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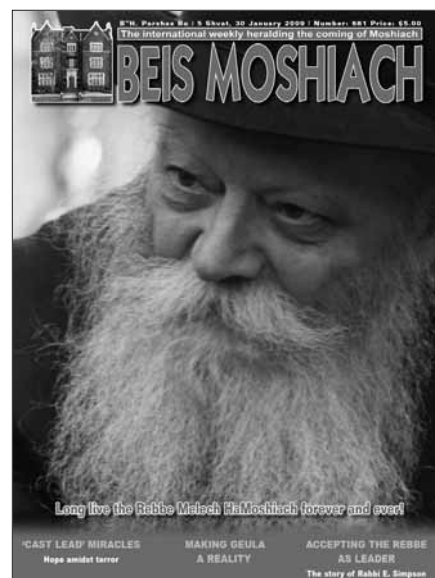
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GO TO THE CHUPPA, BUT DON'T GET MARRIED!

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THE INNOVATIVE MONTH

Translated and adapted by Dovid Yisroel Ber Kaufmann

The Hebrew words for “month” and “innovation” have the same root. Sanctifying the new month prepares for Redemption. Sanctification requires both calculation and testimony. Calculation depends on human reason and effort. Testimony simply clarifies the facts that already exist, reporting the spiritual dimension. There is thus a relationship between the chodesh, the month, of the Exodus and the chidush, the innovation, of Redemption.

Much may turn on a word. The word Moshiach, for instance, conjures images of a new world, a transformation of existence, an innovation in the works of Creation. When Moshiach comes, the world will be filled with knowledge of G-dliness and the wolf shall lie with the lamb. Is it a coincidence, then, that the Hebrew word for month, *chodesh*, is closely related to the word for innovation, *chidush*? Is it also a coincidence that the first mitzvah of the Torah is the sanctification of the new month? Of course not – and more especially of course not when we consider the context of that mitzvah.

The sanctification of the month of Nissan, the month of the Exodus, began the preparations for the Redemption from Egypt. We are told that, “as in the days of your going forth from Egypt, I will show you wonders.” How we prepared for the first Redemption, the exodus from Egypt, teaches us how to prepare for the final

Redemption, that of Moshiach. Clearly, there is a deep, inner connection between the sanctification of the month, the *chodesh*, and the innovation, the *chidush*, of Redemption.

What is a *chidush*, an innovation? That which transforms the “old world” into a “new world” we call an innovation. For example, the use of electricity has changed the way we live. Now, electricity existed before it was discovered and harnessed. The innovation, therefore, was not the invention of electricity, but the revelation of its existence and the realization of its potential.

The same is true of Moshiach. Currently, G-dliness is not visibly or obviously present in the physical world. The innovation of Moshiach will be a revelation of the G-dliness already within the world, actualizing

the spiritual potential within the physical realm. Of course, each mitzvah is a step along the way. Each particular mitzvah reveals a new aspect of G-dliness within creation. What is true of every mitzvah is certainly true in a greater sense of the first mitzvah.

With this background, we can understand the deep, inner connection between *chidush*, innovation, and *chodesh*, the moon, specifically, the sanctification of the moon. As mentioned, the first mitzvah given to the Jewish people is the mitzvah to sanctify the new moon. In this week’s Torah reading it states: “G-d said to Moshe and Aharon . . . this **month** shall be for you the beginning of months.” Practically speaking, the Jewish people had to know when was Rosh *Chodesh* Nissan – the first of the month of Nissan – in order to know when the tenth of the month would occur. For in the very next verse, G-d tells Moshe and Aharon: “Speak to all the congregation of

Israel, saying, ‘in the tenth day of this month they shall take for themselves, every man a lamb . . .’ Thus began the preparations for the Exodus and Redemption.

Now, we know that the Hebrew words for “month” and “innovation” are practically identical, differentiated by only a slight change in vocalization. And of course, the Torah is written without vowels. So the passage could just as easily be read not “this month shall be for you,” but “this **innovation** shall be yours.” This means, simply, that with the first mitzvah G-d gave the Jewish people the ability to innovate, that is, to reveal the innate G-dliness within the world, to spiritually transform creation into a dwelling place for the Divine Presence.

Thus we see that there is something about sanctifying the moon, the *chodesh* of the Exodus, that parallels the revelation of G-dliness, the *chidush* of Redemption. We can go from one to the other. For this reason, sanctifying the moon is the first mitzvah, for it alludes to the Redemption, the ultimate revelation and actualization of the spiritual within the physical.

We determine the new moon in one of two ways: through the testimony of witnesses or through astronomical calculation. Currently, because of historical circumstances, we rely solely on the calendar. When Moshiach comes, the Sanhedrin, the Jewish supreme court, will be re-established, and we will again sanctify the moon based on the testimony of witnesses. However, even when the new month was declared based on witnesses, the Rabbis knew how to calculate the moon’s appearance – and thus logically verify the testimony.

Our first question, then, is why do we need both witnesses and calculation to determine the new moon? To answer this, we first need to look at the purpose of witnesses. Witnesses either *clarify* the facts, verifying what can be determined by other means, or they actually *establish* the facts, determining the law – what’s right or wrong – by their testimony.

In regard to sanctifying the new moon, since we can determine the facts by calculation, we only use the witnesses to verify what we already know. Here, the witnesses don’t establish but only clarify. However, this makes the witnesses seem irrelevant, since testimony that contradicted the astronomical calculations would be discounted. So if the rabbis already knew when the new moon would appear, why bother with witnesses?

The Torah requires witnesses to determine the new moon, despite the advantage of calculation. We can thus actually turn the question around: since in just about every other situation, the Torah tells us to rely on witnesses to *determine* the facts, not just clarify them, why use any calculation at all? Why aren’t witnesses alone good enough to establish the appearance of the new moon?

Since sanctifying the new moon is the first mitzvah, it not only sets the pattern for all subsequent mitzvos, but it also teaches us the inner path to preparing for and initiating the process of Redemption. As mentioned earlier, the Jews in Egypt were commanded to sanctify the new moon in order to begin preparing for the Exodus ten days later. The importance of sanctifying the new moon therefore requires it have the advantages of both calculation and witnesses. The value of calculation is that it relies on the power of the mind, the ability to think and reason. The conclusion results from our efforts and the use of our highest faculty, the mind. On the other hand, we accept the testimony of witnesses solely because the Torah tells us to. Testimony has the advantage of being a decree of the Torah. As such, our acceptance of it transcends logic. This also expresses itself as a submission to the Supernal Will, which is higher than our reason and understanding.

Sanctifying the new month – the *chodesh* – requires both our reason and our submission to G-d’s Will; similarly, the innovation – the *chidush* – of Redemption requires both as well. Only in this way can there be a full and complete revelation of G-dliness.

As an aside, this also explains why in this passage, the Torah states that G-d spoke to both Moshe and Aharon, whereas in most cases G-d speaks to Moshe alone. Each represents one of the two methods of sanctification: Moshe represents the innovation of drawing G-dliness down from Above, self-nullification and acceptance of the heavenly yoke. Aharon represents the innovation of making the world receptive to revelation, using our logic and ability to reason to make the world a dwelling place for G-dliness. Thus, we bring about the Redemption when our approach to Torah and mitzvos combines both our powers of reasoning – the power of calculation – and a self-nullification, an acceptance of the yoke of heaven beyond logic – the power of testimony.

In this way the *chodesh*, the sanctified and just revealed new moon, foreshadows the *chidush*, the sanctified and imminently revealed innovation of the times of Moshiach.

(Based on Likkutei Sichos 21, pp. 62-67)



ACCEPTING THE REBBE AS LEADER

By Shneur Zalman Berger

*Rabbi Eliyahu Yochil Simpson was one of the first Chassidim and rabbanim who worked on getting the Rebbe to accept the nesius after the passing of the Rebbe Rayatz. Although he was older than the Rebbe, and had merited to bask in the glow of the Rebbe Rayatz and the Rebbe Rashab, he nullified himself before the Rebbe and accepted his authority and nesius absolutely. * A lesson in Hiskashrus to the Rebbe, from the book “Chassid Ne’eman” (Loyal Chassid), a biography of Rabbi Simpson. * The book was given as a t’shura at the wedding of his great-grandson, Eliyahu Rosenfeld.*

Rabbi Eliyahu Yochil Simpson was a Chassid and mekushar to three Chabad Rebbes, the Rebbe Rashab, the Rebbe Rayatz, and the Rebbe and for this reason, the Rebbe referred to him as “*Ne’eman Bayis*,” loyal to the Beis HaRav. The word “*ne’eman*” has a number of meanings, including trustworthy, devoted and diligent.

These three meanings fit the Chassidic way of life of Rabbi Simpson.

Masmid/diligent – in yeshiva in Lubavitch, R’ Simpson was considered an “oved” and a “chozer” of the Rebbe Rashab. He continued to work on his avodas ha’t’filla all his life and served as chozer and recorder of the Rebbe

Rayatz. In the Rebbe’s nesius he would write notes of the Rebbe’s sichos and maamarim. For over fifty years he would review maamarei Chassidus by heart every Shabbos in the shul where he was the rav.

M’heiman/devoted – He sent money to the Rebbe Rayatz for the Rebbe’s personal and communal expenses. The amount of money he sent was beyond his means and the Rebbe expressed his surprise about it. Nevertheless, R’ Simpson continued to faithfully send large sums of money.

Raui l’imun/trustworthy – R’ Simpson’s grandson, R’ Shimon Aharon Rosenfeld relates that the Alter Rebbe interprets the verse (BaMidbar 12:7), “It is not so with My servant Moshe; in My entire house he is the trusted one” – that the faithfulness of Moshe and of great tzaddikim is that they see many important things with Ruach HaKodesh and they don’t repeat it. So too with R’ Simpson, although he went into the Rebbe Rayatz’s room on countless occasions, accompanying many Jews on yechidus, he never repeated what he saw and heard.

“MY FATHER AND THE REBBE SPOKE VERY OFTEN”

R’ Simpson’s hiskashrus was boundless from the very start. As

soon as the Rebbe Rayatz passed away it was obvious to him that “Ramash” was the Rebbe and he did many things to compel the Rebbe to accept the Chabad leadership. From then until his final day, he was bound heart and soul to the Rebbe.

Back in 1936, in a letter that the Rebbe wrote as secretary of the Rebbe Rayatz, he asked R’ Simpson:

I am writing to your honor although I do not know you, but I have heard your praise – that you are one of the old-time talmidei

ha’T’mimim, and one of the distinguished ones, and you are bound to the Rebbe, and you treasure and hold dear giving pleasure to the Rebbe...

R’ Simpson first met the Rebbe after being told by the Rebbe Rayatz to join a group of Chassidim who would welcome his son-in-law when he arrived in the US in June 1941. In the years that followed, a close relationship developed. Aside from the ties because R’ Simpson was the Rebbe Rayatz’s gabbai and active in several important Chabad organizations, the Rebbe would speak to him a lot by telephone.

The Simpson family remembers how Ramash would call the Simpson house and ask, “May I speak to Rabbi Simpson?”

“My father and the Rebbe spoke very often. I don’t know what they spoke about since my father did not tell us,” says his daughter, Mrs. Rosenfeld.

When the Simpson family made a simcha, Ramash attended.

AFTER YUD SHVAT, 5710

When the Rebbe Rayatz passed away, R’ Simpson was in Miami on a trip to raise money for Beis Chayeinu. When he heard of the Rebbe’s passing, he asked Ramash permission to return for the funeral and was told he could return.

At the airport in New York, he was met by his son-in-law, Rabbi Sholom Gordon who later related that when R’ Simpson got into the car he burst into tears like a little boy and couldn’t stop. After he finally calmed down a bit, he said that he cried for two reasons – because of the histalkus and because he was worried about a split in the family of Beis HaRav.

When the funeral was over, he went to 770 where a meeting was held that evening. Rabbi Leibel Groner remembers that at the

BRIEF BIO OF RABBI SIMPSON

On Rosh Chodesh Tamuz 5649/1889, in the city of Bobruisk in White Russia, a son was born to the Yochil family and he was named Eliyahu. Decades later, Rabbi Eliyahu Yochil Simpson migrated to the United States and in order to acquire a visa he changed his name to Simpson (because one of his brothers who emigrated a few years before him had bought papers with the name “Philip Simpson”). Since his fellow Chassidim knew him by his original family name, he was known as R’ Eliyahu Yochil Simpson.

He learned in Yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim in Lubavitch for fifteen years and was considered one of the great chozrim of the Rebbe Rashab. “Among the great chozrei Chassidus in Lubavitch” is what the Rebbe added in his handwriting to the text prepared for R’ Simpson’s gravestone and in a letter of consolation that he wrote the Simpson family after R’ Eliyahu’s passing. In a letter to President Zalman Shazar of Israel, the Rebbe referred to R’ Simpson as “one of the leading chozrim and graspers [of Chassidus].”

In 5676/1906 he married Fruma Itta Lifschitz, and a year later the Rebbe Rashab appointed him as mashpia for the Chabad community in Odessa. He served as mashpia for six years in Odessa and then, with a bracha from the Rebbe Rayatz, he moved to America. Shortly after he arrived, he was appointed rav of a shul in Harlem. When Jews left the neighborhood, he moved to Boro Park, where he was rav of a shul for fifty years.

He had the privilege of hosting the Rebbe Rayatz in his home in Elul 1929 and when the Rebbe Rayatz emigrated to America in 1940, he was appointed as personal gabbai to the Rebbe. In this capacity, he stood to the right of the Rebbe Rayatz during yechidus and helped people understand what the Rebbe said, since after the Rebbe’s stroke his speech was unclear.

R’ Simpson was one of the founders of Agudas Chassidei Chabad, director of Agudas HaT’mimim, director of Vaad HaMaamad, and a member of the hanhala of Tomchei T’mimim. He carried out many missions for the Rebbeim throughout the United States, Canada and Australia. He passed away on 29 Kislev 5737/1976.

meeting, R' Simpson spoke about the obligation to continue the dynasty of Admurei Chabad and the obligation to strengthen the connection to Beis Chayeinu.

At meetings held in the period following the histalkus, R' Simpson was one of the first who

encouraged Anash to ask and demand that Ramash accept the Chabad leadership.

"R' Simpson was one of the first who immediately began to work on getting the Rebbe to accept the nesius," says R' Groner. At all the important meetings of the

senior Chassidim at that time, he spoke about the obligation of doing everything possible so that Ramash would accept the nesius. In the year following the histalkus, many went into the Rebbe for yechidus and to talk to him about accepting the nesius, transferring the Rebbe Rayatz's library to the Rebbe, and other sensitive and important subjects connected with the family of Beis HaRav."

In clever ways, he worked with his fellow Chassidim so that the Rebbe would accept the nesius while being particular not to denigrate anyone from Beis HaRav.

MESIRUS NEFESH FOR DEBTS

The Rebbe Rayatz's many activities on behalf of Judaism in general and to establish Chabad mosdos in particular, were very successful but they cost a fortune and the debts weighed on him. After his passing, some of the Chassidim, including R' Simpson, decided to get to work on covering the debts so that the Chabad mosdos would continue to operate.

After the Shloshim, a special meeting was called in 770 and Anash were asked to contribute towards covering the debts. Rabbis Levitin, Simpson, Rivkin, Jacobson, Kazarnovsky and Rodstein signed the letter calling for the meeting. During the meeting, R' Simpson conveyed the necessity in covering the debts and asked those assembled to give with mesirus nefesh, more than usual. Towards the end, Ramash said that the Rebbe's life is a spiritual life and he cried nearly the entire time as he spoke.

"RABBI SIMPSON ASKED THAT CHASSIDUS BE SAID"

A few months went by and the Rebbe refused to accept the nesius



At the wedding reception for R' Sholom Mendel Simpson. The Rebbe said a sicha and next to him sat the chassan. In between them is the chassan's father, Rabbi Eliyahu Simpson.

but R' Simpson already treated him as Rebbe. The night of Shvii shel Pesach 1950, R' Simpson attended the seuda with the Rebbe (being a rav he spent the first night of Pesach at home), as he had done in the days of the Rebbe Rayatz.

There were Chassidim who dared to ask the Rebbe to say a maamer Chassidus, a move that would be considered as accepting the nesius. Among them was R' Simpson.

Rabbanim and ziknei ha'Chassidim who yearned for the Rebbe to accept the nesius, held secret meetings in which they discussed ways of motivating the Rebbe to accept the nesius. At one of these meetings, they decided that a minyan of Anash would go to the gravesite of the Rebbe Rayatz and read a *pidyon nefesh klali* in the name of all Anash and the T'mimim around the world, asking the Rebbe Rayatz to convince the Rebbe to accept the nesius.

Among those who went to the Ohel on 2 Iyar was R' Simpson, who read the *pidyon nefesh* on behalf of them all that the Rebbe should be thus instructed. Indeed, after that the Rebbe never again said he had no such instruction.

In the months that followed, R' Simpson continued to ask the Rebbe to say *maamarei Chassidus*. During the *farbrengen* of the second day of Shavuot, R' Simpson got up and announced on behalf of all of Anash, "These sichos are good but we want [*maamarei Chassidus*]."

The Rebbe did not react and R' Simpson tried to overcome his normal restraint by saying quite a few *l'chaims*, something he wasn't used to at all, and then he stood up again and asked the Rebbe to say *maamarei Chassidus*. Once again, the Rebbe did not react.

After another sicha, R' Simpson got up a third time and asked the Rebbe, on behalf of all Anash, to say a *maamer Chassidus*. The

Rebbe smiled slightly and after a few moments of silence he said, "Must it be now? It can be another time."

About a week after Shavuot, R' Simpson had a dream that he was sitting at a large *farbrengen* with the Rebbe Rayatz, who was *farbrenging*. The Rebbe suddenly asked him why the people were so broken and R' Simpson answered, "Nu, on the contrary."

The Rebbe Rayatz said, "I left my Mendel. He is fitting for this."

This scene repeated itself twice or three times. At the end of the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe Rayatz entered a special room and asked R' Simpson to close the door. He said, "Call R' Mendel here, I want to give him *smicha* (ordination)."

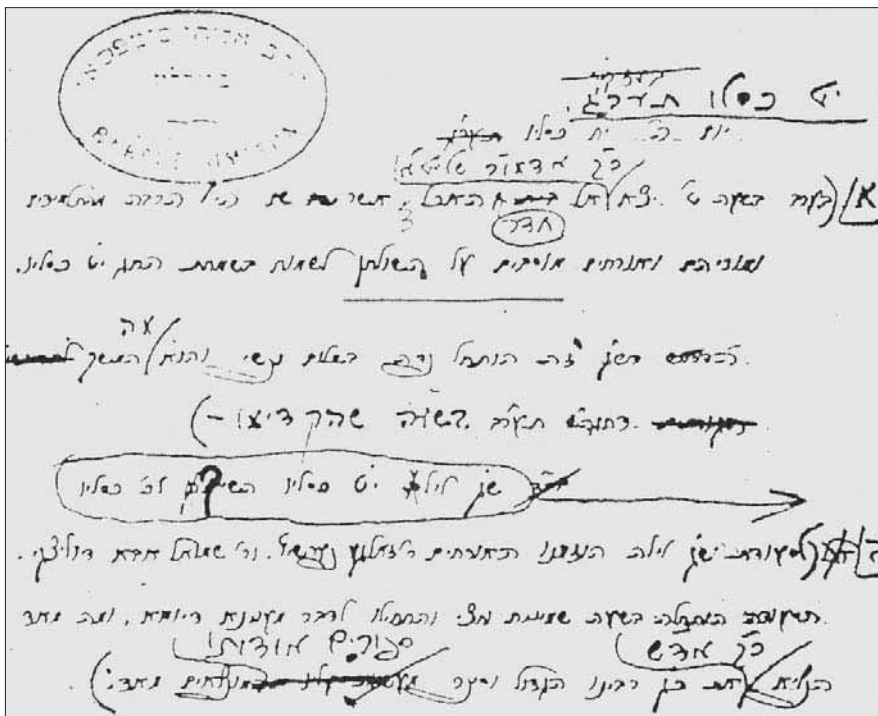
R' Simpson had still not gone when the Rebbe Rayatz repeated what he said. When R' Simpson went to open the door in order to call the Rebbe, he woke up.

When R' Simpson told his dream, he explained that that the reason he had woken up was because he did not have the *z'chus* to watch the lofty conferring of *smicha*.

R' Simpson had *yechidus* and he told the Rebbe his dream. The Rebbe said, "Apparently you thought about this by day (which is why you dreamt about it at night)." But R' Simpson maintained that he had been busy that day and hadn't thought about it. The Rebbe said, "I don't feel it [is something that should be pursued]."

PLACING A PLATFORM FOR THE REBBE

In the months following the passing of the Rebbe Rayatz, a large crowd crowded the small zal in order to hear the Rebbe's *farbrengens*. In those days it was hard to hear the Rebbe and seeing him was nearly impossible. Some suggested that they build a



Notes that Rabbi Simpson wrote of sichos of the Rebbe Rashab with the Rebbe's comments on it.



Rabbi Simpson
entering the large
zal with the "Torah
of Moshiach"

During the farbrengen of the second day of Shavuos, R' Simpson got up and announced on behalf of all of Anash, "These sichos are good but we want [maamarei] Chassidus" ... The Rebbe smiled slightly and after a few moments of silence he said, "Must it be now? It can be another time."

platform for the Rebbe's table so people could see him, but they feared that the Rebbe would not want it.

Despite this apprehension, R' Simpson decided to enable the crowd to see the Rebbe and he prepared a low platform which could be assembled and dismantled quickly so it wouldn't take up space.

The first time the platform was set up, the Chassidim feared the Rebbe would refuse to go up on it since he hadn't accepted the nesius, but to their surprise, the Rebbe went up on the platform and sat down at the elevated table.

ABOVE THE NATURAL ORDER

The Chassidim hoped that when the year of mourning was over, the Rebbe would accept the nesius and as Yud Shvat approached, the efforts increased towards this end. R' Simpson took part in these efforts.

In Teives, R' Simpson had yechidus and he said, "Lately, there have been inyanim that are above the natural order with the Rebbe." The Rebbe answered, "**Surely you mean the Rebbe, my father-in-law. Indeed, he is displaying more wondrous things now than when**

he was alive."

The excitement over the kabbalas ha'nesius grew. Letters of hiskashrus began to arrive from all over the world and Chassidim frequently asked the Rebbe to accept the Chabad leadership.

The Chassidim's hopes were realized on Yud Shvat 5711/1951. During the farbrengen, the Rebbe began saying a maamer Chassidus, thus expressing his consent to accepting the leadership. When the farbrengen ended, the Rebbe walked out to the sound of the Chassidim singing, "Ki B'Simcha Seitzei'u." The crowd, with R' Simpson among them, danced with

tremendous joy to this niggun for a long time.

R' Simpson danced like a young bachur. "You could see how R' Simpson, who had done so much so that the Rebbe would accept the nesius, was truly joyous, a simcha that came from his heart. Although he was usually restrained, this time people could see that he was especially happy that the Rebbe had finally accepted the nesius and the Chabad dynasty carried on," said the chozer, R' Yoel Kahn, who danced behind him.

LETTER TO ERETZ YISROEL

About two months after accepting the nesius, some distinguished Chassidim, among them R' Simpson, wrote a long letter to their friends in Eretz Yisroel about the goings-on in Beis Chayeinu so that the Rebbe's acceptance of the nesius would go

as smoothly as possible in peace and friendship.

The letter explained the activities that had been done to convince the Chassidim that Ramash was the one to take over the crown of Chabad Chassidus:

"Rabbanei Anash explained at length how all of Anash, with no difference between old and young, had agreed that the Rebbe-Ramash was fitting to succeed the Rebbe Rayatz, to continue the nesius and to be the leader of the Chassidic flock until the coming of the Righteous Redeemer speedily in our days..."

"A G'VURA THAT YOU DON'T CRY"

R' Simpson's hiskashrus to the Rebbe was boundless. He did everything for the Rebbe and he consulted with the Rebbe over every move he made in life. He taught his children and

grandchildren that whenever you do something you have to think whether it's something that would meet the Rebbe's approval.

The Rebbe, in return, afforded R' Simpson special honor. During the farbrengen on the night of Purim 5711, he said to R' Simpson special things about his hiskashrus even though he had already been mekushar to two Admurim:

During the construction of the second Bayis, there were elders who remembered the first Bayis and they cried. You who were with the Rebbe [the Rebbe Rashab] and the Rebbe [Rayatz], it's a g'vura for you that you don't cry. It's one thing for the Rebbe [Rayatz] who was his [the Rebbe Rashab's] only son and successor, but what am I and who am I?

The Rebbe motioned with his hand that they should sing and they couldn't hear what else he said. They just heard, "Being mekushar to me is being mekushar to the Rebbe! I succeed him in just one detail."

He also said, "You have faith in Hashem; I am merely the conduit." Then he said, "We must go out of ourselves. Even though I did not get out of being the successor, you should not learn from this."

R' Simpson couldn't listen to this and he said to the Rebbe, "Chassidim don't want to hear this." Other senior Chassidim went over to the Rebbe too and asked him to stop speaking that way.

THE REBBE IS THE ONLY BALABUS

In the 50's, someone in 770 suggested that they appoint a president of the shul as is accepted practice in shuls in the United States. R' Simpson shouted, "What? You are completely crazy! The Rebbe is the only balabus (one

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בי"ה, ה' סבט חסי"א
ברוקלין

לסרנן ורבנן הרבנים הגאונים יושבי
על סנין איש איש בסחננו וקהלתו.
עסקני הצבור בהרפת קרן התורה
והיהדות ברוח ישראל סבא.
וכלל אחפ"י חובבי תורה ומצוה,
רי בכל אחר ואחר, ה' עליהם יחיו.

שלום וברכה!

בזה הנני מסלא את ידו של חרתיג וחרתיג החי"א
נו"ם עוסק בצרכי צבור באסונה ונאסן בית וכו' מוחר"ר אל"י ש"י
סימפסון, אשר יבקר את מוסבוח אחפ"י יחיו, למסור להם פרישת ודרישת
שלום בשמי ולהביא סהם פ"ש, להודיע על מצב היהדות ומעמד מוסדות
התורה והחינוך במחנה ה"ה, ולעורר על דבר הדורש תיקון וחיוון סתאים
לרוח ישראל סבא, וכן לבאר מצב מוסדותינו במדינה זו, בארצנו הקדושה
חיו, באירופא ואפריקא.

ונשען על הכחוב אני ישנה ולבי ער, ועל פי דרו"ל אשר
אף בגלותא לב ישראל ער הוא לכל דבר טוב, ואין סוב אלא תורה מצות
ומעשים טובים, הנה בודאי יסיעו בידו למלאות דבר השליחות בפועל,
וכן בהנגוע לחיוון מוסדותינו במקומות הנ"ל.

והשי"ת יוכל את כל אחד סתאנו כולנו, למלאות תפקידו
בעלמא דין על ידי שיא"ר את סביבתו וחלקו בעולם באור וסאור האבת
השם אהבת התורה ואהבת ישראל.

בכבוד ובברכה טוב גשמי ורוחני

A letter from the Rebbe in which he appoints Rabbi Simpson as shadar (fundraising emissary)

in charge) of 770 and the fact that we can daven here is only because he allows us to do so.”

R' Simpson sometimes walked for an hour and a half from his home in Boro Park to the Rebbe's farbrengens on Shabbos and Yom Tov. When walking became difficult for him, he would spend Shabbos in Crown Heights. When he became weak, he continued to attend farbrengens and after a farbrengen he would not return to his host but stay in R' Shmuel Levitin's room in 770 until Shabbos was over.

In the early years, the Rebbe would farbreng only on Shabbos Mevarchim and Yom Tov. In the 70's the Rebbe began to farbreng on other Shabbosos too, but nobody knew ahead of time when these farbrengens would take place. R' Simpson, who had to know whether to spend Shabbos in Crown Heights or not, would ask the Rebbe every week and the Rebbe answered him. So the Chassidim knew that if R' Simpson was in Crown Heights for Shabbos, that meant there would be a farbrengen that Shabbos.

R' Simpson would sit at a farbrengen completely focused on what the Rebbe was saying, especially during a maamer when he would stand and close his eyes.

Not only would he participate in farbrengens, he would also stay for chazara on Motzaei Shabbos and he sat among the bachurim as though he was one of them, sometimes sitting on the arm of a bench or the edge of a bench.

When the chozer, R' Kahn would suggest that he sit in a more fitting place, he would refuse and say he wanted to sit among the bachurim. When the chazara was over, he would go home and write up portions of the Rebbe's sichos.



Distributing l'chaim at a farbrengen in the early 50's



Rabbi Simpson standing next to the Rebbe

“MANY DID LIKE RABBI SHIMON BAR YOCHAI”

On one of his last Rosh HaShanas, he decided to walk from his house to 770 in order to hear the Rebbe's t'kios. His family tried to dissuade him for he was already very weak, but R' Simpson insisted. He said, “It's fifty years already and I haven't been to the Rebbe's

t'kios.” This was because he davened at his shul with his congregants.

R' Simpson walked to Crown Heights and heard the Rebbe's t'kios. The Rebbe reacted to this at Kos Shel Bracha on Motzaei Simchas Torah when he said, “Many did as Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.” This is stated in the tractate Brachos 35 and it means

that when the Jewish people do Hashem's will, then their work is done for them by others and they do not need to toil.

“THE REBBE SAID”

R' Simpson's great *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe is remembered well by

friends and family. When he would sit down to Yom Tov meals at the Rebbe's table, he would be silent with inner *bittul*, even though elder Chassidim would occasionally raise a halachic or Chassidic topic for discussion.

R' Simpson was considered punctilious when it came to

customs and he remembered many customs that the Rebbe Rashab had. He was an important source for customs. Sometimes the Rebbe or Rashag would refer questions to him about his protracted stay in Lubavitch to which he would respond briefly.

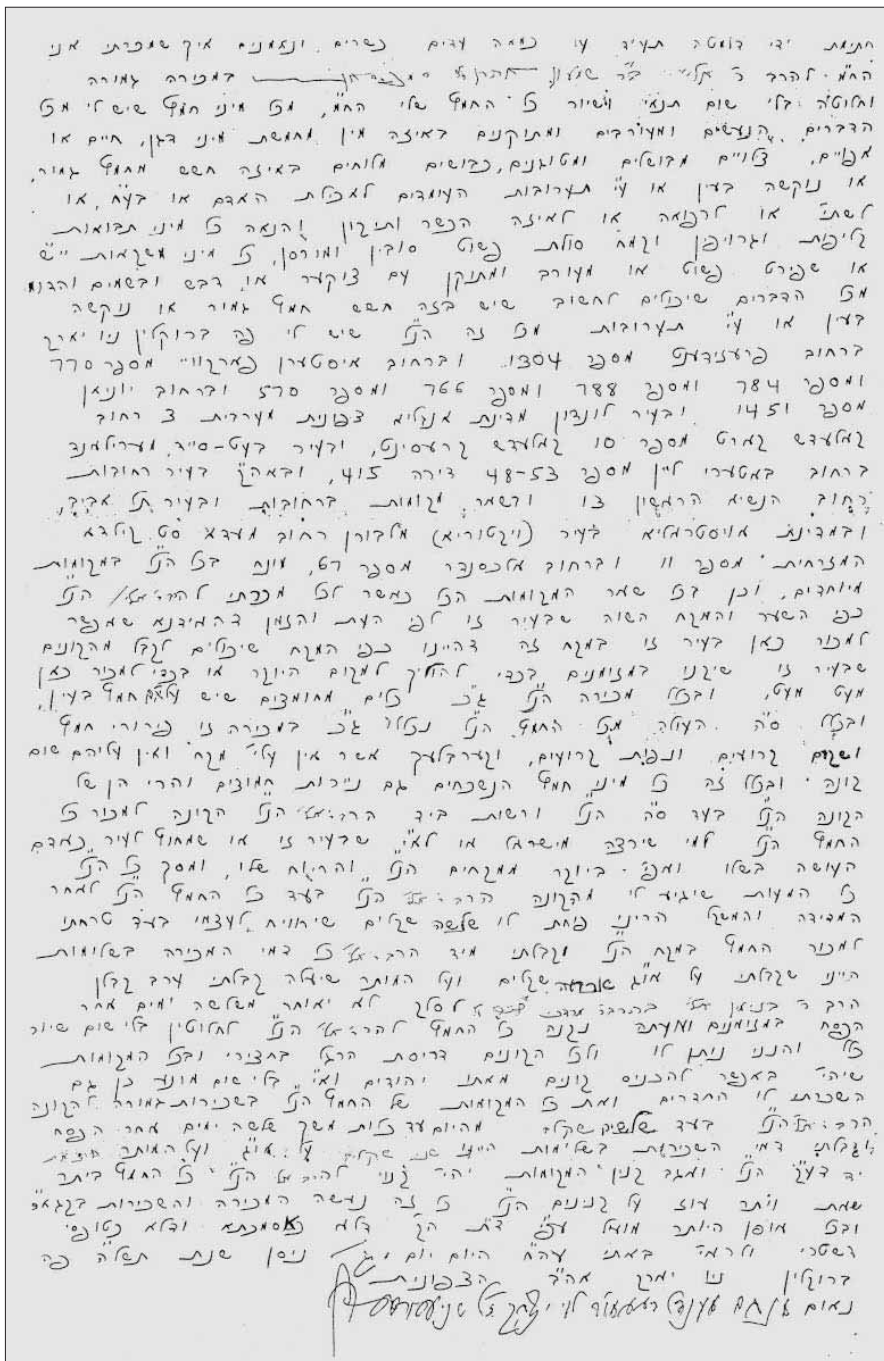
R' Shlomo Zarchi relates, “At a Purim *farbrengen* (in the late 60's), the Rebbe said that *t'filla* with *avoda* is a *segula* against the *klipa* of Amalek. The source for this wasn't clear to me, for in Chassidus it says that Torah is a *segula* against the *klipa* of Amalek. I asked R' Simpson who was known as an expert and big maven in Chassidus whether it said in Chassidic writings that *t'filla* with *avoda* is a *segula* against Amalek and he said, yes. When I asked him where it says so, he answered me in astonishment, ‘The Rebbe just said so in a *farbrengen* – so it says so in Chassidus.’”

SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE REBBE

The Rebbe had a special relationship with R' Simpson. Whenever R' Simpson came for *yeichud*, the Rebbe stood up for him and invited him to sit down. Of course, R' Simpson refused to do so, and since the Rebbe would not sit down the two of them remained standing.

When he was an older man, he was once late to a *farbrengen* by a few minutes and when he walked in, the Rebbe raised himself a bit from his chair, a public gesture of respect for R' Simpson.

In R' Simpson's final years he suffered from health problems and was weak. In *yeichud* he complained that his memory had become weak. The Rebbe advised him to learn *Hemshech* 5666 to strengthen his memory, and as a sign of affection the Rebbe gave him a copy.



The Rebbe's sale of chametz to Rabbi Simpson Erev Pesach 5735

THEY HAVE EYES – AND THEY CAN SEE

By Nosson Avrohom

Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry

Everything had disappeared, both the scar that was left from the previous operation and the pea-sized growth that appeared clearly in all the x-rays that Dr. Pe'er had taken and sent to the professor. Through his bracha, the Rebbe had simply eliminated the growth. One word from the Rebbe had produced supernatural change. There is no doubt that the Rebbe has special powers. No one told me about it, nor did I read about it in books. I experienced it firsthand and saw it with my own eyes.

Meeting Mr. Nati C. (surname omitted for reasons of privacy), one would never imagine the inner and essential connection he shares with the Rebbe. Nati works these days providing private transportation services in the Hadera/Sharon area. His outward appearance may not convey that connection, but it is clearly evident in the great emotion that fills his voice as he recounts the miraculous story that he and his family experienced. “How we miss hearing

the Rebbe’s voice, that calming voice, the only one who knows the future with such G-dly vision.”

The many long years that have passed since that amazing and incalculably wondrous miracle have not dimmed Nati’s intense feelings, despite the fact that he has told the story numerous times over the years. He remembers the details down to the letter, as if it had happened only recently. The most impressive picture that remains etched upon his soul is from the

Sunday dollars distribution, when he was privileged to receive the Rebbe’s blessing for his household. “The Rebbe’s face appeared angelic. I had never seen such an incredible sight. Deep piercing eyes, filled with expression and understanding.”

HIS HAND SHOOK AS HE SIGNED

“The story began twenty-two years ago, when our daughter reached the age of seven months. As responsible parents, we noticed a strain in one of her eyes and this alarmed us. I was truly worried. There was no history of eye trouble in our family. We began running all around the country in search of an expert ophthalmologist who could properly diagnose the problem. The doctors with whom we consulted tried to tell us that our concerns are exaggerated and unfounded.

“My wife began to question my obsession over the matter, but something within me kept me looking. Every time I looked at my infant daughter’s cross-eyed stare, I was overwhelmed by a feeling of genuine anxiety. In hindsight, this must have been sheer parental intuition, for when she was examined by the renowned eye specialist at Hillel Yaffe Hospital in Hadera, his expression turned serious, and he referred our

daughter to the Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital in Yerushalayim for more in-depth tests. He personally was not prepared to give a clear diagnosis, settling instead for his recommendation that we go to Professor Ben-Ezra, known as one of Israel's leading eye specialists.

"After a series of comprehensive x-rays, some under total anesthesia, Professor Ben-Ezra informed us that he had determined that the child had a malignant tumor, recommending that she have an urgent operation to remove her eye together with the tumor. In a professional and restrained manner, the doctor explained that if the operation was not done soon, the cancerous growth was liable to spread towards her brain and her other eye, making the operation far more complex and dangerous.

"It is virtually impossible to describe how I felt upon realizing that I would have to sign an authorization for an operation to have my child's eye removed. My eyes welled with tears and my heart was torn by the intense emotional pain, despite the knowledge that this was the only way to save her life.

"Ever since then, my daughter requires special lenses adapted for her eye, according to her rate of growth. My close relatives and all those around me were stunned by my stubbornness in having my daughter checked, stubbornness that to a large extent was responsible for saving her life.

IT'S HAPPENING AGAIN?

"Days and weeks passed, and our life started getting back on track. We honestly hoped that all the medical problems with our daughter were now behind us, but reality proved us wrong when she turned three and a half. It was at

one of the routine check-ups at Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital. Contrary to previous visits, our daughter was examined this time by Dr. Pe'er, who had just returned to the hospital's ophthalmology ward after a tour of duty in Africa. When he heard that the child had not undergone any examinations under anesthetic since the operation, he was shocked.

"He set a date for a complete and intensive examination. After the tests were completed, he came out to us, hands clasped, and regretfully informed us that he had found a malignant tumor on the

He had determined that the child had a malignant tumor, recommending that she have an urgent operation to remove her eye together with the tumor.

other eye... He tried to calm us by explaining in detail that to our good fortune, the growth had not yet reached a dangerous size; it was as small as a pea. It was located on the eye's outer edge, where it was not likely to cause blindness. He told us about a special manner of laser ray treatment, thereby making an operation unnecessary. 'This special ray penetrates the eye,' Dr. Pe'er explained, 'and freezes the place of the tumor.'

"My wife and I looked at him as if hit by a thunderbolt. At this point, we weren't prepared to

believe a single doctor anymore. Above all, I was frightened and confused. If the procedure was unsuccessful, our child would be left sightless for the rest of her life. I didn't know how to digest this information. I decided to pay whatever it would take, even if it meant selling our house, in order to get to the best ophthalmologist in the world. If our daughter was going to need another operation, at least I wanted her to be in the best of hands. I called one of my brothers, who lives in Chicago, told him the whole story and asked him to help me find the best available specialist.

"Those were very difficult times, filled with sadness and concern. They were possibly the hardest days I had ever experienced in my life. A few days later, my brother called me and said that he had made a thorough investigation, and had found that everyone recommended a Professor Schilz, who worked for a hospital in Philadelphia. Even Dr. Pe'er, who examined our daughter at Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital, warmly recommended him, telling us that he had studied under him before becoming a doctor. He happily agreed to release all the medical files on the case to his former teacher, and my brother scheduled an appointment for us.

"It was at that point in time that I made my first connection with Chabad. My father-in-law introduced me to Rabbi Yechiel Malov from Rishon LeZion, a most unique Jew who truly cares and shows real concern for others. When I told him that I was flying to the States on Sunday, he practically begged me to reschedule my flight for Motzaei Shabbos, so that I could pass by the Lubavitcher Rebbe with my wife and daughter at the famous Sunday dollars distribution and

request his blessing. I didn't really want to change my travel plans. Yet, I had already heard so much about the Rebbe's greatness, as there's not a Jew in the world who doesn't know about the Rebbe in one form or another. As for me, it was only much later that I really felt the immense greatness of the Rebbe...

"Rabbi Malov saw that I was hesitating, and he said, 'Bring me the tickets and I'll make the arrangements.' He managed to move our flight up to Motzaei Shabbos."

STANDING BEFORE HIS HOLY COUNTENANCE

"When we arrived on Sunday at the airport in New York, we were greeted by my brother and a friend of Rabbi Malov, a Chabad chassid who arrived to show us the way to 770 and to explain how to conduct ourselves when we come before the Rebbe.

"When we arrived at 770, the Rebbe's beis midrash, I was amazed by the long line of Jews stretching outside the building. There were Jews there from all walks of life and from every imaginable community. My wife stood in the line for women, while my brother and I got into the men's line.

"My wife went before the Rebbe first, and exited with a stunned look on her face and her whole body shaking. When I met her outside, she told me that there's no reason to continue on to Philadelphia because the Rebbe had already blessed our daughter that she should merit health, marriage, and good deeds. I was only able to understand her great excitement when I went inside myself. My brother is known in street slang as a 'har adam' (man mountain), tall and broad shouldered. When we were facing the Rebbe, he stopped

the line so I wouldn't get pushed outside. I briefly related the entire chain of events to the Rebbe and asked for a bracha. The Rebbe looked at me with compassion. It's impossible to explain it, but I was literally enraptured.

"As I finished recounting my daughter's medical problem, the Rebbe handed me one dollar for me, one dollar for my daughter, and another dollar for the entire family, and gave a bracha for success and health.

"As I tell this now, my whole body is trembling. Similar to my wife, I left the Rebbe's presence

He turned to us and said, 'G-d Alm-ghty, where is it?' That sentence coming out of the mouth of the non-Jewish doctor is remains etched in my memory.

with great excitement. The image of the Rebbe is something beyond what we can see. I felt magnetized. A few hours later, however, after 'cooling off' a bit, thoughts of uncertainty began to enter my mind. Despite our great confidence in the Rebbe's assurance that there was nothing to worry about and everything would be fine, I still asked my brother to take me to receive a medical diagnosis from Professor Schilz, since everyone spoke about him with such praise.

"We arrived at Professor Schilz's clinic in Philadelphia with

mixed feelings and emotions. My wife bore the flag of faith, declaring that if the Rebbe gave the child a blessing, everything will be alright. I continued to be plagued with doubts.

"All of our daughter's medical information since her infancy was placed on his table. He read the material at length, and then set out to make his examinations. After several long minutes, he came out and gave us an immeasurable shock. We never believed that such things could happen in real life. He turned to us and said, 'G-d Alm-ghty, where is it?' That sentence coming out of the mouth of the non-Jewish doctor is remains etched in my memory and will never be forgotten.

"Everything had disappeared, both the scar that was left from the previous operation and the pea-sized growth that appeared clearly in all the x-rays that Dr. Pe'er had taken and sent to the professor. Through his bracha, the Rebbe had simply eliminated the growth. One word from the Rebbe had produced supernatural change. There is no doubt that the Rebbe has special powers. No one told me about it, nor did I read about it in books. I experienced it for firsthand and saw it with my own eyes.

"Today, our daughter learns in college and is having much success in her studies. She also knows quite well – as we all do – in whose merit her sight was saved. We returned to Eretz Yisroel filled with joy. All the sadness that had engulfed me until then had literally been transformed into absolute happiness.

"When I came to Israel, I thanked Rabbi Malov in person. In recognition of this miracle, I accepted upon myself to put on t'fillin each weekday, and I have diligently done so ever since," concluded Nati.

THE YISMACH MOSHE: A POILISHE MISNAGED TURNED HUNGARISHE REBBE

By Yehoshua Kenig

*The staunch Misnaged who became an ardent Chassid and went on to become the first Admur in Hungary. * The tzaddik, the Yismach Moshe, combined halachic genius with Chassidic insight, merited heavenly revelations and distributed kameios for segula and refua. * The Admur, Rabbi Moshe Teitelbaum – a wondrous example of faith in the Geula and trust in its immediate arrival. * The third article in a series on g'dolei Yisroel and the Geula.*

HIS CHILDHOOD

The gaon, Rabbi Moshe Teitelbaum zt"l, was born in 5519 (1759), in Pzemyshl, Galicia (Poland). His parents were Rabbi

Tzvi Hirsch and Chana Teitelbaum of Zbarizh. His family traced its lineage to the Rama and the Maharsha. Family tradition had it that the origin of their surname was

the *teitel*, the silver “yad” that the Torah reader holds to mark his place in the Torah.

In his youth, R' Moshe was known as an *ilui* and an amazing *masmid*. No wonder, then, that in his childhood he was picked by a local philanthropist, Reb Nissan, to be his son-in-law.

At thirteen he married his wife, Chaya Sarah. At seventeen he already had many students, and halachic questions were referred to him by the Torah greats of his region. For ten years he studied assiduously while being supported by his father-in-law, but the days of tranquility came to an abrupt end.

In 5542 (1782), his father-in-law died and shortly thereafter his baby died too. But R' Moshe had little time to indulge in mourning. With his father-in-law's death the family's financial support was gone, and the burden of *parnasa* was his.

THE MISNAGED AND CHASSID DO BATTLE

After three years of poverty, the



26 year old R' Moshe was asked to serve as rabbi in the town of Shiniva. While there, R' Moshe ran a yeshiva for young bachurim and simultaneously devoted himself to his rabbinic obligations and supervising communal matters.

His fame began to grow as a genius in Nigleh and Nistar and as a wonder-worker. Throughout this time he subsisted on a paltry salary provided by the poor townspeople, but this did not prevent him from devoting himself to the welfare of all. He even shared his food with his talmidim, whom he loved as his own children.

R' Moshe, who had been an acrimonious opponent to Chassidus, got to know some Chassidim in Shiniva. These Chassidim were disciples of Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk, a town near Shiniva. A battle waged in his heart. He felt a strong attraction to Chassidim and the ways of Chassidus. Deep in his heart he felt that their deeds were good and desirable to G-d, but he recoiled from their odd ways and kept his distance from them. He

Left: A drawing of the Yismach Moshe
Below: An aerial view of the town of Aujhel



***“Seeing the king
in captivity and
exile, he burst into
bitter tears,
however, he was
overjoyed to host
the king in his
house. The
metaphor is clear.
The Sh’china is in
exile but we have
merited that it
rests among us.”***

could not understand how the Chassidim could daven late, rejoice and even drink vodka.

A PROMISE – HIS INVOLVEMENT WITH CHASSIDUS

Despite his resolute opposition to Chassidus, he chose as his son-in-law Rabbi Aryeh Leib Lifschitz, a Chassid of the Chozeh of Lublin, who later became the rav in Vishnitsa. The Yismach Moshe (as R’ Moshe Teitelbaum came to be known) even promised his son-in-law that he would support him for several years. It is said that the chassan made the wedding conditional on his father-in-law promising to go with him to see the Chozeh.

The Yismach Moshe’s main complaint against Chassidim was their immersion in simcha when the Shulchan Aruch says we should be sorrowing over the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash. He and his

son-in-law argued bitterly, but since he had agreed to travel to Lublin, he couldn’t avoid it. He went to Lublin resolved to clarify his doubts and arrive at a firm decision about the ways of Chassidus. In his heart, he prayed that Hashem set him on the path of truth.

BITTER TEARS AND GEAT JOY

When the Yismach Moshe entered the Chozeh’s room, the Chozeh said, “Why are you despondent? Although it says that it is proper to be sad over the churban, the Wise Man has said, ‘Joy on his face with mourning in his heart ...’”

The Chozeh then related a parable he had heard from his teacher, R’ Shmelke of Nikolsberg:

“There is a story of a king who was taken captive and exiled. One day the king chanced upon the home of one his admirers. When the admirer saw the king in captivity and exile, he burst into bitter tears, however he was also overjoyed to host the king in his house. The metaphor is clear. The Sh’china is in exile but we have merited that it rests among us.”

The barriers fell, and the Yismach Moshe became an ardent Chassid.

CHASSIDUS CONQUERS HUNGARY

In 5568 (1808), the Yismach Moshe was appointed the Av Beis Din of Aujhel, in eastern Hungary. In those days, Jewish life flourished in the surrounding towns. The district was a center for production of kosher wines, which were exported to Poland and throughout Europe.

The Yismach Moshe spent the rest of his life there, earning him the title, “the tzaddik of Aujhel.” He was the first Chassidic Rebbe in

Hungary. Along with his duties as rav, he headed the yeshiva in his town, and his reputation as a gadol in Torah and Chassidus grew.

This was when the infamous Haskala (Enlightenment) movement was getting off the ground, and the Yismach Moshe worked alongside the Chasam Sofer to strengthen Judaism in his area and throughout Hungary. Many Chassidim flocked to him, but he refused to act as Rebbe while the Chozeh of Lublin and the Maggid of Kozhnitz were still alive.

Those two holy men passed away in the same year, 5575 (1815), and that year he assumed the mantle of Rebbe. The “tzaddik of Aujhel” was renowned for his exceptional communication skills and his rebuke had an enormous impact. He was known as an outstanding speaker. His s’farim on Tanach are a treasure of fascinating lectures and explanations which stand out in their originality and simplicity.

Between the lines of his s’farim, one can virtually taste the scholarship and piety united within the author; he connects the simple meaning of the text with chiddushei Halacha; he explains a statement of Chazal according to Chassidus and cites sifrei Chakira like the *Moreh Nevuchim*. Most of his writings that we have today were edited by his grandson, the “Yitav Lev.”

When he davened, he would translate the words into Yiddish. In connection with this, Rabbi Yaakov Landau z”l wrote: The Rebbe Rashab once said that words that are uttered from the depths of one’s heart during prayer are not considered an interruption. R’ Yeshaya Berlin, a famous elderly and wealthy man, related that he once overheard the Yismach Moshe davening, and on the words, “and the wealth and honor are from You,” he said in Yiddish, “my wealth and honor is that I stand before

You.”

KAMEI'OS AND WONDERS

The Yismach Moshe gave out *kameios* (amulets) for health and other blessings. In his room there was a locked box with sixty compartments, which contained kameios for various purposes. He would pray, “Master of the universe, it’s not for my sake or for my honor that I gave this *kameia*, but only for Your honor, so that they may know that Hashem is the Savior in the time of misfortune. Please Hashem, make this *kameia* Your vessel to help *ploni* son of *ploni*.” He would say, “The main thing with a *kameia* is *emuna* – the believer is helped with it, while for the non-believer it’s ineffective.”

The tzaddik’s reputation spread amongst the goyim, too, as a holy

man and wonder-worker. It is told that the famous Hungarian politician, Lajos Kossuth, who is considered “the Father of the Hungarian Nation,” was blessed, in his youth, by the Yismach Moshe.

At the age of nine, Lajos Kossuth was sick with a mortal illness, and his mother, disregarding her anti-Semitic father’s opposition, brought him to the Yismach Moshe for a blessing. When the tzaddik heard the boy’s name, he recited the verse, “You gave to those who fear You a banner to raise up for eternal truth (the Hebrew word used for truth is *koshet*, an apparent play on his name).” This prophecy was fulfilled forty years later when he became the leader of Hungary and led the battle for independence.

When there was a commotion in the street he would jump up from his studies and ask, “What’s that noise? Has the Geula come?”

ALL THE DAYS OF YOUR LIFE – TO BRING THE DAYS OF MOSHIACH

Pain over the bitter galus was etched in his heart. In every sermon he gave, he would cry over the

The entrance to the gravesite of the Yismach Moshe



destruction of the Beis HaMikdash.

Along with the great sorrow were hope and faith in the coming of Moshiach, speedily in his days. He implanted this strong hope in the hearts of all his Chassidim and adherents. When the tzaddik spoke, they felt that Moshiach was about to come.

His anticipation for the coming of Moshiach was expressed practically, too. When there was a commotion in the street he would jump up from his studies and ask, "What's that noise? Has the Geula come?"

Every night he would stand at his window and look out at the horizon

He replied in astonishment, "Moshiach Tzidkeinu is coming and I should buy a dwelling in a foreign land?"

in anticipation. Were those finally the sounds of the footsteps of Moshiach? Before he went to sleep he would put his Shabbos clothing and stick near his bed so they would be readily at hand the moment Moshiach arrived. His servant was instructed that if he heard the shofar of Moshiach he should awaken him immediately.

EAGER ANTICIPATION AND TEARS

The Chassidim knew that their master contained a spark of Yirmiyahu the prophet, because he

constantly mourned the churban of Yerushalayim and did not stop anticipating the Geula. When they saw him during the Three Weeks, his face sullen in spiritual anguish and sorrow, all felt that the prophet himself was standing before them.

He once said, "Do not be surprised by the magnitude of my mourning and misery over the destruction of our Beis HaMikdash. I have seen the suffering of my people and therefore I cannot forget the bitterness of galus for a minute. May Hashem have mercy and I should be zocheh to see the Beis HaMikdash rebuilt, just as I saw it destroyed. I anticipate the redemption of Hashem every day."

Although he lived in an old, rickety house, he did not want to buy property in a gentile land. His Chassidim once encouraged him to buy a house near the shul, which was for sale at a good price. He replied in astonishment, "Moshiach Tzidkeinu is coming and I should buy a dwelling in a foreign land? Every Jew has a portion in the Holy Land and when Moshiach comes I will go to my house and my portion."

He added a quote from Rabbi Chanina (tractate Avoda Zara 9b), who taught the proper extent of one's yearning for Moshiach: "If someone tells you buy a field [outside of Eretz Yisroel] worth 1000 dinarim for one dinar, don't take it." He explained: "When the time for Geula has come, why should I waste one dinar?"

ELIYAHU HA'NAVI IN THE CLOTHES OF THE HIGH PRIEST

His grandson, the Yitav Lev, related: "I have received from my teacher and grandfather that one time, after he finished Shmoneh Esrei, he prayed to be shown what is written in the book *Asara*

Maamaros, that the heavenly temple was not destroyed and sacrifices are brought there even today. He was shown Eliyahu HaNavi dressed in the clothes of the high priest and bringing the daily Tamid sacrifice."

FITTING TO BE SAID BEFORE MOSHIACH

On Shabbos Erev Hoshana Raba, the Yismach Moshe said a deep and lengthy pilpul, and concluded by stating that in case of a difference of opinion between an individual and a group, the halacha goes according to the majority. There is no individuality like Hashem's, and so the halacha must follow the Jewish people, the majority, and we decree and declare all goodness for the Jewish people.

His grandson, the Yitav Lev, who was present on that occasion, wondered why the tzaddik was going on at length in a pilpul when it would have been more appropriate to arouse the listeners to t'shuva. He immediately put the thought aside in his faith in the tzaddik.

On Motzaei Shabbos the Yismach Moshe suddenly turned to him and said, "You should know, that when Moshiach comes and they will give me the honor to say a drasha, I will not be embarrassed to say that drush in front of Moshiach."

SICK FROM GREAT SORROW

In the years prior to 5600 (1840), there was a spiritual arousal among the Jews of Poland, Lithuania, and Russia. Everybody believed that in the year 5600, Moshiach would come. Admurim and rabbanim found sources that indicated that Moshiach would come that year. The Zohar on Parshas Noach says that in 600 years of the sixth millennium, the gates of

would reach a ripe old age and Moshiach would still not have come, he surely would not have been able to bear that, but You, Master of the universe misled me from time to time until I became old ... Therefore I ask of you, Master of the universe, that Moshiach should come now. Master of the universe, You know the truth that I don't look at my own benefit and that I give over my nefesh, ruach and neshama for the honor of Your name."

The Yismach Moshe passed away on 28 Tamuz 5601 (1841), at the age of 82. Thousands escorted him on his final journey and he was buried to the right of his wife, who had died the year before. On the doorway of his Ohel over his gravesite it says the verse, "And

Moshe would take the tent and pitch it outside the camp."

His spiritual legacy continues to illuminate the way, with his enormous anticipation for the Geula, along with his famous s'farim, the *Yismach Moshe* on Tanach and Midrash, *Heishiv Moshe*, a book of halachic responsa and *T'filla L'Moshe* on T'hillim.

His descendants became leaders of the communities of Sighet and Satmar.

He was said to have known of his past *gilgulim* (incarnations), saying that he lived once before in the time of Moshe and once during the time of the destruction of the first Beis HaMikdash, and in a previous gilgul he was a sheep in Yaakov Avinu's flock.

He was once learning Parshas Korach with his grandson, and the Yitav Lev made a comment showing that he didn't think much of Korach.

The Yismach Moshe admonished him saying that we have no idea how great Korach was. In fact, added the Yismach Moshe, he himself was a gilgul from the generation of the desert and had been unsure who to follow in that conflict, since this seemed to be a valid argument between the two greatest men of the generation.

His grandson then asked him, "If so, what did you do and how did you save yourself?" The Yismach Moshe said "Not wanting to be part of the *machlokes*, I ran into my tent and closed the door tightly. I refused to come out until it was all over."

ADD IN ACTS
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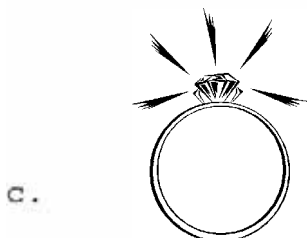
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'CAST LEAD'

MIRACLES

By Nosson Avrohom

“For Your miracles that You do each day for us, and for Your wonders at all times, evening and morning and afternoon...” * This phrase from the davening is what those living in the South say with special fervor, for they don’t just believe it; they have lived it. * Our correspondent went to the South and collected some of the many miracles there, which he publicizes here in order to hasten the Geula.

Last Monday morning, Meir Ben Zikari, resident of Sderot, held a piece of a Kassam that had blasted into a kindergarten where his wife and son were when the rocket landed.

“We have no one, no one to help us. Fortunately, G-d does miracles for us. If not for Him, we’d have rows and rows of bodies here. Every Kassam that does not kill people is a miracle.”

Another resident, Elisheva Turgeman, owner of a house that was largely destroyed by a direct hit, found it hard to speak after the terrible experience she went through. “We were home with the

children. There was an explosion and the house was hit. We managed to take shelter and it was a miracle, a huge miracle! I still don’t believe we made it out alive.”

This kind of talk is being heard more and more over the past weeks and not only from residents in the South, whose houses were hit and who were saved, but from people in the media and cynical journalists. The latter reported on the war but were dumbfounded time and again by the extent of the destruction caused by the Kassam rockets and Grad missiles where they made direct hits, while the human damage was nil.

In many cases, the missiles landed in places teeming with people and did not explode like what happened last week very near the shul at one of the kibbutzim. The shul was full of people at the time.

“A great tragedy was prevented. It could have ended with loss of life,” said Yonit, a resident of the kibbutz.

Last week, I went down south again, to the city that has absorbed most of the rockets and missiles these past eight years, in order to hear about the miracles firsthand. It seems that in this city, there is almost no one who has not experienced a miracle over the past years. All I had to do was ask around in order to hear the stories.

I spoke to three women, mekuravos of the Chabad house run by Rabbi Moshe Zev Pizem and his wife Sima. In recent years, the Chabad house has become a lighthouse for the people of Sderot who turn to the shluchim when they need help, whether material – food and clothing, or spiritual – checking mezuzos, etc., and for moral support – a listening ear and words of encouragement.

WHERE DID HE COME FROM?

The first home we visited was that of Mrs. Sophie Cohen, who lives on Yirmiyahu Street, only about 400 meters away from Beit Chanun, where most of the rockets are shot from.

“People don’t understand how close we are to them. Out of the window of my house I can see when the rockets are shot with the trail of smoke behind them. It was frustrating to watch. To our delight, we just recently got to watch not only the terrorists’ work but the work of our army and the shelling and bombing of the Arab neighborhood, which has caused us

so much suffering for eight years now.”

Mrs. Cohen described the morning of the miracle as any other morning.

“At eight o’clock we heard the siren go off which alerts us to enter the protected areas because a missile is going to land in a few seconds. We don’t have a shelter near our house and even if we had, in the seconds between the siren sounding and the landing of the missile, there is no time to go out to one.

“Our son Nitzan’s room became our protected room because it is located on the first floor of the house and the walls are made of cement, unlike our bedroom and our daughters’ room. My daughters were on the first floor, as was my husband who was getting ready to go to shul.

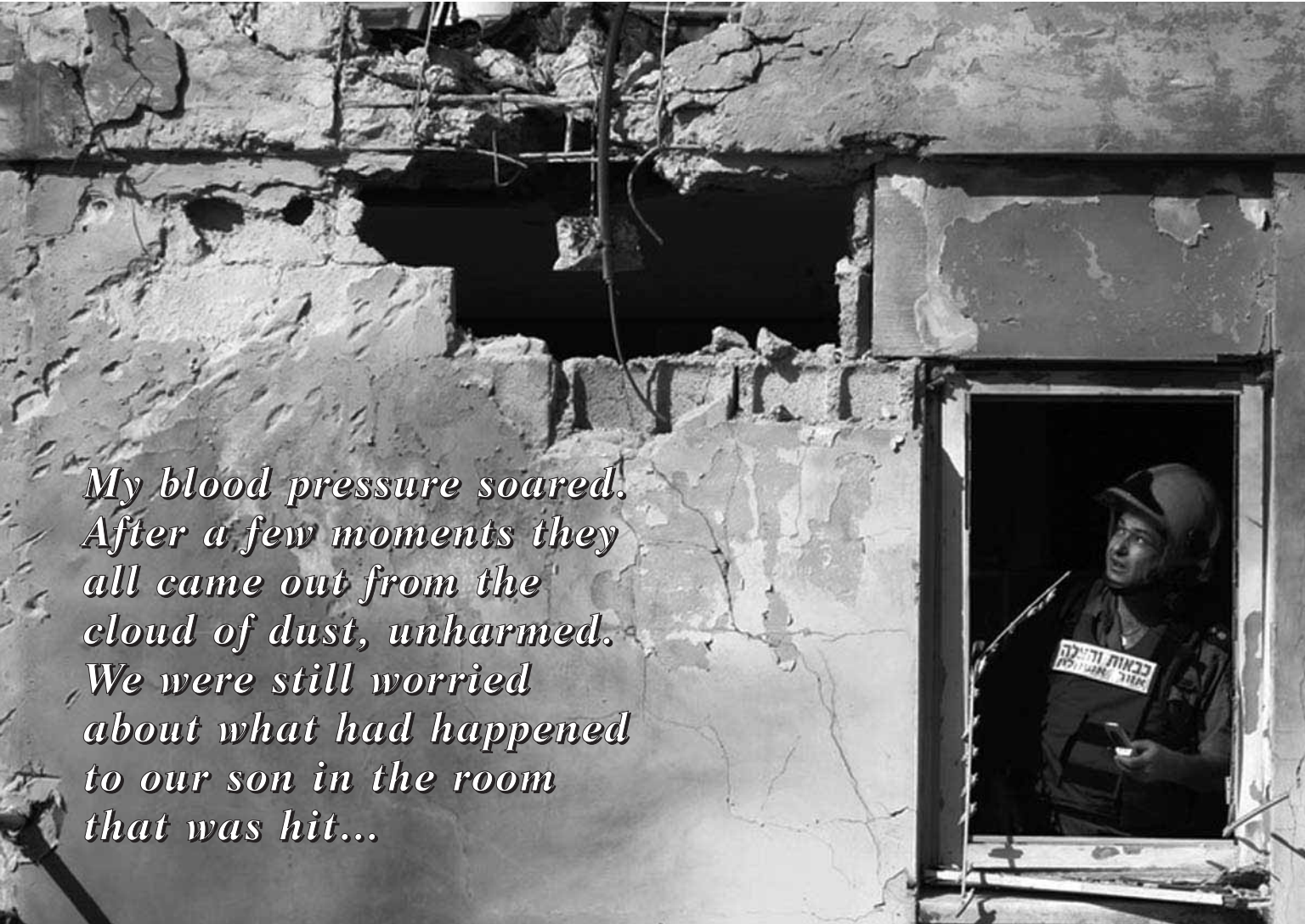
“The big problem was that our son had locked his door before going to sleep and none of us could get into his room. He was sleeping deeply and didn’t hear the siren. I lay in bed and anticipated hearing the

blast, as always. A few seconds went by and I jumped up at the sound of a powerful explosion. I realized the missile had landed nearby this time.

“How near? I saw the answer to that question when I went down the stairs to the first floor and encountered a cloud of smoke coming from my son’s room. I called out to my children and husband and no one answered. My blood pressure soared. After a few moments they all came out from the cloud of dust, unharmed. We were still worried about what had happened to our son in the room that was hit.

“A few minutes went by and my son knocked at the front door. He seemed calm and he said he wasn’t hurt. We didn’t understand where he was coming from since I knew he had been sleeping and hadn’t left the house.

“He asked us to go outside with him so we could appreciate the enormity of the miracle. What happened was, a missile had penetrated the wall of his



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After a few moments they
all came out from the
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room and had made an opening the size of a door and had hit a closet and incinerated all the clothes and the other items in it, but the explosive material and shrapnel landed outside the room. The actual missile fell on his bed which caused light burns on his back. He exited through the new 'door' and reentered the house through the front door.

"When I saw what destruction the missile had wreaked in his room and the shed outside, I gave my son a big hug. I am sure that it was because this son, and his brother who slept near him, always help out the minyan that Hashem did this open miracle for them.

"The shutters and windows throughout the house were lifted out of their places and shattered. The rooms that were untouched were the two rooms on the top floor. The balcony was destroyed and we still have pieces of the missile stuck in the trees in our yard. The protected room is riddled with holes, testimony to the big miracle we had. That morning I was given my children as gifts. Only someone who saw the house would understand.

"You can fix a house and we fixed it already and we even built a protected room, but health and the life of your children you can't fix. Since then, I thank and praise Hashem for the miracle.

"My daughters and husband were also saved when they couldn't go into my son's room as they usually did, because it was locked. That prevented them from injury and worse.

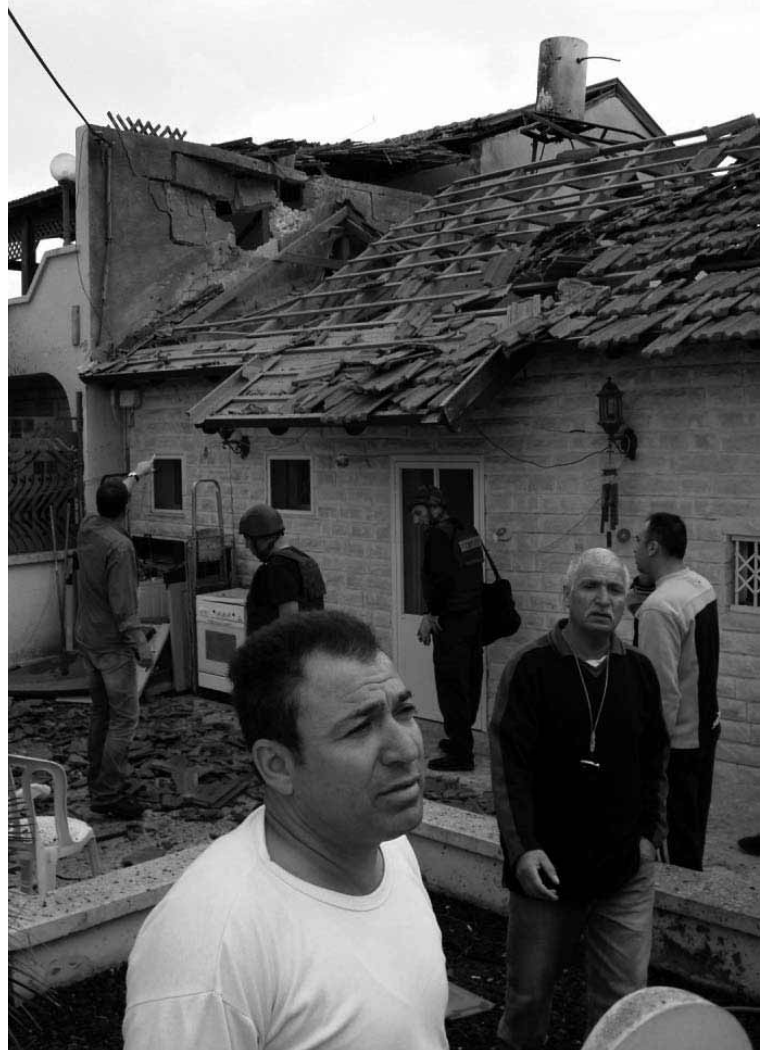
"Another amazing thing, which was reported in the media, was that I found my son's t'fillin in the wreckage. They were fine and clean even though the heat and fire had destroyed the clothes in the closet and turned them to ashes. Even the plastic holder of the t'fillin didn't melt."

THE SOLDIERS LOOKED FOR THE OLD NEIGHBOR AND WERE SAVED

The second home we visited was the home of Mrs. Sima Malka, a neighbor of the Pizem family. Sima, like many women in Sderot, expresses her emuna when she talks. She is well-known in town for the club for seniors that she runs.

"Each time there is a Code Red, I gather the women in the safe room and we read the Shir HaMaalos from the T'hilim. That's what protects us. Throughout the years we have seen missiles land in front of us and behind us, but not near us.

"We received orders from the rear guard not to open the club and so it's been closed since the war began. Every day I get a phone call from another woman who pleads with me to open up."



The story she experienced happened two weeks ago, at the beginning of the war.

"Erev Shabbos, when I finished getting ready for Shabbos, I went with my husband to stay with my son. We left Sderot. I was thrilled to get away a bit and rest up from the tension in the city. My joy wasn't complete though since my neighbor, Miriam Ezra, an old woman, remained alone at home. Every Shabbos I would visit her and spend time with her. On Friday, I went up to see her and say goodbye and I saw that her son had come to visit her.

"She doesn't like to leave her house but when I saw that her son who lives in a different neighborhood was with her, I asked him to take his mother to his house. At first she refused but she finally agreed. When I returned home on Motzaei Shabbos, I saw that her house was dark and I concluded that she hadn't come home yet. Later on I found out that her son had asked

her to stay with him for a few days because of the war. She argued with him but he insisted and she remained with him.

"Sunday morning we awoke to the sound of an explosion. We felt that the missile had landed nearby. Since we have no safe room to hide in, my husband and I hide under a big block of cement and that's what we did that time too. After a few minutes passed we went out and after we checked that all was in order, we went outside to see where the missile had landed. How shocked we were to see that it had fallen on our neighbor's house.

"What a miracle! At that time, all the houses in the area were full of people and it was only her house that was empty. Hashem directed the missile to the empty house. When we got closer to the house we were sorry to see it was completely destroyed. Nothing remained of it.

"Even our house, which is somewhat at a distance from her house, was damaged. The power of the impact made the chandelier fall and the windows broke and the air conditioner fell. There is also a big crack all along the wall of the living room. The walls of my house are decorated with pictures of tzaddikim and rabbanim, including the Lubavitcher Rebbe and his father, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok, which we got at a women's convention organized by the Chabad house.

"The newspaper photographer who came to take pictures pointed out that despite the crack in the wall and that our belongings crashed, the pictures of the tzaddikim were all intact. They didn't fall or crack.

"My neighbor is presently in a hotel in Netanya until her house is rebuilt.

"This was not the first miracle we had. Every day we see the hand of G-d. At the beginning of the war

there were soldiers who distributed devices to the elderly with which they could hear the siren better. The soldiers visited us too and I asked them to bring more of these gadgets for other neighbors of mine, the Ben-Chamu family, where the wife is a cripple and the husband is not well.

"They looked for them and didn't find them and they came back to me so I could show them where to go. As soon as they entered my house, we heard an explosion. The soldiers who are not used to this shook from the power of the blast. Afterwards, we went to see where the missile landed.

"We were stunned to see that the missile had landed right on the Ben-Chamu house. It was miraculous that the soldiers hadn't found them a few seconds earlier.

That saved their lives. The house was destroyed and it was miraculous that Mrs. Ben-Chamu got out with only light injuries. The room she was in was the only room that was not affected.

"We see Hashem doing miracles for us while the Arabs don't have this Heavenly protection. Some Arabs worked for us recently, fixing up the house. One of them broke his leg and another one broke his arm when they ran for shelter in fear of Kassams."

THE WOMEN OF SDEROT ARE MADE OF TOUGH STUFF

We found Mrs. Bas-Sheva Levy at home, exhausted and worried. Her oldest son was serving in the Golani brigade and she hadn't

A BOOK OF MIRACLES

After eight years of Kassam rockets being shot at Sderot, a book called *Tzeva Adom* (Code Red) was published which tells some of the stories of the families who were hit by rockets and documents the many miracles that people in the area have experienced.

The author of the book, Netanel Serusi, did not focus on the pain, fear and anger but chose to collect fifty stories of families who were miraculously saved.

"The idea for the book came to me after constantly reading reports in the paper about the miracles that were happening. I decided to visit the families and tell their stories. It's amazing how close they were to death and how almost nothing happened to them."

One of the stories in the book happened to the Almakais family, Yehuda and Chali. One Friday they were getting ready for Shabbos and close to Shabbos, Chali said to Yehuda:

"Let's go to my relatives in Ashkelon."

He told her that they had prepared everything already for Shabbos but she insisted they go.

"We took all our pots and food and went to her relatives. When Shabbos was over we tarried a bit with Havdala and then as soon as we turned on the phone we got a message that a rocket had destroyed our house."

In the book the story is told about the Dahan family who had a Hachnasas Seifer Torah and when the wife went into the shul to bring the key, a rocket hit just where she had been standing a moment before.



heard from him in two weeks.

"I know he is deep in Gaza but aside from that, I haven't heard a thing. Our last conversation was before the war began and he told me, 'Ima, I'm going now to protect our home.'"

Like other women in Sderot who are strong with emuna, Mrs.

Levy believes and hopes. She prays that her son, like the rest of the soldiers, will return home in good health.

"Even in the media they concede that big miracles are taking place here every day," she says.

"Our personal miracle happened

on Friday, at 8:05, minutes after sending the children to school. I was about to get ready for Shabbos. It had been a wintry week and that day the sun came out. I wanted to hang up the laundry outside to take advantage of the nice day but for some reason I didn't go out. It was as though an

THE ROOF CAVED IN, THE HOUSE WAS DESTROYED, BUT RIVKA IS ALIVE

This is the amazing story of the Cohen family of Netivot:

"I was sitting at home on the couch when I heard the siren," said Mrs. Rivka Cohen. "I got up and stood in the small hallway and heard an explosion. I didn't realize it was my house that had been hit even though it was so powerful. Then things began falling on me and I fell to the ground. I wanted to get up but couldn't, because all the books and shelves had fallen on me. Two men took me out in an ambulance. My house began to collapse since it was made of plaster and wood."

Rivka said that the nearest shelter was too far to get to and they chose a place that was relatively safe.

"It's not exactly a bomb shelter but it's somewhat protected because it's indoors and has some walls. The entire house was destroyed and it's a miracle that I'm alive. We left the house with our Shabbos clothes and there is nothing to go back to. We have no money or documents."

Yisrael, Rivka's husband relates, "I was in shul and my wife was home alone. I heard the explosion but I didn't think it was my house. A child came over to me and said a missile had landed on my house. A neighbor told me not to worry because my wife had only been lightly wounded. It's simply a miracle. Even the most secular will tell you so. Hashem protected us."





inner force stopped me. I never had such a strange feeling. I stayed indoors and left the mountain of laundry where it was. Only a few minutes went by and I heard a deafening explosion that I still haven't recovered from.

"People who did not see or experience it won't understand the terror and destruction it causes. I have invited my friends from the center of the country to come and see what our lives are like and what we are saved from on a daily basis. People think it's a flying object that can't cause damage but it's much worse than that.

"After a few minutes of shock, I recovered enough to go outside and see that a missile had landed in the front of the house, precisely where I was planning to stand and hang laundry. It penetrated the wall and entered one of the rooms, destroying everything in its path and making holes all over, thanks to the shrapnel. If I would have been standing there, I would not have survived. Hashem saved me.

"Whoever lives in Sderot has experienced more than one miracle. Two weeks ago, my son in the

army came to the area preparatory to entering Gaza. He and some friends stayed in an orchard near Sderot and I bought some things to bring to them. When we were on our way home, after visiting them, a soldier on the road motioned to us that there was a Code Red. We left the car and took cover in a cement bus stop. After a long moment, we heard the missile land and we continued driving.

"A few minutes later, my son called and said there was another siren. We stopped again and got out and took shelter. This time, the missile landed closer. We drove back a ways and saw that the station where we had hidden before had sustained a direct hit and was shattered. I don't want to think what would have happened if we had remained there longer than we did.

"The miracles keep happening. On Sunday, a miracle took place that had the entire city talking about it. An acquaintance of mine hides in the safest spot in her house whenever there is a Code Red. That day she was tired, lying in bed, and she didn't hear the

siren. The missile hit her house precisely in the spot where she would hide. The house was demolished. It was a frightening sight. The only area which was not affected was the room she was in."

MIRACLES ON THE FRONT TOO

It's not only the civilians who are experiencing miracles. Soldiers in the line of fire also have miracle stories to relate. Situations which, under natural circumstances, could have ended in tragedy, ended miraculously. If you count the number of injured and dead in this war, you can see how miraculous it was.

Major Mickey Sharvit, commander of a combat armored division, related the miracles that he and his friends personally witnessed in the alleyways of Gaza. Looking out for a possible encounter with terrorists, carefully moving among the booby traps and getting the wounded out while under fire, are only some of the things he had to deal with.

Sharvit explained that this time, the military preparations began way before the actual entry into the Gaza Strip. The tanks which he led worked closely with the commander of the Golani brigade, Avi Peled.

"The fighting is done without seeing the enemy, for the most part. It's all happening underground. The terrorists jump out from the ground where they have an underground city, and this tactic forces us to move very cautiously. In one incident, we approached a house and discovered forty gas balloons. In another building there was a tunnel underneath it that was designed for kidnapping soldiers."

He said that the combat tension helps keep the tank crew on high alert. On one trip, one of the tanks

ran over a powerful low lying charge but the heavy armor plate saved the soldiers from harm. In another incident, his men noticed an RPG which was shot at a bulldozer.

“We shot at it and hit the missile in the air, destroying it two meters before it would have hit the bulldozer!”

A day after three soldiers were killed, Sharvit and his men escorted Golani and engineering forces and came upon a building with a terrorist cell in it.

“Our goal was to isolate the house. On the second floor were two terrorists. It was feared they would attempt a kidnapping.”

Another tank shot at the building and hit the terrorists but that wasn’t the end of it.

“Another three terrorists were identified behind the house among the dense trees. We shot at them and tossed grenades and they didn’t stand a chance.”

THE KIBBUTZNIKIM CLAIM MIRACLES

Miracles aren’t happening only in settlements in the south or on the battlefield, but in the Shefeila valley too. On Day 11 of the war, the terrorists shot a Grad missile which exploded near a house in Gedera. Magen Dovid Edom reported that Shir Inbar, a three month old baby, was lightly wounded and some people were treated for shock.

***“I heard the siren
and like we used
to do in school, I
went down to the
shelter. I called
my father and
suddenly there
was a loud noise.
It was scary.
When I went out I
saw that our dog
had been killed.”***

“The Kadron family bore the brunt of the attack when their dog was killed by shrapnel while it was outside in the yard. Shir, a 12 year old girl, was saved. She was in a ground floor room when she heard the siren and she ran to the shelter. The room she had been in a moment earlier was completely demolished.

She related, “I heard the siren and like we used to do in school, I went down to the shelter. I called my father and suddenly there was a loud noise. It was scary. When I went out I saw that our dog had been killed.”

Her father, Avital Kadron, who came from work in a hurry,

couldn’t believe the miracle.

“There is no other word to describe what happened. Seconds earlier, my daughter was in the room that is now completely destroyed. If she had stayed there, she would not have survived.”

A Kassam rocket was shot and landed in kibbutz Karmiya, south of Ashkelon, and terrorized three people: an eight month old baby, the mother of the baby, and the grandmother, who were treated for shock.

The baby’s grandmother, Galina Pavelotzki related:

“I was outside, hanging up laundry. We wanted to put the baby to sleep and my daughter tried but the baby cried and she took her out to the living room.”

The siren went off and she tried to run for shelter.

“I didn’t manage to make it to the protected room. The rocket hit the house and entered the room.”

One of the neighbors said that the baby had gotten a vaccine that morning, which is why she had been crying. The mother of the baby took her from her room to the living room and within minutes, the Kassam hit the baby’s crib.

“The baby was saved and she saved their lives,” said the neighbor.

Ayelet, who lives on the kibbutz, agrees. “Everybody realizes that this was a big miracle. We saw how everything was destroyed.”



MAKING GEULA A REALITY

By Rabbi Shimon Weitzhandler

You want to generate wealth? Then learn the sicha of Parshas Truma 5752. You want to change the way of thinking and the awareness of people so they understand and internalize that the Nasi HaDor is the Moshiach of the Dor? Learn the kuntres “Beis Rabbeinu Sh’B’Bavel” and Chayei Sara 5752.

THE POWER OF TORAH

In a maamer Chassidus from 5744, the Rebbe quotes the Midrash on the verse (T’hillim 83:2), “G-d, do not hold Your silence; be not silent and be not still, Almighty.” The Midrash says that the verse refers to tzaddikim – “and Your nation are all tzaddikim” who tell Hashem what to do. They tell Him not to sleep and He wakes up. They tell Him not to be silent and he looks out for the good of the Jewish people.

Then the Rebbe brings the parable that Hashem is like a person in the hands of his fellow, as it were. The Jewish people “take Him by the hand and lead Him wherever they want to go.” The question is, how?

The Rebbe answers, through Torah. The Torah has the power. “Whoever studies (*ha’koreh*,

reads/calls) the Torah” – Torah study is referred to as “calling.” Through Torah, we call out to the Creator and tell Him what to do, as it were.

In the sicha of Pesach Sheini 5751, the Rebbe says that a Jew must “shake up the entire Seider Hishtalshlus” in order to bring, *b’poal mamash*, with all explanations of *mamash*, and in the most literal way, the immediate hisgalus of the Rebbe MH”M. How can we open people’s eyes to see the Geula reality? The Rebbe revealed to us the code to effecting change in Creation, including having an influence on Hashem Himself, as it were. It is done through the Torah.

This explains what lies behind the concept, “learning inyanei Moshiach and Geula.” It’s not

mere learning to increase our knowledge; the goal is to make an impact through Torah.

Today, *baruch Hashem*, the Rebbe has moved us into Geula. Back in the time of the Rebbe Rayatz, however, the latter told a story from the time of the Baal Shem Tov about the period of galus. In a certain place in Russia, a decree was made against the Jews. The Baal Shem Tov sent R’ Chaim Rappaport to annul the decree. R’ Chaim Rappaport was a genius in Toras HaNigla and he was being sent to the place of the decree to study Rambam’s Laws of Brachos in depth in order to draw down brachos to the Jewish people.

The Rebbe chose us. He gave us this shlichus to learn – to call Hashem – through the Torah, and to bring about the Geula. For it says, “He looked into Torah, and created the world.”

The Torah is the code of Creation and Torah study is not intended merely to acquire more knowledge but to accomplish things through Torah. Therefore, it is obvious that when looking for what to learn, we have to ask ourselves, what effect do we want to have on the world?

You want to generate wealth? Then learn the sicha of Parshas Truma 5752. You want to change the way of thinking and the awareness of people so they

understand and internalize that the Nasi HaDor is the Moshiach of the Dor? Learn the kuntres “Beis Rabbeinu Sh’B’Bavel” and Chayei Sara 5752. In other words, the goal is not only to convince them with ideas but to instill this reality, as it is in Torah, within the parameters of the world.

In connection with the ability to change the world through the reality of Torah, the Rebbe quotes the Zohar that when the “world needed rain” in the time of Choni HaM’agel, the rain fell because of his prayer. He said, “I am not budging,” until his request was fulfilled.

However, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, master of P’nimius ha’Torah, revealed a new form of avoda. When they asked him for rain, he said Torah on the verse, “How good and how pleasant” and it rained.

The Rebbe concludes: From this we see that the instruction for every Jew, in order to make something happen in the world, is to use the channel that Rashbi opened, learning something that corresponds to the thing you need.

By studying Torah you connect to the most basic core of existence, thereby affecting Creation. If so, then learning inyanei Moshiach and Geula is the Alef-Beis of “do all that you can.” With this horaa, the Rebbe set the stage for the teachings of Nun-Alef-Nun-Beis.

CONNECTING TO THE LOCOMOTIVE

In the sicha of Parshas Chayei Sara, the

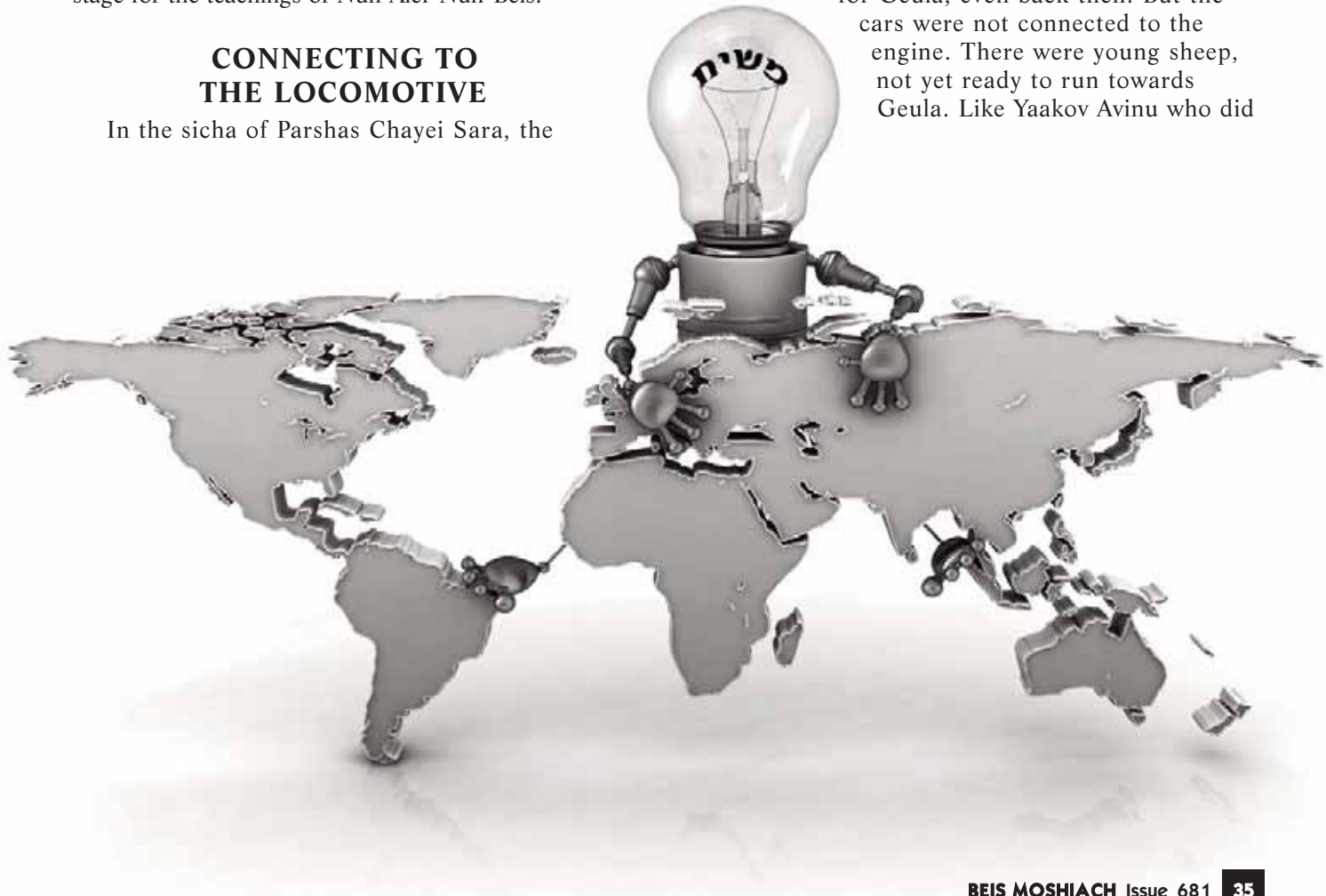
Rebbe makes another point – that learning entails the concept of “*kabbalas p’nei Moshiach*.” What does “*kabbalas*” (receiving) mean? That a person becomes a keili to it, connected. The idea is to connect with and unite with Melech HaMoshiach. He is already in a state of Geula. He is already redeemed and the Geula is a reality to him.

What’s the problem then? It’s like the story that the Rebbe refers to in the sicha of Yud-Tes Kislev in one of the early years, in the name of the Rebbe Rayatz:

In the early days of locomotive travel, an engineer was being trained how to operate a train. After all the instructions he entered the locomotive and followed the rules. He put in coal, heated up the motor, blew the whistle, and moved the handle. He felt himself suddenly speeding along, much faster than he anticipated.

He didn’t understand what was going on (and at this point the Rebbe cried and then continued) until he saw that the train compartments were disconnected from the locomotive. The Rebbe said that for the Rebbe Rayatz “L’Alter l’Geula, L’Alter

l’t’shuva” means actually preparedness for Geula, even back then! But the cars were not connected to the engine. There were young sheep, not yet ready to run towards Geula. Like Yaakov Avinu who did



not go up to Mt. Seir because “I have suckling sheep.”

In 5752, the Rebbe says: How do we bridge this gap between the people and the Nasi HaDor-Melech HaMoshiach, who is himself ready and redeemed from all matters? Through the study of Torah people can unite with him, as it says in *Tanya*, chapter 5 – that learning constitutes the ultimate unity (of one’s mind with the topic studied); such that there does not exist such a wondrous unity b’gashmius. When people study the D’var Malchus, which is what “Moshiach has on his mind,” they **connect** with the Rebbe. It’s the connection between the king and his people, connecting the cars to the locomotive.

LEARNING INYANEI MOSHIACH AND GEULA

So learning inyanei Moshiach and Geula is not just another detail, like increasing in Torah, t’filla and tz’daka; it is the whole point! Torah study is the means to accomplish all the other things.

There’s a fantastic sicha on the Midrash, “A person with a headache should study Torah. If his heart aches, he should study Torah. If his foot aches, he should study Torah.” The Rebbe, on Purim 5747, smiled as he described a person learning and wanting to try out this prescription. After all, he is a “believer, son of a believer,” so he opens the book but still has a headache! Why?

The Rebbe tells us how it works. The “miniature world” – i.e., man – can be found within Torah. If his head hurts, and he finds the “head” within Torah, he will feel better. If his foot hurts, he needs to find “foot” within Torah and he will feel better, and so on.

What’s needed is to find in

Torah that portion which fits your situation. We, who live on the threshold of Geula, need to choose sections of Torah that have to do with Moshiach and Geula. Within Torah itself, which changes the world, we need to emphasize the study of Geula and Moshiach.

***The Rebbe said
that for the Rebbe
Rayatz “L’Alter
l’Geula, L’Alter
l’t’shuva” means
actually
preparedness for
Geula, even back
then! But the cars
were not
connected to the
engine.***

GEFILTE TORAH

In the D’var Malchus of Parshas Emor, the Rebbe explains another point. The Rambam writes that he does not need to bring proofs from the Prophets on the topic of Moshiach since “all the s’farim are full of it.”

In a footnote, the Rebbe explains the meaning of the word “full” and translates it to Yiddish, “*ungefilt*” (lit., stuffed, as in gefilte fish). From the outside, it looks different, but inside, the p’nimius is full of inyanei Moshiach. How can we say that we are stuffed full of Moshiach and Geula?

It says that “the Torah a person learned in this world is *hevel* (steam, air; i.e., vacuous) compared to the Torah of Moshiach.” Doesn’t this disparage the Torah that we learn now?

Hevel is the steam that fills the kitchen when you take the cover off the pot. Yet, you have something of the soup in the vapor. That is the explanation that Chassidus gives to this statement of Chazal. It means that the Torah of Moshiach is what is “cooking in the pot” and the rest of the Torah is also the Torah of Geula but in a way of hevel. And here, the Rebbe gives a new horaa: to redeem the Torah itself, to reveal within it, throughout it, inyanei Moshiach.

We will take an example from learning *Tanya*. We are told in all the sichos of the D’var Malchus to learn Chassidus because it was said to Rabbi Shimon regarding p’nimius ha’Torah: With your composition, they will go out of galus with mercy. A certain Chabad house invited people to learn *Tanya* and the title they gave it was: “*Tanya* – the Psychology of Yemos HaMoshiach.”

In *Tanya* there are opposites: half the book is Musar and half is G-dliness. Half deals in depth with all aspects of the human condition, about the complications and frustrations of the animal soul. But we can’t forget the other half!

Indeed, it is possible to study *Tanya* in the most galus-like manner! One can sit the entire time and learn it as a Musar. I hear tapes of shiurim in which they constantly speak about themselves and their problems, their limitations. True, it says that in *Tanya* too, but it is how a person with galus-eyes learns *Tanya* with his galus perspective. The sad thing is that when they

get up to the part that talks about “ahava rabba” (great love for Hashem) the lecturer says, “That’s not for us. We just learn through this.”

That is galus learning! If we place the emphasis in the right places, we will discover Geula in every chapter. Geula. Let the Alter Rebbe express himself. Let him talk. Don’t stop him. Don’t limit him. The *Tanya* describes the healthy way of life of a neshama in Yemos HaMoshiach.

From time to time we compare what we are learning to our own situation and we dismiss what we learn with, “Halevai ...” But in Emor 5751, the Rebbe declared that what it says in chapter 16 of *Tanya* – that not every Jew can attain the level of tzaddik through his own avoda – is no longer relevant because in our generation, everyone can be a tzaddik. So let the Alter Rebbe speak and don’t cover up the *Tanya*!

There was once a *Tanya* shiur on some radio station and the lecturer taught chapter 2 on the topic of “Roshei Alfei Yisroel.” He explained it nicely, how the brain operates the entire body and then he added (I am sure he did so unintentionally), “Okay, now is not the time to get into politics as to who is the Rosh Alfei Yisroel.”

That is what is meant by “the Sh’china is in galus.” What made him say that? Because he’s a practical person and he prepared the shiur. But he did not let the Alter Rebbe speak. Let him reveal the Rebbe MH”M! Let him explain the love that we received as an inheritance! And don’t add on, “Halevai on us” or “Halevai beinoni.” That’s all.

HOW TO GIVE A GEULA SHIUR

We will take Hilchos Shabbos as another example. It is possible to reveal Geula in countless examples from Hilchos Shabbos. Yemos HaMoshiach is described as “a day that is entirely Shabbos.”

The one who gives the shiur should have, as a minimum, the book “From Exile to Redemption.”

(In 5745 they wanted to publish it but the Rebbe did not permit it. In 5751, the Rebbe gave his bracha and even edited the introduction!) One of the sichos there deals with timing – from what time a person can accept the Shabbos. If a woman decides on Friday, at eleven o’clock in the morning, that she wants to bring in the Shabbos, is that permitted?

The Rebbe brings the *Bayis Chadash* in Hilchos Shabbos which says that in earlier times there was a place where they davened Maariv during the daytime. They recited Kiddush, ate the Shabbos meal, walked on the banks of the river, and upon

their return it was still day! Why is this fact cited in halacha? The answer is in order to resolve a technical problem, to tell us when we can bring in the Shabbos.

And what does the Rebbe learn from this? **That in earlier times, the rabbis paskened that Erev Shabbos, while still broad daylight, a Jew can welcome Moshiach Tzidkeinu!** He can daven Maariv of Yemos HaMoshiach, eat the meal of the Shor HaBar and the Leviasan. He can take a stroll and it will still be daytime!

Even if, according to the clock of history, the time isn’t ripe, halacha says it is possible, even if it isn’t the time written on the calendar.

If we bear in mind that the word “Shabbos”

is interchangeable with “Geula,” then a Moshiach spirit will suffuse the shiur on Hilchos Shabbos.

WHEN A MESHICHIST GIVES A SHIUR

I was at a shiur given by a Lubavitcher on Hilchos Shabbos. The audience was not Lubavitch. At the end of the shiur someone asked, “Tell me, are you a Meshichist?”

The rabbi asked, “What is a Meshichist?”

The man answered, “Nu, someone who says the



Rebbe is chai v'kayam."

The Lubavitcher said Yes and the man said, "I noticed that in the shiur." The rabbi was greatly surprised and the man explained, "I saw that you are not ashamed of Chabad. You said every halacha according to the Alter Rebbe and you didn't give us a speech about this one holding this way and that one holding another way."

This story illustrates how a Chassid ought to learn and teach Hilchos Shabbos. The Alter Rebbe is the final word. Chabad is bringing the Geula. Therefore, everybody ought to learn according to Chabad. That is how a Meshichist gives a shiur.

He doesn't need to look under the table for inyanei Moshiach. **It's all Geula!**

I once read a panel discussion in *Beis Moshiach* about preparing a good shiur. Our goal is to have more and more shiurim. One of the people interviewed said a line that remains with me. "The shiur will be good when you have a goal and know what you want from the people. Otherwise, you will constantly feel you are missing something." That means, you can give a wonderful shiur and everybody will enjoy it, but if you don't have a goal, the shiur missed the mark from the outset. So when you prepare a shiur, you have to answer this question: What do I want from my audience today?

If you are a Meshichist, you automatically know what you want: kabbalas ha'malchus of the Rebbe MH"M. So every week, in every shiur, you bring this out from a different angle. It could be from the parsha or anything else.

I heard the following story from Rabbi Friedman, shliach in Ohr Yehuda. Unfortunately, people don't listen to what the Rebbe said about shleimus

ha'Aretz and as a result, there was a period of time when residents of Ohr Yehuda were killed in terror attacks.

R' Friedman went to a memorial service and it was very difficult. He wanted to console the people but he also wanted to talk about the Rebbe. He wondered, "How can I open my words of consolation with the Rebbe?"

Since the boy who was murdered had studied in a yeshiva high school, rabbanim were

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present who spoke about handling loss. He did not know what to say until he finally decided, "I have the Rebbe and I'm going with him!"

He began by explaining that the Rebbe says that the words of consolation, "*HaMakom yinachem es'chem*," means that just as the only real consolation of the mourners of Zion is the Beis HaMikdash, so too, the only consolation for every Jew who is mourning is the Resurrection of

the Dead. Then he began to explain, based on the *Igros Kodesh* on this topic, how the dead will arise.

The rabbis looked at him cynically as though to say, "That! That is what you came to say? That is how you console a bereaved person?"

Yet, he said, "When I spoke, I felt I had broken through, and in the end, **every time** I meet them, they say to me, 'HaRav, of all the speakers, we remember your speech about T'chiyas HaMeisim.'"

That's right. The Rebbe's teachings had the greatest impact.

THE WORLD IS CRYING OUT: GEULA!

The abysmal lack in the public sphere has become tangible and painful for **all**. A lack of direction, a lack of a goal, for all of us, for the world, in politics, science, it's no longer a secret... Today, everyone can feel, and indeed people do feel, that the world lacks direction. Although no one dares to talk about it, it's an open secret in the world today.

People sense that everything is just talk; it's all void of any real meaning, and nobody debates it at all. The problem is not another personal problem, localized, mine or someone else's. It's not another decree of some wicked king. Today, it is clear, that even if the wicked one dies (or is already dead) and he is hung (or already hung), and there is money and shoes for the children, there is nothing else to look forward to! Nothing we have will make things right! The world is full of unprecedented good things, but it is empty, completely empty!

Since the dispersal of the Dor Haflaga, humanity yearns to return to a world with one leader. It always seems as if that ideal is

becoming ever more remote from our world. But the joke is that now, of all times, everyone has come to the same realization, agreed upon by all (and the dream of every generation), that there is one thing missing, and in a big way: **The ultimate goal!** This is not about finding an individual solution to some personal problem or another, because despite having everything, everything is lacking. All of existence is infinitely lacking: it is infinitely lacking Geula!

TO RATCHET UP THE PUBLIC PROCLAMATIONS

The avoda now (for everyone!) is like the avoda of Avrohom Avinu, Moshe Rabbeinu, and Rabbi Akiva: to get up and cry out – to make Hakhel gatherings. **“To proclaim and announce in every place – with words that come**

from the heart – that Hashem says (through His servant, the Prophets), to each and every Jew...” (guess what).

Naturally, the delicate “self” doesn’t exactly feel comfortable with this wild behavior. This shouting, the primitiveness of it doesn’t suit him. He is an intellectual and still hasn’t internalized and understood enough. He is not superficial, so he is not willing to do things that he does not fully relate to (i.e., that don’t give him pleasure – the spiritual sort, of course!).

And this comes along with concerns of k’dusha, cloaked in pious humility, which shudders at the coarseness of this orphaned generation. “Woe onto us, there was once a time...”

“And it should be added and emphasized that the proclamation and publicity of all this ought to be **also by those** who maintain that they haven’t yet absorbed this

inyan (in its entirety) in their understanding, grasp, and awareness. They can and therefore, they must, publicize this to others, starting with the members of their households who certainly do not need to ‘suffer’ because it is still not settled in his mind.”

A final word – how do we get a little **p’nimius** nowadays? You won’t believe it. From the outside!

“Surely, through the proper effort (i.e., publicity and proclamations) it will be accepted, **including by those who are proclaiming and publicizing** so that it is taken in **b’pnimius**, etc.”

What is the “etc.”? That he will consequently have his spiritual oneg too, of course. That is because with the Rebbe, you don’t lose out on anything.

L’chaim!

(Based on the D’var Malchus of parshiyos Eikev and R’ei 5751)

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TAL'S ASCENT

By Yisroel Yehuda

Translated By Michael Leib Dobry

R' Tal Mandel trained as an IDF pilot and 'made it' as an American businessman, but his greatest achievements have been organizing groups and events as a director of the Ascent Institute in Tzfas. His father was born as the Frierdike Rebbe was being released from jail, but the significance of the date was lost on him, until he embarked on his path of t'shuva. * Part 2 of 2.

[Continued from last issue]

THE BALLOON BURSTS

"Just as I was completing my third and final year in the program, the hi-tech bubble burst. Until then, anyone who completed a degree was immediately grabbed for an employment opportunity. But suddenly, anyone who came out with his degree was considered nothing more than an inexperienced job seeker.

"Though I was already a hi-tech man, I was just drifting, since there was nowhere to progress. Finally, my brother came up with an idea. In some American shopping centers, they set aside an area for vending stands. Anyone who wants can take one of these stands and sell merchandise. My brother's friend had opened such a

business in his hometown of Houston, Texas, and my brother suggested that I join him.

"My brother had traveled earlier and returned. This was the peak time for selling merchandise there, so my parents were happy for me to make the trip. They were prepared for me to travel for a few months, make a few thousand dollars, and come back to pay off the debts.

"I'll never forget the days leading up to the flight. I was in the midst of some very serious financial difficulties. I had to repay my forty thousand shekel college tuition, but I had no work. My parents helped me a little with the airline ticket, and my brother gave me \$500 for some spending money. I was ready to go.

"In the midst of all the pre-flight activity, I began to feel uncomfortable about traveling to a place of exile, where I would be pretty much on my own and among Gentiles. I felt a need to buy a pair of t'fillin. I went to a store and, with some of the money that my brother had given me, bought myself t'fillin! From that moment on, I began to put on t'fillin every weekday. The five minutes each morning of donning the t'fillin and reciting Shma was the beginning of my spiritual return.

"I landed in Texas on a Friday afternoon. The previous resident of my rental apartment was also a young man from Eretz Yisroel. When he heard that I had arrived, he came to collect his belongings and make room for me. By Divine Providence, we arrived at the apartment at the same time. He looked at me and said, 'I'm going to Shabbos services in the Jewish community, would you like to come?' I agreed, and off we went together.

"About forty-five minutes later, we arrived at the local Sephardic synagogue for Israelis. My feelings at that moment are hard to describe. Until then, when I was in Eretz Yisroel, I always felt that I was fighting my surroundings and my parents, and that I constantly had to justify the path I had taken. Suddenly, I found myself in a place where I didn't have to justify anything to anyone, and I could simply flourish.



had noticed that I was ‘warming up’ to Judaism, approached me and said, ‘Others can do that (referring to my traveling by car on Shabbos), not you! I’ll arrange a room for you, and you can stay here all Shabbos.’ This is how I started to keep Shabbos as well. With me in my apartment were two other young men who were also in the process of doing t’shuva, and we all felt an indescribable uplift from the whole experience. It lit up my life.

“Around this same time, our business began to prosper. We became familiar with a young millionaire from Turkey who was impressed by the way Israelis made money from their vending operations in the shopping centers. He also wanted a piece of the action, but he didn’t know any Israelis. We made a deal with him: We would bring and train workers according to the ‘Israeli approach’ that he liked so much, while he invested the money, and we would divide the profits. We took out ads in the papers, brought the Israelis, and within six months and with virtually no investment on our part, we had a staff of seventy employees at twenty-seven vendor stands! Our operations spread to seven cities throughout the United States: New York, Las Vegas, New Orleans, and four cities in Texas. I became the business’ administrative manager, and my partner gave the workers practical training on how to sell. Every city had a regional manager and we were their supervisors. We had turned into big bosses, and the money started to flow.”

A DESCENT FOR THE PURPOSE OF...

“During that year, I suffered a spiritual setback and went back to working on Shabbos. I once heard from Rabbi Arad of Rechovot that

“During that period of my life, I would leave my friend at the shopping center on Friday afternoons and travel three-quarters of an hour to sing ‘Lecha Dodi’ with the Sephardim in great spiritual elation... and then drive back to the shopping center to pick up my friend, singing ‘Lecha Dodi’ to myself all the way there...”

“We worked very hard that first

year. My partner borrowed some money from his mother and we bought a vendor’s stand at the shopping center. Business matters were conducted slowly but surely. While we had success in making a living, we were also extremely frugal. We would buy one cup of cola and share it between us.

“After a few months, the Jewish community’s Sephardic rabbi, who

Soon, he began conducting himself as a completely observant Jew – at the age of seventy-seven! When people asked him why he had become a baal t'shuva, he replied, 'I'm going after my sons!'

after Hashem gives the supernal lights to someone doing t'shuva, he 'takes' them back in order to allow the Jew to make progress on his own power. I too had suddenly lost the feeling of attraction towards religion.

"I began to hear rather unpleasant talk coming out of the Sephardic shul. It was interesting to realize that I had been in the shul for a year already, and I had never noticed such things before. I guess love is blind and I was had been infatuated with the Shabbos experience. As a result of my growing negative feeling, I stopped coming to the Sephardic shul, and thereafter 'crumbled' spiritually. No shul, no Shabbos, nothing more than putting on t'fillin in the morning.

"After a low period lasting several months, a friend invited me to come to New York and participate in his son's bris mila. My week-long stay with him gave me a spiritual rejuvenation. At the conclusion of my visit, I took an afternoon flight back to Houston. I remember sitting in the car

heading to the airport and thinking, 'You're going back to work in Houston now. You have to get a hold of yourself. You must decide if you're going to become a baal t'shuva or not – there's no in between!' I made my final decision: I'm going for it!

"Until then, I hadn't been davening Mincha or Maariv. At that moment, however, I decided that rather than going straight home, I would go and daven Mincha – but where? Unwilling to go back to the Sephardic shul, I was left with two options: Chabad, whose black wardrobe was a bit intimidating for me, or Young Israel. In the end, I went to daven Mincha at Chabad... and didn't miss a t'filla at Chabad for the next two years!

"One of the Chabad community members was making a 'chanukas ha'bayis' that day, and I participated in a chassidic farbrengen for the first time in my life. I would remain in Chabad, in mind and body, from then on. I really got 'hooked' on chassidus in every sense of the word – the Rebbe's maamarim, sichos... After all the 'lights' of t'shuva, I understood that this was it – this was the Truth!

"I began to go around with a hat, go to the mikveh, and of course, I made it clear to my partner that he could forget about working on Shabbos. He had figured that out himself already. Rabbi Betzalel Marinovsky 'adopted' me with his love and warmth, marching forward with me all along the way.

"Throughout this period of time, I was in contact with my home, and this left its mark. My brother had already done t'shuva, and my parents were getting used to the idea. Thus, we completed the second year of our business with both material and spiritual

wealth, and I decided to invite my parents for a visit and a trip to Las Vegas. This was a vacation for them, but for me, it was a goodbye party for worldly pleasures. I hosted them for a month with the very finest – five-star hotel suites, airline tickets, day trips, etc. My brother prepared them in advance, explaining that I had grown a beard and looked religious.

"What really captured my parents' hearts was the warm community in Houston. At the end of the trip, my father blurted: 'You know that I'm a man of few words, but just wait and see, when I get back to Eretz Yisroel...' Indeed, upon his return, he began to get closer to Judaism. Soon, he began conducting himself as a completely observant Jew – at the age of seventy-seven! When people asked him why he had become a baal t'shuva, he replied, 'I'm going after my sons!'

"The impression left by my parents' visit and the marvelous connection with the local Jewish community led to the one most powerful experiences of my life. One Friday night during this period, I dreamt that I saw my father walking close to the Rebbe, and I was running to catch up with them. I never enjoyed a dream more."

FROM THE BUSINESS WORLD TO YESHIVA LIFE

"At the conclusion of the second year, my partner and I decided to take a break. Although we had made a considerable amount of money, working with Israelis is very difficult and tiring, and in any event, my partner wanted to do some traveling and I wanted to go and learn in yeshiva. We decided to take a year off from our business affairs. We then went

our separate ways – my partner to South America, and me, to Morristown.

“Morristown,” Tal recalled longingly, “short though it was, was one of the sweetest times of my life. I was there for about a month and a half, and I enjoyed every minute of it – the teaching staff, the studies, my friends. I made considerable progress in my Torah knowledge, totally immersing myself in the world of Torah and chassidus.

“Afterwards, I traveled back to Eretz HaKodesh to meet with my parents. It wasn’t long before I was yearning for the warm atmosphere of the Morristown yeshiva – and that feeling wouldn’t let up. I tried to enter one of the yeshiva programs in Eretz Yisroel, but the feeling wasn’t quite the same – I hadn’t found myself. Thus, one day I found myself sitting and writing the following note: ‘Rebbe, I’ve been here for a week, and I’ve seen everybody. Things were good for me back in Morristown, and I want to return there...’

“I placed the note in a volume

of ‘Igros Kodesh’, and when I opened it, I was positively stunned. The answer appeared in Vol. 9, pg. 61:

[Regarding] what he wrote about a journey to the United States to study, there is much more to do and to finish in his yeshiva in Eretz HaKodesh, may it be rebuilt and restored. He should learn with the appropriate devotion, dedication, and persistence, and without confusing himself with thoughts of traveling, etc., at this time.

...regarding what he wrote about a lack of diligence in the study of the revealed Torah, etc., it is known how stringent our holy Rebbeim were about diligence in the study of nigleh. Our Rabbis, of blessed memory, said, [One who says ‘I have not worked hard and have been successful’ is not believed, and thus the matter is in his hand – if he truly wants it, he will study diligently and also succeed. It is understood that after the interruption, all beginnings are difficult. However, he will have it easier with time, provided that

he makes the effort, in heart and soul. This is also the case in relation to learning chassidus, as surely in this study, he can also improve more. With the agreement of his rosh mesivta and mashpia, he should divide the time for reviewing his studies in a way that will not require learning one subject for hours, rather in an alternating manner that can, at least during this initial period, stimulate the desire to learn. As our Rabbis, of blessed memory, said, ‘a person should always learn in the place that the heart desires.’

“I felt as if an arrow had pierced my heart. The Rebbe was speaking to me – and with such explicit words...

“I understood that I was staying in Eretz Yisroel, and I simply had to look for a suitable place to learn. By Divine Providence, my brother happened to suggest that I travel to Tzfas, where we met with R’ Eyal HaKohen Riess, who was serving as the administrator of the Ascent Institute. I’ll never forget my first visit there as long as I live. This



R’ Tal Mandel utilizing his military service for IDF soldier outreach

This breakthrough enabled us to reach the entire Israel Defense Forces. Just this past month, we hosted more than one thousand soldiers!

was a rare and most powerful experience. The atmosphere, the programs, the hospitality – it was all something quite extraordinary. I felt that this was the place for me. I began making inquiries among the staff as to whether there was a Chabad yeshiva in the area. They looked at me with amazement: ‘Don’t you know that the biggest Chabad yeshiva is in Tzfas?’ I realized that when the Rebbe wrote about ‘the place that the heart desires’, this is where he meant.

“I began to learn in the Chabad yeshiva of Tzfas immediately after Tishrei, combining my studies with outreach work at Ascent on the weekends. After my wedding about two years ago, (immediately after the Second Lebanon War), Ascent director Rabbi Shaul Leiter offered me a position heading the Groups and Events Division. This has been my shlichus ever since.

“Interestingly, when I returned to Eretz Yisroel, the army summoned me for an interview, and my commanding officer, who knew that I had become a baal t’shuva, wanted to know if I planned to continue serving in the army reserve. Since there were conflicting views on this matter, I wrote to the Rebbe. The answer was: **‘May it be G-d’s Will that he will utilize the strengths that he received from Divine Providence to continue working with the broadest range of**



R' Tal Mandel in his office at the Ascent Institute of Tzfas

groups, and especially within the army...’ (25th of Nissan, 5719).

“I was not expecting such a clear answer. That same day, I notified my commanding officer that I would present myself for reserve duty, and I even received an offer to serve as a platoon commander.

“In the framework of my activities with Ascent, we periodically bring in groups of IDF soldiers. Over the years, such visits had to go through the army rabbinate for approval, but when I started working for Ascent, we found a way to change its categorization from a ‘religious’ to an ‘educational’ institution, which meant that we could begin working with the education corps instead of the army rabbinate.

This breakthrough enabled us to reach the entire Israel Defense Forces. Just this past month, we hosted more than one thousand soldiers! I felt that this is what the Rebbe meant when he wrote, ‘and especially within the army...’

“Thus, when soldiers come to Ascent, I try to do everything so that they will enjoy their visit and be positively influenced, since they came by the order of their commanding officer, not by their own personal choice. A couple of weeks ago, a group of air force cadets arrived for a ‘traditional Shabbos’ experience, together with five officers. Even before anyone from the staff spoke to them, the commanding officer called them in and gave them his own introduction: ‘You are about to have an unusual experience. Until recently, we would stay at the regional army unit. However, ever since we became familiar with ‘Ascent’, we only come here. To give you an idea how pleasant this place is, you should know that the other four officers accompanying you were scheduled to spend this Shabbos at home. However, they were here a few weeks ago for Shabbos, and they preferred to come and spend another Shabbos here at ‘Ascent’...”

Dedicated in memory of R' Tal's father, R. Yechiel Mandel, of blessed memory, who passed away on Shabbos Parshas Lech Lecha., the 10th of MarCheshvan, 5769.



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By Rabbi Chaim Ashkenazi
Rav of the Chabad k'hilla in Tel Aviv

*This is the reason why young married men would invite friends to farbreng in their homes right after their Sheva Brachos. Not to show off their new abode, but to establish the Chassidishe atmosphere of the home. * A Chassidishe farbrengen about enjoying the pleasures of this world.*

TAKING PLEASURE AWAY FROM JEWS

When they came to arrest the Alter Rebbe the first time, he left his house via a back door and left town. He met the Chassid R' Shmuel Munkes and asked him whether he thought he should give himself up to the authorities.

In response to this question, R' Shmuel told about a certain Chassidic Rebbe who was traveling when the wagon driver crashed into a house and broke the windows. Unfortunately for him, it was the house of an arrogant squire who, in his fury, aimed his gun at the wagon

driver. The wagon driver turned to the Rebbe and pointed at him as the one responsible for the damage. Miraculously, the squire did not shoot and the tzaddik was able to appease him.

After they paid for the damage and went on their way, the Rebbe asked the wagon driver, "Why did you point at me when the squire wanted to shoot at us? What did I do wrong?"

The wagon driver replied, "If you are truly a Rebbe, the bullet wouldn't hurt you, and if you're not a genuine Rebbe, you deserve the bullet, because why are you fooling people?"

R' Shmuel Munkes finished relating this story and said, as the wagon driver did, "If you are a Rebbe, no bullet will hurt you. If you are not a Rebbe, then by what right did you take away the pleasure in this world from thousands of Chassidim?"

The Alter Rebbe decided to return home, and the next time they came to arrest him, he went along peaceably. That is the story of his arrest and the subsequent redemption of Yud-Tes Kislev. Since the arrest and liberation were not a personal matter but affected all the Jewish people and the spreading of



Chassidus, the story of his consulting with R' Shmuel Munkes has a general message for us regarding the founding and spreading of Chassidus.

This story enables us to understand what the Rebbeim thought to achieve with Toras HaChassidus, with the avodas Hashem of so many Chassidim for over 200 years. Why were there seven generations of Rebbeim? Why were there arrests of the Rebbeim and the persecution of the Misnagdim? Why have Chassidim sat for hundreds of thousands of hours at farbrengens?

We should be asking what all that accomplished and what it should be accomplishing in us. Is it just that Chassidic clothing or customs should be different? Was it only because of the study of additional s'farim – sifrei Chassidus in addition to sifrei Nigleh – that the Satan aroused the anger of the Misnagdim and the students of the Maggid against the Alter Rebbe for publicizing Chassidus, and in later generations, the opposition of the Polish Rebbes, and so on?

What so bothered the Satan about learning some more s'farim, more Torah ideas, additional explanations about the Creator of the world, what Torah and mitzvos are, what is a Jew, etc.? What was the basis for the animosity that divided the Jewish people for several generations and caused dissent (and worse) between parents and children, brothers and brothers-in-law?

R' Shmuel Munkes' answer to the Alter Rebbe answers all these questions, and shows us toward what goal the Alter Rebbe, and the Rebbeim who followed him, were striving: **to take away from us the ability to enjoy things of this world, so that we can take pleasure in Hashem, each according to his ability.**

THE THIN LINE BETWEEN PLEASURE AND HERESY

In *Tanya*, the fundamental text of Chassidus, you can see the extent to which this goal is the basis for avodas Hashem. We learn this from the Alter Rebbe's chiddush and explanation about the difference between a perfect tzaddik and an imperfect tzaddik. The difference is seemingly small. The "tzaddik v'tov lo" completely despises evil and not a remnant of evil remains within him, while a "tzaddik v'ra lo" does not entirely despise evil and therefore, a remnant of perceiving evil as pleasurable remains within him.

This does not mean that the "tzaddik v'ra lo" has any inclination towards evil, G-d forbid, nor does he take any pleasure in it. Rather, simply because he does not find evil utterly abhorrent, he is called a "tzaddik v'ra lo." This tremendous innovation in the understanding of a tzaddik does not appear in other s'farim on avodas Hashem.

This is one of the things that aroused the ire of the Misnagdim in the Alter Rebbe's generation. They wondered how it was possible to say about great people that because they did not completely loath evil, their perception of evil as pleasurable made them lacking.

Those who are unlearned in Chassidus lack an understanding of the true, inner meaning of many fundamental concepts in Judaism. Take, for example, the verses that describe the insignificance of Creation relative to the Creator, describing how it is nothing compared to Him. What is the meaning of "ein od," "yachid chei ha'olamim," "baruch sh'amar v'haya ha'olam" and similar verses? Without Chassidus, people's understanding of these verses is not the ultimate truth – that there is nothing that has intrinsic reality aside from G-d Himself.

Since "there is nothing aside

from Him," desire for any created thing, as separate from Hashem, is evil. Those who don't know Chassidus say that Hashem, Torah, and mitzvos should be on our list of pleasures, and preferably at the top of the list; there's nothing wrong with enjoying worldly pleasures as well. Such people may wonder why this kind of attitude is looked at askance by Chassidim.

Chassidus opens our eyes to see that this approach is, in a subtle way, hedonistic and even heretical. This is because a miniscule amount of pleasure or attraction to anything aside from G-d is a subtle form of avoda zara. If a person does not despise the pleasures of this world and especially if he is drawn towards anything aside from G-d, this implies that he ascribes importance to something other than G-d.

This principle is learned from the story about Rabbi Dovid of Tolna, who was once hosted by a very poor man. The host asked him for a blessing for parnasa, and the tzaddik said he could only bless him if the man gave him 200 rubles. The man found it hard to part with the money, since it was money he had put aside in case of need, but he gave it to the tzaddik.

The tzaddik then took the man outside, and predicted, "Over here you will have a large inn, over there, a tavern," and other such promises. Another Jew who was present, not a Chassid, was taken aback by R' Dovid's conduct. He later returned to see whether R' Dovid's promises had come true. Indeed, the man had become wealthy and had built all the buildings that the tzaddik had predicted.

The observer traveled to the tzaddik and said that after seeing this miracle, he had decided to become his Chassid, but he wanted to understand why R' Dovid had taken the man's last rubles as a condition for his bracha.

R' Dovid replied, "This Jew had riches waiting for him, but he could not receive it because he had avoda zara in his house – 200 rubles in which he had placed his trust. I therefore had to take it from him."

THE SLIPPERY SLOPE

Enjoyment of physical things can, at first, be minimal – merely taking pleasure in thinking about it. But it quickly escalates into an investment of time, energy, and money in order to achieve the actual physical pleasure. A person is sometimes even willing to undergo stress and enter into competition with neighbors and friends to see who will "die with the most toys."

Numerous hours are invested into thinking and talking about pleasures. Eventually, a person might even be willing to forego Torah and mitzvos to obtain them, such as cutting davening short or missing the opportunities for "amen yehei shmei rabba," Kaddish and Krias HaTorah. Or it might come at the expense of shiurim and farbrengens or a child's chinuch.

When a person is obsessed with desire, G-d forbid, he can even go so far as to engage in thought, speech, or action in the realm of klipa to obtain what he wants. Then, when he has achieved his aim, he boasts about it to others, thinking that their listening proves that they admire his ability to obtain pleasurable things.

He sometimes arouses admiration and jealousy for the material things that he has acquired and inspires other people to compete with him. R' Shlomo Chaim Kesselman would compare a person like this to a creature that wallows in filth with tremendous enjoyment, making noises as if to say: "Give, give! It's not enough for me that it reaches my nose. I want the filth to reach above my nose!"

This behavior is reminiscent of the Russian gentile who, on a visit to

Germany, was caught stealing. He was punished by being driven along the main street, where people stood on both sides of the street screaming, "Shame on you!" Not understanding German, he assumed they were cheering for him and he yelled back, "Don't worry, I'll do it again!"

Delighting in physical pleasures is not the Jewish way. A Jew, by contrast, must be careful of even a smidgen of attraction to pleasures, lest he get schlepped into the downward slide. The Rebbe Rayatz, when speaking about this topic, brought an example of someone sitting and

"If you are a Rebbe, no bullet will hurt you. If you are not a Rebbe, then by what right did you take away the pleasure in this world from thousands of Chassidim?"

learning *Likkutei Torah* and drinking a cup of tea. After each sip he sighs contentedly, "Ahhh." Who knows, said the Rebbe Rayatz, whether his pleasure is over the G-dliness in the maamer Chassidus he is learning or over the tea...

The Rebbeim, in their great love for Klal Yisroel and their desire to distance them from spiritual danger, publicized Chassidus as a protection from the pursuit of the pleasures of this world. This explains why the Rebbeim showered us with so much Chassidus and were ready to pay a heavy price – to the extent of

mesirus nefesh – to instill in us the "taste it and see that G-d is good." They didn't limit their concern to their own flocks. They made it clear that Chassidus is not the province of a particular group or party but belongs to all Jews.

AROUSING COMPASSION ON THE G-DLY SPARK

Chassidim farbrenged about this over the generations, working on understanding and absorbing the idea that worldly pleasures are the biggest barriers to grasping G-dly pleasure. They worked on directing the desire for pleasure towards spiritual and G-dly matters.

At farbrengens, they spoke at length about the "sights of this world" which the neshama must forget in order to enter Gan Eden. The soul must go through a cleansing process to make it forget. Even if one's enjoyment of this world is minimal, it is engraved in his soul and the neshama must divest itself of it in order to delight in Hashem.

The mashpiim throughout the generations tried to instill an abhorrence, or at least a dissatisfaction, with worldly enjoyment and interest in anything other than Hashem. In order to drive their point home, and to prevent a person from investing all his excitement into physical pleasures to the point that he gets upset and angry when it's withheld from him, they would liken it to the Peor idol worship.

Worshipping Peor entailed defecating before the idol. What sense was there in this "worship," and how did people think that this honored their idol?

The answer is that they knew that pleasures of this world are the leftovers, the remnants of the spiritual pleasures of the Ofanim angels, angels that are the lowest in stature, from whose waste this world was created. By defecating before the

Peor, they expressed their thanks to it, since they imagined that it was Peor who gave them the physical pleasures which were its excretions. They were reciprocating with their own excretions, the waste products of their eating and drinking.

Bacteria and worms enjoy excrement and subsist from that which is disgusting, but for us, the Jewish people, a part of G-d above, it is not fitting at all. There is no justification for enjoying waste. We need to take pleasure in the source of all pleasures, Hashem, Torah and mitzvos, Moshiach, Rebbe, and Chassidus.

Mashpiim put in hours upon hours of talks and farbrengens in order to mold a Chassid to be ashamed to take pleasure in matters of this world, each on his level.

In days gone by, a Chassid went to his Rebbe to ask for help for his neshama, which had descended from a “high rooftop to a low pit,” from being in Gan Eden where it enjoyed G-dliness to taking pleasure in this physical world. He would ask that he not find pleasure in foolish things – from certain clothing, certain haircuts, glasses or shoes or a watch, etc. From delicious food, casual or forbidden conversation, or from viewing physical things or forbidden things, G-d forbid.

Nowadays, there are situations in which the person, who can display the most forbidden images through technological devices or other means, is viewed as a chevraman and his friends are envious of him. Referring back to the analogy given before, he defecates to the Peor and then instead of the other people holding their noses and running away, they envy him and want to have more of what he has.

It's like the drunkard in the story who would roll in the streets in his stupor and mortify his son with his behavior. One time, the son was walking down the street when he

noticed a drunk rolling in the mud. He brought his father to show him the unsightliness of such conduct. The father ran over to the drunk and asked, “Where did you get such great liquor?”

Chassidim would describe the degradation of a soul coming down to this world, to which the person adds indignity upon indignity by his actions. They would describe the soul's tears and tremendous pain caused by this behavior, and would quote verses and maamarei Chazal that describe how pathetic it is for the G-dly spark within.

CHASSIDISHE CHINUCH TO DESPISE PHYSICAL PLEASURES

Chassidim would also explain at length how by saying “amen, yehei shmei rabba” or verses from the Torah, doing mitzvos, and the like, a person can give his neshama a respite and some consolation. Man can enable the soul to feel that it was worth coming down to this world, which is a temple to Peor, in order to learn Torah and do mitzvos. The Chassidim would convey how all the treasure in the world is not worth one kiss of a Torah scroll.

This is what they would think about during the singing at farbrengens. Each would think of his true state, to the point that they heard the soul's cry – gevald! Save me!

After the farbrengen, they would leave determined: No more avoda zara! No more rooting through the garbage pail. Let's look for the source of all pleasures. No wonder that after a farbrengen they made somersaults, even in the mud, for that was to counter the accepted norms of the world of pleasures that the body is attracted to.

It is told about R' Tzemach Gurewitz a”h, that at his Sheva Brachos, after a few l'chaims, he was

requested to make a somersault. He was a chassan with a new sirtuk, at a time when not everybody had one (and if they did, it had many patches), so he was not very eager to oblige. One of the Chassidim suggested, “Come, let's switch sirtuks.” That Chassid then proceeded to perform a somersault in the chassan's sirtuk. That is how the Chassidim trained the young men to look down on materialism.

The elder Chassidim would tell the young men: “Sanctify the woman, go to the chuppa, write the k'suba, and make Sheva Brachos, but don't ‘get married!’” By this they meant, don't derive enjoyment from this.

When they made Sheva Brachos in yeshiva and R' Shlomo Chaim Kesselman saw the chassan rejoicing, he would yell over at him, “What are you enjoying? The wedding is another descent into this world. You ought to be like the Mittler Rebbe, who wanted to get married only in order to be able to hear maamarim from his father, the Alter Rebbe.”

Although we are not like the Mittler Rebbe, that is what we should be aiming for. At the very least, we shouldn't be taking pleasure in the opposite direction. There is no reason to show your friends your newly furnished house or pictures or movies of your wedding. After all, you don't see the Rebbe on the video or senior Chassidim farbrenging or how the chassan does a somersault with his sirtuk, cuffed slacks and tie.

There is a story in the sichos of the Rebbe Rayatz about a Chassid who came to ask his wealthy brother for monetary assistance to marry off his daughter. When he arrived at his brother's home, his brother showed him around his spacious, beautifully appointed home.

The Chassidishe brother, who was bothered by the fact that his brother had put so much money into nonsense, said, “There is an animal

that wallows in mud and refuse and wants more and more of it. Either give me what I need to marry off my daughter or I'm leaving, because none of this interests me."

R' Shmuel Munkes drove this point home to the well-to-do R' Meir Refael's. He once entered R' Meir's home and lay down on the lovely couch with his muddy boots. When R' Meir came home and asked R' Shmuel why he did so, R' Shmuel replied, "That's what bothers you?!" And he left the house.

R' Meir ran after him to appease him and R' Shmuel agreed to return only if R' Meir would ride down the main street on a broomstick. R' Meir did!

This is the reason why young married men would invite friends to farbreng in their homes right after their Sheva Brachos. Not to show off their new abode, but to establish the Chassidishe atmosphere of the home. And if there was chazara, i.e., throwing up from too much mashke, they felt that they had established the Chassidishe basis of their homes.

TAKING PLEASURE IN G-D

R' Meir Simcha Chein was offered a shidduch for his daughter with an illustrious and wealthy family. When they sat down to conclude the shidduch, the mechutan wanted to discuss buying a beautiful bedroom and dining room set and other stylish furnishings.

R' Meir Simcha would not agree to that. He said that he was no longer interested in the shidduch. The mechutan thought that R' Meir Simcha did not want to spend so much money, and offered to pay the extra expenses.

R' Meir Simcha said he was absolutely not interested. In explanation, he pointed at the table and said, "See, I have a simple table. When Chassidim come to farbreng, sometimes a leg of the table breaks. The next day I simply ask Yaakov the

carpenter to come and fix it. A few days later, there is another farbreng and the same thing happens again.

"But if my daughter has a magnificent dining room set, they won't have Chassidim come to farbreng, because how would they ensure that Chassidim wouldn't dance on the expensive table? If it breaks, Yaakov the carpenter wouldn't be the man for the job. They would have to send the table back to the factory for repairs, which is a bother and a big expense. That's why I'm not interested in this shidduch."

"This Jew had riches waiting for him, but he could not receive it because he had avoda zara in his house – 200 rubles in which he had placed his trust."

From these and similar stories we see how enjoyment of this world prevents us from taking pleasure in the Creator. The more copious the physical pleasures, the more they block the truth and cause one to chase after even more physical pleasures. The mashpia, R' Shaul Brook, would say that when people started wearing pressed pants, they stopped reciting Tikkun Chatzos, because you can't sit on the floor in pressed pants. At the very least, you would want to clean the floor before sitting on it. What sort of Tikkun Chatzos would it be after doing that?

We see that running after pleasures leads to taking enjoyment

in things that boggle the mind, like taking pleasure in copying gentile styles, under-dressing (literally!), and adorning oneself with tattoos and rings on the heads, ears, eyes, necks, and other body parts.

What a pity it is on those who completely forget why they are here for 120 years! There are creatures who don't have another world, so they grab whatever pleasure they can from this world. We children of Avrohom, Yitzchok and Yaakov, have another world and we have to prepare for it. Why cause ourselves sorrow and embarrassment for not doing what we were told to do?

Each moment is that much more critical in our days, when we are about to see Moshiach and we will begin to live the life of truth once again, of "then you will take pleasure in Hashem." In these final moments of galus, we must do as Yaakov Avinu did when he left the yeshiva of Shem and Eiver. He put rocks around his head in order to protect it from becoming immersed in the pleasures of Charan.

We are dealing with the darkness of the final moments of galus and we can't "lose our heads." Let us learn from the Alter Rebbe who, when he went to jail, instructed us on what is important and trivial in our lives.

We can learn true pleasure from a Chassid of an earlier generation. When someone wanted to help him carry his tallis and t'fillin to shul he responded, "you don't give spiritual heights to anyone to carry; you carry it yourself."

The Rebbe informed us about Moshiach's coming so that we won't be ashamed to greet him, and so that our pressed pants won't interfere with our running towards him. We will show Moshiach the spiritual heights that we held on to and didn't let go. These are the G-dly pleasures that we recognized and "tasted," and in their merit we will take pleasure in the revelation of Hashem, immediately mamash.