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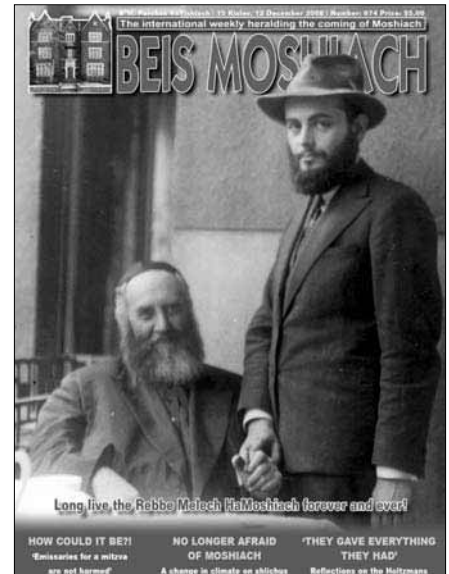
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THE IMPURITY OF IDOLATRY

Translated and adapted by Dovid Yisroel Ber Kaufmann

Removal of idolatry is a pre-requisite for Redemption. The tuma, ritual impurity, of idolatry can affect both the object and the person. Every sin is an act of idolatry. “Removing the strange gods” breaks through the barriers concealing G-d’s Presence.

It is well known that serving idols and accepting G-d’s sovereignty are mutually exclusive. Idolatry is an obstacle to the complete revelation of G-d’s presence. Thus, one of the accomplishments of the era of Moshiach will be elimination of the spirit of impurity, the source of idolatry. When the nations will be motivated to serve G-d, then all forms of idolatry will be destroyed.

Idolatry itself has two negative consequences. First, the practices and rituals violate G-d’s Will. Second, idolatry creates ritual impurity, a distancing from holiness. The term for this in Hebrew is *tuma*. The concept of *tuma*, which has far-reaching consequences, may be understood as follows: G-d is the source of life. Anything that reveals, or can potentially reveal, the innate G-dliness, the Divine life-force, is in a state of ritual purity (*tahara*). Anything that conceals, obstructs or impedes the flow of G-dliness is *tuma* – ritually impure and prohibited from being in contact with holiness.

According to Maimonides, this week’s Torah reading contains an allusion to the impurity of idolatry. As Jacob prepares to return home with his family, he gives them the following instruction: “Put away the strange gods that are among you and purify yourselves and change your garments.” Here we see a clear connection between idolatry – the “strange gods” – and *tuma*, or impurity. By removing the “strange gods,” the idols, the household of

Jacob will purify itself. Jacob’s instruction will be completely and literally fulfilled in the era of Moshiach when, as the prophet declares, the spirit of impurity will be removed.

The *tuma*, or impurity, caused by idolatry falls into two categories. First, the *tuma*, or impurity, may apply to the idolatrous object itself. That is, just as the Torah prohibits one from deriving any benefit or pleasure from an object used in idolatry, so the rabbis decreed that an object used in idolatry is *tuma*, ritually impure.

However, the impurity, or *tuma*, of idolatry, may apply only to the individual, the actual idolater. That is, while the Torah prohibits idolatry, the object worshipped does not in and of itself become ritually impure. Rather, it is the person engaged in idolatry who becomes *tamei*. The rabbis decreed an idolater ritually impure – in a state of *tuma* – so that people would distance themselves from ‘strange gods.’

These two categories emphasize different aspects of idolatry. When we say that the impurity applies to the idolatrous object itself, what is emphasized is the repulsiveness of the object. The idol is disgusting. On the other hand, when we say that the individual, the idolater, is *tamei*, the need to distance one’s self from idolatry, to “remove the strange gods among you,” is emphasized. There should be a complete distancing and total separation from the slightest vestige of idolatry.

Maimonides cites Jacob’s declaration from this week’s Torah reading as proof that idol-worship makes one *tamei*; that is, worshipping idols makes one ritually – and spiritually – impure. By doing so, he stresses the second aspect, the need to distance one’s self from “the strange gods among you,” rather than the first aspect, the repulsiveness of idolatry. Maimonides’s explanation that the passage in this week’s Torah reading – “remove the strange gods among you” – indicates that *tuma* applies mainly to the individual also helps us understand a general principle of idolatry. Understanding this general principle requires two preliminary observations.

First, there is a fundamental difference between the prohibition of idol-worship and all other prohibitions in the Torah. All other prohibitions prohibit something of real substance. For example, the Torah prohibits eating

chametz on Passover, or eating an animal that died of natural causes, and so forth. In each case the thing prohibited actually exists: there is *chametz*, a dead animal, etc., that one is not allowed to eat. Idolatry, on the other hand, is an illusion. True, the tree or stone being worshipped is real. But to imagine that the tree or stone or other object has any ability to harm or benefit is delusional. Therefore, in regard to idolatry, any act that would lead one to think that the ‘strange gods’ are actually real or have any effect is forbidden.

The second preliminary observation concerns the difference between prohibiting benefit or pleasure and the concept of impurity, or *tuma*. The purpose of a prohibition is to negate something, nullifying its significance. If something is *tamei*, on the other hand, this means the object, however loathsome, has the ability to affect the person who comes in contact with it. One who touches *tuma* himself becomes *tamei*. One who is impure thus cannot enter the Temple, the place of holiness, because he would bring impurity within its gates.

The whole concept of idolatry raises the question: how can something which denies G-d’s Oneness exist in the world made by G-d? How can G-d allow a person to think that an idol has any reality, to the point where there is a need to destroy the idol and its associated rituals?

The answer lies in the wording Maimonides emphasizes. Jacob tells his household, “Remove the strange gods.” The key action is the removal of the “strange gods,” that is, the idols, by Jacob and his household. In other words, idolatry exists only so that the very possibility of idolatry will be completely eliminated

through the actions of the Jewish people. G-d wants holiness to be brought into this world and revealed through the efforts of the Jewish people.

The reason G-d permits these false notions to exist is for the Jewish people to reveal that idolatry is a lie, without any substance. By negating idolatry, a true belief – belief in the One G-d – is revealed.

Every sin or transgression is a miniature act of idolatry. Belief in the Oneness of G-d means more than accepting that there is no other god. It means recognizing there is no other existence, and that all creation is an expression of the “word of G-d” which gives it life and being. Any thought or feeling of self-sufficiency – any violation of G-d’s commandments – denies, at least in a subtle way, the Oneness of G-d.

The same may be said of forbidden objects: they oppose the Oneness of G-d. We may apply the same logic to the “miniature” idolatry: prohibited objects exist for the sake of the Divine service of the Jewish people. *Tuma*, the sense of being a separate existence and other oppositions to holiness – all appear to have substance and reality because the Divine life-force that animates them is covered up and concealed. Once the concealment of the Light of the Infinite is removed, the innate G-dliness within even the most mundane aspects of the world will be revealed. As Jacob commanded his

family, “remove the strange gods from among you,” so too must we “remove the strange gods,” break through the barriers and concealments, and reveal the G-dliness within every aspect of creation. Then will be fulfilled the prophecy concerning the era of Moshiach, that the “spirit of impurity will be removed from the earth.”

(Based on Likkutei Sichos 30, pp. 155-160) Vayishlach

How can something which denies G-d’s Oneness exist in the world made by G-d? How can G-d allow a person to think that an idol has any reality, to the point where there is a need to destroy the idol and its associated rituals?



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‘EMISSARIES FOR A MITZVA ARE NOT HARMED’

HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN?

By Rabbi Menachem Mendel Arad, Shliach, Marrakesh, Morocco

A shliach and shlucha who, under similar circumstances, would be helping in the aftermath of the disaster, saving Jews and extricating bodies, were themselves bodies, lying within their home, the Chabad house, the home of every Jew.

WHERE IS THE SECURITY INSURANCE POLICY?

Thursday night, Rosh Chodesh Kislev in a Moslem country: I sit down to farbreng with the few Jews who make the effort to go to shul for Maariv. My mind is racing, crossing continents. For a moment my thoughts are in 770, with the singing, dancing and simcha of Rosh Chodesh Kislev. Then I return to the

painful reality in which our fellow shluchim are hostages, in danger, and who knows... I can't even think of another possibility.

My thoughts are intruded upon by the wailing from the mosques, which I find creepier than ever. I try to focus on my present task and ask those present to say a l'chaim for the shluchim. I remind them that "what a Chassidishe farbrengen can accomplish even the Angel Michael

cannot accomplish." I calmed myself with the saying of our Rebbeim, "Think good and it will be good," and the saying of Chazal, "Emissaries to do a mitzva are not harmed."

Then the phone rang. Daniel, one of the mekuravim, excitedly reported that the shliach and his wife were released. I immediately called home to relay the good news and in the meantime the people in shul, on their own, starting singing, "Pada V'Shalom Nafshi."

Moshe, who sat next to me, said, "I was thinking on my way here that the Rebbe has to make a miracle for his shluchim. Baruch Hashem, praised be His name." The Kiddush Hashem was great. Rosh Chodesh Kislev, I think to myself, has become even more significant. The farbrengen took off with everybody in good spirits.

However, when I went home, I found out that no, they had not been



released. As Shabbos came in, we davened, hoped and added a candle. Shabbos morning we found out the bitter truth; the Rebbe's shluchim were gone! A shliach and shlucha who, under similar circumstances, would be helping in the aftermath of the disaster, saving Jews and extricating bodies, were themselves bodies, lying within their home, the Chabad house, the home of every Jew.

Our mind rejects the information. Our heart refuses to believe it. The Shabbos davening and reading of the Torah don't assuage the pain. So much of it has an astonishing relevance: "and the hands are the hands of Eisav," "and by your sword you will live," "behold, Eisav your brother is planning to kill you," and "why should I be bereaved of both of you in one day?"

How is it possible that the Guardian of Israel who neither slumbers nor sleeps allowed this bloodbath to occur? How was it possible that this auspicious opportunity and its propensity for Kiddush Hashem was blown? **Why?** "Why should the goyim say, where is their G-d?"

I look around me. I see policemen and soldiers standing at the entrance to the shul and Jewish center. Security men, in uniform and plainclothes, patrol the street. But they themselves are Moslems. All that's missing is the spark to ignite them, to cause them to think and act differently.

"The fiery angels on High cried out bitterly: This is Torah and this is its reward?! ... The enemy disgraces Your great and fearsome name!"



Have the rules of the game changed? Have we lost the secure guarantee with which we walk dressed as Lubavitchers in the streets? Must we, from now on, rein in our Jewish pride in front of the members of the community and the tourists, and take the position of, “Be a Jew in your home and a man on the street?”

How will we instill the principles of emuna and bitachon in Hashem in our k'hilla and among the tourists?

TO ASK OR TO REMAIN QUIET

Although the questions are not voiced, the feeling is that people are waiting for the shliach to explain things. I recalled a Chassidic story which I heard in the name of Rabbi Chaim Levi Yitzchok Ginsberg. I told the story and said, by way of introduction, that it was not meant to justify G-d's ways, for we need to cry out “ad masai.” I said it in order to forestall doubts.

An Israeli kibbutznik was hosted in the home of a Lubavitcher family in Crown Heights one Yom Kippur. Although he was a self-professed atheist, he decided to fast and go to shul out of respect for his hosts.

He followed the davening in 770, and when the chazan got up to the part of the Harugei Malchus (the ten Torah greats who were killed), he was shocked to read the gruesome description of the murder of these great tzaddikim. His shock was even greater when he read the following, **“The fiery angels on High cried out bitterly: This is Torah and this is its reward?! ... The enemy disgraces Your great and fearsome name! Blaspheming divrei Torah!”**

A Heavenly voice called out from Heaven: If I hear another sound, I will turn the world into water! This is a decree of Mine. Accept it, those who delight in the Torah!

The kibbutznik, who was not

raised to quietly accept what it says in s'farim and believe, refused to continue. He demanded an explanation for G-d's response, which, as he put it, was nothing more than a flexing of divine muscle. “What happened? Someone dares to speak up and instead of getting an answer he is berated and threatened, ‘One more word and I will destroy you all?’”

The Chassidim around him did not have answers, so they referred him to an older, wiser Chassid by the name of R' Zushe Partisan. R'

“Hashem said, ‘I could explain My actions and assuage your doubts, but since you are limited, created beings, I would have to turn the world back to chaos to do so...’”

Zushe told him the following story:

A wealthy king was getting ready to marry off his only daughter. He ordered the finest food in special dishes, the best musicians, and a special outfit, woven of exclusive fabric. He hired a Jewish tailor to do the work.

The priests, who hated the Jews and were annoyed at the king's relationship with him, told the king that giving that fabric to the Jew was like abandoning money in the street. They suggested that the king warn the tailor that if, at the end of his

work, it was discovered that he had taken any of the material for himself, he would be condemned to death and would have no opportunity to defend himself.

The tailor agreed to undertake the job regardless and left for home, while the priests remained grinning in anticipation.

When the work was finished, the tailor went to the palace with the stunning suit. The king was impressed by his work and asked for the remnants of material. To his surprise, the tailor said there were none!

The priests, who were eagerly waiting this moment, swore by everything holy that the Jew had betrayed the king and the king sentenced him to death, as per the conditions he had specified from the outset.

The Jew did not plead for his life. All he did was ask that his final request be granted, as it is for all those who are condemned. His request was for the suit he had made and a pair of scissors to be brought to him.

The king was incensed. “Do you want to take revenge?” But since he did not want to renege on the traditional last request, he acceded to the tailor's wishes.

To the surprise of all those present, the tailor delicately undid all the stitches. Slowly, the suit reverted back to its original material, and to the amazement of the king and priests, they saw that the tailor had expertly used every last bit of fabric!

Then the Jew said, “My dear king, unfortunately I had no choice but to take apart the garment. Now you believe me, but the suit is no more!”

“So too,” said R' Zushe to the kibbutznik, “Hashem said, I could explain My actions and assuage your doubts, but since you are limited, created beings, I would have to turn the world back to chaos...”

TO MY FELLOW SHLUCHIM

I will end with a few words for my fellow shluchim who surely learned and farbrenged on the sicha for Parshas Noach, Likkutei Sichos vol. 5, known by the name, "And only Noach remained," a sicha which the Rebbe concludes with five paragraphs of directives.

We have to continue supplying the world with spiritual nourishment, even if the shliach is, heaven forbid, in a state of "groaning and spitting up blood," even if the people around him are on the level of "animals," even if he doesn't have basic necessities for himself and his family.

If that isn't enough, the Rebbe demands that we not do this with kabbalas ol but with simcha. The Rebbe demonstrates that this avoda pertains to one and all. It's a fact. It's in Rashi, which is for the "ben

BOMBAY?

Beis Moshiach has determined that Bombay is a more appropriate way to refer to India's major city because the new name is an explicit reference to avoda zara. As we are prohibited to mention the names of idolatry, we revert to the old name, Bombay, which simply means "good bay," and is in any case still commonly used, even in India itself.

chamesh l'Mikra." And the Rebbe notes that we have to be happy since we were chosen for this holy work that saves us from the "flood" that covers the world.

On first thought you ask yourself: Master of the universe, Gabi and Rivka, may Hashem avenge their blood, were moser nefesh to go on shlichus and were moser nefesh day in and day out. They didn't think about themselves

but about the Rebbe's shlichus. How could they be killed while on shlichus!?

On second thought, with the knowledge that we cannot understand, perhaps it is incumbent on us to adopt the line of "and the living will take it to heart":

Because this terrible tragedy ripped our hearts to shreds, we must rise above all the hardships of language, fear, danger, finances, friends and family, and think about one thing only: carrying out the shlichus we were assigned, to prepare ourselves and the people of our city and those who come to our city, to greet the Rebbe, Moshiach Tzidkeinu, with joy!

When tourists ask us how long we are going to be here on shlichus, we answer, "For a very short time, until Moshiach comes."

Rebbe, we all need you, now!

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LOST SOUL, FOUND

By Nosson Avrohom

They were out of gas in a neighborhoods even the police were afraid to enter without reinforcements. Suffice to say that in those years, the federal government enlisted the military in order to fight crime in these neighborhoods. * An amazing story of Divine Providence that took place on Chanuka.

"I've told this story dozens of times," says Rabbi Boruch Goldberg, a resident of the Old City of Yerushalayim and a familiar Lubavitcher face in the Tzemach Tzedek shul there. "Nevertheless, each time I tell it, I am not only moved, but I understand more than ever the power of the Rebbe that reaches every Jew. The Rebbe's net is spread wide to save Jews, even those who reach the furthest places.

"I heard this story from the one it happened to, R' Shlomo Schwartz of Los Angeles, a man dedicated to spreading Yiddishkait and reaching out."

This story happened during the years when the Rebbe stressed the importance of going on mitzvaim on Chanuka and making the biggest *pirsumei nisa* possible. Each of the shluchim in Los Angeles took responsibility for an area where he would do his best that not a single Jew would remain in the dark about the Festival of Lights.

R' Schwartz took on a huge university campus, attended by thousands of Jews, as well as a number of neighborhoods where many Jews lived. He prepared a detailed plan and during the first days of Chanuka, he barely slept. He ran from place to place, trying to reach every Jew. For a few days he went from house to house, neighborhood to neighborhood, along with another Lubavitcher who volunteered to help him.

On one of the last days of Chanuka he was sitting in his office, feeling exhausted. After finishing his work, he left for home with his assistant. It wasn't a long trip home but part of their route took them through dangerous neighborhoods known for their serious criminal activity. Even the police were afraid to enter without reinforcements. Suffice to say that in those years, the federal government enlisted the military in order to fight crime in these

neighborhoods. They were the only ones who could bring law and order there.

Unfortunately, as R' Schwartz and his friend headed home, the motor died and the car stopped. When he tried to restart the car, he noticed that they had run out of gas. They looked at one another in despair. In the midst of their flurry of Chanuka activity they had in fact noticed the gas gauge inching toward empty, but they kept put off the errand a bit too long. Now, here they were, stuck in the worst possible place. Who would help them?

The darkness and silence made them even more nervous. Assessing their situation, they realized that staying in the car was not an option, and they decided to get out and ask for help. But from whom? They glanced at the buildings around them and saw that the lights were out, which meant that people were sleeping and as Chazal say, "The sleep of the wicked is good for them and good for the world."

They needed at least one person awake, because it certainly wouldn't do them any good to wake someone up and say, "My gas tank is empty, could you please come out and help us." Yet, what choice did they have?

They decided to walk around and see if they found any lights on in one of the houses. When they saw a light, they got up their courage to walk up the steps and knock on the thick, metal door. Later on, they said they had no idea how they had the guts to knock at that door.

They could hear footsteps approaching and a loud voice asked them to identify themselves. R' Schwartz and his friend didn't even have a chance to reply when the door opened and they nearly fainted. A huge black man stood there, muscles rippling, wearing chains, earrings and tattoos aplenty. They were absolutely terrified.

To their amazement, he smiled at them and turned around and called into the house, "Come, you have guests."

R' Schwartz couldn't imagine who he would meet next. Within a few seconds a white-skinned woman appeared who looked obviously Jewish.

Their fear dissipated and was replaced with a feeling of astonishment. They quickly discovered that the black man was a

nice guy. He heard about their problem and went out himself to fill their tank. In the meantime, they went inside and talked to the Jewish woman. She asked them to wait a moment while she went to her room on the second floor. She returned with a letter she had received from her mother after years of estrangement over her living with this black, non-Jewish man.

Her mother wrote her how much she missed her, and how despite the many years of separation, her longing for her had grown. At the end of her letter, the mother asked whether she still lit the Chanuka Menorah, a mitzva she had loved to do as a girl and still kept up in the early years of her estrangement from Judaism.

The woman asked the two men if they happened to have a Menorah

and candles because she wanted to light one. They brought her a Menorah from the car and enough candles to last until the end of Chanuka.

She cried at the sight of the flames and was amazed by the Divine Providence that brought them to her apartment in the middle of the night.

R' Schwartz concluded the story by saying, "That lost soul had a victory over the depths of klipa into which it had fallen, just as the few Maccabees were victorious over the mighty Yevanim. We stayed in touch with her. A few months later she left her gentile boyfriend and decided to get back to her roots.

"This incredible story taught me that nobody goes lost. We just have to reach out."



CULTURAL WAR

By Menachem Ziegelboim

*We all know the story of the jug of pure oil and the renewed conquest of the Mikdash, but how many know what really happened during the rule of the Yevanim? What did they do during their control of the holy sites? What prompted the Chashmonaim to respond in war? What did the Chashmonaim see when they went to the Mikdash after three years of spiritual devastation? * In a conversation with Rabbi Menachem Makover, director of V'Hareinu B'vinyano, we cast our gaze back to the events of Chanuka, watched anxiously for the success of the Chashmonaim in their impossible task, and rejoiced to see their rededication of the Altar.*

Chanuka is approaching and the Chanuka story is familiar to us all since kindergarten. As we get older, we learn more about that period of history, the era of the Chashmonaim which was more or less in the middle of the second Beis HaMikdash era, about two hundred years before the churban.

But amidst trying to get into the details of the wars and the miracles, it can be hard to visualize what it

was like for the Chashmonaim. Together with Rabbi Menachem Makover, we projected ourselves back to that period of time and examined the events that took place, especially from the perspective of the Beis HaMikdash, Kohanim and the renewed avoda.

We learn about the war between the Chashmonaim and the Yevanim and are not quite familiar with the political background and

about the Jewish people in Eretz Yisroel in those days.

When we talk about that era, we can say that there was a war between nations. There were the Egyptian Greeks in the south and the Syrian Greeks in Eretz Yisroel, who ruled after capturing the area from the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt. Yavan at that time was divided into several nations following the death of Alexander of Macedonia. The Yevanim who ruled over Eretz Yisroel were Syrian-Greeks led by King Antiochus Epiphanies.

Chazal stress that unlike other kings and kingdoms that conquered Eretz Yisroel, the goal of this nation was one of spiritual rather than physical destruction, where their culture would prevail. It was ideological dominance that they sought. This is why Chazal emphasize the spiritual battle of the Yevanim and not their military-political victory. This is also the reason that the ones who rebelled were specifically Kohanim and not regular soldiers.

During the conquering of Eretz Yisroel, Yerushalayim and the Mikdash, the Jewish people were not completely religious, correct?

The Greek culture spread and the Yevanim tried, as much as possible, to propagate their culture. Near the Temple Mount they built a stadium, which attracted not only the general Jewish population but the Kohanim too. Between doing the avoda in the Mikdash, there were some that visited the stadium.

We do not know exactly what transpired that time. In Chazal it



appears obliquely, but there are other sources that give more background and shed light on the struggle. It was a very difficult spiritual war. Greek culture was a culture of sports and physical beauty. They did all they could to influence the youth to join this mindset and behavior. The sports stadiums and body worship were very appealing to the youth.

How long did it take before they managed to overtake the masses?

It was a battle of decades that unfolded in stages. One of the main stages, which actually incited the rebellion, was when the Yevanim began instituting the decrees that Chazal enumerate, decrees whose

purpose was to dim and ultimately eradicate the Torah. It came in dribs and drabs. At first they affected the atmosphere, and then came the decrees which were designed to spiritually annihilate the Jewish people.

The conquering of the Beis HaMikdash did not happen at the beginning, but later on. When the Yevanim saw that their cultural takeover wasn't as widespread as they would have liked, they realized that it would happen only after physically conquering Yerushalayim and the Mikdash.

Who was responsible for the Beis HaMikdash at that time?

When things were as they ought to be, the Beis HaMikdash was an

It was a very deep spiritual galus. It's not that the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed; rather it stood in its place and was dishonored again and again, a galus within the Mikdash.

independent entity. There was the High Priest who led the Kohanim. There was the Sanhedrin as well as the Beis Din of the Kohanim. There was a hierarchy which was completely removed from civilian rule. They made all the decisions and supervised the Beis HaMikdash and the avoda of the Kohanim.

In the first stage, the Yevanim tried to influence the appointments within this hierarchy in order to be able to control the spiritual leadership. It was only in the second stage, much further along, that they conquered the Mikdash.

The one who had to lead the attack was the High Priest and his people. Who served in this position at that fateful time?

There are a number of opinions about this. What we know from Chazal is that it was Matisyahu. There is an open question whether Matisyahu was a High Priest himself or only the son of the High Priest, Yochanan). In the Book of Chashmonaim it mentions other names, but the ones who led the rebellion were members of the family of the High Priest.

What do we know about the rule of the Yevanim?

There is not much in Chazal; a little bit appears in hints. At first, the Yevanim made decrees that undermined the system of the avoda. They mixed in to the election of High Priests and other things of that sort. They tried forcing their culture into the Mikdash. When they weren't as successful as they would have liked, they realized that it wasn't enough to have conquered the outlying areas. They had to physically conquer Yerushalayim and the Mikdash.

There are things that Chazal deliberately avoiding publicizing because of the dishonor to the Mikdash. From other sources we know, for example, that during the three years in which they controlled the Mikdash, not only did the

When the Yevanim saw that their cultural takeover wasn't as widespread as they would have liked, they realized that it would happen only after physically conquering Yerushalayim and the Mikdash.

Yevanim put an idol there but they also used the mizbeiach. Faithful to their principle not to physically break things but to subsume them within their culture, they did not break the mizbeiach but used it for their avoda zara. In this way, they tried to draw the nation into Hellenism and idol worship, without actually destroying the Mikdash. They simply used it for their own purposes.

What happened in the Beis HaMikdash under the rule of the Yevanim?

According to the Book of Chashmonaim, the Yevanim controlled the Mikdash for exactly three years, from 25 Kislev to 25 Kislev.

It would seem that throughout this time, there was no avoda in the Mikdash. Chazal make a few statements which we can put together to get a general picture of

the situation. In the tractate Middos (2, 3) it says that the Yevanim made thirteen breaches in the *soreg*. The *soreg* was a low fence that surrounded the courtyard within the Temple Mount. One of the main purposes of the fence was to keep the goyim who passed by from entering the Mikdash. (According to other sources the fence had signs in Greek which warned goyim not to cross the fence. About a hundred years ago, two such stones with Greek writing were found in Yerushalayim. One is in the Rockefeller Museum in Yerushalayim, and the other is in Istanbul.)

The Yevanim – say Chazal – made those breaches in the fence in order to symbolize that their impurity was, in fact, going to enter. The Yevanim also contaminated all the oil in the Oil Storeroom, which was located at the edge of the Ezras Nashim. The Yevanim did not spill the oil out, just contaminated it. Once again, this was in line with their philosophy of infiltration as opposed to destruction.

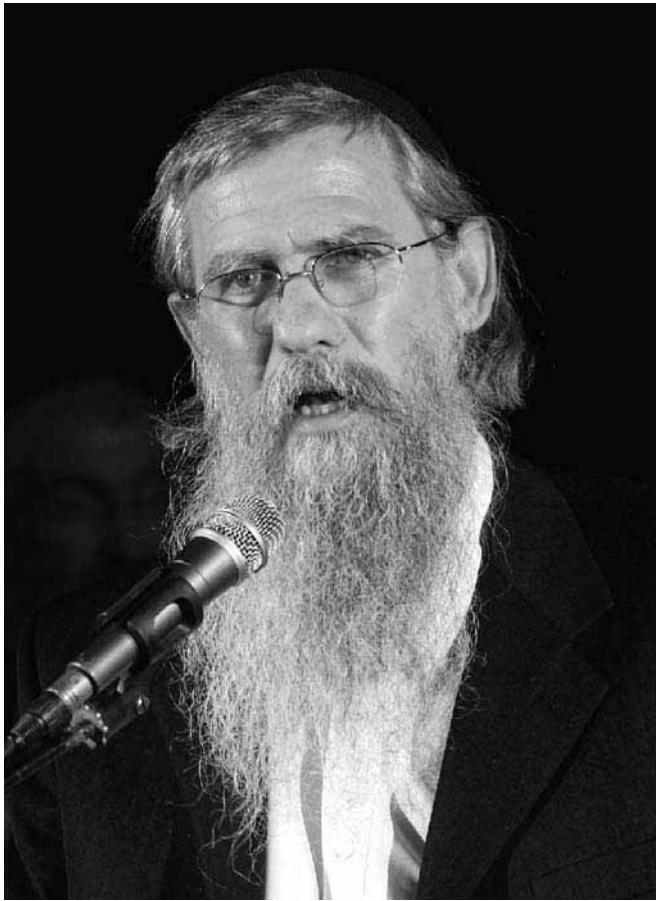
Did they also physically harm the Mikdash?

We don't know of any physical damage, and their goal was not to destroy a beautiful structure. This second Mikdash reached its peak of beauty a hundred years later under Hurdus (Herod), but even then it was a large, beautiful building. They did however plunder the vessels of the Mikdash, which were worth a fortune because of the gold from which they were made.

It was a very deep spiritual galus. It's not that the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed; rather it stood in its place and was dishonored again and again, a galus within the Mikdash.

The secularism and wantonness of that time – can it be compared to our days?

In certain ways, it was much worse. Today we don't have avoda



Above: Rabbi Menachem Makover.

Below: An illustration depicting the Kohanim assembling a temporary Menora after purifying the Beis HaMikdash

zara. Back then, not only was there the culture of body worship, i.e., sports and entertainment, but there was also literal avoda zara - idolatry.

This type of war motivated the Kohanim, those who represented k'dusha, to fight. They were the first to realize that the path of Hellenism led to their spiritual destruction. It was a war of light against darkness.

What was the final straw that led the Kohanim to declare war?

The famous story about Matisyahu's reaction to the Hellenist who brought a sacrifice to avoda zara always appears as the incident that set off the rebellion. Other stories in Chazal, however, testify to the battle with Hellenism that infiltrated even within the homes of the Kohanim.

A famous story along these lines is the story of Miriam of Beis Bilga, told in tractate Sukka. In those decadent times, she converted and married a Yevani soldier. She then entered the Mikdash, went over to the mizbeiach, and kicked it saying, "Wolf, wolf, how long will you continue to consume the money of the Jews while not standing by them in their time of sorrow?"

Reading between the lines of this story, we can understand a bit of what the situation was like then. The Beis HaMikdash was a free-for-all. Whoever wanted to enter, did so. Thus, this Jewish woman, married to a Yevani, was able to simply walk in and disparage the altar.

What we see here is not only degradation but the fact that someone from a family of Kohanim reached such a nadir. It would seem that she wasn't so



When the Kohanim saw that the nation was going downhill spiritually and nobody else was rising to the challenge, they took it on.

exceptional, but that her behavior reflected a mentality that had even contaminated the homes of Kohanim. The Sages say that she heard talk at home that affected her in this way.

We learn from this how powerful the Hellenistic culture was. This is why Chazal bring this story even though it's about a rebellious young

woman. It illustrates the very difficult spiritual battle that had to be waged deep within home turf.

Chazal relate several punishments that the Kohanim of Beis Bilga were given: locking the iron ring used for sh'chita during their shift, sealing of the window ledge where their sh'chita knives were stored, and dividing the Lechem HaPanim in the south instead of the north. This was all because of what Miriam did. These punishments were something like the "sign of Kayin." It identified and reminded people of who they were.

(The Rebbe in the sicha of 6 Tishrei and Simchas Torah 5735 explains from a Chassidic perspective the deep significance of Miriam's actions.)

Three years after the Yevanim took over, the Chashmonaim liberated the Mikdash. The war actually lasted close to two years and did not end with the liberation of the Mikdash, but continued for a while after that.

Along with their geographical victories, the Chashmonaim went to

work wiping out Hellenist influences and purifying the contaminated social and cultural environment. Difficult battles still awaited them, both against the Yevanim and amongst their own people. It was a critical stage, in which they had to reverse the spiritual direction that the Jewish nation was taking.

The fact that they had retaken the Mikdash served as a great boost to their morale, as did the renewed avoda and the bringing of korbanos. This was extremely helpful in their war against the Hellenists within the nation.

The Yevanim controlled the Mikdash for three years, which meant that the Kohanim were silenced for a long time.

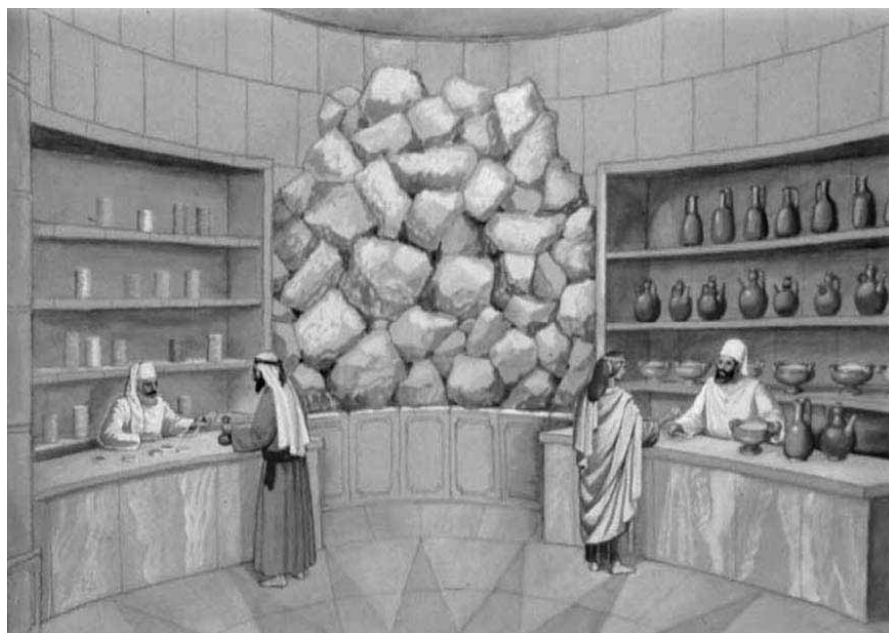
First, you have to remember that the Kohanim were the nation's spiritual leaders, not soldiers. It would be like the men in our Kollelim today rising up and rebelling against the government. The Kohanim's role was one of avodas Hashem. They wandered among the towns and spread the teachings of Torah.

When they saw that the nation was going downhill spiritually and nobody else was rising to the challenge, they took it on.

In addition, although the Yevanim controlled the Mikdash for three years until the Chashmonaim conquered it, the rebellion began about a year and a half before that. It took time for them to achieve their goals.

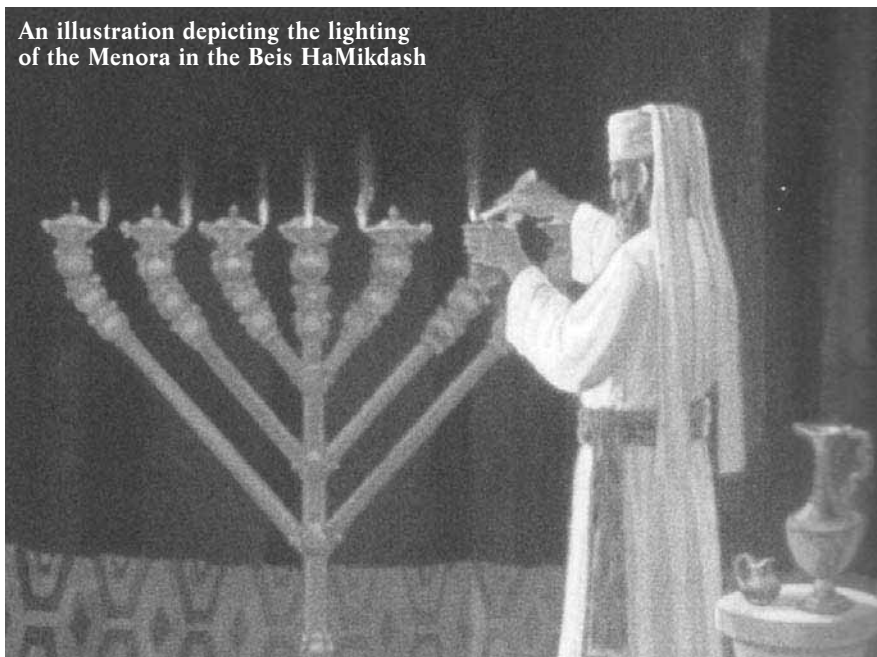
On which day did they conquer the Mikdash?

We know that on the night of 25 Kislev they lit the Menora for the first time. The question is, when did they light, at night or during the day? If they lit it at night, the evening of the 25th, that means that they actually re-conquered the Mikdash on the 24th. Some of Chazal say that they came on the 25th and immediately lit it that day.



The Office of Seals, which contained the stones of the altar removed by the Chashmonaim.

An illustration depicting the lighting of the Menora in the Beis HaMikdash



The only remnant that we have of the Mikdash today is the light of the Menora which continues to illumine through the Menoras that we light. This light illuminates the galus.

Halachically speaking, according to the Rambam, you can light during the day.

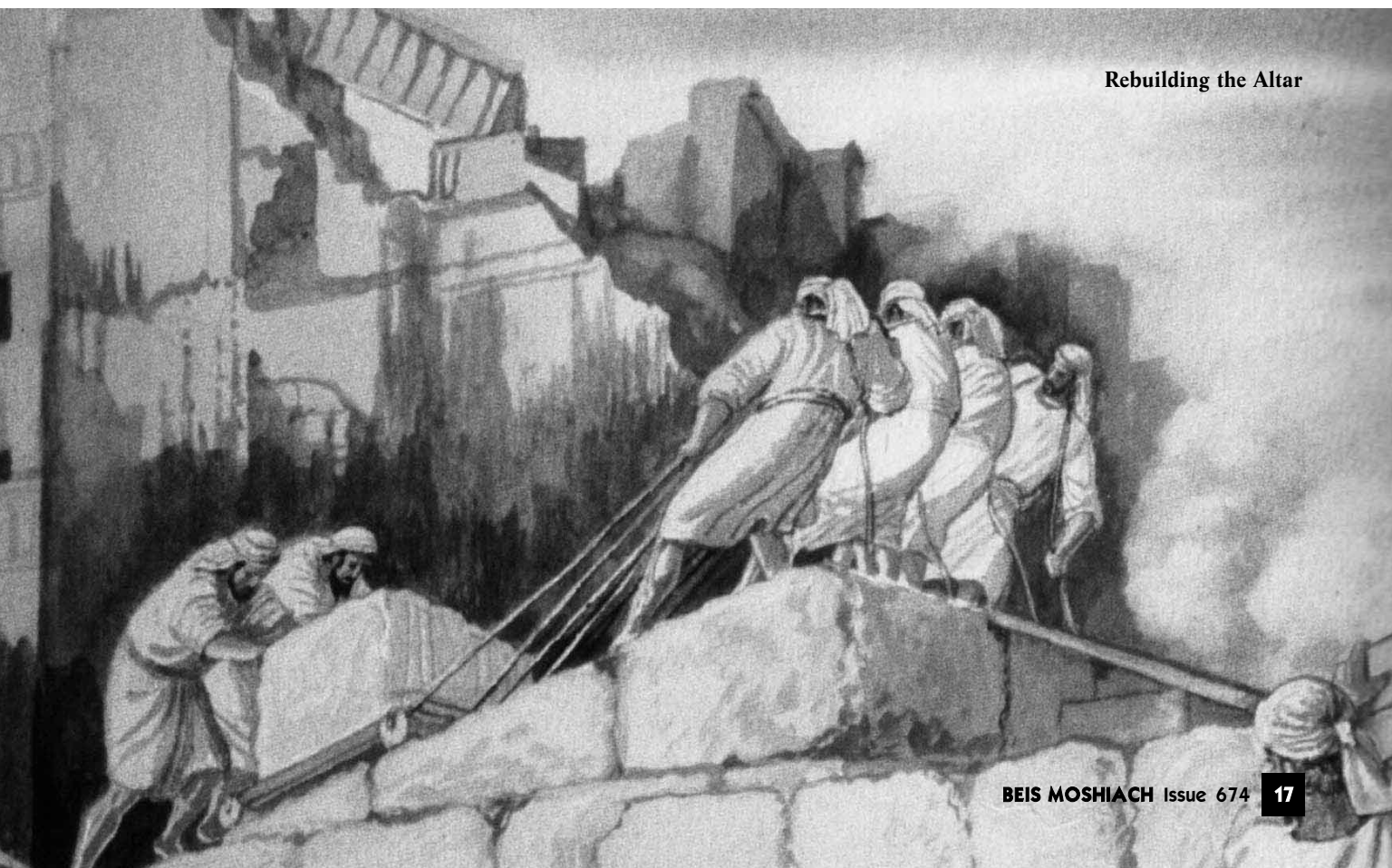
What was the first thing the Chashmonaim did when they entered the Mikdash?

Though some details remain unknown, we do know about the fixing of the breaches in the soleg and searching for pure oil, as well as efforts made simultaneously to grind olives for new oil. They had to

replace the Altar because even though stones do not become impure, they thought it likely that the Yevanim had used metal on the stones which invalidates them.

Chazal emphasize the fact that

Rebuilding the Altar



the Chashmonaim, not wanting any contact with the impurity of the Yevanim, replaced the Mizbeiach upon which impure sacrifices had been brought.

They found the idol that the Yevanim had placed there, which had to be removed along with all the rest of the idolatrous items that had been left behind. The Chashmonaim also discovered that all the keilim had been robbed. There was no Menora, no Shulchan, and no Inner Altar. Nothing.

Our observance commemorates the effort made to light the Menora as early as possible. Why weren't similar efforts made to immediately renew the bringing of the Tamid sacrifices, for example, which was no less important?

It's a big question from a chronological perspective. The first question is whether the two are interdependent, the lighting the Menora and the avoda on the Altar. Second, as far as the Altar itself, when was it rededicated? It seems that the Chanukas HaMizbeiach took place on Zos Chanuka (the 8th day of Chanuka). Some say that it is the rededication of the Altar which gives Zos Chanuka special significance. The menorah was lit for seven days but they did not yet bring sacrifices. So perhaps our observance acknowledges both.

Why was the Menora first?

It was difficult building an Altar within eight days. They needed whole stones, hewn in some special way or taken from the sea, without the use of metal instruments. For those times, the work was complicated. Doing it within eight days was a miraculous achievement.

The Chashmonaim did all in their power not to come in contact with the impurity of the Yevanim. For this reason, despite the halacha which states that the Menora could be lit with impure oil, since "*tuma d'chuya b'tzibbur*," they wished to

avoid this. Heaven enabled them to do so with the miracle of finding the one jug of pure oil, sealed by the High Priest. It wasn't just that it had the hechsher of the High Priest. It was oil designated for the High Priest, special oil.

In sifrei Chassidus it says that the oil of the High Priest represents the innermost point within the Jewish soul that can never be eradicated. It always remains pure.

The second miracle was that this small amount of oil lasted eight days, demonstrating the victory of holiness over impurity. This is the essence of the holiday of Chanuka.

The Chashmonaim used pure oil but put it in a plain, unsophisticated Menora. This demonstrates the supremacy of spirit over matter, the theme of the holiday.

Fixing the sores was also symbolic of rectifying the breach within the walls of purity. The stones of the altar that became impure were put away in the north-eastern chamber of the Beis HaMokad and served as eternal testimony to the holiness of the Jewish people and the impurity of the Yevanim.

If the Menora was also robbed, what did they light?

The first Menora they used was made of simple iron bars, not out of gold. According to halacha, it is permitted to make the Menora out of other metals. It's only if it is

made out of gold that the other halachos apply, such as: 18 *t'fachim*, flowers, knobs and cups, made out of one piece, a *kikar* of gold, etc.

There is a deep lesson in this. The Chashmonaim used pure oil (even though they were permitted to use impure oil) but put it in a plain, unsophisticated Menora. This demonstrates the supremacy of spirit over matter, the theme of the holiday.

How did they begin to restore the various services in the Beis HaMikdash?

I think that the entire system had to be re-organized – no simple matter after so many years of neglect. The hierarchy of jobs had to be re-instituted. In the Mikdash there were fifteen appointees with eight levels of permanent jobs: the High Priest, his assistant, and then various positions under them. This system, as well as the renovations, had to be re-established.

A small example – the Korban Tamid was brought from the money of the half-shekel coins that each Jew gave. The collection of these half-shekel coins had to be reinstated.

Another challenge the Chashmonaim had to overcome was how to reinstate the avoda and the system in which Kohanim took turns doing the avoda. Many of the Kohanim were unfamiliar with the avoda. Some Kohanim could not do the avoda since they had left Jewish practice, and others had killed people in war and it was a halachic question as to whether they could do the avoda in the Beis HaMikdash.

After having endured this trauma, it was no simple matter to get back to routine, neither in the Mikdash, nor in civilian daily life.

The spiritual light is the outstanding motif in the Chanuka story. There were miracles in the

war, a miracle in rebuilding the mizbeiach that quickly, and many other miracles, but it is the miracle of the oil that is emphasized for generations. The Menora, which is lit so that it is seen in public, demonstrates how a small light has such immense power.

In Chassidus it explains that the only remnant that we have of the Mikdash today is the light of the Menora, which continues to illumine through the Menoras that we light. It is a remnant of the light which was hidden during the first week of Creation. The Sfas Emes says that the 36 lights of the Menora correspond to the 36 hours that the original divine light shone from Friday morning until Saturday night during the week that Hashem created the world. That first Motzaei

Shabbos it was hidden away but on Chanuka, the menora radiates a little of this light to illuminate the galus.

On the words in B'Reishis, "and darkness upon the face of the deep," Chazal say, "This is the kingdom of Yavan, which darkened the eyes of Israel with its decrees." The light of the Menora symbolizes the Jewish people, while the jug of oil of the High Priest, symbolizes the wisdom within the Torah. This is the message for the generations throughout galus. In the end, this light transforms the darkness.

Moshiach is coming momentarily and the Beis HaMikdash will be built. Where will we get pure olive oil from?

Baruch Hashem, we have olive oil. Jews produce it. Although we are impure from contact with the dead, we pray that the moment we reach that stage, we will all merit becoming pure.

On a personal note I want to tell you that my oldest son opened an olive press in Tekoa. Menachos 85b says, "Tekoa was the source for oil." It seems that in the time of the Mikdash they brought oil from Tekoa to the Mikdash. The fact that my son produces oil from a press in Tekoa thrills me. The first oil that emerged from the olives was preserved and sealed for the Beis HaMikdash, which will be speedily built in our day. This expresses the Jewish people's renewed inspiration.

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NO LONGER AFRAID OF MOSHIACH

By Keren Kaplan

*Shlichus is like a dish comprised of all sorts of tastes and textures. Tangy and sweet. Spicy and bland. The main ingredient is lots of giving and emuna in the Rebbe, because without that, you really can't manage. * Shlucha Keren Kaplan gives us some glimpses of life on shlichus.*

On Chai Elul we had a modest “upsheren.” Yes, we are here three years already! I am sure that veteran shluchos and ordinary readers are wondering a bit about what the big deal is. It's one thing if a Chabad house celebrates fifty years, or at least ten, but three years?

In order to provide you with some background information, let us go back three years. A young couple with a baby land in the some obscure neighborhood in Rishon L'Tzion. “Nachalat Yehuda?” Sounds nice. It's even the name of one of the tribes...

Granted, going on shlichus is truly wonderful and a great privilege, but the charming description of any given Chabad house as a long assembly line, which easily and quickly produces sirtuks and sheitels, was not quite accurate. Shlichus entails a lot of giving, and

sometimes, you simply do not see anything in exchange. Shlichus sometimes entails joining a family oriented community with a mentality and rules of their own. Shlichus is to live without family close by and without ready access to food with a good hechsher. In short, with all due respect, shlichus is not that simple.

One minute! – You are certainly thinking – what is she talking about? You check to see where she went on shlichus, and see that it's not to Russia, or the other end of the globe. So what is she going on about? She's two minutes from Kfar Chabad! And anyway, shlichus in Eretz Yisroel is so easy!

However, sometimes there is “close” which is “far.” Without a car, it takes a lot of time and energy to get to Kfar Chabad. Up until recently, the nearest place to get bread with a proper hechsher was a

half hour walk away. It's not Siberia, but it's not easy. Not to mention the people who are very different than what we are used to. But Baruch Hashem the meshaleiach is always there to help us!

Before we went out on shlichus, we looked for an apartment, of course, but in Nachalat Yehuda there is no such thing as a real estate agent. You need an apartment? So ask around, and maybe there will be an ad hanging in the local mall. It took us time to figure this out, but in the meantime, we had no apartment.

The letters we wrote to the Rebbe at that time, when one rental contract was about to end and another suitable contract was not in the offing, were answered with - mivtzaim are the solution. Soon the locals who frequent the business center of Nachalat began to notice a young Lubavitcher energetically working on Mivtza T'fillin. And yes, we found an apartment by incredible Divine Providence in the course of mivtzaim.

So we had an apartment! The busy month of Tishrei was around the corner, and Mivtza Shofar got underway. A bachur was brought for reinforcement and the mivtza went door to door, with astonished faces peering out from every side. Since this is a very family oriented neighborhood, the astonished looks were many and varied, and usually included several generations. We

began to acquire a reputation, “The religious guy with the shofar and the redheaded baby.”

I’ll skip Yom Kippur, surrounded by shuls with a nusach different than we are used to, and go straight to Sukkos. As a couple with several Tishreis with the Rebbe behind us, we were determined to have Simchas Beis HaShoeiva in the street. It’s just that we were unprepared for the shock of the locals, who wondered why Hakafos Shniyos were made, and why three times?

But we did it. We played CD’s and had a huge doll that was blown up for the children, and about twenty men participated. Nearly another fifty men stood and clapped. We did Mivtza Arba Minim too. This is how it went, “Who’s at the door? From Chabad again? I already heard the shofar and got honey cake, what is it now?”

The holidays passed and it came time for me to make connections with the women of the neighborhood

(an article about the men is for another time). At that time, I was the only one in the neighborhood with a sheitel (today, baruch Hashem, that’s no longer the case) and you can imagine that there were other things in which I was unique too. No wonder, then, that my first connection to the women took place through a girl.

About a month after we arrived, I went down with Mendel to the playground. A nine year old girl came over and stared at me. I seized the opportunity to do a little “mivtzaim,” even knowing that it would entail an interrogation by this curious child.

“Is something wrong?” I asked her in a playful tone (while hastily checking my sheitel and clothes).

The girl wasn’t fazed. She merely whispered, “You know what they say about you here in the neighborhood?”

I tried to think about what terrible thing I could have done, when she continued, “They say that

The topic of Moshiach’s coming was first met with suspicion. “I thought Moshiach had to be a mekubal,” or “When Moshiach comes, we all die, right?”

your hair is not real!”

I started laughing and tried to explain to the child why those rumors were true.

The process of connecting with the women was long and arduous. They all knew one another, and I



Young shluchim at 770



Moshiach flag at the head of the Lag B’Omer parade

was the stranger in their midst. I tried to get to know them by organizing Rosh Chodesh gatherings. Today, when I recall those gatherings, I can only laugh. We put so much effort into the decorating, lecturers, workshops, and advertising, but nothing helped. For many months, the poor showing sent me back home in utter frustration. What was wrong with these women? Workshops like these would bring dozens of women out of their homes in other locations, while here ...

I experienced several frustrating months until I consulted with my mashpia. (Don't wait to consult with yours!) While talking to her, I clarified for myself that I had to try a different approach, with Rosh Chodesh gatherings in women's homes. It has been working out quite successfully elsewhere.

It's important to think long and hard about what will be suitable and where your anticipated crowd will feel comfortable. That's critical – matching the type of the program to the people you want to attract. Or, as the Rebbe quotes, "When you go to city, follow their customs."

The topic of Moshiach's coming was first met with suspicion. "What, we won't all die with Gog U'Magog?" or "I thought Moshiach had to be a mekubal," or "When Moshiach comes we all die, right?" But slowly, after years of shiurim and farbrengens, we made inroads. Today, every child ("Meshichoi") in the neighborhood knows that when Moshiach comes it will be good for everyone materially and spiritually.

Every Chabad house has miracle stories that the shluchim hold on to tightly to fall back on when challenges arise. Our story took place last Lag B'Omer. A woman from the south of the country donates a nice sum of money every year for the parade. The Lag

B'Omer parade is very expensive, so her donation was very much appreciated.

This year, for some reason, she said sorry, she can't help us out. At 7:30 the next morning, less than twelve hours since her decision, she called us back. The story she told us was moving. She had suffered from various problems and had just returned from a medical consultation when she dreamt of the Rebbe. In the dream, the Rebbe asked her, "Why are you going for consultations? You need to donate towards my parade."

The first thing she did when she awoke was to make contact to arrange the sending of the donation.

Speaking of donations, the community of Nachalat also believes the myth of the great Chabad gold mine which provides all the shluchim with their funding. We are working hard to dispel this myth.

Writing to the Rebbe is done matter-of-factly here, and every Rosh Chodesh gathering ends two hours late because everybody wants to write.

I had some nachas at a shiur that I gave on the D'var Malchus of Parshas Shoftim. When I got to the part that there is someone to consult with in our generation, the women told stories that happened to them with the Igros Kodesh. I barely had to say anything further.

A few months ago, an election meeting for one of the candidates for mayor took place. The frustrated residents of the community vented on him for various reasons. One of the women was annoyed that the invitation to this gathering had been a small and all but invisible ad.

"See," said the woman, pointing at a picture of the Rebbe and at various flyers from the Chabad house that filled the wall. "You can't miss *those* ads. You can see that whoever hung them up considered it

important that they be seen!"

Speaking of nachas, this is the third year in a row in which we ran a successful day camp. We've had unbelievable results, thanks to our wonderful staff. A boy switched to a religious school and nudged his mother to build a sukka, children began wearing tzitzis and insisting on kosher food... Hearing these terrific accomplishments gives one the strength to continue doing and working.

After actually going on shlichus, you really understand what it means when we say: "Beit Chabad – the address for anything Jewish." The usual programs like shiurim and mitzvaim with all the different demographics are always spiced up with interesting occurrences. The ongoing class for girls enables the girls to ask any halachic question that they are embarrassed to ask a rav. For many Shabbasos we had to supervise any interactions with the "Shabbos goy" because the girls did not know what was permitted to tell him.

We lend religious reading material to replace other books and newspapers, and get Jewish music CD's to replace whatever they were used to listening to. Sometimes I go shopping with mekuravos for modest clothing in B'nei Brak, and I serve as a ready listener to all their problems. The help provided at a Chabad house runs the gamut, so that I think it's more accurate to say, "Beit Chabad – the address for *anything!*"

On shlichus, you need to be prepared for any eventuality. One Friday night, one of the regular participants at the Rosh Chodesh gatherings came with her family to the meal. We got to talking and found out that her daughter had served as a soldier during the Expulsion. We were taken aback. It was fascinating to hear how much



Chassidishe farbrengens



she regretted what she did. Our shock over that revelation lasted for days.

I remember a great story that happened in the first months of our shlichus. It was nine in the evening

and I was exhausted. Little Mendel wasn't at all tired - who let him sleep in the afternoon? In short, the house was not at its best.

There was a knock at the door. I opened it and saw, to my surprise,

ten girls. They said they were doing a movie on the Jewish family.

The quiet evening I had dreamt of turned into a lively evening of questions and answers about Family Purity and the woman's position in Judaism. It was actually enjoyable, though we were constantly interrupted by Mendel who, on a regular night, was asleep at this time. ("Ima, Abba goes to the mikva, right? We are pure because we wash our hands?") His comments amused the girls, and when he began to murmur p'sukim when he was almost asleep, they were surprised. "What is he singing?" One girl took out her video camera and began filming.

In the end, I was told that what I had to say was very interesting and they had a good time, but the sight of a Chassidic boy, barely two, singing p'sukim that they hardly knew as an act of penitence for accidentally spilling water on his mother (out of exhaustion) reached them in places that I could not manage to reach.

To conclude, shlichus is really no simple matter. I tried to give you some glimpses of what life on shlichus is like. It's like a dish comprised of all sorts of tastes and textures. Tangy and sweet. Spicy and bland. The main ingredient is lots of giving and emuna in the Rebbe, because without that, you really can't manage.



STARE DEATH IN THE FACE AND PROCLAIM YECHI!

Rachel Kupchick, Shlucha to Poona, India, was celebrating her son's wedding in Israel when the terrorists attacked in Bombay. In the aftermath, she shared these stories of hashgacha pratis, mesirus nefesh and emuna. Translated by Mina Ruth Drurian.

Mrs. Kupchick opened her farbrengen quoting the pasuk, "We pray in the morning, and have emuna at night." Even in the darkest hours of shlichus, there has to be trust.

Her son's wedding date in Eretz Yisroel was rapidly approaching and, and Rachel Kupchick, shlucha in Poona, India, was very much looking forward to greeting her other son, Schneur, and daughter-in-law Sara at the simcha in Israel. Schneur and Sara were shluchim in Delhi, India, a flight of several hours from Poona.

The tickets were arranged and everything seemed perfectly coordinated, until Schneur and Sara wrote to the Rebbe. The answer they received was unclear. They discussed it with their mashpiim and were advised not to leave India to

travel to the wedding. With days to go before the wedding of Schneur's brother, Mrs. Kupchick was baffled. She had wanted to see her son and daughter-in-law so much that she could already taste it. And now, the couple had decided they were not going to come? Why?!

The Rebbe's guidance via the volumes of Igros Kodesh had played an important part in their lives in the past. The shidduch itself was no exception. Soon after the chassan and kalla had met in Tishrei, they told their parents they were going to write the Rebbe for a blessing to wed. But when did they do this? While it was after Yom Tov in Israel but still Simchas Torah in India.

Understandably, not knowing the answer was quite a stress for Mrs. Kupchick. (but, she added, stress

should only be from positive things.) The time for candle lighting came and went, but she still hadn't heard from the couple in Israel. During Yom Tov, an Indian helper came to the Chabad House with a letter written in Hebrew that said Mazal Tov! Mazal Tov!, but Mrs. Kupchick wanted to know for herself what was going on.

She put the letter into a volume of Igros, and opened to an answer in Yiddish: "You're writing in the name of your son about a shidduch that was suggested to him. There is a feeling that the parents of the girl cannot afford to contribute to the wedding with a respectable sum of money... But her middos (character traits) are worthy of your son — and that's the ikar, the important thing. The parnasa will be OK, as well... the bride's parents will probably open a factory."

Mrs. Kupchick had already been accustomed to seeing the actualization of the blessings from the Igros, so she was not surprised to learn that the kalla's parents had been planning on opening a business, which was indeed opened a few weeks later!

Mrs. Kupchick called the kalla's family after the chag to wish them Mazal Tov, and the kalla said she felt a little funny because she wrote in to the Rebbe and got an answer the

keep the matter secret for the time being, so that the news wouldn't be spread in an undignified matter because of the chag and Shabbat!

By the time Mrs. Kupchick learned that her son and daughter-in-law wouldn't be coming to the wedding, she was puzzled, but not downcast because of her trust in the Rebbe and experience with Igros.

The wedding was beautiful and very emotional, especially as Mrs. Kupchick brought a laptop so the brothers could at least be in contact that way during the wedding festivities. What the Kupchick family did not know was that while they were celebrating the wedding that Wednesday evening, her son Schneur in Delhi was getting calls about the events beginning to unfold in Bombay.

On Thursday, when the couple heard the situation was not good, they immediately flew from Delhi to Bombay. They made it in time to greet and make accommodations for the Rosenberg family, parents of the K'doshim, Rivky and Gavriel Holtzberg, HY"D, and members of Zaka who had also flown to Bombay. In this time of unbearable confusion and pain, no one remembered to bring kosher food. Needs such as this were always taken care of by the Beis Chabad. But what Beis Chabad?! Things were chaotic.

Mrs. Kupchick called Yossi, the one person left at the Chabad House in Poona, and gave him instructions to completely empty her freezer there of everything she had stocked. Now in the middle of making Sheva Brachos for her son and his kalla in

In this time of unbearable confusion and pain, no one remembered to bring kosher food. Needs such as this were always taken care of by the Beis Chabad. But what Beis Chabad?!

Eretz Yisroel, Mrs. Kupchick guided Yossi on how to prepare all the necessary food items at the Chabad

Scenes of Chabad in Poona



It was exactly these words, in the Bombay Seifer Torah rolled to Acharei Mos-K'doshim, that were pierced by one of the terrorist's bullets.

House. Yossi managed to pull everything together, but then another problem arose. No taxi was willing to take him and the food to Bombay. Everyone was too fearful to go there.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Kupchick was not able to reach Schneur, who by now had arrived in Bombay, and she was becoming increasingly worried. Finally, Yossi found an Indian family who was willing to take him on the several hour drive from Poona to Bombay. Yehudit Rosenberg, Rivki's mother, later said that they didn't know what they would have done were it not for all that food, that lasted through Shabbos to Sunday.

It was a most powerful Shabbos that was shared by the Kupchicks, Rosenbergs, Zaka members and other Jews who had come there to help. The only way Mrs. Kupchick could convey the power of these

moments was to draw on the words the Rebbe spoke when he had returned from the levaya of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka....

"V'ha'chai yitein el libo — and the living take matters to heart..."

That Shabbos, while many parts of the world were still davening and gathering in prayer for the couple and other hostages inside the Bombay Beis Chabad, the Rosenberg's had already learned the most devastating of news. They went into a room and asked to be alone for an hour. Then HaRav Rosenberg came out of the room and said Yechi, and asked to make a l'chaim!

The Rosenberg family set the example for everyone there by singing niggunim and observing the prohibition against mourning on Shabbos.

"You can't understand the strength of their souls. In our generation it's unbelievable," said Mrs. Kupchick. Then she related the story about a Chassid whose daughter was killed in a car accident. The news had also come in right before Shabbos, but the Chassid did not let his family mourn until the Shabbos had passed. The Chassid was the father of Rivki's father, Rav Shimon Rosenberg, and the woman in the accident was his sister, o.b.m.!

"What can we take from the strength of this family at this hard moment?" asked Mrs. Kupchick. "We have to learn spiritual strength from them. We can ask 'why?' That's what Moshe asked. But it was written that Aaron remained silent

when his two sons were taken...." It was exactly these words, in the Bombay Seifer Torah rolled to Acharei Mos-K'doshim, that were pierced by one of the terrorist's bullets.

"And Aaron was silent," said Mrs. Kupchick. "We have no explanation. We don't understand.

"When Rabbi Akiva's skin was flayed with iron rakes, his students screamed out, 'Why?' But there is a maamer of the Rebbe from Yud Shvat (5711) in which the Rebbe explained that our goal is not the k'dusha of martyrdom like Rabbi Akiva, but rather the self-sacrifice of Avrohom Avinu, who sought to promote the truth at any cost, even the cost of martyrdom, but did not seek martyrdom as a goal in itself."

The shlichus is difficult in India, Mrs. Kupchick concluded, but the mesirus nefesh is no more than of shluchim in any other place of the world. "It's all balanced," she said, "there are some things more difficult, and some things easier....

"But if you need the mesirus nefesh of Avrohom Avinu, look at Rivkie. She was very young, and to not even once be able to sit at the dinner table alone with her husband was mesirus nefesh. They went to do their shlichus like Avrohom Avinu. The mesirus nefesh is there, but they didn't look for it."

At this point, Mrs. Kupchick concluded by again quoting the pasuk, "We pray in the morning, and have emuna at night." Even in the darkest hours of shlichus, there has to be trust.

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THE TANYA FOR EVERY SINGLE JEW

By Menachem Ziegelboim

The Mekubal Rabbi Yoram Abergil of Netivot is one of the greatest disseminators of Chassidus in Eretz Yisroel. The subject of his first book is Igeres HaT'shuva of Tanya. In honor of Yud-Tes Kislev we interviewed him about his ties to the Rebbe, his teaching of Chassidus to thousands of people, and about the special kochos we have as Chabad Chassidim.

I interviewed Rabbi Yoram Abergil at the Kollel Rav Pe'alim in Netivot. In my conversation with him, he came across as a folksy type. He spoke from the heart using simple words. He wore a short jacket, and his appearance was like that of thousands of others. It was hard to tell that this is a man who started a network of over thirty Kollelim across the country, beautiful mosdos chinuch, and that many people seek his advice and blessing.

The official reason for the interview was the publishing of his first book, *B'Tzur Yarum*, which contains explanations and talks on Igeres HaT'shuva in Tanya. "The word 'b'tzur' has the letters of 'tzibbur,' and the purpose of my

book is to uplift the tzibbur through the explanations on Igeres HaT'shuva of the Rav of Liadi."

I find it fascinating that Rabbi Abergil's first book is on Tanya in light of the fact that he doesn't even consider himself a Lubavitcher!

Few know about R' Abergil's love of Tanya. Even fewer know that he is one of the great disseminators of Chassidus in our times. The 1900 members of his Kollelim begin their day with a lengthy Tanya shiur. Rabbi Abergil personally reads, explains, and most importantly, makes the Tanya practical, reaching hearts and souls. His goal is to bring the Tanya to the people.

Even though most of the men in his Kollelim are graduates of Litvishe yeshivos, they start their day

with Tanya. R' Abergil's shiurim are powerful, and he says that many of the men continue learning Tanya even after they leave Kollel.

"After dozens of years of giving Tanya shiurim to the public, I saw that it was worth getting it down in writing. As the Baal HaTanya says, things in writing are eternalized in a man's heart. Each time a person forgets an idea, he can review it in the book. I also made a CD of shiurim, which is good to use when driving; it purifies the air, along the lines of the Chassidic directive to review Tanya while walking in the street for this purpose.

Why did you start with Igeres HaT'shuva?

"I chose Igeres HaT'shuva as an alternative to the many complicated and harsh Musar s'farim that tend to turn people off more than bring them close. Chazal say, "The left repels while the right draws near." Today, though, we need to be mekarev with both hands. The words of advice of the Baal HaTanya are straight and gentle, and were written by his holy hand. This is the proper way to be mekarev Jews to t'shuva. Every Jew must be drawn close, like a child born to parents in their old age.

"The power of the Baal HaTanya is that he reaches every Jew, as he writes in his introduction, "from big to small," without differentiating. This book teaches us what Ahavas Yisroel is and to know that there is

no giving up. Every Jew must adhere to this book, to every word and letter.”

R' Abergil's daily schedule, according to those close to him, begins at 3:45am. He immerses in the mikva and learns before davening. After davening, he gives an hour long shiur in Tanya to the 300 men in his Kollel. Then he receives people in the beis midrash.

Around ten o'clock he starts his demanding study schedule of Shas and Poskim, as well as Halacha in depth. During the day he also devotes some time to learning Chassidus, as is evidenced by the numerous Chassidic works that surround him. After the conclusion of the yeshiva's learning schedule at six, R' Abergil gives shiurim around the country, in a different city each evening.

It's close to midnight by the time he heads back to Netivot, but he does not arrive until two o'clock. Along the way, he stops in various places to visit sick people in the hospital and various unfortunates who look forward to seeing him.

"Sometimes he sleeps in his car until 3:45, when he is woken up," said one of his mekuravim. "Except on Shabbos, he doesn't see his bed all week."

R' Abergil, who has more than thirty years of hafatza behind him, also runs many mosdos. In addition to the more than 30 Kollelim around the country (Beer Sheva, Yerucham, Karmiel, Ashdod, Bat-Yam, Kiryat Sefer, Beitar Ilit, Ramat HaSharon, Ofakim, etc.), he also runs two elementary schools with about 600 boys plus a school for girls with hundreds more. After listening to the problems of those going through hard times, he started a fund which distributes food to about 500 needy families every week.

R' Abergil is especially fond of the settlements in Yesha. He often visited the settlers in Gush Katif and

encouraged them in their difficult situation until the expulsion. He supports the widows and orphans of Yesha.

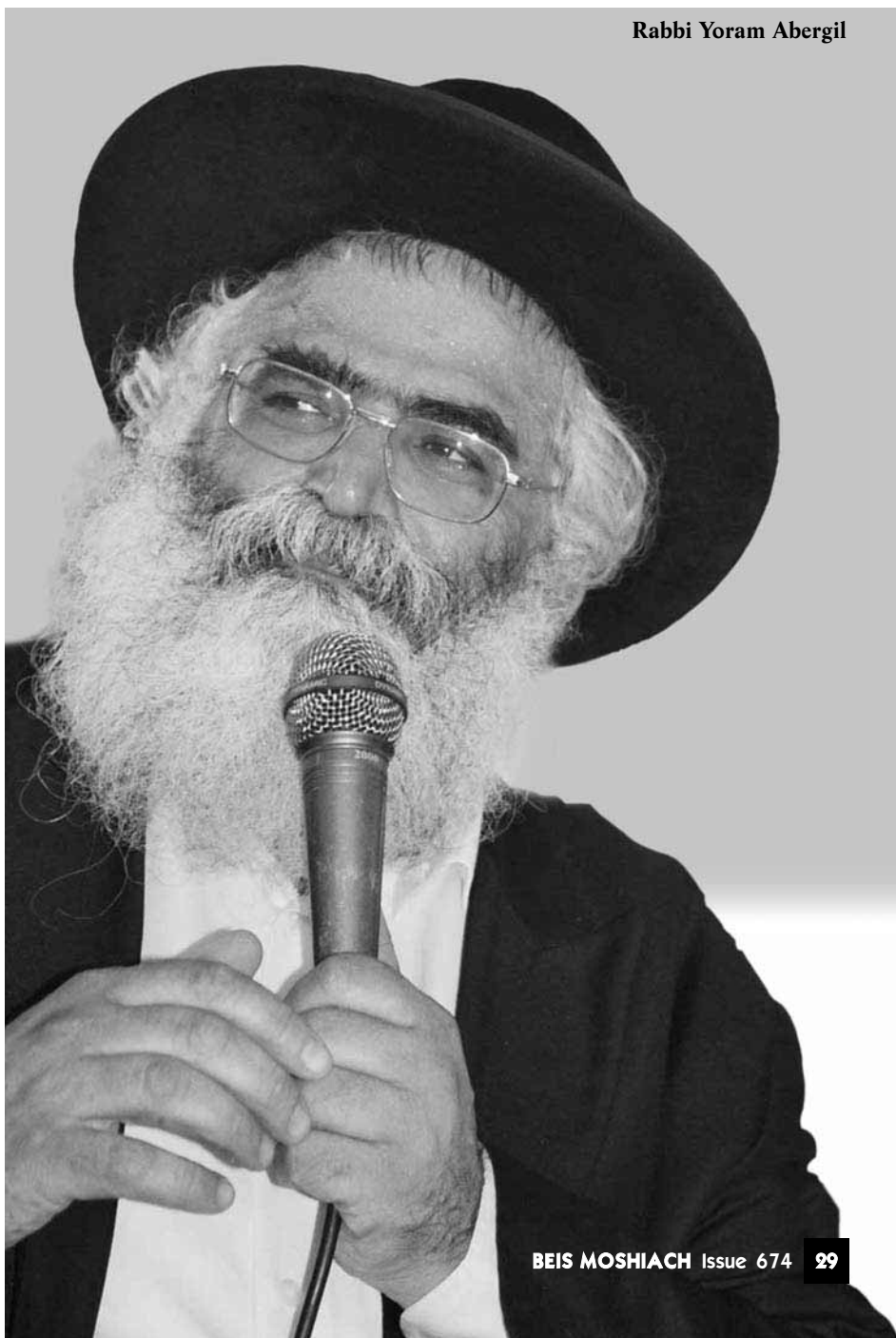
On the day of my interview, I found R' Abergil sitting in his place in the Kollel, with the voices of 300 men thundering behind him. To his right is a bookcase with plenty of sifrei Chassidus including *Likkutei Torah*, *D'var Malchus*, and *Nezer HaTanya*. On his desk is a Tanya with a faded blue cover and yellowed

pages. It is obviously old.

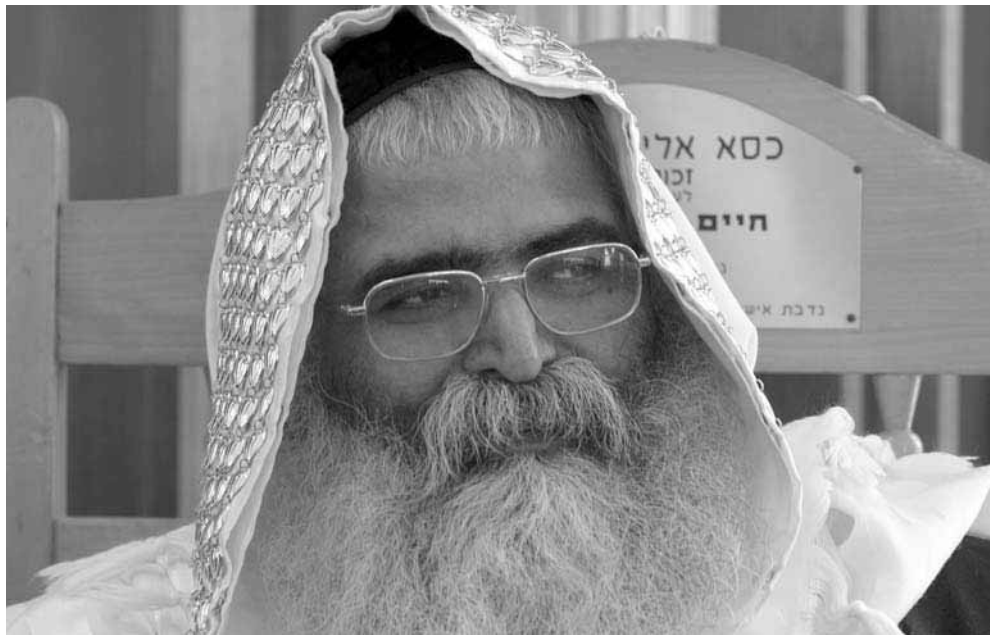
When I asked R' Abergil when he first encountered Tanya, he took the Tanya from his desk and caressed it. "I learned Tanya for the first time from this volume, and it is very precious to me. It was back in 1970."

R' Abergil was a young student in the Chabad school in Brosh. It was the local Chabad school, under the Reshet Oholei Yosef Yitzchok. His teacher was the mashpia, Rabbi

Rabbi Yoram Abergil



Rabbi Abergil personally reads, explains, and most importantly, makes the Tanya practical, reaching hearts and souls. His goal is to bring the Tanya to the people.



Yeshavam Segal.

“He is a Torah scholar whose fear of Heaven precedes his wisdom. He is a baal Ahavas Yisroel and extremely knowledgeable; his every word counts. “In Pirkei Avos it often introduces someone’s teaching with the expression ‘hu haya omer’ (‘he would say’). The Chafetz Chaim explained ‘he would say’ as ‘nobody else could say it like him.’ That was Rav Segal. I was a boy at the time and I heard years of shiurim from him. I especially remember learning ‘and you shall know today and impress upon your heart,’ from Tanya.

“When I finished my studies there, my parents wanted me to continue in a Litvishe yeshiva. In deference to their wishes, I went to the Litvishe yeshiva, Beis Aharon, a branch of Chevron yeshiva. Then I learned in Yeshivas HaNegev with Rabbi Yisachar Meir. Even in the Litvishe yeshivos I learned Tanya every day. In another year, it will be forty years that I’ve been learning Tanya.

Every group learns their own s’farim. In Litvishe yeshivos they learn various Musar s’farim, in Chassidishe yeshivos they learn the

Chassidishe s’farim that pertain to their Chassidus. What you have accomplished is that many men, almost none of whom are from Lubavitcher homes, dedicate time every day to learning Tanya.

“I knew that even someone unacquainted with Tanya could learn it, and that is what we do here. Most of the men here come from Litvishe yeshivos, and they learn Tanya enthusiastically.

“I acquaint them with Tanya. I know that many people find it hard, so I have made it accessible. When people who are committed to their own approach learn Tanya, they discover that their previous position wasn’t correct. Still, they accept this with love and simcha.”

R’ Abergil corresponded with the Rebbe, a connection which began through his father, Rabbi Chania Abergil. His father met Chabad mashpiim in Morocco, when he lived in Marrakesh.

“My father visited the Rebbe twice. The first time was in 1959, when he stayed three weeks, and the second time was in 1982, when he stayed for six weeks. He flew solely to have yechidus with the Rebbe.

“When I heard that he was

going, I wrote the Rebbe a letter and sent it with him. At that time, I was a maggid shiur in yeshiva and I wrote that this job took up my entire day. I asked the Rebbe whether to focus on high school and teaching talmidim there, or to go out and give shiurim to the public.

“The Rebbe told my father, ‘So that he has length of days over his kingdom, he and his children among all Israel,’ hinting to him that my work is ‘among all Israel.’ That year I began spreading the wellsprings.”

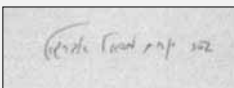
It started with shiurim in Gemara in various places. He would always begin or end with a bit of Chassidus, “One time Tanya, another time Basi L’Gani, anything connected with the Rebbe, Nasi Doreinu.”

His circle of listeners grew. He speaks in a straightforward manner and employs parables and divrei Torah that appeal to one and all. Over the years, his influence has grown. Today he runs a network of Kollelim from Karmiel to Dimona, in which 1100 men learn at full stipend, with another 800 receiving various degrees of support. In these Kollelim the men study Nigleh, Halacha b’iyun, and Chassidus.

When R’ Abergil talks about the

PSAK DIN – THE REBBE MELECH HA'MOSHIACH

On one of Rabbi Yoram Abergil's visits to New York, he visited 770. During his visit, he joined the hundreds of rabbanim who signed the P'sak Din that the Rebbe is the Prophet of our generation, he is Melech HaMoshiach, and he should immediately redeem us.



Examining the
P'sak Din.

Rebbe, he seems in awe. “The Rebbe loves every Jew like the pupil of his eye. Each day he was moser nefesh for Jews! In his sichos, the mitzvaim he initiated, his devotion to Eretz Yisroel – in his very existence. And everything he said came to pass, one by one. Only a blind person would fail to see his greatness and not understand that the Rebbe stands at our head as the gaon of the generation.

“When Yosef was tested, it says that he saw the image of his father and fled from the house. The question is: Yosef ought to have acted out of fear of Hashem. Why did he flee only when he saw an

image of his father, especially when he himself had said, “How can I do this evil thing and I will sin to G-d?” He himself says that he fears G-d!

“From this we learn that when a person is being tested, even if he is aware of Hashem, he needs mercy. The only one who can save him is his Rebbe. When a person is connected to the teachings of his Rebbe, it stands by him in every circumstance. The Rebbe is mekushar to the Chassidim and is with them wherever they need him.”

Have you personally seen yeshuos?

“Many times. Each time I needed a yeshua – opening yeshivos,

keeping up with budgets – everything in the name of the Rebbe. When you need the Rebbe, he comes and helps. How does he come? In his own way.”

When I contacted R' Abergil for an interview, he was very busy. Yet I really wanted to speak to him before Yud-Tes Kislev. When he heard this reason, his face lit up and he immediately cleared his day for me.

We are about to celebrate Yud-Tes Kislev. What does this mean to us?

“The Chag Ha'Geula is a Yom Tov for all who believe in the Giver of the Torah. We have to know that Hashem took us from servitude to freedom, from sorrow to joy, from mourning to Yom Tov. He illuminated the world with Chassidus. The teachings of the Baal HaTanya make the heart rejoice, illuminate the eyes, and save from the judgment of Gehinom.

“This Yom Tov pertains to every Jew. Whoever does not know and believe in this day has not yet learned to differentiate between light and darkness, between good and bad.

“A person can learn Shas and Poskim and still not know the Giver



Dancing in 770

of the Torah. The reason is since he is lowly and a *yesh* (arrogant). The Baal HaTanya transforms the *yesh* into *ayin* and the lowliness into greatness.”

The Baal Shem Tov was told that Moshiach will come when his teachings spread forth. The Rebbe spoke strongly about Geula. Where are we holding today, as far as Geula is concerned?

“The prophet Yeshaya says, “Behold, the darkness will cover the land and a deep darkness over the nations, and Hashem will shine upon you and His glory appear upon you.” Someone who did not taste some of the light beforehand, will not enjoy the light at the time of revelation.

“Therefore, spreading the teachings of Chassidus in our times is important in order to illuminate every home. It’s like those who taste from the Shabbos food before Shabbos - so too we learn Chassidus, getting a taste of the world to come.

“What is miraculous in our times is that everybody recognizes Hashem, everyone, something we never had before. In this generation, **every Jew** recognizes Hashem. You can check this out from Eilat to Maalot. Most Jews say, “G-d willing,” even those who are very far from Judaism.”

Yet this generation is called “the heels of Moshiach” because we are the lowest.

“The heel has a great advantage since it supports the entire body.

“The avoda of Chassidus is to illuminate every corner. A Chassid is a lamplighter. If there is no lamppost then he has to go find a lamppost and then turn it on. Chassidim can’t avoid the work. The ones who will bring Moshiach are the Chassidim. They recognize the truth and are the pioneers who influence the people to get out of the darkness.

“Many go out, but there are still those who sit and wait for Geula



Rabbi Abergil being interviewed for *Beis Moshiach*

without doing anything. We must go out en masse and be mekarev people. If you have a good voice, use your voice; if you have money, use your money; if you are influential, use your power of influence. It will hasten the Geula. When it comes to mitzvos, there’s no comparison between the power of a few and the power of many.

“The number of Chassidim grows from day to day, and every Chassid must be mekarev people. It’s the call of the hour. We cannot delay, because those who did not accomplish will be in the category of “he who did not work Erev Shabbos, what will he eat on Shabbos?” He who is not a Chassid, what can he do... But someone who is already a Chassid, who got a taste of Chassidus and knows how important spreading the wellsprings is, must go out to the people.”

Do you have a message for Chabad Chassidim?

“Every Lubavitcher must know

and remember three main things. First, he has an eternally living father. Second, a Chassid cannot be idle. You have to work day and night, following the Rebbe’s instructions. If you work hard on the Rebbe’s projects, know that the Rebbe watches you and your children, for length of days, materially and spiritually, because this is the purpose of creation; He wants a dwelling down below through the spreading of the wellsprings.

“Third, increase Ahavas Yisroel as much as possible. G-d forbid there should be any fighting among Chassidim or others. The pillar of peace is greater than everything. If there is achdus, there is blessing.

“The Rebbe is a man of peace, a man of unity, of Ahavas Hashem and Ahavas Yisroel. You need to do everything possible to give him nachas. This is how we will bring everlasting salvation with the Geula.”

SACRIFICES FOR PEACE

By Rabbi Sholom Dovber Wolpo

Our brothers' blood cries out to us. All the mitzvaim are of vital importance but is there anything that can take precedence over ensuring that no more Jewish blood is spilled?!

On that sad Erev Shabbos Parshas Toldos we learned in the parsha, "Why should I be bereaved." Rashi explains, "I will be bereft of both of you. We learn from this that someone who buries his children is called *shakul* – bereaved, and she [Rivka Imeinu] prophesied that both of them [Yaakov and Eisav] would die on the same day."

Before that, Rashi says on the words, "And may Elokim give you..." – "Elokim is the G-d of judgment... a Jew, who has faith and justifies the judgment, does not have complaints against You."

The families of those who were murdered, and the larger Chabad family, need a lot of emuna in order to justify this enormous loss. It says in Chassidus that there is a kind of tzara, tremendous concealment, which elicits the cry from the heart, "Why Hashem do You stand at a distance." But it is specifically such a situation that leads to the opposite, "Behold, I will save you from a distance."

We cry out to Hashem, "Why do

You stand at a distance," and we are confident that the holy blood of our Rebbe's shluchim will rise up to the Throne of Glory to bring the Geula. "Whoever touches them [the shluchim, may Hashem avenge their blood] is like touching the pupil of His eye."

Many people are wondering what we can do, what we can correct. The Rebbe answered these questions.

The Rebbe warned that talking about giving away parts of our Holy Land to our enemies causes bloodshed not only in Eretz Yisroel but outside of it too.

When the Rebbe spoke to Rabbi Elimelech Naiman, who came with a delegation regarding joining the Peres government, in Nissan 5750, warned that talking about territorial concessions has led to "the Arabs in every area continued their activities and hurt a number of our fellow Jews to the extent of murder, and not only in Eretz Yisroel but in other countries too. Who knows whether during these talks (we don't want to open our mouths to Satan but) at

this moment, if something hasn't happened to a Jew, may it not happen, for their arms are still outstretched."

If talks can lead to that, then all the more so actions such as the expulsion from Gush Katif, the destruction of Amona and other outposts, the plans to uproot all the settlements of Yehuda, Shomron, and the Golan Heights, and the division of Yerushalayim!

On the other hand, just as talking about giving away land to our enemies endangers lives, talk *against* giving away land and a strong protest against the government and those who support these dangerous actions, certainly diminishes and eliminates any danger to life.

Unfortunately, many shluchim consider the problem of shleimus ha'Aretz to be that of certain individuals in Eretz Yisroel, while they focus on outreach. Consequently, thousands of shluchim in the United States and Europe, each of whom has connections with senators, members of Congress, and influential people, did not use these connections to ensure that America and Europe not pressure Israel to make concessions to our enemies. This is derived from the mistaken idea that this is a problem that pertains to Israel and those who live there.

Even shluchim in Israel maintain that their goal is to spread the wellsprings. They don't mix in to these issues of danger to life because doing so can ruin certain relationships they have or because they don't want to be considered involved in anything political. This sorry attitude was so pervasive that when the expulsion from Gush Katif took place three and a half years ago, there was almost complete silence on the part of the shluchim.

It is very difficult to give Musar at this time, while this recent horrific tragedy is fresh in our minds, and I

know that some people will immediately attack me. Perhaps, to some extent, they are right since we need to follow Aharon's example, "and Aharon was silent." But on several occasions we heard the Rebbe repeat the Rambam's warning in Hilchos Taanis, that someone who says, regarding tzaros, "it happens," will experience additional tzaros. We therefore have no choice but to cry out to our thousands of shluchim:

You see that this isn't a local issue, but a terrible danger for Jews wherever they are, and especially to the "soldiers of the house of Dovid" who are on the front lines of the war for the revelation of Moshiach. Therefore, acknowledge that this is **everyone's problem**, no matter where we are!

We must start an uncompromising war in which the thousands of shluchim around the world participate, each one exerting his influence on those people who set policy or have an influence on those who set policy in Eretz Yisroel

and abroad. The message must be: **do not speak to Arabs about giving up even an inch of Israel.**

Our brothers' blood cries out to us. Setting up Jewish libraries, arranging new shiurim, encouraging women to light Shabbos candles and learning Mishnayos in their memories are all important, but **even more important is ensuring that more blood is not spilled!** And let us not forget the stories we constantly read about shluchim and T'mimim being brutally attacked in Germany, Ukraine etc.

Melech HaMoshiach fights the wars of Hashem with the "soldiers of the house of Dovid." Let us all join this war, which is waged on every continent. Every shliach should send an official letter of protest a week to the President, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, governor, senators, congressman etc. of his country or state, and to the Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Foreign Minister in Eretz Yisroel. The letters should

state our opposition to discussing the establishment of a Palestinian state, the freeing of terrorists, and the opening of the country before our enemies which endangers Jews everywhere. All possible connections should be used for this holy purpose *which affects every shliach personally.*

Just as shluchim are presently busy with the natural protective measures to secure their Chabad houses, so too and even more so should offices be opened to coordinate activities for shleimus ha'Aretz which are actually activities for the protection and security of all the shluchim, wherever they live.

May we soon be able to announce victory in the war against Amalek. That is the only way we will know we have made amends for the loss of the precious shluchim and the others who were murdered, who became the most recent "sacrifices for peace."



'THEY GAVE EVERYTHING THEY HAD'

Reflections from Shlomo Schwer, 45, born in France but living in Eretz Yisroel the past 30 years. During the past four years that business trips had brought him to India, he became very close with Rabbi Gavriel and Rebbetzin Rivki.

R. Shlomo shared some indelible memories Thursday with the Holtzberg and Rosenberg families during a Shiva call in Afula, and later shared some of his unforgettable experiences with Beis Moshiach:

The Rabbi had a smile you could never say No to, even though he would never ask you for anything... They once asked me to bring matza, but even that was not for them; it was for the community. Whenever I received an e-mail from them or phone call it was to ask how I was and what was happening with me.

When they installed the internet system, they wanted it wireless, so that anyone could use their own computer. Once, I heard a conversation between the computer technician and the Rav.

When the tech explained that it was important to install a password so that the computer system could be protected from outsiders, the Rav asked, "What if I'm not here?" The technician told him that he could put the password on a piece of paper on the computer, and the Rav asked, "And what if it falls on the floor and they can't find it?" He was so concerned that every last person should be able to use the computer when needed, that he decided not to have the protective password installed.

Rav Gaby welcomed everyone, Jews as well as Gentiles, especially on Passover and the chagim, when guests would come with a non-Jewish spouse or friend. He would welcome everybody with a huge smile.

My very first time I came to the Chabad House in Bombay four years ago, I called to ask if I could come and how much he charged. He said just come. I asked again, and he answered, just come, we'll talk about it Motzaei Shabbos. After Shabbos I asked again, and he explained that they don't ask for pay, but if he wanted to make a donation it was up to me.

The moment you crossed the gate, you felt at home, that you were coming home because you had a home there. They were one of a kind.

As the tragic news broke, my friend from Bombay tried to update me and at 2 in the afternoon he called to tell me the Rabbi and his wife were safe. You don't know India, how things can be such a mess and there was a lot of misinformation. This friend, who isn't Jewish, met the Rabbi twice and he has been so much impressed by these people. He thanks G-d for the privilege to have know them.

Shabbos evenings were very sweet over there, they would go from one guest to another. The Rebbetzin usually made her challot Friday morning, but one time a guest had to travel and so that Thursday night, she made special challot and loaded the guest with wine, chocolates, and many Shabbos delicacies.

I talked with Rivka many times. They had almost no permanent friends there, everyone always came and went. It must have been so hard. We can't even imagine. And the building is in one of the worst slums in Bombay.

On Friday nights, the Rabbi and his guests went to the Blue synagogue to daven in order to support the minyan there. It

was about a 20-minute walk. On the way back from shul, the Rabbi would just disappear, and five, ten minutes later he would appear with guests, and no one knew where he had picked them up!

The Rabbi provided all the other areas of India with kosher meat. At first, he was shechting on an island about three miles from Bombay. Every Sunday he would go there and send the chickens over. Later he found a place for that in Bombay.

You can go on and on but the main thing is giving, that's all he was about, a life of devotion to others, from a simple smile — they gave everything they had...

Since Friday afternoon I haven't stopped crying, hoping I'm going to wake up from the nightmare. I can't imagine life without Rabbi Holtzberg.

Right now, it would be very difficult for me to think of going back to India. Currently I don't have a project there. But there was one thing he talked about with me for several months. He wanted to keep a date base for people looking for businesses and contacts. I am planning to work on that.

I'm closer to G-d then ever...for the first time in my life I'm trying to understand what G-d wants from me...

***You can go on
and on but the
main thing is
giving. That's all
he was about, a
life of devotion to
others, from a
simple smile —
they gave
everything they
had...***



AT THE LEVAYA OF THE K'DOSHEIM:

"Moishele, Moishele. You have no mother. You have no father. You will never have a mother to say Shma with you. You will never know your mother to hold you. But you are the child of all of Chabad...the child of Am Yisroel! We will raise you as our own. You will grow to be the finest!"

How many times during the levaya in Kfar Chabad Tuesday of Rabbi Gavriel and Rivky Holtzberg, did these words come in shries and cries from the depths of the family members and rabbanim? They shook everyone to the core. How can anyone even grasp the pain and the nightmare that this family went through? The torture and the deaths of those so dear to Hashem, to the Rebbe, to Am Yisroel, to every soul they ever came in contact with in their short lives?

ABBA, ABBA!? ... IMA?! EIFO IMA?!

"We (all of Chabad) are like little Moishele," said one speaker. "We are crying, Rebbe! Rebbe! Eifoh Ata! Hashem, Hashem, AD MASAI?! AD MASAI?! AD MASAI?!"

"But this was Kislev?! Chag HaGeula! Chag shel Chanuka! Yes, two-year-old Moishele — ushered, in his blood-soaked pants, out of the house of terror by his Indian nanny, who didn't take her own life into account by her heroic deed, is the Chanuka miracle, the little cruse of oil that will light the entire world... The Moshe that was rescued from death in the Nile that Paro would have wished upon him."

Gavriel's father asked if there was something, a little something the couple had left behind in the Chabad House, something personal, maybe a picture, a memento... They asked the nanny, "Is there anything special that belonged to Rivkie and Gaby? The nanny

couldn't give them an answer. Perplexed, she answered the family members; "They had no private possessions. There was nothing that was theirs. Whatever they had was shared with the community. They themselves had nothing...nothing."

Memories from those who visited the Chabad House of Bombay have been pouring in from all corners of the world. It was announced by leaders of the Chabad shluchim's office that a family has already donated money to rebuild the Chabad House in Bombay. Before the burning embers even died out, this was decided, and this was established. And the family would personally see to it that this very Chanuka, the lights would be kindled in Bombay! And that Moishe'le would grow to continue his parent's service.

Ten terrorists wreaked havoc and death, turning an entire world upside down. Ten terrorists! We know from the number 10 — this minyan of evil...So how much power will it have if hundreds, thousands, infused light into the world... We will not win with Ak47s rifles and grenades... We will win by spreading the light of Torah and mitzvot...by complete unity and achdus starting within Chabad and emanating outwards — with never again the slightest scent of machlokes.

Pledges of tz'deka and the acceptance of Torah and mitzvot, even a small but additional undertaking, have already reverberated around the world. This IS the final push into the Geula. Why should Moishele wait until he grows older to see his parents again? Why should we grow older before we see the Rebbe?

Moishele, Moishele — you taught us not to be consoled...not even by a candy or a toy basketball...

ABBA! ABBA! ABBBA! ABBBBBA! EIFOH ATAH! EIFOH! ABBBBBBBBBA. IMMMMAAAAAAAAAA!

These are the battle cries that will lead us into Geula.



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CAMERA SHY

By Nosson Avrohom

Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry

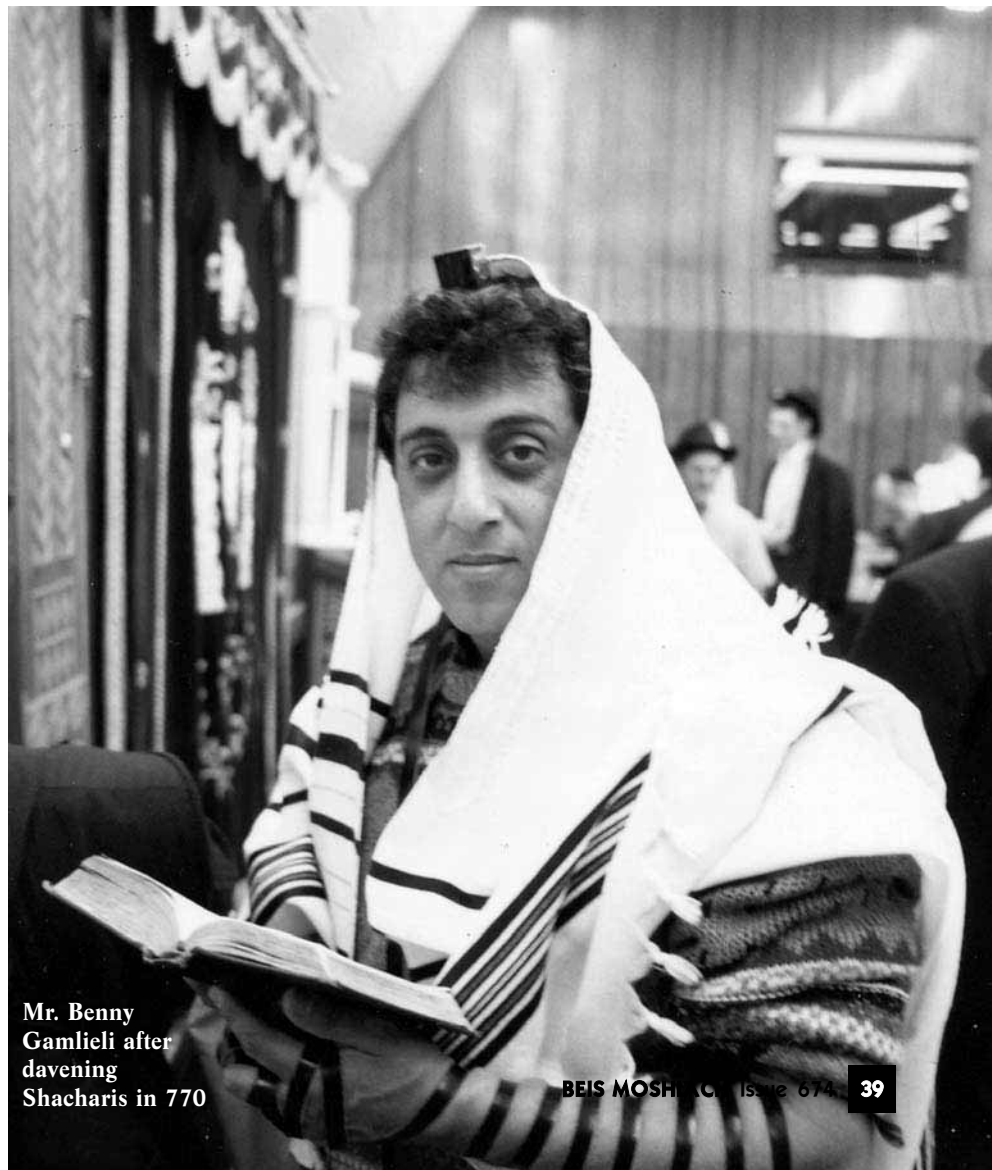
The camera had suddenly – without warning – stopped working just at the moment that I needed it the most. How could I return to Eilat without any photos of the Rebbe? I shuddered at the very thought.

A little less than two years ago, the Photo Booth store of Eilat photographer **Binyamin Gamlieli** closed its doors for the last time. There's no one in Eilat who isn't familiar with this store, especially with its owner, the smiling and beloved figure of Benny Gamlieli. It's no wonder that the local weekly newspaper dedicated its front page picture and story to the store closing. In a wide-ranging interview with the paper, Gamlieli told about his public activities, focusing upon the store and his extensive professional work.

When the reporter asked, "When did you take the most meaningful photograph in your life?" Mr. Gamlieli replied: "Three pictures moved me deeply: The first was during Menachem Begin's historic visit to Eilat. The entire city was excited by the honor, and I photographed him on behalf of the City of Eilat. The second was during the Israel-Jordan treaty signing at the Eilat-Aqaba border with King Hussein, Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin, and President Bill Clinton. This picture was also taken

for the City of Eilat. The third picture was the most thrilling one in my life – when I traveled with Rabbi Shimon Eisenbach to the Lubavitcher Rebbe and photographed him in the beis midrash among thousands of chassidim."

I met Benny Gamlieli last week in Eilat. He has changed his profession from photographer to tour guide for local tourists, working in his free time on his doctorate thesis on the subject of Yemenite Jewry. His friendship with Rabbi Shimon Eisenbach, one of the Rebbe's shlichim in Eilat and the rav of the city's Shachmon neighborhood, has continued and strengthened, becoming extremely close over the years. They learn



Mr. Benny Gamlieli after davening Shacharis in 770

together b'chavrusa every week. Benny returned to Eretz Yisroel from his visit to the Rebbe with twenty stunning and exclusive pictures. The best of them adorn the walls of numerous homes in Eilat and the surrounding area, and not just of Chabad chassidim and their supporters.

A HEARTSTOPPING MOMENT AND A CAMERA THAT WOULDN'T WORK

"Rabbi Eisenbach would visit my photo shop in order to put t'fillin on with me and to talk about different subjects in Judaism. At every opportunity, he would mention the Lubavitcher Rebbe and tell me that I must join him for a trip to 770, adding a variety of special stories and descriptions of the greatness of the Rebbe. Through my work I had heard a lot about the Rebbe and his unique spiritual strengths, even from people who are not considered Chabad chassidim, and one day I decided to accept his invitation. Shortly before Chaf-Beis Shvat, 5751, when Rabbi Eisenbach came to me and tried to convince me to come with him, I happily agreed.

"I was most curious to meet once and for all the Rebbe I had heard so much about. At the time, I was at the height of my photography career, and I decided that if I'm already taking a break from my work and traveling to the Rebbe, I should at least take my camera, which I never go anywhere without, so that I can return home with a few pictures of the Rebbe. This way, I could also write an article in the local magazine about my visit. I thought that if I would write an unabashedly enthusiastic article, it would surely have an influence. In fact, people would view my article as being more objective than an article written by Rabbi Eisenbach or the city's chief rabbi, Rabbi Hecht, as many of the

readers would suspect them of biased journalism.

"With every passing day bringing me closer to my trip to the Rebbe, the level of excitement in my heart grew. I was extremely interested to find out what I was to encounter.

"I arrived in the Rebbe's neighborhood – Crown Heights – before Maariv on a Thursday evening. How surprised I was to meet Rabbi Yair Hadaya, the son of our city's Sephardic rabbi, there.

"This was not my first visit to the United States. I had previously stayed in New York on a mission for



Rabbi Shimon Eisenbach

the Jewish Agency. But when I arrived at 770, and I saw the throngs of chassidim and others from all walks of Jewish life, I asked myself: How is it that I didn't visit 770 before?

"The next day, Friday, I prepared to go with Rabbi Eisenbach and Rabbi Yair Hadaya to the Rebbe's house on President Street for Shacharis. Before we went over there, I requested that we take a group picture in front of 770. I

thought this would be a very appropriate photograph for the article that I would write upon my return to Eilat – a picture showing the son of the city's Sephardic rabbi, one of the local Chabad House shluchim, and myself. After we took the picture, we rushed into the Rebbe's house to daven.

"Not everyone could get into the house due to the limited space; only guests and other important individuals were allowed in. Since we were guests, we were privileged to enter. When I saw the Rebbe coming down the stairs from the house's upper floor towards the living room area for Shacharis, my heart almost stopped.

"This was a moment that I will never forget. Everything was crowded, with the chassidim standing very close together. But when the Rebbe came in, total silence reigned in the house. The Rebbe's beard, his eyes, his holy countenance left me stunned for several seconds. The Rebbe continued walking toward his place with quick steps, quite uncharacteristic for a man of such an advanced age. As I was marveling that I was so privileged to be here, I noticed that the Rebbe was looking at me. I could see the Rebbe's piercing eyes and his serious expression.

"This entire episode lasted several seconds. I quickly recovered, reminding myself that I am also here essentially to do an article, and I need good pictures for the magazine – and lots of them. Who knows when I would have another opportunity to snap a picture of the Rebbe in all his glory? I placed my emotions on the side, took out my camera, and began pressing the button. I tried again and again, but though the button was pressed, the camera wouldn't work...

"The Rebbe was coming closer. It was all a matter of a few seconds

until he would pass and I'd be left without a picture of him. I had no chance. I asked if I could get a little closer to the Rebbe's place in order to take his picture there, but it was too difficult to pass through the wall of humanity.

"I was confused. I had taken several pictures just five minutes earlier, including the one at the entrance to the Rebbe's house. I had been a photographer for thirty years, and nothing like this had ever happened to me before. I was in indescribable shock. The Rebbe had already passed by me, Shacharis had already begun, and I stood looking at the camera to try and figure out what had happened to it. I hadn't the slightest idea.

SHABBOS IN 770

"It's not so nice to say this, but the davening interested me less at that moment. I was concentrating on the fact that the camera had suddenly – without warning – stopped working just at the moment that I needed it the most. How could I return to Eilat without any photos of the Rebbe? I shuddered at the very thought. All of my friends and professional colleagues, not to mention the entire city, had heard that I'm traveling with Rabbi Eisenbach to the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

What would I do now?

"My mood was a bit down. We spent that Friday with our hosts, the family of Rabbi Dan Yoel Levy, relatives of Rabbi Eisenbach. I was constantly checking the camera, but I couldn't seem to understand why it wouldn't take any pictures.

"On Shabbos afternoon, after the davening in the central beis midrash of 770 had concluded, I turned to Rabbi Eisenbach and asked him why we weren't returning to our host's home to eat the Shabbos meal. My stomach was growling, and I was exhausted from the crowding and jostling. Rabbi Eisenbach explained to me that the Rebbe would soon be conducting a farbrengen, and it would be a pity to miss it. He assured me that it would be a short farbrengen that wouldn't take long.

"In the meantime, the respected elder chassidim took their places behind the Rebbe's chair, while we stood to the side. The hall was filled from wall to wall. The Rebbe majestically entered, took his seat, and began to speak. I was miserable because I didn't understand a single word of Yiddish and couldn't follow what was going on. The situation was very peculiar – on the one hand, I was deeply moved by the Rebbe's appearance. On the other hand, however, I was very hungry and tired, and still agitated by the fact

that I would be leaving the Rebbe without any pictures.

"The Rebbe spoke for about twenty minutes, everyone sang a niggun, and then the Rebbe spoke for another half an hour. The Rebbe said '*Lchaim*,' looking in a certain direction, and everyone responded '*Lchaim*.' He delivered another sicha, said a '*Lchaim*,' and turned to look in another direction. I was rapidly losing my patience while Rabbi Eisenbach remained totally riveted.

"Rabbi Eisenbach, I want to get out of here already,' I whispered to him repeatedly, and for two hours, he whispered back to me, 'Here, it's about to finish.' I personally thought that the only way to leave the place where I was standing would be by helicopter. My emotional and physical strengths had long been depleted. What was breathing life into me was the smell of the cholent hitting my nose as we finally made our way outside. To my great disappointment, I quickly found out that not a morsel of it was left. I was totally despondent.

THE CAMERA GOT EMBARRASSED

"We made our way back to our host family, the Levys. I told Rabbi Eisenbach that the next day, Sunday, I would travel to visit some close acquaintances and I would see him next on Wednesday, the day of our return flight.

"Rabbi Eisenbach asked that I come for Shacharis on Sunday morning, and afterwards, the Rebbe would distribute dollars as a blessing for success. My eldest son, Omer, had been ill around this time and I decided that I would pass by the



Left to right: Rabbi Yair Hadaya, Rabbi Shimon Eisenbach, and Mr. Benny Gamlieli near the stairs to the entrance of the Rebbe's house on President Street



Just as the Rebbe gazed at me, the camera began to take pictures...

Rebbe and then go to Manhattan. As a matter of instinct, I took my camera with me, in spite of the fact that it wasn't working in any case, and went into 770 to daven. I got a place close to the Aron Kodesh, not far from the platform where the Rebbe stood. I soon heard the sound of hand clapping and everyone singing. A minute later, the Rebbe arrived, walking in brisk and measured steps, and took his place – the sign for the start of davening. I stood and looked for several long moments at the Rebbe's radiant image. I was spellbound.

Without thinking, I took my camera out of its case and set it. Towards the end of davening, when the chazzan recited the Birkas

Kohanim during the repetition of the Amida, the Rebbe stood still, facing the congregation, his hands placed on the shtender like an angel. I started clicking the shutter on my camera. Just as the Rebbe gazed at me, the camera began to take pictures, one after another. I was beside myself with joy. I couldn't believe that the camera had suddenly started working. I heard myself crying to Rabbi Eisenbach, 'The camera's working – this is actually a miracle!' The people around me surely thought that I was insane...

"I was so excited by the fact that the camera had suddenly begun to take pictures that I was completely engrossed only in photographing the Rebbe. It seemed to me that the

davening went much faster than expected.

"In the meantime, everyone started forming a line to receive a dollar from the Rebbe. The Rebbe came down from the platform at the conclusion of davening and began giving out dollars. I also stood in line, and when I came before the Rebbe, I told him that I had come from Eilat with Rabbi Eisenbach and I requested a bracha for the recovery of my first-born son, Omer. The Rebbe gave me a dollar for Omer's recovery, another dollar for the members of my family, and another dollar for the city of Eilat.

"I left the Rebbe in a tremendous state of emotion that is difficult to describe.

"It should be quite obvious and understandable that I spent the following days with the Rebbe, and shelved my plans to visit Manhattan. Just as I didn't know what caused my camera not to work, I didn't know what caused it to start taking pictures again. I am a camera repairman by trade, and I had never encountered such a problem before.

"Rabbi Eisenbach explained to me afterwards that it's impossible to just come from Eilat and start taking pictures of the Rebbe. You have to undergo a process of spiritual training for that, and after I went through what I did on Shabbos, the Rebbe 'permitted' me to photograph him. I don't know if that's the explanation, but one thing I do know – during my visit to the Rebbe, I experienced something that was clearly not in the realm of nature.

"When I returned to Eilat, I wrote my article and entitled it 'The Camera That Got Embarrassed.'

Benny Gamlieli has a film clip in his house showing the passing image of the Rebbe. On many occasions, he finds himself watching the film in his free time.