural consequence of her situation. On the other hand, in order for the nations to benefit from Avrohom's miracle, another miracle was required. The blessing required a separate action on the part of Avrohom.

Clearly, the birth of Isaac was a catalyst in Avrohom and Sara's relationship to the world. Isaac is unique because he was the first child born as a Jew. His birth – and its consequences – serves as a paradigm for the birth of the Jewish people – and the consequences thereof. Specifically, one of the fundamental aspects of Isaac's birth – and therefore the birth of the Jewish people at Sinai, with the giving of the Torah – was its effect on the nations of the world. That effect has two aspects, one connected with the miracles associated with Avrohom, one connected with the miracles associated with Sara.

Now, it's well known that there are seven Noachide commandments – seven commandments that apply to all

mankind. According to Rambam, Moses was instructed by G-d to compel the nations to accept these seven commandments. Further, any non-Jew who accepts and observes the seven Noachide commandments is a righteous gentile, and has a share in the World to Come. However, his acceptance must be based on the fact that G-d commanded them in the Torah and knowledge of them came through Moses.

Since the Torah and its mitzvos were given solely to the Jewish people, we may well ask why the Jewish people have to compel the nations of the world to accept the Noachide commandments, or why the non-Jew must observe them because they are commanded in the Torah.

The question may be answered thus: because Creation exists for the sake of Israel and for the sake of Torah, after the birth of the Jewish people and the giving of the Torah, every commandment to the world at large must be through the mediation of Israel and the Torah.

Looking more closely at the Rambam, we see that there are two ways in which the Jewish people can get the nations to accept the seven commandments incumbent upon them. On the one hand, the Jewish people can compel the nations (verbally as well as physically) to accept the commandments. Or, the influence may be indirect, so that the nations recognize on their own the necessity of keeping their seven mitzvos, since they were also given by G-d in the Torah.

These two methods, compelling and persuading, have a role in the times of Moshiach as well. Rambam explains

that Moshiach, after the ingathering of the Jewish people, will correct the world, so that all the peoples of the world will serve G-d together. Later, Rambam says that in the times of Moshiach there will be neither hunger nor jealousy, etc., and the business of the world will be to know G-d.

In the first case, Moshiach compels the nations to acknowledge G-d's sovereignty and presence; in the second, as a result of the tranquility and security of the Jews, the nations recognize the G-dliness in the world on their own.

These two methods parallel the different types of miracles that accompanied Avrohom and Sara as a result of the miraculous birth of Isaac. Avrohom, being the father of many nations (which is what the word "Avrohom" means) had to be directly involved, compelling the nations over the course of time to acknowledge G-d's sovereignty. Sara, on the other hand, was a ruler (the name "Sara" meaning princess, in a general sense), removed, like a monarch, from a direct connection. The effect of her miracle followed automatically, like a royal decree, without her involvement or interference.

And at the end of exile, with the coming of Moshiach, this fundamental purpose of the birth of Isaac will finally be perfected. Then, since the revelation of G-dliness to the Jewish people will be complete, their influence on and recognition by

the nations of the world will be a necessary consequence, so that "the world will be filled with knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the ocean bed."

(Based on Likkutei Sichos 35, pp. 94-100)

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SHIKUN CHABAD IN CHEVRON

By Avrohom Reinitz

*Liberating Chabad property from the Arabs who lived in Chevron. * The gripping story that took place behind the scenes. * Presented for Parshas Chayei Sara, the parsha in which Avrohom Avinu purchased the Cave of Machpela in Kiryat Arba – Chevron.*

It was five o'clock in the morning. The dark skies over B'nei Brak were beginning to lighten with the first light of day. A car stopped near a building on Rechov Yechezkel 3, the home of the *mara d'asra*, Rabbi Yaakov Landau z"l.

Despite the early hour, the rav was waiting for them. They were men from Kollel Chabad and the Rebbe had sent them. They had a weighty question of Chassidic-political-historical significance. They presented the sensitive issue while Rabbi Landau listened closely.

By six o'clock, they were calling Chevron, where Rabbi Moshe Levinger was waiting impatiently for their answer.

"The answer is positive," they said. R' Levinger breathed a sigh of relief. He had gotten permission to take action, but he now faced a big battle – liberating Chabad property from the Arabs who lived in Chevron. He knew that it would be a

protracted battle in which too many hands would meddle and try to torpedo his efforts. He had to act diplomatically, sensitively and determinedly, just like Avrohom Avinu in his time. Avrohom had to deal with Efron the Chitite from whom he bought the field with the cave, despite the gift they were supposedly giving him. Avrohom knew that more was being left unsaid than said.

R' Levinger earned the title, "Father of the Jewish Settlement in Chevron" through his many years of tireless work on behalf of the Jewish yishuv. He did all in his power to return Jews to the area near the graves of our ancestors. He asked for help from many influential people in the Jewish world, to renew the Jewish settlement in Chevron which had been taken back after the Six Day War. Jews had not lived there since the massacre of 1929.

One of his many attempts included writing to the Rebbe and asking him to encourage the settlers in Chevron, to get involved on behalf of the yishuv, and perhaps to even send his Chassidim to settle in Chevron. In response to his letter, the Rebbe wrote (in 5729) that there was no question about the need to settle Chevron, especially by Chabad Chassidim whose Rebbeim had supported the Jewish settlement in the city. However, since the Israeli government was ready to give Chevron to the Arabs, it was only an open miracle that prevented the return of the city to Arab rule. Therefore, in accordance with Chazal's dictum, "we do not rely on miracles," he could not accede to R' Levinger's request.

In his letter, the Rebbe emphasized: **It is not the goyim I am afraid of, heaven forbid ... but the mistaken view of our brethren, the Jewish people, who are *baalei b'chira* (have free choice).** The Rebbe, known for his war for shleimus ha'Aretz, was afraid lest this answer dampen the resolve of R' Levinger and the others who were involved, and so he concluded his letter by saying: **My intention is not at all to weaken you and those with you in your principles and work.**

The battle to renew the Jewish yishuv in Chevron was fought by activists throughout the years since the city was liberated in 1967. They were motivated by the conviction



**Above: Beis Romano
after the renovations
Left: Beis Romano
when Chevron was
first resettled**



that it was forbidden to cave in as a result of the 1929 bloodbath, and they could not allow their murderers to be victorious. Jews had lived in Chevron for thousands of years. They were expelled as a result of Arab cruelty, but they would return because it was

their right.

This group of pioneers got to work less than a year after the Six Day War, on Pesach night, 1968. A group of people led by R' Levinger and lawyer Elyakim HaEztni (who, on the day that the city was liberated by IDF forces, vowed to return and live there) took action on behalf of the return of Jews to Chevron. They decided to rent the Park Hotel in the heart of Chevron and spend Pesach there.

The group presented itself to the owner of the hotel as tourists from Switzerland. HaEztni said that afterwards, Kwasama, the manager of the hotel, told him that when they came to his house to take the key, he was sure they had come to kill him. "They remembered the pogrom of 1929 and were sure we were going to take revenge. Of course, that was not our intention; we wouldn't harm those who were innocent of any crime."

When all was ready, the organizers of the group asked commander Uzi Narkiss for weapons with which to defend themselves. Narkiss, who was not pleased (to say the least) by the group's visit to his office, told them that the government had decided not to interfere with them, but not to help them either. Furthermore, he personally did not want to be involved and sufficed with, "Do what you want." After a long talk with him, he finally, unwillingly, wrote a letter to the police commander in Chevron asking him "to give them some rifles."

Rabbi Chaim Drukman led the Pesach seider. About a hundred people, including Rabbi Eliezer Waldman (today, the rosh yeshiva of Nir in Kiryat Arba), the writer Moshe Shamir (one of the leaders in the movement for Eretz Yisroel Shleima), Shmuel Katz (who was a member of the Etzel command and a member of the first Knesset), Rabbi

Levinger and Elyakim HaEztni and their families, sat around the table.

The atmosphere was uplifting. When they were finished, they walked the streets of Chevron towards the Maaras HaMachpella. Aside from them, nobody was out on the streets at that hour. Here and there, window shutters opened and an Arab peered out, eyebrows raised in wonder at the unusual sight. On their way they danced and sang, "Ki Mei'Chevron Teitzei Torah." They walked bravely, without weapons, without military escort.

"Although Chevron today and then was hostile," said HaEztni, "at that time the Arabs were not overtly hostile but just amazed. They were

***Here and there,
window shutters
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wonder at the
unusual sight.***

sure we would kill them. The mayor of the city, Jebri, wanted to cooperate with us. He welcomed us with 'Ahalan and Sahalan.' He even offered the military authorities to renovate the Avrohom Avinu shul so that the expenses would be divided – half paid by the military authorities and half by the city of Chevron, but the authorities said that wouldn't be necessary.

"There was a goat pen where the Avrohom Avinu shul was. When we found the Arab who dried goat dung on the holy ground where the shul had stood for years, we were shocked when he took out a certificate written in Hebrew by the

military government which allowed him to keep his goat pen on the site of the shul!"

Three weeks later, when the Israeli newspapers began inciting against the "group of settlers who plan on throwing the Arabs out of Chevron," the leaders of the group were called to Jebri's office. On his desk were clippings from Israeli newspapers along with Arab translations. The mayor told them that in a telegram to Moshe Dayan he informed him that he was not responsible for the security of the settlers.

Dayan replied in a telegram that the Jews' settling in Chevron was legal and he did not ask Jebri to guarantee their security. "The IDF is responsible for their security," wrote Dayan, in a letter which looks like it comes from the office of today's Defense Minister.

That Pesach did not satisfy the pioneers; on the contrary, it whetted their appetite for more. They wanted to create facts on the ground in order to reclaim the city. A team was formed, whose goal was to redeem the plots of Jews from the Arabs who had taken them over since 1929.

The property belonging to Chabad was a large portion of all the Jewish property in Chevron. In the first stage they spoke about "Beis Schneersohn," the house where Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel, known as the "Mother of the Jewish yishuv in Chevron," lived. The Slonim family (see box) lived on this property throughout the years.

R' Levinger, who wanted to redeem the house from the Arabs, faced a dead end. He could not begin attempts to redeem the property as long as he didn't have power of attorney from the owners – Kolliel Chabad under the leadership of the Rebbe. When he called the offices of Kolliel Chabad in Eretz Yisroel, he was told that without permission from the president of the



IDF officers visiting Chevron after the city was liberated in the Six Day War

Kollel, i.e. the Lubavitcher Rebbe, they could not provide him with the power of attorney.

So he asked the Rebbe for power of attorney over Beis Schneersohn. After repeated attempts by R' Levinger, on Yud-Tes Kislev, 5738, the Rebbe told the directors of Kollel Chabad to speak to a Lubavitcher rav.

This, then, is the background of the meeting with Rabbi Landau in B'nei Brak described in the beginning of this article. R' Landau, who apparently knew R' Levinger

and his work, said he thought he should be given power of attorney to redeem Beis Schneersohn, for he was experienced in redeeming land in Chevron.

Immediately after he was given power of attorney, R' Levinger got to work. He spoke to the Arab owners and asked them to leave the house in exchange for a vast sum of money. Although he could take them to court and prove his legal ownership of the house, he preferred to redeem the property without the unwanted media attention which

would accompany a legal battle.

Despite the monetary compensation, they refused to leave the house. The members of the Peace Now organization, who knew the intentions of those settling in Chevron, promised the Arabs huge sums of money if they did not sell the house. It was only after the personal intervention of Zamir Shemesh, director of the property board in Chevron, that the Arab agreed to sell them the house.

After they signed the agreement and left the house, they noticed the car of the senior lawyer for Peace Now, who had come to thwart the sale.

In the years to come the house was renovated and rebuilt. Today it is a residential building, except for the basement where there is a day care center.

Although the Rebbe refrained from encouraging his Chassidim to settle in Chevron, he inquired into the possibility of re-establishing yeshivas Toras Emes there. The Rebbe Rashab had founded yeshivas Toras Emes in Chevron, and it continued under the leadership of his son, the Rebbe Rayatz. The Rebbe very much desired to perpetuate the Chabad presence in Chevron in the same buildings the yeshiva had been in previously.

The Rebbe's interest began right after the Six Day War, but we know hardly any details about this plan. The only evidence I have found is in a letter the Rebbe wrote to Ariel Sharon (see box) which says:

Despite what was said previously, they found out about the possibility regarding founding the yeshiva etc., and I got a clear answer that "better for me" to inquire about a yeshiva in Yerushalayim than in Chevron.

A fire burned in R' Levinger's bones, and following the success with Beis Schneersohn, he immediately began inquiring about



Beis Schneersohn

Beis Romano. This was the largest Jewish estate in the Chevron area and it covered nearly 5000 square meters (see box).

In those years, on the land of Beis Romano there was a big Arab school and Arab stores, and the Chevron central bus station was on a large portion of it. R' Levinger wanted to redeem the land and build a yeshiva, but here too he was told that without express approval from the Rebbe, Kollel Chabad could not give him power of attorney for the property.

(In the political echelons they also required the Rebbe's consent. In one of his meetings with the Prime Minister at that time, Menachem Begin, the topic was broached and Begin said that only after hearing the Lubavitcher Rebbe's opinion would he render his decision. Aryeh Naor, the Secretary of State, reacted similarly).

R' Levinger decided his only choice was to go and see the Rebbe personally, tell him his plans, and ask for his approval. This was at the beginning of Nissan, 5741. He knew that after the Rebbe's heart attack on Simchas Torah, 5738, it would be hard for him to get an appointment with the Rebbe, but he decided to gamble. He dropped all his Erev Pesach work, went to the Rebbe and asked for yechidus. He was told that under the circumstances it would not be possible for him to have yechidus in the near future.

A few hours later, the phone at his host's home rang. It was Rabbi Groner, the Rebbe's secretary, on the line. "The Rebbe wants you to see him after Mincha," he said.

R' Levinger rushed to 770 and after Mincha he had yechidus. The yechidus took hours, during which they discussed all angles of the issue of settling Yehuda-Shomron in general and Chevron in particular. The Rebbe took an interest in every detail and encouraged him to



In the entrance to Beis Romano during construction

continue his work.

R' Levinger says that the Rebbe spoke to him about many matters that still should remain secret, even today. The Rebbe asked him not to reveal it and so R' Levinger doesn't say much about his yechidus.

When he began to talk to the Rebbe about Beis Romano, the Rebbe's face turned serious. He told the Rebbe what he planned to do, which was to redeem the house from the Arabs and open a yeshiva. The Rebbe listened, heard all the details,

and then agreed to give R' Levinger power of attorney to act on his behalf to redeem this large Chabad plot.

This was only power of attorney giving R' Levinger the authority to act in the Rebbe's name, but it did not give him any rights to the property, which remained the property of Chabad.

R' Levinger returned to Eretz Yisroel and began working on redeeming the property. The Arabs in Beis Romano were more ready to leave the area in exchange for a large sum of money. The only problem was where to put the hundreds of students in the school.

In the meantime, a number of serious security breaches occurred - like the stabbing of a yeshiva student named Kaposki near Beis Romano - which forced the government to take steps against the Arabs of Chevron. For one thing, they confiscated the entire estate (except for the row of stores that the Arabs built after 1929) for security purposes. (The army had a vested interest in confiscating the property, to take advantage of its strategic central location). As for what to do with the Arab students, they gave the Chevron municipality classrooms in

BEIS SCHNEERSOHN

Beis Schneersohn is located about ten meters south of Beit Hadassah. The building was built in the 19th century by Chabad Chassidim, and it served as a meeting place, a beis midrash, and as a place for guests and residents.

Beis Schneersohn was where Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel Slonim (granddaughter of the Alter Rebbe and daughter of the Mittlerer Rebbe) lived. She was the "Mother of the Chabad yishuv in Chevron," and was known for her piety and manifold abilities. She was admired by all the residents of Chevron.

Today, another two floors have been added to Beis Schneersohn, and attached to the northern façade of the building is a new building called Beit HaShisha. Another building was built behind Beis Schneersohn, which is called Beit Fink after the donors.

Six large families now live in Beis Schneersohn, and there is a day care center on the ground floor.

other schools in the city.

The process was coordinated between R' Levinger and the Defense Minister at the time, Ariel Sharon, who planned on setting up an army camp on the empty property and giving the building at a later stage to the Jewish settlers for their yeshiva.

In Elul, 5742, the yeshiva Shavei Chevron opened in Beis Romano. Once again, the sound of Torah could be heard in the place where previously, Yeshivas Toras Emes had been. The yeshiva opened with only ten talmidim, but thanks to the blessing of the owners, the Chabad leaders, the yeshiva grew until today there are about 200 bachurim and fifty men learning there.

With the growth of the yeshiva there was an urgent need to expand the existing building. The condition of the existing building was also not satisfactory, and the decision was made to renovate the entire building and to add another floor. In 5751, the plans were approved by the Housing Minister of that time, Ariel Sharon, who guaranteed to give two million shekels to refurbish the yeshiva.

As the construction got underway, they discovered an ancient underground structure which was previously unknown. Hundreds, possibly thousands, of years before Romano built the building, there was a large building there. This underground floor was renovated, too, with the input of expert architects, and today the yeshiva has various rooms and a storage area down there.

In the summer of 5752, with the rise of the Left to power, the government declined to honor agreements signed by the previous authorities, and the money the yeshiva was supposed to get was frozen. The hanhala of the yeshiva went to court and managed to extricate the promised funds, but it



Rabbi Moshe Levinger at a bris in Chevron

wasn't enough to complete the renovations.

The high cost of the renovations was due to the efforts made to preserve the original building. During the construction, the building suddenly split in two! The engineers set up iron beams around the entire building, which were connected by huge screws. For a few weeks they turned the screws every day, as much as possible, until the building was made whole again.

In 5743, about two years after Beis Romano was redeemed from the Arabs, plans were made at the Kollel Chabad offices to open a Chabad yeshiva g'dola there. According to the plan, Kollel Chabad would place temporary structures near Beis Romano for the talmidim from yeshiva Shavei Chevron until a building was found for them. In the meantime, the existing building was renovated for use.

At first, the Rebbe was very positive about this project, and he approved the plans and gave them his blessing. Then a friend of Chabad abroad, who was on excellent terms with Rabbi Leibel Kaplan a"h, director of the umbrella group of Chabad mosdos in Eretz Yisroel, heard about the plans and agreed to fund the entire project. At

this point, the umbrella group of Chabad mosdos in Eretz Yisroel entered the picture.

The millionaire, an enthusiastic supporter of Jewish settlement in Yesha, decided to take advantage of the fact that Chabad wanted to build in Chevron, and he pushed for massive construction in the entire area of Beis Romano. According to the plans that were made at that time, they were talking about a Chabad neighborhood around the yeshiva. It involved an investment of hundreds of thousands of dollars, which he promised to provide.

Within a few weeks, the plan went into action. Temporary buildings were brought and set up near Beis Romano. Chabad askanim met with P.M. Begin and the Housing Minister Dovid Levy, who agreed in principle to the plans. They even sat together perusing maps of the building and preparing detailed blueprints for the purpose of phase one of the renovations, and to add a floor or two at a later point.

The plans to build a neighborhood around the yeshiva were so close to implementation that there were discussions and suggestions about what kind of settlers would live in the new neighborhood. One of the ideas was

to settle Russian immigrants there.

Interestingly, the work was done under a heavy veil of secrecy. Messages had come from the Rebbe's secretaries that the Rebbe wanted it all to be done secretly. Some of the visits that the heads of the Kollel made with other Chabad askanim took place late at night, for this reason.

Then came the day when the Rebbe said they should stop. From the tone of the order, it was understood that it was preferable to avoid carrying out the plans without mixing in the Rebbe's part in to the decision. So Chabad askanim gently backed out of the plans to renew the Chabad yishuv in Chevron.

One of the ardent supporters of the plan, who had even invested large sums of money into drawing up the plans, realized that the askanim had dropped their plans as a result of an order from the Rebbe and he asked the Rebbe, in a letter, why Chabad had backed out.

In the Rebbe's lengthy response, he explained that there was no question that revitalizing the Jewish yishuv in Chevron was very important, especially the Chabad yishuv, since the Chabad movement had deep roots in Chevron. However, despite the strong desire to do so, he was not willing to take the responsibility to send his Chassidim there since the security situation was not safe enough. As long as the security situation remained as it was, the Rebbe would not send his Chassidim to Chevron.

The Rebbe concluded his letter by promising that the moment the situation changed, and one could settle in Chevron without danger, the plans would be brought up again and he would be one of the first to be informed!

From the Rebbe's letters to R' Levinger and Sharon, as well as from the Rebbe's attitude towards the plans of renewing the Chabad

yishuv in Chevron, we see that the Rebbe was eager to have the liberated territories settled, Chevron in particular, but as an "Ish Halacha," he would not make a move that was not 100% in accordance with halacha. The Rebbe did not tell Lubavitcher Chassidim (an instruction that would be interpreted as a command) to settle Chevron, based on the halachic principle that we do not rely on a miracle, especially when there is danger to life and limb.

At the same time, those who settled in liberated territories, especially Chevron (today it's an "open secret" that there were Lubavitchers among them), were supported by the Rebbe. As the

Rebbe himself concluded his letter to R' Levinger, **"My intention is not at all to weaken you and those with you in your principles and work."**

Today there is a Chabad house in Kiryat Arba-Chevron, which is run by Rabbi Victor Ettia, Rabbi Danny Cohen, Rabbi Yossi Nachshon, who grew up in Kiryat Arba, and a new shliach, Rabbi Menachem Porter. They are all busy spreading Chassidus and the B'suras HaGeula.

As we say in Shmoneh Esrei, "And He [G-d] remembers the kindness of the Fathers and brings the Redeemer to their children's children" – *miyad* now!

BEIS ROMANO

Beis Romano was built in 5640 (1880), by a wealthy man named Avrohom Romano, as part of a move out of the "ghetto." It served as a place for guests. A shul was established within it, which was called "the Istanbul shul."

In 5661 (1901), Rabbi Chizkiyahu Medini emigrated to Eretz Yisroel and opened a yeshiva in Beis Romano. It was there that he completed writing the famous encyclopedic work, *S'dei Chemed*.

In 5672 (1911), the house was bought by the Rebbe Rashab and yeshivas Toras Emes was founded there. In 5677 (1917), the British requisitioned the house and opened a police station, the same police who did nothing to help the Jews in the pogrom of 1929. The wounded and slaughtered were then brought to Beis Romano.

In 1948, after the Jordanian conquest, the Arabs started a school in Beis Romano, and continued to operate even after the liberation of Chevron in 1967.

In 1981, after the murder of six Jews near Beit Hadassah, the government returned the building to the Jews. Yeshivas Shavei-Chevron, run by Rabbi Moshe Bleicher, which originally started out in Beit Hadassah, was moved from the Avrohom Avinu shul to Beis Romano.

From 5756-5760, renovations were made to the building and another floor was discovered buried in the earth. Two more floors were added to the building.

Today, Yeshivat Shavei Chevron uses part of Beis Romano. The IDF and the police use the rest.

R' Danny Cohen, shliach in Chevron, worked together with the building's current occupants to establish a library there in memory of the Rebbe Rashab. Located on Beis Romano's first floor, the Heichal HaRashab library contains writings by all of the leaders of Lubavitch.

SHLICHUS IN THE CITY OF THE PATRIARCHS

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelewitz, Shliach, Beit Shaan

*Shluchim operate in the most diverse of circumstances, cities, suburbs, freedom, oppression, you name it. But no other shluchim deal with the range of hardships that pertain specifically to shlichus in Chevron, near the gravesites of Judaism's Founding Fathers and Mothers, a fragile enclave surrounded by a sea of hostility. * Presented for Parshas Chayei Sara, the parsha in which Avrohom purchases the Cave of Machpella in Chevron.*

Rabbi Danny Cohen and Rabbi Victor Ettia, shluchim in Chevron and Kiryat Arba, together with all who live and work there, operate on a daily basis with mesirus nefesh under dangerous conditions. They have stories to tell that can happen only in Chevron.

SURROUNDED BY ARABS AND BY SOLDIERS

If you haven't visited Chevron,

you could mistakenly think that there are two separate worlds that never meet: the Jewish settlement and the Arab city. Actually, the situation is the other way round. The Jews of Kiryat Arba and Chevron walk through the narrow, winding Arab alleyways every day on their way to the Maaras HaMachpella. L'havdil, the Arab residents of Chevron pass by or through the Jewish settlement on their way to work outside the city or to vineyards in

the area.

R' Ettia relates:

"On the walk from my house till the Maaras HaMachpella I pass five or six IDF positions and meet about sixty soldiers. Nearly all of them know me. Most of them have eaten a Shabbos meal either with me or with Danny Cohen. They also know what I am likely to ask every time I meet them. The first thing is whether they each have Rabbi Rittterman's protection booklet containing the Rebbe's picture, the ten mitzvaim and some chapters of T'hillim.

"Then I will try to put t'fillin on with them. Most of the time, they refuse. They protest, 'We can't do that while on guard,' and then I take out my 'secret weapon.' I know some magic tricks, and the soldiers are willing to watch me do them and be amazed. After a brief performance they loosen up, we get to talking, and sometimes they roll up their sleeves for t'fillin."

R' Ettia's magic shows are part and parcel of mitzvaim. It's a key that unlocks hearts.

"I was asked to come and perform at a bar mitzva of a boy in Ramat Mamrei whose father had died. When I finished the

show, sounds of automatic gunfire could be heard outside. A group of T'mimim from Rabbi Yitzchok Arad's Yeshivas Daas was visiting in a neighboring building. We were all on the alert. In the meantime, a number of soldiers arrived and ordered everybody to enter armor protected buildings.

"The shooting continued, and it took half an hour before the army allowed us to come out. It turned out there had been a quarrel between two Arab factions and they were fighting it out. This is not an unusual occurrence in Chevron.

"One year, on Sukkos, I went with a group of bachurim with the Dalet minim to visit the soldiers. At one of our stops there was a guard who would not let us enter. He said we had no permit. Just then a Captain pulled up in a military jeep. He realized what was going on and censured the guard, 'How could you not let Rabbi Victor in? Do you know I was a soldier of his?'

"I was taken aback, as I had never been an officer in the army, but he soon explained that he had been a soldier in the Tzivos Hashem club and in Chabad camps. I recognized him and we hugged. The captain then informed his soldiers, 'Woe to whoever does not shake the four minim.' We went right in and all the soldiers did the mitzva."

FACING AN ARMED ARAB

Life in Chevron is unlike life anywhere else. If a shliach in Chaifa, Yerushalayim or Miami experiences car trouble, he goes to the nearest garage (or calls for a tow-truck) and has his car fixed. In Chevron it's another story entirely.

R' Ettia continued:

"When I first started out in shlichus, I had an old car that liked visiting the mechanic. One day, while driving in a bad, Arab area, it showed clear signs of quitting. I quickly drove into the nearest garage.

"Nadal, the owner of the garage, lay with his tools under my car and began checking for the problem. The streets were quiet, and it was getting dark. I felt uneasy. I checked to see that my revolver was on me and moved to stand with my back to the wall so I'd be able to see anyone who approached and would be protected on one side.

"A big Arab suddenly appeared, with a knife in his hand. He looked around and came over to me with a bloodthirsty look. I knew just what he wanted and I took out my gun. At the last second I shouted to Nadal, 'Nadal! Someone's here to stab me and I'm going to shoot him!'

"Nadal got out from under the

Just then a Captain pulled up in a military jeep. He realized what was going on and censured the guard, 'How could you not let Rabbi Victor in? Do you know I was a soldier of his?'

car, threw all his work tools at the guy and fought with him until he dragged him out of the garage and sent him running for his life. Then he came in and calmed me down. He told me the man was a depressed character who was once the head of the Jebri clan.



Rabbi Victor Ettia and Rabbi Danny Cohen with soldiers in Chevron

***At the last second
I shouted to
Nadal, ‘Nadal!’
Someone’s here to
stab me and I’m
going to shoot
him!’***

His wife ran off to Jordan and now he became a drunkard. He asked me not to be angry with him.

STONE THROWING

“One Chanuka I traveled with a friend to Yerushalayim to bring doughnuts for the soldiers. As soon as I left Chevron, near Beit Omar, a group of boys aroused my suspicion. Sure enough, one of them, about 17 years old, picked up a rock and threw it at my car. Fortunately, I was driving an armored car and the windshield didn’t break.

“I decided to drive back to the boys and scare them with my gun so they would run away and not bother other drivers. I was just in time to see four Shabak men chase after them and arrest them. I identified the boy who had thrown the rock, and thanks to my testimony he was punished.

“Despite all the hardships and limitations, we are in a developmental stage. A big building for the Chabad house is being built, which is being named to memorialize my daughter, Chaya Mushka a”h. With the help of many donors we have put in about a million dollars already and now we are trying to finish the building. Recently, another shliach joined us in Chevron, Menachem Porter. He gives a

shiur in the Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel Kollel. A beautiful Chabad mikva will soon be built in Kiryat Arba. All this is in addition to our outreach, which nearly all the members of the yishuv participate in.”

**HE WENT TO LEARN IN
HIS GRANDMOTHER’S
KOLLEL**

R’ Ettia ran the show in Kiryat Arba and Chevron for years. Then Danny Cohen joined him. R’ Cohen concentrates on the Jewish yishuv in Chevron and does tremendous work there. There are many Arabs there, but also lots of soldiers and Jews who need the help the Chabad house provides, not to mention the thousands of tourists who visit Chevron every year.

Up until a few years ago, the area of the gravesite of Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel, daughter of the Mittlerer Rebbe, was open to the Arabs. Nearly every month they desecrated the graves in the cemetery and did not allow people to come and fix things up.

Six years ago, soon upon the arrival of Danny Cohen to Chevron, the shluchim got permission to open a Kollel near the cemetery. Soldiers came to guard the place and many men from Kiryat Arba and Chevron come every day to learn Chassidus in the Kollel.

The soldiers don’t just do guard duty; they go inside the Kollel and learn too, a little from the s’farim, a little from the stories, and sometimes they just chat.

R’ Cohen relates:

“One day, we met a soldier who refused to put on t’fillin but he said he and his family had a special connection with Chevron. His family tradition is that his great-grandmother was a Rabbanit in Chevron and there is even a book that lists all her descendents.

“I immediately guessed which Rebbetzin he meant and I asked him his name and his family name. It was Yoav Slonim. I took out a book of the descendents of the Alter Rebbe and found the soldier’s family in it. Without

THE FIRST SHLUCHIM IN CHEVRON

You can’t write about Chabad in Chevron without mentioning the Nachshon family, the artist Boruch and his wife Sara, the founders of the Jewish yishuv in Chevron who received amazing personal attention from the Rebbe. They started the first Chabad house in Kiryat Arba-Chevron in their own home.

Boruch Nachshon says that while at first it was a struggle to complete a minyan at the Chabad house, now there are sixty people every Shabbos. They all learn a sicha of the Rebbe, join the Shabbos Mevarchim farbrengens and are exposed to Chassidic ideas and the B’suras HaGeula.

Yossi Nachshon, his son, organizes the outreach work in all the nearby yishuvim. He recently got a donation to buy a mitzva tank with which he visits the yishuvim. Wherever he goes he makes clubs for the kids, gives shiurim to the adults, and takes care of people’s material and spiritual needs. Yossi also teaches Chassidus in the Kollel and runs the terrific “Chabad Chevron” website, which is shared by all the shluchim in the City of our Fathers.

another word, I put my arm in his and led him to the gravesite of his grandmother, the Rebbetzin. He was very moved, and of course he rolled up his sleeve for t'fillin. He even joined in the learning of 'the Kollel of his grandmother.'"

MENORA IN ABU SNINA

Another position "conquered" by the Chabad house is the Abu Snina hill. The Arabs used to shoot from there directly into the Jewish settlement (remember baby Shalhevet Pass a"h?). But since Operation Defensive Shield, the hill is under Jewish control and is called Givat Shalhevet. Danny Cohen goes there every night of Chanuka, accompanied

by a military escort, and he lights a big menorah that can be seen from all over Chevron.

"One time, a new officer came to the area. He grumbled about having to go to the hill in order to light the menorah 'for no one,' as he put it. He didn't even want to take a doughnut from me. Nevertheless, he came to protect us every night, and little by little, the ice broke. Friday night he joined us for the meal at my home and on the last night of Chanuka he said to me, 'Danny, you've already lit my candle. Now I understand how important it is to light the menorah.'"

A few years ago, the police arrested Shalhevet's father on suspicion of maintaining an

illegal militia. At first, nobody was allowed to visit him, neither family nor a lawyer. Danny Cohen was asked by his parents to visit him and check his t'fillin. He was told that nobody could visit the prisoner, but while his belongings were being searched the jailor saw a picture of the Rebbe. "What? You're from the Rebbe? That's another thing altogether. Go in and cheer him up. You have permission."

This is just a drop in the bucket of the experiences the shlichim in Chevron and Kiryat Arba have on shlichus, as they continue the work of Avraham and Sara in the final days of galus.

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THE REBBE WAS LIKE A FATHER TO ME

By Nosson Avrohom

Translated by Michoel Leib Dobry

*“Since my parents passed away in my youth, I saw the Rebbe as a father in every respect. I even made certain to indicate this in many of my letters, and the Rebbe responded in kind.” * While R. Chaim Aflalo, a Lubavitcher from Migdal HaEmek in Eretz Yisroel, is known to many people as a chassid involved in all matters of holiness, his interesting life story is largely unknown. This includes the numerous expressions of closeness and the fatherly relationship that he was privileged to have with the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, over the years, alongside the various “miracles” he saw first-hand.*

Only a few chassidim from the Chabad community of Migdal HaEmek are unfamiliar with R. Chaim Aflalo, a most prominent and active individual, a good-hearted and engaging Jew with whom it is a pleasure to

communicate. During the week, as on Shabbos, he provides logistic and hands-on help for the local Chabad shul. On weekdays, he paints and plasters, repairs and renovates – all on a volunteer basis. He goes about these tasks

joyfully, with a smile on his lips – with chassidic grace and a shining countenance.

He’s not only known around town, but also from his outreach in the prison system and his work as a scribe.

We met him last week at his home in Migdal HaEmek, and he agreed to tell the story of the various stages of his life, which is filled with thrilling episodes, heart-stopping miracle stories, and extraordinary expressions of closeness that he was privileged to receive from the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach. “Since my parents passed away in my youth, I saw the Rebbe as a father in every respect. I even made certain to indicate this in many of my letters, and the Rebbe responded in kind.”

FROM THE SOCCER FIELD TO RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Chaim was born and lived until the age of three in the Moroccan town of Mugdar (or Svira, as the locals called it), a summer resort town located on the seashore. Many of its residents make their living in the fishing industry. A relatively large Jewish community lives there, where they devoutly observe a life of Torah and mitzvos.

This city is the birthplace of

Rabbi Chaim ben Atar and later of Rabbi Moshe Pinto, the town's chief rabbi, a prominent kabbalist and miracle worker. "I absorbed a great deal of faith in tzaddikim in my home," R. Chaim recalled. "My mother would bake challos every Erev Shabbos and send them to Rabbi Moshe Pinto in order that he would make a bracha on them. When they decided to emigrate to Eretz Yisroel, they did it with a feeling of awe and reverence."

As Divine Providence would have it, R. Chaim lost his parents when he was still in his youth. His father passed away when he was just a few months shy of his bar-mitzvah, and his mother returned her soul to her Maker when Chaim was only seventeen years old.

His family came to Eretz Yisroel when he was three, and they settled in Natzrat Illit. Chaim was sent to learn in the city's government-sponsored religious school. "I really loved soccer. In those days, it was the only activity we had in our free time. One day, returning home exhausted from a tiring match, I saw my father quietly conferring in our house with a rav for whom he had great respect. When my father saw me, he asked me to wash my face and join them in the conversation. I found out later that this was Rabbi Avraham Menachem, then the chief Sephardic rabbi of Migdal HaEmek.

Chaim did as his father asked and respectfully approached the rav. The rav began to ask him fundamental questions on Judaism and then asked if he could see his workbooks from school. "I will never forget those moments," R. Chaim notes. "He said to me, 'Look, you are a good boy. We are making a special camp in another two weeks in the city of Migdal

HaEmek nearby, and we want you to take part."

On the appointed day, Chaim arrived at the site and saw another twenty boys there. He looked around and saw modern buildings with excellent material conditions. "This was a most unique camp. The atmosphere was warm and intimate. On Friday nights, we would eat at the home at Rabbi Yitzchak Dovid Grossman. When the camp program was completed and we were offered to continue our studies there for the following

***It was dark, and
I was afraid that
the approaching
car couldn't see
the Rebbe. I
quickly jumped
in front and
blocked the road,
and the car came
to a screeching
halt.***

scholastic year, we were quite happy to oblige."

Chaim and his friends constituted the first class to open the school, and they laid the foundation for the Migdal Ohr Institutions of today. At their new place of learning, the boys were exposed to Jewish studies. The daily schedule was one half Torah studies, one half secular studies. Over a period of time, more students enrolled in the school, due to the excellent reputation it

had earned from the warm and affectionate manner it treated its students.

"My first connection to the Rebbe was when I was completing my high school studies at Migdal Ohr. In the middle of the Simchas Torah davening, Rabbi Dovid Teichtel entered the Sephardic shul where we conducted our prayers and said that he had been informed that the Rebbe had suffered a heart attack, and he would feel better only from simcha. He took out a bottle of 'mashke' and begun to pour 'L'chaim' for all those in attendance.

Rabbi Teichtel's great concern for the Rebbe's health instilled within Chaim an awareness and recognition that the Lubavitcher Rebbe, about whom he had heard on more than one occasion from Rabbi Grossman and other teachers in the school, is not just another rabbinical figure, rather a Jewish leader of the highest order.

"When we came back to school in Migdal HaEmek that Cheshvan, we had a surprise waiting for us. We met there several young bachurim from 770, sent to us by the Rebbe. They subsequently were instrumental in laying the groundwork for the opening of Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in the city. Among the bachurim were Boruch Chaim Levkivker, Chaim Shlomo Diskin, Levi Yitzchak Ginsberg, Itzik Gruzman, Moshe Avraham, Shimshon Halperin, and Alter Betzalel Kupchik. They breathed much new vitality into the walls of the school, made lots of farbrengens, and created a marvelous atmosphere."

Chaim found himself drawn towards this group of young men, and he would convince his friends to participate more in the farbrengens and other activities that the shluchim/bachurim would

initiate. “They succeeded in instilling within us the messages of *Tanya* and chassidus. They started a campaign that anyone who learned a chapter of *Tanya* by heart would receive twenty liras – no small sum of money in those days. The sum was later increased in order to bring in those students who weren’t particularly interested in the project. In the next stage, we learned maamarim in depth and were awarded prizes for our efforts. They would periodically bring exciting Chabad lecturers, such as Professor Yirmiyahu Branover and Rabbi Yechezkel Sofer.”

What other rabbis and Torah scholars had failed to instill within the students over the years, this group of charismatic and vigorous T’mimim managed to instill within a year. “I was moved primarily by Rabbi Ginsberg. Here was a relatively young man, expounding upon Torah subjects with Rabbi Yisroel Grossman, who was known to be an outstanding Torah giant in his own right, quoting the Gemara and the Midrashim. The shluchim’s successful combination of scholarliness on the one hand, and humility and Ahavas Yisroel on the other – drew me with a desire to become one of them.”

PERSONAL EXPRESSIONS OF CLOSENESS FROM THE REBBE

At the conclusion of that year (5739), Chaim decided that he wanted to see with his own eyes the great wonder that the bachurim live and breathe twenty-four hours a day. He decided to travel to 770 and study in the k’vutza program in the Central Lubavitcher Yeshiva. “The moment I arrived in New York and saw the Rebbe for the first time, I made a

switch in my mind. Until then, it was only a preparation and a warm-up, but from that moment, I knew that I wanted to be a Chabad chassid in every sense of the word. This was a deep and inner process, and when I ‘grasped it,’ there was no one happier than me that I had discovered the Rebbe.”

When Chaim saw the Rebbe for the first time, it virtually took his breath away. “I felt T I was looking upon an angel of G-d,” he said with much emotion, even



R. Chaim Aflalo

thirty years later. “You look into the Rebbe’s eyes, and they shine with the brilliance of the heavens. It seems as if the Rebbe already knows you and has read you like a book from the day you were born.”

Chaim encountered many miraculous experiences in those days, bringing him to an intense and loving connection with the Rebbe. “After two months, I had decided that Chabad was the way for me. I asked the Rebbe if I

could begin putting on Rabbeinu Tam t’fillin, and he replied that I have to ask a rav. I turned to the rav of Crown Heights, the gaon, Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dworkin, of blessed memory. He asked me if I would have celebrated my bar-mitzvah now, would I put on Rabbeinu Tam t’fillin. When I responded with an unequivocal yes, he requested that I bring two witnesses... I brought two of the shluchim from Migdal HaEmek – Itzik Gruzman and Chaim Shlomo Diskin – who testified to the validity of what I had said, and I received the rav’s permission to begin putting on Rabbeinu Tam’s...”

Chaim quickly immersed himself, mind and spirit, into the lifestyle of the young men who learn in 770, whose entire existence revolves around the Rebbe. “One snowy night in the month of Teives, when I was passing near 770, I saw two bachurim standing and waiting by the main entrance. When I asked them why they were waiting, they replied that they were waiting for the Rebbe to come out of his room in order that they could escort him on his way home. At two-thirty in the morning, when the bachurim saw that the Rebbe still hadn’t come out, they gave up and I was left there alone. The Rebbe finally came out about half an hour later, at three a.m. I opened the front door of 770 for the Rebbe, and I remained to walk behind him. The Rebbe approached me with a smile and said, ‘Thank you very much. Go to sleep, there’s seider tomorrow...’”

Chaim made certain to note that he didn’t waste a moment and went immediately to sleep. The next morning, he was in chassidus seider on time.

He was privileged to walk behind the Rebbe several times

that year, and escort him home. “I felt that the Rebbe is my father,” Chaim said as tears welled in his eyes. “Anyone who saw the Rebbe walking knows that the Rebbe walks erect and looks neither left nor right. On one occasion when I was walking behind the Rebbe, as he crossed Brooklyn Avenue, I saw a car in the distance moving down the street at high speed. It was late at night, and I was afraid that he couldn’t see the Rebbe. I quickly jumped in front and blocked the road, and the car came to a screeching halt.”

This intense feeling of affection for the Rebbe, he felt from the Rebbe towards him as well. There was almost no question that he submitted to the Rebbe that did not elicit a response, from the simplest to the most complex. Many people asked him to write letters to the Rebbe for them, and they received answers. There were numerous occasions when he was privileged to see the realization of the Rebbe’s brachos and his revealed ruach ha’kodesh.

“I made the acquaintance of a couple in Migdal HaEmek who

The Rebbe finally came out about three a.m. The Rebbe approached me with a smile and said, “Thank you very much. Go to sleep, there’s seider tomorrow...”

had come closer to the path of Yiddishkait, though not to chassidus and the Rebbe. In the year that I was on ‘k’vutza,’ a child was born to them, and he was diagnosed with a heart defect. When I found out about this, I promised the parents that I would submit a letter to the Rebbe with their son’s name in request of a bracha for a complete recovery.

“It’s hard to describe the suffering that they went through

with this child. They would be one week at home, followed by a month in the hospital. He needed an operation to save his life, but the doctors refused to do it because he was still too young to endure the procedure. The parents wavered between hope and despair, and every day that he opened his eyes was virtually a miracle. After I wrote a letter to the Rebbe about the boy, I was privileged to receive an answer in which the Rebbe writes that the parents should be stringent in their observance of the Laws of Family Purity and he would mention them at the Ohel. I quickly called to tell them about the Rebbe’s response. The mother actually learned several classes with Rebbetzin Toby Hendel, whereas the father took part once or twice, but didn’t take the matter seriously.

“They saw the Rebbe’s bracha as a mere suggestion, while they were more interested in treating the child with more conventional means in the field of medicine. One leading rabbinical figure of the previous generation, residing in B’nei Brak, suggested a certain hospital in Switzerland, where the child could undergo his operation. When I heard this, I was dismayed. I knew what it meant when the Rebbe says to do one thing and the person does something else. I tried to convince them that they shouldn’t go, but the father was firm about doing things according to that rabbi from B’nei Brak. When I wrote to the Rebbe about their desire to do the operation, the Rebbe gave a verbal reply: ‘Not advisable.’ The mother was more responsive to me, but the father went ahead with it and traveled with the boy to Switzerland. The next time I called them was to offer my condolences, as the child passed



R. Chaim with former Foreign Minister David Levy

away on the operating table.

"This proved to be a painful lesson for me and for them about how we must listen to what the Rebbe says. Prior to the child's passing, I had an opportunity to place a Seifer T'hillim before the Rebbe, for him to recite the daily portion from it. Though it was prepared with its bookmark at the beginning of that day's portion, I noticed that the Rebbe opened the seifer to the first page, where I had written the boy's name and his mother's name for the prayers to be in his merit. The Rebbe gazed at the name for a few seconds and then opened the seifer again to the daily portion. After the boy passed away, during the week of Parshas VaYeishev, I placed a large-print Chumash on the Rebbe's shtender for him to follow the Torah reading. Between the aliyos, the Rebbe turned to the first page and saw that the Chumash had been dedicated in the boy's memory. The Rebbe turned around and stared at me for a few long moments..."

SHLICHUS FROM THE REBBE TO MR. DAVID LEVY

Chaim was filled with great sadness when the year of "k'vutza" drew to its conclusion. Like his friends, he found it difficult to leave the source of the greatest and most flowing wellspring in the world. During the week of Parshas Noach, he entered together with his fellow students for a personal-general "yeichidus," during which the Rebbe delivered a sicha on relevant Torah subjects for that time of year.

Prior to his return to Eretz Yisroel, he was privileged to have a profound discussion with the Rebbe's secretary, Rabbi

He didn't make a move without knowing that he was going in the direction that the Rebbe wanted and giving him satisfaction.

Chadakov, who explained to the bachurim that shlichus is not just when you go out into the country; rather every Jew is a shliach wherever he may be.

"During my initial period back in Eretz Yisroel, I felt that I had been cut off from my life's source. I was very agitated, and I promised to myself that I would return to 770 as soon as possible, while I turned my attention in the meantime to my studies for

rabbinical ordination."

A year later, Chaim was inducted into the Israel Defense Forces and found himself serving as a major at the Shimshon Base military headquarters, where he met Eshkol Levy, son of then-Israel Cabinet Minister David Levy. The two developed a strong and friendly relationship. Chaim began to visit the Levy family home in Beit Shean with great regularity, and become friendly with the other family members. He signed up as a member of the Likud Party's Central Committee and encouraged many other young people to join the party's youth political activities, until he was eventually appointed head of the Likud's religious youth wing. As with everything else he did, he poured his love for the Rebbe into the position. Every time before he would travel to the Rebbe, he would go to David Levy to see if he had a request or question that he wanted submitted to the Rebbe.

Personally, David Levy had great respect for the Rebbe. He once told R. Chaim, "Look, despite the fact that the Rebbe is



Chaim Aflalo (center) with friends learning during "k'vutza"

Ashkenazic, he doesn't merely focus on his own community, rather he is concerned with the entire Jewish People, helping and assisting them with genuine concern." He always took the Rebbe's opinion on various matters seriously into consideration.

When Chaim tells the following story, he becomes quite emotional. This incident made considerable waves at the time among Mr. David Levy's closest confidants, as people saw clearly how precise the Rebbe's words are and how he sees the future:

"The following story took place in 5750, when David Levy was serving as Israel's Minister of Foreign Affairs. The President of the United States at the time was George H. W. Bush, and his Secretary of State was James A. Baker III, who was known for the strongly pro-Arab and clearly confrontational positions he held towards the Jewish state. Whenever Baker conducted meetings with the higher echelons of the Government of Israel, he would pressure them to make concessions to the Arab enemy. Government ministers and Knesset Members preferred not to meet with him. The Prime Minister of Israel at the time was Mr. Yitzchak Shamir, who opposed any concessions to the Arabs, yet he also found it difficult to stand up to Secretary Baker's pressure tactics. Shortly before Lag B'Omer that year, I made my customary visit to David Levy and told him that I would be traveling that day to the Rebbe, and I asked him if he wanted me to submit a request or a question.

"He told me that he had three requests: a) a bracha for the success of the entire Jewish People; b) a bracha for his family; c) a bracha in the matters of state

under his authority. When I arrived in Crown Heights, I submitted David Levy's requests

to the Rebbe and then went with my wife on a visit to Manhattan. After I came back, I was told by

A LOVING CONCERN AND REVEALED RUACH HA'KODESH

R. Chaim Aflalo: "Every year when I would travel to *Beis Chayeinu*, I would do so right before Lag B'Omer. In 5750, I was joined by my wife and my first-born son, the only child I had at the time. The traditional parade was held that year, and the Rebbe delivered a sicha. Afterwards, the Rebbe distributed a Lag B'Omer medallion through the counselors and Tankists. I tried to get a medallion for my son, but he was extremely tired and exhausted from the day's events, and his impatience began to come through. All he wanted to do was to return to our hosts' home and go to sleep. I calmed myself with the knowledge that I would put him to sleep and come right back, but as it turned out, I also fell asleep. The next day, I was bitterly disappointed that we didn't get that medallion. It's not every day that the Rebbe gives out such a medallion, but there was nothing I could do...

"That morning, Rabbi Groner told me that the Rebbe was about to go to the Ohel via the side door that he used during the latter years, and that I should wait there with my son to receive "*Birkas HaDerech*." I waited with my son for the Rebbe to come out. When the Rebbe finally came out, there were already other children standing there, and the Rebbe gave each one a coin for tz'daka. My son was the last one to approach the Rebbe and when he did, the Rebbe smiled at him, transferred the envelope from his right hand into his left hand, took out the medallion that he had distributed the day before, and gave him one... The Rebbe then put the envelope back into his right hand, gave him a 'regular' coin for tz'daka, and immediately got into his car.

"I remained nailed to my place for several minutes, utterly amazed. What a display of fatherly concern and care..."

* * *

"During that same visit, I decided to ask the Rebbe for a bracha for more children. I stood like everyone else in a long line for dollars that wound around the outside of 770. I thought to myself how to tell the Rebbe what was bothering me in the few seconds allotted, and to ask for his blessing for *zera chaya v'kayma*. When my turn came and I was standing before the Rebbe, the words simply left me and I was rendered totally silent.

"I received a dollar and was immediately pushed outside. In my mind, I told myself that I hadn't managed to ask for anything, but I would write it out later that evening and submit the note to Rabbi Groner in the secretaries' office. As I was thinking all this, I heard them calling me back to the Rebbe. Trembling, I went back inside. The Rebbe gave me another dollar, saying that it was for my wife and added, "It should be in a good and auspicious hour."

On the 7th of Shvat the following year, our daughter was born and we named her Sima Chana – Sima, after my mother, and Chana, after the mother of the Rebbe, in whose merit she was born..."

my host that the Rebbe's secretary, Rabbi Yehuda Leib Groner, was looking for me urgently because there was an answer from the Rebbe. I rushed to 770 and Rabbi Groner told me that the Rebbe had requested that I inform David Levy that he mustn't be concerned about his meeting with that man, in spite of the intense pressure that he will place upon them. He should be strong and firm during the first few minutes, and G-d will help him.

"I understood the implications from the language of the answer, and I realized that I must convey the Rebbe's message to David Levy personally as quickly as possible. It was Friday, and I simply could not allow this matter to wait until Sunday. The problem was that all of my efforts to contact him were to no avail. I finally managed to get through to David Levy's personal driver and told him the Rebbe's message for the foreign minister. That Sunday, a meeting took place between David Levy and U.S. Secretary of State Baker. After twenty minutes of the usual pointed and concrete discussion, Mr. Baker's aide entered to inform the Secretary that his mother had passed away, causing him to leave the meeting immediately..."

IN THE SERVICE OF THE PRISON SYSTEM

By nature, Chaim is a very active person. This is the reason why he didn't last long in his position as chief supervisor of the Kashrus Division in Natzrat Illit. "I felt that I could do much more," he recalled. "I sought the advice of Rabbi Dovid Teichtel. Today he is the mashpia of the Chabad community in Natzrat Illit, and he previously served with the rabbinate in the Shata Prison. He urged me to consider a career change and to work in the prison system, where there were many Jewish souls longing to hear Jewish teachings from a rabbinical figure who could instill within them yiras Shamayim and love for the Torah.

I had received a slew of other offers as well, such as being a melamed in cheider or going back to work as a sofer, a trade I had learned as a young man back in Migdal HaEmek. I decided to ask the Rebbe's guidance. I wrote the offer to serve as a prison chaplain at the end of the letter. Four days later, I received the Rebbe's answer via Rabbi Segal from Afula. The Rebbe circled the offer to work in the prison, and my path was clear. I turned to then-Knesset Member Shaul Amor, who I knew from the days of my Likud Party activities, and told him about the Rebbe's answer. He promised that he would help, and that evening he arranged a meeting at the penitentiary system's national headquarters in Tel

הרב של הכדורגלנים

בשנות ה' 78 נהג הרב אברהם בכר ללכת אחרי מכבי יפו באש ובמים, גם אז היה בשבת. הגרסה המודרנית של שנות ה' 2000 הוא הרב אפילו ממגדל העמק, שמחובר לכדורגלנים רבים. מייצץ, נותן טיפ טוב, אבל להבדיל, דואג לשמור על קדושת השבת.



בכר בתוך מחנה עם חסידים מניו יורק. מצולם: אפרים יעקב

הרב אברהם בכר, 78, נהג ללכת אחרי מכבי יפו באש ובמים, גם אז היה בשבת. הגרסה המודרנית של שנות ה' 2000 הוא הרב אפילו ממגדל העמק, שמחובר לכדורגלנים רבים. מייצץ, נותן טיפ טוב, אבל להבדיל, דואג לשמור על קדושת השבת.

משתכר בהכדורגל הפסיד כישרון גדול, לטובת העולם הרחני. "לאחר מעשה אני חושב שהשפתי קריירה ככדורגלן, אבל אני לא מצטער שהלכתי בדרך הזו. כדורגל טוב לתקופה מסוימת, לא לכל החיים. רק תורה ומצוות הם לכל חיים." אומר הרב אפילו.

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prisoners, and he did so with the utmost pleasure.”

At every step that he took in his life, R. Chaim asked the Rebbe for his bracha. He didn't make a move without knowing that he was going in the direction that the Rebbe wanted and giving him satisfaction. Today, he is involved in his profession as a sofer. Even in this area, he has merited the Rebbe's closeness. "I learned the trade of writing t'fillin and mezuzos when I was a student in 'Migdal Ohr.' There were parents who complained that they didn't want their children to finish school without a profitable skill. As a result, the school established two courses for professional training: *sh'chita* (ritual kosher slaughter) and *safrus* (learning to a Torah scribe). I connected more readily with the latter. Now that I have retired from my service in the prison system, I am occupied primarily with writing t'fillin and mezuzos."

During his year of "k'vutza," one of R. Chaim's friends suggested

that he present the Rebbe with one of the mezuzos he had written. "I prepared a mezuza of ten centimeters in length, investing my entire soul in writing it. I gave it in to the Rebbe with a request for a bracha that I shouldn't make mistakes in my work. I added that I would be most happy if the Rebbe would accept the mezuza. Two weeks later, Rabbi Groner called me in and gave me a fifty-dollar bill with an answer from the Rebbe: **'With money [underlined twice], as is explained in numerous places in Shulchan Aruch. I will mention it at the Tziyon.'** I was beside myself with joy that the Rebbe had found it appropriate to accept the mezuza."

IN THE SERVICE OF THE REBBE

In recent years, Chaim began spreading Yiddishkeit in the Maccabi Tel Aviv sports club. He had traded the great love that he had for soccer for spreading the wellsprings of chassidus with one of the teams. The club considers

him to be the authority in all matters of Judaism. He blows shofar for them during the month of Elul, and is invited to bris milas, weddings, and other ceremonial events to say a few words of Torah. In the merit of his activities, some of the players even write to the Rebbe. Those athletes who travel to participate in matches overseas establish contact with the local Chabad House in the host city as a result of the foundation that R. Chaim had already laid.

When I asked him to say a few words in summation, his voice cracked a bit. He revealed the deep and maddening pain he felt over the "hiding and concealment" that has been forced upon the Jewish People, as they cannot see the Rebbe with their own eyes. "I feel a deep and inner connection to the Rebbe. I feel that the Rebbe is my father, the father that I love with all my strength and to whom I want to give much satisfaction always. This is my great aspiration..."

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WITHIN THE FOUR CUBITS OF G-DLINESS

By Boruch Merkur

*“Since the service of making for G-d a dwelling place in the lower realms still has not been completed, nor has the promise of ‘the spirit of impurity I will remove from the earth’ been fulfilled,’ therefore, one’s service is only within his four cubits, within the boundaries of sanctity.” * Tracing the Rebbe MH”M’s instructions on how to perfect our Divine service in the Final Era.*

[Continued from Issue #662]

THE WORLD ON OUR SHOULDERS

In reference to the law regarding carrying on Shabbos, as it appears in Rambam’s *Mishneh Torah*⁷² – “A person may stand in the public domain and carry throughout the entirety of the private domain. He may also stand in the private domain and carry in the public domain, so long as he does not go out of the four cubits [he occupies]” – the Rebbe MH”M derives a lesson in the service of G-d,⁷³ one which the Rebbe says, “illustrates the general significance of the service of man to his Maker,” and which sheds light on our

service of G-d in the Future Era.

The Rebbe begins by explaining how a living person is comprised of a soul and a physical body. The soul has been cast into the world, the material world,⁷⁴ a world that is described as a “‘public domain,’ a ‘World of Separation.’”⁷⁵ And the Rebbe continues:

“But thus one may ‘carry throughout the entirety of the private domain,’ meaning that one may also affect the ‘r’shus ha’yachid (the private domain),’ [the domain of] *Yechido Shel Olam* (the Singularity of the Universe). This lesson follows the teaching of the Maggid⁷⁶ on the Mishna,⁷⁷ ‘Know that which is above you’: ‘Know that all that is Above (in the Supernal Realms, etc., “the private domain”), all of it is

from you,’ for everything is dependent upon and accomplished through the service of man. Indeed it is the will of the Holy One Blessed Be He that the effect Above should be brought about specifically by the service of man below...whereby through one’s [spiritual] status and service in the ‘public domain’ (utilizing the “objects” found in the public domain), he ‘carries throughout the entirety of the private domain.’”

The entirety of the Supernal Realm, the G-dliness that is revealed there, hinges on the efforts and successes of the Lower Realm, the accomplishments we achieve in the material world.

WHO WILL GUARANTEE OUR SUCCESS?

We are charged with an enormous responsibility. The effect of all that we do reverberates through all of existence, reaching even the highest spiritual realms. But how are we guaranteed that we will succeed in such a vital mission? From where are we to derive the strength and ability, the assurance that we will succeed?

The latter part of the law of carrying on Shabbos – “He may also stand in the private domain and carry in the public domain, so long as he does not go out of the four cubits [he occupies]” – answers these questions:

“From the beginning of one’s service he already possesses the ‘reward,’⁷⁸ insofar as ‘He stands in the *r’shus ha’yachid* (the **private** domain)’ (of the *Yechido Shel Olam* (of G-d, the Singularity of the Universe)). In fact, it is not that **he** (the person) just stands in the private domain; it is also within his power to affect the public domain – “and carries in the public domain” – even making it into a dwelling place for G-d, may He be blessed, in the lower worlds.”⁷⁹

The essence of a Jew, his soul, is “a veritable part of G-d Above.” From such a lofty vantage point, standing in the private domain of the Creator Himself, he is granted the G-dly powers that enable him to have an effect on Creation. Indeed, he is a partner in Creation, serving the purpose of fulfilling G-d’s desire to transform the material world into His personal dwelling place.

WITHIN THE FOUR CUBITS OF SANCTITY

There is one condition, however: “...so long as he does not go out of the four cubits [he occupies].” In order to be granted the blessings of success from the Source of blessings Himself, one must follow G-d’s law and not go “outside the boundaries of sanctity.” The Torah is our guide, setting out the correct path for our journey in the world, helping us avoid the manifold pitfalls and dangers of veering off the path.

There will be a time, however, when the entire world will be safe for exploring and settling, devoid of danger and evil, a time when we will no longer be confined, as it were, commanded^{79*} to operate within the boundaries of holiness, as the Rebbe suggests:

“Since the service of making for G-d, may He be blessed, a dwelling place in the lower realms still has

not been completed, nor has the promise⁸⁰ of ‘the spirit of impurity I will remove from the earth’ been fulfilled,’ therefore, one’s service is only within his four cubits – ‘the four cubits of a person acquire for him’⁸¹ – ‘so long as he does not go out of the four cubits [he occupies],’ [so long as he does not go] outside the boundaries of sanctity.”⁸²

Presently, during the final moments of Exile, success in our service of G-d is clearly dependent on our adherence to the Torah and its laws, staying within the four cubits of sanctity and G-dliness.

NOTES:

⁷² 15:1.

⁷³ *Seifer HaSichos* 5748 Vol. A, pg. 285 ff.

⁷⁴ Although the soul as it is Above is also considered the “only son of the Holy One Blessed Be He, nevertheless, the commandment and the potential to **emulate** G-d – “And you shall go in His ways”: “Just as He is called ‘gracious,’ so shall you be gracious, etc.; just as He provides clothing for those who are without clothing, etc., so shall you, etc.; the Holy One Blessed Be He visits the sick, etc., so shall you, etc., the Holy One Blessed Be He consoles mourners, etc., so shall you, etc.,” and the like (see Sota 14a; Rambam Hilchos Deios 1:6, among others) – applies only to the soul as it exists in a body in the physical world.

⁷⁵ See *Tanya* Ch. 33, end, among several other places.

⁷⁶ *Likkutei Amarim* Aphorism #198.

⁷⁷ *Avos* Ch. 2, beg.

⁷⁸ To note that “‘The reward for the performance of a Mitzva is a Mitzva,’ meaning that we can derive the significance of the Mitzva performed from its reward” (*Tanya* Ch. 39 (53a)).

⁷⁹ See *Tanchuma Naso* 16, among other places; *Tanya* Ch. 36, and several other places.

^{79*} See the kuntres on the topic of The Laws of the Oral Torah which will Never be Nullified,” *Seifer HaSichos* 5752, pg. 27ff.

⁸⁰ Zecharia 13:2.

⁸¹ Bava Metzia 10a. See *On the Essence of Chassidus*, where it is discussed.

⁸² To note that the four cubits of man (*adam*, “*adama la’Elyon* (resembling the Supernal One)”) correspond to the four letters of G-d’s name Havaya. (See *Ohr HaTorah* Balak pg. 935.)

WHAT WERE THE KGB LOOKING FOR IN MY WORKSHOP?

*As soon as he came down the embankment, two men in civilian clothes approached, grabbed him, and pushed him into a car. At first he didn't know whether he had fallen into the hands of thieves or the KGB. * For years it remained a mystery until it was solved in the course of a fortuitous meeting. * Another chapter in the memoirs of R' Hillel Zaltzman. * Part 2 of 2*

[Continued from last week]

ACCOMPANIED BY THE KGB

By twelve noon the inspection was almost over, when the front door suddenly opened. Berel entered, white as a ghost. He was followed by a man, elegantly dressed, who immediately scanned all the workers. His dress and demeanor led me to believe that he was a KGB agent.

As I tried to come up with a reason for a KGB agent at my

workshop, and wondered how he was connected with my brother's disappearance for several hours, another KGB agent walked in, followed by another one, and then another. In less than a minute the room was occupied by seven agents.

I cannot begin to describe to you how terrified I was. The first one who came in, apparently the leader of the group, quietly said to himself, "What is this, an underground printing press?"

I quaked. If that is what we were suspected of, we were in deep

trouble. An underground printing press meant that we were printing material against the government. In those years, even a simple typewriter had to be registered with the KGB, and here we were accused to be an underground printing press ...

In the meantime, Berel had managed to walk past me and he blurted out, "I was 'there' and 'they' took the address of my home." It was unnecessary for him to specify where 'there' was and who 'they' were. He wanted me to know that his house was in the sights of the KGB, because five bachurim learned there in an underground yeshiva.

I was petrified. I began to shake, and felt hot and cold. A cold sweat broke out all over my body. I thought: "Oy vey, the bachurim are sitting there now in Berel's house, and the KGB probably went there already and caught them with their Gemaras at the table. Who knows what they are going through in the KGB interrogation rooms, and how well they will be able to keep their mouths shut."

They were all good boys and careful not to say a word about their learning in Samarkand, but KGB agents were experts at getting people to talk. Even a mute would speak for them. What if they did not withstand the torture and revealed that I was

connected with the yeshiva? (At that time, for various reasons, the running of all the classes was my responsibility).

The senior agent asked, “Who is the manager here?” They all pointed at me and he motioned to me to approach him. I was in the middle of producing labels, and I made believe I didn’t understand what was going on. The other workers also tried to maintain a calm look on their faces, although all of them were terribly frightened.

“For which plant are you working here?” he questioned.

“Zavad Chazbitaizdely (the name of the plant I worked under)”, I responded.

He then asked if I had an agreement with the landlord. I said that I did, and I went with them to the landlord. The landlord took out our official agreement and showed it to them. The senior agent examined it, and then returned it to the landlord.

In the meantime they noticed that among all the Jewish workers

there was one non-Jewish woman. That was Lilia. Some of the KGB agents spoke to her out in the yard. They spoke for half an hour, and when they were done, one of them took something out of his pocket and showed it to her. She said something to them, and then the KGB left the place without another word.

When Lilia came back in, I asked her what the KGB had wanted to know. She said that they told her they were looking for someone. One of them had taken out a photograph and asked whether she knew the man in the picture.

“I didn’t know him and I said the truth, that I did not recognize him. Apparently they made a mistake.”

I did not accept her answer, because I had seen that they had spoken for half an hour and only afterwards did they take out the picture.

We were shaken up by the incident, but since we hadn’t finished the inspection we couldn’t speak freely amongst ourselves. We

just joked in front of them, and said to one another: “How interesting! I wonder what they wanted ...”

When the inspection was over, I hurried to Berel’s house, to tell the bachurim learning there that they should leave immediately. I was relieved to see the five bachurim learning peacefully, and so I knew that the KGB had not made an appearance at the house.

I told the bachurim that there was a temporary problem with their continued learning in Samarkand, and they should go home. They were scared and asked what had happened.

I didn’t want to tell them, and just said that for various reasons we had to change the place where they learned. In the meantime, they should go home, and we would let them know when to return.

The bachurim’s trip to Tashkent wasn’t a simple matter. Sometimes you couldn’t get tickets at the booth and had to walk around the train station. Of course, I couldn’t walk around the station with the bachurim, because the place was crawling with police. With Hashem’s help, I was able to buy tickets quickly and sent them safely on their way.

I was not surprised to find my first white hairs the next day.

MICHOEL’S MIRACLE

My workshop was within a backyard, in a place that wasn’t readily visible. Beyond the yard was a pile of sand and stones over which the electric train rode. When Berel went out in the morning he crossed the iron tracks, and as soon as he came down the embankment, two men in civilian clothes approached, grabbed him, and pushed him into a car on the side of the road. They warned him to be silent. At first he didn’t know whether he had fallen into the hands of thieves or the KGB.



Hillel Zaltzman pointing at the house where he lived in Samarkand.

He was thrown into the back seat of the car, and the two men who had grabbed him sat on his right and left. The driver began driving quickly. As they rode, they lifted his hat and discovered his yarmulke underneath.

"Why do you wear that?" they asked.

Berel said that since he didn't have hair, it filled the space in his hat. Then they began quizzing him about where he was coming from and where he was running.

He told them everything "by the book," that there was a workshop and he had to run to the public phone to tell the representative of his workshop to hurry and come, as the inspectors were there waiting.

The car continued driving along the streets of Samarkand, and Berel noticed that they were approaching KGB headquarters. When the gates were opened he thought it was the end. He was taken to the interrogation room where they asked him the same questions again, as well as some other questions.

During this interrogation they took down information like where he lived, which made him very concerned about the fate of the bachurim who were learning there. When the interrogation was over, seven agents left with Berel for my workshop.

Ivan, who had gone out for five minutes to buy cigarettes and took half an hour to come back, told us afterwards that he had also met the KGB, who were swarming in the area. When they saw him leave the workshop, they grabbed him and questioned him about where he was from and where he was going. They detained him for twenty minutes until they realized that he was not connected with us and released him.

Michoel Mishulovin had also fallen into the clutches of the KGB. He said that after he left and turned into a small alleyway in the direction

of the pool, a man in civilian clothes ran after him and ordered him to stop. The KGB agent questioned him too, asking where he was from and where he was going. Michoel told him that he worked in the area and since he hadn't felt well when he arrived at work, he had decided to go to the pool and refresh himself.

The KGB agent searched him and, after failing to find anything suspicious, released him. Michoel realized what a miracle it was that he had left the small Tanya at our office. If the Tanya had been in his pocket, the KGB agent would have found it and seen that it was printed in Brooklyn, New York – reason enough to arrest him and accuse him of ties with the west.

THE KGB ASKS FOR OUR FILES

Although I was the manager of the workshop, and they all knew this, the official manager was Aharon Peknayeve, a religious Bucharian Jew. He did not mix into anything, and I paid him every month to officially represent us. I told him what had happened, minimizing how terrified we had been, so that he would not be afraid to continue working with us.

We both decided not to say anything to the manager of the factory we worked for. He was a clever goy by the name of Konstantin Nikolayevich Alexandrov, and he had worked with religious Jews for years. We agreed that we would only tell him if he found out indirectly.

Before a day had gone by, and I was told that the manager wanted to see me immediately. When I got to the main office, he called me into his room, closed the door, and with an expression that combined pain and fear he asked me, "Zaltzman, what happened at your workshop? Did you make a secret synagogue there? They called me from the KGB! Do

you know what the KGB is? That's not the OBHS!"

(In the Soviet Union there were two government agencies, the OBHS and the KGB. The function of the OBHS was to preserve order in the country, to fight corruption, theft, embezzlement etc. In other words, they dealt with crimes against property. The KGB's function was to fight spies, enemies of the state, and the like. It's like the difference between the FBI and the CIA in the United States. You could bribe someone in the OBHS, but the KGB was an entirely closed entity. This is why he was so frightened when they called him from the KGB office, and he nearly cried from fear when he spoke to me about it).

At first I thought that he had found out about the incident at the workshop the day before, but as he spoke, I realized that this was something new. He said they had called him from the KGB office and asked him to send the files of all the workers at our workshop. He tried to stall, and said he wasn't permitted to send personal details just because of a phone conversation. If they wanted it, they should send one of their people to ask for it personally.

To his surprise, within half an hour a KGB agent arrived on a motorcycle, as they had in Samarkand, and he took all our files.

What did they have against us at the KGB office?

Amongst ourselves, we tried to come up with an explanation. At first we speculated that since we had submitted a request for a visa, which was the responsibility of the KGB, they had decided to follow us. But on second thought we discarded this idea, since something like would not have warranted such a large-scale raid, to the point of interrogating everyone who left the workshop.

We thought that perhaps they had discovered all our underground

work over the years and were trying to collect proof. We went about with the heavy feeling that something big was being cooked up against us at the KGB, and we tried not to publicize the incident, even among Anash.

Around that time, I needed to be in Tashkent, where I met Simcha Gorodetzky. I told him what had happened, and added that the KGB's official explanation for the raid was that they were searching for someone and had mistakenly thought he was with us.

Simcha didn't buy that story. He said that it wasn't like them to make mistakes of this magnitude. Besides which, if they discovered that it was a mistake, why did they ask for the workers' files the next day? The best explanation was that they simply wanted to scare us. If they had any information on us, they would have arrested us. But who knew? Maybe they really had discovered something.

Once we met the seven KGB agents, we got involved in another "project." When we saw them walking in a friendly manner with other people, we knew that they too worked for the KGB, and tried to memorize their faces. That is how we spied on those who spied on us, but with one small difference. We couldn't do anything to them other than be wary of them, while they could do to us whatever they pleased.

Days, weeks, and then months went by, yet nothing happened. We finally called the talmidim to return, and life went on like nothing had ever happened.

MYSTERY SOLVED

It was only years later that the mystery was solved. One day I met the non-Jewish woman whom the KGB had interrogated. We were on the tramway together. By amazing Divine providence, two of the KGB

agents who had raided us that day were also on the tram. We both recognized them, and automatically moved to the next compartment. This situation reminded us of that unpleasant day years before.

She asked: "Did you recognize the men who entered the first compartment?"

"Of course," I replied.

"If so," she said, "I will tell you what happened after they descended on your workshop. A few days later I was called down to the offices of the KGB, but was too afraid to go, so they sent another summons. My husband had worked for the KGB in the past and made a good salary there, but at a certain point he felt

Simcha didn't buy that story. He said that it wasn't like them to make mistakes of this magnitude.

that the work was too demanding and that he had to neglect his family for it. He decided to leave before they considered him a permanent employee, which would have made it impossible for him to ever leave.

"I told my husband what happened at your workshop and about the summons I had received, and asked him to find out what they wanted and what I had to do with the story. After asking his KGB pals, he told me there was nothing to worry about. They wouldn't do anything to me; they just wanted to talk to me.

"I went to the KGB, and to my surprise they took out thick files on

each of you and said to me: "We know they are religious etc. but we want to ask you, since you work with them on behalf of the central plant, perhaps you know – where do they go on their vacations?"

"I answered them truthfully, that to the best of my knowledge, even during vacation they continued to work, and received double salary according to the law."

That is all that the woman said to them, and they released her.

When I heard this, I understood something, even if not completely. As I mentioned in earlier chapters of my memoirs, I had occasion to travel on various missions for the communal good. Each time I traveled, I would leave a formal request letter to the director of the central plant requesting vacation, as every worker is entitled to two weeks of vacation a year. I told the workers who worked for me that if they came to inspect and asked where I was, they should show my letter and tell them I was on vacation.

Each time I returned, I asked whether anyone had showed up, and they told me that nobody had come. I then destroyed the letter as though I hadn't asked for vacation or taken off.

Apparently, the KGB knew something about my trips, but did not have precise information. This is why they asked the woman where I went. She, however, had no idea that I occasionally left, and was sure that I worked instead of taking vacation, so I could get double the salary.

Our conclusion was that the KGB wanted to frighten us, and this is why they organized the raid. It wasn't the days of Stalin, but that of Khrushchev, and they didn't arrest people based on these suspicions, but they did scare people. This fear pursued us until we left the Soviet Union.

SHLICHUS IN THE BASTION OF REFORM

By Nosson Avrohom

When the Rebbe told Rabbi Sholom Dovber Kalmanson to go on shlichus to Cincinnati, he didn't even know where it was on the map. Upon checking it out, he realized what a monumental task lay before him. Thirty-five years later there is an array of mosdos and additional shluchim. * The story of a shliach who went up against the Reform stronghold and won. * Part 1 of 2

Shortly after his marriage in Montreal, Rabbi Sholom Dovber Kalmanson began working at Beis Rivka there and founded camp Pardes Chana in memory of Rebbetzin Chana a"h, the Rebbe's mother.

Later on, he had various shlichus opportunities, and on Lag B'Omer, 5734 (1974), he and his wife had yechidus with the Rebbe. He asked the Rebbe to tell him which was his shlichus. The Rebbe looked at the note with the various suggestions

and said, "How about considering Cincinnati?"

Until then, R' Kalmanson had never heard of Cincinnati and didn't know where it was located, but if the Rebbe said Cincinnati, that's what it would be!

He made a pilot trip and quickly realized that this was not going to be easy. Cincinnati had many Jews, but most of them were associated with the Reform movement. In fact, Reform headquarters is located in Cincinnati. At Reform's Hebrew

Union College they train future leaders. Some referred to it as the *l'umas zeh* (antithesis) of Crown Heights.

At his next yechidus, for his birthday on 4 Tishrei, R' Kalmanson asked the Rebbe what message he should bring with him to his work in Cincinnati. The Rebbe said, "The Tzemach Tzedek fought to get Lilienthal (one of the leading Maskilim) out of Russia. When he arrived in the United States, he settled in Cincinnati and founded the Reform movement. Now, the descendents of the Tzemach Tzedek need to win a decisive victory over the descendents of Lilienthal."

At that point, R' Kalmanson was certain that his shlichus was particularly tough and had to do with a Heavenly battle between the forces of holiness and those opposing holiness. Every successful activity that would be done in Cincinnati would affect the Reform movement as a whole. There was no room for compromise. It was a battle that would have to be conducted wisely, with lots of determination and Chassidishe "Jewish pride."

When you look today at the Chassidishe empire that R' Kalmanson has built in Cincinnati, it's quite impressive. Aside from the central Chabad house that he runs, there are an additional eleven Chabad centers, which form a large Chabad community made up of people who became Lubavitcher Chassidim over the years. They all "live with Moshiach," and if you ask R' Kalmanson, this is the secret of his success.

After an interview that took several hours, I must admit that one article – as long as it is – is insufficient to do Chabad in Cincinnati justice. The issues that R' Kalmanson had to contend with had a dramatic effect on the work of shluchim all around the United

States. A major example was his fight to be allowed to put up a public menorah in the center of town, a fight that was covered by many news outlets. His victory serves as a legal precedent which other shlichim use to get similar laws passed in their cities.

R' Kalmanson's "Ani Maamins" are not to budge an iota from the Rebbe's horaos and to always say the unvarnished truth.

TWO LETTERS TO THE REBBE ON EREV YOM KIPPUR

R' Kalmanson began his shlichus on Erev Rosh HaShana, 5735.

Unlike many other shlichim, within a few days he was able to buy a building for his Chabad house. It was a building that belonged to a Jewish school which had closed.

No, R' Kalmanson did not go to Cincinnati with suitcases full of money, nor did he have an inheritance.

"I bought the building without having a cent in my pocket. I told the municipality that I wanted to buy a building, and entered into negotiations with them. When we agreed on an amount, I went to the local bank and told the gentile clerk about the Chabad movement and its work. I asked for a mortgage for 100% of the amount.

"He looked at me in bewilderment and informed me that the law limits the maximum amount that can be given to 80% of the total purchase price, and even this could be given only after credit checks and reliable guarantees. I was unwilling to leave the bank without some kind of arrangement which would enable me to buy the building. I urged him to find a way.

"By Divine Providence, he found a way. He said that he had no idea why he was willing to do this for me, as it was going against the rules

of the bank, but he was going to give me 80% of the cost as a mortgage and the rest of the money as a three month loan.

"After we signed a contract, the city people wanted to know where I had gotten the money from. After hearing my story, they asked the bank clerk how he had the guts to do it. He replied, 'I don't know. The rabbi somehow convinced me.'"

Every three months R' Kalmanson pushed off paying the loan for another three months, until he got on his feet and was able to pay off the loan as well as the mortgage.



Rabbi Sholom Dovber Kalmanson

"Throughout those years, especially in the early years, there was lots of money trouble. More than once, when I wrote to the Rebbe about the financial situation, I saw open miracles. My father, the renowned shochet Rabbi Yisroel Shimon Kalmanson, went to the Rebbe's room twice a year - Erev Pesach to bring the Rebbe wine for Pesach, and Erev Yom Kippur, to give the Rebbe 39 *malkos*. The Rebbe would speak with my father about various things.

"At the end of 5739, I had big

financial woes. The debts ballooned and I felt I was drowning. I asked my father to give the Rebbe a letter from me. In the letter I described the situation. The Rebbe opened the letter and, with a smile, he told my father, 'He got out of it a few years ago, and he will get out of it now, too.'

"When my father called to tell me the Rebbe's answer, I was very happy and I went into Yom Kippur in a very joyful frame of mind. However, the problem was that apparently the test wasn't over. The following year, not only had the situation not improved, but it had gotten worse. I gave my father another letter for the Rebbe, in which I wrote that if this was Hashem's will, then I wasn't complaining, but my financial situation had worsened.

"This time, the Rebbe did not open the envelope. He placed it in his Siddur and did not react. Yom Kippur that year was a very serious day for me, and carried a feeling of despondency.

"On the first day of Chol HaMoed Sukkos, I got a phone call from the secretary, Rabbi Binyamin Klein. The Rebbe told him that although he did not write on Chol HaMoed, since he knew I was in turmoil he gave an answer for me. The Rebbe underlined what I had written, 'If this is the will of Hashem that my financial situation should be awful,' and wrote, 'and it will go up; I will mention it at the gravesite.'

"The Rebbe's answer gave me renewed simcha. Not only would my financial situation improve, it would ascend. And that is what happened. Right after Sukkos there was a complete turnaround."

BATTLING REFORM

Many people don't know this, but until R' Kalmanson went on shlichus, all the shlichim in the

United States worked with students in campus Chabad houses and did not integrate into local communities. When R' Kalmanson went to Cincinnati, he realized that if he settled on or near campus, his influence would be limited to students.

"I asked the Rebbe whether we could set up our Chabad house in the center of town, and I was given the go-ahead. This enabled me to invite students to our house for Shabbos meals while also doing programs for adults, opening a shul and providing shiurim for them."

R' Kalmanson's big challenge was to chart a course in which he would spread the wellsprings without bringing the wrath of the Reform down on his head.

"From the beginning, I developed nice relationships with the leaders of the Reform movement, relationships that continue till today. Many of my students came from their leadership and became Chassidim.

"I consulted with the Rebbe about everything, and the Rebbe did not always allow me to work

together with them, even if it was something that supported our own interests. For example, during the Rebbe's war to amend the law of MiHu Yehudi, I wanted to get their president, Dr. Gottschalk, to come out with me in favor of amending the law. When he asked permission from the chairman of his movement, the latter agreed on condition that on the paper he would sign, my signature would appear too.

"The Rebbe vetoed this, because it would look as though Lubavitch collaborated with Reform activities. Despite the Rebbe's fight to get the law amended and the achievement that a proclamation like this would accomplish, the Rebbe did not want people to think we were 'kashering' them."

Along with the friendships, R' Kalmanson maintains ironclad principles, and perhaps it is because of this that the friendships thrive.

"That same Dr. Gottschalk, whom I was friendly with, said something unfortunate after Rabin's assassination and I had to put him in his place. He contended that the Chabad movement caused his assassination. When I heard this, I was beside myself. The day he made this statement was an American holiday, and I didn't want to ruin his celebration, so I called him the next day. After he confirmed his words, I asked him where he got this information against Chabad. He said that he had read it in the *Forwards*, that anti-Semitic Jewish newspaper that put the blame on Rabbi Avrohom Hecht.

"I told him, 'Let's say the newspaper is right; does Rabbi Hecht represent the Chabad movement? He studied in yeshivas Torah Vodaas, serves as a rav in a Sephardic shul and is chairman of the Igud HaRabbanim. What's the connection with Lubavitch? In addition, I know Rabbi Hecht, and he has nothing to do with things like

this. The paper that wrote this did so because it is anti-religious, and it has printed other reprehensible things in the past.'

"Even after my rebuttal, he continued to play dumb and said, 'You may be right but it was written in the paper.' I told him that if this was his approach, I was going to announce that Reform leaders killed their wives. I reminded him of something that had happened and had been in the newspapers.

"He saw where we were heading with that, and he immediately apologized and asked me what I wanted him to do. I asked him to write a letter of apology about the besmirching of an entire group. I figured he would do this on Monday when his office opened. I was surprised when he sent me a two page apology that same night, in which he said that he had investigated and found that Chabad stood for Ahavas Yisroel. The letter was printed that same week in big Jewish newspapers in the United States.

"Why am I telling you this? Because we have to know that our work is not done with our own strengths, but with the power of the Rebbe MH"M, and we have to walk tall and proud. I think this is my shlichus, as the Rebbe told me in yechidus – for the grandchildren to finish the work the Tzemach Tzedek started with the founder of their movement."

DID YOU SUBSCRIBE TO "THE CHABAD TIMES"?

When R' Kalmanson started publishing "The Chabad Times" he had no idea what an impact it would make or that he would publish it for over 30 years! The most exciting thing for him, though, is the Rebbe's encouragement of the publication.

"The newspaper started out with 24 pages and increased to its current 48 pages. We had a problem

"I bought the building without having a cent in my pocket... He said that he had no idea why he was willing to do this for me, as it was going against the rules of the bank."



Rabbi Kalmanson giving the Rebbe the key to the Chabad house in Cincinnati

with the local Jewish paper. The editor and I did not exactly see eye to eye. The many Chabad news items that we submitted to his paper were either shortened or tucked away on the obituary pages.

"After Simchas Torah, 5737, I went to their office with a news item about our work. The editor made a face, and I told him that if he didn't treat our news items as he did the news items submitted by everybody else, we would publish our own paper.

"That newspaper is the oldest Jewish newspaper in the United States. While other newspapers folded, he's still around. So not surprisingly, he laughed at my

threat. After getting the Rebbe's blessing, we got to work. The encouragement we got was amazing. The Rebbe dealt with every detail and guided us throughout. For example, the Rebbe instructed that I should place the 'B"H' (Boruch Hashem) in the middle of the page.

"Many people asked us to use a magazine format but the Rebbe said to leave it as a newspaper. We would include the English translation of the Rebbe's sichos under the heading, 'Thought of the Week,' and the Rebbe said that in a newspaper format, the sicha would have a greater chance of being read.

"I felt that the Rebbe was very

supportive of the newspaper and I was thrilled with the privilege of publishing it. Once, I had to go to Crown Heights for a relative's wedding. Since a new issue had just come out, I took a copy and gave it to the secretaries. I told them that I was in New York only for a few hours for a wedding.

"How amazed I was to see R' Binyamin Klein looking for me during the dancing! He told me that the response from the Rebbe was, 'I will mention it at the gravesite.' The Rebbe felt it important to give me an answer and encouragement.

"The newspaper first came out in Kislev and was very successful, but there were many obstacles, and

not just financial ones. Some were unexpected.

“Two weeks after the answer I got at the wedding, I received a phone call from a Chabad askan. He told me to stop publishing the paper because it made a Chilul Hashem. I was very upset. I asked him where he got this information from, and he said this is what the Rebbe thought too. I was stunned. All attempts at drawing out more details failed.

“I was a young, inexperienced shliach and I couldn’t understand how I could get encouraging answers from the Rebbe while this person claimed the Rebbe didn’t want the paper. I didn’t want to write to the Rebbe and quote this askan. I decided I would do an experiment to see where the truth lay. The fiftieth edition was about to be published, and in the previous issue I had asked rabbanim, leaders, and politicians to write letters of approbation.

“I sent that paper to the Rebbe, of course without asking the Rebbe for a letter of approbation, because at that time, the Rebbe only wrote letters for dinners and organizations for Oholei Torah and a few mosdos that he had written for in the past. Along with the paper I included a letter with a report about our work, as well as a report about the project we had initiated for the fiftieth issue.

“To say that I was flabbergasted when I got a two page letter from the Rebbe would be an understatement. (The letter is printed in volume 4 of the Rebbe’s letters in English published by Otzar Sifrei Lubavitch, p. 187)

“The Rebbe began his letter with a D’var Torah on the parsha of that week and then went on to speak warmly about the ‘popular’ newspaper and offered his wishes that its influence in disseminating Judaism, as it is illuminated by the teachings of Chassidus, would go from strength to strength.

“I felt that the Rebbe knew about those who wanted to stop me from publishing the newspaper and lied to me about the Rebbe’s wishes. He wanted to give me his support. Obviously, after I printed this letter on page one of the new issue, I got no further phone calls.

“When I look back and think about the impact the newspaper has had, I can understand why there were forces against us, as well as why the Rebbe encouraged it. Countless people became acquainted with Judaism thanks to it and they established Chassidishe families. One example is R’ Yaakov Moses, who today writes a column for the newspaper in which he answers

“If they become close to the Rebbe, then, as a matter of course, they will become observant.”

readers’ questions about Judaism.

“Moses encountered the paper as he was sitting in downtown Cincinnati during the period when we battled over the menorah. The issue interested him, and he decided to check it out for himself. He came to us and eventually became a Chassid himself.”

FORMING A COMMUNITY

When you speak about the concept of a Chassid creating an atmosphere, Cincinnati provides an excellent example. Over the course of 35 years, many people and families were brought to Judaism

and Chassidus. In addition to a warm community that numbers about thirty families, all of whom ‘live’ with the Rebbe and Moshiach, there are dozens more who left Cincinnati for larger Jewish communities.

“My approach is to be mekarev people to the Rebbe. If they become close to the Rebbe, then, as a matter of course, they will become observant. Before there were Chabad yeshivos for baalei t’shuva in Israel, shluchim debated about whether to send mekuravim to the Litvishe yeshivos in Yerushalayim.

“I maintained that it was better to hold on to them until a Chabad yeshiva opened, then to send them to yeshivos where they would be taught to hate Lubavitch. If you want a mekurav to grow to be a good Jew, you have to give him the proper chinuch, and this chinuch is acquired only when it goes along with hiskashrus to the Rebbe.

“Twenty years ago, a father of a US soldier stationed in Germany called me. His son had begun taking an interest in Judaism and had even spent some time learning at Aish Ha’Torah, a Litvishe yeshiva for baalei t’shuva in Yerushalayim. The father begged me to convince his son to leave Israel because it was dangerous there. I agreed, just not for the same reason.

“When he came home on furlough we met, and I asked him why he should study in Israel when there was a Yeshiva in the United States? His knowledge of Judaism was still weak and he did not know that I am a Lubavitcher Chassid. He asked me, ‘Is it a Lubavitch yeshiva?’ When I said that it is, he said he wouldn’t go there.

“I asked him, ‘How long were you in Aish Ha’Torah?’ He said a month. I asked him, ‘Did you put t’fillin on there?’ He said he had not. ‘Do you know how to read a Siddur?’ He said no. ‘What is the



Rabbi Kalmanson giving t'fillin to Russian immigrants who moved to Cincinnati in the 1970's

only thing you learned there?' I asked rhetorically. 'That Chabad is no good!'

"He realized he had been brainwashed, and I sent him to Morristown, where he was welcomed by Rabbi Avrohom Lipsker. Today he has a beautiful Chassidishe family.

"One of the proven ways to be mekarev people is to be straightforward, not to hide things, not to avoid answering difficult questions. I know that when I meet someone who has questions and seems tough, it's worth talking and there is a high likelihood that he will be won over."

R' Kalmanson has dozens of stories but when I asked him to pick one, he chose a story that took place when he was a bachur.

"In 5723(1963), I learned in 770. In those days there was a nice program of "Shabbos with Chabad" at universities. Every Shabbos a group of bachurim would go to a

different university and talk with the Jewish students. One Shabbos, we went to a university in Pennsylvania. The fascinating program interested everybody, except one student by the name of Yaakov Hanoka.

"Though he participated in some of the program, he remained passive. He stood there like a block of ice and refused to take an active part. They told us that he was tops in physics.

"On Sunday, before we returned to Crown Heights, we asked the students to put on t'fillin. Many of them were happy to do so, but he stood on the side and observed.

"In those years, the Rebbe would farbreng only on Shabbos Mevarchim, and we invited the students for Shabbos so they could experience it. We told them that we would arrange yechidus for them on Sunday. They were enthusiastic about the idea and came, including Hanoka, who still maintained his standoffish stance.

"On Sunday they went in for yechidus and many of the students asked questions. The Rebbe answered them all. Hanoka stood on the side.

"At the end of the yechidus, when the students began to leave the room, Hanoka asked the Rebbe a difficult question in physics, a question that had bothered him for years and which he had asked professors in the field without getting a satisfactory answer. To his amazement, the Rebbe answered it with simple elegance. On the spot he decided to remain in 770.

"When we heard his decision, we told him to ask the Rebbe first. The Rebbe's response was that he should continue his studies at the university. Later on, Hanoka asked the Rebbe's pardon for his attitude at the yechidus and the Rebbe told him that it was his attitude that had effected the change. The Rebbe explained that when a Jew reacts that way, it's a sign that his soul is

He asked the Rebbe a difficult question in physics, which had bothered him for years and which he had asked professors in the field without getting a satisfactory answer. To his amazement, the Rebbe answered it with simple elegance.

searching, and therefore, he is more of a 'vessel' to receive G-dliness."

A NIGGLING FEELING

The big problem of assimilation, for which the Reform movement is largely responsible, is prevalent in Cincinnati. According to R' Kalmanson, there is hardly a family that is not intermarried. The biggest problem is that there are families where the father is Jewish but the mother is not; the family goes to Temple on Shabbos and the children think they are Jewish.

"I am not embarrassed to ask people who are interested in Judaism, who think they are Jewish, questions about their background. If their mother did a Reform conversion, I explain that they are not Jewish. 'A fish cannot be a bird,' I tell them. If they still want Torah

and mitzvos, they have to undergo a proper conversion."

R' Kalmanson has developed a reputation as someone who can get to the bottom of a person's ancestry. In addition, when problems arise with a Jewish couple, psychologists and therapists often send the couple to him, so he can help them as a Jewish authority figure. People accept what he has to say.

"That was the goal to begin with, to deal with all sorts of Jewish issues. That is why we wanted the Chabad house in the center of town and not on a university campus."

R' Kalmanson has many stories about saving Jews from assimilation and intermarriage. We asked him for one special story and this is what he told us:

"A man recently came to me and told me he wanted to marry an Israeli girl. He wanted a letter that affirmed his Jewish status. When I asked him why he came to me when he was a member of the Reform movement, he said that it was his Reform rabbi who had sent him to me since when he wanted to register his marriage in Israel, they would ask him for proof of his being Jewish. If he had a letter from a Chabad rabbi, they would accept it.

"I told him that since I didn't know him, I would have to look into it, and he agreed without hesitation.


The first thing I asked him was to bring me his parents' k'suba.

"When he brought the k'suba I saw that it was fine. It was kosher, not one that the Reform rabbis give. For some reason I still decided to read it from beginning to end and I was surprised to see that the sofer had written *ploni ben ploni* and *ploni bas ploni*, without names. That was odd, especially when the rav who had signed the k'suba was an Orthodox rabbi from Baltimore whom I knew personally.

"I spoke to his parents, and when they couldn't answer my question I asked them for permission to call that rabbi. I called him and he said that yes, they were Jews and he had married them. He told me that after 25 years of marriage, the couple asked him to renew their vows and to write another k'suba. He consulted with some poskim and they told him to write the new one in such a way that if someone read it they would understand that it wasn't the first k'suba.

"The rav said the couple was Jewish. When I asked if he knew anything about their children, he said he did not know since the couple had become members of the Reform movement.

"I don't know what made me so meticulous, but when the son came

<h2 style="margin: 0;">The Chabad Times</h2> <p style="margin: 0;">A Chabad of Southern Ohio Monthly Publication</p>	
<p>Vol. 31 No 9 (369) September, 2008</p>	<p>Elul, 5768 48 Pages</p>
<h3 style="margin: 0;">HIGH HOLIDAY PROGRAMS TO BE CONDUCTED IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES</h3>	<h3 style="margin: 0;">HIGH HOLIDAY SERVICES OFFERED FREE OF CHARGE TO ENTIRE COMMUNITY</h3>
 <p style="font-size: small;">In his message, the Rebbe elaborated on the particular significance of the observance of the month of Tishrei with its ritual services, eating the traditional foods, the Tashlich "Casting of the Sin".</p>	<p style="font-size: small;">Services, the Mitzvah of the "Four Species", etc.</p> <p style="font-size: small;">"...Those of our Jewish brothers and sisters who are incarcerated in a jail or prison are obligated, just (Continued on page 13)</p>
<h3 style="margin: 0;">CHARLES & MIREILLE GABBOUR TO CO-CHAIR SECOND ANNUAL RAFFLE, \$20,000 IN PRIZES</h3>	
<p style="font-size: x-small;">to Cincinnati in 1986, and reside in Amherst ever since. Their photo</p>	

A recent issue of *The Chabad Times*

again I asked him whether he was a biological child or adopted. He told me that of course he was their biological child. I asked him for his birth certificate, and the document wasn't from Cincinnati. When I asked him about this, he didn't know, so I decided to ask the parents.

"At first, the parents were annoyed that I brought the question up. I began to suspect that something was amiss and I persisted in asking questions. They finally told me that they had adopted him a few days after he was born and he was raised as a Jew, and so they thought there was no problem.

"When he came to me the next day, I told him, 'I don't want to be the one to tell you the news that will rock your world, but you are adopted! Although you were raised as a Jew, you might be a non-Jew. If you want to marry a Jewish woman, you have to undergo a conversion in which you commit to observe mitzvos.'

"A few weeks later, his girlfriend, a Sephardic woman with strong feelings about Judaism, came to me and asked me whether anything could be done. I asked her whether she would marry an Arab and she said absolutely not. I told her that he was in the same halachic category."

[To be continued be"H]



Rabbi Kalmanson with Vice President Mondale at an event marking the Rebbe's 76th birthday



Rabbi Kalmanson speaking with Nobel Prize winner, Eli Wiesel



Rabbi Kalmanson with astronaut John Glenn, first to orbit the Earth

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