

Wishing our readers and all Jews a kosher and freilichin Pesach! The next issue is due to be printed for Shabbos Parshas Tazria-Metzora.

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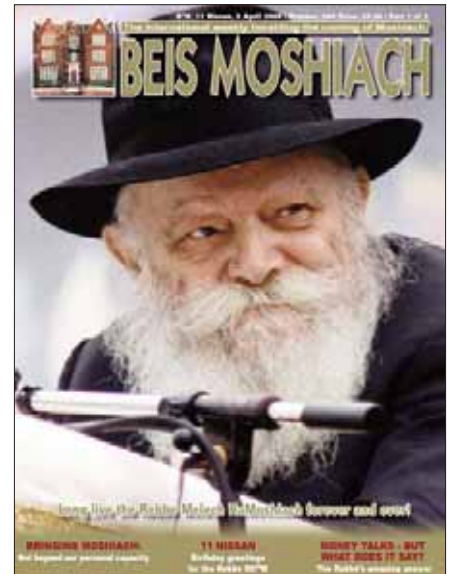
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Lubavitch

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B"H 16th of Adar, 5769

MO'OS CHITTIM

To All Anash and Temimim wha' Sholom U'vrocho!

Excerpt of a Sicho Kedoisho, which speaks for itself

The Jews will be redeemed solely through *tzedakah*... In particular, this applies with regards to the matter relevant at present, *maos chittim*, *tzedakah* given for Pesach that includes all of the needs of the holiday.

Our involvement with this must be in a manner of *ratzo* and *shov*, i.e., **one should not wait for the *tzedakah* collector, but instead, rush to give him *maos chittim* on his own initiative (*ratzo*). Moreover, even after he has already given *maos chittim*, he should go and give a second time (*shov*)....** For one who has been blessed should increase his gifts according to the blessing he has been given. And who ever increases will be given additional reward. Indeed, there is no limit to this additional reward. From the sichos Shabbos Parshas Vayakhel-pikudei, 5750

It is well known that "Kupas Rabbeinu" endeavors to continue implementing all of the holy projects and activities which the Rebbe has established. Amongst these activities is the Rebbe's practice to extend financial aid to those families in need of their various Pesach necessities.

Accordingly, we are at this time urging and requesting each and every Anash member and Tomim uhj ha to contribute generously to "Kupas Rabbeinu," in order to enable the administration to provide for these families and thus afford them with the opportunity to celebrate Pesach with contentment and joy.

Regarding this Mitzvah it is stated: "Whoever increases (in giving) is praiseworthy."

Unfortunately, the amount of families in need of this financial assistance is more than generally assumed. As such, the more generous your contribution to "Kupas Rabbeinu," the greater the number of families receiving assistance will be.

And since, with regard to all Mitzvahs we are instructed to act with Simcha and zest, it is all the more pertinent with regard to the aforementioned, as it is of paramount importance that the funds be received and distributed as soon as possible.

In the merit of Tzedakah which hastens the Geula, may we merit the true Geula Shlaimah, with the revelation of Melech HaMashiach - The Rebbe Nasi Doreinu, immediately, Mamash.

Chag HaPesach Kosher V'Sameach, *Vaad Kupas Rabbeinu*

P.S. 1) The traditional "**Magvis Yud Shevat, Purim**" can also be sent at this time, as well as all other Magvios.

2) All funds should be sent to the following address only; Donations are tax deductible

KUPAS RABBEINU, P.O. Box 288, BROOKLYN, N.Y. 11225

In Eretz haKodesh: KEREN KUPAS ADMU"R, P.O. Box 1247, KIRYAT MALACHI – ISRAEL

IGNITING THE SOUL

Translated and adapted by Dovid Yisroel Ber Kaufmann

The activities in the Temple are a metaphor for human conduct. From the apparently superfluous word “continuously” we learn that the menorah is to be lit from the fire on the altar. There is a practical lesson: the eternal fire of the menorah represents an “internal service” – working with one’s self to improve one’s character – while the eternal fire of the altar represents an “external service” – help another Jew, to bring others close to Torah and mitzvos. The “internal flame” must be lit from the “external flame,” because one’s own soul is ignited by igniting the soul of another Jew.

Before discussing the inner meaning of a passage of the Torah – its relevance to our daily Divine service and relationship to our times, the days of Moshiach – we must first understand its simple meaning. Of course, a literal reading often raises practical questions and reveals apparent contradictions. Two verses may seem to require opposite interpretations. But as these questions are reconciled on a fundamental level, the deeper, more mystical meaning emerges.

Thus, when discussing the Temple activities and the sacrifices, we must remember that the details of the Temple are a model for and reflection of the inner structure of the human soul. For this reason, rebuilding the Temple is integral to and a manifestation of Redemption. It indicates the completion of our Divine mission, transforming the world into a dwelling place for

G-dliness. Obviously, then, we must not only understand the mystical relationship between the external Temple and our internal soul, but we must internalize the Divine service. We must translate the Temple’s vessels and activities into our own. Rebuilding our inner *Beis HaMikdash*, our inner holy Temple, is the first step toward rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem.

One such activity, described in this week’s Torah reading, is the lighting of the fire upon the altar. Regarding the outer altar where the sacrifices were brought, G-d instructs Moses: “The fire on the altar shall be kept burning; it shall not be extinguished. The priest shall kindle wood on it every morning. He shall arrange the burnt offering on it and burn the choicest parts of the peace-offerings. A fire shall be kept burning continuously on the altar. It shall not be extinguished.”

At first glance, the word “continuously” seems superfluous. If the fire is to be kept burning and not be extinguished, of course it will burn “perpetually.” Since in the Torah every word counts, there must be a

reason for an apparently unnecessary word. Of course, the explanation has to be consistent with the intent and context of the passage. As Rashi is the foremost exponent of the plain meaning of the text, it’s worthwhile to consider his comment: “The fire regarding which it is stated ‘perpetually’ is the one with which they kindle the lamps [of the menorah], for it is stated regarding it, ‘to kindle the perpetual lamp.’ This fire too should be ignited from the fire on the outer altar.”

The word for ‘perpetually’ or ‘continuously’ in Hebrew is *tamid*. The perpetual or eternal lamp in the synagogue, the *ner tamid*, is a reminder of the menorah, the *ner tamid* or eternal lamp, of the Temple. So from this one word we can derive a very practical law regarding the Temple service: The menorah is called a *ner tamid*, an

eternal lamp. The fire on the altar is called an *esh tamid*, an eternal fire. The flame of both the menorah and the altar is described as “*tamid*” – perpetual and continuous. There is no superfluous word. The “continuous fire” alludes to the “eternal lamp.” The “*esh tamid*” mentioned here invokes the “*ner tamid*” mentioned earlier. From this juxtaposition and allusion, we learn an important principle: the menorah is to be lit from the fire on the altar.

There is another critical factor: The Tabernacle consisted of two parts, an outer area housing the large altar for sacrifices and an inner area housing the incense altar, the menorah and the table for the so-called showbread. This means that the menorah, which belonged to the inner, more sacred area, had to be lit from the altar, which stood in the outer, more common area.

What is the lesson, the inner significance? Why must the eternal fire of the menorah, an “internal service,” be lit from the eternal fire of the altar, an “external service”?

What applies to the Temple service applies to a person’s individual Divine service. There is an inner service, a working with one’s self to improve one’s character – the *middos* – to become more observant, more spiritually sensitive, more truly learned in Torah. There is also an outer service, that which is done to help another Jew, to bring others close to Torah and mitzvos. The outer service includes the effect we have on the external world. In the process of transforming the world into a dwelling place for G-dliness, every Jew influences his environment, elevating the non-Jews as well. As every Jew could bring a sacrifice (the outer service) – and will again, imminently, bring sacrifices to the Third Temple, with the coming of Moshiach – so too every Jew has a responsibility and the strength to purify his part of the world.

This latter, outer service parallels the sacrifices brought on the outer altar. Precisely there were brought the sacrifices of every Jew. This contrasts with the inner, incense altar. Only the Kohanim could enter the inner area, where the incense altar and menorah were located.

The comparison can be more precise: There is an obligation to learn Torah, to elevate one’s self through absorbing, and being absorbed in, G-d’s Wisdom. This is the concept behind lighting the menorah. As it says in Proverbs, “For a mitzvah is a candle, and Torah is light.”

The kindling of the “*ner tamid*,” the eternal light of the menorah in the Temple, represents the continuous connection of the Jew with G-d through Torah.

A Torah scholar might argue that he is too busy with learning to be concerned with someone on the “outside.” Worldly matters belong in the outer courtyard, while he is occupied with concerns of the menorah, secluded in the inner sanctum.

A Jew, no matter how learned, how wise, how holy, must never separate himself from another Jew. He may not isolate himself in his learning while another Jew waits on the altar, waits to have his soul kindled. This is the lesson of the law of kindling the menorah. For the menorah is kindled precisely from the external altar. Of course the “inner altar,” the spiritual self-improvement of a Jew, is important. But that does not kindle the light of the menorah.

The light of Torah is sustained – is a “*ner tamid*,” an eternal lamp, only when the fire on the outer altar is already lit, already an “*esh tamid*,” an eternal flame. Since the menorah must be lit from the altar’s fire, that fire must have an inherent and a prior connection with the menorah.

A Jew who wishes to “enlighten” himself, to ignite himself spiritually and intellectually, must first concern himself with a Jew who is “outside.” He must make sure that that Jew is aflame with Torah, that that Jew is alight, since “the candle of G-d is the soul of man.” By arousing another Jew, by igniting his Jewish soul, the scholar can kindle his own Torah, so to speak. The “candle of G-d,” the Jewish soul, kindles the “light of Torah.”

The directive is not limited to scholars or rabbis. Indeed, if Torah itself is vouchsafed only to the Jew who kindles the “candle of G-d,” then regardless of our status or level of learning, we must first make sure the Jewish soul standing “outside” is aflame.

It is not sufficient to arouse the other person, to kindle his or her interest in Judaism and enthusiasm for mitzvos. Rather, the Jewish soul, the outer altar, must burn continuously. It must be an “*esh tamid*,” an eternal flame. We must continuously put ourselves to the test, go through the difficulties to continuously elevate our fellow Jew and thereby the world around us. Then will our Torah knowledge be perpetual, as the prophet declares, “The whole world will be filled with knowledge of G-dliness.”

(Based on Likkutei Sichos 17:50-56)

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continuously.***

BRINGING MOSHIACH: NOT BEYOND ONE'S PERSONAL CAPACITY

By the Grace of G-d
23rd of Tammuz, 5727
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Blessing and Greeting:

I duly received your recent letter, in which you write about different thoughts and plans, including also preparations for the coming of Moshiach, etc.

Generally speaking, every thinking person, looking around and reflecting upon the important events that take place in the world, is inclined to think in terms of big personal accomplishments, which are sometimes beyond one's capacity. However, G-d Who is the Essence of Goodness and it is in the nature of the Good to do good, does not expect anyone to do more than in accordance with one's capacities which He bestowed upon the person, and which G-d desires that they should be utilized to the full. Thus there is a great deal one can do in one's immediate environment to spread and strengthen Yiddishkeit, and thus hasten the coming of Moshiach, and indeed make a far-reaching contribution to the happiness and harmony in the whole universe. Inasmuch as one of the basic Mitzvoth is V'Ohavto L'Reacho Komocho, it calls upon every Jew and Jewess to use their good influence not only within their immediate environment, but also to the fullest extent of their influence. And the surest way of accomplishing this is to use one's influence to strengthen the daily conduct in accordance with the Shulchan Aruch, in such matters as Kashrus, Shabbos observance, etc.

As for the question of the coming of Moshiach, when he will come and how it will be, etc., this and similar matters should be left to G-d Himself, in perfect faith, as it is written, "You shall be wholehearted with G-d, your G-d."

Inasmuch as everything is by Divine Providence, I want to take advantage of this opportunity to suggest that it would be a good thing to have the Mezuzoth in your home checked to make sure they are Kosher and properly affixed, if this has not been done within the last twelve months.

Please convey my prayerful wishes to your parents.

With blessing,

KEEPING KOSHER BRINGS MOSHIACH

Translated and adapted by Dovid Yisroel Ber Kaufmann

The name of a Torah reading reveals the inner connection of its contents. Both the dedication of the Kohanim and the definition of kosher animals are connected by the concept of the “eighth.” Seven represents completion within the natural, physical world, while the “eighth” elevates that to a higher, spiritual realm. The “eighth” is associated with Moshiach.

Since the Torah is the “blueprint of the world,” everything in it teaches us something about the spiritual structure of creation. In particular, even the name of a Torah reading reveals some aspect of our Divine service, of how we are to transform the physical world into a dwelling place for G-dliness. The significance of the name applies to the whole Torah portion. It is the unifying factor and reveals the essence of that reading. At first glance, the beginning of a reading may *seem* to have more in common with the previous portion than with its own contents. But however diverse the inner content of a Torah reading, its name reveals the inner connection between all parts and aspects of a particular portion.

This week's reading provides a good illustration. The name, *Shmini*, means “eighth.” The opening of the portion narrates the dedication of Aaron and his four sons as Kohanim. This dedication took place after the seven-day ceremony consecrating the Tabernacle. The Torah reading begins, “On the eighth day.” Hence, it is called *Shmini*, eighth.

Later in the Torah reading, G-d defines the kosher

animals, listing the requirements for beast, bird and fish. An animal must have split hooves and chew its cud, a fish must have fins and scales, and all the non-kosher birds are enumerated.

At first glance, these two sections seem quite disparate. In fact, we might think the Torah reading should be structured differently. Why not put the narrative of dedicating the Kohanim with the seven day consecration from the previous portion, and the laws of kashrus in a separate portion? After all, the Tabernacle's consecration introduces and prepares the dedication of the Kohanim. The seven days of consecration lead to the eighth day of dedication. On the other hand, what connection is there between

dedicating the Kohanim and defining the kosher animals?

Yet the fact that they are in the same Torah reading means they must share a common theme, express the same spiritual concept. The name of the Torah reading, *Shmini*, eighth, reveals that conceptual connection. In spiritual or mystical terms, the word “*Shmini*,” eighth, represents a stage categorically different from and superior to seven. Creation, the physical world, exists in terms of seven: the seven days of creation. Eight represents that which is higher than creation, that which is G-dly, beyond the boundaries of the world. The number seven refers to the G-dliness clothed within the world, concealed within the laws of nature. Eight refers to the Divine Light, higher than the process of concealment and materialization.

But *Shmini* means eighth. The eighth, while categorically different from one through seven, is not an independent number. It comes after and is connected to seven. The seven must precede and exist prior to the eighth. The eighth may be superior to the seven, but it depends on them. For this reason it can influence,

complete and perfect the seven. More specifically, the seven days of creation become elevated and transformed, fulfill their purpose, when they culminate in an eighth day.

The eighth reveals G-dliness in its fullest. Divine Light shines without limitations. The name of the Torah reading, *Shmini*, eighth, alludes to the true intent of creation, that the Infinite Divine Light should be drawn into and revealed within the finite physical realm. The world itself should be illuminated with G-dliness fully revealed. Creation itself, the world of seven, should be filled with G-dliness, a dimension higher than seven – the eighth.

The eighth, that which the seven days of creation lead to, is Moshiach. In many places throughout Rabbinic literature, the number eight alludes to Moshiach. For example, the harp of Moshiach will have eight strings, a clear allusion to the future transformation and elevation of existence.

In the days of Moshiach, perception will change. Now, we cannot discern the G-dliness that suffuses and sustains existence. But in the days of Moshiach, as Isaiah prophesies, “the glory of G-d will be revealed and all flesh will see.” The “glory of G-d” is categorically higher than creation – as the eighth day is categorically higher than the seven days. Nevertheless, in the days of Moshiach we will perceive G-dliness not as an extraordinary phenomenon, but as part of the physical world. Perceiving G-dliness will become a natural characteristic of our physical senses.

This clarifies the connection of the days of Moshiach with the number eight. The natural perception of G-dliness that will occur expresses the two dimensions mentioned earlier. On the one hand, the “glory of G-d” is categorically superior and differentiated from the seven days of creation. Nevertheless, in the days of Moshiach, we will intrinsically sense G-dliness, perceiving it naturally and tangibly.

Let’s return to our original observation: the concept of *Shmini* unites the consecration of the Kohanim and the definition of kosher animals. Both the consecration and definition are bound to and expressions of “the eighth.” This shared affinity places them in the same Torah reading. It also overrides superficial similarities to other events, such as the seven-day dedication of the Tabernacle.

The seven day dedication was a preparation for the indwelling of the Divine Presence in the Tabernacle. This indwelling of the Divine Presence in the Tabernacle

parallels and provides a foretaste of the revelation of G-dliness in the days of Moshiach. When the Divine Presence took up residence in the Tabernacle, so to speak, G-dliness, while still completely separated from creation and physicality, merged with elements of creation.

Aaron and his sons were consecrated on the eighth day, indicating the relation between Kohanim and the days of Moshiach. The consecration of the Kohanim completed the dedication of the Tabernacle, enabling and servicing the indwelling of the Divine Presence. Similarly, the Jewish people, a nation of Kohanim, through mitzvos such as kashrus, bring down G-dliness as it will be revealed in the days of Moshiach. The Divine service of Aaron and his sons models that of the Jewish people. Most sacrifices were eaten. The sacrifice in the Tabernacle entailed the elevation of the animal; by eating only kosher, the Jewish people do the same in the world at large. Both forms of Divine service involve refining an animalistic

nature, that within the human being and that of the world. Both involve self-discipline and self-sacrifice.

The world, seven, conceals the Divine Presence. *Shmini*, the eighth, reveals the Divine Light within the physical. Similarly, the impure beasts exist because the process of creation obscures the Divine Light. When we say, “I want what is not kosher, but what can I do? G-d has commanded me otherwise,” we acknowledge the G-dliness that creates and sustains the world. The self-sacrifice of our mitzvos, controlling our desires and acting as G-d commanded us purifies the world. Eating kosher reveals the Divine Presence, as did the

sacrifices in the Tabernacle.

In the days of Moshiach, it will be normal for “our eyes of flesh to see G-d.” To achieve this, we must distinguish between the impure and pure, between “the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten.” By making the distinction, by eating only kosher animals, we refine the physical. In so doing, we remove the coarseness that conceals G-dliness.

Of course, kashrus is only one of the mitzvos. But since the most common physical activity is eating, the laws of kosher animals provide the paradigm of how the world will be refined. These laws correspond to the dedication of Aaron and his sons. They have the same context: actions that accustom us to perceive G-dliness.

The Jewish people were given the mitzvos to refine the world, to bring it to a state of *Shmini*, the eighth, the days of Moshiach.

(Based on Likkutei Sichos 17:92-99)

***In the days of
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BIRTHDAY GREETINGS FOR THE REBBE

By Nosson Avrohom

*Rabbi Shloimke Maidanchek, a”h, director of Agudas Chassidei Chabad in Eretz Yisroel, had ties with top government officials, including the president, the prime minister, ministers, senior officials, chiefs of staff and military brass. Each year, he would compile an album of their brachos to the Rebbe in honor of his birthday and personally present it to the Rebbe. * Mivtza Yom Huledes is but one expression of the connection these Jews had with the Nasi HaDor.*

The many activities of the well-known askan, R’ Shloimke Maidanchek a”h, earned him the title, “the Rebbe’s ambassador in Eretz Yisroel” for nearly fifty years. Among these activities was a very special and unique practice. Starting in the year 1972, which marked the Rebbe’s 70th birthday, he would make the rounds of various

government offices in the Knesset building and the offices of top ranking army officials to get their blessings and good wishes for the Rebbe. He traveled the length and breadth of the land for this purpose, from Tzfas in the north to Be’er Sheva in the south.

He didn’t make it easy for himself. He could have phoned

these distinguished people and asked them to send their signatures, but instead, he undertook to visit each one personally. Since “shlucho shel adam k’moso,” he felt that they were being visited not just by him, but by the Rebbe himself.

When R’ Shloimke did something, he did it with all his heart. He didn’t just collect signatures on a form letter; each of them wrote brachos and wishes in their own words. R’ Shloimke felt that when you are mekasher a Jew to the Rebbe, it has to be done with proper attention and in a serious, p’nimius’dike way, in the same manner that the Rebbe would give of himself to every Jew.

For this reason, his family relates, he would go to the various offices without making an appointment. When asked why he did it this way, he explained, “When I go to an office, it’s not really me but the Rebbe who is going, and who wouldn’t want the Rebbe to come to his office?”

He related that one time, he was having trouble finding the time to go to Tzfas in order to meet with the council chairman due to the strict schedule in his work as a train conductor. “Rabbi Chadakov called demanding: ‘You are the Rebbe’s

ambassador there. Why aren't you going to Tzfas? How will it look?"

"I immediately switched around with other conductors so they would do my scheduled routes and I went to Tzfas."

The family still has in their possession one album that was written and signed by the president, ministers, Knesset members, mayors and councilmen in honor of the Rebbe's 70th birthday. When you flip through the album you can't help but be impressed. R' Shloimke was able to compile good wishes from people on the Right and Left, religious and irreligious. He got them all to join in this project he conceived.

When you read the brachos and note the authors, you can see how deeply R' Shloimke reached into their hearts. There is no political cynicism or any of the usual political considerations. The essence of the soul and Jewish faith shine forth. No matter what his position, each expresses bittul to the Nasi HaDor.

R' Shloimke's success was in his

personal relationship with these VIPs over the years, relationships that were forged through the love and genuine affection he had for his friends.

"You know how a minister, a Knesset member or a commander in the IDF is; it's very hard to pull one over on them. He knows good and well whether you are really his friend or you are using him; whether you are one of those for whom he does a favor today and tomorrow you don't acknowledge him," R' Shloimke told *Beis Moshiach* in an interview a number of years ago.

R' Shloimke developed personal relationships with every government leader from Mapai (left wing labor party), every chief of staff and all the top generals over a period of decades! There wasn't a top military commander who did not know him, and he used these relationships to connect them all to the Rebbe MH"M.

R' Shloimke's goal in all his public work was to connect as many

Jews as possible to the Rebbe, and one of the best ways to do this is to give them an opportunity to bless the Rebbe on his birthday. This birthday campaign of his was just one way of expressing this bond with the Rebbe. R' Shloimke wrote, a few days before he passed away (on Chol HaMoed Pesach 2004), about connecting Jews to the Rebbe. The following was published by Aguch in a book in his memory:

We all know the inyan of the Chabad movement from the Rebbe's sichos over the years. The main points are ruchnius, k'dusha, Ahavas Yisroel without limits, mesirus nefesh for others, and everything involved with rectifying the world for the Malchus Hashem.

Over the years, the Rebbe established legions of askanim. Though their methods may differ, their common goal is to, by obeying the Rebbe's horaos in these areas, cause the way of Chabad to succeed, in an expansive manner. The Rebbe issued hundreds and thousands of horaos about how to be wary of the traps that the "world of falsehood"



sets for those public activists, placing them only one step away from the opposite of holiness and truth. We see this in a tangible way: only when following the Rebbe's horaos do we not fall.

R' Shloimke's characteristic discretion came into play in this campaign. As someone who kept things to himself and did not run to publicize his activities, he didn't say a word about it, not even to his family. Every year he collected the birthday wishes himself and made the trip to New York to bring them to the Rebbe.

As Yud-Alef Nissan is also R' Shloimke's birthday, every year he would visit 770 on this day and return to Eretz Yisroel before Pesach. Often the Rebbe asked him to take packages of matzos with him to Anash in Eretz Yisroel.

This was R' Shloimke's practice for 25 years and every year the number of well-wishers increased. Since he did it without fanfare, it took effort to find just three testimonials to his work. One of these is a copy of some of the brachos preserved from the 70th birthday. He had asked the well-wishers for a second copy for a notebook that he kept for himself.

It's amazing to read in what high esteem these politicians held the Rebbe. These aren't pat, polite lines that the secretary typed up, but heartfelt wishes written by the people themselves. For example, this is what the Chief of Staff the year the Rebbe turned 70, General Dovid Elazar, wrote:

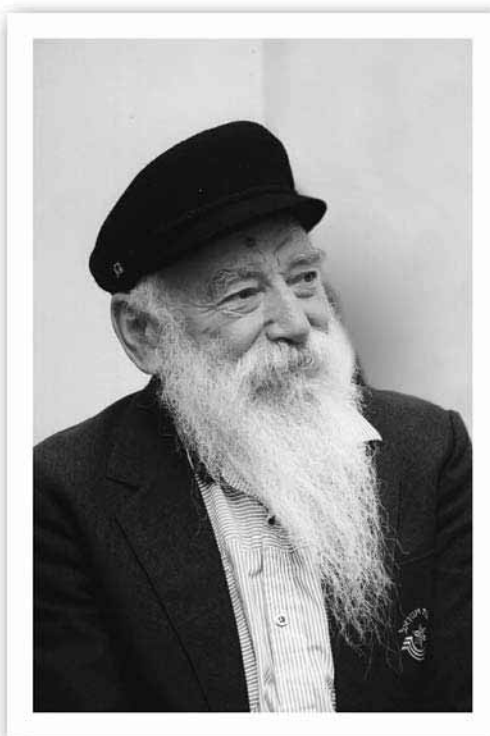
Choicest of blessings on your seventieth birthday. Please accept my wishes for good health and long life. If only we could celebrate your next birthday in Yerushalayim the Holy City. Koi L'Choi!

President Shimon Peres, who was a member of Knesset at the

time, wrote:

As you mark 70 years, your fellow Jews pray that you continue to radiate your wisdom and modesty so that Toras Yisroel deepen its roots and Ahavas Yisroel expand its scope, with Love for Eretz Yisroel as their anvil. Koi L'Choi.

Mr. Rechavam Zeevi, then Chief of Central Command and celebrated commander who oversaw a number of daring military campaigns and later became a Chassid of the Rebbe, wrote:



R' Shloimke Maidanchek

In honor of the Lubavitcher Rebbe on the day of your 70th birthday, please accept my blessing, from one who is the smallest of the multitude, with all my heart, for health and long life. May we celebrate your next birthday in Yerushalayim the Holy City.

The album contains dozens more brachos, written by Knesset members and ministers alongside military figures, mayors and district

councilmen, all of whom cherished a warm relationship with R' Shloimke.

At a farbrengen on Motzaei Shabbos HaGadol, the day after 11 Nissan, 1987, the Rebbe publicly acknowledged the album of brachos that R' Shloimke brought him every year. That something special and important was impending became apparent when the Rebbe announced at the Shabbos farbrengen that there would be another farbrengen on Motzaei Shabbos, in the course of which a topic that was not suitable for Shabbos would be discussed.

The topic surprised everyone. The Rebbe encouraged the building of a "Lubavitch city" in Yerushalayim for the Russian immigrants. There were Chabad enclaves around the country but the Rebbe spoke about an "*Ir Lubavitch*" within the walls of Yerushalayim, the Holy City and the City of Dovid.

Most people were unaware of the background to this suggestion. As he did every year, R' Shloimke brought the Rebbe an album of brachos from the leaders of the country. At the farbrengen, the Rebbe said that his suggestion was coming in the wake of two things which took place lately: 1) the aliya of Jews from Russia, and 2) **"At this time, I was approached with well-wishes from those whose job it is to allocate land and money, who can help on a whole different level. At their head was the one in charge of all parts of Eretz Yisroel currently in the hands of Yisroel (Israel) ... especially that the bracha comes from their inspiration and their initiative ... surely it is necessary and possible to use this opportunity to the fullest."**

I won't get into the subject of the building of the Ir Chabad in

Yerushalayim now. Suffice to say that R' Shloimke, who brought the signatures to the Rebbe, and Professor Branover – then director of the magneto-hydrodynamic laboratory at Ben Gurion University in Be'er Sheva, and director of SHAMIR (Shomrei Mitzvos Yotzei Russia) – felt that the Rebbe was addressing them.

Indeed, after the farbrengen, R' Leibel Groner informed them that the Rebbe had appointed them to this job and would discuss it with them in a yechidus in the near future. The next day, the two of them were asked by the Rebbe whether they had begun work on it...

Every year, R' Shloimke found original ways to “improve” on his project. In addition to getting birthday greetings from more people, he worked on beautifying the album itself. In 1987, he decided that in addition to the album of personal wishes, he would order a poster which would be signed by all the heads of state, Knesset members, ministers, the president, senior military men, mayors and council heads. He ordered a beautiful poster and took it with him to all the offices to collect the signatures.

On top of the beautifully designed poster, which was three feet by three feet, it said:

In appreciation and deep admiration for the personality and work of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, we members of the Knesset and government of Israel do present this letter of honor and appreciation on the occasion of his 85th birthday on Yud-Alef Nissan, 5747, for length of days and good years.

The great persona of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, the guide and leader, the influencer and inspirer of

our day, has left an indelible stamp on our era. His mighty deeds throughout the world, his deep concern for Klal Yisroel, and his evident influence wherever scattered Jews are found, are a powerful boost to Jewish arousal and sense of identity. These activities, done so pleasantly and affectionately, draw hearts close and deepen the feeling of unity, love for G-d, love for Torah, and love for Eretz Yisroel. We bless him on his birthday and wish him

You can see how deeply R' Shloimke reached into their hearts. There is none of the usual political considerations. The essence of the soul and Jewish faith shine forth. No matter what his position, each expresses bittul to the Nasi HaDor.

length of days and good years and that he continue to act on behalf of Am Yisroel in good health and happiness and raise them unto the path to receive the complete Geula.

The first signature was that of the president at the time, President Chaim Herzog, who was a close friend of R' Shloimke. Also present at the meeting with Herzog were the director of 770 in Kfar Chabad, R' Yisroel Maidanchek; Director of the

Chabad Mobile Mitzva Tanks and Tzivos Hashem, R' Dovid Nachshon; secretary of the Mobile Mitzva Tanks, R' Avi ben Zecharia; member of the Vaad Kfar Chabad, R' Menachem Lerer; and Chabad spokesman, R' Berke Wolf.

Jose Sarne, who was president of Brazil at the time, was there as well, and he also wanted to add his appreciation for the Rebbe's work. He wrote:

I have the privilege to address his honor and glory on the occasion of his 85th birthday and I wish him heartfelt wishes of personal success. I have followed with great interest his spiritual work for a more just, humane and united society. In the name of the Brazilian people, I express my deep appreciation for his honor's work and wish that his mission of peace and faith and wisdom spread not only for many years but to the entire world.

Then Prime Minister, Yitzchok Shamir wrote:

It is a great privilege for me to bless his honor with length of days and years in exceptional health so that his honor, the Rebbe, can serve the Jewish people and Eretz Yisroel with his full strength. In the merit of his great work, may we all merit the complete Geula with the help of G-d.

He signed the letter; from his admirer, with love.

There is no question that the most special letter was written by the Attorney General at the time, Mr. Yosef Charish:

As I sit in my office, the legal office in the Old City of Yerushalayim, involved with various mundane matters including financial cases and iniquities committed by individuals – and unfortunately, there are many – my friend, the Chassid, R' Shlomo Maidanchek came and placed before me this impressive volume of blessings written by admirers and devotees of

my master in honor of his 85th year, so that I can append my blessing too. I am taken aback by the privilege that has come my way, to be counted in with those who bless our master, in the same volume.

Not all merit this. Having merited to send a blessing to my master, in addition to recently receiving a letter from his honor, I take the opportunity to pray for the fulfillment of the blessing inscribed on this volume in letters of gold, "yomim al yemei melech tosif," and may all the days that Hashem adds in His kindness to my master be days of physical health and supernal light. May they be days in which he increases in strength in Torah and his wellsprings shall spread forth, so as to infuse all those who heed and

It's amazing to read in what high esteem these politicians held the Rebbe. These aren't pat, polite lines that the secretary typed up, but heartfelt wishes written by the people themselves.

appreciate his teachings with the proper spirit, wherever they may be.

Yosef Charish ben Mina and Shlomo.

Many know of R' Shloimke's ties with prominent figures in the Israeli government, the IDF and Israel's corporate structure, but not many know the scope and depth of these relationships. Each year, he gathered them all in one beautiful album and presented it on the Rebbe's birthday.

The staff he built up in Aguch continues his work today, establishing personal connections and being mekasher people to the Rebbe. Many public figures still write to the Rebbe as a result of these contacts.

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IN (1 1) NISSAN THEY WERE REDEEMED

By Rabbi Chaim Ashkenazi, Rav, k'hillas Anash in Tel Aviv

Why was it necessary to announce that Moshiach is coming, and especially to tell the world that the Nasi HaDor is Moshiach and we have to accept his reign and bring piskei dinim from rabbanim that Hashem must bring Moshiach? They say – let Hashem run things! Let us spread the wellsprings and He will do his part!

CONNECTING THE ELECTRICITY

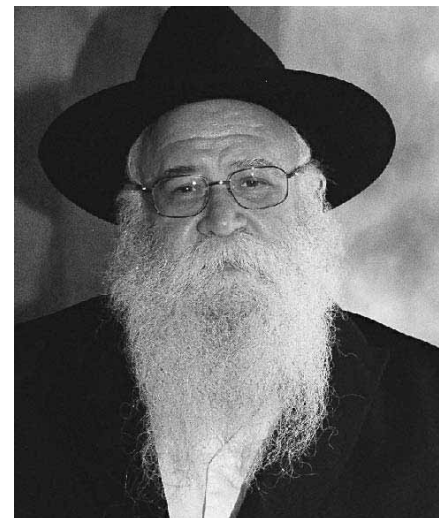
From the Midrash saying that until Avrohom the world was in darkness but when he came it was light, one might think that the world was like a huge construction project where the electricity wasn't properly connected. This is why at first there was gloom until the expert electrician, Avrohom Avinu, came and fixed it and there was light.

However when the Creator is the one who constructed it this edifice, how could something go awry? There is no flaw in Hashem's handiwork. The explanation is that Hashem made the world incomplete so that Jewish souls would come along and illuminate it with the revelation of divine truth where such truth seemingly does not belong. As the Midrash puts it, "Hashem

desired a dwelling place down below for Himself."

What does *tachtonim* (down below) mean? Tachton is not a low place and the Midrash is not saying that Hashem wanted to be revealed in a physically low area, because it makes no difference to the revelation of the Creator whether it takes place high up in the worlds or low down in the worlds. The meaning of tachton is a state wherein created beings do not realize that there is a Creator who created everything out of nothing.

In order to create a tachton like this, it was necessary to employ a process of tzimtzum, (constriction) until the "breaking of the vessels" and the diminishing of the moon, the sin of the Tree of Knowledge and the sins that followed it. All of this led to the ultimate tachton, a world



so low that a created being could actually deny the existence of G-d. He might even believe that a person or a statue is the Creator and sustainer of all, G-d forbid.

When Chassidim wanted to describe such a depraved condition, they would analogize to a drunken villager who knocks at the door of another villager. The homeowner asks, "Who's there?"

The drunk answers, "It is I!"

"But who are you? Ivan?"

"No, I'm not Ivan. I'm someone much greater than him."

"Are you the mayor of the village?"

"Mayor?!" replied the drunk disdainfully. "I am much greater than him."

"Ah, in that case, you must be the police chief!" said the homeowner.

"No, even greater."

The homeowner tried to ascertain whether the man was the priest, the bishop or even the pope himself. No matter whom he thought the person knocking might be, the man answered that he was even greater than that. The homeowner took a deep breath and tremblingly asked: Are you G-d?

“I am greater than Him too,” said the drunk confidently.

The homeowner couldn’t take it anymore and he decided to open the door and see who was so elevated. To his astonishment, it was only the drunk Ivan pounding his chest importantly and saying: I am the idol-maker and so I am greater than god.

That is what Nimrod who rebelled against G-d was like. He ruled the world and did as he pleased.

Avrohom the believer was a soul sent into this lowly world to illuminate it and show that there is a Creator of the world; not only that there is a Creator but that all that exists, exists by the power of G-d as it says, “Keil olam,” which means that **the world is G-dliness!** It doesn’t say, “Keil **ha’**olam” which would mean that Hashem merely rules the world. Avrohom began spreading the belief that the world was created and is renewed through the exclusively through the will of the one-and-only Creator.

EXTERNAL, INTERNAL WILL AND THAT WHICH IS IN BETWEEN

Since divine will is what sustains the world, when someone goes against the divine will, one would expect a disaster of some kind, perhaps the sun would follow suit and change its course or shine at night and not by day. Destruction and chaos would follow. But there’s a difference between a physical entity and a person.

When you don’t use a physical

object according to the instructions of the one who made it, it gets ruined, since the one who made it didn’t make it out of nothing but merely fashioned its form. In other words, he took something and made something else out of it. Therefore, the instructions that go along with it are meant to preserve the new form he fashioned. This is why, when you use a physical object in the wrong way it gets ruined but the original material it was made out of still remains.

In contrast to that, when you ignore the instructions of the Creator who made things **out of nothing**, the object ought to revert to **nothing** because there is no reason for its continued existence.

So why is it that the world is not destroyed, or at least the person’s personal world, when he sins? This is because the Supernal will has a *p’nimius* and a *chitzonius*. The *p’nimius ha’ratzon* (inner will) is the will that gives life to all elements of holiness within the entire Order of Devolvement – the worlds, angels, souls, and Torah and mitzvos with which, and through which, Hashem’s ratzon in the creation is fulfilled. This means that they perpetuate the inner will in creation and this is why it exists.

The more something embodies the inner divine will, the more nullified to the Creator it becomes. One may even come to see how the Creator continuously creates the world at every moment ex nihilo, until we reach the state of Geula in which “all flesh will see” – we will actually see the sustaining utterance, the Divine energy within each and every thing.

But there is also *chitzonius ha’ratzon* (external will) which is the desire to sustain the world as a means to carry out the *p’nimius ha’ratzon*. We can understand each of the layers of ratzon by comparing it to someone who goes to work. What motivates someone to go to

work? He wants to earn money and the desire for money is so that he can buy a house and the desire for a house is to be able to live comfortably, etc. So the inner desire wants the pleasure of a home. All the actions taken until he actually dwells in his home are also his ratzon - for if not for this desire he would not go to work and wouldn’t buy and pay for all the expenses associated with building a home – but they are only the externals.

The G-dly *chitzonius ha’ratzon* is that the world should exist.

Therefore, the world continues to exist even though we do things that are against His will, because there is hope (even knowledge) that in the end, the sinners will repent and then the *p’nimius ha’ratzon*, that there be a “dwelling place for Him below,” will be perfectly fulfilled.

If we continue with the analogy of the house, we can say that the person who builds a house and does not find peace of mind in it, will continue to hold on to it only if there is a chance that his *p’nimius ha’ratzon* will be realized in the future. If this becomes impossible, he will abandon it or destroy and rebuild it.

If a person were to say: What do I care if the world is here from the *p’nimius* or the *chitzonius*? The main thing is that I can keep doing whatever I want - that my world should continue to exist!

The simple answer is that since this is only an external means to the goal which is *p’nimius ha’ratzon*, if he does not carry out or bring closer the fulfillment of the ratzon *p’nimi*, his world would cease to exist because there is no need for it. Why does this fellow’s perverse world continue to exist? So he can correct his previous deeds which brings about the fulfillment of Hashem’s ratzon *p’nimi* or at least from now on, he acts in such a way that the desire in the *chitzonius* should be in harmony with the ratzon *p’nimi*.

“BE CAREFUL NOT TO DESTROY MY WORLD!”

We can say then, that when a person does not carry out the instructions of the Creator, the truth is that his personal world is destroyed. The fact that he does not see this is because he does not have the glasses to see it. There were instances in which tzaddikim showed the churban that resulted by behavior that was contrary to G-d's will. The Baal Shem Tov showed his disciples that in the house of the arrogant *parush* (ascetic) there swarmed impure creatures that had been created by his ego.

Similarly, when the Maggid of Mezritch was at an inn with his disciples, he showed them fearsome creatures that had been created from the landlord's sins of immorality. Through his prayers he was able to get rid of them and help the landlord do *t'shuva*.

A story is also told about Rabbi Yoel Baal Shem who revealed to his disciples the significance of the frightening voices that emanated from the house of the deceased goldsmith in Posen (as recounted in the *Memoirs*). There were demons and spirits in the house that looked like various animals. They considered themselves the inheritors of the goldsmith since they had been created by his sins and the curses of his wife.

This kind of behavior, of a person who says, “I’m satisfied that I attained my (physical!) desire and what do I care about Hashem’s *p’nimius ha’ratzon*, is reminiscent of the porter who would bring boxes of vegetables to market. In order to calculate the payment for his work according to the number of boxes he schlepped, the storekeeper said he would put a small coin on every box he brought. Afterwards, they would count the coins and he would be paid accordingly.

The porter, seeing a pile of coins, waited for a moment when the

storekeeper wasn’t looking and he stole some coins from the pile. The fool didn’t take into account that he was making do with pennies and was losing far greater wages that he could have received in place of the coins.

The same is true for us. The activities of thought, speech and actions, which occur in our world, get their life energy from Hashem’s *chitzonius ha’ratzon* which is only an intermediary – like the coins – for us to get to the main thing, i.e. so that through our thoughts, speech and action we do Torah and mitzvos.

He showed them fearsome creatures that had been created from the landlord's sins of immorality. Through his prayers he was able to get rid of them and help the landlord do t'shuva.

When we don’t do those things, we are left with a few coins that aren’t worth the effort...

Until Avrohom Avinu, people acted like that porter who stole the coins, and the world continued to exist with people feeling that they had benefited from taking coins without working for them. Avrohom opened people’s eyes to the truth, that this is idol worship in which every person decides for himself what he finds appealing and what he will worship. These physical substitutes for which he works are

like small change and he loses out on real life, on building his world and connecting to his eternal future.

Behaving in this way comes from man’s desire to create a world around himself that provides him with pleasure and comfort and refrains from demanding that he carry out assignments that someone above him imposes. This is like the person who saw many targets on the side of the road with arrows precisely in the bulls-eye. When he asked the archer how he had managed to aim so accurately, the man replied: It’s easy. First I shoot the arrows and then I draw circles around them. As it says, “What man’s hands create out of wood and stone” – he himself “shoots the arrow” towards the god he set up for himself. Then he builds circles of reasons, excuses and justifications around his lowly concerns.

He actually “uses” G-d who so kindly provides him with an extension on life and continues to enable him to exist out of His *chitzonius ha’ratzon*. It’s like Chazal say on the verse, “who is like You *b’eilim Hashem*” – instead of reading it as “the powerful ones,” read it *b’ilmim* – the mute ones, for Hashem remains silent even as we act contrary to His will. By rights, the person should be put out of existence but Hashem is patient for the sake of *t'shuva*.

FOLLOWERS OF AVROHOM AVINU

This was Avrohom’s *avoda*, to prove that there is a Creator and a purpose to creation. This is why it says that “two thousand years of Torah” began with Avrohom (out of the 6000 years of the world), since he is the one who taught mankind that the goal is to acknowledge and conform to the divine will, Torah.

The world progressed and became more refined through Yitzchok and Yaakov and so on, until Mattan Torah when “there was a

great voice which did not cease.” The Rebbe explains that G-dliness penetrated all of creation. The process of the refinement of creation continued further and further through the construction of the first and second Battei Mikdash and the revelation of the Mishna and Gemara.

At this time, the 2000 years of Yemos HaMoshiach began which meant that the goal for the world, the revelation of Moshiach, had begun, especially through Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai who revealed p’nimius ha’Torah, and then the Arizal and R’ Eliyahu Baal Shem and R’ Yoel Baal Shem and R’ Adam Baal Shem, who disseminated the teachings of Kabbala, p’nimius ha’Torah which is a revelation of the era of Moshiach. Thus, there was revelation after revelation until R’ Yisroel Baal Shem Tov and the Chabad Rebbeim and the end of galus and the beginning of Geula. It has all been heading in one direction since Avrohom Avinu began to publicize that there is a Creator of this creation called “the world.”

The Rebbe defines it thus – the Alter Rebbe, who was like Avrohom Avinu who brought the Sh’china down (but he brought it down from one heaven to the next), also brought the Sh’china from heaven to heaven ... until our Rebbe who brought the Sh’china down below, to the lowest, forsaken places that exist on earth, to situations which seem utterly remote from divinity.

The G-dly light reached and continues to reach, through the Rebbe’s shluchim, even to people whose view is that “There is no justice and there is no judge” and so they immerse themselves in any hedonistic desire that arises. The Rebbe’s light has reached even these lowest of places. For example, someone who works with down and out people once found a picture of the Rebbe in the wallet of a drug addict. When he asked him why he had this picture, the man answered:

When I look at the Rebbe’s picture, I have a few moments of sanity and it’s worth everything!

So everything in the world is operating according to a preconceived plan that we were chosen to carry out in the best possible way. Even if it seems to us that something has gone wrong, we must remember that there is no veering off G-d’s plan. All along the way, the Evil Inclination –and his master, Satan – try to prove that there is no creator and this is the reason for all the suffering the Jewish people have endured. It is all in order to try and challenge the belief that there is a Creator and One who runs the world. Whenever we pass a test, even if we seem to emerge bloody and bruised, we fulfill our ultimate purpose.

That means that that situation (which we can define as “tachton”) that threatened to cause the Jewish people to say, “G-d abandoned the earth,” but failed, will not be repeated since it is a **tachton which was already refined**. We may have additional hardships but they are different than those which preceded them; and not only different but lower.

All the *kitzim* (calculated endpoints of exile, expected dates when Moshiach would come bit didn’t) were not false. They were certain low points in time that were elevated. They had the potential of bringing about “and the earth will be full of knowledge” but Hashem wanted an even lower and lower situation to cry out, “Hashem Hu HaElokim.”

Throughout the generations there was opposition to preparing the world for the revelation of G-dly light which sometimes came from goyim and sometimes came through Jews, l’havdil. There were the Maskilim for example, and even great Jews, real gaonim, like the early opponents to the study of Kabbala and Chassidus. There were times

that the *sitra achra* sent someone from the family to stop the Rebbe’s spreading of Chassidus like the relative of the Mittlerer Rebbe who informed on him, saying that he was rebelling against the czar, as a result of which the Mittlerer Rebbe was arrested.

Sometimes the opposition was from the Chassidim and tzaddikim who carried on the way of the Baal Shem Tov, like in the time of the Alter Rebbe when some of his colleagues greatly opposed the fact that he revealed Chassidus. The Rebbe Rashab said that there would be people who “mock the footsteps of Your anointed one,” people who are frum who oppose the inyan of Moshiach.

THE GREATEST OF ALL

Chassidim would say that there are three rabbinic holidays: Purim, Chanuka, and Yud-Tes Kislev, which correspond to the Jewish people, the Torah, and Hashem. On **Purim**, there was a decree against the **Jews**, that they be annihilated. On **Chanuka** there was a decree “to make them forget **Your Torah** and to remove them from the statutes of Your will,” – the **Torah**. On **Yud-Tes Kislev** there was a decree against **G-d**, namely that people not know who Hashem is.

In our generation we have an additional Yom Tov, **5 Teives**, because there was a decree against the revelation of the Rebbe as **Moshiach**, which is the final step in the revelation of the G-dly light and the destination which Avrohom and all his descendents yearned for. Here too, the plot against the Rebbe and against his being the **Rosh B’nei Yisroel** came from a family member, a descendent of the Rebbeim, who drew others in his wake.

At this time we are in the era of the revelation of G-d through Moshiach and therefore we can understand why the world already agrees to all the revelations of the

Jewish people, the Torah and Hashem but when it comes to connecting all this to **Moshiach**, we run into trouble. Throughout the world, the ideas and depth within the first three things have been accepted and every lecturer includes them in his talks (including the idea of *ein od milvado* as the Baal Shem Tov explains it, as well as the eternity of Torah and Yisroel as they are explained in Chassidus).

However, connecting this with the Rebbe or even Moshiach without identifying who he is, is not seen as necessary and it may go so far as to be seen as an impediment. Just like the Israeli politicians wanted to erase the mention of Jewish origin from Israel's national identity cards, they think they can erase Moshiach from being identified as such, and they make spurious claims such as there will be a Geula without Moshiach (as the nationalists believe) or there will be a Geula with a human being who is Moshiach but when it happens we will know about it and it's not necessary to point him out now because it only turns people off...

Those who rally under the banner of "they mock the footsteps of Your anointed one" try to claim that everything the Rebbe said regarding the fact that Moshiach is the Nasi HaDor, and the ten years or so in which he led us in this direction and we followed along with great enthusiasm was some kind of unusual period and we don't need to refer to it any longer.

They try to hide the sichos and those videos and the other means which the Rebbe used to publicize what he said. It's a new sort of decree of "making them forget your Torah" adopted by people amongst us. Apparently, they are the ones the Rebbe Rashab meant when he said there would be religious Jews who would mock the footsteps of Your anointed one because what other frum people since the time of the Rebbe Rashab (aside from the few

remaining opponents to Chassidus) would deny this?

Some people wonder – what was the point in publicizing all that about Moshiach when most of the world is ready to accept Chassidic ideas, especially with the plethora of explanations provided by the Rebbe as they are explained in thousands of sichos, maamarim and letters? Baruch Hashem we have reached Yemos HaMoshiach, as the Baal Shem Tov said Moshiach told him would happen when his wellsprings spread forth!

Today, in all streams of Judaism, from the national-religious to the former misnagdim, all the other Chassidic groups and the many Jews who are still not religious – all of them have gotten a taste of the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov and want more. All of them enjoy Chassidic niggunim, Chassidic customs and Chassidic ideas and it doesn't scare anyone off.

So why was it necessary to announce that Moshiach is coming, and especially to tell the world that the Nasi HaDor is Moshiach and we have to accept his reign and bring piskei dinim from rabbanim that Hashem must bring Moshiach? They say – let Hashem run things! Let us spread the wellsprings and He will do his part!

They even point out the benefits we could have enjoyed if we followed their approach, saying that we could have lived together in peace and harmony and Chabad Chassidim would be accepted everywhere in the world.

They want to know why we acted like a bull in a china shop, breaking all the delicate wares, i.e. ruining the chance of spreading the wellsprings to all segments of the Jewish people. They forget that we are following the path paved by Avrohom who – when the time came – entered his father Terach's idol store and smashed them all to bits.

The Rebbe was born in Nissan

and in Nissan we will be redeemed. He informed us that if we don't have the actual Geula, then all the progress made since Avrohom was for naught as the Rebbe said explicitly, "If we don't have the Redeemer, we accomplished nothing!"

The Rambam describes who the Redeemer is so that when the moment of truth comes, in which we have to point at him, we will know who it is. The Rebbe, and only the Rebbe, is the authority who tells us when the right moment has come and he decided that now is the time to announce, "Hinei zeh Moshiach ba!"

We should not be fazed by those who ask questions and turn up their noses and thereby mock the footsteps of the anointed one. As in all previous generations, even when they didn't see any way out in the face of a nisayon, they knew it was a test and they did as it says in Chassidus – knowing that there is no purpose in fighting a nisayon. What needs to be done is to stand firmly with emuna and emerge from it stronger and with a deeper connection to our Creator.

All the more so now that the process of the creation of the world is reaching its denouement, we cannot allow ourselves to be dragged into debates. And especially not when the Rebbe told us several times that the world is ready and we just have to find the way to convey the message.

We need to hold on tight to our emuna that "Hinei zeh Moshiach ba." The Rebbe's ratzon will certainly be fulfilled and his prophecies will be realized. May it be through us and may we be the ones who finish Avrohom Avinu's work in illuminating the world with the revelation of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach now!

*Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu
V'Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach
L'olam Va'ed!*

SHOOTING IN THE FOREST

By Rabbi Shneur Zalman Chanan

The ongoing adventures of the group of Chassidim after they crossed the Polish-Czech border.

In the previous installment, I told how my parents safely crossed the Polish-Czech border, boarded passenger trains, and arrived at a refugee camp where they were to stay a few days before moving on.

In general, the Czechs were favorably disposed towards the refugees. The Foreign Minister, Jan Masaryk, was actually a friend of the Jews. Thanks to him, the Czech Republic opened its doors to Jews and provided them with food. Not only did the government provide the refugees with seven trains for over two years to transport them south or east, it even paid for this transportation and for hot food for the refugees.

The catch was that although the Czech government allowed the refugees to pass through its land, it did not allow them to remain there. The condition was that the refugees stay a maximum of 72 hours and then leave. They had guards who watched the transit camps and the trains so that refugees wouldn't sneak off and blend into the general population. The Bricha promised, "We will pass through your land ... we won't veer right or left until we cross your border," (as the Jews in the desert promised Edom).



The makeshift refugee camp in Czechoslovakia

Bricha took my parents and all 46 Chassidim in trucks and traveled southwest. At some point on the road, near a thick forest, they placed them in a large wooden barracks which had recently been used as a stable. Each person was given a folding army cot and they told them to be ready for at any moment they would continue traveling.

MONEY TALKS

On Friday, they told the group of Chassidim that at night they had to board another train which would bring them closer to the border. The Chassidim, who felt comfortable with the Czechs, were confident that as long as they were in Czechoslovakia nothing bad would happen to them. They decided to do

all in their power not to desecrate the Shabbos.

"We knew we had to continue traveling but we didn't want to travel on Shabbos if it wasn't necessary," explained my father. "As soon as we left Poland, the immediate danger to our lives was gone. The time, circumstances and place we were in were no longer pikuach nefesh according to Halacha, and therefore, we couldn't desecrate the Shabbos. We hoped that if we could only speak with the border guards we would be able to postpone our trip until after Shabbos. We knew that the soldiers had already received some hefty bribes and we thought we didn't have to rush and follow orders."

The askanim, led by my father, used the tactic which had worked well under the communists. First, my father gave money to the engineer of the train who agreed to make believe there was a technical problem which required an urgent repair that could take 24 hours. Then, he gave money to the soldiers and they agreed to wait until the train was fixed. Nevertheless, the Bricha people advised the Chassidim not to tarry and to get going as soon as the stars appeared in the sky.

A SURPRISING TELEGRAM FROM THE REBBE

I don't know whether it was Erev Shabbos or on Shabbos itself

that the Chassidim received a telegram from the Rebbe in which he wrote that he was sending his representative from the United States to meet them, in his name. It also said that this emissary would have further instructions as to where they should continue to travel.

For the Chassidim, who longed to see the Rebbe, knowing that the Rebbe had sent an emissary to meet them was tremendously exciting. To them, seeing and hearing the Rebbe's emissary would be like meeting the Rebbe himself.

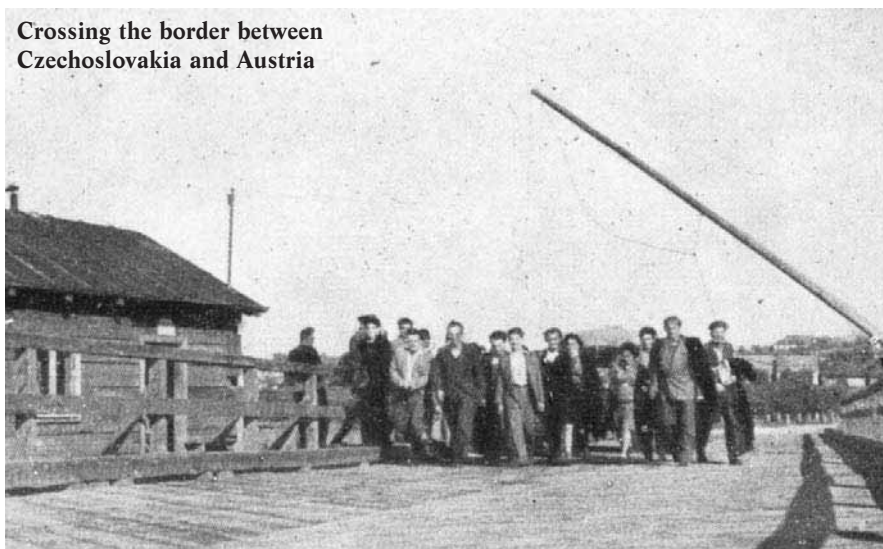
Since communications in 1946 were not as developed as they are today, telegrams and letters did not always reach their destination in time. This was especially true after the war, which had brought in its wake chaos and bedlam, and especially for the Chassidim who had no fixed address. When the Rebbe's telegram arrived, it wasn't clear and it left the Chassidim confused. Did the Rebbe want the group to wait where they were until his emissary arrived or should they continue traveling and the emissary would meet them later on?



The difference of opinion that the telegram created among the leaders of the group caused much aggravation. Those who thought the Rebbe wanted them to wait did not want to listen to the Bricha people who said they had to continue traveling. They insisted on remaining there until the emissary arrived or until the Rebbe's instruction became clear.

The other group said they must travel! They were not in a settled place but in a clearing in a forest and it was dangerous to remain there. They said there was no reason to wait for the emissary and they had to continue. The emissary would find them later on.

Crossing the border between Czechoslovakia and Austria



The trains the refugees traveled on in Czechoslovakia.

SHOOTING IN THE FOREST

As the Chassidim discussed what the Rebbe meant, the pastoral silence in the woods was disturbed. Late Shabbos afternoon, two tall soldiers walked in and looked at the bearded Chassidim, at the women and children, and shouted at them to get out.

I was never able to understand what happened, what motivated the Czech soldiers to act as they did. Possibly another group of refugees had to arrive at that temporary camp and they had to

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clear out the stable for them. Maybe it was because the 72 hours were up and that is why they were ordered to leave immediately. What is nearly certain is that the soldiers were anti-Semites. They definitely thought that all the Jews had been killed by Hitler and his devotees and when they suddenly saw a different reality – a large group of bearded Jews with their wives and children, it aroused their anti-Semitic ire.

I heard the following from my father many times. It was very traumatic for him and he remembered every detail.

When the soldiers began chasing them out, the askanim, led by my father, R' Dovid Bravman, and R' Yona Eidelkopf, tried to talk to them. They hoped to convince them with additional money and with the help of Bricha, to wait a few more hours and then they would leave. But the Czech soldiers were impatient. They cocked their rifles and ordered everyone to take their belongings and leave immediately. If they did not obey, they said, they would start shooting. In order to show they meant business, the soldiers began hitting some of the refugees in the attempt to chase them out.

My father and R' Dovid Bravman jumped forward and stood between the Czech soldiers and those people who tried to defend themselves, which made the soldiers angrier and they started shooting in the air, right and left.

SHE SAVED HER HUSBAND BUT GOT A BULLET IN HER BACK

Suddenly, Mrs. Tzivya Bravman, R' Dovid's wife, who was in her ninth month of pregnancy, noticed that one of the

soldiers was aiming his gun at her husband. In a second, she had placed herself between the soldier and her husband and had knocked the gun to the side. The bullet did not hit R' Dovid but it struck her at the end of her spine and she began bleeding.

Mrs. Itta Sasonkin-Levitin, who was in another corner of the barrack and saw the soldier aiming in the direction of Tzivya, began to scream, "They're killing Tzivka!"

Her screaming made the soldier even madder and he aimed his gun and shot at her too.

Mrs. Itta was 33 years old, the daughter of R' Nachum Shmaryahu Sasonkin, the rav of Batum, who was known as R' Shmerel Batumer. In her short life, Mrs. Itta had been widowed from her first husband who had been killed on the front. The cursed Russians had drafted him to the Russian army as punishment for belonging to the "Schneersohnskis" and spreading Torah and Judaism.

Before leaving Russia, Mrs. Itta had married the mashgiach of yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim, R' Shneur Zalman Levitin who was like a father to her two children, Avrohom and Rochele. Mrs. Itta died of her wounds the next day. May Hashem avenge her blood.

The soldier continued shooting towards my father and if not for my aunt, Esther Rochel, who caught my father by the hands and dragged him away from where he stood, he would have gotten the third bullet.

My aunt, my mother's sister, Mrs. Mussia Nimotin, did all she could to salvage the situation. Seeing Mrs. Bravman bleeding, she opened her suitcase which had an item of clothing or two and took out the only sheet she owned and ripped it into strips. If you did not live in those days, you cannot

**Left: Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson,
the Rebbe Rayatz's emissary**



A map that shows the journey Anash took from Tashkent to Peking.

appreciate what a mesirus nefesh this was. She did not think about her single, irreplaceable sheet nor about the discomfort and health risk this loss would cause. Mussia simply tore it into strips and bandaged Tzivke to save her life.

Mrs. Tzivya Bravman finishes relating what happened to her:

“I was injured and had lost a lot of blood but we were in a clearing in the forest and far from civilization. In order to get to a hospital I had to travel by train but I first had to walk to the train station.

“I arrived at the hospital Sunday morning when most of the doctors were on vacation and I sat in a room that was like an emergency room, to wait my turn. Big crosses were hung on the walls around me and monks dressed in black walked back and forth. I was in great pain and terrified. I was glad that at least that the bleeding had stopped.

“Someone called the name that appeared on my false papers and at first I didn’t react because I didn’t remember that it was my name! When I realized, I was afraid to speak in Russian but I didn’t know any other language. I was confused since my identity had changed so



Rabbi Dovid Bravman

many times to match the false papers we were given. I told the nurse that I knew English. After some time, someone came in civilian clothes, and he seemed to have an official position. He asked me to sign a paper that would take the blame off the soldier who shot at me, but would point out that the bullet was ejected because I pushed the soldier’s hand.

“I didn’t know what to do. One of the Bricha people, who had

accompanied me, asked me to sign so as not to cause problems for the groups of Jews who would be following us. I signed.

“It was first at six in the evening that a German doctor came and examined me. He said I was lucky because the bullet hadn’t touched the fetus. They were able to remove the bullet after anesthetizing the area with ice. I managed to catch up with the group before they crossed the border into Austria. Three weeks later, when we were already in Germany, I gave birth to my oldest daughter Rochel.”

Of course this episode shook up the Chassidim and when, that night, one of the Bricha members came and told them to follow him, they sadly went. They went by train until the nearest border where they stopped in order to walk across the Austrian border. Once again they were frightened. The Bricha guide had a collective visa and each of the refugees was given a new certificate, sealed by “the International Committee for Refugees.” Everybody knew that the documents were fabricated in a forgery factory and that even if the documents had been genuine, the names written on them did not match the people who held them.

Once again they entered a dark dense forest and walked what seemed an endless path. After they safely crossed the Austrian border, Bricha put them on another train that brought them to the transit camp called “Oifnams Lager” (reception camp) in the city of Hoff. There they met the Rebbe’s representative, Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson, who brought the Rebbe’s blessing and instructions not to delay but to follow the Bricha people to the American zone in Germany.

AN AMAZING DREAM BEFORE PESACH

By Nosson Avrohom

*Shlomo reacted with excitement. “A special evening in the Rebbe’s honor?” he responded enthusiastically. “Of course I’ll be there!” * Everybody sat back down to listen to him. He was obviously very worked up. “As those of you who know me are aware, I am not religious. However, I want to tell you about a miracle...”*

Over the course of 18 years on shlichus, Rabbi Aryeh Greenberg, shliach in Moshava Mazkeret Batya, has had numerous special instances of Divine Providence and quite a few miracles, thanks to the Rebbe’s brachos. Yet, he can’t help getting excited as he relates this truly unique miracle story.

It was Yud Shvat, 5756. Like every year, we arranged a special evening for the people of the Moshava. I invite many of the residents personally, even up to a few days before the event, and so it was when I met with Mr. Shlomo Chajaj. Although he is not yet religiously observant, nor amongst those who regularly take part in Chabad events, Mr. Chajaj

has warm feelings for Judaism and I figured he was likely to attend if he was personally invited.

After speaking with him for a while, I told him about the evening we were devoting to the Rebbe to commemorate the day he became the Nasi. Shlomo reacted with excitement. “A special evening in the Rebbe’s honor?” he responded enthusiastically. “Of course I’ll be there!”

He asked me how much a raffle ticket cost. Our policy is that we don’t sell raffle tickets before the gatherings so people who don’t have the money won’t be deterred from attending, but he insisted that he wanted to buy a raffle for himself and his wife right then and there. Surprised by

his enthusiasm, I sold him the tickets.

At the gathering on Motzaei Shabbos, he was one of the first to show up. It was a very successful evening and attracted quite a large turnout. There were several speakers, each of whom spoke about the Rebbe’s tremendous impact on the Jewish world, shlichus, and the Rebbe’s mitzvaim. The last speaker was Rabbi Hertzl Borochof of Rechovot, who runs the Machon Igros Kodesh. He told his life story, describing how he became a Chabad Chassid and the tremendous impact that had on his life. He shared numerous miracle stories and the crowd was enthralled.

When he was finished, a large group of people gathered around him, eager to hear more stories. Some of them wanted to write to the Rebbe. Shlomo joined this group, then approached the microphone and asked to say a few words.

I was very curious. I couldn’t imagine what he would say. Everybody sat back down to listen to him. He was obviously very worked up.

“As those of you who know me are aware, I am not religious. However, I want to tell you about a miracle that I had with the Rebbe. This happened four years ago, a little while after the Rebbe

became sick.”

I was flabbergasted. Here was a person who I would never have suspected had any connection to the Rebbe, not to mention a miracle, and yet, not only had he had a serious encounter with the Rebbe, he remembered precisely when it happened and the Rebbe’s condition at the time. My ears perked up.

“I work as a truck driver, and my day begins late in the morning. That year, two days before Pesach, I dreamt that I woke up at five in the morning

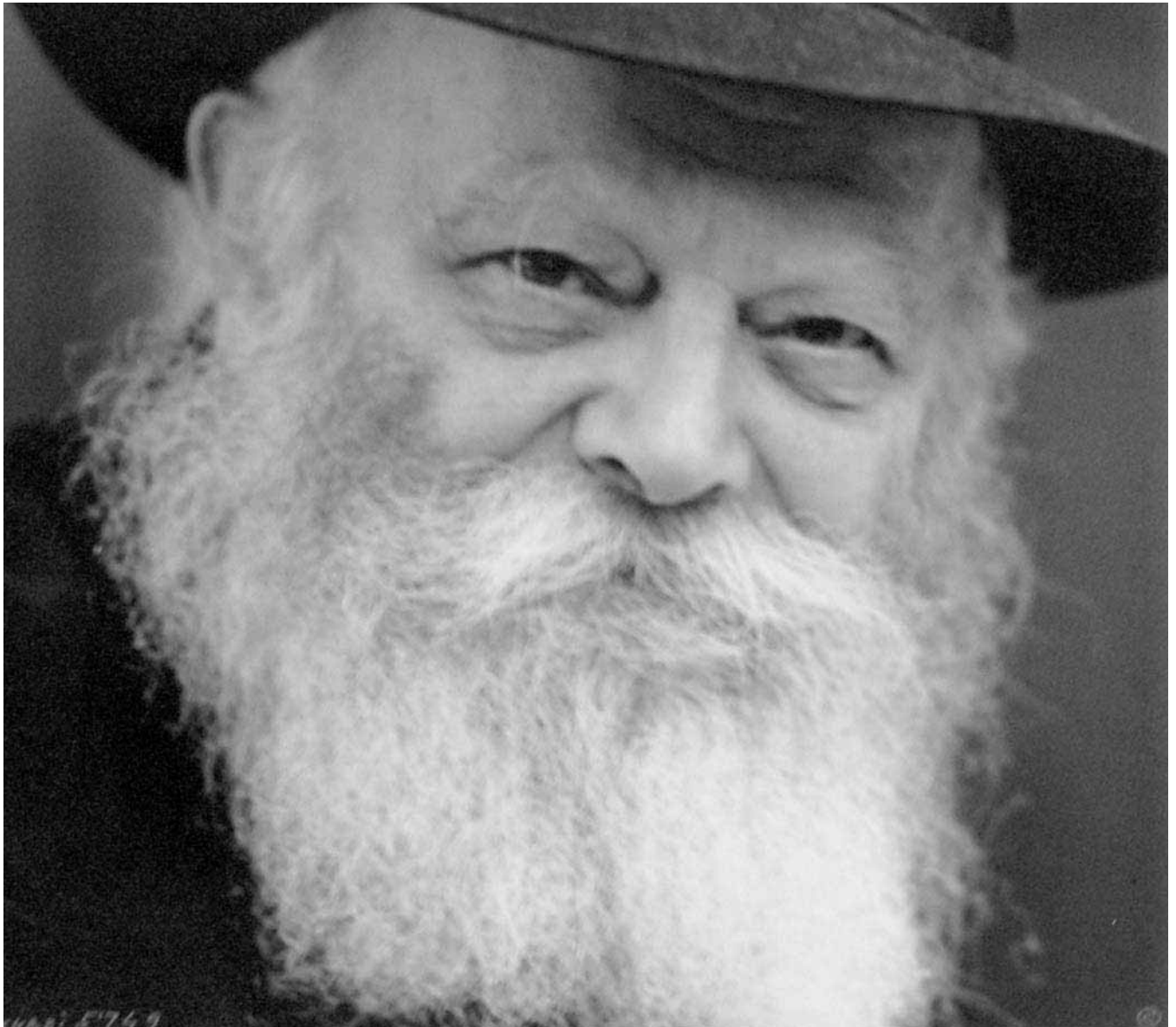
and couldn’t fall back asleep. I sat up in bed, took a cigarette and began smoking. Suddenly, I saw the Lubavitcher Rebbe. I was taken aback. I had no acquaintance with the Rebbe and knew him only from advertisements in the papers and from the work of Chabad.

“The Rebbe didn’t give me much time to think. He asked, ‘Do all the people in your vicinity have what they need for the upcoming holiday?’

“I was confused. After a long moment, I answered that I hadn’t

***My heart
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knocked at the
door... At this, she
burst into
uncontrollable
tears.***

checked and so how could I know? The Rebbe said I should



try to ensure that everybody had what they needed for the holiday and then he disappeared.

“When my wife woke up I told her about my dream. I usually don’t pay too much attention to dreams, but this one seemed to be much more than just a dream – I felt it was a vision! I gave a lot of thought as to what the Rebbe could have been referring to. It was the kind of dream that did not allow you to ignore it and move on. It was all so vivid. I had made eye contact with the Rebbe and I felt as though if I had reached out, I could have touched him.

“After much thought, I recalled that a neighbor of mine was experiencing hard times. This person is very private and hardly shares his circumstances with others, but his difficult financial situation was well known.

“I decided that I would overcome my discomfort and find out whether this person needed financial help for the holiday. My heart pounding, I knocked at his door. His wife opened the door. Her eyes looked red and swollen and it was clear that it wasn’t due to lack of sleep.

“I asked whether her husband was in and she said he wasn’t. I asked whether they had everything they needed for the holiday and whether I could be of help. At this, she burst into uncontrollable tears, bringing tears to my own eyes. When she finally calmed down, she told me, ‘Yesterday, my husband was taken to jail because of his debts and I don’t know what to do and where to begin ...’

“I felt overcome with compassion for her. From the outside, she seemed like a strong woman. To see her like this was very hard for me. In addition, they kept to themselves and never told the neighbors what was going on in their house.

“I didn’t hesitate. On the spot I took out 500 shekels from my pocket and gave it to her. She was very embarrassed and at first refused to take the money from me. Only when I told her that the money did not come from me but was sent by someone else did she agree to accept it. I went



The shliach of Mazkeret Batya, Rabbi Greenberg with the council chairman, Mr. Meir Dahan at a public menorah lighting

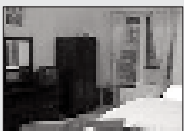
home feeling very shaken up.

“I saw that the dream of the Rebbe was not just a dream. Throughout the day I couldn’t stop thinking about what had happened. I went to sleep just an ordinary truck driver, was charged with a mission by the Lubavitcher Rebbe overnight, and by the next morning had fulfilled it. The quick turn of events had me reeling.

“The very next day, the man was released from jail. Coming home from another hard day on the highway, I met him on the street and he invited me into his house. It was Erev Pesach and the table was set with fish and meat. ‘It’s all thanks to you,’ he said gratefully.

“Though this neighbor was never one to welcome neighbors into his home, this time he ushered me in with palpable joy and excitement. It was one of the happiest days of my life. I sent a silent thanks to the Lubavitcher Rebbe for enabling me to do this big mitzva. We sat down in his living room and I told him about my dream which had seemed so odd at first, but had resulted in this marvelous conclusion.”

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PESACH IN PERU: SHLICHUS UNLIMITED

By Chani Nussbaum

“Remember that dust isn’t chametz and children aren’t the korban Pesach.” * An interview with veteran shlucha, Mrs. Sarah Blumenfeld of Peru, about Pesach on shlichus.

How do you make Pesach?

Enlisting the help of about ten bachurim, we make several public S’darim. We host a more homey and relaxed seider in our home for the members of the Lima community, between 80-100 people.

Since our s’darim are conducted in Spanish and English and it would be difficult to add another language to that, another, less formal seider led by bachurim takes place in the shul.

We also send bachurim to a number of nearby cities: Juarez, Ica, Arequipa. The largest seider takes place in Cusco, where Ofer and Yael Kripor have served as the shluchim for the past four years.

How do you prepare?

We import a large container with all the products we need. Before we came here, the sum total of what Jews had here for Pesach, in the way of kosher products, was machine matzos and wine. We taught people that more than that is both necessary and accessible. A few weeks before Pesach, thousands of chickens and about twenty cows are slaughtered. We

also supervise sugar, coffee, salt and cocoa in factories.

We had always ordered most of the products we needed from New York but last year we found it cheaper to order from Israel. It’s a big expense, especially when 80% of the shipment is used for our public S’darim, leaving only 20% of the container to be sold. The increased awareness it generates among the residents and tourists for the necessity of kosher products

Below: Rabbi Shneur Zalman Blumenfeld



STORIES OF THE FIFTH SON

One year, in the middle of the seider during the singing of Ma Nishtana, two Israeli girls with backpacks burst into the room and started crying hysterically. They had wandered for hours, searching for a seider in Lima. They had almost despaired when they suddenly heard us singing and that is how they found us.

They immediately lit candles. They didn't stop shedding tears until the end of the seider, which I am sure they will never forget.

There was an Israeli tourist who did not want to come to the Chabad house. All his friends came to us for the t'fillos on the Yomim Nora'im but he stayed at the hotel. Then the unbelievable happened and he suddenly felt enormous regret and he said to his friends: When I go back to Israel I will go to yeshiva. They didn't believe him, of course, but he did it. As soon as he arrived back in Israel he looked for the nearest Chabad house and was referred to a yeshiva.

Today he is a shliach. That "fifth son" is a shliach and is looking for other "fifth sons" as we are.

We don't know how connected every Jew is to the Nasi HaDor. I heard an amazing story about a tourist who came here. His friend in America finished studying medicine but did not find a job. He was very upset about this, feeling that seven years of studying had gone to waste.

He spoke to the local shliach who suggested that he write to the Rebbe. Then he got four job offers, one of which is close to his home. So he found work and also got more connected to the Rebbe.

They had wandered for hours, searching for a seider in Lima. At the brink of despair, they suddenly heard us singing and came in. They immediately lit candles. They didn't stop shedding tears until the end of the seider, which I am sure they will never forget.

makes the huge expenditure worthwhile.

It's a challenge to juggle arranging S'darim for the people of our community, the tourists, and the other Chabad houses who make s'darim with the help of the T'mimim we bring out. How do we manage? There is no explanation other than the Rebbe!

Who are the "Four Sons" on shlichus?

The "Chacham," one who becomes religiously observant, takes some time to cultivate. Our job as shluchim is to make the generation *zakai* (meritorious) by making a "ben" out of "acher." To watch those who recently did not know the Alef-Beis learn in yeshivos is the true happiness of every shliach.

The goal of the S'darim is to bring together all four sons, and to enable them to understand the significance of the exile in Egypt, the present galus, and the anticipation of Geula. When all are involved together, we will be ready for the impending Geula.

How do you explain concepts like chametz, matza, maror, galus and Geula to Jews who never heard them before?

The Rebbe's sichos are full of explanations of these concepts and we need to learn and teach them to our mekuravim. The seider in our home is always a very lengthy affair, as seider at home takes so long because my husband explains every paragraph in Spanish, starting with questions to get the attention of the children and working many of the Rebbe's sichos into the recitation of the Hagada. People are eager to hear more and more and they accept it in a way that is astonishing to us.

In general, the S'darim are an opportune time for every Jew to feel the Holiday of Freedom.

What is "chametz" in life on shlichus?



Every person has the “chametz” he has to deal with. The big difference is that on shlichus, the Rebbe is helping us every step of the way. It reminds me of a humorous line I once heard. Saying *b’ezras Hashem* (with G-d’s help) doesn’t give us the right to blame Him when something goes wrong. So too on shlichus, having the Rebbe with us gives us the responsibility to be proper shluchim, not the right to blame him when things are tough.

If hardships are “chametz” then of that, we’ve got plenty. We deal with abysmal Jewish ignorance and assimilation and struggle to see the bright side, including the fact that people who don’t know a lot are more receptive. We’ve gotten used to importing most things, as they are simply not available in Peru, such as pomegranates for Rosh

HaShana and horseradish for Pesach.

Chinuch is an enormous hardship. My four oldest children are in Israel and the three younger ones are home-schooled thanks to the Internet and the home-schooling program for children of shluchim. My youngest son is still too young for formal schooling, but I try to provide him with enrichment. We are looking for another couple to come and help on shlichus, especially with the chinuch of our children.

It’s hard, but when we remind ourselves that the Rebbe takes responsibility for the children, it’s definitely encouraging.

When do you as a shlucha feel cheirus/freedom?

Genuine cheirus for me as a shlucha is when I see results like when I sit with our “extended

family” of 100 people and more on Pesach. In order to feel the freedom, I start cooking right after Purim so that the next two weeks I am completely free to take care of all the things that need to be done at the Chabad house starting with kippot and matzos and up to paying the bills for all the needed repairs.

When I look at the immense changes that have occurred since we came here, it makes me very happy. In the early years we were able to bring kosher food that sufficed for us whereas today, we need to bring a container because the demand has grown.

The results include a girl who went to New York to study at Machon Chana and today is a shlucha herself, as well as seeing people who started living more Jewish lives, koshering their home for Pesach etc. Some people don’t

SHLICHUS IN PERU

We are on shlichus for over 20 years. We left on shlichus about five months after we married. We went past the Rebbe for “dollars” and the Rebbe gave us a bracha to go on shlichus to Peru.

We didn't know exactly where we were going. We didn't check things out beforehand and we discovered that the situation here was awful. Terrorists ruled and they kidnapped people off the streets. The economy was terrible.

After two years, my husband went to the Rebbe with an important person from Peru and the Rebbe said to them, “The time has come for peace and tranquility in Peru.” A short while later there were elections and some anonymous candidate won who improved the security and economic situation beyond recognition. The Rebbe's prophecy was realized. We felt enormously relieved.

Little by little, people began discovering their Judaism. There started to be a demand for kosher food and we opened a bakery at the Chabad house. I supervise milking and we pasteurize the milk and sometimes make cheese.

The many tourists that come here, as opposed to those who go to the Far East, are not searching for spirituality. They come for the incredible scenery. We have a lot of work to do in reaching out to them. We have started courses in “Kabbala” that have been very successful.

We try to capitalize on the inspiration an Israeli tourist feels when he is abroad. In Israel he wouldn't go to a shul but here, he is more likely to do so in order to feel at home.

The Rebbe said to them, “The time has come for peace and tranquility in Peru.” A short while later radical reforms took place that improved the situation beyond recognition. The Rebbe's prophecy was realized.

work on Pesach and for Jews of Peru, that's tremendous progress!

How do you prepare for the Seudas Moshiach?

We have the Seudas Moshiach at the Chabad house. We invite the public and farbreng and sing. It's very inspiring. We feel that it's an auspicious time and people make good mitzva resolutions. It helps that the bachurim who were near and far running S'darim have returned to base for the Seudas Moshiach.

Do you have some tips for others on shlichus?

There is a lot of work both at home and with the children and at the Chabad house so it's crucial to be organized. Start preparing right after Purim so closer to Pesach you will be free to handle whatever comes up.

The worst thing for anybody, a shlucha especially, is to work till the last minute. That is also, by the way, the reason that the week before Pesach we don't eat chametz here.

Use disposable plates and tablecloths. They make life easier.

We sell food and kugels for Pesach at the Chabad house. It's important that people know that there's food to eat on Pesach even if you are very particular about kashrus.

Remember that dust isn't chametz and children are not the korban Pesach.

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TO COLLECT WHAT IS ‘OWED’ TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE

By Boruch Merkur

Tracing the Rebbe MH”M’s instructions on how to perfect our Divine service in the Final Era.

The Rebbe MH”M closes his address with a focus on the imminent Redemption:

“All matters of ‘our deeds and our service,’¹³⁷ especially those of the righteous women of our generation, in whose merit the Redemption will unfold¹³⁸ (as exemplified in the redemption of Purim through Ester), shall bring about the complete reward owed to the Jews (as it were), including (in addition to the reward) the obligation upon the Holy One Blessed Be He¹³⁹ to [fulfill] ‘You¹⁴⁰ shall surely provide him,’¹⁴¹ the Jewish people, who have served for and arrived at ‘six years [when a slave must be freed]’ ([referring to the] six thousand years of the world’s existence¹⁴²), being servants of the Holy One Blessed Be He (a concept that receives additional emphasis in a Year of Hakhel, which follows the Shmita year).

“This is especially so in light of the service done amidst the darkness of Exile, which is doubled and redoubled, necessitating self-sacrifice and fortitude in the face of scorners,¹⁴³ and particularly after the most difficult decrees [the Holocaust] we have encountered in the last generation, ‘the trouble shall not arise twice.’¹⁴⁴

“In addition to all the above, just as Jews give and increase in giving **charity** to others, so too, G-d must give, as it were – ‘measure for measure’¹⁴⁵ – in a manner of charity. In exchange for ‘The Holy One Blessed Be He did an act of charity for the Jewish people by dispersing them among the gentile nations,’¹⁴⁶ ‘scattered and fragmented among the nations,’ may there be the revealed charitable act of ‘and you, the Jewish people, shall be gathered one by one,’¹⁴⁷ among a great ‘congregation.’¹⁴⁸

“That is, in addition to a gathering and unity of Jewish souls, also – and mainly – there should be the unity of souls in **bodies**, ‘awaken and sing, you who dwell in the dust,’¹⁴⁹ with the Resurrection of the Dead.”

[To be continued be”H]

NOTES:

¹³⁷ Quoting *Tanya* Ch. 37, beg.

¹³⁸ “The generation will only be redeemed in reward for the righteous Jewish women” (Yalkut Shimoni Rus remez 606, end, from Midrash Zuta

Rus), as was the case regarding the Exodus from Egypt – that in the merit of the righteous women of that generation they were redeemed (Sota 11b, Shmos Rabba 1:12). In fact, this connection is apparently especially relevant to the righteous women of our generation, which is a reincarnation of the generation of those who left Egypt (*Shaar HaGilgulim* Preface 20; *Likkutei Torah* and *Seifer HaLikkutim* (of the Arizal) Shmos 3:4).

¹³⁹ For “What He does, He tells the Jewish people to do” (Shmos Rabba 30:9).

¹⁴⁰ R’ei 15:14.

¹⁴¹ Especially according to the commentary explaining that this is considered the reward for his labor (and not charity). See *Likkutei Sichos* Vol. 19, pg. 154 ff.

¹⁴² Rosh HaShana 31a.

¹⁴³ Maamer beginning with the words, “*Ein HaKadosh Baruch Hu Ba B’Trunia*” of 5648, 5685; “*Mishkani*” 5687 (beginning with “*Ani Yishana*” 5709). See *Seifer HaMaamarim Meluket* Vol. 2, pg. 271 ff.

To the extent that even Moshe was humbled before the generation of the Heels of Moshiach on account of their challenges in dealing with the scorners, etc. (*Seifer HaMaamarim* 5679, pg. 464 ff; 5709, pg. 5, 5710 pg. 236 ff. See *Torah Ohr* 22a, *Seifer HaMaamarim* 5562 Vo. 1, pg. 51)

¹⁴⁴ Wording of Scripture – Nachum 1:9 (see *Likkutei Sichos* Vol. 23, pg. 306, Footnote 55), echoed in the words of the Mittlerer Rebbe (*Shaarei T’shuva* Vol. 1 5a), “It will not recur.”

¹⁴⁵ Sanhedrin 90a, end.

¹⁴⁶ P’sachim 87b.

¹⁴⁷ Yeshayahu 27:12.

¹⁴⁸ Yermiyahu 31:7.

¹⁴⁹ Yeshayahu 26:19.

MONEY TALKS – BUT WHAT DOES IT SAY?

By Eli Shneuri

Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry

In the early days of the Chabad Mobile Centers, Rabbi David Nachshon received a financial offer that was hard to refuse. A well-known philanthropist from Florida asked to meet him urgently on his private plane, while the purpose of the meeting remained vague. The curiosity was intense, and the trial afterwards was unbearable. Yet, above all, there was the surprising answer from the Rebbe.

Rabbi David Nachshon told the following story at a farbrengen recently held in 770. While this story doesn't conclude with a "happy ending" in the material sense of the phrase, it does teach about the strength of a chassid to stand up to a trial, and about the need to hold fast to the clear instructions and answers of the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach.

Rabbi Nachshon relates:

This story took place in the early *Mems*, during the first decade after the establishment of the Mitzvah Tanks – the Chabad

Mobile Centers. At that time, the organization was in a state of financial distress, confronted with huge expenses to operate the tanks and their extensive activities. During that period, I was in contact with a *g'vir* (Jewish philanthropist) from Florida, who owned considerable assets and corporations.

One day, this honored philanthropist called the Rebbe's secretariat, and asked Rabbi Binyomin Klein that I should be in touch with him. Immediately after receiving the message, I contacted him.

"I need to speak with you," he

said. "Where is it possible to meet with you?"

When I tried to find out the purpose of this meeting, his reply merely intensified my curiosity. "This is not something to discuss over the phone," he stated flatly without explanation.

He asked if I could come to him, and when I said that I could, but only in another two days, he said, "Then I'll come to you – today."

A few minutes later, he called to update me with his flight number and asked that I come to LaGuardia Airport to meet him as soon as the plane lands.

"The meeting must be face-to-face," he emphasized again and again.

With such scanty information, I felt that I had no choice, and I asked one of my closest friends among the mobile center supporters, R. Yankel Tilson from New Jersey, to join me at the meeting, despite the fact that this was against the *g'vir's* "orders".

Back in those days, nearly thirty years ago, the approach to the runways was open and unrestricted, and therefore, we freely made our way in the direction of the aircraft of this philanthropist.

As soon as we met, he asked why I didn't fulfill his wishes and brought my friend along.

“We’re talking about someone quite trustworthy who knows how to keep a secret,” I hastened to say, as I tried to clarify why I didn’t abide by his instructions. “What you say to me in his presence goes no further. You can tell him anything on this matter without any reason for concern.” It was clear that he accepted my explanation, because he had no choice.

We stood in a quiet corner in the departure terminal, and the g’vir proceeded to get right to the point:

“A few dozen years ago, I transferred several hundred thousand dollars for a building project outside of the United States. The project never got off the ground, but I never returned the funds to America. The money was placed in a secret foreign bank account and earned a sizable amount of interest. Access to this account was possible only via a code without the need for personal identification.

“Recently, I was informed by my son that the FBI has begun conducting investigations in search of funds belonging to American businesses located in foreign banks. As a result, my son suggested that I gather my money from there and close matters in the best and quickest manner possible. This investment poses a certain legal problem in connection with the secret bank account that is unknown to U.S. authorities, especially since the transfer of these funds back to the United States will require a declaration. Then, I suddenly got the idea to unload the money by donating it to a charitable institution. I have seven main institutions that I support on a regular basis, but I have decided to choose your organization...”, the philanthropist

said.

“I am giving you the secret code that will enable you to take out all the funds that are in this account. Just go there and take it!”, he said to my great surprise. I was in a state of sheer euphoria. “Make certain that this entire matter remains an absolute secret!” he cautioned.

“I suggest that on your way back,” he continued, “in order to avoid any unexpected problems, don’t return directly to the United States; travel instead to Israel via



Rabbi David Nachshon

Europe.”

The future that appeared before me seemed rosier than ever before. My mind envisioned a huge budget that would put an end to the debts from our programs, once and for all, and give a push to the new wave of activities.

“In your estimation, how much money is there?” I asked.

“I don’t know exactly,” he said. “However, after decades of earning high interest, we’re talking about a sizable sum of money. At

least a million dollars!”

The feeling was simply exhilarating. A million dollars for our activities! A million dollars in those days was the equivalent of five or six million dollars today. A huge amount.

We parted cordially from one another, and then my companion and I headed back to 770.

“Something here is too good to be true – and legal!” I thought out loud within earshot of R. Yankel. He tried to convince me that there was nothing to worry about and no reason for concern, and we could see clearly how the Rebbe was arranging everything in the best possible way in order to finance our activities.

When I returned to 770, I spoke with two askanim with whom I was quite close, and raised before them the possibility that I should ask the Rebbe on the matter. However, they replied that there was no need whatsoever. They were unanimous in their belief that this had come directly from G-d, and He had blessed me with great success! They claimed that one never asks the Rebbe whether to take contributions from people, as this is part of an institution’s continual activities.

Yet, specifically because all this seemed too good – I felt that I had to ask. I thought to myself: Why am I trying to avoid submitting a report to the Rebbe? I felt that there was something wrong here, and my “feeling” urged me on to ask the Rebbe.

I laid out the whole story in writing, and I requested the Rebbe’s bracha and approval. I wouldn’t have to stay in suspense for very long, because not long after I submitted the question, the Rebbe’s secretary, Rabbi Yehuda Leib Groner, called and informed me: “There’s an answer from the Rebbe.” He read me the text of the



Rebbe's wondrous answer over the phone. The content of the message was clear (not verbatim): *"It's amazing how he even agreed to speak about things that the person said should not be discussed over the phone, and that he didn't turn him down then and there. And as is known, Chabad has no connection with things that are forbidden to talk about on the phone..."*

The truth is that I was very surprised by this answer. Nevertheless, it was clear to me that I would not travel to that place and I would touch the money in that account.

My friends were positively stunned when they heard the Rebbe's answer. None of them expected such a clear and unambiguously negative response.

Now, the only problem that

remained was to call the philanthropist and tell him what I had decided. This would be no pleasant task to tell him that I wouldn't accept his contribution of more than one million dollars!...

With a feeling of some concern, I called the g'vir and asked to speak with him. "I want to thank you very much for your strong

willingness to support our activities. However, to my great regret, due to certain reasons, I am unable to accept the contribution." When he heard what I had said, it was clear that he felt insulted, and he became quite furious.

"I wanted to help you," he said angrily, "but now I'll give [the money] to someone else," and he ended the conversation. The g'vir cut off all relations with us and never gave money to the Chabad Mobile Centers again.

The following day, Rabbi Groner met me at the entrance of 770 and asked, *"Ha? A groiser nisayon, ha?"* (A big trial, right?!)

"The big trial was whether to ask the Rebbe," I replied. "But after we asked and received an answer – there was no trial...of course, we followed orders!"

***I was in a state of
sheer euphoria.
"Make certain
that this entire
matter remains an
absolute secret!"
he cautioned.***

PESACH IN YAMIT: A FIGHT TILL THE END

By Shai Gefen and Menachem Ziegelboim

*On 28 Nissan 1982, Yamit was destroyed along with 17 settlements by the same man who, years later, destroyed the Jewish settlements of Gush Katif. Many people, from all over the country, went to Yamit for Pesach including many Lubavitcher Chassidim who worked to stop the withdrawal. * In exclusive interviews with Beis Moshiach, various people tell about those days in Yamit as well as Yud-Alef Nissan, Pesach and the Seudas Moshiach.*

27 years ago, Erev Pesach, R' Chaim Tzvi Lipsker, a Lubavitcher Chassid from Petach Tikva, decided he could no longer sit with hands folded at home when the government was planning on destroying Yamit. His daughter, journalist Bat-Sheva Levkivker, then a young girl, tells us about those days:

Nissan 5742: The peace agreement with Egypt was about to be implemented. Some of the settlements in the Sinai had already been dismantled and the

land returned to Egypt.

Yamit, that beautiful city, was in the final states of dismantlement. My father, whose love for the land flowed in his veins, felt as though they were uprooting parts of his body. He felt that "something had to be done" even though it was obvious that there was nothing left to do.

On the morning of 13 Nissan, the day of b'dikas chametz, he made his decision. We would spend the night of the seider in Yamit together with the few

residents remaining there who refused to accept the "evil decree." At least they wouldn't be accepting it without putting up some opposition.

Pesach isn't like other holidays. We even took salt along with us. It was almost the exact reverse of the original exodus, as we prepared for our own exodus to Egypt.

My mother was in charge of packing the food, utensils, tablecloths, and clothing while preparing the house for b'dikas chametz. My father was on the phone, in charge of the logistics of the campaign. Already then, getting to Yamit was no simple matter. The army was afraid that the few remaining residents would be augmented by "crazies," who would make the withdrawal difficult and so they had sealed it off.

After lengthy discussions, situation assessments and practice simulations, it was decided that we would all meet (other people joined us) at the edges of Gaza.

At that time, ironically, the most secure way to get to Yamit was via Gaza City. There, at our meeting point, my cousin would be waiting for us; he would give final instructions and lead us, via side roads, into Yamit.

We left close to midnight. We joined up with the cars of other family members and traveled most

of the way as a convoy. You could sense the tension in the air. We feared that despite all our plans, we would have to return home.

Cell phones were not in use back then and every so often, when the need to calm our fears became too strong, we stopped on the side of the road and tried to relax.

We got to Gaza after noon. The streets were desolate. The heavy shutters over the stores were closed and aside from a dog whose ribs stuck out and had a rolled up tail, not a living creature could be seen on the street.

Towards morning we arrived at the first roadblock. The soldier sitting in the guard house was dozing. To our good fortune, the only thing that interested him at that moment was going back to sleep. We entered Yamit.

Yamit back then was combination of beach sand, empty ranch style houses and a handful of

stubborn people. Of all the beauty that had been, almost nothing remained. It had been a long time since they had watered the gardens. Nature had been allowed free rein.

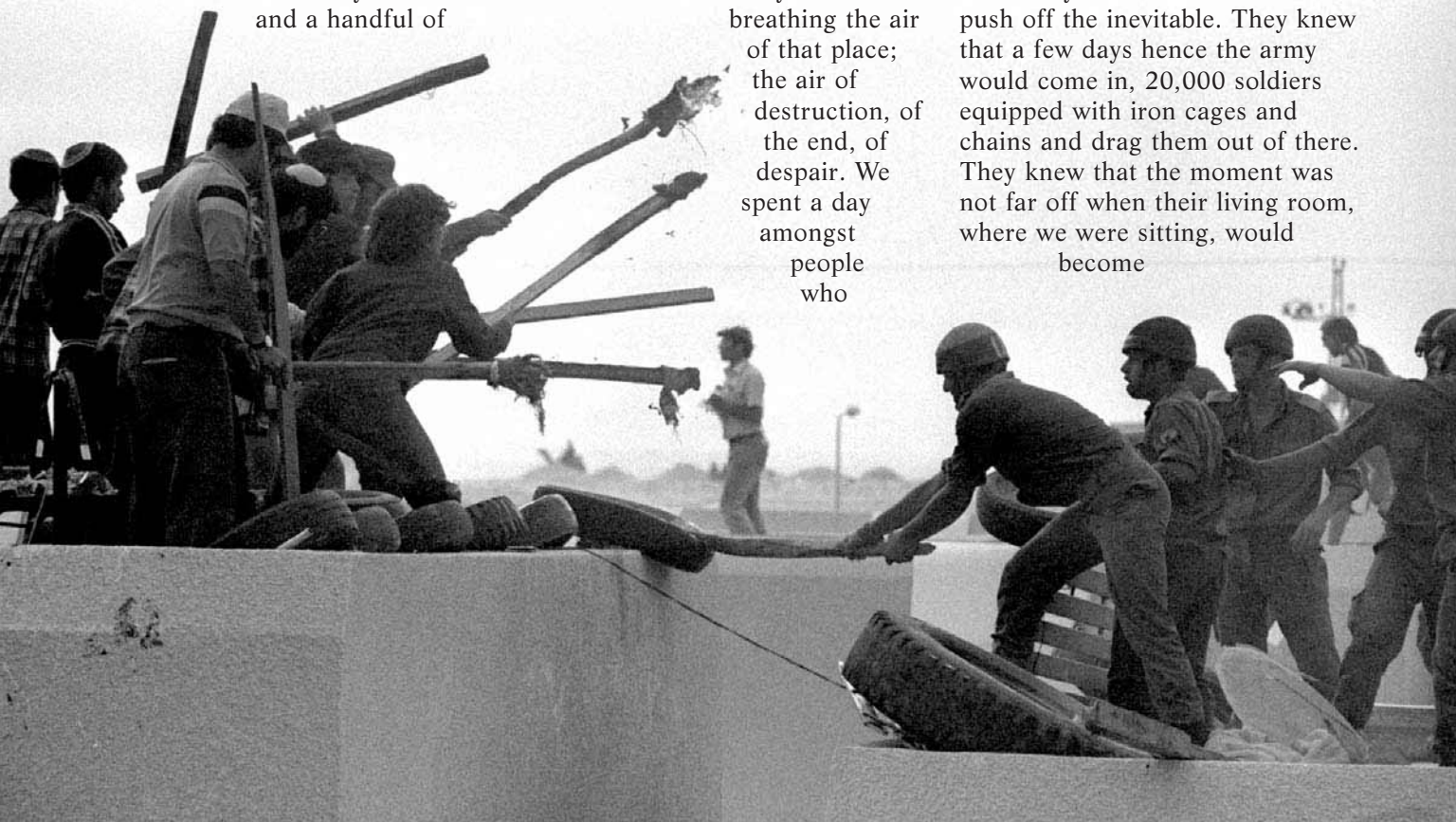
The next day, on that unusual Erev Pesach, we found ourselves with nothing to do and we went on a final trip in the area. We left the gates of the town, this time as “residents,” with a promise that we would be back in a few hours. We went to see, for the last time, areas that up until a few days before had been flourishing, settled, and full of life and we found them desolate. Some of the houses remained as they had been while some were already destroyed. The decision was that the Egyptians would be getting heaps of ruins (which are still in the same condition 27 years later...).

As we sat down to the seider, it was after an entire day of breathing the air of that place; the air of destruction, of the end, of despair. We spent a day amongst people who

were forced to abandon their land, land which they had worked and loved for nine years. And now it was being given freely into enemy hands.

Around thirty of us sat around the holiday table, a heterogenic group that included Chassidim, people who wore knitted yarmulkes and black yarmulkes. Despite the differences in customs, foods, and z'miros, we had a lot in common. Whenever the word “Mitzrayim” was mentioned, our opinions were in sync. The entire time there hovered the thought that this was the last time, surely for many more years, that Pesach would be celebrated here.

For us, the guests, it was easier. We knew that despite the solidarity we would be going home the next day, but for the residents, the seider night was like a respite, a small island of sanity in a time when they battled to survive and push off the inevitable. They knew that a few days hence the army would come in, 20,000 soldiers equipped with iron cages and chains and drag them out of there. They knew that the moment was not far off when their living room, where we were sitting, would become



a pile of rubble.

There were attempts to set aside weekday matters and focus exclusively on the story of the exodus but that was impossible. The almost surrealistic connection between the miracles done for our forefathers back then in Egypt, in their war against the Egyptians, and the current situation, kept bringing us back to reality. We hoped that this time too, a miracle would happen and the walls of sand would swallow the Egyptians.

The special taste of the holiday foods was marred by bitterness, soured by parting. Grains of sand literally mixed into the crumbs of matza. The sand, which was the first thing to cover all signs of life, snuck between your teeth and didn't let you forget it.

Opposite the house we stayed in was a bunker where Rabbi Kahane's men were holed up. As a last, desperate act, they had threatened to commit suicide when the soldiers came to throw them out. They behaved as expected. Throughout the night they walked on the roof of the shelter, wearing talleisim, spreading their hands towards heaven. They shouted portions of the Hagada, sang Pesach songs, all with a dramatic flair. Their voices wafted through the open windows and added to the general atmosphere.

We hurried to finish our private seider so we could join the communal seider that was organized by "the Committee to Prevent the Withdrawal." They had set up a tent and made a seider for people who gone to Yamit to thwart the withdrawal. Rabbi Drukman, Geula Cohen, Tzachi HaNegbi (before he became a minister), Avi Parchan, and others were there. There was singing and an attempt to bolster spirits and lots of talk about how,

what, and when.

The next day, we packed our belongings and said goodbye. We parted from Yamit forever.

27 years have gone by since the destruction of Yamit and the 17 settlements in the Sinai by the Begin government and the Defense Minister Ariel Sharon. The bloody wound still hasn't healed. The negative repercussions of the Camp David Accords are apparent.

The Begin government announced the date of the evacuation after Pesach 1982. The main battle began in the months of Adar and Nissan. As opposed to the residents of the Yamit area,

"If another 1000 Chabadnikim had come, they could have stopped the withdrawal."

most of whom left when compensated by the government, thousands of people began streaming towards Yamit. They were encouraged by the "Committee to Prevent the Withdrawal from Sinai" from Gush Emunim. They sent thousands of people to the area for the purpose of fighting against the withdrawal.

Repopulating the city began at the beginning of Adar. Hundreds of families went to Yamit, to Ofira, and Chatzar Adar. Yeshivos and ulpanot were founded by the "Committee to Prevent the Withdrawal from Sinai." Jews changed their addresses to settlements in the Sinai strip and

they worked together with the original residents of Yamit and the other settlements in the Strip who refused to be evacuated. They all waited for a miracle to stop the evacuation.

Wednesday, 28 Nissan 5742 marked the end of Yamit. *Maariv's* headline the next day announced the death of the city of Yamit – dust, anger and tears. The battle raged till the final moment. Hundreds of people from all over the country went to save Eretz Yisroel but it wasn't enough. Later on, R' Berke Wolf a"h, who proclaimed to the media the Rebbe's sharply worded statements against the withdrawal, said that (the late) Prime Minister Menachem Begin told him, "If another 1000 Chabadnikim had come, they could have stopped the withdrawal."

A number of Lubavitchers did go to Yamit. They circumvented the military blockades and snuck into the city in order to show their support and to let the Nasi HaDor's opposition to the destruction of Yamit and the giving away of land be heard. Chabad Chassidim did a number of things thanks to which some people came close to Chabad and even established Chassidic homes.

Rabbi Lipa Kurtzweil, director of the Chabad house in Kiryat Malachi, was in charge of the entire southern region, including Sinai. Alongside the usual activities in the spreading of Judaism and Chassidus (for many of the residents of the Yamit Strip were not yet religious) he worked hard to stop the withdrawal as per the Rebbe's instructions.

"Over the years, I traveled to Yamit hundreds of times for mitzvaim, programs, shiurim, and printing the Tanya. We also made Lag B'Omer parades in the settlements there."



The Lag B'Omer parade passing through the main thoroughfare



The children of Yamit in a Lag B'Omer parade, a year before the withdrawal

When did your relationship with the people there begin?

My connection with them began ten years before, in 5731/1971. We reached out to the people in the settlements and kibbutzim. For example, we worked at moshav Sadot through the Shefer family. Thanks to our joint efforts, the community became very involved in Judaism. Most of the people in the Chevel (district) were not religious so there was plenty to do. There were children from the Chevel who came to the camp we ran in

Nachalat Har Chabad. We had a warm relationship with many families. We did a lot of Mivtza Mezusa and quite a few people wrote to the Rebbe regularly.

We printed the Tanya in Chatzar Adar and then we learned Tanya with special fervor. A few weeks later they brutally evacuated Chatzar Adar. Heartbreaking scenes that I will never forget took place there. They dragged babies and their mothers out of their houses, put them on trucks, and sent them out of the city.

The Rebbe sent a letter to the

residents of Atzmona (see box) who asked for the Rebbe's bracha. Throughout this time, we took an active role in the fight.

Such as?

In my house we organized protest meetings. My house was the step off point for activities in Yamit. We also collected food to bring to the settlers. We put up flyers in Chabad centers and throughout the country. We had meetings with rabbanim and public figures and we did many acts of protest as per the Rebbe's instructions.

R' Boruch Marzel of Chevron remembers what Chabad did back then:

You have to understand that the settlers were a much smaller group than they are today and the work that Chabad did, along with their aid, was very important. I remember Rabbi Kurtzweil who was extremely active and did a lot for the cause.

The Rebbe constantly encouraged us and until the last minute told us not to despair. I was the one who brought the letter the Rebbe wrote to the residents of Atzmona. That letter was framed and kept in the main office of the yishuv Atzmona that moved to Gush Katif until that was also destroyed.

R' Yigal Kirschnzaft, former shliach in Gush Katif, was one of the people who fought for Yamit and then was the first resident in Neve Dekalim:

Chabad's efforts stood out. I remember how in the final months, Rabbi Yitzchok Ginsburgh came and opened a Chabad house. Tanyas were printed throughout the Chevel as the Rebbe instructed. Chabad's work was so dynamic that some people became Chabad Chassidim after Yamit was destroyed.

Rabbi Sholom Dovber Wolpo was one of the outstanding activists who worked on behalf of Yamit and later for Gush Katif. By direct instruction of the Rebbe he wrote, *Daas Torah B'Inyonei Eretz HaKodesh* and *Sholom, Sholom, V'Ein Sholom*. He not only publicized the Rebbe's view but also took an active part in the fight for Sinai. He regularly went there and was there on the last day of the evacuation.

Rabbi Wolpo, what was the purpose of your trips?

We went to encourage the residents and support them in their battle. Unfortunately, the nation did not understand the great danger, which is why tens of thousands did not flock there. There is no question that if tens of thousands of people would have gone, the withdrawal would not have taken place.

On our visits there we would farbreng with the residents, give shiurim, and run activities with the youth. We held a big rally for children on the Rebbe's birthday, Yud-Alef Nissan. I gave a shiur in the yeshiva in Yamit in the Rebbe's sichos. I remember that R' Uri Kaploun went down to live in Yamit and we held farbrengens in his house.

Was the Rebbe informed about these activities in Yamit?

Certainly. We reported to the Rebbe about every visit. We quoted the Rebbe and distributed the books I wrote. My second book, *Sholom, Sholom, V'Ein Sholom* was published just then, a book that the Rebbe told me to write in a yechidus in the summer of 5741.

Was the Rebbe's view publicized enough in the media at that time?

Every sicha the Rebbe said at that time was widely publicized in

the media thanks to the devoted work of the Chabad spokesman, R' Berke Wolf.

R' Boruch Marzel: I cannot forget my friend, R' Berke Wolf. Nearly every week, sharp sichos of the Rebbe appeared in the newspapers against the accords and when we saw them they gave us a lot of strength to continue fighting.

R' Wolpo: I want to tell you something about publicizing the Rebbe's horaa. One time, when we were in Yamit, I received a personal instruction from the Rebbe to raise the following question in the media: Anwar

In light of the tense situation, we tried to lighten things up. I did a somersault. Journalists asked me afterwards about it and I told them that as I stood on my head I saw the world right-side-up ...

Sadat, President of Egypt, announced that peace would never be firmly established without resolving the problem of Jerusalem or until Begin would say that he was in favor of withdrawing from Jerusalem. If so, why was he evacuating the Sinai for no purpose?

We made sure that this question made it to the top of the news. One of the means we used to widely broadcast this question was through the people holed up in the bunker who threatened to end their lives. We had them send a telegram from their bunker with the Rebbe's question and that's how it was talked about in the media again and again.

Those who were with you remember that on Yud-Alef Nissan, during the program with the children, you brought simcha to the children in a special way.

We held a Tzivos Hashem rally. In light of the tense situation, we tried to lighten things up. I did a somersault. Journalists asked me afterwards about it and I told them that as I stood on my head I saw the world right-side-up ...

We tried to give a spirit of hope and faith to the settlers. It was painful to see how few of the original settlers were left. The city was practically deserted of inhabitants and most of the people that were there had come to lend moral support. There is no doubt that if there had been more people, the situation would have been completely different.

R' Yaakov Lenchner: I went to Yamit for Yud-Alef Nissan. On the way I saw, to my surprise, the van belonging to the Chabad school of Kiryat Gat. Afterwards I found out that R' Wolpo had gone to Yamit to run a children's rally on Yud-Alef Nissan. The rally took place at the sports center. I'll never forget the great joy R' Wolpo brought to the children.

Later on, R' Wolpo gave a shiur in the yeshiva of Yamit on a sicha of the Rebbe on the topic of all Geula being a continuation of the Geula from Egypt. I was a young bachur at the time but till this day I remember how everybody was greatly impressed.

**The army closed off the city.
How did you manage to get in?**

We would travel until Kfar Maimon and from there we were led via dirt roads by special trackers and former military men who knew the terrain. Every trip was an adventure. We usually traveled via Gaza. I remember that one time our car got a flat tire in Gaza. The driver got out to fix the tire and in the meantime, I reviewed the maamer, “Pada V’Shalom Nafshi” of the Rebbe.

One of the drivers who took R’ Wolpo to Yamit was R’ Gershon Levin, today dean of the network of preschools in Kiryat Gat:

Till today I remember and “live” the special experience of the trip to Yamit. We would gather in Gaza and wait for a group of cars and then we left Gaza for Yamit without lights. Every convoy had a leader who knew all the side roads and knew how to circumvent all the IDF blockades. We entered Yamit several times even when it was completely closed off.

R’ Yaakov Lenchner went to Yamit two times where his sister

lived (she later moved to Neve Dekalim which the army also destroyed). At that time R’ Lenchner was a Tamim in Tomchei T’mimim in Kfar Chabad:

Before Pesach I went to Yamit to bring my sister utensils for Pesach. Yamit was under siege and we had to get through. We arranged convoys in the dark of night that went off the beaten track. We would unwind the fences and after the car went through, we would twist them back together.

Col. Motti Yogav (Res.) started his activities for the Chevel in Kislev 5742. His job was to coordinate the activities between Chadera and Gadera:

We arranged parlor meetings for people of all backgrounds. We gave lectures in schools and produced various flyers and information opposing the withdrawal.

My wife and I and our two little children went to Yamit for Pesach.

We took

an empty three room apartment. In each room lived a different family. In the first room was the Moaz family, in the second room was Adi Mintz, in the living room lived a 55 year old man, a kibbutznik, who came alone and then there was us.

We bought new utensils for Pesach from an Arab who came from El-Arish and we prepared for the holiday in a city that was a ghost town.

On Shvii shel Pesach 5742 a public Seudas Moshiach was arranged which was attended by most of the people in Yamit. This seuda gave much strength to the settlers and fighters for Chevel Yamit.

Below: Rabbi Sholom Dovber Wolpo standing on the roof of the bunker on the eve of the withdrawal from Yamit



Colonel Motti Yogav, who lived in Yamit in the latter half of the year before the withdrawal, could not forget that Seudas Moshiach, which was held only a week before the expulsion and destruction:

In the middle of Pesach some people who had come to Yamit for Pesach came to me and said they could not stay for Shvii shel Pesach because they had to make a Seudas Moshiach. They also explained the significance of this event. At that time, every person who remained there, counted. I said to them, "What's the problem? We'll have a Seudas Moshiach here, with lots of people."

I took responsibility for arranging it. We advertised the seuda in Yamit's newsletter (yes, there was something like that in Yamit). The central clubhouse of Yamit was readied for this event. The Lubavitchers arranged the spiritual end of things like the drinking of the cups of wine and the niggunim and yearning for Geula.

Dear Diary: A Twelve-Year Old Girl Remembers

Tal Bracha, a bas mitzvah girl, wrote the following entry in her diary about the Seudas Moshiach which obviously had made a great impact on her:

The week of Pesach was packed with experiences but the last day was especially nice. "Shvii shel Pesach" is the day that the Sea split. Jewish communities have the custom to sing the Song of the Sea on this night. Since we were so close to the sea and because of the special atmosphere, we experienced the Shira in a unique way.

After the Yom Tov meal, at nearly midnight, my father suggested to Yair and me to join him and we were happy to do so. We went to the beach, men,

women, and young people. The walk to the sea was quiet. The light of the moon gave us a little illumination and thousands of stars sparkled in the sky. A tall boy led the group holding aloft a Lucas lamp. I imagined that this is how Moshe Rabbeinu looked with a pillar of fire above him.

When we got there, we stood facing the sea. The smell of salt was pungent. The white foam of the sea glowed in the darkness and in the background the sound of the breaking waves could be heard. I felt as though I was going back in time 3000 years and standing with the Jewish people who had left Egypt: in front of us was the sea, and behind us – the Egyptians. We did not know from whence salvation would come.

I thought how the scene resembled our own situation. Before us – the government of Israel threatened to expel us. Behind us – the Egyptians pressured Israel to give them the Sinai. As for us – what would become of us?

As we all sang the Shiras HaYam I looked at the sea and listened to the waves and in my heart I prayed, "G-d, make something happen! Just as You split the sea for our ancestors when they left Egypt, so too, tear up the terrible decree about the withdrawal from Sinai."

Sounds of song and dancing interrupted my thoughts. The large crowd turned into a large circle of dancers and the singing could be heard from a distance.

I stood on the side and saw Rabbi Yisroel Ariel, the rav of Yamit, being hoisted upon the shoulders of a husky young man. The rav spurred on the crowd of dancers as he sang from the Musaf of the Shalosh Regalim, "Build Your house as in former times and establish Your Mikdash

in its place ... and return the Kohanim to their service and the Levites to their chanting and song ... and return Israel to their dwelling places."

Then the rabbi improvised, and to the applause of the crowd he said, "And return Israel to Chatzar Adar and return Israel to Talmei Yosef."

Most of the yishuvim had been evacuated already. Chatzar Adar had been evacuated at the beginning of Adar, Talmei Yosef after Purim. There were battles in these two settlements against the withdrawal. Yamit remained but who knew for how long?

The joy of the dancers made us temporarily forget the answer to that question.

The next day, in the afternoon, Yair my brother suggested that I join him for the Seudas Moshiach. What's that? I asked him as we walked together.

It's the Chabadnikim! Don't you know them?

Then he explained to me how the Chabadnikim are everywhere. The Lubavitcher Rebbe enlisted them in his movement. They have put up signs all over the country, "the Committee to Prevent the Withdrawal from Sinai." Likewise, they volunteered to come, to help, to bring joy, and to check mezuzos. Chabad Chassidim have a seuda at the end of the holiday with emuna that this is the time for the Goel to come.

When we got there, we saw a large crowd sitting around long tables covered with white tablecloths on which were matzos and bottles of wine.

See that rabbi? Yair pointed towards an old man whose white beard framed his face. I recognized him as Rabbi Moshe Segal from the Jewish quarter of Yerushalayim.

You know, whispered Yair,



נה"ל משלים הריסת ימית

ים א' מסתיימות 15 שנות שלטון ישראל בסיני • בגין ישדר לאומה • שרון: המצרים היו מעוניינים בהריסת ימית

בפשי' הדחפורים: מהלומות אתרונות על ימית



The newspapers report the final moments of Yamit. The headline says, "The IDF completes the destruction of Yamit."

when he was young, he was imprisoned by the British for blowing the shofar at the Kosel on Yom Kippur.

We approached the tables. The Chabad Chassidim were singing niggunim and between tunes they said divrei Chassidus. I sat on the

side and tried to listen in.

A young bachur in Chassidic dress said: The Lubavitcher Rebbe says that we have something to learn from the generation of the Spies! Just like that time, the same is true now! The Spies said about the land, "it is a land which

consumes its inhabitants." The Spies said, "the nation that dwells in the land is mighty" and "it is stronger than us [Him]." The Spies preferred remaining in the desert than endangering themselves by entering the land!

The bachur sitting next to him added: Today too, some Jews say that we need "Peace Now." They say we should give the Arabs all the land they want because they are stronger than us ... Just as the Spies back then brought tragedy upon the Jewish people, so too today, unfortunately ...

We cannot make rational calculations, interjected another bachur. We have to do as it says in our holy Torah! We cannot give an inch of Eretz Yisroel away!

"L'chaim, l'chaim!" called out those sitting near him, and they poured wine into the cups. They began singing a Chassidic niggun and I went to the women's section.

"Do you know what the Rebbe said about Sadat?" This was asked by a woman wearing a wig. The women stopped talking and turned to her.

"He said after the agreement was signed: Who knows how long Sadat will retain his position. And, now you see, it was a prophecy! Within a short time he was assassinated.

Just a year ago, during a victory parade in Egypt, Sadat was killed. The Rebbe says that the only way to achieve real peace is not by conceding territory but by acting firmly with the non-Jews."

"Right!" said another woman who sat near her. The Rebbe also said that we would have only tzaros from this peace agreement. Autonomy for the Arabs would lead to a Palestinian state.

Another woman, who had been quiet up until now, said: "In the merit of the righteous women the



One night, someone burned the three cranes.

Jewish people were redeemed from Egypt and in their merit they will be redeemed in the future.” This is an auspicious time for Geula and with the strength of our emuna we will be saved.

Rabbi Yisroel Ariel, rav of Yamit, also wrote an interesting diary about that special Seudas Moshiach:

The yeshiva dining room was packed. Hundreds of people came to celebrate the end of Pesach with us. The menu surprised me: Matzos, wine, eggs, vegetables, and fruit. Jam produced by the factory in Yamit, made out of fruit from the region, oranges, tomatoes and cucumbers. The crowd was huge. I estimate between 300-400 people. Many of them stood.

At the main table sat teachers from our yeshiva and other yeshivos, rabbanim from various yishuvim, and in the center sat R’ Moshe Segal. I stood up to introduce him to the crowd.

According to Halacha there is no obligation to eat a third meal on Yom Tov but Shvii shel Pesach is different. The Baal Shem Tov ate a third meal on Shvii shel Pesach (Acharon Shel Pesach in the Diaspora) to express the idea that the holiday of Pesach does not end but is ongoing. The Geula process did not end but continues and therefore we don’t part from the holiday of Pesach. We draw it out as long as possible. Chassidim as well as others identify with this custom and this itself can draw us close to Geula ...

The one who leads us is one of the believers in Geula in our generation, R’ Moshe Segal, a Chabad Chassid, one of those who blew the shofar near the Kosel on Motzaei Yom Kippur. For this “crime” he was sentenced and imprisoned by the British. He was

one of the first settlers in the Old City of Yerushalayim who annulled his vow not to leave Yerushalayim and stayed here for the entire Pesach with his family. Just as he merited to make the shofar heard near the Kosel, may he merit to soon hear the sound of the shofar of Moshiach reverberating throughout our land and in Yamit too.

R’ Moshe Segal got up, poured a cup, and briefly explained the origin of this meal which Chabad Chassidim call “Seudas Moshiach.” The first day of Pesach is *isarusa d’l’eila* (arousal from above). Shvii shel Pesach is *isarusa d’l’tata* (arousal from below). On the first of Pesach we were carried by eagles’ wings and taken out of Egypt. On the seventh of Pesach we needed

Nachshon to jump into the sea so the sea would split. The people in Yamit are Nachshon, leading the camp. In his merit may we merit a Geula in our day too. Let us drink the first cup of the four cups of this meal.

He recited the bracha and hundreds of people responded with “amen.” R’ Moshe drank his cup.

L’chaim, l’chaim – to the life of Am Yisroel, to the life of Yamit! And the crowd burst into song, “V’Karev pizureinu mi’bein ha’goyim u’nefutzoseinu kanes mi’yarkesei aretz ...” and other songs. The enthusiasm grew from song to song and there were clapping of hands and tapping of feet. Then the elderly R’ Moshe got up. His white beard stood out among the many dark-haired people. The singing stopped. Let us drink the second cup!

L’chaim, to the life of Moshiach Tzidkeinu.

“L’chaim!” roared the crowd and the singing was louder than ever.

Motti Yogav summed up: I can’t forget the special atmosphere at that Seudas Moshiach. For me personally, it was very strengthening; a boost of emuna. The withdrawal was carried out a week later and in the final stages of the battle it definitely gave us lots of strength. I think that everyone who was there at the seuda remembers that special atmosphere.

R’ Yaakov Menachem Tzeiger, a Lubavitcher from Yerushalayim, took his family to Gush Katif. He was considered a fighter who did a lot behind the scenes to stop the withdrawal. For example, he broke open all the sealed doors in the houses in Yamit (after they had been welded closed by the army) so the new tenants who came to

AN ETERNAL INHERITANCE

The following is an excerpt from a letter the Rebbe wrote to the residents of Atzmona in Chevel Yamit on 15 Kislev 5741:

...This is all connected with firm, strong watchfulness and an upright stance for Shleimus HaAretz, our holy land. Hashem your G-d’s eyes are constantly upon it from the beginning of the year until the end of the year. Eretz Yisroel and its borders was given as an eternal inheritance to the eternal people by the eternal G-d, including all the territories necessary for its security – both physical and spiritual security – for they are one in the life of every Jewish man and woman and integral to the empowerment of the spiritual over the material.

stop the withdrawal would have a place to live.

“At that time I wasn’t yet a Lubavitcher but I remember the Chabad activities, which dominated the whole process. For a while we lived in Atzmona and I remember R’ Lipa Kurtzweil coming to my sukkah to do outreach. For a while I helped in establishing Chatzar Adar which was Boruch Marzel’s nucleus. After not acclimating to Atzmona we returned to Yerushalayim but then we returned to Yamit. We couldn’t stand and observe from the sidelines. For a while we lived in yishuv Talmei Yosef where we got a house and I was given the job of aesthetics coordinator, which meant overseeing all activities aimed at beautifying all of Chevel Yamit.

“I remember that they brought the Manofei Avi Company to uproot the bunkers. One night, some unknown people burned the three cranes. I was suspected of doing it and put in jail for two weeks. Then they extended my jail stay but in the end they had to release me for lack of evidence. However, they did not allow me to re-enter Chevel Yamit. They put me on trial and since I had no money for a lawyer, I represented myself. I told the judges that my wife and children were there but it didn’t help. I dared to tell the judges, ‘I am ready to meet you halfway. Until Pesach I am willing not to be in Chevel Yamit but from Pesach and on – the world can turn over, I will be there!’

“The judges conferred and finally told me, ‘If you stay there until Pesach, you can be there.’ They were sure it would be evacuated before Pesach.

“I asked the judge for this in writing and I received it. A few days before Pesach it was forbidden to enter Yamit and I was the only one able to freely enter the Chevel since I had the court’s permission. I still have that permit.”

On the day of the evacuation, 28 Nissan, were you in Yamit?

R’ Wolpo: Yes. I felt I had to be there on that bitter day when the government opened up the land before our enemies. At that time, they still did not understand the significance of the withdrawal. People thought it was a deserted piece of land, but now we see the consequences. The same person (Sharon) who destroyed all of Chevel Yamit is the one who destroyed all of Gush Katif.

R’ Yaakov Lenchner: After Pesach I returned to Yamit again. I remember not knowing what to do if they came to remove me, whether to go or fight. I heard from R’ Ariel that giving land to the goyim was like the prohibition of eating pig. This made me uncomfortable and put me in a dilemma. On the last day in Yamit, Rabbi Yaakov Katz, rosh yeshiva in Tomchei T’mimim, also came and I asked him what to do. He told me it was forbidden to leave willingly and to wait until they removed me forcibly. That is what I did.

I remember R’ Wolpo distributing his new book and as always, the eternal debate was about “is’chalta d’Geula.” There were the bulldozers, ready to demolish the houses and expel the Jews. I saw a father crying near the bunker where the young people who threatened to commit suicide were holed up. Above them hovered the helicopter with Rabbi Kahane who was brought in by the Security forces to convince his people not to kill themselves. R’ Wolpo was also standing near the bunker and then one person turned around and said accusingly at him, “There’s the rabbi who wrote in his book that this is not the is’chalta d’Geula ...” It was a tense scene and a sad picture that I’ll never forget.

Today, 27 years later, we have lived through another, worse expulsion. R’ Wolpo, Boruch Marzel, R’ Tzeiger, and Motti Yogav all said after Yamit and before the expulsion from Gush Katif: If tens of thousands of people had showed up, it would have been altogether different.

The expulsions won’t stop with Yamit and Gush Katif. The government plans on making more and parts of Eretz Yisroel Judenrein: Yehuda, Shomron, Yerushalayim, the Galil, the Golan. That which the Rebbe warned about, is happening. The Rebbe said this is a matter of pikuach nefesh. When the town is burning, you do what you can to save it, without asking questions.



FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT

By S. Malachi

Eldad Shiff is a competitive fighter who has won the World Cup twice in free-style fighting. After discovering Judaism, he directed his attention to the real struggle, the one in man's heart that takes place between two souls. Today Eldad continues to work in his chosen field, training himself and others, but above all else he fights in the army of the "soldiers of the house of Dovid," to bring the Geula.

At the public school in Ein Kerem, as unfortunately in many other schools, the rule is: Might is right! Whoever is stronger rules the roost; the weak are beaten.

As a sensitive child, Eldad Shiff suffered from daily taunts and beatings. At the age of fifteen he decided to study martial arts and within a short time the powerless boy turned into an outstanding student and fighter. He studied Tae Kwon Do, "krav maga" (the IDF system of hand-

to-hand combat) and Jujitsu, giving it all he had and viewing this training as his life's purpose.

DID YOU PUT ON TEFILLIN?

The one who ignited the first spark was an anonymous shliach of the Rebbe who suggested that he put on t'fillin in a mall. Eldad remembered this long-forgotten incident, years later, after he had become religious.

"Yehudi, did you put t'fillin on

today?" asked the Lubavitcher. This wasn't the first time that Eldad had heard this question and as always he excused himself and kept walking. But this time was different. The question reverberated in his head and gave him no peace. Eldad went back and put on t'fillin, without understanding why he did so. He was very moved by the experience and felt an actual tremor go through him.

This was the second time in his life that he had put on t'fillin. The first time was at his bar mitzvah. "Even then, I wasn't exactly shown what to do. They told me, if you want to do it, do it; if not, not."

THE ROAD TO THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

During his army service he met Orly who came from a traditional home. Although she wasn't religious she tried to influence Eldad to be traditional but was unsuccessful. Another incident he remembers from that time is when he showed up at the Schneller military camp on Shabbos in his car. It is next to the very religious Geula neighborhood.

"I got out of the car and a religious Jew confronted me and screamed, 'Shaaaaabbos!' To this day that scream echoes in my ears. There's no question that the shock I got from his screaming woke me up."

As soon as he was released from the army he went back to the world of competitive fighting and starting participating in competitions. At that time his life revolved around training, from morning till night. His motivation was glory, the desire for recognition.

At first he won the national



Eldad with students

CHANUKA MIRACLE 5763

On Chanuka 5763 Eldad flew with his cousin Yossi to another competition for the world title in Greece. That's when Yossi told him that he had committed to putting on t'fillin every day.

"I was shocked. I asked him – What's up with you? Isn't this going overboard? He suggested that I put t'fillin on too and I brushed him off."

Nevertheless, a seed had been planted. The competition was on one of the days of Chanuka. Eldad got up early. His adrenaline levels weren't letting him sleep and he knew that it wouldn't allow him to fight as well as he should.

Tae Kwon Do competition and from there he went to various international competitions. He won the European cup twice in a row. Along with his personal training he started teaching martial arts to students young and old and was very successful at it.

As he advanced professionally, his personal life advanced too. Eldad and Orly decided to get married but Orly insisted that the house have some Jewish flavor. She tried to pressure him to keep Shabbos and at a certain point even made it a condition for their marriage. At first, this coercion made Eldad want to keep his distance from religion but he slowly changed his mind.

They were three cousins who trained together in martial arts: Tzachi, Yossi and Eldad. When Tzachi's grandmother died, he began searching for meaning in life which soon led him to becoming a baal t'shuva.

Yossi followed him by starting to attend shiurim. They naturally had an influence on Eldad. Along with strengthening his spiritual side, Eldad continued his career in competitive combat. He took part in the world championship (Pan-karate-on) and won first

place in the heavy-weight freestyle category.



Anybody involved in competitive sports knows that getting too excited before the battle diminishes your abilities by up to thirty percent. Sometimes, by the time the competitor manages to settle himself down he has lost the battle.

Eldad took out the t'fillin and put the black boxes on his head and arm. After reading from the siddur he spoke directly to Hashem and said, "If You allow me to get into the ring and fight without being over-excited, so that I am as successful in the competition as I am when I train, I will go to shiurim and... (I made other conditions)."

Eldad fought and it was easy and quick without any emotional interference. He won the world cup for the second time.

KEEPS HIS PROMISE

Eldad began going to shiurim and along with his cousins he listened to a yeshiva bachur named Moshe who gave them some of the time. The results were soon apparent as along with preparing for the wedding, Eldad committed more and more to mitzva observance.

Not everybody was happy with this change. Eldad's parents found it hard to make peace with the fact that their son was becoming religious and they considered Orly responsible. As a result, they refused to make their son a "Shabbat Chatan," which turned out to be a big favor for Eldad because it enabled him to discover the Rebbe. Orly's sister, who lived in Kfar Yona and was a mekureves of a Chabad house, suggested that he come to Kfar Yona where the Chabad rabbi would make him a Shabbat Chatan.

Eldad went with his family to the Chabad house which is located in the center of the business

district and had a very special Shabbat Chatan:

"At the farbrengen, Rabbi Schmerling gave me lots of l'chaim and my tough exterior started to melt... My connection to Chabad had begun."

WHY CHABAD?

The young couple moved to Mevaseret Tziyon which is near Yerushalayim and the moshav

After reading from the siddur he spoke directly to Hashem and said, "If You allow me to get into the ring and fight without being over-excited, so that I am as successful in the competition as I am when I train, I will go to shiurim and more.

where Eldad was born. They kept in touch with the shluchim in Kfar Yona. Problems began when those around him found it hard to accept his transformation into a Chassid.

"They said to me, why davka Chabad? They believe that their Rebbe is Moshiach."

But Eldad, having seen the light, overcame all the obstacles and continued on his chosen path. The changes taking place inside

him slowly bubbled to the surface; a kippa, tzitzis, a beard and finally a hat, suit and sirtuk. Behind every external change there was an epic internal battle, which included many fears and concerns.

Friends, acquaintances and students were shocked by the changes. As hard as it was for Eldad, it was much harder for his students. With patience and good cheer, Eldad proved to all of them that a good Chassid can also be a delightful Jew.

"Today, even those who opposed me and interfered, at first, have joined in."

Moshe, the bachur from whom Eldad learned at the beginning and who strongly opposed his involvement with Chabad, is learning Chassidus these days with Eldad. Today he is a rav in a Sefardic-Litvish yeshiva and he tells the talmidim sichos and thoughts from the Rebbe though for now, he doesn't cite a source.

THE FACE OF MOSHIACH

Yossi, the cousin who became religious though not Chabad, also found it hard to accept the belief in the Rebbe as Moshiach and he and Eldad had some stormy debates. One day that all changed.

"Yossi came to me and said, 'I had a dream.' I said, 'That's nice.' He continued, 'I dreamt about Moshiach.' I said to him, 'That's even nicer.' He said, 'I saw his face.' I said, 'That's really special. Who was it?' And then he dropped the bomb. 'It was the Lubavitcher Rebbe.' From then on, his entire attitude towards Chassidus changed."

R' Schmerling convinced Eldad to fly to the Rebbe and since then he joins the shluchim of Kfar Yona every year when they fly for the Kinus HaShluchim.

When you ask Eldad how it was, he answers with an analogy: Can a young couple who has a

child explain to a couple who did not yet have a child what it's like? It's impossible to describe what it's like to be with the Rebbe. You have to be there!

When he tells about the flight he recalls how enjoyable it was to spend hours with R' Levi Solomon, one of the shluchim from Kfar Yona.

"Whenever we flew to the Rebbe, R' Levi gave me hours of time. He sat with me, taught me, explained, and told stories. In more recent years I sit with other people in order to explain things to them..."

PUBLICIZING TO EVERYBODY IN THE GENERATION

As soon as he moved to the yishuv after he married, Eldad arranged a *Tanya* shiur in his house. R' Elozor Kenig (today in Moscow) came to give the shiur and Eldad would urge his friends to come.

"I wanted to tell everybody about Chassidus and about Judaism. When you are exposed to something so amazing, you try to influence everyone. You have something that is so sweet and

you have these people you love so much – wouldn't you give them some of it?"

At first Eldad's approach was heavy on the *oros* but the people he spoke to were not *keilim* for the message.

"I told them: there is only the Rebbe and the rest is klipa, but that did not go over well."

One of his students decided to have a Reform bar mitzva. Eldad, who couldn't bear the thought of it, was sharp about it and the student stopped coming to class.

Slowly, Eldad learned how to convey the message without breaking the keilim.

"The lesson I learned is that you have to guide the baal t'shuva because his inclination is to tell the world, but he doesn't know how to do it."

During this period he became close with the shliach of the moshav, R' Yitzchok Rabinowitz.

"When we sit and learn a maamer before davening, it is unlike anybody else I've ever learned with. Since I started learning with R' Rabinowitz, my learning has changed completely and the maamarim really 'settle' inside my head."

Every Shabbos, Eldad does

Mesibos Shabbos with the children of the moshav. When the shliach organizes a Lag B'Omer parade, Eldad works with him. He brings his students to events in a way that enables everybody to enjoy them for they appear on stage to the delight of the audience. In addition, Eldad arranges farbrengens and other events with R' Rabinowitz.

MARTIAL ARTS AND HAFATZA

Eldad's profession provides him with plenty of opportunities to spread Judaism. As a famous champion, he is always getting new students. When they see his beard they are taken aback but as time goes by, the students get to know their bearded instructor and they discover that the truth about chareidim is not as black as they thought.

"The fact that they see a chareidi up close can have a far greater effect than a shiur. One time, I had to travel with a student to a training session and I didn't have a car. We went by public transportation and behind us sat a young soldier next to the bag with our equipment. I said to him – you can lean on it, it's just boxing gloves etc. He didn't believe me until I showed him and he ended up training with me."

Over the years, Eldad learned how to combine the Jewish side of things in his lessons in a way that is readily accepted. On holidays, for example, everybody is willing to hear something about the holiday. So his training facility has become a sort of Chabad house. On Chanuka they light a public menorah with students and their parents. Each student gets two half shekels as Chanuka gelt and Eldad will suggest that they put one in a pushka. For Rosh HaShana he gives out apple and



Eldad with R' Levi Yitzchok Solomon in 770

honey, and so on for the other holidays.

Most parents are happy that their child is hearing a bit about tradition but there are other reactions too.

"I once explained to a boy who punched another kid about Ahavas Yisroel. The next day, his mother angrily approached me and said: Why are you teaching the children Torah? I told her: I am not just a physical trainer. I have to train his psyche too. When I tell him not to hit, I also have to tell him why he can't hit. I can't hide what I know from him and invent other reasons. I'm just telling him about our heritage.

"Another mother said to me: I am not pleased that you tell my son divrei Torah but he's happy so what can I do..."

Between punches and kicks, Eldad teaches his students his fighting philosophy which draws parallels between the world of physical fighting and the spiritual. He takes the ideas from *Tanya*:

"If you see that the other side is putting in more effort, it's probably because he's about to lose" - "Don't be fazed by difficulties in the war with the Evil Inclination."

"You have to fight energetically; if you're happy and

***"His mother
angrily approached
me and said: Why
are you teaching
the children
Torah? I told her:
I am not just a
physical trainer. I
have to train his
psyche too."***

not lazy, you can win even a stronger opponent than you."
"Serve Hashem with joy."

"When you have a weak point in your fighting, you have to strengthen it. If you see that your kick with your left foot isn't good, you have to work on it" - "You have to fight precisely where it's hard for you."

NOT HIDING MOSHIACH

Eldad has discovered that there is plenty he can do with the older students. At first he would arrange

for a *Tanya* shiur after every training session. Some of his students include boys from chareidi families, the kind known as *shabab* (wayward youths), and they also got to hear a *Tanya* shiur.

It's hard to get the students to attend farbrengens on Chassidic special days but they all attend his birthday farbrengen. Because of one of these farbrengens, one of the students began davening with t'fillin and even keeps Shabbos along with his wife.

"I don't hide Moshiach. When I explain what the Rebbe says on the subject, people accept it. For example, in a shiur around Yud Shevat, I taught them the maamer Basi L'Gani 5711. I explained to them that we are the last generation of galus and the first of Geula. I explained that the Rebbe is the Nasi HaDor and the Moshiach of the Dor and they just accepted it."

WITHOUT CHASSIDUS THERE IS NO TORAH!

Two of those "at risk" yeshiva bachurim who trained with Eldad learned *Tanya* and attended one farbrengen. It didn't look as though it had any effect on them but Eldad continued as usual. The two boys kept up a friendly relationship with him even after they stopped training.

Last Sukkos they went to Eldad's house and spoke to him about this and that. Before they left they said a line that left him flabbergasted and showed him how far-reaching our influence can be:

"From our perspective, without Chassidus, there is no Torah," they said. "I know that there is no way to really serve Hashem without studying Chassidus," added one of them and then the other said, "It's obvious to me that

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Eldad Shiff grew up on a moshav near Yerushalayim to an irreligious family. From a young age he studied various forms of martial and competitive fighting and reached the level of Black Belt - Dan 4. He participated in competitions and won the World Cup twice in free-style fighting.

After discovering Judaism he directed his attention to the real struggle, the one in man's heart that takes place between two souls. Today Eldad continues to work in his chosen field, training himself and training others, but above all else he fights in the army of the "soldiers of the house of Dovid," to bring the Geula. He brings the light of Torah and Chassidus to acquaintances and students and proudly broadcasts the Besuras Ha'Geula of the Melech HaMoshiach: "Hinei zeh Moshiach ba."

in order to learn Nigleh I have to learn Chassidus.”

At a certain point, Eldad decided to change his approach:

“I saw that when I had a *Tanya* shiur I lost some of the students so I switched to saying a d’var Torah by heart at the end of every lesson.”

THANKS TO ONE TANYA SHIUR

One day Eldad was asked to give lessons in martial arts in a Litvishe yeshiva to boys who had not found their place in mainstream programs. After a few days though, he was told that the class was cancelled because “a workout room was opened in the

school and they couldn’t support both things.”

A short while later he heard from his cousin Yossi, who had gotten an offer to teach there, that his Lubavitcher appearance bothered the hanhala. But he quickly saw that he hadn’t gone there for nothing.

One of the boys in that school began taking private lessons with Eldad in a club in the Kastel neighborhood. While training, Eldad managed to convince him to attend one *Tanya* class.

“Two weeks ago, he called me to say hello and as we spoke he told me that he had transferred to a serious yeshiva and was learning well there. ‘You’ll be happy to hear why – it’s thanks to the *Tanya*

class you took me to. I wasn’t embarrassed to tell this to my rosh yeshiva either. I told him – Do you know why and from where I got the desire to learn? It’s thanks to one *Tanya* class I attended!’”

EVERY JEW IS A SHLIACH

The Rebbe says that every Jew is a shliach but for an ordinary Chassid it’s harder to remember this. A shliach knows this is his life’s work but a Chassid who works at other things has to constantly remember not to get overly involved in his work and to remember that his occupation is merely a means to carry out his shlichus.

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A CHASSID IN GOOD TIMES AND BAD

Prepared for publication by Avrohom Reinitz

R' Hillel Zaltzman continues describing his father, R' Avrohom a"h. * In this chapter he tells of a life of nonstop chesed, mesirus nefesh for chinuch and hiskashrus to the Rebbe.

My parents lived in Tcherpovitch for a number of years and my father was the shochet. He told us that around the city that was on the Siberian steppes, and there were many deer which he slaughtered to provide kosher meat to the Jews of the city.

Apparently, due to religious persecution they were forced to emigrate to Charkov in the Ukraine. In Charkov there was a relatively large community of religious Jews and also a community of Chabad Chassidim.

Upon first arriving there, my father ran a kosher restaurant that he opened. In 1931 a new law was passed which was called "passportization" which stated that every person from the age of 16 and up needed a new identity card which would serve as a residency permit. Since every such item needed a photograph, photography became the new popular profession. My father quickly learned photography and became a photographer. Many Lubavitchers had their picture taken with him

for this legal form as well as for personal photos. Many pictures that Lubavitchers have from their time in Charkov were taken by my father.

MIRACULOUSLY SAVED FROM THE ARMY

In the summer of 1941, Germany invaded Russia in an enormous campaign that was called Barbarossa. A general draft was announced and my father got his draft notice. It was hard to know what to do. On the one hand, most of the soldiers sent to the front were killed. On the other hand, if you avoided the draft during wartime, you were sentenced to death.

My father remembered a story about the Alter Rebbe that when they came to arrest him, he fled and hid for a short while and then went with the soldiers who came to arrest him. The Alter Rebbe explained that this is what Yaakov Avinu did when he fled from Eisav his brother. First he hid in the beis

midrash of Shem and only then did he go on his way. My father decided to remain at home and to go to the draft office one hour later than the time he had been told to go.

When he left the house, we children were in the yard. My father kissed us and cried a lot. We did not understand and we asked him where he was going and why he was crying. He said tearfully that he hoped to return soon. In fact, a miracle occurred and when he got to the draft office they yelled, "Why are you late? They were all sent to the front already? Next time, come at the time that we tell you!"

My father joyfully returned home and thus he was saved from nearly certain death.

In the meantime, the Germans quickly advanced and by Tishrei 5702 they were very close to conquering Charkov. On the radio they reported about the atrocities the Germans had perpetrated against Jewish civilians in conquered lands and encouraged the Jews to leave Charkov for safer areas.

The Jews, who had gotten used to not believing Soviet propaganda, were inclined to think that these reports were not true. Many Jews, my father included, remembered the Germans who came to their city after World War I who treated Jews with respect

and propriety.

In the meantime, letters began to arrive which described German cruelty and nearly all the Jews decided to flee. Most Lubavitcher Chassidim traveled to Tashkent or Samarkand which were far from the battlefields and where the winter is much milder and shorter. For Anash there was another reason to travel to those cities in particular. They knew that in those cities were large Jewish communities of Bucharian Jews who were familiar with Chabad Chassidim thanks to R' Simcha Gorodetzky who was sent by the Rebbe Rayatz to Samarkand twenty years before.

Our family was one of the last to leave. The train tracks were in bad shape because of the nonstop bombing of the German air force, and the freight train we traveled on moved slowly. It was an open miracle that we were able to travel the entire way without the Germans managing to hit the train.

We arrived in Samarkand and we joined – as did the other Chabad Chassidim – the Bucharian community which was comprised of religious and traditionally observant Jews. They were centered in the old city. Mostly Ashkenazim lived in the new city and they weren't observant.

Meeting the Jews of Samarkand reminds me of the sicha of the Rebbe about the tremendous power of Torah which is the glue that unites all the Jewish people. Jews scattered over the globe do not have a common language, a common culture, or a similar look. There is just one thing that unites us all: the holy Torah.

When we got to Samarkand, at first we stayed away from the local Jews for in their dress and appearance they looked like Uzbeks. Their language was Tajik and their culture was completely



Avrohom Zaltzman and his camera

different than the culture we came from. However, when we went to their shul and saw the sifrei Torah, the t'fillos, and the Torah study – all barriers fell away.

We felt like one nation.

We spent the Yomim Nora'im in Samarkand. Since my father was good at singing and he had a very emotion-filled voice, Anash asked him to be the chazan. In my childhood memories I have a sweet memory from when I was about three of my father standing in shul and preparing the davening for the Yomim Nora'im. As he delved into the meaning of the piyutim, he began to cry. I was taking an afternoon nap and when I woke up, I saw my father crying and I began to cry too until he calmed me down and explained that he was crying from emotion as he read the t'fillos of the Yomim Nora'im.

PARNASSA DIFFICULTIES

When we arrived in Samarkand, people were literally starving. Everybody looked for work to get some bread. Bread

was given in exchange for coupons that were rationed by the government. My mother tried to save her portion of bread and when we woke up at night because of our hunger, she would give us a small piece of bread so we could go back to sleep.

My mother got up early in the morning, at four, and took the coupons in order to stand in line for bread. Sometimes she returned empty-handed because certain "special" people took bread before the plain people and there was no more bread to be had. These were the war wounded, heroes who had returned from war with medals or women who came with babies; and then there were ruffians who pushed everybody aside. Many people, who were not privileged or ruffians, returned empty-handed.

We children walked the streets and looked for seeds to eat. One time, my brother Berel returned happily from school with a few hundred seeds he had found. One morning, when my mother went to stand on line for bread, Berel and Sarah looked for pieces of

dry bread in the kitchen and after not finding any, went outside to look for seeds. Suddenly, I heard the voice of a woman calling: Here's another seed!

I realized it was my mother and I turned around and ran towards her while asking plaintively: Did you get bread?

She answered in tears: No, Hilke, there was no bread for me.

That was the sorry state of many Lubavitchers when they first arrived in Tashkent and Samarkand.

My father kept looking for a source of parnasa until he became a photo salesman. He would travel to villages and towns around Samarkand where Uzbeks lived and offer them a special service: photo enlarging. He would take small pictures of their parents and relatives and enlarge them in the photo labs in Samarkand. It was a unique service and his customers were willing to pay nicely for it.

On one of his trips he entered the home of an Uzbek lawyer who was a prosecutor and asked whether he was interested in having pictures enlarged. Unfortunately for him, the lawyer decided to make trouble for my father. He asked to see receipts and official permits for his business. When my father could not provide them to his satisfaction, he called the police and said my father was working illegally.

The police took my father to jail where he spent four months including the Yomim Nora'im, Sukkos, and Simchas Torah. Afterwards, he told us that on Simchas Torah he told the goyim with him in the cell: Today is a holiday of rejoicing for the Jews and so I ask you to stand in a circle as I merrily dance. That is how he celebrated Simchas

***When we went to
their shul and saw
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Torah.

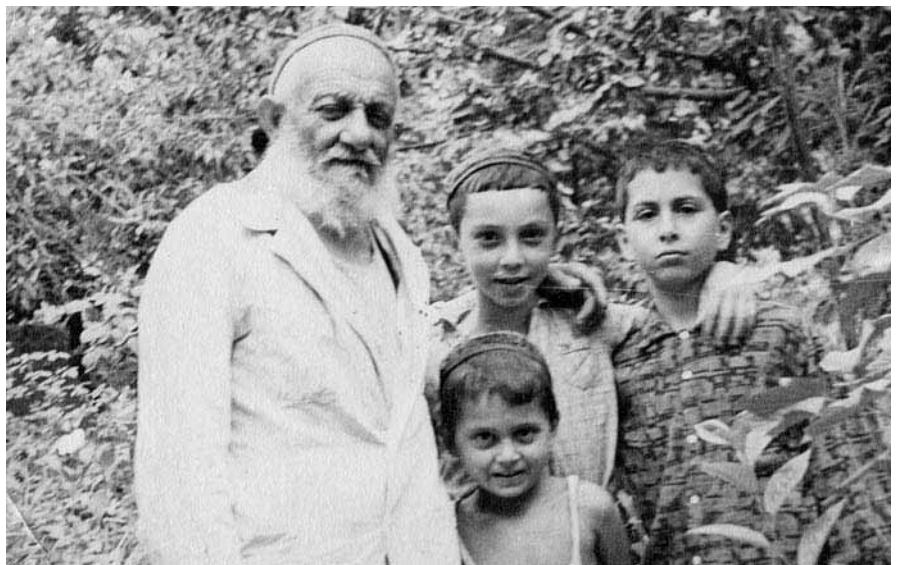
While he was in jail, the jailors cut his beard against his will. When he tried to oppose them they slapped him on the face and he lost two teeth. I remember that when he returned home with only part of a beard I didn't recognize him and was afraid of him.

After he left jail, my father couldn't continue with the photo business. He met his friend Asher Sasonkin (Batumer) who asked him: Avremel, what are you working at today? After my father told him that he didn't know what to do, Asher

suggested that he work at selling bread.

At first my father refused, saying he had no idea how to do it. However, Asher insisted and explained to my father how this business worked. First, you bribed the officials at the office so they would give you a permit to sell bread. Then you bribed the people at the government bakery to set aside bread for you so they wouldn't say they didn't have enough. After bribing everyone, you were able to get bread and sell it.

My father accepted his idea and after bribing the right people he hired a goy with a donkey and closed wagon and every morning he would go to the government factory, load up with loaves of bread on special shelves he had installed in his wagon, and sell the bread in the market. He was able to support our family for some time and we were saved from starvation for every night my father would come home with some loaves of bread. For us, this was an excellent example of mutual aid among Jews in those difficult times.



R' Avrohom Zaltzman with his grandchildren – Yosef Yitzchok Zaltzman, Yosef Yitzchok Mishulovin and Berke Mishulovin

BEING CAREFUL AT THE BLACK MARKET

In the Soviet Union of those days it was very hard to support a family on a legal salary and many citizens supplemented their income on the black market which was a criminal activity. My father, despite his difficult financial circumstances, kept his distance from the black market. He would say: It's enough that we are religious and Chabad Chassidim and already have a criminal record ... we don't need to add to it.

Many who were wary about having anything to do with the black market made small profits on the "gray" market. There is a big difference between a citizen whose business is dealing in foreign currency or gold and a citizen who works legally and occasionally crosses the legal line. An example of gray market dealing, which most citizens were involved in was the buying and selling of "obligations." These were government notes that entitled the holder to take part in a lottery that took place twice a year for large sums of money.

Citizens received these obligation notes as part of their salary. It was known that the government took 80% of the lottery and only 20% went to the citizens so the chances of winning were very slim. For this reason, all the poor workers, especially those in farming, were willing to sell the tickets for much less than they were worth. They preferred one bird in the hand than two in the bush.

Some people bought these obligations from the poor workers in large quantities. Some invested tens of thousands and some even invested millions. As in every business, there were also middlemen who bought for less from the workers and then sold

them at a higher price to the big dealers. Twice a year, when the lottery took place, these dealers sat and checked their papers to see how much they won. The big dealers held large amounts of these notes and the entire family was drafted to work. Those who bought more of these would usually win much larger amounts.

This business wasn't legal and whoever was caught could be sent to jail for many years. One time, a Jew by the name of Max came to my father. He wasn't religious but he hung around our community in Samarkand during the war. He suggested that my father buy these obligations and in order to convince him, he named Lubavitchers who had bought from him. In the end, my father bought some.

That night my father was so worried he couldn't sleep. He was afraid that just as Max had named the people who had bought them he would include my father's name in the list of Anash who had bought from him and who knew what that could lead to? In the morning he went to the Polish agent and told him that he was afraid to be involved and he wanted to sell back what he bought and he should know that he had no more of them. He was so eager to get rid of the obligations that he was willing to sell it all at half price just so he would know that he had no more and could sleep at night.

UNLIMITED CHESD

My father was known as a man of chesed. During the war the economy was terrible and Erev Pesach we had no matzos or other Pesach foods. In order to make Pesach we needed 3000 rubles but the situation was so bad there was nobody from whom to borrow.

My mother was very worried

As he delved into the meaning of the piyutim, he began to cry. I saw my father crying and I began to cry too until he calmed me down and explained that he was crying from emotion as he read the t'fillos of the Yomim Nora'im.

and every day she asked my father where we would get money for Yom Tov. One day, my father said that he had found someone to lend him 3000 rubles and the next day, after davening, he would take the money.

The next day, my father returned after Shacharis empty-handed. My mother asked him: Nu, did you borrow money?

My father said that he did. My mother was happy and she said: Nu, baruch Hashem we will be able to buy what we need for Yom Tov. But then my father said: With Hashem's help it will be okay ...

My mother realized that something was amiss and she asked him directly: Do you have the money?

My father tried to avoid answering but in the end he had to say the truth, that he did not have the money. My mother asked: Was it stolen?

***That poor man is
one of ours and
yet we all passed
him by and
ignored him while
the only one who
responded to his
pleas was
Zaltzman the Jew!***

My father said: No. I borrowed 3000 rubles but on my way home I met someone who told me he has three children and no money for Yom Tov and I gave him the money.

My mother couldn't believe her ears. She tearfully said: Why did you give it all away? You couldn't give him half the money? What will we do now?

She burst into tears and my father tried to calm her and said: Bracha'le, don't cry. I will find someone else who will lend me money. Everybody knows me here and surely I will find a way to borrow money but that Jew I met is a stranger. No one knows him here and no one will lend him money. If I did not lend him the money, he and his family would die of hunger.

That was my father. He had more compassion on others than on himself. R' Moshe Nisselevitz told me that he remembers the following scene: My father went to some minyan in Samarkand and they told him they were collecting for an important matter and he was asked to contribute. My father put his hand in his pocket and took out all the money he had and without counting it, he gave it all to tz'daka. R' Moshe

was astonished by the simple manner in which my father gave all his money away.

My father excelled in his goodness and kindness even among gentiles. He would make a big Kiddush Hashem like in the case when he went to work and saw a gentile pauper at the entrance asking for charity who said he was starving. My father went and bought him a loaf of bread and a bottle of lemonade and gave him some rubles. The non-Jew with whom he worked saw this and afterwards said in amazement: See what a Jew is. That poor man is one of ours and yet we all passed him by and ignored him while the only one

who responded to his pleas was Zaltzman the Jew!

My father's good heart once got him in trouble when a fraud took advantage of his trust and ensnared him. What happened was, one day a Polish Jew came to him and told him that he was an expert in cream cakes. Since he was a stranger, without a penny in his pocket, he suggested that my father be his partner and start a bakery to make extra income.

My father borrowed money from his friends and the Pole bought the ingredients and made delicious cakes. The baking was done in our house and we children were the main beneficiaries of this new

R' YOM TOV EHRLICH AND JEWISH SAMARKAND

When my father went around to villages to take pictures, he met a Polish Jew who lived alone in an Uzbek town. When my father asked him what he was doing there alone, he said that his family had perished in Europe by the Germans and he had come there. My father told him about the big Jewish community in Samarkand and invited him to our house.

The man, who was R' Yom Tov Ehrlich, and always had a guitar and an accordion, came with him. He later became famous as a Jewish singer and chazan.

In Samarkand, R' Ehrlich supported himself by being a badchan at weddings of Anash. At first he sang songs about Uzbeks and their way of life which shocked him. At one wedding R' Yisroel Noach Blinitzky said to him: Yom Tov, is that all you found in Samarkand? What about the Jewish community?

R' Ehrlich accepted this and for the next wedding he composed a special song about Jewish Samarkand, about the minyanim and yeshivos, the Jewish communities and the special weddings.

R' Ehrlich left Russia in 1946 when Polish citizens were allowed to leave (Unlike most Lubavitcher Chassidim who had to pretend to be Polish citizens in order to get out of Russia, he was really a Polish citizen.) and after traveling about he ended up in America and settled in Williamsburg in the 60's. When the Iron Curtain opened a bit and Jews left Russia, he inquired about my father. When my father arrived in 1969, R' Ehrlich located him and they had a warm reunion.

Three years later, when I went to the Rebbe, I traveled to Williamsburg to meet R' Ehrlich. He remembered me as a little boy and was very happy to see me. He complained that his lot was to live in Williamsburg for if he were in a Chabad community, surely the Rebbe would have him use his talents to be mekarev Jews.

enterprise. In addition to the children who loved tasting the cake there were other problems. There was no place in the house to store the cakes and they remained on the tables. I remember that one time they baked beautiful cakes with a flower on them made out of red icing and they were left on the tables overnight. During the night a cat got in and licked off nearly every flower.

After a few weeks when the Pole had gained my father's trust, he told my father he had to buy a large quantity of merchandise and he needed a large sum of money. My father borrowed the money and gave it to him and the man disappeared with the cash. That was the end of the baking business.

THE GIRL IN THE CORRIDOR

One winter day in 1945, shortly before the end of the war, it was bitter cold, ten degrees below zero. Snow had fallen the day before and sparkled like heaps of crystal. That morning, I remember, my father returned from shul earlier than usual and told my mother that when he entered the hallway of the shul he saw a girl about nineteen years of age, sitting on the ground, crying and trembling from the cold. Her clothes were torn and dirty and she muttered: I have nothing ... Where will I go tonight ... I am starving ... have pity on me ...

Compassionate Jews who entered the shul gave her some kopecks and went in to daven. My father gave her five rubles and went inside but he was perturbed. He couldn't stand to see a Jewish girl in that state. He returned to the entranceway and asked her where she was from. The girl said that her entire family, her parents,



R' Avrohom Zaltzman with his grandson, Berke Mishulovin

her brothers and sisters, had perished in the Holocaust and she was sent to Samarkand.

My father hurried home and after telling my mother about this girl, he said they had to have mercy and rescue her. My mother got dressed immediately and rushed back to shul with my father, taking clothing with her for the girl and a warm coat. From the shul my mother took her to the bathhouse and two hours later she came home with the girl and announced that from that day on, this was her house.

The girl spoke Yiddish with a Polish accent and slowly learned Russian. She lived with us for half a year as a member of the family. She found a job and moved into an apartment that she rented.

After two years she came to my parents and said that she had been offered a shidduch with a Bucharian boy who was 26. He was nice-looking and had good middos but had a major handicap. Since she considered my parents as her parents, she wanted their advice. What was his handicap? He was blind from childhood. My parent didn't know what to tell

her. After inquiring about the boy and seeing that she really liked him, they agreed to the shidduch.

They got married and established a traditional Jewish home. He supported himself by asking for donations with his wife leading him. When I walked near him he recognized me by my walk and his wife also let him know that I was coming. I always gave him a nice donation. They had three healthy children and when people started making aliya from Samarkand, they also went to Eretz Yisroel.

MESIRAS NEFESH FOR CHINUCH

In the Soviet Union, as you know, it was very hard to live a Jewish life and it was nearly impossible to provide a Jewish chinuch. Although the mitzva of chinuch is rabbinic, Lubavitcher Chassidim were as particular about it as a biblical mitzva. As the Rebbe Rashab said, as quoted in the *HaYom Yom*, just as putting on t'fillin is an obligation on every Jew, so too every Jew must dedicate half an hour a day to thinking about chinuch.

It's hard, even impossible to judge those who did not stand up to the cruel communist government and sent their children to government schools. Some parents found it hard to withstand the test, saying that if their child was home 24 hours a day, it would adversely affect their health, physically and emotionally.

There were few who sent only for elementary school since they figured that they were stuck in Russia anyway and when the children grew up they would need to have a profession and would have to go to university. Some excused going to university by saying that students were exempt from the army for the duration of



R' Avrohom Zaltzman working in his garden

their studies and that saved them from a greater tzara, spiritually speaking. Everybody had their reasons.

At the same time though, we should acknowledge and give credit to those who tried in various ways and under constant danger to teach and raise their children in the way of Torah and mitzvos. These parents had to hide their children in the house and for many years they did not allow them to step foot outside so the neighbors wouldn't know that there were school-aged children living there who did not attend school.

When the secret got out and government officials came to see why the children were truant, the parents sent them to their relatives or friends in other cities. It was very difficult.

My father did all he could to avoid sending us to school. He managed to hide my brother Berel until he was past school age. He hid me for a long time but after a few years the government found out about me and I had to go to school. If I had refused to go, they would have removed me from my home and sent me to a Soviet orphanage where I was

likely to lose all of my Judaism. Having no choice, my father sent me to school but with an iron resolve not to send me on Shabbos. My father got a doctor's note which said I was a weak child and had to rest two days a week. Baruch Hashem, we successfully made it through this obstacle.

When my father would hear that someone was not withstanding the test and was sending his children to university and was taking pride in their son the doctor or engineer who was very successful, he would immediately say: What about his Judaism? He is saying how talented his son is but he is ignoring the fact that along with his material success there is a serious deterioration in his spiritual state. What about his Shabbos observance, t'fillin, kashrus? He was disgusted when he heard that a Jew had become a big engineer or the like.

My father never worried about how we would support ourselves if we did not go to university. He always said: "The one who gave life will give food." When my cousin, Yaakov Pil a"h came back from the war, some said he would be suited to teaching in a school or working at some intellectual job or another. My father was certain that he was better off opening a store, a less honorable occupation but one that would not affect his Jewish observance.

My father held strongly to his beliefs even in hard years. So for example, the years 1950-1953 were very difficult years, culminating in the Doctors' Plot. The situation was so dire that when my father bought new earthenware utensils for Pesach, my aunt Rosa excoriated him saying: These days we have to save money and buy canned goods and preserves in order to have what to eat on the long trip to Siberia ... That's how bad it was with people waiting for the moment that Stalin would order us off to Siberia.

I will never forget the terrible scene Erev Rosh HaShana 1952 or 1953. We young people were scared, of course, to go to shul and before my father left the house he looked up to heaven and choked with tears he prayed: Master of the world, what do I ask of you? All I want is for my sons to remain *erlicher Yidden*.

My father raised his hands up to heaven and said tearfully: Master of the world, if it was decreed that my sons go off the derech, I ask You to take me to You first so I don't see it.

My mother was horrified to hear this and she shouted, "How can you talk like that on Erev Rosh HaShana? Our children are *yerei'im v'shleimim*! Our children don't compromise on anything. Not a day passes without t'fillin and they never treat kashrus

or Shabbos lightly. Other people did not stand strong and their children went off, but with us, baruch Hashem, we are all *yerei'im v'shleimim!*"

My father was not pacified and he said, "True, but these are very hard times and who knows what tomorrow will bring. I'm telling you – if they go off the *derech*, heaven forbid, I will not be able to continue living!"

That was the *mesirus nefesh* of a Chassid p'nimi in the Soviet Union of those days.

THE NEW HOUSE WITH THE PRIVATE YARD

At the end of the fifties Anash began moving to the new city. We bought a house together with my brother-in-law, Eliyahu Mishulovin. We were able to buy a large house with a huge yard, more than 1000 square meters with eighty fruit trees and bushes.

The large house, which was very unusual in urban Samarkand, had been the home of a Brigadier General in the Russian army. The

government had given him a large plot of land to build a house. After he built the house, he planted all the trees, divorced his wife, and married a younger woman. His former wife moved and lived in a government house near his yard. One of the windows of her house directly overlooked his large yard and she would torment the army officer and his young wife. He had no choice but to sell the house and that is how we came to buy it.

It was a pleasure to sit in the garden but the windows overlooking our yard bothered us too. On the one hand this was the first time we had a house and our own yard; on the other hand, every move we made was observed by the gentile neighbors. The children couldn't go out to the yard because the neighbors couldn't see that there were children who did not go to school. We couldn't go outside wearing *tzitzis* or Shabbos clothing because they were watching, etc. We had to hide out in our house.

My father raised his hands up to heaven and said tearfully: Master of the world, if it was decreed that my sons go off the derech, I ask You to take me to You first so I don't see it.

My father said that all the pleasures were not worthwhile and we had to do something to get out of their sight. We couldn't be in *galus* in our own yard. He finally came to an agreement with the neighbors – he gave them five meters of land extending the entire length of the yard and in exchange he got their agreement for a high wall that hid what went on in our yard. After that we were able to host groups of *bachurim* who learned in our yard on a regular basis.

A CLEVER FATHER-IN-LAW

My father was a clever and deep man. We sometimes saw how right he was only after time had passed. For example, when R' Mendel Futerfas hid with us, my father suspected one of the gentile neighbors of following us. My father was not relaxed in those days and he would tell us: Just as I left the house the neighbor decided to walk his dog. When I went to the market, he was there too and when he noticed me he bent over as though he was tying his shoelace.

We thought my father was exaggerating and even R' Mendel said he was imagining things, but my father insisted. After a while, the gentile stopped following us and only then did we realize how closely he had shadowed us in the previous months.

Before R' Mendel left Russia, my brother-in-law Eliyahu told him: Now that you're going, who will we consult with?

R' Mendel said: If you have a question, consult with your father-in-law. He is a clever Chassid and he understands things. Do you remember how we all thought he was imagining things when he thought the gentile neighbor was following us? After a while I found out that he was actually following us and we were all naïve while your father-in-law was absolutely right in his assessment.

"KINDERLACH, I KNOW ALREADY"

In Tamuz 1968 my mother had a heart attack. The doctors said it was a major heart attack and she had to go to the hospital. In Samarkand of those days the hospital did not have an ICU and the rooms did not even have air conditioning. It was very hot out and my mother had to lie there in a stifling room, attached to an IV line.

We stayed with her at her bedside throughout her hospital



R' Hillel and R' Berke Zaltzman at their father's gravesite

stay. My brother Berel, myself and our cousin Yaakov Pil took turns so she wouldn't be alone. Throughout that time we heard her say, "I have no complaints towards heaven. I had the z'chus of raising a family and bringing up frum children. I married them off and have seen grandchildren. True, it would be wonderful to live another ten or fifteen years but I have no complaints against G-d. Baruch Hashem, I have fulfilled my shlichus in this world."

Tuesday morning, 27 Tamuz, my mother felt it was her final moments. I was there with her and she asked me to call for my father immediately since she wanted to say goodbye. She said: We lived together for 43 years.

It was hard for me to call my father under these circumstances. I was afraid he wouldn't be able to handle the emotional burden. I called my brother Berel and explained the situation and he came immediately. In the meantime, she called me and said: Do you not understand what condition I am in?

She asked me to recite the Shma with her. I began to say it

word by word and after saying the word "va'ed" she passed away.

While my mother was in the hospital, my father would prepare cereal for her and bring it to the hospital. After she died, I stood there waiting with my brother for him to come so he wouldn't walk in and suddenly be confronted by the news. We kept going out to the hall to see if he had come.

We finally saw him walking heavily towards her room, empty handed. Before we could go over to him he called out in tears, "Kinderlach, I know already."

Later, my brother-in-law, Eliyahu Mishulovin said that my father had put the cereal on the fire in the morning, as he always did, and went to daven. Within a short time he suddenly returned home and shut the fire, saying: The cereal isn't needed and an *onen* is exempt from davening. My brother-in-law and his brother Dovid yelled at him for talking that way but he insisted that he knew.

My father wanted to make my mother's funeral as soon as possible, even if there was only a minyan, saying that the time

between the death and the burial was very hard for the deceased. In Samarkand of those days all the preparations for burial, including the tahara, was done in the home of the deceased. My father was in the house and he sobbed the entire time.

Then we suddenly didn't hear him and it was strangely quiet. We were very apprehensive. We began looking for him and couldn't find him. We finally found him outside among the fruit trees, leaning on a tree. We ran over to him and asked: What happened? Do you not feel well?

He said: Kinderlach, I am so broken that I never felt as broken as this; I remembered Yaakov Avinu, that when he met Yosef his heart was suffused with great love and he directed this enormous love towards Hashem as he read the Shma. I want to use these moments when my heart is broken. I am saying Vidui.

In accordance with my father's wishes, we held the funeral immediately. My mother was buried next to her sister, our aunt Chaya Aidel Pil who died a half year earlier. My mother had cared for her a lot through her illness. As my father requested, we connected the two gravestones with an additional stone on which it was written, "Those who were beloved and pleasant in their lifetime were not parted in their death."

HISKASHRUS AND KABBOLAS OL

At this time we were all preoccupied with leaving Russia. In the winter of 5728, about half a year after our mother's passing, my father and my sister and her family were able to leave Russia and they settled in Kfar Chabad. We remained in Samarkand but my sister would report to us about

WEDDING RING

We never saw my mother's wedding ring. We found out that on one of my father's trips to the Rebbe Rayatz, his financial situation was bad and he had no money to bring for *maamud* (money for the Rebbe's household). My father did not want to forego on *maamud* which was holy in his eyes and he discussed it with my mother.

My mother didn't hesitate. She offered to give her wedding ring to the Rebbe as *maamud*, and that is what he did.

life in Eretz Yisroel.

One day we were surprised to read in a letter that my father had left my sister's house in Kfar Chabad and moved to Kiryat Malachi. We did not understand what happened with my father who had lived in peace, all the years, with my sister's family. What made him leave for Kiryat Malachi? In the letter we wrote back to my sister we asked her what happened.

In her next letter my sister wrote what happened with this preface: Don't you know our father? One fine day he came and said: I have to pack my suitcases because I'm moving to Kiryat Malachi. My stunned sister asked him why he was suddenly leaving and he said that R' Dovid Raskin had come to shul that morning. He had come to Eretz Yisroel on shlichus from the Rebbe and he spoke in shul about the Rebbe starting a new neighborhood in Kiryat Malachi called Nachalas Har Chabad. He was opening a Kollel there and he wanted Russian Jews to move there.

"I immediately decided to move to Kiryat Malachi and I stopped at the post office to send the Rebbe a telegram with the good news."

My sister asked him how he would manage on his own without a woman to cook and do laundry for him. He said he would manage somehow; the main thing was giving the Rebbe nachas. We read the letter and understood the power of kabbalas ol and hiskashrus to the Rebbe. My father made no conditions; he did not ask questions about how it would work out. He simply packed and left.

The Rebbe did indeed take pleasure in my father's devotion and he blessed him that in the merit of this he would see his

sons come to him. A short while later we left Russia for Eretz Yisroel.

While in Nachalas Har Chabad, a fundraiser from B'nei Brak once went to his house and asked for a donation. My father asked him why he was in a place of new immigrants who had no money. The man said that he would be surprised to know that the immigrants gave more than the old-timers.

The two men got to talking and the collector asked my father why his house wasn't that orderly. My father told him of my mother's passing away. The man said he had a wonderful shidduch for him with a worthy woman in Lud. My father went to Lud to meet the woman and after seeing that they were suited to one another, they received the Rebbe's blessing and married.

My father lived happily with his second wife for thirteen years. She was involved in communal work in Nachala and everybody knew her and respected her. She greatly respected my father and took care of him. Of course we too, out of respect for my father, respected her very much. After my father passed away, she moved to a senior citizen home and we would go visit her. She was very happy with our visits and was proud to introduce us to her friends as her children.

RUNNING A KOLLEL

A short time after he arrived in Nachala, the Rebbe appointed my father as director of the Kollel. We read about this in a letter that he sent to us in Samarkand. We wondered how someone who had been a businessman all his life could run a Kollel. By the way, we heard about the concept of a Kollel, for the first time, in this letter. He explained what it is and



R' Avrohom Zaltzman in the yard of his house in Nachalas Har Chabad



R' Avrohom Zaltzman listening to a broadcast of the Rebbe

wrote that he sat all day involved in Torah and avoda and this was his lot and where he put his energy.

Men who learned in the Kollel in those years told me that their best years of learning were the years that my father served as menahel. He looked out for their welfare and if it was cold, he bought a heater with his own money. He took care of every detail. Over the years many people went to Nachala who were very capable of serving as

menahel of the Kollel, but every time R' Efraim Wolf asked the Rebbe about this, the Rebbe did not agree to replace my father without his consent.

Most of the money he earned in the Kollel my father gave to the gemach fund that he started in my mother's memory. He and his wife lived off the reparations his wife got as a Holocaust survivor. If they lacked some money he would take some of his salary but most of the salary went to the gemach that served the members of the Kollel.

My father once wrote me that since he put all his money into the gemach, he didn't know what would happen after 120 years for he wanted to be buried on Mt. Olives but a plot cost \$3000 and he would not be leaving behind even one cent.

What could I tell him – that he shouldn't worry because we would pay for his burial? I didn't say anything. After some time he told me that he had asked the Rebbe whether to continue donating all his money to the gemach or to save some money for the plot. The Rebbe told him to give it to the gemach and blessed him with long life.

A LUBAVITCHER CHASSID

In 5743, when R' Mendel Wechter had to leave New York, the Rebbe advised him to settle in Eretz Yisroel. He found his rightful place in Nachalas Har Chabad in the Kollel that my father directed, and he became the Rosh Kollel. My father liked him so much that in his letter to the Rebbe he wrote that R' Mendel was truly a Chassid, yerei Shamayim and a lamdan.

I heard that when R' Mendel's father went to Nachalas Har Chabad to see his son, his son told him: If you want to see what a Lubavitcher Chassid is, look at R' Avrohom Zaltzman.

On the day he died, my father went to the Kollel after lunch and asked the men forgiveness if he had been too demanding about coming on time or if he yelled at them. R' Mendel, who heard him asking forgiveness of the young men was amazed by his humility. He didn't think for a minute that this was taking place before he passed away. That day, after the period of learning in the Kollel, R' Mendel asked my father to review

some responsa in the laws of issur and heter. He asked my father to give it back to him in a few days. To his surprise, my father returned it all to him that night at eight o'clock.

At nine o'clock my father did not feel well. An ambulance took him to the hospital but on the way his condition deteriorated and they had to call an intensive care mobile unit, in which he passed on.

Before he left the house he left a note on the table which said two words: Har HaZeisim. We fulfilled his request and he was buried on Mt. Olives on 11 Shevat 5740. When we had to put a gravestone on his grave, we were reminded about what he told us several times that he hated seeing numerous titles on gravestones because the deceased has to answer to each one of them. He said that on his gravestone he wanted it to say, "Here lies Avrohom Zaltzman who had the privilege of learning in Lubavitch." Of course, we fulfilled his request.

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FROM THE PARDES, WITH LOVE

*A compilation of stories about R' Yehuda Aryeh Kurant a"h, the Rebbe's shliach in Moshava Pardes Chana for 35 years. * Compiled from hundreds of stories collected by his son, R' Aharon Kurant.*

In Elul 5713 (1953), R' Kurant received the Rebbe's handwritten answer in a letter: **Regarding learning the vocations of mila and sh'chita – clarify the custom of Eretz Yisroel and the Holy City about this.**

Indeed, after clarifying that there was no problem, he became proficient in both these holy jobs and used them in his place of shlichus with great success. He used them to spread the Rebbe's holy inyanim. After every bris, even in irreligious families, he would register all the children in the family for a letter in the Torah Scroll of Jewish Children, and utilize the opportunity to encourage the family in others of the Rebbe's mitzvaim.

In Kislev 5735, R' Kurant received this answer from the Rebbe: **Surely you are participating in the five mitzvaim.** And the Rebbe added

in his handwriting: **As well as candle-lighting.**

THE NEAR FUTURE

In 5735, his expanding family outgrew their apartment in Pardes Chana. R' Yehuda sent a letter to the Rebbe asking whether it was time to return to Yerushalayim. The answer he received, dated 5 Av, said: **In response to your question, it is worthwhile to continue in the city you are in now (at least for the near future).**

R' Yehuda Aryeh told his family that since the Rebbe always spoke in terms of Moshiach being about to come, "the near future" had to mean until the coming of Moshiach. He enlarged the apartment and the family remained where they were. And he and his large family remained where they were and enlarged the apartment.

MESIRUS NEFESH WHICH HELPED

In the course of his work as the only mohel in the area, he was called to brissin in distant yishuvim. When necessary, he would spend all of Shabbos at a yishuv or kibbutz.

One year, he was called to a bris at yishuv Bat Shlomo on Rosh HaShana. Rosh HaShana fell on a Thursday that year, which meant he would have to remain there for the three consecutive days of Yom Tov and Shabbos. Despite the great inconvenience, he agreed to go and do the bris, as he did on countless comparably inconvenient occasions.

His family, who found it exceedingly hard to be without him for three days of Yom Tov and Shabbos, asked him, "Would they have called you on a weekday, too, or is it just when they need someone who is willing to stay with them for three days on a Yom Tov that they remember that you are a mohel?"

R' Kurant answered, "It's a mitzva to bring another Jew into the covenant of Avrohom Avinu a"h."

That year, they were all able to see the results of this mitzva. He wanted to travel to the Rebbe for Yom Kippur and Simchas Torah, but due to a massive strike at the airport which had prevented many people from traveling, it looked like he would have to change his plans. A friend from Pardes Chana came to his aid and signed whatever he needed and, despite the strike and the long lines, even accompanied him to the plane.

When he returned, he told his family that he had no doubt that it was only in the merit of his mesirus nefesh in performing that bris at Bat Shlomo that he had been able to travel to the Rebbe despite the strike.

NAME HIM YOSEF YITZCHOK

On 13 Adar, 5725 (1965), R'

Kurant received (in addition to a letter on the birth of his son) the following response: **Surely you will energetically search for students of Chabad schools in Morocco who are now in your area...in order to organize shiurim in Nigleh and Chassidus etc. for them.**

R' Yehuda followed this instruction and began to work, among other places, in the shul for Moroccan immigrants, holding shiurim and farbrengens there.

One of the participants in these shiurim asked for his bracha for himself and his wife, for they had not had any children yet. R' Yehuda told them to write to the Rebbe and

the couple received the Rebbe's bracha, with the stipulation that they name their child "Yosef Yitzchok."

The bracha was fulfilled and since then, this family pays for the annual Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen at the Chabad house.

AND A PLACE TO SLEEP

Among his activities in Pardes Chana, R' Kurant reached out to the bachurim learning in Medrashiyat Noam through shiurim and farbrengens in his home.

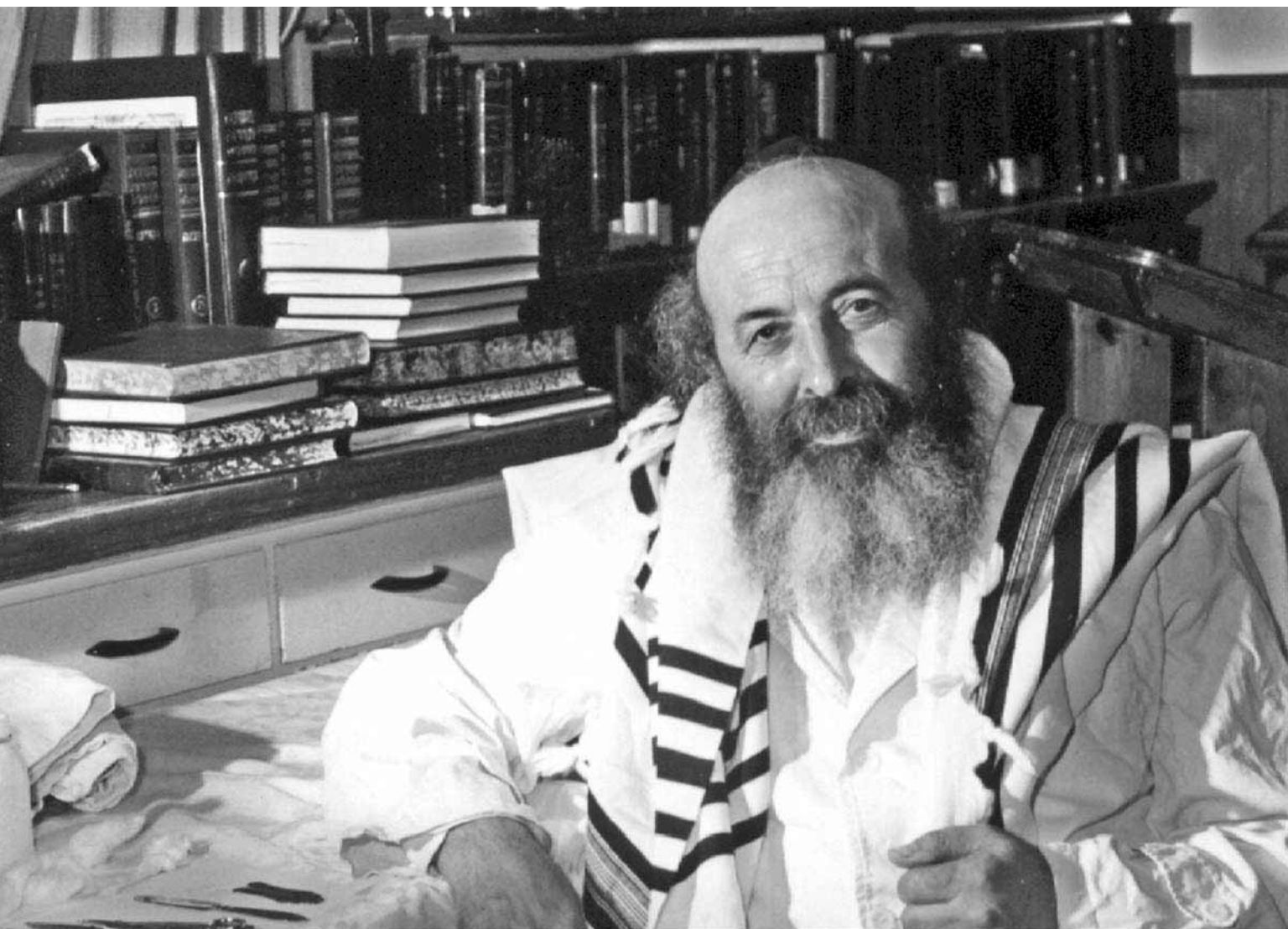
(Medrashiyat Noam was founded in Pardes Chana in Elul, 1944, and is considered the "mother" of yeshiva high schools, being the first to

combine Limudei Kodesh and l'havdil, secular studies.)

R' Nechemia Schmerling, one of the bachurim who R' Kurant was mekarev and today is a shliach in Kfar Yona, recalls:

"One year, about ten bachurim came to the Medrashiya on the Shabbos before Yud-Tes Kislev. They were supposed to sleep in the infirmary, but after the Shabbos meal and farbrengen in the Medrashiya, they discovered that the infirmary was locked.

"One of the talmidim of the Medrashiya reminded them that R' Kurant lived in the area. Though the entire moshava was asleep at that



Though the entire moshava was asleep at that late hour, they went to his house and knocked at the door... Only in the morning did they realize that he had given them his children's bedrooms.

late hour, they went to his house and knocked at the door. R' Kurant opened the door and welcomed them warmly. Within a few minutes he had arranged beds and mattresses for them and they went to sleep.

"Only in the morning did they realize that he had given them his children's bedrooms. They apologized, but instead he thanked them for the privilege of being able to host them and asked them to join him for the Shabbos meal."

NEW FACES

R' Michoel Katz relates:

One Shabbos Mevarchim, when I was learning in Toras Emes, the mashpia, R' Chaim Shaul Brook a"h, announced that T'hillim would start at 6:30. When R' Brook came to say T'hillim the next morning, he found the zal empty except for R' Yudel Kurant, who was saying T'hillim.

After the davening, the bachurim asked R' Brook to farbreng, but he refused, saying, "There is no reason to farbreng. If you don't say T'hillim, it's not Shabbos Mevarchim!" He finally consented to

farbreng only because R' Yudel was there on time and saying T'hillim.

In those years, he spread Chassidus throughout Yerushalayim and in the surrounding yishuvim by giving shiurim and other activities. He received this answer from the Rebbe: **Yehi ratzon that the merit of your involvement in spreading the wellsprings outward ... stand by you in everything, in what you need and in the fulfillment of your heart's requests for good. It is certainly unnecessary to explain at length to someone such as yourself the words of the Tana D'vei Eliyahu, that even if you see a naked person (meaning naked of Torah and mitzvos) and should cover him (in all this also) do not ignore your own flesh; regarding avoda with yourself; with yourself and within yourself.**

At that time, the Rebbe asked that the pictures of the bachurim learning in Toras Emes be sent to him. Three months later, they were surprised to receive a request from the Rebbe to send new pictures. Rabbi Yaakov Minsky, who was learning in Toras Emes at the time, relates that the bachurim speculated that this request was on account of R' Yudel. He had so devoted himself to the study of Nigleh and Chassidus since the previous picture was taken

that his face had changed and become more refined and he looked like a different person.

HE SHOULD ENLARGE HIS HOUSE

When his sister, Devorah Raizel a"h, went to the Rebbe for yechidus, the Rebbe asked her whether she was the sister of R' Yudel Kurant. When she said she was, the Rebbe spoke to her about him for over ten minutes.

First, said the Rebbe, you should encourage him to build and enlarge his apartment in Pardes Chana, and he shouldn't be afraid of a loan that is not linked to the rate of inflation. (It should be noted that he saw an open miracle in this regard. Not long afterwards, the Israeli liros were changed for new sh'kalim, and he was left with hardly any debt at all since the loan hadn't been linked).

JUDAISM WITH A SMILE

For 35 years of shlichus in Pardes Chana, R' Kurant was mekarev entire families to Judaism. His approach was friendly and with great love for every Jew.

Pardes Chana was not a religious community when he got there, and every Shabbos he would walk a long way to the shul. On his way, he would wish every Jew "Shabbat Shalom" with a warm smile.

The shul that he davened in had an avowed anti-religious neighbor, who would publicly desecrate the Shabbos in order to anger the worshipers at the shul. He went so far as to bring trained dogs to the shul's yard, and on another occasion, to go horseback riding there. Then he enlarged his yard onto the shul's property.

The other shul-goers wanted to file a case against him with the police for his despicable acts, but R' Yehuda asked them not to do

R' YEHUDA ARYEH KURANT A"H

R' Kurant was a shochet and mohel for decades in Pardes Chana and its environs. He ran gemach funds and aid for the needy. He ran a Chabad house in Pardes Chana.

He was modest, humble, and pleasant. He greeted everybody graciously. He was born in 1934, in Zhirtza, Poland, and passed away on 16 Adar, 5758 (1998).

anything to drive him away. He continued wishing him, "Shabbat Shalom" on his way in and out of shul.

After a while, the man stopped publicly desecrating the Shabbos. Then he stopped desecrating the Shabbos altogether. Eventually, he began attending shul and even brought his sons with him and encouraged other people to daven there.

During the Shiva for R' Kurant, he went every day to daven in his home. He said to R' Kurant's sons, "It is only thanks to your father's smiles and kiruv that I became religious."

After a few years, when they built a new shul on the site of the old one and named it for Rabbi Yehuda Aryeh Kurant, he agreed to have part of the enlarged shul extend into his yard.



Rabbi Kurant at a "general yechidus

CHABAD DOESN'T GET INVOLVED IN POLITICS

When there were elections for the Pardes Chana council, each

candidate hoped to advertise that R' Yehuda supported him. As a Lubavitcher Chassid and with his special personality, he was approved of by all. One of the candidates asked him who he would be voting for and R' Yehuda answered that he would vote for him. A few days later, another candidate came to his home and R' Yehuda gave him the same answer.

Word got out and the first candidate went back to him and asked, "How come you told me you would vote for me and then you told my rival the same thing?"

R' Yehuda replied, "I put two ballots in the box."

"But that cancels your vote!"

"That's not my business. I voted for both of you and you can work it out amongst yourselves."

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