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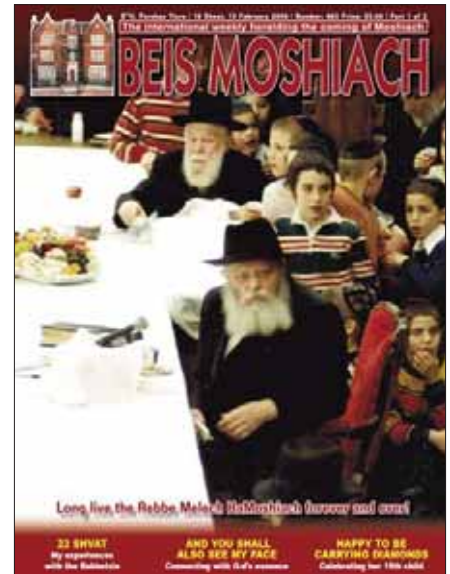
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USA

744 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409
Tel: (718) 778-8000
Fax: (718) 778-0800
admin@beismoshiach.org
www.beismoshiach.org

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:

M.M. Hendel

ENGLISH EDITOR:

Boruch Merkur
ed@beismoshiach.org

ASSISTANT EDITOR:

Dr. Aryeh Gotfryd

HEBREW EDITOR:

Rabbi Sholom Yaakov Chazan
editorH@beismoshiach.org

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TEN COMPELS SEVEN

Translated and adapted by Dovid Yisroel Ber Kaufmann

The Ten Commandments establish an exclusive relationship between G-d and the Jewish people. Since the Torah portion is named after a non-Jew, this indicates that the non-Jewish world benefits when the Jewish people fulfill the six hundred thirteen mitzvos. It also indicates that the Jewish people have an obligation to “compel” the seventy nations to observe the seven Noachide commandments.

The central event of the Torah – the revelation at Sinai – occurs in this week’s portion. By giving the Ten Commandments to the Jewish people, G-d establishes an exclusive relationship with Israel. Indeed, G-d declares, “Now therefore, if you will indeed hearken to My voice and you will keep My covenant, then you shall be mine own treasure from among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.”

There arises, then, a simple question: why is “Yisro” the name of the Torah reading? Yisro, the father-in-law of Moshe, was a Midianite chief, a former priest for every form of idolatry. Given that the Ten Commandments emphasize G-d’s relationship with the Jewish people, that the Torah and the six hundred thirteen mitzvos define Israel as G-d’s “own treasure,” it seems odd that this Torah reading in particular should be called by the name of a non-Jew.

The Rebbe emphasizes many times the significance

of names, emphasizing that the name of a Torah reading indicates the essential nature of that portion. Therefore, that Yisro is a non-Jew indicates that even though the covenant and the commandments belong exclusively to the Jewish people, still the Torah is relevant to the non-Jew in some significant and essential way.

Now it is well known that there are seven universal laws that apply to all mankind. These seven Noachide laws are so named since all humanity descends from Noah and his children. Although the Torah applies only to the Jewish people, everyone must observe the seven Noachide commandments. In fact, because the Torah was given to the Jewish people, the rest of the world must be “compelled” to

accept the seven universal laws. As Maimonides writes: “Moshe gave the Torah and mitzvos as an inheritance only to Israel . . . someone else who does not wish to accept Torah and mitzvos should not be forced to. By the same token, Moshe was commanded by the Almighty to compel all the inhabitants of the world to accept the laws given to Noah’s descendants.”

At Sinai the Jewish people received – and accepted upon themselves – two categories of obligation. First was acceptance of G-d’s *Kingship* – and an automatic rejection of idolatry. Second was an acceptance of the mitzvos, G-d’s *commandments*. Moshe – and therefore the Jewish people – are commanded to compel the nations to accept the first obligation, G-d’s *Kingship*.

The Torah was not given just so that Jews would accept the yoke of G-d’s *Kingship* and His commandments. The ultimate purpose of the giving of the Torah was to transform the world, so that

ultimately – in the era of Moshiach – “G-d will be King over all the earth.” Since however, Torah – acceptance of G-d’s Kingship and His mitzvos – is a “Jewish thing,” the Jews alone have the ability and obligation to bring G-d’s Kingship to the whole world.

In short, the obligation to **compel** all the inhabitants of the world to accept the seven Noachide commandments, with all the implications thereof, derives from the very fact the Jewish people were given the Torah. This obligation applies even today. Especially now, on the threshold of Redemption, must the Jewish people “compel” the non-Jews to accept and fulfill the seven mitzvos. (That now, for the first time in history, we are able to openly publicize and promote the Seven Mitzvos is itself a sign we are on the threshold of the coming of Moshiach.)

In this context, “compelling” means to persuade, to explain, to enlighten – to use the various media and means of communication to educate the non-Jewish world about the Noachide commandments. Everyone with a connection to a non-Jew, or who has an opportunity, should try to influence the b’nei Noach – the descendants of Noah – to accept his or her Divine obligation, the seven universal laws.

Previously, the Jewish people were unable to observe this law. Even in those countries which did not persecute the Jews, any attempt to influence the non-Jewish population was fraught with danger. When the government was neutral, so to speak, other so-called leaders, religious or otherwise, certainly were not interested in or tolerant of what Judaism taught regarding G-d’s commandments to the nations.

Now, however, the situation is different. In countries like the United States, when a Jew tries to enlighten his or her neighbor about the Seven Mitzvos, there is no danger of any kind. There is neither physical danger, nor the hazard of financial loss or penalty. Just the opposite: efforts to influence and educate non-Jews is beneficial, bringing both spiritual and material profit. In such a situation, the obligation “to compel [i.e., influence and inspire] all the inhabitants of the world to accept the laws given to Noah’s descendants” applies to every Jew in full force.

That Jews are not only able to educate, persuade and influence non-Jews, but also to benefit thereby is itself an indicator we are in the era of Moshiach.

Certainly the Jewish people benefit when non-Jews accept and observe the seven Noachide laws. Every Jew is still affected by the Holocaust. Although the events are fifty years past, to this day the terror and horror leaves its trace in Jewish life, its shadow over the Jewish people. Yet one could see clearly during those times that there were righteous gentiles, individuals and

groups who refrained from murder and thievery, and through whose efforts thousands of Jews were saved.

From those times – G-d forbid they should ever be repeated, and we should all see only good – we have a living example of the benefit Jews receive when the nations observe the Seven Mitzvos. How much more so, then, will the Jewish people benefit when there is no danger to the non-Jew, when the interaction is “only” a business transaction. In such a situation, when a Jew conducts himself in a pleasant and amiable manner, certainly the Jews will benefit from the non-Jews’ observance of their mitzvos. In such circumstances as we find ourselves now, it is not only possible, it is imperative to try to “compel” the non-Jew to accept G-d’s Kingship and observe the Noachide commandments.

Simply put, if a gentile has the opportunity to harm or help a Jew, but feels that there is “an Eye that sees and an Ear that hears,” obviously he will choose to help the Jew. When he knows he must observe his Seven Mitzvos – as a Jew must observe his six hundred thirteen – automatically the relationship between the Jew and non-Jew will improve.

By making the effort to “compel” the non-Jews to observe the Seven Mitzvos, thousands and thousands of gentiles will come to observe G-d’s commandments. Then the world will see that G-d “has made Israel a light unto the nations.”

Indeed, fulfilling this Divine commandment to influence and “compel” the non-Jews sets the stage and prepares the way for fulfillment of the prophetic promise that G-d “will make the peoples pure of speech that they will **all** call upon the Name of G-d and serve Him with one purpose” in the complete and final Redemption.

(Based on Likkutei Sichos 26, pp. 132-144)

י"ד
Beis Miriam
Yerushalayim
Seminary

212-444-9105

www.beismiriam.com
info@beismiriam.com

MY EXPERIENCES WITH THE REBBETZIN

By Ofra Bedosa

Mrs. Malka Wilschansky, shlucha in Tzfas, shares her memories of the Rebbetzin a"h. * Presented for the Rebbetzin's yahrtzait, 22 Shvat.

Five years ago on 22 Shvat, I sat at a farbrengen in the Pnimitiyut seminary in Ramat Aviv with Malka Wilschansky, shlucha to Tzfas. I still remember the feeling she conveyed to us in the farbrengen, a feeling that we could, through her stories, access just a drop of the majesty and mystique of the Rebbetzin.

When I was asked to write something in honor of the Rebbetzin's yahrtzait, I was reminded of that farbrengen. I met with Mrs. Wilschansky in order to convey to you, dear reader, those special stories.

How did you know the Rebbetzin?

You remind me of the story of the Chassid who told the Rebbe Rayatz in a yechidus that he knew the Rebbe's father, the Rebbe Rashab. The Rebbe Rayatz countered, "You may have seen my father, but you didn't know him."

That was my feeling too, for I

saw the Rebbetzin but I did not know her. That's the difference between ordinary people and the Rebbe and Rebbetzin. The closer you become with an ordinary person, the more your estimation of them changes, whereas with the Rebbe and Rebbetzin, the closer you get, the greater their depth and inscrutability.

I was greatly privileged to meet the Rebbetzin twice. At the time, I kept those encounters discreet. The Rebbetzin's conduct was so modest and hidden that she hardly went out among others. So if she allowed us to visit her, we didn't talk or boast about it. It was part of the mystique that enveloped her. Till today, whenever 22 Shvat comes around and I am asked to farbreng and talk about the Rebbetzin, I wonder whether she would approve.

So why do you talk about her?

After the Rebbetzin passed away in 1988, the Rebbe spoke a

lot about "and the living shall take it to heart." Talking about the Rebbetzin and learning from her ways motivates people to make a spiritual accounting and improve their behavior. Every time I am asked to speak about her, I think about this point and try to convey what she was like so we can learn from her.

Can you tell us how you felt right before you met the Rebbetzin for the first time?

I was overwhelmed. The thought of entering the home of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin was mind-boggling. Many did not even dare to walk past their house, and certainly not to stand in front of it. We had a tremendous feeling of awe. The closest I had gotten was the corner of President Street and Brooklyn Avenue, from where I could see the house in the distance.

**FIRST ENCOUNTER:
CONCERN FOR SMALL
DETAILS**

The first time I went to see the Rebbetzin, I was accompanying my maternal grandmother, Rebbetzin Karasik. She would visit the Rebbetzin every year when she

came from Eretz Yisroel for Tishrei.

The Rebbetzin opened the door for us. My grandmother shook her hand and I followed suit. The Rebbetzin led us through the living room into the dining room.

Before the visit, I had been instructed to notice the details in the Rebbe's house, such as the china closet in the living room with various silver items from the Rebbeim, but I was too excited to remember to look at anything. All I remember noticing is that the Rebbetzin was petite and had big blue eyes.

Our visit took place in the dining room. The table was set with a hot water urn, cups and refreshments. I had been forewarned that though the Rebbetzin would offer food, it wasn't customary to eat in the Rebbe's house. During the visit I didn't know which was more respectful, to eat or not to eat from what the Rebbetzin prepared.

What did you talk about?

After the Rebbetzin spoke with my grandmother, she turned to me. I had recently begun working as a madricha in the dormitory and was finding both the position and the distance from home challenging. She took a great interest in the details and wanted to hear how I was managing with all the difficulties. It was very important to me to tell her about my difficulties in chinuch and hadracha, since I was told that what we spoke about with the Rebbetzin would be conveyed to the Rebbe.

At that time I was into drawing, and the Rebbetzin inquired whether I was studying and developing in this area.

I was amazed by the Rebbetzin's consideration and eagerness to give nachas to others. This was demonstrated to me after

our visit. After we left the house, the Rebbetzin called my paternal grandmother, Rebbetzin Ashkenazi (who lived in New York) and gave her regards from her granddaughter who had come to see her and told her about the visit.

SECOND ENCOUNTER: WHY IS THE KALLA WORRIED?

Our wedding took place in Crown Heights, and about a

month before the wedding I flew to Brooklyn to get ready. I stayed with my aunt, Mrs. Rivka Chitrik. I was somewhat uncomfortable about how much she did for me.

One morning I decided to take care of some errands alone, without troubling her. Not knowing English and unfamiliar with the area, this was no small feat. I decided to go to the dressmaker, who lived on Union Street, near Nostrand. This was relatively far and in a predominantly black

MRS. SCHNEERSOHN

I have an aunt who helped the Rebbetzin with her home decorating. When I was in Crown Heights for Tishrei, 5734 (1973), she suggested that I come with her to the Rebbetzin. It was an enticing offer, but my grandmothers would not allow it; they said I should go to the Rebbetzin as a Chassid, not as a friend.

This aunt, who was traditionally observant, called her Mrs. Schneersohn rather than Rebbetzin. This bothered her mother, my grandmother. She pointed this out to her and asked her to use the title Rebbetzin.

The next time the Rebbetzin spoke with my grandmother, she placated her and said it was fine if people called her Mrs. Schneersohn.

This aunt suffered from a certain health problem and when she told the Rebbetzin about it, the Rebbetzin said that she should call in the evening at a certain time. My aunt realized that the Rebbe would be home then and the Rebbetzin wanted the Rebbe to hear the details of the problem and give his bracha.

When my aunt called that evening, the Rebbetzin said, "Tell me all the details again." As she did so, she noticed that the Rebbetzin was absolutely silent, a sign that the Rebbe was on the line.

When she finished talking, there were a few seconds of silence and then the Rebbetzin said, "You should go to your family doctor and only tell him that you have pains, without telling him what the expert doctors who examined you had to say. Whatever he tells you, do, and you should have a refua shleima."

The next day, my aunt went to her family doctor. After a regular exam the doctor said that she seemed to have an ordinary virus. He told her to take a certain medication a few times a day.

My aunt did as he said and miraculously, her serious medical problem vanished.

Aside from this miracle of the Rebbe, there's a lesson we could learn from the Rebbetzin in this. The Rebbetzin valued every second she had with the Rebbe, especially when they were home together. Yet, in appreciation to my aunt for her professional expertise and help, she gave up some of this time to help her in return.

neighborhood.

As I walked there, I felt my heart racing at the thought of this adventure. I stopped at the traffic light at Brooklyn Avenue and waited for the light to change. A car with a black driver stopped near me, opened the window, and offered me a ride. I refused, of course, but I was terrified. Nevertheless, I continued on my way. I returned home happy that I had managed to take care of things on my own, without bothering my aunt.

In the evening, my aunt came into the room and cried, "Malka! What did you do to me?" It turned out that the Rebbetzin had called and told her, "I saw the kalla standing on the street. It's not fitting for a kalla to look so worried. Is everything all right?"

Apparently, the Rebbetzin had driven past a few moments after I was offered a ride and noticed me standing on the street looking like a wreck.

What is your strongest memory of the Rebbetzin?

What I remember most of all is my mother's (Rebbetzin Devorah Ashkenazi) emotional expressions when we listened to one of the broadcasts of the Rebbe's farbrengens. She quietly commented, "We are sitting here together, listening to the farbrengen, while over there, a small one is sitting alone in such a big house." With this remark she expressed what the Rebbetzin did for the Rebbe and the Chassidim.

Her mesirus nefesh came to the fore during the court case over the s'farim, when she shed her anonymity for the sake of the Rebbe and the Chassidim.

A SHARP EYE

My father would go to the Rebbe every year for Yud Shvat. He would travel to Europe for his

business in diamonds, and proceed from there to New York. Each year he would visit the Rebbetzin and tell her about all that had transpired in his business. Since it was almost certain that what you told the Rebbetzin was conveyed to the Rebbe, for my father this was another means of hiskashrus.

He would share these experiences with us upon his return, highlighting the Rebbetzin's unusual powers of listening and understanding. My father was always very nervous before and during these visits. On

The thought of entering the home of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin was mind-boggling. Many did not even dare to walk past their house, and certainly not to stand in front of it.

one occasion he got up to go and the Rebbetzin accompanied him to the door. In his great nervousness, he fumbled with the door knob.

The Rebbetzin stood on the side and waited. To smooth over an awkward moment, the Rebbetzin quipped, "I see how hard it is for Rabbi Ashkenazi to open other people's doors..."

Anyone who knew my father would understand how on the mark her comment was. This was a central aspect of his life. He was a very straight and truthful person

who did not like to pry into the lives of others.

The Rebbetzin would visit her mother, Rebbetzin Nechama Dina, in 770. She would go through the main entrance and up in the elevator upstairs. When the visit was over, about two hours later, she would take the elevator down to Gan Eden HaTachton in order to enter the Rebbe's room.

My brother Chaim was on K'vutza and he enjoyed watching the Rebbetzin standing in front of the Rebbe's door, gently lifting her hand to knock on the door. He was very impressed by the movement of her hand which expressed so much.

YOUR NACHAS IS OUR NACHAS

The Rebbetzin had a very motherly way with the Chassidim. When my father-in-law arrived from France he went to visit the Rebbetzin. At the conclusion of the visit, he said, "May the Rebbe have nachas from us." The Rebbetzin said, "Your nachas is our nachas."

What can we learn from the Rebbetzin for our own lives?

What stands out about the Rebbetzin is her loftiness and her bittul, which expresses the spiritual concept of *Malchus*. She had bittul towards the Rebbe and even towards people who visited her. When you met with her, the conversation was amiable and straightforward.

I think that women can learn a lot from the Rebbetzin's bittul. Though the Rebbe gave us many jobs to do, it's important to know our rightful place. That means having bittul towards the Rebbe, towards one's husband, and especially in regard to our roles as women – may we truly achieve this.

T'FILLIN, A SMILE, AND A BRACHA

By S. Malachi

Translated By Michael Leib Dobry

Bentzion Cohen's journey from Indiana and Indian spirituality to Kfar Chabad the Rebbe's Mivtzaim.

Bentzion was born in Indianapolis, Indiana, to an egalitarian Jewish family. His exposure to Judaism was limited to a few hours a week at Hebrew school, where he learned the language and about Jewish holidays.

At the age of seventeen, he went on a two-month tour of Eretz HaKodesh. This was 5727 (1967), about two weeks after the Six Day War. Young Bentzion was positively impressed by the unique atmosphere, and he decided to remain for his academic studies at Hebrew University in Yerushalayim. While in college, he discovered yoga and began waking up at sunrise to do meditation exercises. He also stopped eating meat, "in order not to cause harm to animals."

When he returned to the United States for summer vacation, his head was immersed in Asiatic mysticism, and he was considering a possible trip "to the source" — India. When his father realized to how far afield Bentzion's quest was leading him, he became very worried.

In such situations, he knew only one effective course of action: The concerned father turned to a Chabad acquaintance, Yechezkel (Charley) Roth from New York. He confided that his son was looking for spirituality in the wrong places and requested that he get him connected to Chabad.

YOGA, KASHRUS, AND A MINYAN IN THE DINING ROOM

Bentzion was planning to travel from New York to Eretz Yisroel by ship, so Charley met up with him in the heart of the noisy Manhattan

port. Bentzion spoke about yoga, while Charley spoke about Judaism.

Charley tried to convince him not to travel to India: "There are lethal epidemics and diseases there," he said. "You need to learn *Tanya*, travel to Kfar Chabad, and start putting on t'fillin." When he saw that the young man didn't understand what he was talking about, he explained: "These are black boxes that a Jew fastens on his arm and head."

At the time, Bentzion was a young man of eighteen, and he listened to the words of this older chassid only out of a sense of courtesy. Although he didn't pay much attention to what Charley Roth told him about Yiddishkeit, in retrospect Bentzion acknowledges that his efforts were not in vain. In fact, over the course of the next day, a major revolution began in his life. He was on the path to

BENTZION COHEN

As a child in the Indianapolis public school system, Bentzion Cohen was the only Jew in his class. When he returned to Indianapolis, he was the only Lubavitcher in the State of Indiana. He had exchanged yoga for chassidic meditation.

Rabbi Bentzion Cohen had always dreamed of opening a Chabad House on an American university campus. But the Rebbe had other ideas and instructed him to move to Kfar Chabad.

He serves as a mashpia in Yeshivas Ohr T'mimim, and goes out on mivtzaim every day to the nearby Assaf HaRofe Hospital, where he brings light, joy, and a pair of t'fillin to people no one else remembers.

truth.

When he boarded the ship, he was asked if he wanted to eat in the kosher or the non-kosher dining room. Benzion chose the latter, but upon discovering at his first breakfast that the omelet had been fried in animal fat, he immediately got up and moved over to the kosher dining area. Part of the yoga methodology is not to use animal products, and he strictly avoided eating any meat.

Benzion was baffled by the great joy that was aroused when he entered the kosher dining area.

There were nine families of young religious Jews who had decided to emigrate to Eretz Yisroel, and they welcomed him with much happiness. It was not long before he understood.

TWELVE DAYS, THIRTY-SIX MINYANIM, AND A KIPPA

The young people explained to him that they have only nine adult men, and they're missing a tenth to make a minyan for communal prayers. Having discovered that

he's Jewish, they invited him to daven with him. "I couldn't refuse," Benzion recalled. "This was also part of the yoga way: to try and help everyone and to disappoint no one."

The words of the davening captivated Benzion, drawing him magically toward his tradition. Over a period of twelve days, he davened with the group three times a day. He developed a connection with the small children of the religious couples, while their parents tried to have a positive influence on him.

After twelve days and thirty-six minyanim, Benzion finally tread upon the holy ground of Eretz Yisroel. By the time he disembarked, he was committed to wearing a kippa, saying the Shma twice daily and davening the Shmoneh Esrei.

TO SAVE BENZION

Life changed. During his sophomore year of studies, Benzion switched his curriculum from physics and natural sciences to Jewish studies: Tanach, Jewish philosophy, and even kabbala. He also moved out of the student dormitories into a small rented room near the Meia Sh'arim neighborhood.

One day that winter (5729), he unexpectedly received an invitation from Chabad of Lod to spend Shabbos there. He later discovered that Charley Roth had not given up on the enthusiastic young man, and had sent a letter to Rabbi Zushe Posner, asking him to save Benzion.

Benzion arrived at the Chabad shul in Lod, which was located at the time inside an old Arab house. After davening, the chassidim started to dance, and Benzion was won over by the chassidic warmth and simcha. R' Zushe had seven small children at the time, and each



of them shared what he/she had learned in school. Benzion was fascinated by the pleasant and joyous atmosphere. This was his first Shabbos in Lubavitch, and he enjoyed it immensely.

When Benzion returned to the university, his studies were no longer attracting him as they had before. "It never crossed my mind to abandon my studies. It was quite clear that I had to finish my courses." However, he found a solution: He would learn half a day in yeshiva, and the other half, *l'havdil*, in the university.

ONE DAY IN YESHIVA, AND THEN ANOTHER

Benzion checked out different yeshivos in Yerushalayim, yet he remained confused. He decided to go to R' Zushe for another Shabbos. There he heard about the baal t'shuva program for Anglophones in Kfar Chabad, now known as "Yeshivas Ohr T'mimim." "I told him that I want to learn half a day in the university, but R. Zushe replied, 'Go check it out. You have nothing to lose.'"

One Sunday morning, Benzion packed a small suitcase and set out for Kfar Chabad. The yeshiva students there greeted him warmly, learned with him, and spoke with him until the late evening hours. They suggested that he stay until the following day to participate in the Gemara class of the highly respected rosh yeshiva, Rabbi Shneur Zalman Gafni. Benzion agreed, and was most enthralled by the class. The combination of the Gemara study and Rabbi Gafni's pleasant demeanor made a powerful impression upon him.

Benzion decided to stay another day, during which he joined the entire day's learning schedule in nigleh and chassidus. After the third day, he decided to remain for another day. After the fourth day,

he had already made up his mind to leave the university!

Once Benzion decided to stay in the Kfar Chabad yeshiva, he immediately cut his long hair. He went back to Yerushalayim to collect his belongings, and ever since..."Thank G-d, I'm in Kfar Chabad!"

FIRST TRIP

After about a year of learning with Rabbi Gafni, he moved up to

Benzion was the only Chassidic Jew in all Indiana, where there wasn't even a Chabad House yet. After a very trying week, Bentzion was beginning to think about forgetting the whole thing and staying in Indianapolis.

the central Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim and became a full-fledged yeshiva bachur in every respect. In 5730, Benzion traveled to the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, for the first time. He stayed in the Rebbe's court for the Slichos, Rosh HaShana, and Yom Kippur. Shortly before Sukkos, he went to visit his parents, marking his first visit since doing t'shuva. His father was most pleased by the transformation, while his mother had difficulty grasping

it. "How is it possible to be an Orthodox Jew in modern times?" She was eventually convinced that "it's not so terrible."

The visit at home was quite difficult. Benzion was the only Chassidic Jew in all Indiana, where there wasn't even a Chabad House yet. After a very trying week, Bentzion was beginning to think about forgetting the whole thing and staying in Indianapolis. Once again, his father came to the rescue. He convinced him to go back, thus saving his future a second time.

"AND YOU SHALL CIRCUMCISE THE FORESKIN OF YOUR HEART"

Benzion returned to 770 for Simchas Torah and two days of joyous dancing like nowhere else in the world. After Yom Tov, he went in to the Rebbe for the very first yechidus of his life.

The yechidus took place in the middle of the night, and Benzion made the necessary preparations with the utmost solemnity. "I went to the mikveh (in ice-cold water), and prepared two slips of paper – one written out in request of a bracha, and the other to write down what the Rebbe said as soon as I left the room.

"I entered. The Rebbe sat in his place, and I handed him the kvittel. The Rebbe gave me a bracha, and as he spoke, I felt my heart ripping open. Later, when I learned the HaYom Yom for the 13th of Elul, I finally understood what had happened to me and could give it a name. 'In the first yechidus, there is the removal of the foreskin. Whatever else, he is immediately rid of the foreskin of the heart.'"

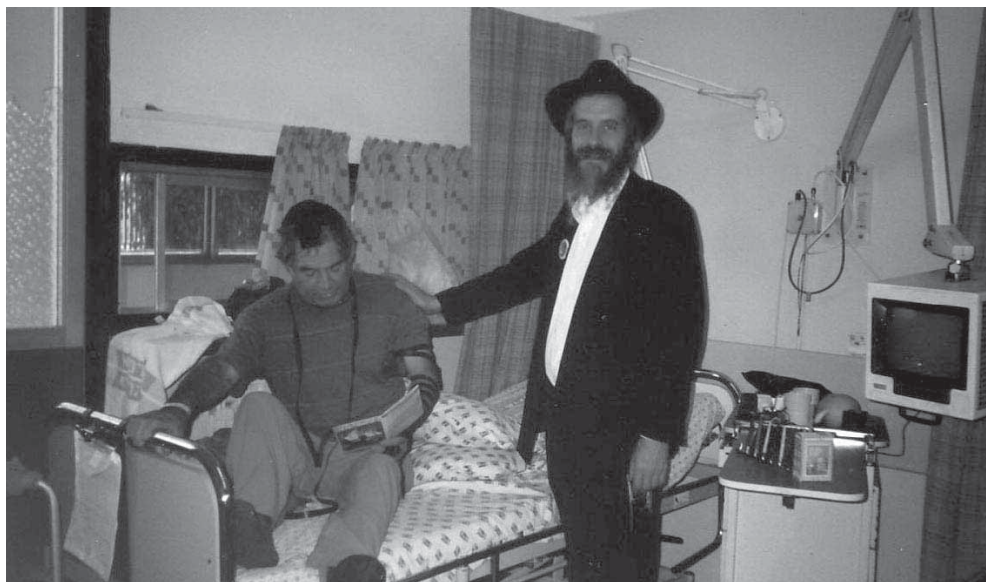
When Benzion left the yechidus, he intended to write down what the Rebbe had told him, but he

couldn't manage to remember a thing. He went back to his studies in Eretz Yisroel a totally changed person. About a year later, he contracted hepatitis, and after a lengthy period of hospitalization, he went back home to Indianapolis to recuperate. This time, the stay there did not have any adverse effect upon him. "This was all in the merit of my yechidus with the Rebbe," he said with confidence.

MARRIAGE

Shortly thereafter, he began learning in the Hadar Hatorah Yeshiva in Crown Heights. When he had recovered completely from the hepatitis, the Rebbe told him to return to Eretz HaKodesh.

Rabbi Gafni, who was not only his rosh yeshiva and mashpia, but also a shadchan, proposed a shidduch for him. The young lady was the great-granddaughter of Rabbi Avraham Sender Nemtsov,



Rabbi Benzion Cohen in action

who was privileged to be the one who asked the Rebbe to say a maamer at the historic farbrengen of Motzaei Yud Shvat, 5711, when the Rebbe accepted the leadership.

Her journey to Chassidus is a

story of its own. Born in Ireland, she and her parents emigrated to Canada when she was three years old. Years later, she traveled to Eretz HaKodesh for the purpose of studying at Machon Gold to become a teacher. En route, she made a stopover in France. There she met the shliach, Rabbi Shmuel Azimov, who told her, "Go to Beis Rivka – that's a real Jewish institution." She did, and the rest is history.

TEFILLIN, A BRACHA, AND A SMILE

In accordance with the Rebbe's instructions, the young couple started out living in Kfar Chabad. They later moved to Tzfas, where Benzion began going to the Rebecca Sieff Hospital each day for T'fillin Campaign activities. Their home was devastated by a mysterious fire one Friday night, from which the family was miraculously saved.

After receiving the Rebbe's bracha, the family returned to Kfar Chabad, and Benzion decided to continue his longstanding custom of going out on Mivtza T'fillin in the local hospital – this time, the Assaf

THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE ARE WAITING FOR US

"I always wanted to go out on shlichus.

"When the Rebbe told us to remain in Kfar Chabad, I thought to myself: 'What is my shlichus here?' I discovered that you don't have to travel to faraway places in order to be involved with shlichus. I am certain that each person knows of some place or another within close proximity to his home, where people are waiting for him.

"Mivtzaim is an important part of my life. If I don't go on mivtzaim one day, my whole day suffers. Like anyone else, I have aspects to my life that are not as good as others. But when I go out on mivtzaim, making people happy and helping them to fulfill mitzvos – everything changes. When we connect ourselves to the meshaleiach, we get renewed strengths. Mivtzaim, I discovered, gives me much more than what I give to others.

"I wish to use the forum of this magazine to make a personal appeal to all Anash members: There are many hospitals and geriatric centers that no one visits on a regular basis! There are thousands of people lying there and waiting for us to come and infuse them with life, both literally and figuratively. I'm only able to cover a fraction of the hospital every day, and it's a shame. I really wish that a few more Lubavitchers would join me in my work there.

"There are many Jews who would put on t'fillin each day, but they can't put them on by themselves. They would be so happy if someone would come and put on t'fillin with them..."

FROM THE CHASSIDIC RABBI'S DIARY

Over a period of seventy years (until the age of ninety-five), Benzion's father published the *National Jewish Post and Opinion* weekly newspaper. Since his passing, Benzion's sister continues to publish the paper to a nationwide readership.

Nine months ago, Benzion's sister, in her role as publisher, decided to turn her brother's e-mail messages into a weekly column under the title "From the Chassidic Rabbi's Diary." Here's one example:

PRAYER FOR THE MOSHIACH

Dear family and friends,
Shalom u'v'racha! How are you? We are well, thank G-d.

Today, I have a beautiful story to tell you. On Thursday, my son Levi made a bris for his son. Levi decided to name the baby after his beloved grandfather, Gavriel Moshe (Gabe for short) Cohen, may he rest in peace, who edited and published the *National Jewish Post and Opinion* for over seventy years. Levi's wife wanted the baby to also be named after her grandfather, Moshe Kalman. So the baby was named Gavriel Moshe Kalman and everyone is happy.

The bris was scheduled for 5:00 p.m. in Emanuel, Israel, where they live. I therefore had to go to the hospital earlier to help the patients and staff pray and put on t'fillin. I arrived at the geriatric ward about six hours earlier than usual. The patients are pretty much the same, whether you visit them at twelve noon or 6:00 p.m. However, the staff is different. At 3:00 p.m., the morning staff is replaced by the afternoon staff. As I soon realized, this (and everything that happens in the world) was Divine Providence, part of Hashem's master plan.

I have five steady 'customers' in the geriatric ward with whom I put on t'fillin. One advantage of visiting the geriatrics is because patients stay there for a long period, we see each other often and develop friendships. In the other wards, most of the patients only stay for a few days or a week.

Another advantage is that the patients and staff

are very appreciative of and thankful. My five steady customers had put on t'fillin every day for at least sixty years but now, due to a stroke or other medical problems, they can't put on t'fillin by themselves. They are very appreciative of my help. The other patients are also very grateful that someone smiles and greets them. (In fact, if you need a lift or a blessing or both, do a big mitzva and go and visit the geriatric ward of your local hospital or the old folks home.)

One of my regulars, Moshe, is about ninety-two years old. I say the blessing on the t'fillin, Shma, and a prayer for Moshiach with him, word by word.

This Thursday, when I said the Shma with Moshe, one of the nurses joined in. All three of us said the Shma, word by word. A thought snuck into

my mind. My dark side said, "Maybe today we'll skip the prayer for Moshiach. Maybe this nurse won't understand about Moshiach."

I pushed away the thought and said, "Yechi Adoneinu." The nurse responded, "Moreinu V'Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach."

I was pleasantly surprised. I had found a fellow Lubavitcher. Although I had been visiting the geriatric ward almost every day for a few months, we had never met, because she only works the morning shift. We both believe that our long awaited Redemption is finally happening, and that the

Lubavitcher Rebbe himself is Moshiach. She pointed to a picture of the Rebbe that she had put up, and asked me to bring a new and bigger one, and a charity box for the ward.

It may be true that not all Jews believe 100%. It may also be true that there are still some negative things happening in the world. But more and more Jews (and non-Jews) are becoming stronger in their belief. And the balance of the whole world in general is gradually becoming more and more positive.

And little incidents like this one keep my belief strong.

Love, Benzion

***I pushed away the
thought and said,
"Yechi Adoneinu."
The nurse
responded,
"Moreinu
V'Rabbeinu
Melech
HaMoshiach."***



HaRofe Hospital in nearby Tzrifin.

Benzion found a number of donors who would give financial support for his activities, and he set out on his mission. Benzion visits the five hospital wards that are permissible for a Cohen to enter, greeting the patients with a smile and a bracha for a complete and speedy recovery as he suggests to the patients and visitors that they should put on t'fillin.

"When I was in yechidus," Benzion recalled fondly with a smile, "the Rebbe told me that since I am a Cohen, I should bless the Jews in Eretz HaKodesh. Ever since then, I always try to give everyone a bracha, especially those in the hospital."

Benzion doesn't keep these blessed activities to himself. He strives to give more and more chassidim the privilege of going out on mivtzaim, particularly on fast days or on their days off from work, when they have the time available.

GREETING MOSHIACH

The activities at the hospital are permeated with the only shlichus that the Rebbe placed upon every Jew: "to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu."

Benzion always finds the right words to say to the patients, the visitors, and the medical staff about Moshiach and the Redemption. He likes to leave a few informational brochures, such as *HaGeula* and Rabbi Lior Malka's weekly leaflet with thoughts on Moshiach and the Redemption for every day of the week.

In connection with publicizing the announcement of the Redemption, Benzion recalls an electrifying episode:

On the 12th of Elul, 5763, Benzion went out on his daily hospital route with t'fillin and shofar in hand. Suddenly, a powerful explosion shook the area – there had been a deadly terrorist attack at nearby Tzrifin Junction!

Benzion immediately went to the location and gave passers-by and security forces the privilege of putting on t'fillin and hearing the shofar. Numerous media correspondents spoke to the Chabad rabbi, but only one actually wrote something about him in the papers (see picture). Benzion later realized that this had been the only reporter to whom he had explained that putting on t'fillin and blowing the shofar are part of the necessary preparations to hastening the Redemption.

Benzion ensures that every hospital ward has basic Judaica items: A siddur, Chitas, *Tanya*, *Igros Kodesh*, kippa, and talleisim. In addition, he devotes much effort to getting patients to continue putting on t'fillin daily after they recover.

Benzion's mivtzaim affect him too. "Seeing a person hooked up to an oxygen tube, unable to move, makes us recognize how much we have to thank G-d for those little things that are taken for granted, e.g., sleeping at home, not suffering with constant pain, and every breath we take."

SPREADING THE WELLSPRINGS EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

Benzion sends an e-mail each week to his family, his wife's family, and friends. It reaches dozens of people, and includes updates on what's happening with the family, alongside words of spiritual encouragement and stories of Divine Providence from his "mivtzaim" activities.

The e-mail is accompanied by a weekly d'var Torah from Rabbi Tuvia Bolton of Yeshivas Ohr T'mimim (which Rabbi Bolton himself sends via e-mail to seven thousand subscribers).

"Mivtzaim is an important part of my life. If I don't go on mivtzaim one day, my whole day suffers. Like anyone else, I have aspects to my life that are not as good as others. But when I go out on mivtzaim, making people happy and helping them to fulfill mitzvos – everything changes."

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU SAY...

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelewitz, Shliach, Beit Shaan

“A Lubavitcher neighbor told me that I can ask the Lubavitcher Rebbe for a bracha. That was in 1994. We wrote to the Rebbe, and a few days later my wife told me the good news...”

When the Rebbe Maharash was a boy of six or seven, he had a friend his age by the name of Pinchas. Shmuel and Pinchas would talk and play together in their free time.¹

One day the two boys went to a well. Over the well was a roof, a wheel, and a rope from which hung two buckets. When one bucket went down, the other one went up. The children made a game out of it. Each child went into a bucket and they had a sort of seesaw. Shmuel jumped into the bucket and went down and Pinchas went up. After a few minutes of play, Pinchas got tired of it. When he reached the top, he got out and went home, forgetting about his friend.

Shmuel realized he was alone.

He yelled for his friend, but Pinchas had already gone home. Shmuel had to wait down in the well until someone came to draw water. The person scolded, “Why should I have to exert myself to bring you up?”

The next time Shmuel met Pinchas, he asked him the following. At the end of Chumash BaMidbar there are five parshiyos: Chukas, Balak, Pinchas, Mattos and Massei. Chukas and Balak are sometimes read together, Mattos and Massei are sometimes read together, and only Pinchas is always read on its own. Nu, since your name is Pinchas, maybe you know why Parshas Pinchas is never joined with another parsha?

Pinchas realized there was something behind this question

but he had to concede that Shmuel had to tell him the answer. Then Shmuel said: Pinchas in the Torah was a tzaddik and he saved the Jewish people, but it's hard to connect with him since he was a *dakran* (one who stabbed). You too Pinchas, are a good boy but it's hard to be your friend since you leave friends alone in the well.

A STORY WITHIN A STORY

A few years ago, I arranged a meeting with someone, a resident of a kibbutz in the area. He is a director of a big company and I wanted to ask him for a donation to the Chabad house. In the fundraising course I took, they taught us to begin every meeting on an optimistic note with a story or vort from the parsha. Since the meeting took place the week of Parshas Pinchas, I planned to open with this story.

I knew that the director had a baal t'shuva son, a sweet and outstanding Chassid. What I didn't know was that he had another son who was married to a non-Jewish woman. When I arrived for my appointment, I said I wanted to begin with a Chassidic story. I gave him the background, telling him about the affair that Zimri ben Salu had with a Midianite woman and how Pinchas came and killed them.

Even before I got to the story of Shmuel and Pinchas, the man stopped me furiously. “That sounds like the lynch that took place in Ramallah. By what right does someone get up and kill someone else?”

I didn't get my donation, but I did come out of there with an important lesson. Even when you

¹ From the *Reshimas D'varim* of R' Yehuda Chitrik, a"h, Vol. 1, p.144

want to tell a story about “not stabbing,” you have to be careful not to stab ...

EXCUSE ME, ARE YOU LUBAVITCH?

I heard the following story from R' Reuven Gol, a shliach in Teveria:

“One day I was shopping in a local supermarket. As I began to pay for my purchases, I heard an argument at a nearby register. It was an express line, up to ten items, but the customer had a few more than ten, and the cashier was refusing to check him out. I interjected with a smile, ‘Come over to this register. I’m practically finished and you’ll be right after me.’

“The man came behind me, but was more interested in finding out whether I’m a Lubavitcher than in his turn at the register. When I told him I am, he inquired, ‘Maybe you would know who prepares boys for their bar mitzva?’

“He was excited to hear that I did that at the

Chabad house, and related, ‘Before I lived in Teveria, I lived in Tzfas near the Chabad community. I had been married for a few years already but did not have children. 14 years ago, a Lubavitcher neighbor told me that I can ask the Lubavitcher Rebbe for a bracha. That was in 1994.

“We wrote to the Rebbe, and a few days later my wife told me the good news... My son is almost 13 now, and I’m looking for someone to teach him for his bar mitzva. You have no idea how happy I am for my son, really ‘the Rebbe’s son’ to have his bar mitzva at a Chabad house.”

The boy learned with R' Gol and had his aliya at the Chabad house with his family in attendance, and it was all because a shliach smiled at him in the supermarket.

DO YOU KNOW WHY I'M WEARING A KIPPA?

I'll conclude with a story from the Chabad house in Gadera. R' Binyamin Karmiel relates:

A few years ago, as we were getting ready to board the bus heading to the national Kinus in honor of Gimmel Tamuz, I was approached by a young man, a resident of Gadera, who was wearing a kippa.

“Can I talk to you for a minute?” he asked.

“Sure,” I answered.

Then he asked me whether I had noticed that he had started wearing a kippa.

“Yes, I noticed, and I’m happy to see it,” I affirmed.

“Do you know why I started wearing a kippa?

On two occasions you met me and asked me to complete a minyan for Mincha at the Chabad house. I refused both times, despite your entreaties. ‘G-d is waiting for you,’ you said. I still refused, and I thought you’d be angry with me. I was very touched when instead, to my surprise, you wished me a good evening.

“At the same time the next day, I was in the mall when I remembered that this was the time for Mincha. Because you had wished me well, I felt an uncontrollable urge to go daven. I went to the nearby shul and davened Mincha and Maariv, and returned the next day for Shacharis. Since then, I go for every t’filla, put on t’fillin every day, wear a kippa and keep Shabbos. I continued to make progress in my mitzva observance. I just wanted to tell you that it’s all thanks to your kind words when I didn’t want to complete a minyan.”



Water Carrier by Yechiel Ofner

AND YOU SHALL ALSO SEE MY FACE

By Boruch Merkur

*Moshe was requesting a relationship with G-d resembling familiarity with another person, recognizing his face, alluding to the person's essential character. Moshe wanted to perceive his connection to the very essence of G-d. * Tracing the Rebbe MH" M's instructions on how to perfect our Divine service in the Final Era.*

[Continued from last issue]

To sum up the effect of summoning self-sacrifice in serving G-d:

"Self-motivated self-sacrifice draws down the aspect of the Supernal 'he doesn't know,' the very essence and being of G-d. Since it derives from the service of man of his own accord (from below), one thereby becomes unified with [this essential G-dliness], permeating his being,¹¹³ including his physical body, as discussed above. In fact, the effect is even manifest [outside the person's body] in the physicality of the world ... [resulting in] the inheritance of Eretz Yisroel."

The inner essence of G-d is brought down into the world, and in a manner that the physical world can accommodate. Thus, the world becomes perfected. And in a perfect world, it is only natural that the Jewish people inherit the Promised Land, with the coming of Moshiach.

BUT IT SAYS 'MY FACE YOU SHALL NOT SEE'

Of course, it is difficult to fathom such a sublime

revelation, connecting with and bringing down the inner essence of G-d. Apparently, this is a feat that even the greatest of all prophets, Moshe Rabbeinu, was unable to do. Moshe pleads with G-d,

"Please show me Your glory,"¹¹⁴ and G-d answers him,¹¹⁵ 'You are not able to behold My face, for no man can see My face and live, etc. You shall see Me from behind, but My face you shall not see.'"

At first glance, Moshe Rabbeinu was asking the impossible, but the Rebbe continues,

"Moshe's prayer, 'Please show me Your glory,' was that G-d should reveal to

him even His 'face,' [meaning] as Rambam puts it, 'He asked to know the truth of the existence of the Holy One Blessed Be He ... as one knows a person, having seen his face.' And since the prayer of a righteous person is not ignored, G-d forbid,¹¹⁶ it is logical to say that G-d fulfilled, at least in part, Moshe's request, also with respect to [seeing] the 'face' of the Holy One Blessed Be He."

Moshe was requesting a relationship with G-d resembling familiarity with another person, recognizing his face, alluding to the person's essential character. Moshe wanted to perceive his connection to the very essence of G-d. The Rebbe innovates that Moshe did in fact succeed – his prayers were indeed answered, at least to some degree – reading the relevant verse as follows: "'You shall see Me from behind and [you shall also see] My face'¹¹⁷ ... but the seeing of 'My face' will be in a manner of 'you shall not see.'"

To explain: There are two types of knowledge –

knowledge of what is and knowledge of what is not. Moshe Rabbeinu attained the ultimate height in knowing the aspects of G-d that can be fathomed, His external manifestations, as it were (“You shall see Me from behind”). The internal essence of G-d, however, His “face,” cannot possibly be conceived by the human intellect, even the G-dly mind of Moshe Rabbeinu, except (to some extent) through negation:

“A connection was established between the mind of Moshe (seeing) and even the ‘face’ of G-d. However, the connection with G-d’s ‘face’ was only in a manner of negation: ‘[you shall also see] My face [in a manner of] you shall **not** see.’”

The intimate relationship Moshe Rabbeinu had with G-d is truly profound, albeit by means of negation, as the Rebbe cites (in a footnote) *Likkutei Torah* (P’kudei 6c) on *A Guide to the Perplexed*: “Through extensive knowledge acquired by means of negation (it is possible) to virtually arrive at the form of the thing/matter as it indeed is.”

WHAT’S GOOD FOR THE HEAD IS GOOD FOR THE BODY

Thus far we have seen how Moshe succeeded in connecting with the very essence of G-d. But Moshe Rabbeinu is unique, the greatest and most gifted prophet imaginable. How does this teaching apply to other Jews? How can we possibly attain a connection to G-d’s essence?

The fact is that the accomplishments of the head of the Jewish people benefit the entire Jewish body:

“We may assert that since Moshe is the Faithful

Shepherd of all the Jews throughout all generations, his prayer, ‘Please show me Your glory,’ also extends to every Jew (especially with regard to the aspect of Moshe within him¹¹⁸) – that every Jew can connect himself¹¹⁹ even with the aspect of ‘My face.’

“Accordingly ... through self-nullification and self-sacrifice in a manner of ‘he doesn’t know,’ one unites with the Supernal ‘he doesn’t know,’ as it was in the days of Purim – that through their (self-motivated) self-nullification, in a manner of ‘he doesn’t know,’ ‘they merited a revelation of the light of the Infinite One, regarding which it is said, ‘no man can see My face and live.’”¹²⁰

NOTES:

113 See *Shaarei Ora* cited in Footnote 45 [of the original].

114 Ki Sisa 33:18.

115 Ki Sisa 33:20, 23.

116 Indeed, it is even said that the righteous decree and the Holy One Blessed Be He fulfills (Tanchuma VaYeira 19; see Shabbos 58b). In fact, the Holy One Blessed Be He decrees and the righteous annul (Moed Kattan 16b, where it is discussed).

117 The prefix letter Vav being translated as “and” instead of “but.”

118 See *Tanya* Ch. 42, beg.

119 Though not in a manner of actual knowledge and comprehension (and certainly not at the level of Moshe’s grasp). Thus, there is no contradiction with what Rambam writes there, “And He, may He be blessed, granted knowledge to him [to Moshe Rabbeinu] of what was previously unknown to man and what was not known thereafter.”

120 *Torah Ohr* Megillas Ester 98a.

“You shall see Me from behind and [you shall also see] My face’ ... but the seeing of ‘My face’ will be in a manner of ‘you shall not see,’” i.e., knowledge of G-d through negation, knowledge of what He is not.



THE HOUSE AT 82 ROTHSCHILD BLVD

By Menachem Ziegelboim

When Moshiach comes, and the walls and ceilings testify, it will be interesting to hear what the old house at 82 Rothschild has to tell about its decades of Chassidic life.

The three storey house at 82 Rothschild (the main street in old Tel Aviv of the 1940's) saw many Chassidic figures enter its doors over the years; its thick walls absorbed the sound of Torah and Chassidus and witnessed many fateful meetings for the building of Chabad in Eretz Yisroel. It saw many rabbanim and askanim, who came to learn, farbreng, discuss, ask, request, argue, understand and enjoy the company of the people there.

The first floor of this building was the home of Rabbi Moshe Ashkenazi and his wife, both of whom passed away just a couple of years ago.

This house, situated adjacent to a movie theater of all things, was an island of Chassidic warmth within cold, estranged Tel Aviv. There the Ashkenazi's raised their children, Jews who fill important roles in the world of Chabad today. Notable among them are Rabbi Mordechai Shmuel Ashkenazi, rav and *mara*

d'asra of Kfar Chabad and Rabbi Chaim Ashkenazi, who succeeded his father in the rabbanus in Tel Aviv.

Nor were they the only Chassidim who lived in this building. They followed in the footsteps of the chassid, Rabbi Chaim Eliezer Karasik and his wife Leah, who moved to Eretz Yisroel in 1935 and lived in this house from the year 1941.

For nearly seventy years they breathed Chassidic life into this old house, which served as a lighthouse for Chabad Chassidim who lived in Tel Aviv and the budding community of Anash in Eretz Yisroel. Even many years later, when Kfar Chabad became the capitol of Chabad Chassidus in Eretz Yisroel, the Chassidic warmth continued to be felt in this old house in Tel Aviv.

This modest home served as the headquarters for Chabad askanus in Eretz Yisroel, at a time when it was still in its infancy. Rabbi Eliezer Karasik

was the Rebbe Rayatz's representative and was as devoted to Chabad askanus as to rabbanus. He set the foundation for the expansion of Chabad in Eretz Yisroel. Rabbi Karasik was one of the founders of the Chabad School in Tel Aviv, yeshivas Achei T'mimim, the yeshiva in Lud, the vocational school, and served as director of Agudas Chassidei Chabad in Eretz Yisroel and Reshet Oholei Yosef Yitzchok and more.

The prophet Chavakuk says that in the future, "a stone from the wall will cry out, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it." When that time comes, it would be interesting to take a tape recorder (with lots of tapes in reserve) to that old apartment on 82 Rothschild Boulevard, and record the stories that the stones and wood will be able to relate of what they saw and heard over the decades.

They would tell about Rabbi Eliezer Karasik, who came home every evening, tired after a day of Chabad public service, and nevertheless took a Gemara or work of Chassidus and sat and learned.

They could certainly tell about the large packages of food that R' Karasik and his wife lovingly prepared for their fellow Chassidim who remained behind the Iron Curtain and lived lives of

poverty. They surely also saw the huge bundles of clothing that were packed to warm up the Russian Chassidim and their families, or for them to sell on the black market and live off the proceeds.

The house was a “meeting place for scholars,” in the Chassidic sense of the phrase; the walls heard many heated debates over critical decisions regarding the building of Chabad in Eretz Yisroel, and witnessed the hugs and kisses of Chassidim who love one another despite differences of

opinion.

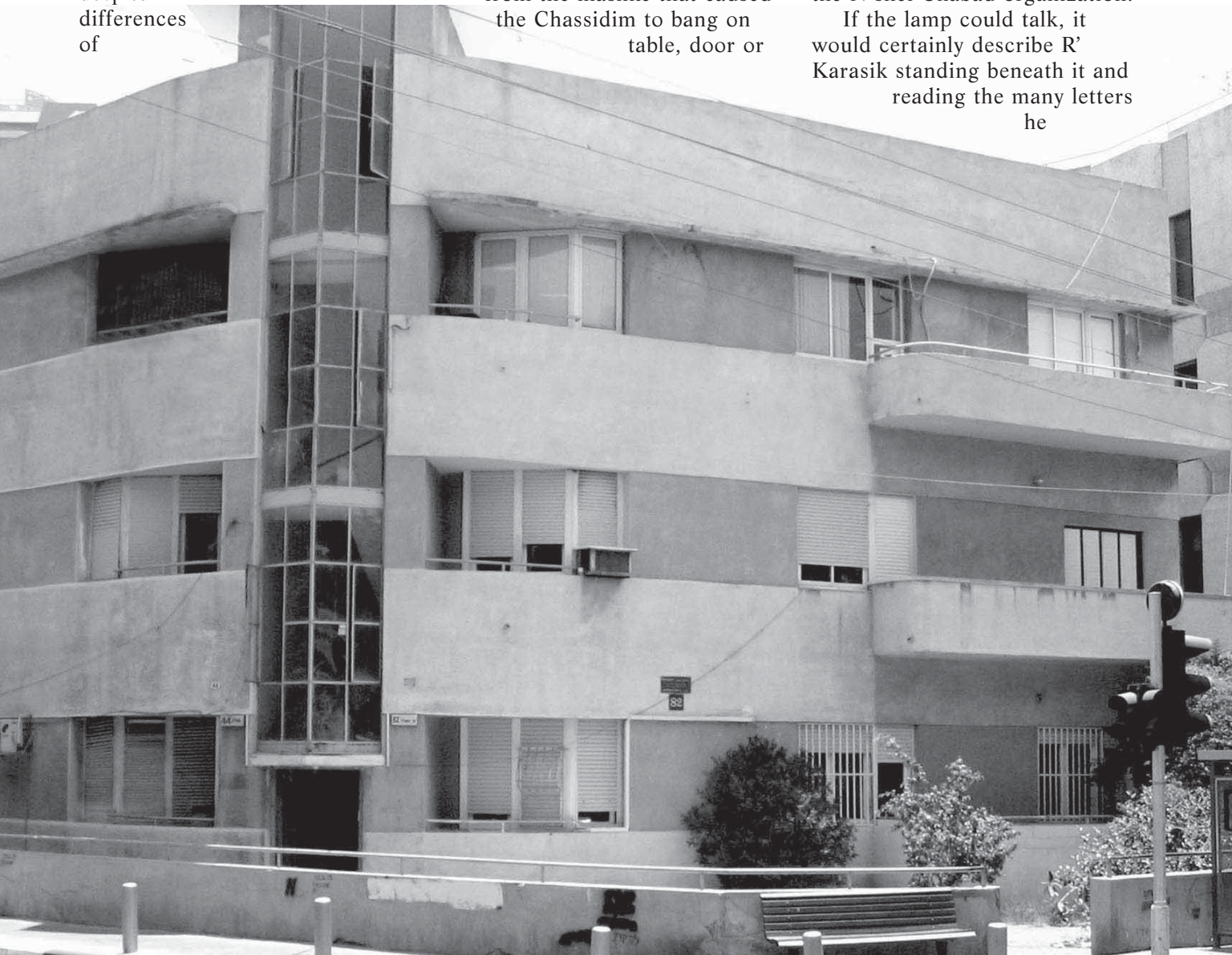
If you wanted a real Chassidishe farbrengen, you wanted the address on Rothschild. This was the place to be for the big farbrengens on Simchas Torah and Purim, where, as one participant said, “He didn’t even care when the chevra drank too much and caused damage.”

There was the big table which broke every so often during lively farbrengens, and the window panes which shattered from the pressure of so many people, or from the mashke that caused the Chassidim to bang on table, door or

window.

The large dining room table, oh, if it could open its mouth and talk... It would tell about the Chassidim of all ages who sat around it and farbrenged with Chassidic simcha, and a fiery yearning to achieve something in their spiritual lives, to attain some Chassidic quality or to see the Rebbe. It would testify to the many gatherings where they discussed the opening of yeshivas Achei T’mimim in Tel Aviv or the Chabad Talmud Torah, or perhaps the building of Kfar Chabad or the N’shei Chabad organization.

If the lamp could talk, it would certainly describe R’ Karasik standing beneath it and reading the many letters he



received from the Rebbe, containing instructions to build, to found, to urge, to hasten, to add, to strengthen. Perhaps it would tell of the many letters that he wrote to the Rebbe in which he reported, asked for advice, made requests ...

The wooden chairs can surely tell about the feet and shoes that danced on them at the Simchas Torah and Purim farbrengens, when they all sang and danced in pure, brotherly, Chassidic love.

His grandson, Rabbi Mordechai Ashkenazi tells about one of these farbrengens: "On Purim, 1949, the first new immigrants who were able to get out of Russia farbrenged with my

grandfather. Although I was just a little boy at the time, the scene is etched in my mind as though it happened yesterday.

"Anash from Russia began streaming in to farbreng. My grandfather welcomed them with tremendous happiness and my grandmother immediately served a variety of foods. The farbrengen went on for hours, and after a while the joy spilled over to the street, where the Chassidim took over with song and dance.

"The enjoyment and pleasure I saw on my grandparents' faces is indescribable. They were thrilled to host these people, whom they hadn't seen for more than ten years. There was tremendous

simcha. They paid no attention to the dishes that shattered or the furniture that broke. They simply enjoyed having Anash in their home."

Rabbi Moshe Yaroslavsky, who took part in those exciting farbrengens, once said that if Chabad Chassidim had saved the money they used to buy mashke and bought property in Tel Aviv instead, they would have become millionaires. But there were no regrets, since those who grew up in those days among the Chabad Chassidim in Tel Aviv were spiritual millionaires!

The tiled floors could surely tell about the man with the majestic beard who would pace back and forth across them on Shabbos afternoons, studying a maamer Chassidus by heart (usually the Rebbe Rashab's from the 1900's or 1910's), which he would later review at the gathering in the Chabad shul on Montefiore Street or Nachalat Binyamin, to the delight of Anash and the T'mimim.

The old wooden doors could tell about the Chabad refugees who arrived in Eretz Yisroel with their wives and children after much suffering, starving and with just the clothes on their backs. In this Chassidic home they found outstretched arms, big smiles, compassionate hearts, food and drink, beds and a warm atmosphere.

R' Zev Zalmanov relates: "A few days after we made aliya in 1936, our entire family was hosted in the house of Rabbi Karasik. Despite the crowding, he welcomed us and our eight children warmly. We lived there for a while until we were able to find an apartment."

Similarly, R' Zalman Sudakovitz, who made aliya with a large group of Anash, related:

THE BOULEVARD AND THE HOUSE

Rothschild Boulevard was created as a result of the physical topography of Tel Aviv. Tel Aviv was built on sand dunes, which had to be flattened before any construction could be done so that the buildings would be level. This resulted in piles of sand that were dug up from the area and found unsuitable for construction. It is there that it was decided to lay down the boulevard.

On 23 Kislev, 5671 (1911), at a meeting of the Vaad Tel Aviv, it was decided to name the street for Baron Rothschild. Mordechai Ben Hillel and Meir Dizengoff were appointed to write a letter to the Baron informing him that the boulevard was named for him. In postcards and other documents from that time period, the boulevard was sometimes called Sderot Binyamin or "the Boulevard."

The Braun-Rabinsky family lived at number 82 for seven years, between the completion of the building and the arrival of the Karasik family. The house was designed in 1933 by Yosef Berlin, in the traditional symmetrical international style. The illuminated stairwell tower serves as a central focal point, highlighting the architectural lines of the structure. Balconies are staggered and extend outward from the façade.

Usually, people choose a home based on what suits their family's physical needs and comfort, but the Karasik family chose this as their home upon their arrival in Israel in 1935 for purely spiritual reasons.

When Rabbi Karasik would be involved in a complicated topic in his learning, he would pace from wall to wall. When his wife saw the apartment on 82 Rothschild, she noticed that the two main rooms had a large connecting door between them. She decided to rent it so the large area would help her husband on his "walks" as he learned.

This home served as a hostel of Torah, Chassidus and Chesed for over seventy years.

“When I arrived in Eretz Yisroel in 1949, my brother, who had preceded me by a few months, told me that in Tel Aviv there was a warmhearted Jew, R’ Lazer Karasik, who welcomed new immigrants from Russia. That is the first house to go to and you will get a hot cup of tea and good advice from the balabus.

“When we arrived there, we saw that my brother had not exaggerated. R’ Karasik and the Rebbetzin welcomed us with unusual warmth, took an interest in the details of our situations, and took care of us.”

The house on Rothschild Street could certainly tell about the many Chassidim who came every morning of Sukkos in order to say a bracha on the esrog. It was one of the few Calabrian esrogim in Eretz Yisroel, and R’ Karasik made sure to announce that all were welcome to come and use it.

Thus, the house saw Anash come on foot every day from as far as Yaffo, Ramat Gan, B’nei Brak and even Petach Tikva! Jews from other groups, too, came from the early hours of the morning in order to say the bracha on the esrog. R’ Karasik personally saw to it that each one

who came enjoyed a cup of coffee and cake in the sukkah, for it is not our custom to eat before saying the bracha on the Dalet minim.

The spacious living room surely remembers the late afternoon hours of Sunday, 11 Shvat, 1950, when R’ Karasik and his wife returned from the port in Chaifa (where they had accompanied some T’mimim on their way to 770) with the sad news of the passing of the Rebbe Rayatz. The walls would tell of the copious tears of the Rebbetzin, who looked like her world had come to an end. Her cries of “Tatte, tatte,” shook the rafters.

R’ Karasik himself paced back and forth, closed and restrained, his red ears (a sign that his blood pressure had risen) testifying to the storm of emotions raging in his heart.

A short while later, the rabbanim, R’ Shmaryahu Gurary, R’ Moshe Gurary, R’ Alexander Sender Yudasin, R’ Shaul Dovber Zislin, and R’ Pinye Altheus came in quietly. All were in mourning and trying to find consolation in the presence of the others.

In this room many meetings and discussions took place, and it

There was the big table which broke every so often during lively farbrengens, and the window panes which shattered from the pressure of so many people, or from the mashke that caused the Chassidim to bang on table, door or window.

was here that they decided to crown Ramash as Nasi of the seventh generation. R’ Karasik and his brothers-in-law left for the meeting at the shul on Nachalas Binyamin Street, resolved to convince the other Chassidim of their decision.



The way the street looked during the years that the Karasik family lived in Tel Aviv



Rothschild Boulevard, a decade after the trees were planted

Friday night, 5 Nissan, 1960, R' Karasik led the Shabbos meal in his home, in the course of which many niggunim were sung. After the meal, he told his grandson Chaim (who lived in their house since the age of 11, when he returned from Brazil in order to learn in Eretz Yisroel), "Now you have vacation and we can learn Gemara together."

After he finished reciting *Shnayim Mikra V'Echad Targum*, he retired to his bed, and he suffered a heart attack in his sleep. A doctor who lived in the neighborhood was called and gave him an injection, but to no avail. R' Karasik raised his hands towards heaven and passed away. Of the entire family, only 11 year old Chaim was there with him.

His son-in-law, R' Moshe Ashkenazi, who was in Brazil, returned to Eretz Yisroel. As the Rebbe instructed him, he accepted the position of rav of the Chabad community in Tel Aviv. This wasn't simply about accepting a rabbinic position, but about carrying on all the work of his late father-in-law.

R' Ashkenazi, his wife Devorah, and their children moved into the Chassidishe apartment on Rothschild Street together with Mrs. Leah Karasik. They lived there together for fourteen years. On Shabbos Mevarchim Shvat, 5734(1974), Mrs. Karasik asked for a cup of water. She said the bracha and drank, said some T'hillim, and nodded off in her chair. Suddenly, at midday, with a T'hillim in her hand, she passed away.

R' Moshe Ashkenazi succeeded his father-in-law as rav of the k'hilla as well as in Agudas Chassidei Chabad and directing tz'daka and chesed affairs. The walls of the house saw bundles of

cash designated for distribution, as well as free-loan repayment checks that he never cashed, knowing how hard it was for the debtors to make ends meet.

These walls observed his conscientiousness with money matters. When he was quite old, despite his weakness, he mustered the strength before Pesach to go to his former place of work, the diamond exchange, and raise money for the needy. He always

Before he got involved in a communal matter, he would sit for hours and ponder whether he had any personal agenda. Until he was 100% sure that he was objective, he would not state his opinion.

endeavored to give the money to its intended recipients without delay.

The old furniture of the home could relate a recurring conversation between him and his wife. She would ask him for money for household expenses and he would always say it wasn't necessary. She would rejoin, "How am I different than anybody else who asks for donations which you give so

generously?" She would also jokingly say that she would ask R' Moshe Weber z"l for help, since R' Ashkenazi gave him large sums of money to distribute to those in need.

The house could certainly tell of R' Moshe laboring over drafts of letters to the Rebbe, writing another version and yet another version, tearing them up, writing again, and giving up in despair. Day after day, he would write draft after draft. It could be weeks until he had a letter for the Rebbe. Sometimes, after all the preparations and drafts he would determine that he wasn't a "vessel" to write the letter, and he would stop writing the letter in the middle.

The rooms of the house saw Anash coming in the middle of the night, when most people were asleep, in order to hear the Rebbe's voice over the telephone during the broadcasts from New York. When dawn broke over the trees, Rebbetzin Devorah would serve drinks and cake to revive them.

The house could tell of the hours upon hours that R' Ashkenazi sat and listened to people's problems. He advised them in matters of chinuch and shalom bayis, and encouraged and guided those who had veered from the path of Chassidus.

The door to the home could tell of the young man with the piercing eyes who tottered into the house after midnight Pesach night, 1949, and fainted. After fasting all day, since he was a firstborn, he had then led the main seider at the Tzrifin camp in his position as an army chaplain, and then walked to Tel Aviv. When he was aroused, he sat down to conduct his own seider.

The walls of the living room can tell of the Shabbos meals



Rothschild Boulevard during the fifties



The way the street looks in recent years



Chief Rabbis of Israel visiting the house during the Shiva for R' Moshe Ashkenazi a"h

during which R' Ashkenazi asked his son, R' Nosson a"h – a soulful person who was knowledgeable in old niggunim – to sing niggun after niggun. One could see that he was nostalgic for the good old days when he was a bachur and attended the farbrengens of R' Alter Simchovitz in yeshivas Toras Emes. On these occasions, he would be inspired and experience dissatisfaction with his spiritual state. He would feel he did not do enough for the Rebbe's inyanim in Tel Aviv.

The house was suffused with countless hours of learning with R' Yisroel Tzvi Heber a"h, R' Avrohom Shmuel Levin and R' Yechezkel Reichman. R' Reichman testified, "We did not say a word about other topics, we just learned!"

The house and furnishings witnessed how carefully he searched for chametz, a job that took hours as he turned over every piece of furniture.

More than the house heard, it was a witness to silence, to that which was not said. For R' Ashkenazi, silence and restraint

When his daughter, Mrs. Wilschansky, asked him what business he had with the beggar, he said that the man seemed to be one of the 36 hidden tzaddikim.



Rabbi Moshe Ashkenazi



Rabbi Chaim Eliezer Karasik

were an inseparable part of his personality. Before he got involved in a communal matter, he would sit for hours and ponder whether he had any personal agenda. Until he was 100% sure that he was objective, he would not state his opinion.

This was true for family affairs as well. He never criticized his children's teachers. If a child complained about someone, he did not accept what the child said.

Even the big comfortable chair that his children bought him as a gift can relate that for a few years he did not sit in it, fearing shatnez in the upholstery. In order not to offend, he did not comment; he simply refrained from sitting in it.

His silence was also apparent in his unusual stoicism when he

was told about the death of his son Nosson during the Shiva for his wife. An ambulance waited near the house and the doctor who conveyed the terrible news was amazed by R' Ashkenazi's reaction. R' Moshe lifted his hands and eyes heavenward and said ... nothing. "And Aharon was silent."

There are secrets to which only R' Ashkenazi and the walls can testify. There was the unfortunate beggar who walked the streets of Tel Aviv, pulling a covered wagon along. His sister collected money at the Central Bus Station of Tel Aviv. The brother and sister beggar-pair lived in southern Tel Aviv, and used the money to support needy families. All those years, he slept on a chair in the yeshiva, so as not to live together with his single

sister.

One morning before Pesach, this beggar came to see R' Moshe Ashkenazi. When they were finished, R' Moshe walked him to the door and the man went on his way. When his daughter, Mrs. Wilschansky, asked him what business he had with the beggar, he said that the man seemed to be one of the 36 hidden tzaddikim. In his wagon he carried things for the poor and needy. Once in a while he came to ask him for money for tz'daka. That particular day he asked for an especially large sum, said R' Moshe, and we made a "deal," something to do with the World to Come.

At that point, R' Ashkenazi held his tongue, obviously sorry that he had said that much.

If only the walls could speak...

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HAPPY TO BE CARRYING DIAMONDS

By H. Ben Yishai

Mrs. Simi Zalmanov, who just gave birth to her 19th child, tells us how she juggles her household and her job as a principal, and describes her priorities and her greatest sources of nachas and inspiration.

Mrs. Simi Zalmanov of Tzfas has become famous ever since the recent birth of her 19th child made the news in Israel and around the world. Meeting her, it's hard to believe that such a modest, smiley, inconspicuous woman was the focus of so much attention. Never one to flaunt herself or take credit for her accomplishments, she wouldn't have agreed to the exposure had she not been assured it's for the benefit of the public.

The women in Tzfas know her for two reasons – for being the principal of the Beis Chana High School, and for being the mother of 19 children (nine boys and ten girls), six of whom are married with children. A few of her grandchildren are older than

some of her children.

Simi was born in America. Her father was Rabbi Mordechai Altein shlita, who started his shlichus during the lifetime of the Rebbe Rayatz. Her husband, Yosef Yitzchok Zalmanov, is from Kfar Chabad. He works as a chaplain in prisons, being mekarev and giving chizuk to inmates.

Simi, did you always want a large family?

Yes, always. I grew up in a mid-sized family of seven. I was the youngest and always dreamed of having a large family. My oldest sister is 16 years older than me. My sisters have many children, and I remember that when I was younger, I would hope to have as many as they do.

For many years, when I lit the Shabbos candles I would daven that I should have 18 children. When I gave birth to my 18th child, I felt Hashem had listened to my prayers.

From time to time, certain problems arose that threatened my ability to have children, but then I would daven that Hashem grant me more children as if those problems did not exist. Over the years I said “Chana’s prayer” regularly and I sought all kinds of segulos. I did not take this bracha for granted.

To demonstrate the magnitude and unexpectedness of the bracha with each child, I’ll tell you that for my 18th and 19th I had nothing to dress the baby in, since I had given it all away. I had to start all over. I had given away all my maternity clothes too.

How did your home prepare you for your future life?

Our home and education were old-world, unlike the way things are done today. It was a home with lots of giving, lots of thought about others. Both of my parents are very special people. The brother right above me was handicapped and I had to forego a lot. In general, when you grow up with a handicapped sibling, it matures you.

What are the differences in chinuch between then and now?

Back then they did whatever needed doing. They didn’t ask a child what he wanted. If something had to be done, it was done. Going on shlichus was a given and the accepted approach was “don’t be spoiled.”

Today it’s not like that. The focus is on doing what you like and looking for fun.

There is a middle road. There needs to be a sense of order in place and time, and clarity about what is acceptable to us and what

is not. Children need guidelines, boundaries and clear rules, while allowing room for choices and preferences.

These basics let the children know what is expected of them and give them confidence, making chinuch much easier. When you put effort into this, all the other things come much easier.

But how do you do balance these two enormous projects, home and school?

Physically and technically it's really two mosdos. Success begins with the right perspective, regardless of the size of the family. The principles are the same: starting with establishing habits and creating a healthy, balanced atmosphere both at home and at school. When children know the day's routine and what is expected of them, they learn how to be a part of it.

My role, whether as mother or principal, is to direct them, to conduct the orchestra so that it works effectively and harmoniously. The primary guideline is always do **what is good for the child**, in the short run and long run, providing a good childhood in the present and building an independent life for the child in the future.

How do you do this at home?

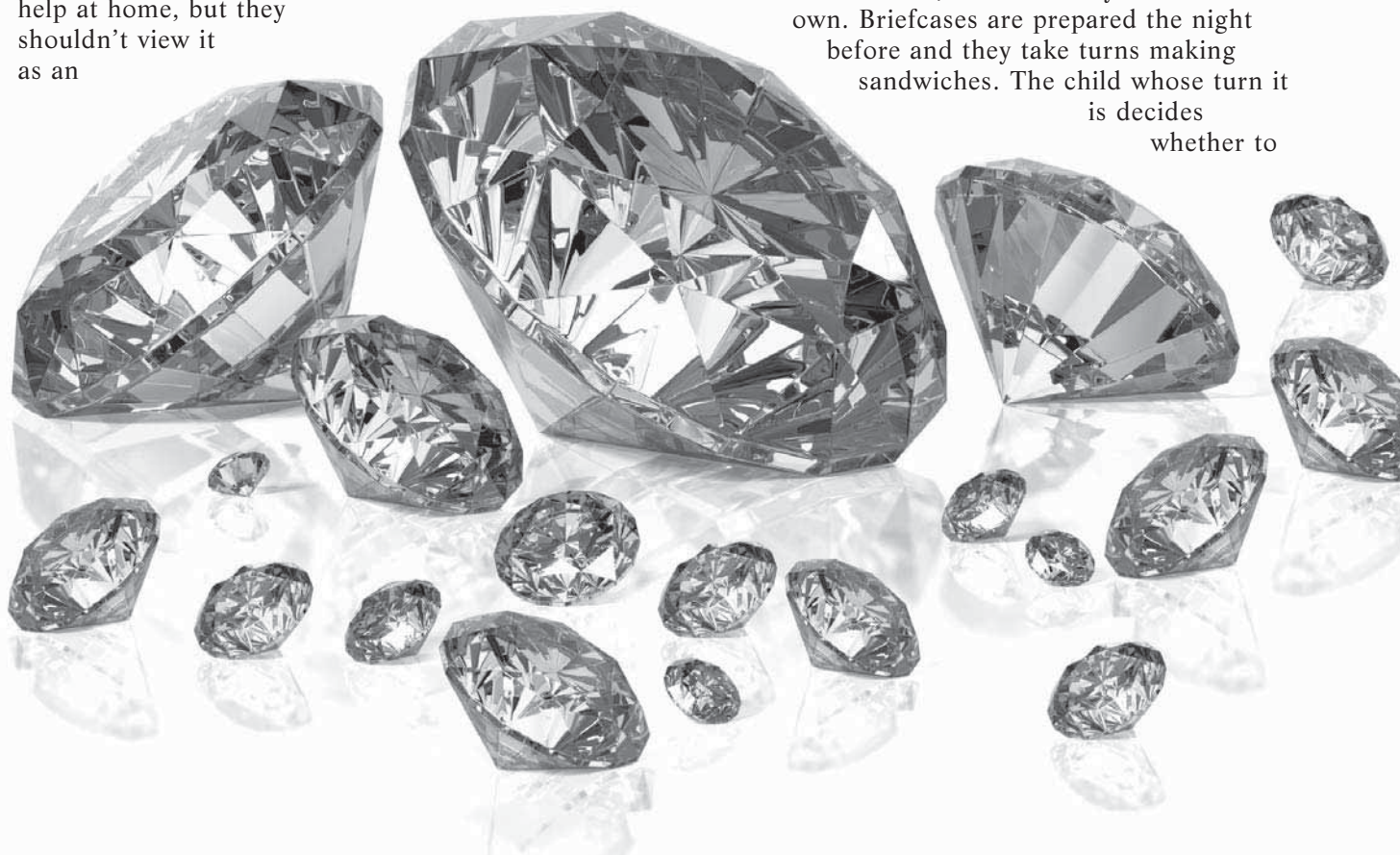
I think it's good for a child to help at home, but they shouldn't view it as an

For many years, when I lit the Shabbos candles I would daven that I should have 18 children. When I gave birth to my 18th child, I felt Hashem had listened to my prayers.

encumbrance. It's very important to me that the children shouldn't feel burdened. For example, my older girls feel very free, and participate in all social activities outside the home. I hire help so they won't lose out on their childhood.

At the same time, the first step in educating children is instilling habits. The children acquire them from day one since everything, especially the daily routine, is clearly defined.

Each child knows how to make his bed, empty his negel vasser, and get dressed with the clothes prepared the night before. When they're younger, I set out the clothes, and then they do it on their own. Briefcases are prepared the night before and they take turns making sandwiches. The child whose turn it is decides whether to



make them the night before or in the morning. We have a list on the fridge which says what each child does or doesn't like in a sandwich.

They eat cornflakes or oatmeal in the morning and have a drink before they leave. They also take turns emptying out the negel vasser for the little ones and making their beds.

The bedrooms are upstairs and before they come down they straighten up. In the afternoon, when they come home, they shower and change into the clothes prepared on their beds. This reduces the pressure later on so the evenings are more relaxed.

In addition to habits there is also order. Everything in the house has a set place. The children are free to take what they want but they know they have to return it to its place after a game. On Motzaei Shabbos, one of the girls helps everyone check their briefcases and makes sure each child has what he needs for the new week: school supplies, food and money for tz'daka.

They take turns taking the two little ones to the daycare center in the morning and there's also a weekly routine, a day when nails are cut, a day when they're checked for lice, etc.

By nature I'm very organized. I clean up and don't let things accumulate. Some people aren't stressed by a bit of disorder and maybe it's better that way, but it's very important to me that everything be organized. Each child has his cubby, and they all know where things belong.

Why is your daily routine like?

I usually get up early, at five, and if I'm able to, I daven and learn Chitas before everybody gets up. After the children go to

school, I cook and go to work.

I have a cleaning lady every day for two and a half hours. I leave an orderly house and she continues from there. I have a babysitter who comes at one o'clock. She takes the babies from the daycare center and welcomes the children who come home at lunchtime. This is natural to them, as they are accustomed to it practically from birth. This babysitter has been

children. It's important to me to give each one of them, from the youngest right up to the married ones, what they need at every stage of life.

I'm always amazed by how Hashem created each one different from the next, in temperament and looks. This requires us to deal differently with each one. Boruch Hashem, He gives us the ability to handle it. I try very hard to give each

Sons and sons-in-law



working for us for at least twenty years and the children love her like a grandmother. I return home around four.

What else is important to you in running the house and the chinuch of your children?

Organization is really very important. There's so much to do - cooking and laundry in quantities that people aren't used to - but what really occupies me, and what I give the most thought to, is the **relationship among the**

child what he needs, to be in touch with all the teachers, and to take part in school meetings and talks with parents. All we can do is to try our utmost and rely on Hashem to do the rest.

What fundamental ideas and concepts guide you in raising such a large family?

Emuna is the basis for our outlook on life. We recognize and believe that Hashem knows what is best for us and go along with that. We try to work with

Hashem, not against Him.

The Rebbe spoke about childbirth as a fundamental part women have in bringing about the Geula. He cited the Chazal that says that Moshiach will not come until all the neshamos come down. That's our mitvza; our role is to help in bringing down all the neshamos from Heaven so they live here in physical bodies. This is why family planning is not for us believing Jews. True, sometimes there's a natural break and no children are born, and of course that's from Hashem too.

We in Chabad are so busy influencing others, but the first thing is to be a personal example. We have to be honest and admit the truth: Are we ready to forego our comfort? Are we willing to do the work ourselves and not just tell others to do it?

There are more difficult times and more difficult children; it's not all rosy, but this is what is demanded of me. This is the avoda and it's not easy, but that's why it contains the bracha. This is my test, but it is also my bracha.

What gives you the strength?

There are lots of people who work around the clock for their careers. It's all in your head. I see my family and my other chinuch work as my life's occupation.

Your perspective is what gives you the strength. If you were carrying around a sack of diamonds, would you have the energy? Of course. What about a sack of sand? Of course not. You would happily drag around diamonds all day and night because you know that it's worth your while. That sums up my outlook on life.

Another vital component is my relationship with my husband and our mutual support. My husband

and I support one another throughout, and it builds our children up tremendously to see this. We try to make time to be together every day in the house, even for ten minutes. Every so often I take off half a day or a day and go out and take care of things with my husband. We also speak to each other on the phone every day.

How do you recharge yourself?

Once a year, my husband's job gives him three days vacation in a hotel, usually on Chanuka when most of the children are home. That is our annual vacation and we try to organize a trip for everyone. Other than that, it's rare for us to go out together. Since we don't have a car and it's very expensive to rent transportation for the entire family, our recreation takes place mostly at home. On days off we do things in the area. Occasionally we go to the beach, but not so often because it's really expensive.

The children are very attached to one another and the house is cozy. They can sit for hours together and they don't like going out much. They also support one another. The weddings were very uplifting occasions. Everybody enjoys it when the married couples and their children come. They sit together on the floor in the living room, and they are all united.

The married couples often come on Shabbos and we also try to have guests from outside the family.

How do you build a personal relationship with each child?

I make sure to hear what they have to say and what they're saying in between the lines. You find a way to create a personal relationship with a child through

The pregnancies and births are the easy part. Raising the children is far more complicated and difficult.

the child himself, specifically in the daily physical care of the children. It starts in your head, with your outlook and thoughts, and that leads to action. While taking care of them and talking to them, I pay attention to that which is special about them and see where each one is up to in life.

Hashem made them different in appearance, nature, and personality so I would be able to see what is unique about each child and relate to that uniqueness. Each one was created special, and when you see what is special in each of them, he is no longer one of a bunch. That helps me very much.

In the shidduchim that we have made, it becomes apparent that each couple is very different from the others. They are so dissimilar that people ask me how they can possibly be siblings.

How do you manage to find the time to take care of and listen to each of them?

Having household help is a necessity, not a luxury for me. The house and all the furnishings are simple, but I cannot manage without cleaning help. When I come home, I don't get them "all worked up" over what needs to be done, so I have quiet. The house is calm and orderly and I have the ability and desire to listen to them. What did you learn today? How is your teacher? I listen to what's going on with them. Each

person has to find the way to be more available to their children.

This might sound trivial, but I found it interesting that when the secular media came after my recent birth, they were amazed by “How do you remember all their names and which class each one is in?”

At the Shabbos table we ask for divrei Torah and whoever wants to, says something. We pay attention to the notes they bring home and over the years I’ve kept folders for the children. Part of the daily routine entails checking

the calendar and calling teachers once in a while.

My children are not a clan. Each one is a separate personality. Yes, when there are many of them it’s really hard to give each one his or her own space. You need a lot of wisdom so that nobody feels cheated. I don’t aim for perfection. I keep in mind what it says in Pirkei Avot, “The work is not for you to finish, nor are you free to desist from it.”

The pregnancies and births are the easy part. Raising the

children is far more complicated and difficult.

You have many roles that you play simultaneously: mother, grandmother, mother-in-law. How do you manage when you have so many ages and situations to deal with?

It’s much different now than it used to be. On the one hand the family dynamics are more intricate and diverse; on the other hand, I have more experience. The younger children’s chinuch is different than the first children’s, because they are influenced by the older ones.

It’s very important to me that they all get along so we try to invite the married couples together. Boruch Hashem, there is a relationship between us and them and between themselves. I give thought to how the young ones can connect with the older ones. Family togetherness contributes so much to their chinuch. The children notice my relationship with my husband, the relationship with the older children, our priorities and values. They observe what we do with the older ones and they ask a lot of questions. How come this one is more particular about this and another is not, or is particular about something else. The children notice these things, so we discuss it.

One of my younger daughters is very close in age to one of my grandchildren. She once asked me while near him, “Savta, do you let?”

One granddaughter calls me “Savta Mommy.” When there are grandchildren in the house, they differentiate between “Savta’s baby” and “Imma’s baby.”

What are your greatest moments of nachas?

My happiest moments are when the children are here

WORKING AT BEIS CHANA

I was married at a relatively young age in New York. We moved to Eretz Yisroel right after the wedding and I started, as per the counsel of the Rebbe, to be involved in chinuch. Every year the instruction to be involved in chinuch was received once again, so I’ve been working all this time.

My hours changed as my family grew. I started as an English teacher at Beis Chana in Tzfas and then worked at Machon Alte. As per the Rebbe’s instruction, I worked for many years as a mechaneches and principal in the Beis Chana high school and dormitory.

After my 17th child was born (she’s 5 and a half now) I stopped running the dormitory and just run the school. In recent years the school has become one unit – 7th through 12th grade, divided into three levels.

By the way, I did not want to be a principal, but through the *Igros Kodesh* I got such clear answers about it that there was nothing to discuss.

Even after I started that job, I wanted to leave at first. I felt I wasn’t suited for the position. Then I opened to an amazing answer about someone who wants to leave an administrative position and the Rebbe explains why not to leave. At the start of nearly every school year, I think about what lies ahead for me and consider discontinuing my involvement in chinuch, but the Rebbe’s answer always sends me back there and I rededicate myself to the work. There have, however, been certain years when I was told not to work. I always saw how the Rebbe answered according to the circumstances. It’s really a bracha.

I can’t say that it’s easy. It entails running two complicated enterprises simultaneously. My job entails so much responsibility and being away from home a lot. It is really impossible to understand how they both work out together. I see that doing this work in chinuch brings bracha to the home and in the end, both elements go together. This gives me the strength to carry on.

together, which is usually on Shabbos. I love to see the married couples and those still at home getting along well, and sitting and talking together. At those times I don't want to do anything except sit on the side and watch. It gives me such nachas that I can't describe it.

Can you tell us some interesting tidbits?

When my fourth was born, the oldest was 3 years and 3 months. The day before I gave birth, my second daughter, who was two years old, broke her thigh bone and was in a cast from top to bottom. I was home with four little children and my husband was in Kollel. The two year old cried because she wanted my attention. The one year old was in the bath, the infant was crying and the phone was ringing. I said to my 3 year old, "You can wait, because you are the oldest here."

He looked at me and said in Yiddish: "But Mommy, a three year old is not yet a father!"

I was taken aback. I realized that every child, at every age, needs what he needs in accordance with his age, and a three year old is not yet a father. He's a very little boy. I've always remembered that line of his.

Our second child was a preemie who miraculously survived. We got an amazing answer from the Rebbe that even Moshe Rabbeinu was born premature. We called her our Moshe Rabbeinu. Today she is, baruch Hashem, the mother of three.

Are your children happy to be part of a family that is the size of a class?

Each child is so different, but generally speaking the young ones consider it an experience; they always have friends. The older ones express their

happiness, each one in their own way. My eight year old was asked whether he wants another brother and he said, "Of course, at least to make it to 20."

They asked him, "And if it means giving up on your room or bed?"

He said, "What's the problem? We'll enlarge the apartment."

It's sometimes hard for them when I work and have to leave the house. They don't understand that it's for their good and it's difficult for them on a daily basis. In the larger scheme of things,

If you calculate the income and the expenses, you see that it's not possible, but if you rely on Hashem, and you do your best, then the bracha comes in ways that are above nature.

though, they are treated the same as those in smaller families.

Why did you get into the news recently?

After I gave birth, I wanted to change rooms at the hospital and the staff refused. One of the nurses advocated that if a woman was there for her 19th baby, she deserved her own room, and the news got out. She asked me to be interviewed but I didn't want to. Over the next 24 hours, she persisted, but I continued to

refuse.

When my husband heard about it, he said, "How can you just say no? Ask."

He consulted with a rav-mashpia and we were told we had to be interviewed. It was very hard for me. We don't like exposure and we guard our privacy, but in accordance with our rav's directive, we agreed.

Within a few hours, a photographer and reporter arrived at the hospital to interview me. I was horrified to hear women speaking about it, having heard the radio program. Two days later, when I returned home, photographers came and took pictures. That Sunday we starred in all the radio programs and in the newspapers.

When we read the article, we were shocked to discover that everything I had said about Chabad and the Rebbe had been omitted. I felt very bad about it, because that had been the reason I had agreed to be interviewed. But my husband had asked the rav and I asked the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh* and we got our directives about what to do and that's that.

We know it made a big Kiddush Hashem, especially for the irreligious sector. It's not only about a big family. They heard about a cohesive family, people who work and don't live at other people's expense, with an orderly home and well-mannered children.

What reactions do you get from people?

The reactions are usually positive because they see the reality here. People ask questions, but they don't begrudge us. Some even ask to be hosted for a Shabbos meal. The irreligious journalists expected to see chaos and neglected children. Instead,

they saw well-mannered, quiet children in a neat and clean house, everything in its place and a calm atmosphere. You feel relaxed here.

Do you encourage other women to have children?

Last year they asked me to speak at the Shifra U’Pua gathering in Kfar Chabad. I read the Rebbe’s letters on the subject. The Rebbe writes very sharply that family planning is destructive. The Rebbe says that Hashem knows better than us what is good for us and how to plan our families for us. So how can someone do the opposite of what the Rebbe says?

Of course you have to take a woman’s physical and emotional health into account, and consult with doctors and Chassidishe rabbanim. But when a healthy, strong woman looks for leniencies in this and claims not to have the strength, I think she should look for other ways to make it easier on herself, like by taking more help, maybe a babysitter so she can rest, or cleaning help, or using disposable dishes ... *That’s* where the planning should be done.

If you open the Rebbe’s sichos and see how strongly he words it, you can’t be indifferent. You can’t present yourself as a Lubavitcher and defy what the Rebbe says. You can cry out Moshiach and ad masai, but what about this basic mitzva? Look at what a role we have! And this has to do with the Geula – the bringing down of souls before Moshiach comes.

What segulos do you use to merit siyata d’Shmaya (Heavenly assistance)?

Every day I say the chapter of T’hillim that corresponds to the age of each of my family members, including the

daughters-in-law, sons-in-law and grandchildren. It takes time but it’s worth it and I see results. I like davening Shacharis and feel it’s a segula. At candle lighting I mention everyone’s name and make requests.

It’s a special siyata d’Shmaya that my husband has lots of patience and can talk to them, sit on the floor with them, make salad, play, schmooze, listen – to all of them.

A few years ago, there was an

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interesting transition period when my husband was home more and his relationship with the children became very strong. He was able to talk to them a lot. It does wonders for them, so we do it all the time. When there’s Avos U’Banim, my husband goes with the boys.

We have no computer at home and no VCR. Two years ago, the school required me to carry a cell phone; otherwise I wouldn’t have one. We sit and read on the floor,

play Monopoly, do a puzzle together. We’re a bit primitive, but it’s good for us that way.

If not for my husband’s support I wouldn’t be able to manage. He contributes so very much. He is always supportive, gets involved, and doesn’t lecture or complain; he does whatever he can. He also works hard. During the time that I worked until late in the day, he came to meet me and walk me home so I wouldn’t go alone in the dark.

What is your parting message for us?

To go with the belief that Hashem knows what is best for us, and to believe in Him and the Rebbe. If Hashem gives the challenge, He also gives us the strength.

If you calculate the income and the expenses, you see that it’s not possible, but if you rely on Hashem, and you do your best, then the bracha comes in ways that are above nature.

I firmly believe that the bracha of chinuch of children in the house comes in the merit of my working in chinuch [in school], and the reverse – that the success of the school is thanks to the home. To me, they are not two mosdos, but one thing. Each one contributes to the success of the other.

If you make rational calculations, it doesn’t add up. There’s no strength, no money, no nothing. But Hashem’s calculations are different than ours. I try to do my utmost and believe that if I was not successful at getting to something, it was apparently less important. I daven a lot that if I made a mistake, the children shouldn’t feel it, and Hashem and the Rebbe surely do their part.

RABBI YOSEF GREENBERG A”H

By Shneur Zalman Berger

*Rabbi Yosef Greenberg was twice arrested by the communists for secretly learning and teaching Nigleh and Chassidus. The first time, he was freed after a few months. The second time he was sentenced to hard labor in Siberia. Despite the subhuman conditions, he maintained his mitzva observance with great mesirus nefesh. * Brief notes on the life of a great yet humble Chassid, who passed on to his reward last month.*

OLD BEFORE HIS TIME

R’ Yosef Greenberg was born in Coprest, Romania on 29 Av, 1931, to R’ Naftali and Rochel Greenberg. His father was a shochet and mohel and his mother was very involved with the chesed organizations in her city, such as the Bikur Cholim and help for new mothers.

Rochel Greenberg passed away in the course of their wanderings after they escaped during World War II. After much suffering and tribulation, the family arrived in Tashkent in distant Uzbekistan.

R’ Yosef studied in the underground yeshiva there, and was greatly influenced by his melamed, the Chassid R’ Yisroel Neveler (Levin).

It was at this time that his father passed away in a tragic accident. One Shabbos, he went to immerse in the river with R’ Aharon Chazan and another friend. One by one, they quickly entered the river and immersed. The last one in was R’ Naftali. Inexplicably, he was swept away by the river and gave up his soul in holiness and purity.

R’ Yosef lived with his sisters,

Mrs. Zissel Friedman and Mrs. Chaya Sigalov. As a young boy, he did much to manage on his own and take care of his needs independently.

ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE

At the end of the war, R’ Yosef traveled to Lvov, together with many other Lubavitchers who were attempting to cross the border. Hundreds of Chassidim managed to flee the Soviet Union. The authorities caught on, ending the organized escape. Many were arrested and others fled the city. A few tried to organize a small group to leave the country. R’ Yosef was in this group, and was “adopted” by R’ Shmuel Notik (may Hashem avenge his blood).

R’ Shmuel Gurewitz a”h related: “They told us that we had to be at the train station in the morning to take the train heading for Poland. We were told that those traveling on this train included the mashpia, R’ Mendel Futerfas, R’ Shmuel Notik, his wife and daughter, my brother Avrohom, myself and Yosef Greenberg (who were listed as R’ Shmuel Notik’s sons).

“We left Lvov before noon on a regular passenger train, unlike the previous groups, who had traveled on freight trains called *eshalons*. Most of the passengers were military and government

figures and we acted as though we were legitimate passengers.

"The train traveled towards the border near the town of Premishlan and a few men in civilian dress passed through our car. To my horror, I overheard one of them say to the other, 'They are dreaming nice dreams ...' I hoped they were not talking about us, for we believed we had succeeded in leaving the Soviet Union.

"When the train was stopped at the Premishlan station, our 'nice dream' ended. Armed soldiers with cocked rifles burst in from both ends of the car and ordered us to follow them. We knew that we were lost, but we had yet to realize what price we would have to pay.

"Initially we were detained in an abandoned hut that was used by the station employees and surrounded by guards. The following morning we were put on a military truck that brought

us to the counter-espionage branch of the secret police. There they separated us and each of us was taken to a separate room for interrogation."

After literally months of interrogations, they decided to release the youngsters in the group, R' Greenberg and the Gurewitz brothers. R' Mendel, R' Shmuel and his wife and daughter were exiled to labor camps in Kazakhstan and Siberia. R' Notik died in exile and the rest suffered greatly until they were finally freed.

THE INCRIMINATING TELEGRAM

After they were released, R' Yosef went to Samarkand in Uzbekistan. Together with the Mishulovin family, he organized secret chadarim for the children of Anash. From Samarkand he traveled to Kutais in Georgia and there, too, he gathered children

and taught them Torah in secret. He taught them Gemara, *Tanya* and Tanach.

Only three years after he had been caught the first time, he again fell into their clutches. Some of the organizers of the mass escape via Lvov had been able to evade the searches conducted by the government to find them. Among them was Mrs. Sarah Katzenelenbogen, known as Mumme Sarah. She wandered from place to place.

Her son, Moshe, who had also helped in the smuggling, was in Kutais. He was arrested as he left a Lag B'Omer farbrengen in 1950. After his arrest, the police examined the mail that he received, which led to the arrest of other Lubavitchers, including Yosef Greenberg.

Years later, R' Moshe Katzenelenbogen shlita related: "In the days following my arrest, my mother sent me a telegram from Moscow informing me that on a certain day she would be arriving by train and asking me to greet her at the Kutais train station.

"Since all my mail was under scrutiny, the police knew about this telegram, while my mother did not know I was arrested. She hadn't signed her real name to the telegram, but they realized who had sent it.

"They were thrilled with this telegram and the noose tightened. They sent a routine announcement to my address to come to the post office and pick up a telegram that was waiting there for me. Eager to catch other people in their net, they waited to see who would pick up the telegram.

"Yosef Greenberg, who was in Kutais at the time, was the one who went to the post office. He had no idea how many pairs of eyes were on him when he picked



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up the telegram. Yosef gave it to one of Anash so he could meet my mother at the station and warn her that her son was arrested and she would be putting herself in danger by going to my house.

"In the end, an old couple, R' Alter and Rochel Neimark, were asked to meet her at the station and tell her about my arrest. The 'angels of destruction' stood nearby with a picture of my mother, their gaze following anyone who had come to meet her.

"When she alit from the train, the old couple saw the man holding her suitcase and thought he was a porter assisting her. They approached her and told her about the arrest of her son Moshe and warned her not to go to his house. The 'porter' accompanied Mumme Sarah directly to the KGB car, and when he heard what the couple told her, he instructed them to come along, too."

When R' Yosef Greenberg was arrested the next day, it became clear that he had been under

surveillance for a long time. He was accused of serious crimes: aiding the head of the smuggling operation, learning Torah with children, contacting local people and convincing them to do mitzvos.

SURVIVING FOR EIGHT DAYS ON SUGAR AND WATER

For months he was interrogated and tortured, but he kept his mouth closed and said nothing about other Chassidim. He also refused to confess to any crimes he was charged with so as not to incriminate others, even when he was promised a shorter sentence in exchange for information.

All that is known about the period of his arrest are two episodes that his friend, Moshe Katzenelenbogen, told, which demonstrate R' Yosef's mesirus nefesh for mitzvos: "While I was in jail, I felt extremely lonely. Then, one morning, I heard someone in the next cell pouring water several times. When this was repeated the following morning, I counted how many times the person poured and concluded that the person was washing six times and that this was a Jew. I immediately called out to him, and discovered that the anonymous person was none other than my good friend, Yosef Greenberg."

Eventually, the two of them were placed in the same cell, where they "celebrated" Pesach together: "Of course we couldn't eat anything for eight days except for sugar and water. For the first days of Yom Tov we had some sugar cubes my mother had given us when we met with her in jail, but that could not suffice for all of Pesach.

"We shared a cell with twenty-five non-Jewish prisoners, and when two days went by and they saw that we didn't eat anything brought to us, they were willing to give us their sugar. The prisoners were usually brought a cup of tea with sugar twice a day, in the morning and in the evening. The goyim had pity on us, seeing we had nothing to eat, and some of them gave us their sugar allotment. That's how we got through Pesach, with measured amounts of sugar and water."

TEN YEARS IN EXILE

When the long period in jail ended, a trial was held. There was no prosecutor or defense attorney and the sentence was determined ahead of time. Mumme Sarah, her son Moshe, Alter and his wife Rochel, and Yosef Greenberg were brought into the courtroom. They were all sentenced to exile in labor camps in Siberia. Yosef, who was only 19, was sentenced to ten years and hard labor.

He was sent to Norilsk, a city with some of the worst labor camps surrounding it. The prisoners of camps in this area had to dig nickel in the mines under sub-human conditions. It was physically arduous labor for many hours of the day and they were given only limited rations. Not surprisingly, many prisoners died of cold, illness and lack of strength, in addition to the hazards of the mines.

Notwithstanding the harsh conditions and the close supervision of the prisoners, R' Yosef did much on behalf of the Jews in the camp. He taught Judaism little by little, as much as he could. He also wrote a Siddur, Machzor and calendar from memory (he knew by heart the t'fillos for weekdays, Shabbos and

Yom Tov, as well as the book of T'hillim). He contacted one of the commanders of the camp and promised that he would work beyond the norm in exchange for paper and ink - items that were otherwise unobtainable.

At first, he davened alone from the Siddur and Machzor he wrote. Later, some other people joined him. He did not take the Siddur, Machzor and calendar with him when he was released, leaving them for the other Jews there.

For Chanuka he got a nice amount of potatoes and margarine. By hollowing out the potatoes, filling them with margarine and making wicks out of threads from his clothes, he was able to light the menorah in the labor camp. His sister Zissel Friedman sent him matzos for Pesach. Despite the camp's careful examination of packages, the package of matzos made it to Yosef and he had what to eat for Yom Tov. His sister was in touch

with him by letter, and she sent him medication when he became sick.

He spent six years in the camp, until 1957. He was among the many prisoners who were released after Stalin's death.

From Siberia he went to Chernowitz, where he was joyously reunited with R' Mendel Futerfas, with whom he had tried crossing the border more than six years earlier. He lived with the Cooperman family, who made a shidduch between him and Leah Scheiner. The wedding took place secretly, in a suburb of Moscow, so that the KGB wouldn't know about this religious event taking place.

The chuppa was attended by a small group of people at the home of a relative, R' Aharon Chazan. The mesader kiddushin was the Admur of Machnovka zt"l, who lived in Moscow. The chuppa began at 11 o'clock at night, followed by a festive meal at his sister Zissel's house, where they celebrated until dawn.

The goyim had pity on us, seeing we had nothing to eat, and some of them gave us their sugar allotment. That's how we got through Pesach, with measured amounts of sugar and water.

The young couple lived in Chernowitz for six weeks and then they moved to Samarkand, where there was a small Chabad community. They made aliya in 1969.

Although he suffered much during his life, R' Yosef was always b'simcha. He radiated calm and serenity.

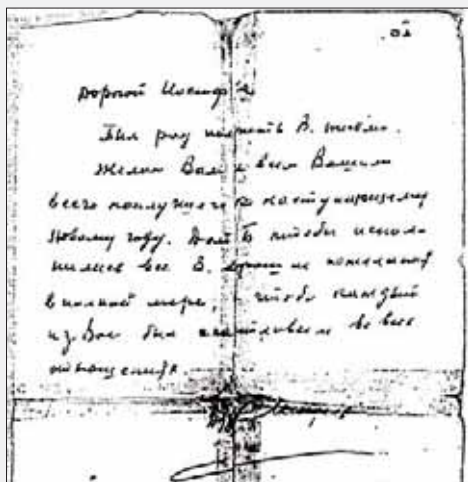
"GRANDFATHER MENDEL"

R' Yossel was mekushar to the Rebbe while still in the Soviet Union. He received a letter from the Rebbe which was written in Russian and signed, "Grandfather Mendel," to disguise the real author. The letter said:

Dear Yosef,

I was happy to receive your letter. I wish you and the entire family everything good for the upcoming new year. May all your desires be realized for good, in full. May each of you be happy in all matters.

Grandfather Mendel



MASHPIA IN NEVE ACHIEZER

Upon his aliya, he settled in B'nei Brak in order to be near his brother, Moshe who directed Tzach there. He was a regular at the Chabad shul in Neve Achiezer, where he taught sichos of the Rebbe. At farbrengens, he would tell a little bit of the mesirus nefesh of Chassidim behind the Iron Curtain. He was the mashpia of the Chabad k'hilla in this shul.

The family relates that the Rebbe's mitzvaim were an integral part of his life. He couldn't be without them. The Rebbe's wars to amend the Law of Return and to prevent the

giving away of parts of Eretz Yisroel greatly affected him. Even when he was older, he took part in events and protests for these causes. Until a few years before his passing, he regularly went on Mivtza T'fillin every week.

In recent years he became seriously sick and his health deteriorated. Towards the end, he was not able to read and family members would read chapters of T'hilim for him. If they made mistakes, he would correct them.

He is survived by his wife Leah Rivka, and children: Mrs. Rochel Weingarten (Crown Heights), Mrs. Itta Reinetz (Tzfas), Rabbi Naftaly Greenberg (shliach California), Chana Krishevsky (B'nei Brak), Rabbi Moshe Greenberg (Boro Park), and Nechama Ehrentroi (Tzfas).

MODESTY AND SIMPLICITY

Despite – or perhaps because of – the amazing chapters of mesirus nefesh in his life, R' Yosef did not like speaking about himself or his past. He hardly spoke about his travails. Only now and then did he volunteer some story or another about his mesirus nefesh in the Soviet Union. Even his own family realized over time that he had so many more amazing tales of mesirus nefesh than he was willing to share with them.

A few years ago, his granddaughter was collecting some family research for a school assignment and she decided to ask him. He refused. “Why should you young people know the suffering I endured? How will it help?”

He tried to convince her to drop the idea. He was modest and he did not want to relate his history and his heroism during the years of exile and suffering. It was only when she insisted that she needed it for school that he agreed to cooperate. Even then, he did not speak freely, only consenting to listen to stories the family already knew and to add, make corrections, and clarify. With some additional information from his wife, their granddaughter put together her report about a Chassid and baal mesirus nefesh.

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