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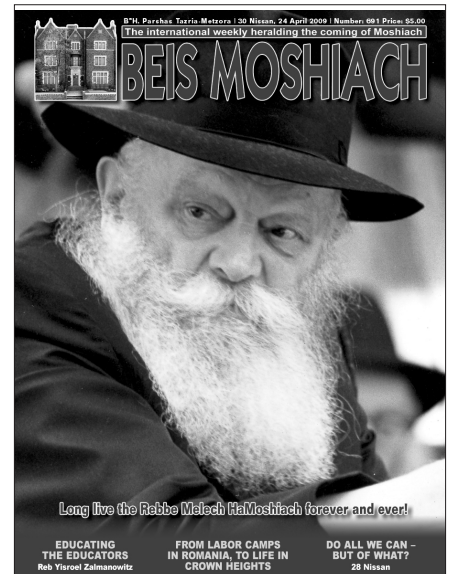
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EDUCATING THE EDUCATORS

Chinuch | Nosson Avrohom



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THE HIDDEN HOLINESS

Translated and adapted by Dovid Yisroel Ber Kaufmann

Tzara'as is an external blemish, a surface impurity that cannot be cured by one's own efforts. Hence, Moshiach is metaphorically called a metzora, one with tzara'as, for he will refine the "outermost edge" of the children of Israel. The tiny, out-of-the-way blemish we cannot reach on our own prevents the world from being a dwelling place for G-dliness. But Moshiach will do more than refine the negative; he will also reveal the positive. Tzara'as is the most extreme, most external manifestation of the attribute of Divine Judgment. It is the most physical form of the impulse to move inward and upward, to dissolve into G-dliness.

As mentioned previously, names signify the inner meaning of something. When two things share a name, we can expect some vital connection between them. This is true even if the name they share is a nickname or description, rather than their actual names. In a fascinating Talmudic passage, the rabbis propose a number of different names for Moshiach. While the suggested names often refer to the rabbi's teacher, each name also alludes to a particular characteristic of

Moshiach.

In one such passage, the Sages declare Moshiach will be called "the *metzora* of Beis Rebbe." A *metzora* is one stricken with *tzara'as*, a spiritual condition that manifests itself as a skin disease, a blemish on the outer surface of an object or person. This assertion is based on a prophecy by Isaiah. Once Moshiach is recognized, he says, the Jewish people will declare, "Indeed he bore our illnesses and our pains – he carried them, yet we accounted him as plagued, smitten by G-d and oppressed." The word "plagued" technically refers to the plague of *tzara'as*. Hence the Talmud identifies Moshiach as a *metzora*, one plagued.

What characteristics do a *metzora* and Moshiach have in common?

First, we need to understand the nature of *tzara'as*, the plague which afflicts a *metzora*. The Torah defines *tzara'as* as follows: "When a man will have a rising or scab in the skin of his flesh, or a bright spot and it becomes in the skin of his flesh the plague of *tzara'as*, then he shall be brought to Aaron the Kohen or one of his sons the Kohanim." The plague of *tzara'as* appears on the skin – the outermost part of the person. Equally significant, it says "when a man . . ." using the word "*adam*" for "man," rather than the more common "*ish*." The Torah uses several names for a human being, depending on the context. The name "*adam*" as a general designation refers to Israel, the Jewish people at their highest.

Accordingly, *tzara'as* affects only an individual who has perfected himself, a Jew who has all but completed his Divine service. At that, it touches only the outermost aspect,

the fringes, the most external or peripheral aspects of the person. Only the exterior edge needs refinement.

By and large, the Jewish people have already been purified through the long years of exile. Only the remnant, the outer layer remains unrefined. Moshiach has only to purify the external, the evil of the Jewish people that is only "skin-deep," so to speak. Therefore, he is called "metzora."

That Moshiach is called a *metzora* explains the length of the exile. The Jewish people, whose essence is holiness, has just about refined itself – and the world – through the Torah learned and mitzvos performed over the centuries. Still, there remain some peripheral imperfections or impurities. Although the *tzara'as* is only on the surface, its existence still renders the Jewish people – and the world – “impure” and incomplete. This is the task of Moshiach, to refine the “outermost edge” of the children of Israel. This also explains why Isaiah says Moshiach will bear “our illnesses and our pains,” that tiny, out-of-the-way blemish we cannot reach on our own. And that blemish prevents the world from being a dwelling place for G-dliness.

Still we may ask, what is the inner reason for associating the term *metzora* with Moshiach? At first glance, such an association is troubling, despite its metaphoric meaning. “Metzora” is a negative term, indicating one ritually impure and separated from the community. But the essence of Moshiach is Redemption – the rebuilding of the Temple and the ingathering of the exiles. Clearly, something of that essence must be reflected in the concept of *metzora*. Moshiach must be more than the one who purifies the transgressions of Israel; he must be the one who brings redemption. Within “*metzora*” must be more than refinement of the negative; there must be revelation of the positive.

In simple terms, *tzara'as* represents a concealment of G-dliness. *Tzara'as* is the most severe form of ritual impurity. Ritual impurity occurs when there is a concealment of the inner, Divine life force.

When the Torah outlines the laws of *tzara'as* – how to identify it, how to treat it, etc., the Kohen plays a pivotal role. An individual or object must be seen by a Kohen before being designated as having *tzara'as*. Once cured, the individual cannot rejoin the community, cannot be considered ritually pure and able to enter the Sanctuary, until after a Kohen-directed ceremony. The mere appearance of *tzara'as* does not make someone ritually impure. He must be declared so by the Kohen. Until then, he remains in a state of holiness. *Tzara'as* does not become meaningful until the Kohen recognizes it as such. Because of his spiritual nature, precisely a Kohen had to declare a person a *metzora*.

Aaron was the embodiment of kindness; he was a lover of peace, a pursuer of peace, and one who brought peace between a man and his neighbor and between a husband and wife. Kindness is the spiritual attribute primarily

associated with the Kohanim.

In Jewish mysticism, the opposite of kindness is judgment or force. *Tzara'as* is the most physical manifestation of this spiritual attribute, the extreme opposite of the Kohen.

Kindness by its nature moves outward and downward, from above to below. It is expansive. Judgment or force by its nature moves inward and upward. It is restrictive. Mystically, kindness is an outpouring of revelation. The Kohanim, through their service in the Temple and the priestly blessing, draw down a revelation of G-dliness.

But too much revelation can overwhelm and overpower. There must be a restraint of revelation, a limitation. This limitation is measured according to the recipient. It withholds an overwhelming outpouring of G-dliness, allowing the physical world to exist.

It is the impulse to move inward and upward – the attribute of Divine Judgment – that limits the impulse to move outward and downward – the attribute of Divine Kindness.

It also serves as a channel, so that G-dliness can descend into the physical. As creation becomes more physical, there has to be more concealment of the G-dliness that sustains it.

Once begun, however, the inner G-dliness can be so constrained that it descends to the level of *tzara'as*, a plague of impurity.

Tzara'as is a plague of the skin. It is the most extreme, most external manifestation of the attribute of Divine Judgment. It is the most

physical form of the impulse to move inward and upward.

The spiritual *tzara'as* in man is the plague of desire, a longing to leave the restrictions of a body, to cleave to G-dliness with complete self-nullification and never return to the physical world. This is an impurity, the opposite of holiness. For G-d does not desire expiration of the soul, but the service of “return.” The intent behind creation is that through Torah and mitzvos, G-dliness will be drawn into the world. The soul is to illuminate and be revealed within in a body.

In the physical world, that force may be so restricted and constrained as to appear negative. But it represents the potential for unbounded holiness. Thus Moshiach is called a *metzora*, for Moshiach will bring Redemption. Then the force of G-dliness will be fully and completely revealed within the physical. Then a holiness without boundaries or limitations will be revealed within the most mundane, material level.

(Based on Likkutei Sichos 37:33-36)

Moshiach must be more than the one who purifies the transgressions of Israel; he must be the one who brings redemption.

RETROACTIVE REDEMPTION

Translated and adapted by Dovid Yisroel Ber Kaufmann

The laws of negai'im, or plagues, are presented in two separate Torah readings. In Tazria, negai'im for a person are defined; in Metzora, the purification process of a person is described. Metzora also describes both the definition and the purification of negai'im for houses. Of all the possible impurities – obstructions to holiness – negai'im are the most severe. Nevertheless, the appearance of negai'im provides a unique opportunity for spiritual elevation – the chance to do t'shuva. The inner connection between the negai'im of houses and that of people is the retroactive redemption of t'shuva.

This week's Torah portion contains the laws of negai'im. Negai'im, translated as plagues or leprosy, actually are blemishes that appear on the skin, on clothes or on houses. These physical discolorations reveal a spiritual imperfection. The laws of negai'im apply only when the *Beis HaMikdash*, the Temple, is standing and the Kohanim are offering sacrifices. Though not applicable now, these laws of negai'im will become a

practical issue imminently, with the coming of Moshiach.

But, they must also have a current relevance. The inner, spiritual significance of any aspect of Torah remains eternally valid; this is true even when, for whatever reason, the physical expression of that significance is temporarily suspended. That we do not, for this brief moment, have a *Beis HaMikdash*, does not affect its value or importance. What was true before the destruction, and will be true after the rebuilding, must also be true now, during the exile and its last moments.

The laws of negai'im seem ordered in a peculiar manner. Last week's reading, *Tazria*, describes the appearance and dimensions of the negai'im, explaining which blemishes make a human being or clothing ritually impure. It also explains how to determine if the negai'im – the so-called plagues – are still active, that is, when the person may be purified. But the purification process isn't discussed until this week's reading, *Metzora*. On the other hand, this week's portion also discusses **all** the details of negai'im in houses.

Thus, the laws of negai'im are structured as follows: in *Tazria*, negai'im for a person; in *Tazria*, negai'im for clothing and the purification therefrom; in *Metzora*, purification of a person from negai'im; in *Metzora*, negai'im for houses and the purification therefrom.

The laws of the human being are divided between the two Torah readings and separated by the laws of clothing. Since the laws for houses follow a person's purification ritual,

we may conclude there is an inner connection between houses in general and the ritual purification of the person.

Now, the negai'im of houses have an unusual description: it says G-d Himself will place the negai'im on the houses. Two contradictory explanations are given for this: one is that the inhabitants hid their gold in the

walls; breaking down the houses with *negai'im* revealed the gold. The other is that the idolatry of the Canaanites was so foul, it penetrated their very houses. To remove the loathsome spirit of idolatry, the houses that had to be destroyed were marked, as it were, with *negai'im*.

Of course, not all the houses had *negai'im* and not all of them were destroyed. As there are various levels of impurity, so the degree to which it penetrates an object varies. In most cases, simple acts which took possession of the house, such as putting up a mezuzah, sufficed to remove the impurity and remnant of idolatry. But sometimes the spirit of abomination is so deep it cannot be elevated without destroying its "housing." And yet, the "treasures of gold" are located precisely there.

This concept applies to *negai'im* in general: of all the possible impurities – obstructions to holiness – *negai'im* – the so-called plagues or leprosy – are the most severe. Nevertheless, the appearance of *negai'im* provides a unique opportunity for spiritual elevation. They are an unusual occurrence with a special purpose. A person is afflicted with *negai'im* so that he will do *t'shuva*. When a Jew returns, removes the last vestige of his acts of impurity, he reveals the "treasure of gold" within his soul. A Baal *T'shuva* – one who has repented – stands higher than a complete *tzaddik*. Thus, it turns out that *negai'im* – the severest form of impurity – initiate the highest elevation.

We can apply this idea to our own times and situation: the length and severity of the current exile surely is the harshest and most severe the Jewish people have experienced. It follows that, as with the person and houses afflicted with *negai'im*, there is a treasure of gold, the highest spiritual and physical elevation, hidden within the adversity. The highest levels of holiness inherent in man and the world, originally concealed, can be revealed only through the process of rectification, of *t'shuva*.

This indicates the intimate and integral connection between *t'shuva* and Redemption. As soon as there is *t'shuva*, there is Redemption. Further, the Sages declare that *t'shuva* motivated by love transforms deliberate transgressions into meritorious acts. Obviously, in the days of Moshiach, all Israel will achieve this status.

Still, there is a problem, echoed in the structure of the Torah readings. We must distinguish between the individual and the object, between the one afflicted and the affliction itself, between the person and the *negai'im*. Last week's reading, *Tazria*, dealt with the *negai'im*, while this week's reading, *Metzora*, deals with the purification of man. So *T'shuva* purifies and elevates the individual, raising him to a level higher than the *tzaddik*. But, it seems, the deliberate transgressions remain transgressions. Things that are loathsome and impure remain so; the prohibited act remains forbidden.

We know from the prophets that the blemish and iniquity last only until the day when "death will be swallowed up forever," when Moshiach comes and the spirit of impurity will be removed forever. Still, we can anticipate the Redemption, foreshadow the coming of Moshiach, through a *t'shuva* so great that it transforms transgressions into merits. Not only is the individual elevated and purified, but the evil is nullified. Therefore, the essence of the transgression, the sinful act changes.

There is a remarkable implication to all this: every transgression contains within it an element of the permitted. Since *t'shuva* transforms, and *t'shuva* is a mitzva, there must be an aspect of the permitted and holy within the prohibited and sinful.

Obviously, there is nothing remarkable about a case where a practical reparation is possible. For example, if one does not tithe properly, that mistake or oversight is easily corrected.

However, an act that violates G-d's Will remains a violation of G-d's Will. One cannot deliberately transgress a commandment and expect *t'shuva* to rectify the situation. Indeed, one who says, "I will sin and repent" is not given the opportunity to repent. Therefore the sin, the deliberate transgression, has no element of the permitted. It should remain essentially evil.

And yet, *t'shuva* affects not only the person, but the transgression itself. Remarkably, it causes a retroactive redemption. It transforms past evil, turning deliberate, willful sins and desecration into actual merits. Other transformations are conditional, and so always possessed the possibility of change from one state to another. For instance, a sale may be reversed because of a change in circumstances or failure to meet a condition. In this case, the altered status existed in potential from the start. *T'shuva*, though, affects that which was not conditional, but at first was completely and irrevocably sinful.

A Jew can transform the past because he is in essence attached to G-d, who transcends the boundaries of time. A *t'shuva* from the depths of the heart calls forth that essence. The great love of a Jew for G-d places him beyond the confines of past, present and future. That which was can be transformed into that which should and will be.

In the natural order, man cannot purify himself from his *negai'im*, which is why the subject is divided between two portions. Purification comes through *t'shuva*. But the Jewish people, in a state of *t'shuva*, can break the walls of the houses, reveal the hidden treasures of G-dliness. By destroying the houses of idolatry, the previously concealed spiritual and material gold can be used to build a new house, the house of G-d, the Third *Beis HaMikdash*.

(Based on Likkutei Sichos 27:107-115)

DOING ALL THAT WE CAN – BUT OF WHAT?

By Nosson Avrohom

*Eighteen years have passed since the Rebbe delivered that monumental sicha: “The only thing I can do is give it over to you: Do all that you can – in a way of oros of tohu but in keilim of tikkun – to actually bring Moshiach Tzidkeinu immediately!” * We asked a number of activists, who are busy year round with hafatza, publishing, chinuch and hadracha in inyanei Geula and Moshiach and got their perspective on this subject.*



AN END TO CONFUSION

Rabbi Yosef Pizem, Menahel Talmud Torah Chabad, Kiryot

To my understanding, the thing which is still lacking is learning inyanei Moshiach and Geula. Here at the Talmud Torah (elementary school), inyanei Moshiach and Geula is part of the curriculum. There are lessons in class and a mark is given for it on the report card. In fourth grade, for example,

the boys learn the booklet I published, *HaDerech HaYeshara*, which has brief pieces on inyanei Moshiach and Geula as they are explained in the D’var Malchus, along with work for the student to do on every parsha.

In fifth grade they learn from the book *Besuras HaGeula*. In sixth grade, they learn from the book *Z’man HaGeula*, which has some of the Rebbe’s special sichos with the citations in the footnotes written out and certain sections emphasized. In seventh and eighth grade they learn from the book *Yemos HaMoshiach*.

The homework also gets the parents involved in living inyanei Geula on a daily basis. The children go home with booklets of questions and the parents learn with them and help them. To the children there is no fooling around – what the Rebbe says is reality.

For a few years now we have had a terrific project initiated by the children. During recess there are shiurim in Geula and Moshiach and the students themselves raise the funds to provide the snacks. When the eighth graders graduate, the next class takes over.

As to your question, we need to have more and more learning of inyanei Moshiach and Geula. If we

already have shiurim and various forms of learning in Chabad, then we need to get outsiders to learn it too. We need to establish a broad array of classes and even distribute multimedia so people can watch and listen to shiurim. We need a better system to organize the learning of inyanei Moshiach and Geula and to distribute booklets in non-Chabad yeshivos and communities. Tests should be held in various locations with money given for high marks.

We need new shiurim among Anash, for all ages. There are shiurim in D'var Malchus but we need to expand them. Many people are not well-versed in the Rebbe's sichos on this topic.

STILL WORK TO DO IN BREAKING DOWN THE BARRIERS

*Rabbi Pinchas Mamon, Editor
Ezrachim B'Medinat HaMoshiach*

First, I think we have done everything already. If we look at the Rebbe's sichos then we see that the avodas ha'birurim has been finished. I recently learned a sicha in which the Rebbe explains that the chiddush of Moshiach is not that he brings the Geula but that he breaks through the

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We have to come up with ideas of how to reach outside our Chabad communities and connect more Jews to the Rebbe through the learning of inyanei Moshiach and Geula. A few years ago, a Lubavitcher came up with the idea of getting more people to learn Shulchan Aruch HaRav. He has tests and gives out stipends and his efforts have met with great success. The same can and should be done for inyanei Moshiach and Geula.

The Rebbe said that the "straight path" to bringing Moshiach is by learning these topics. When you learn the sichos, all the confusion dissipates.

boundaries of Geula. To us, the future Geula is understood as something defined and thus limited. Even we Chassidim define it and describe what will happen with the Rebbe's hisgalus. Moshiach will break through these definitions.

The activities we need to do, in this spirit, are to break through the limitations of Geula. The Rebbe told us that everything is ready and the buttons are already polished and we even have a taste of the Ahavas Yisroel of the future, but the fact that we still don't see the Rebbe demonstrates that we still have work to do in the area of breaking out of those boundaries.

Since the Rebbe's derech begins and ends with Torah, everything has to go through learning inyanei Moshiach and Geula. As the Rebbe said, there is no more direct way than learning about it. The Rebbe's teachings, especially the D'var Malchus and inyanei Moshiach and Geula, are the teachings of Moshiach – a veritable taste of what Moshiach will teach in the future.

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It's not just a matter of covering material. For even if one could say that he learned all of inyanei Moshiach and Geula, learning it through one time and learning it fifteen times are very different. The more you study it, the more you "live" it, and you also discover things that you didn't notice the first times. Most importantly, just learning the subject hastens the Geula, as the Rebbe emphasized several times in sichos.

As far as Klal Yisroel, we cannot yet say that we did all we could to draw them close to the Rebbe's malchus. We must get out there and teach people that the future Geula is for all of us. For scholars there are the D'var Malchus and many other s'farim. For less knowledgeable people there are magazines and booklets that explain the subject in a user-friendly manner. One such magazine is the one I edit, *Ezrachim B'Medinat HaMoshiach*, whose message is: The world is ready for the hisgalus of the Rebbe.



SPREAD THE B'SURAS HA'GEULA

Rabbi Yitzchok Fine, Publisher of the D'var Malchus

I will divide your question into a number of points. The first and main point is that today everybody can take on a project, however large, and see how things work out. Shluchim can tell you how despite the difficulties, they have had

tremendous success with many impressive endeavors. You just have to start, and then you see clear *siyata d'Shmaya*, and how the Rebbe helps.

A second point is that today it is easier to overcome difficulties. I have spoken with Lubavitchers who have told me that in the past, every topic, especially spreading the wellsprings, was hard. Today they see how much easier it is. The Rebbe has taken away 80% of the difficulties. The reason we don't accomplish as much as we should is because we schlep around a load of difficulties which are nothing but the wiles of the Evil Inclination. When you overcome the obstacles, you become more refined and consequently, spreading the B'suras HaGeula becomes easier.

A third point about "do all that

you can," is in the area of outreach. There are many people who are "friends of Chabad" and close to the Rebbe who learn Chassidus and even follow some Chabad customs, but the topic of Moshiach turns them off. We must explain how, according to Halacha, the Rebbe is Moshiach and publicize how g'dolei Yisroel, such as Rabbi Soloveitchik and Rabbi Hirschprung, accepted this position. Then you have to explain how 3 Tammuz doesn't contradict this fact and show in different sources how Moshiach will disappear before the hisgalus.

There is a need for someone to make summaries of the Rebbe's sichos of 5751-5752 so people who cannot learn the entire sicha will get the gist of the idea. This will motivate them to delve deeper into inyanei Moshiach and Geula.



DON'T PREVENT GEULA FROM ENTERING YOUR HOME

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Beckerman, Shliach, Givatayim

I would first like to say to Anash in particular, that we must stop with the clique mentality, i.e. whether a person is a Meshichist or not. It shouldn't be viewed as belonging to a party. One can be a Meshichist who "lives" with all the inyanim while accepting the views of a Chassid with different views

and different projects. We must stop having separate camps.

Sometimes a shliach feels at odds with what's going on around him, yet he has to conform to expectations. Why? Because he belongs to a specific group. Chabad is not politics. We must look more at action and less at views. Every good, Jewish activity that a shliach does, and it makes no difference what his views are, hastens the hisgalus of the Rebbe MH"M.

To address the broader public – we need to convey how the world is ready for Geula. For example, in Givatayim, where I am the shliach, we make a Seudas Moshiach in all the shuls. Chassidim come from B'nei Brak to farbreng. One year, I neglected to send anyone to farbreng in a particular shul. When I met the gabbai a few days after Yom Tov, I apologized to him for not sending someone to farbreng. To my surprise, he replied, "What

do you think – because of that we wouldn't have a Seudas Moshiach?"

From this we can see how real success in shlichus is reflected not only through the shliach's leadership but especially through others taking the initiative to implement the Rebbe's projects. This also shows how world is ready for the Rebbe's hisgalus and we are clearly in the final moments. These aren't just nice words that we have to believe. It's a daily reality that we can sense and even see.

The Rebbe instructed us to "do all that you can," because it really is up to us. This is both a responsibility and a wonderful opportunity. People have to be involved and the truth is that they want to be involved. It's up to us to facilitate this and ensure that we don't prevent the Geula from entering our homes.



A TASTE OF GEULA

Rabbi Pinchas Tzorfat, Menahel Sifriyat HaChassidus, Beitar Ilit

The Rebbe instructed us that learning inyanei Moshiach and Geula is the “best path,” and the easiest and most direct way of bringing Moshiach.

As a result of this horaa, we founded a library with s’farim on Geula, which has grown into a Jewish-Chassidic empire. Sifriya HaChassidus now boasts Kollelim, a learning program for women, a shul which is already outgrowing its quarters, and more. As the Rebbe said, all of shlichus is “to bring to Yemos HaMoshiach.” It all starts with the inyan of Moshiach. It’s not always easy but we need not be

scared off since this is the more direct, easy, and authentic way. This is why the obstacles are greater. You see sometimes that shiurim in Chassidus are more readily started and developed. It is because inyanei Moshiach and Geula are the inyan of this generation that it sometimes doesn’t go easily.

If we accept that Moshiach and Geula is the most vital subject of our time, we will do it and ignore the obstacles. The horaa to “do all that you can” is not just for Anash but also – perhaps even mainly – for outside of Lubavitch. We must convey to them that this is the inyan of our times. When we do so in an interesting way, it attracts people. People are willing to buy books and attend lectures on “Life after Death,” and similar topics because these ideas are conveyed in an interesting way. There is no reason why inyanei Moshiach and Geula can’t be similarly brought to the public at large.

We have to demonstrate that it’s all based on the sources and this is not about a Chassid’s “hergesh.” When someone learns a maamer Chassidus he gets excited because he realizes that this is a revelation of G-dliness, something which he

If we accept that Moshiach and Geula is the most vital subject of our time, we will do it and ignore the obstacles.

doesn’t experience when he learns other parts of Torah. If this is so regarding Chassidus in general, then it is all the more so with inyanei Moshiach and Geula. We have to get people to learn it because once they try it, they’ll get hooked.

Teaching it in an interesting way and providing answers to questions about the Geula is mekarev people, and the frum people shouldn’t be left out, either. The Rebbe teaches in the D’var Malchus that whoever is involved in the teachings about the ola sacrifice, it’s like he brought that sacrifice. So too, if you are involved in learning about Geula, you can “live” Geula. It’s not magic; we must learn inyanei Moshiach and Geula and then more people will live the Geula.



WORK WITH UNITY AND POSITIVITY

Rabbi Moshe Bardugo, Migdal HaEmek

What makes us unique as Chabad Chassidim is the fact that we are mekusharim to the Rebbe as “soldiers of the house of Dovid” who are working to bring about the hisgalus. We all need to conduct ourselves in this way, as the Rebbe noted in a sicha in 5752 that every encounter with a Jew should be permeated with Moshiach.

When I enter the classroom and ask, “How are you children?” they chorus, “Baruch Hashem, we are waiting for Moshiach.”

In 5751-5752 the Rebbe brought these ideas down to our level. If, until then, I thought that I did

enough, I realized that I didn’t even begin to do anything. The Rebbe, in the sicha of “do all that you can,” informed us that we cannot rest until our goal is achieved.

I remember going from house to house in Migdal HaEmek with a few other shluchim, distributing material on inyanei Moshiach and Geula. We said that we were there as emissaries of the Rebbe. Many people committed to putting on t’fillin, to checking their mezuzos and other fine things to hasten the Geula.

We sent a report to the Rebbe, to which he responded, “Thank you, I will mention it at the gravesite.” On

Yud Shevat, 5752, I presented the Rebbe with an album containing pictures of every street in Migdal HaEmek where there was a sign announcing, *Hichonu LVias HaMoshiach*. I told the Rebbe, “Migdal HaEmek is waiting for Geula.” The Rebbe replied, “b’suros tovos,” and accepted the album, which he later took with him to the Ohel.

On Yud Shevat, 5753, after the Rebbe encouraged the proclaiming of Yechi, I prepared 28 placards with “Yechi” and the Rebbe’s picture and hung them up. The rosh yeshiva, Rabbi Goldberg, said I couldn’t do this without an explicit instruction from the Rebbe.

My mashpia, Rabbi Segal, and I called Rabbi Groner and requested that he ask the Rebbe whether we could hang up these signs. A few hours later, at 6:30 in the morning, he called me back and said that the

Rebbe’s answer was: “bracha v’hatzlacha v’haskama.”

When R’ Goldberg heard this, he asked me to make a sign for him too, which he proudly displayed on the front of his house. I compiled an album of pictures of all the signs and sent it to the Rebbe. The secretaries said that the Rebbe went through the album and he looked pleased. Later on, the Rebbe had a bottle of wine sent to me, although this was no longer regular practice.

Our goal today is “v’yisau” – to move on, to travel on the road of Geula. This trip has to be done with achdus. When you see before your eyes only one goal – to bring about the Rebbe’s hisgalus, achdus will only help you because you are not battling darkness, you are involved with “light.” As the Rebbe emphasized in his last farbrengen, the secret to success is to work with achdus.



THE REVOLUTION BEGINS WITH SMALL THINGS

Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Ben Ari, Shliach, kibbutzim

“Do all that you can,” in my humble opinion, can be divided into two main points. It starts with small things, that everything be permeated with inyanei Moshiach. I go to kibbutzim in a yellow car with a Moshiach flag and I connect everything, every sicha, to the topic

of Moshiach. Not every subject readily connects with Geula, like kashrus for example, but we try to bring out a “Moshiach point.”

Another thing is to **live** with Moshiach. A kibbutznik is usually a very rational person. When you speak to him, he looks to see whether your emuna is genuine and serious. If he sees that it’s not superficial, he is hooked. When a Chassid does not “live” with it and talks about Moshiach coolly, the reaction will be, “Nu ... he said something interesting.” I would tell people of that ilk not to even bother to talk about Moshiach; better they should just talk about Judaism.

Kibbutznikim can’t just listen to someone who transmits information. The one giving the shiur has to get them to think. Among the hundreds of lecturers, few of them are capable of working in kibbutzim. We need to train more lecturers who can speak in kibbutzim because there is much

When I enter the classroom and ask, “How are you, children?” they chorus, “Baruch Hashem, we are waiting for Moshiach.”

We also need to remember that projects have to be coordinated with the shliach of the city and it makes no difference what his views are. Even when shluchim have other views, you can coordinate with them if you go about it in a pleasant way. If we keep our egos out of it, we are assured of success.

that can be accomplished.

Another point is availability. I believe that shluchim and activists should keep their phones on 24 hours a day. The subject of Moshiach demands a constant sacrifice. “Do all that you can” means a Chassid must sacrifice himself, his money, and his time.

A powerful way of raising awareness is by decorating your car with things that you believe in. People see you and yell, “Moshiach, Moshiach.” Think about how many people will see you and get the message. Anash should buy Moshiach products because we need to get people thinking about Moshiach.

In short, “do all that you can” doesn’t necessarily entail grandiose activities but starts with the little things, with ourselves, living the inyan and being willing to sacrifice our comfort.

LIVING THE WARMTH AND FIRE OF MOSHIACH

Rabbi 'Shimileh' Pizem, Director of Hisachdus HaChassidim

The foundation of Chassidus Chabad is that it is all built on "soul," and "soul" permeates everything. People are constantly in search of warmth and the inner chayus that gives life to everything, seeking the inner fire which burns within everything. Without a foundation of warmth and enthusiasm, an inyan remains lifeless because the main thing is lacking. Chassidus teaches us that we need to find the soul in every mitzva and inyan and truly live it, not just do things by rote.

Inyanei Moshiach is the neshama of all inyanim. Involvement in it needs to be grounded in this world. Therefore, "do all that you can"

doesn't mean to engage in it like a "balabus" but to ignite the fire and passion in matters of Geula and Moshiach.

In recent years we've seen that many Chassidim lack this soul quality in inyanei Moshiach and Geula, which is why I have started an organization called "Hisachdus HaChassidim L'Kabbalas P'nei Moshiach," whose purpose is to get people enthusiastic about Chassidic issues. This provides a framework for the Chassidic life of a Chassid and connects him to this new reality in a context of shlichus, so as to bring about the hisgalus and welcoming of Moshiach.

When we direct our lives with this idea, then we naturally find the impetus within ourselves, because the passion grows ever stronger and the neshama perspective permeates

If we live with Moshiach in a sincere and vibrant way, we'll find what it takes to "do all that you can."

everything we do. In the sichos of 5751-5752, the Rebbe says that our top priority is to "live with Moshiach." Whatever we do needs to be connected with welcoming Moshiach. If we live with Moshiach in a sincere and vibrant way, we'll find what it takes to "do all that you can."

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THE GOOD OLD WAYS STILL WORK

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelewitz, Shliach, Beit Shaan

It was the lessons and impressions I gained from these shluchim, and others like them, that made me look forward to the day that I would be a shliach.

My memory bank is rich with memories of my experiences in Chabad houses in Cholon, Nahariya, Be'er Sheva, and Bat Yam. These memories have taught me a lot, and became the basis and vision for my own Chabad house in Beit Shaan.

The goal of this article is not to reminisce and tell stories; nor is it to flatter or "eulogize" one shliach or another. My intent is to create an awareness among shluchim of the tremendous significance and impact of their behavior on the bachurim and girls who help them out. If they see that the shliach is completely devoted to his shlichus, they will take that with them and adopt that devotion and love for the Rebbe and shlichus in their own lives, perhaps opening their own Chabad houses.

When I was studying in Kfar Chabad, in 1981-1983, there were very few Chabad houses in Eretz Yisroel – twenty at most. Then two dynamic bachurim, with the consent of the hanhala of the yeshiva, opened a Chabad house in Cholon. Those two bachurim were R' Yoske Lieder and R' Levi Wilyamovsky. Nearly every Shabbos they invited some bachurim to Cholon, provided

them with room and board, and had them review sichos of the Rebbe in the many shuls there.

On one of these Shabbasos, I went with R' Wilyamovsky from one shul to the next. R' Wilyamovsky would approach the gabbai and tell him that he had brought a young rabbi from Kfar Chabad, and the gabbai would invite me to speak. We were very tired, hardly having slept on Friday night. Thus, in one shul, as I sat and waited while R' Wilyamovsky spoke to the gabbai, I fell asleep. I suddenly heard voices calling, "Rabbi Shmuelewitz! Rabbi Shmuelewitz!"

I woke up in confusion to find everyone waiting for me to get up and speak. I have no idea what I said, but R' Wilyamovsky said it was fine.

I couldn't blame myself for falling asleep, since I had been really tired. But I couldn't fathom how R' Wilyamovsky managed such a demanding schedule every Shabbos.

Our schedule in Cholon included next to no sleep. We were already in sleep deprivation mode by the time we arrived on Friday afternoon. We spent a few hours on Mivtza T'fillin

and then went to the Chabad house. Only after making the rounds of several shuls, where we reviewed a sicha of the Rebbe, did we have our own minyan for Kabbalas Shabbos. Naturally, you have to learn Chassidus first, then daven, make Kiddush, eat and farbreng.

I have fond memories of R' Lieder farbrenging with us for hours, instilling in us love for the Rebbe and the great privilege of being on shlichus. The farbrenging lasted until late at night, a mere few hours before we were up again, heading out to visit as many shuls as possible. No wonder, then, that I fell asleep and that those Shabbasos are precious memories of faithful shluchim who had so much to teach us.

Another wonderful role model for me from those years is Rabbi Yisroel Butman of Nahariya. I spent Shavuos there and was amazed by the popularity and capability of such a young rabbi. He gave one shiur and lecture after another on Shavuos night in many shuls, and still had the energy the next day to dance with and entertain hundreds of children and read the Aseres HaDibros.

The three Purims I spent with Rabbi Avrohom Cohen of Be'er Sheva exemplified a shliach who didn't rest for a minute. Rabbi Zimroni Tzik of Bat Yam made a lasting impression on me, with his many talmidim learning in a yeshiva

That is when I resolved that, with Hashem's help, I would do all I could to be the Rebbe's shliach and would not let any sacrifice or effort deter me.

in the center of town.

It was the lessons and impressions I gained from these shluchim, and others like them, that made me look forward to the day that I would be a shliach.

FROM MIGDAL HA'EMEK TO YERUCHAM, FROM THAILAND TO ZICHRON YAAKOV

I could go on at length about these shluchim, but there is no need. Every shliach I spoke to has similar

memories which inspired them to become shluchim.

Rabbi Chaim Wolf, shliach in Yerucham, told me about his yeshiva days in Migdal HaEmek, in what was then a small, shlichus oriented yeshiva. "It was amazing to see all the rabbis of the yeshiva, shluchim who had not long before spent extraordinary years with the Rebbe, here in this distant city, and all of them devoted to shlichus. It was moving to see the love for the Rebbe and their utter devotion to shlichus and the strengthening of this fledgling yeshiva. That is when I resolved that, with Hashem's help, I would do all I could to be the Rebbe's shliach and would not let any sacrifice or effort deter me."

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Freiman, shliach in Zichron Yaakov, deals with numerous financial and organizational difficulties on a daily basis. Each day, he must drive his children to and from school. Despite his demanding schedule and many responsibilities, he nonetheless managed to complete a beautiful building in the form of 770.

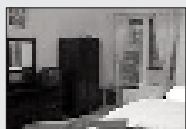
"I did my 'training' in Bangkok when it was still an exotic and

unknown entity. R' Nechemia Wilhelm was yet to arrive on the scene, and a Chabad house wasn't even a dream. Two other bachurim and I went for two weeks – which stretched to half a year. We were hosted in the home of R' Kantor, the shliach and rabbi of the Jewish community in Thailand.

"I remember the anxiety when his first son was born – where would they get a mohel? In the end, a mohel from California, not coincidentally the grandfather of the baby, volunteered to undertake the 24 hour flight. I also remember seeing a bread machine in R' Kantor's house. He explained to us that there was no pas Yisroel to be had on the entire continent. During the week they managed without bread, and they used this machine to make lechem mishna for Shabbos."

I hope that the bachurim who come every so often to Beit Shaan to help out, as well as the readers who are finishing this column, will commit to the only remaining shlichus – preparing ourselves and the world to greet Moshiach immediately.

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IT'S ALL DONE, SO WHAT'S MISSING?

Rabbi Nechemia Schmerling, Shliach, Kfar Yona

*The Rebbe is talking to me, to you, and to all of us. He is saying: “Do all that you can to bring Moshiach and of course, to really want him.” * When a person really does all that he can, and “more than he is accustomed to,” it’s worth a million of many other activities. * From a speech at a Kinus Chaf-Ches Nisan in Kfar Chabad.*



When I was a boy, I read a story about a real salt of the earth sabra who was informed that his father was very sick and that he should go see him. He did not drop his important activities immediately and go home. It was only when family pressure exerted itself that he appeared at the hospital.

He was greeted by the doctor who said, “It’s good you came. Your father is in that room. Go in and cheer him up.”

When the Palmachnik saw his father lying there, pale and weak, he went over to him to cheer him up. He slapped him on the shoulder and in bravado, Israeli style he asked, “So what’s up, Abba? Dying, huh? ...”

It is 18 years since the Rebbe delivered that frightening sicha in which he gave us the job of bringing the Geula with the injunction, “Do

all that you can to bring Moshiach.” We did not gather here in order to count the years since the sicha and to mark the number on the wall. We did not gather here in order to recount how many drops of gasoline are left in the tank and to reassure ourselves that we are still alive.

We are here as soldiers who are checking out the situation and equipping ourselves so we can make up for what is lacking, which in army parlance is called after-action analysis, i.e. to assess the current situation and to continue the advance.

In other words, we aren’t here to wallow in nostalgic yearning for the past, or in self-flagellation for the exile situation we are in, but to examine what are the good things we have in our personal history and develop them, and to find those methods we did not yet use and

harness them in the effort to bring about the hisgalus of the Rebbe in the hopes that we’ll finally do it, once and for all.

REALLY DOING ALL THAT WE CAN

In Kfar Yona we have three shuls that identify as Chabad minyanim. One is in the new neighborhood, another is at the Chabad house, and a third is the shul where I am rabbi – the main shul of Kfar Yona. Most of the people who daven there do not dress or appear as Chabad Chassidim, but the shul policy is Chabad. We follow all the Chabad customs and horaos of the Rebbe, like learning half an hour of Chassidus before davening, having a minyan for T’hillim on Shabbos Mevarchim, a sicha before Krias Ha’Torah, a farbrengen after

davening, etc. Every Shabbos morning at 8:00 we learn a maamer Chassidus together.

On Shabbos Chaf-Ches Nissan, 5768, instead of learning a maamer we learned the Rebbe's sicha of 28 Nissan, 5751. The content of the sicha, as well as the sharp expressions the Rebbe used, aroused a tumult. One of the men stood up and exclaimed, "I don't understand this. The Rebbe is saying that ten people have to **really** want Moshiach, so what's with you in Chabad? Some say this and some say that ... as for Moshiach – where is he?"

I said to him, "And who said that the ten people the Rebbe spoke about are in Kfar Chabad? Maybe the ten are right **here**, in the main shul of Kfar Yona! The Rebbe is talking to me, to you, and to all of us. He is saying: *Do all that you can* to bring Moshiach and of course, to **really want him**."

Someone else got up. He had come a long way. He went to a yeshiva high school and looked like your typical, ardent knitted kippa type, but everything he does is permeated with the utmost bittul. He said, "I don't get it. **25,000** meshichisten were there [at the stadium in Ramat Gan for the Rebbe's birthday] and they shouted all the proclamations and there weren't **ten who really wanted Moshiach**?"

The discussion about this sicha on Shabbos was the "hisbonenus before davening." Presumably, it lasted throughout the davening, since the topic resumed immediately after the minyan concluded and was the focus of the farbrengen that followed it. Many of the attendees came with me afterwards to the farbrengen at the Chabad house, where we continued to farbreng on this topic.

We came to the conclusion that we need to divide the sicha into two parts. When it comes to "do all that

you can," there is no question that many people have done and continue to do **all that they can** to bring Moshiach. By virtue of the fact that they are doing the maximum within the limitations of their nature, they are fulfilling the injunction of "do all that you can."

While we may not agree with everything a person does, he is doing what he knows and the best that he can do from where he's coming from. For example, someone whose life is music may take a guitar and compose a song. Whether or not you appreciate the song, its message and style, doesn't change the fact that this is what he knows how to do and he is doing it with all his neshama. He is doing all that he can do.

Over the years, many have done all that they can, we're not debating that (although in some cases, the activities were problematic). I think that there is almost nothing we haven't tried in order to spread the Besuras HaGeula. From this respect, we have done not bad at all and even pretty well. However, apparently we haven't done enough. The proof is that although we certainly hastened the Rebbe's hisgalus, we still did not achieve our goal – "**actually** bringing Moshiach."

PERSONAL ABILITY

I'd like to tell you a lesson that I learned about what unique – yet simple – levels one can reach in the doing of "all that you can," and how it impacts on others.

Last week, Israel marked Yom HaZikaron for the Jews who were murdered in the ghettos and extermination camps in the Holocaust. Every year ministers and politicians, educators and opinion-sayers, Holocaust survivors and their children, come up with new ideas about how to keep memories of the Holocaust alive.

They all talk about the need to transmit the history of the Holocaust

to the next generation. Some ideas, such as the "March of the Living," have become a tradition.

In Kfar Yona we also had a ceremony to mark the day. Two hours beforehand, a boy came to my house for his bar mitzva lesson. He has been coming for two months straight and his father, a tough, muscular, macho man, accompanies him every time.

That afternoon I asked them, "What about t'fillin?" The father said he had ordered t'fillin for his son and they were supposed to come in two weeks. When I asked him what about him and t'fillin, he said he used his grandfather's t'fillin.

"You shouldn't think that I use my grandfather's t'fillin because I'm cheap and don't want to buy my own. When I was bar mitzva, they took these t'fillin to be checked. When they were found to be kosher I began using them, since my father brought these t'fillin from the ghetto."

And then this burly guy began to cry.

"My father brought two things from the Holocaust, these t'fillin and a notebook. In the notebook he wrote the names of all the people he knew who had died during the war and next to each name he wrote the date he died or was killed."

He wiped his tears and continued:

"My father was a simple laborer, a carpenter. That is what he did his entire life, but he wasn't 'simple.' Every morning he would go to the store and buy cookies and bottles of schnapps and bring it to shul for Shacharis.

"After Shacharis he would get up and say, 'Yidden, say l'chaim for Moishe'le. Today is his yahrtzeit.' The next day he would say l'chaim for Yossele and so on, day after day. In this way he would go through the year, marking the deaths of his family and friends who perished in the Holocaust."

I looked at this “superman” sitting in my house in tears. You usually don’t see men crying; surely not like this. I thought, this man’s father was a simple man **but his entire life he did all that he could.** You don’t need ceremonies or gatherings or marches. In his own way, this man succeeded in transmitting to his son and grandson the “Holocaust legacy.”

We’re doing okay in the “do all that you can” department: No matter what anybody says, and despite the tendency toward self-flagellation. When a person really does all that he can, and “more than he is accustomed to,” it’s worth a million of many other activities. In the end, the message will seep through and influence others to join in and take action to bring the Geula.

NEW TACTICS

However, regarding the “ten Jews,” the results are what matters. The Rebbe says in the sicha that if they truly seek it, the Geula will come. In other words, the results are what counts.

Since the Rebbe said this sicha, years have gone by yet we still don’t have the complete Geula. We have to concede that we have a serious problem, an obstacle that we need to overcome, or else look for other ways to reach our destination.

The Rebbe wants ten people to stubbornly work on bringing Moshiach. Why is it that although everybody is doing his own “all that you can”, it is specifically activities focused on bringing the Geula that bring out the heavy artillery against those trying to do in this area?

I’d like to tell you a historical story of someone whose starting position was pretty precarious but his approach made him victorious. I think that if we adopt this approach, we will win too. It’s a tactic we haven’t tried yet. I’m talking about the famous Trafalgar battle, the most

important battle at sea in Napoleon’s wars.

Napoleon invaded Egypt and from there he continued to Palestine. It was clear to one and all that Napoleon would be successful in holding Palestine as long as his supply lines would remain open and the French navy could supply his military needs and food.

While the French armada sailed the Mediterranean, the English had a famous Admiral, Horatio Nelson. Nelson pursued the French armada and one day, he managed to chase them into the Gulf of Abu Kir in northern Africa. It looked as though a French victory was assured. Why? Because the gulf was full of reefs

Although we certainly hastened the Rebbe’s hisgalus, we still did not achieve our goal – “actually bringing Moshiach.”

and the French had lined up their entire fleet in the Gulf with their cannons aimed out to sea.

In addition, the French generals stationed artillery batteries on the cliffs around the gulf. Nelson was coming towards them from the sea and his chance for victory, much less a decisive one, was less than zero.

This reminds me of the present situation of the sea of galus when we have a vital task to accomplish and we can’t throw up our hands and lose. We are liable to think that the entire world is against us. Do we stand a chance?

But then Nelson came up with an ingenious idea. He said one sentence that became his war strategy.

“Where a ship can turn around, we can cross!” At night, under cover of darkness and in utter silence, Nelson’s ships moved alongside and then behind the French ships and turned around to face the rear of the flotilla. When the sun rose, the men manning the big guns on the beach discovered that the enemy’s ships were too close to hit with their cannon.

The French, searching for Nelson at sea, suddenly discovered that he was behind them, among them, and together with them. Victory was his.

We are good at excuses. They are genuine excuses – the galus, yeshus, fear of the unknown, etc all have their impact. But this is an approach we have yet to try. We have to find the narrow corridor where society turns on its axis and break through that way. We have to find a way of reaching them from a point where they feel that they can no longer attack. We need to “sneak up from behind,” i.e. convey the message without the type of frontal attack that invites an immediate retaliatory attack, or at best, a protective posture.

We need to remember that since Moshiach is the most important topic, the “other side” opposes it. To start with the Moshiach topic intimidates many people, since they don’t understand it. Our job is not to weaken but to teach the topic from the Rebbe’s sichos, to hit with everything we have, while avoiding confrontation.

We need to look for creative ideas for how to convey the topic of Moshiach and the Rebbe in a way that people will enjoy, because the goal is for people to **accept it.**

We are indeed doing all we can in regard to Besuras HaGeula and the Goel, but we need to remind ourselves that we haven’t done enough. We have to try methods with which to reach all of Klal Yisroel. Then, with Hashem’s help, we will see the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach now mamash.

A STUBBORN CHILD, GUIDED FROM ABOVE

By Nosson Avrohom
Pictures by Dovber Matuf

The fascinating journey of Rabbi Aharon Dalfin from labor camps in Romania, to yeshiva in Lud, to life in Crown Heights.

This story describes the fascinating journey of a twelve year old Holocaust survivor to yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Lud. Rabbi Dalfin is a fixture in the shul on Lefferts. Despite his age, he is full of youthful energy that could put the young ones among us to shame. His life's story could fill a book; what follows are some highlights of his youth.

A HUNGRY CHILD LOOKS FOR FOOD

I was born in Gura Humorului, in the Bukovina area of Romania, before the outbreak of World War II. The town we lived in was nestled between majestic mountains, valleys and flowing streams and attracted many tourists and vacationers. Along with the material bounty, Jewish life in the town flourished.

When the war ended and the survivors returned to start their lives anew, no fewer than twelve shuls, mikvaos and Talmudei Torah operated in the town, and all were full of worshippers.

I was born in 1937, so I was a child during the war years. When we returned from the labor camp to our hometown, I was already about eight years old and I remember a lot. I used to love walking in the forest, breathing the clear air and seeing the numerous waterfalls. In the yard of our house we had a well from which we drew pure water. Today, living in Crown Heights, I can only dream about the magnificent scenery. The material abundance in our town was paralleled by its spiritual richness.

Upon our return from the labor camp, my mother sent me to Talmud Torah. Every day we heard about more and more Jews who had

died because of the typhus epidemic due, in part, to the lack of food.

However, my mother was determined that I get a Jewish education nonetheless.

Weighed down with worries and distracted by hunger, I had difficulty listening and concentrating on what the teacher taught in Talmud Torah. I was habituated to prayer because my mother would daven with us even while we were in the labor camp, so it penetrated my mentality enough to enable me to participate regardless.

The labor camp where my father, R' Shlomo, had worked with thousands of other Jews, was near Serbia, in a place called Sargerass Transnistria. The Germans provided just two slices of bread per person, one for the morning and one for the evening. A single slice of bread was obviously insufficient to satisfy a person for the day, and I would plead with my mother for the other slice. She wisely saved it for the evening, so I wouldn't go to bed hungry.

While my father performed forced labor for the cursed Germans and my mother would sit and cry over our bitter lot, I would go out to

the streets and look for something to eat. Due to the starvation, coupled with the bitter cold and lack of medication, people died in the streets like flies. Every day they would collect hundreds of bodies of people who did not make it through the night. The first to go were the

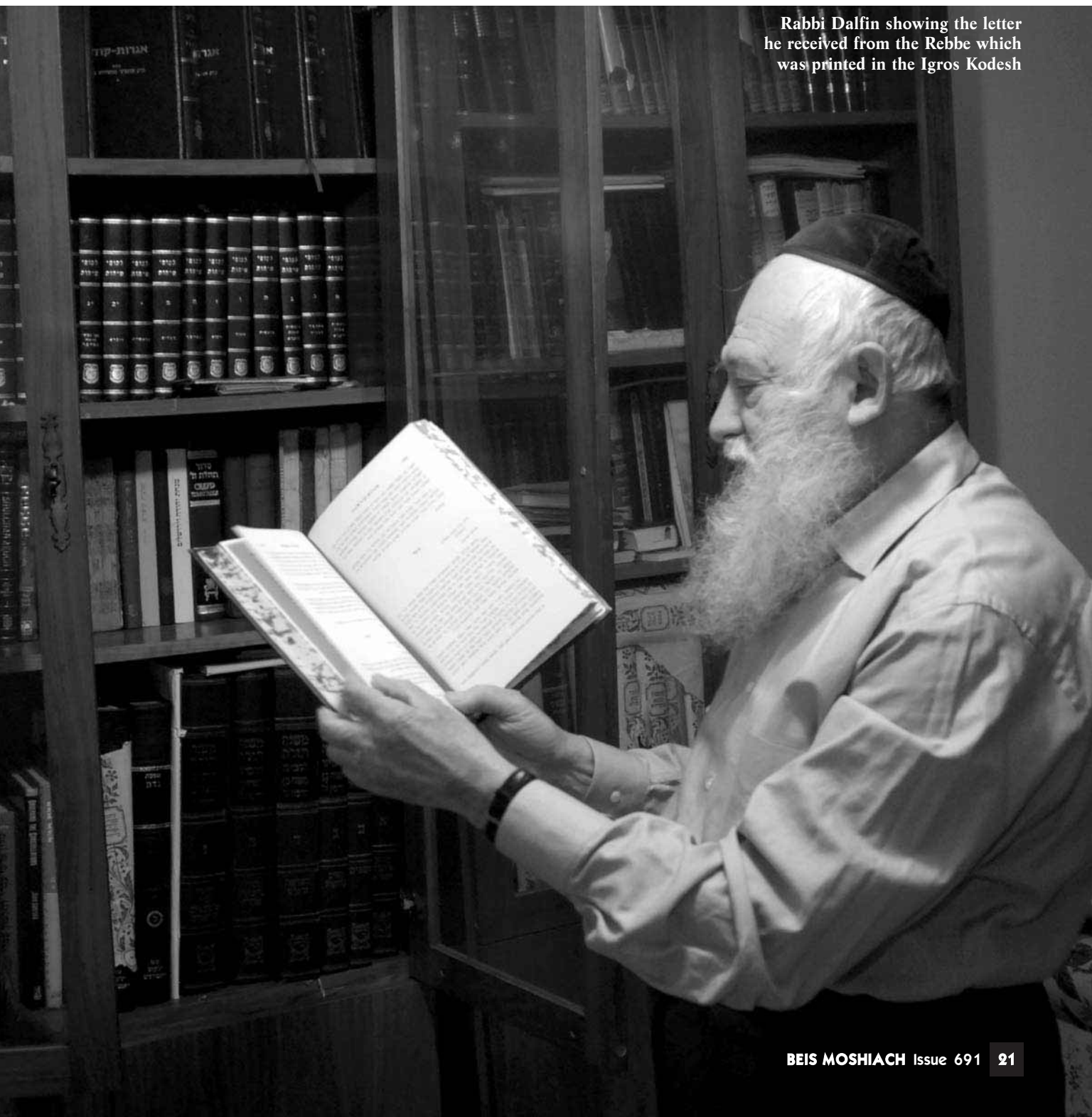
Jews, of course.

I also came down with the deadly typhus that killed so many, and my mother confided after the war that she had despaired of my life. Nine members of our family died.

We have to be so grateful to

Hashem for all the good He has given us. We don't always know to appreciate it, but living through those dark days taught that lesson the hard way. Looking back, I realize what great mesirus nefesh my parents had. My mother used the little bit of money she had to

Rabbi Dalfin showing the letter he received from the Rebbe which was printed in the Igros Kodesh



***As starving
children we would
watch longingly as
the Russian
trains, laden with
food, cows, goats,
sheep, horses and
lumber,
transported their
loads into Russia
day and night.***

pay for a teacher to teach me and my sister the Alef-Beis. That is what was important to her, teaching us Jewish values.

A STUBBORN BOY IN THE ATLIT CAMP

When I was twelve, we traveled to Israel in 1950, and stayed at first in the Atlit transit camp.

Along with 3000 other Jews, we had come on the ship *Transylvania*, which was made to accommodate 1000 people. Romania was one of the satellite countries of the Soviet Union and was ruled by the communist party. The Foreign Minister, Anna Pauker, was a Jewish woman who had been a senior member of the communist party since before the war. Apparently, she still had a little Jewish feeling left in her.

She came before the Romanian government and declared, "Comrades, the situation here is bleak. There is nothing to eat and people are dying for lack of medication. There are many Jews who want to leave the country. Why shouldn't we let them?"

The government agreed to allow

Jews to leave Romania. I remember the waves this made in the media. The news spread quickly throughout Romania and within a short time, about 100,000 Jews left for Israel, which had declared its independence two years earlier. We were very happy.

Our joy was marred by the starvation that was rampant throughout the country. The Russian government blamed Romania and other countries for caving in easily to the Nazi army, enabling the Nazis to reach the suburbs of Moscow, the capitol, where they wreaked such havoc and massacred so many people. In revenge and retaliation, the Russian government robbed Romania of its natural and agricultural resources.

As starving children we would watch longingly as the Russian trains, laden with food, cows, goats, sheep, horses and lumber, transported their loads into Russia day and night.

The Romanian government soon realized that the huge number of Jews who had left the country, many of whom held important positions in the economy and other government sectors, were leaving an unfilled void. When they saw they were heading towards anarchy, they did not allow any more people to leave. Many Jews who had begun the emigration process remained in Romania for years. My family and I were among the fortunate 100,000 who got out.

The situation in the Atlit transit camp in Eretz Yisroel was no better than it had been in Romania, but at least in Eretz Yisroel we felt we belonged.

Even before we left Romania, I dreamed of finding a yeshiva to learn in all day when we reached Eretz Yisroel. My melamed in Romania, Rabbi Akselrod, was constantly telling me that what I learned with him twice a week,

Gemara with a little Rashi, was far from sufficient. In order to fulfill the mitzva of limud Torah properly, I had to go to yeshiva.

When I asked him what a yeshiva is, he said, "a place where you learn Torah all day." Nu, as a child I didn't know any different and so this is what I yearned for. As soon as we settled in the transit camp, my priority was to go and learn in yeshiva as my melamed had told me to do before I left Romania.

One day, as I strolled through the streets of Atlit, I heard someone call out, "Yeled! (Boy)." I turned and, not knowing a word of Hebrew, asked the man in Yiddish what he wanted. He said he was a representative of the Jewish Agency and asked if I could do him a favor. Unsure what he wanted from me, I explained that I had nothing so how could I help him?

He smiled and said that he wanted to inform all the Romanian immigrants who lived in the camp about a meeting regarding their future accommodations in the camp. He wanted me to make the announcement, for he did not speak Romanian.

I was happy to oblige and he gave me a piece of metal and told me to speak into it so people would hear me better. I'll never forget how I looked at the piece of metal in wonder. I had never known such a thing as a megaphone existed, much less handled one.

I gladly did as he told me and when I finished making the announcement there wasn't a single Romanian immigrant who hadn't heard it. I returned the megaphone to him and asked him to do me a favor in return. I told him about my melamed in Romania, his injunction to learn in a yeshiva in Eretz Yisroel, and my yearning to do as he had said. A I asked him to guide me in where to go.

I was a young boy, a few months

before bar mitzva, and he wasn't religious but apparently he had some familiarity with the yeshiva world because he made three suggestions and said I should choose the best one for me. The first was to travel to B'nei Brak and seek the guidance of the Chazon Ish as to which yeshiva to attend. His second idea was to learn in Kibbutz Chafetz Chaim, where they learned half a day and worked half a day. His third suggestion was to go to the Vaad HaYeshivos in Tel Aviv and they would recommend a suitable yeshiva. I remember being amazed that a Jew without a head-covering was so knowledgeable about

I asked him how to get to the Chazon Ish and he said that I had to take a bus. Bus? What's a bus? I knew what a horse and wagon were and I had even seen a car, but what was a bus?

He explained to me how a bus differed from a horse and wagon and my excitement threatened to overwhelm me. I rushed to my parents to ask my father for money so I could go to yeshiva. Without hesitation, my father reached into his pocket and handed me a fistful of coins.

Caught up in my excitement to go to yeshiva, he gave me a relatively large sum for those days

questioning the value of the trip. When we finally got to Tel Aviv, I followed the advice of another passenger and bought a soda, which settled my stomach.

After a somewhat lengthy ordeal, I arrived at the home of the Chazon Ish and knocked on the door. Someone came out and asked me what I wanted. I replied that I wanted to see the Chazon Ish. He gave me an odd look and told me to scram, closing the door in my face. I refused to give up. I persisted in knocking, and when he finally reopened the door, I asked innocently, "Why did you send me away? I don't want anything from you. I want to speak to the Chazon Ish."

Seeing that I would not give in, he grudgingly asked me where I had come from. I told him that I had just emigrated from Romania. He then wanted to know my name, which I told him, but when he asked what I wanted I was unwilling to answer him. I insisted that he should let me in and I would say what I had to say to the Chazon Ish.

He refused, but I stubbornly maintained that I had come from far away and if he wouldn't let me in, I would sit outside until he did. I was determined to see the "navi." He finally gave in and said he would ask the Chazon Ish whether to let me in.

He returned a few minutes later and escorted me inside. He told me to take a seat by the table in a wide room that was packed with s'farim and the Chazon Ish would come in momentarily and talk to me. Within a very short time, the Chazon Ish came in and greeted me warmly. He asked my name and where I was from and what he could do for me. I told him where I had come from and said that my melamed told me, before I left for Israel with my family, that when I got to Eretz



Rabbi Aharon Dalfin's picture on his Israeli identity card

yeshivos.

I was a naïve new immigrant and was intrigued by the name Chazon Ish. I asked, "I know what an 'ish' is but I don't know 'chazon.'"

He explained to me in Yiddish that chazon means a vision and a person who can see what will happen before it happens. I immediately said that I wanted to go to him. I assumed I would be meeting a person with prophetic vision like from the era of the Prophets and I was overjoyed at the idea.

and bade me farewell. It didn't matter much that neither he nor I knew exactly where I was going.

ON MY WAY TO YESHIVA

The bus trip to B'nei Brak necessitated switching buses twice, in Netanya and Tel Aviv. I'll never forget that trip. It was my first time on a bus, and before long I felt nauseous and dizzy. The people sitting next to me felt bad for me. They suggested that I sit on the steps of the bus but unfortunately, that made me feel worse. I began

I replied that I wanted to see the Chazon Ish. He gave me an odd look and told me to scram... I asked innocently, "Why did you send me away? I don't want anything from you. I want to speak to the Chazon Ish."

Yisroel I should learn in a yeshiva.

He seemed impressed by my words and especially pleased by the sincerity with which I said them. He offered me refreshments and told me about a yeshiva in B'nei Brak called Tiferes Tziyon. If I wished to learn there he could arrange for me to be accepted immediately. I would get full room and board and all I would have to do is learn Torah.

This sounded wonderful and I eagerly agreed. The Chazon Ish asked me to wait in his house while he arranged for me to be picked up by someone from the yeshiva. A man arrived a few moments later.

He first brought me to his house, where he offered me hot soup and a large, comfortable bed with clean sheets and pillows. Even in Romania I had not slept on such a comfortable bed. There, the beds were made of wooden slats that we cut in the forest on which we scattered twigs and straw. This was my first time sleeping on a normal bed.

I couldn't help but compare the

comforts I was experiencing in the home of this Jew in B'nei Brak to the primitive conditions we had had in Romania. Next to the bedroom was a bathroom with modern fixtures where I had taken a shower with plentiful running water. Compared to Romania, this was Gan Eden. We need to thank Hashem for the material plenty He gives us. Up until fifty, sixty years ago, all the things that are norms for us today were just a dream.

In the morning, my host took me to yeshiva. Hundreds of boys were gathered for Shacharis when we arrived. After davening and breakfast, someone volunteered to show me where my room was and which bed and closet I should use. Later on I was very happy to meet a second cousin, a bachur by the name of Mendel Kramer.

The next day, when I went down to daven, I noticed that the davening was different from what I had been taught by my father and melamed. My father began Shacharis with Hodu and here they started with Baruch Sh'Amar and then went back to Hodu. I was confused.

Some talmidim who spoke Yiddish fluently explained to me that they weren't adding anything to the davening; it was just said in a different order. It was only later that I realized that the Litvishe followed minhag Ashkenaz, while I was familiar with the Chassidic nusach, as my father was a Chassid.

My cousin didn't understand why I was making an issue of it. "Ignore it and busy yourself with more important things," he advised, but I wasn't willing to give in. The same determination that had brought me from Atlit to yeshiva drove me to seek answers. I didn't want to change from the derech in which my father and our entire family had been raised and educated for generations.

Uncomfortable with the situation in the yeshiva and without even a change of clothes, when the suggestion to go to the Vaad HaYeshivos in Tel Aviv was echoed by the people at the yeshiva, I decided to go.

With the little bit of money I had left from what my father had given me, I traveled to Tel Aviv and went to the offices of the Vaad HaYeshivos, where three rabbanim directed bachurim from various cities and backgrounds to appropriate yeshivos.

I walked in and told the rabbis of the dream my melamed, R' Akselrod, had instilled in me of learning in yeshiva, my meeting with the Chazon Ish and the problems I had encountered in the yeshiva he sent me to. I asked them to send me to a yeshiva that was suitable to my background and for additional clothing.

They questioned me about my knowledge in learning, and I admitted that I did not have much learning to my credit, having been educated in the communist school. In the few hours I had with my melamed twice a week, I had learned *Eilu Metzius* in Bava Metzia.

The rabbanim tested me and asked various questions. Pleased with my answers, one of the rabbanim remarked, "A smart boy like this should go to Lubavitch." The other two agreed.

This meant nothing to me. I knew of Chassidus, because my family was Vizhnitz, but I knew nothing about the different Chassidic groups or the derech of Chabad.

Just then there was a knock at the door. I walked the famous Lubavitcher askan, R' Zushe Wilyamovsky. He was the Chabad representative at the Vaad HaYeshivos and had come to take care of something. The rabbanim

couldn't get over the amazing Hashgacha Pratis that he arrived at precisely that moment.

They filled him in and all agreed that I would go with him to the Chabad yeshiva that was located, at that time, in Pardes, Lud. R' Wilyamovsky took me to a store and bought me two of each item of clothing and also gave me a little money so I could buy a snack. Together we went to the home of R' Moshe Yaroslavsky and from there we took a bus to the yeshiva in Lud.

A NEW BOY IN TOMCHEI TMIMIM

R' Wilyamovsky brought me to the class of R' Munya Shneur. Being completely immersed in a



Rabbi Dalfin in his youth

Chabad atmosphere was very difficult at first. The deep study of Chassidus and the Chassidic concepts were foreign to me. I sat days and nights in class and tried to understand, with no success. Mishna and Gemara I could handle, but Tanya and maamarim were beyond me. I persevered and overcame the many challenges, remaining in yeshiva there for three years.

I would visit Chassidus Vizhnitz occasionally, but I never considered leaving the Chabad yeshiva for another one. The whole approach, facilitated by the graciousness and deep explanations of the mashpia, R' Shlomo Chaim Kesselman, won me over.

Most of the bachurim came from



Rabbi Dalfin has tremendous nachas from his children and grandchildren, who are mekusharim to the Rebbe

Chabad homes and were used to Lubavitch ways, but there was also a group of talmidim who, like me, did not come from Chabad homes. They, too, had a hard time adjusting to yeshiva but eventually became Chassidim. In this group were Rabbi Michael Steinmetz who lives today in Kfar Chabad, Rabbi Moshe Aharon Teichman, Rabbi Yaakov Lerer, Rabbi Elimelech Tzviebel and the brothers, R' Avrohom and Reuven Dunin. We didn't have an easy time. Today I know that the

Pleased with my answers, one of the rabbanim remarked, "A smart boy like this should go to Lubavitch."

Rebbe Rashab selected our neshamos, and that's for the real reason why I continued to learn in Pardes.

Today, as a father and grandfather of children and grandchildren who are all Lubavitchers, I don't have enough words with which to thank Hashem for this z'chus, but back then, as boys, there were many times that we rebelled against the yeshiva. Challenging as it was, we always remained in the yeshiva. There was but one time when I decided to leave, which is a story worth sharing.

A FATEFUL MEETING ON THE STREETS OF TEL AVIV

When I was 15-and-a-half and had been learning in Lud for three

years, I was under a lot of pressure from my parents to go and learn a trade so I would be able to support myself in life. My parents saw no contradiction between going out to work and remaining an observant Jew. Eventually, I was won over to their way of thinking and decided to leave yeshiva and go to Tel Aviv.

There I met a car mechanic and began apprenticing with him. Naturally, life in Tel Aviv caused me to deteriorate spiritually.

One day, I was walking down the street, and I saw a chassid walking towards me. He had an especially distinguished appearance. He was tall, with a beautiful white beard, and he held a black t'fillin bag. I tried to avoid him but he addressed me, "Yingle, where are you going?"

I was annoyed by his question. Who was he to quiz me on where I was going? I told him I was taking a walk. He didn't give up. "What's your name?" he asked, "and where do you live?"

He was a powerful personality and I could not help but answer him, although a voice inside me whispered not to. He asked me what I was doing and I told him I was learning how to be a mechanic. "You don't go to school?" he asked in surprise.

"Where did you learn before you went to work?" he asked. I told him I had learned in the Chabad yeshiva in Lud but my parents had encouraged me to leave yeshiva and learn a trade. I explained the philosophy of life I had adopted at that time, namely that I would learn a trade and thus be able to support myself.

When he heard I'd learned in Chabad, his face lit up. "Here's my advice for you," he suggested. "Write to the Lubavitcher Rebbe and do as he tells you."

At first I rejected his idea. Why should I write? I had no problems.

Everything was fine. But he wasn't giving up too quickly. "It doesn't hurt to write," he assured me.

I was stubbornly maintained that I had nothing to write about.

He finally said, "Write to the Rebbe that Yona Eidelkopf asked you to write about your life and say that you think everything is just fine with you."

I figured I had nothing to lose so I wrote the whole saga from the time I had come from Romania explained why I now wanted to learn a trade so I could support myself honorably. I noted at the beginning of the letter that I wouldn't have written, but R' Eidelkopf had met me and persisted until I agreed to write.

A few weeks later, a letter from the Rebbe arrived in my mail box. The letter is printed in Igros Kodesh, vol. 7, p. 163:

27 Shevat, 5713

Brooklyn

Greetings!

I received your letter of 23 Shevat in which you write briefly about how you learned in Tomchei T'mimim in Lud and you end by saying that you are fifteen and a half and you ask whether to leave yeshiva to learn a trade or not.

It is obvious that since it was in a wondrous manner, as you write in your letter, that you merited to enter the yeshiva, especially a yeshiva like that where they learn both Nigleh and Chassidus, you need to understand how they are helping you from Above to establish you in the best way, materially as well as spiritually. It is also obvious that in order to test you, you sometimes have thoughts of stopping learning. You need to dismiss them and devote yourself to shiurim in Nigleh and Chassidus with great diligence, and obviously, the One who sustains and supports everything,



when the time comes that you need to support yourself, will provide your parnasa too. Don't confuse yourself at your age with involvement in preparing for a parnasa which depends solely on Hashem. Consequently, the devotion to His Torah and mitzvos are a wondrous means to make it easier for you afterwards with parnasa, while leaving the tent of Torah prematurely interferes with this. May Hashem grant you the merit and success to Torah study with fear of Heaven.

With blessing,

In the name of the Rebbe shlita
The secretary

I read the letter time and again and was overcome by emotion. A short while later I returned to yeshiva, where I learned for another four years.

When I look at the pictures of my children and grandchildren, I

can't help but shed a tear. The Rebbe, like a loving father who compassionately cares for his children, bothered to send me a response that addressed my concerns and motivated me to return to yeshiva.

We are fortunate to be Chassidim and to have merited to raise a generation who are all mekusharim to the Rebbe and go in the ways of Chassidim. Without that letter, who knows where I would be today.

AMAZING YECHIDUS

Over the many years that passed since then, R' Dalfin received many more letters from the Rebbe on a variety of topics, some of them instructions and brachos which he saw fulfilled. We will have to leave these other letters and the stories behind them for another time.

R' Dalfin concluded our interview with a story about a bracha he received in a yechidus before his marriage on 25 Adar, 5720(1960):

My wedding took place in Crown Heights and my parents were in Tel Aviv. I took care of all the spiritual and material preparations myself. In those days, the Rebbe was no longer mesader kiddushin. In a private audience

“When I think of you, it will be like I am there at the chuppa and giving you my brachos there. Spiritually, time and place are not barriers.”

that I had a few days before my wedding, I told the Rebbe that I was very broken over not having a single relative with me. I asked the Rebbe whether he could make an exception for me and be my mesader kiddushin since I was a special case.

The Rebbe's replied seriously, “In general, the rav is the mesader kiddushin. Inform me when you are being led to the chuppa, and I will think of you at that time. When I think of you, it will be like I am there at the chuppa and giving you my brachos there. Spiritually, time and place are not barriers.”

These words of the Rebbe accompany me throughout my life. In order to give a bracha, the Rebbe is not limited by physical constraints. If you are mekushar to the Rebbe and follow his horaos, you see that the Rebbe finds the way to guide you.

UNTIL 18

By Nosson Avraham

Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry

That night, I poured the depths of my pain and anguish out on paper, pleading with the Rebbe for help. Years later, the Rebbe's bracha materialized out of nowhere at exactly the right moment.

As Mrs. Ester Houri of Tzfas began to relate her thrilling story, tears of deep emotion and joy welled in her eyes. The story brought her back fifteen years, to when her daughter, Zelda Rochel, was only four years old. The doctors had discovered a serious vision disorder in both of her eyes, requiring that she wear glasses with heavy thick lenses. The glasses did not exactly enhance her appearance, and created an obstacle socially and in school.

A bracha from the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, though it took two years to be realized, miraculously changed her situation. It was a number of months until her neighbors, teachers, friends and classmates in Beis Chana of Tzfas were able to properly internalize the tremendous wonder to which they had witnessed.

This amazing story spread throughout the Tzfas community like wildfire, strengthening their tremendous faith in the brachos of the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach.

"We were living in Sarcelles,

France, when our second daughter, Zelda Rochel, entered the world. Until she was four years old, we noticed no problem with her; she was a normal girl and there was absolutely nothing unusual in her conduct. I certainly never suspected any problem with her large and beautiful dark eyes until, when she was four years old, I began to notice that she had a very severe squint, and the pupils of her eyes seemed to move in every direction whenever she tried to focus on something.

"Continued observation convinced me that this was an ongoing condition, not just some momentary phenomenon. I was gripped by a feeling of panic. I understood that there was a problem here that must be taken seriously. I made an immediate appointment with a pediatrician who specialized in ophthalmology. His diagnosis confirmed my fears. She was severely cross-eyed in both of her eyes, and in order for her to be able to see properly, she must begin wearing eyeglasses with very thick lenses, specially suited to her prescription. The steep cost of these

glasses was the least of my concerns.

"I inquired whether perhaps there was some treatment that could repair the problem, or at least deal with this condition more effectively, but in vain. Thus, with no alternative, she began wearing special glasses. It was difficult for me to see her in them, as the glasses concealed her naturally beautiful eyes, and I worried that she might suffer lasting emotional damage should her kindergarten classmates laugh at her. Though my husband's position as the educational director for the local Chabad kindergarten made it easier for us to deal with this challenge, we were still pained that our daughter had this serious vision disorder at such a young age.

"By 5753, we had already reconciled ourselves to this unpleasant situation, so when one of my husband's friends from the kollel in Sarcelles told us he was traveling to 'Beis Chayeinu,' the letter we sent with him to the Rebbe concentrated on another matter entirely and did not mention a word about our daughter's condition. At the time, we were extremely uncertain regarding where our shlichus in life ought to be, and we asked the Rebbe for guidance regarding which city in France we should choose. A strong possibility was Nice, the city where I was born and raised. Along with Nice, we included the names of several cities throughout the French Republic. When we gave the letter to my husband's friend, he suggested we add the name 'Eretz Yisroel' to the list.

"We had no real intention of moving to Eretz Yisroel. We knew no one there, we didn't speak Hebrew that well, and there was no reason that we should want to leave the country of our birth. Certain that the Rebbe would not recommend this option, we added

Eretz Yisroel at the bottom of the list.

“A few days after the man flew to New York, we called the number that he left us. Rabbi Groner answered, and he informed us that we had an answer from the Rebbe. We were stunned by the reply. The Rebbe indicated that the best place for us was Eretz Yisroel, and he also suggested that we should live there on a rental basis and not buy a home.

“It was not until a year later that we finally fulfilled the Rebbe’s request. It was difficult for us to leave our entire family and all our friends in France and move to a country that, albeit the most natural place for every Jew, was totally foreign to us and where we did not know a soul. This was before the large waves of immigration from France to Eretz Yisroel that took place in recent years.

“On Rosh HaShana 5754, we learned the hard way that if the Rebbe suggests something, it would be appropriate to do it without delay. As my husband left shul, he was struck by an out-of-control car and was seriously injured. When I heard what had happened, I immediately felt that this was a way of hinting to us that if we would have left for Eretz Yisroel already, it could have been avoided.

“The following year, right after his condition had stabilized and the birth of our son, we emigrated to Eretz Yisroel and settled in the Holy City of Tzfas.

“Zelda Rochel was already six years old at the time. As she grew, my motherly anguish at her condition grew as well. I resolved that I must do something to put an end to her problem, and so I made an appointment at the children’s eye clinic at Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital in Yerushalayim. There we met with Professor Ben-Ezra. That he was also a French speaker greatly

eased our interaction with him. He examined our daughter and reached the same diagnosis of the doctors in France.

“He told me that though it was possible to correct the problem through the use of laser treatment, her young age made it a possibility that she might move during the operation. Due to the risk involved in this, it would be far preferable to postpone such an operation until she grows up. Such an operation was possible on children her age, and he had done some in the past, but though the probability of damage was not high, the danger was great so he preferred to wait. When I asked him what the danger was, he replied: ‘Total and permanent blindness.’ I realized that it would be better to leave the matter alone at this stage and have her wear those special glasses, rather than risk the loss of her sight for the rest of her life.

“That night, I decided that the time had come to request a bracha and advice from the Rebbe. I didn’t know whether it was right to wait several more years or if it would be more appropriate to start the treatment earlier. I felt that her appearance with these glasses precluded her proper development and acquiring greater self-confidence. I poured out all my thoughts and feelings in the letter, expressing the depths of my pain and anguish and pleading and supplicating for a bracha. I then placed the letter in one of the volumes of ‘Igros Kodesh’ in my home.

“The Rebbe’s answer was addressed to a boy who had requested a bracha on a certain matter. The Rebbe wrote to him that it will pass by the time he turns eighteen years old, and blessed him with many brachos.

“I couldn’t fully relate to this answer, but I understood that the

Rebbe was saying that there’s no need to rush and it would be better to postpone the operation until she’s older. It was extremely difficult to do so, because the difficulty in seeing my daughter this way was so great, but if that’s what the Rebbe said, it had apparently been decreed that we must deal with this problem.

“When she reached the age of twelve, a friend of mine, who worked for a local optician and was familiar with my daughter’s problem, suggested that I buy her a different type of glasses. These glasses had the same ophthalmologic designs, yet were more comfortable and had a more modern and far less unsightly appearance. We bought a pair that very day, which she wore until the age of seventeen.

“Throughout the next few years, the situation with her eyes remained the same. We left the matter alone, not consulting with any doctors or discussing the matter with anyone. While I did think about it occasionally, I would quickly push it out of my mind and forget about it.

“Every once in a while, thoughts crossed my mind about the Rebbe’s answer regarding the age of eighteen. I was taking it to mean that before she reaches the age of eighteen, the problem will be solved. But of course, this was merely my personal interpretation based on an emotional feeling and my heart’s desire.

“Shortly before her seventeenth birthday, we went to a well-known and prominent eye doctor from Rosh Pina named Dr. Rosenfeld. We told him about the serious vision disorder which had afflicted our daughter from an early age, and asked him to examine her in the hopes that he could determine some improvement in her condition over the years or an alternative form of treatment that could cure it. He proceeded to run a lengthy series of

tests, and after a long while, he said that he had identified the source of the problem. He then referred us to Dr. Miriam, an ophthalmologist at Poriya Hospital in T'verya who specialized in eye muscle exercises and could make a diagnosis at a much higher level and possibly recommend the proper treatment. In the meantime, Dr. Rosenfeld recommended to my daughter that she try removing her glasses every so often.

"The doctor's words gave her and us a powerful emotional boost.

"Following the doctor's advice, our daughter began to remove her glasses periodically, though she still wouldn't dare take them off outside the house.

"One morning, however – and even today, I still have to pinch myself sometimes to be sure that it's not all just a dream – she woke up and realized with a jolt that she could see perfectly fine, even without the aid of her glasses. She could look symmetrically without any difficulty. She rushed to her older sister's room and emotionally related her astounding discovery.

"Her sister looked at her eyes, and confirmed that indeed, she was looking straight ahead without appearing cross-eyed, even without her special glasses. The level of excitement in the house went through the roof. When a few days later, she traveled to Sarcelles, France, to work there as a camp counselor for the summer, she made the trip without her glasses.

"All the pain and anguish that had been part of my life ever since she was four years old had been transformed into incredible joy. I recalled the answer that I had received from the Rebbe, an answer that I had revealed to no one, about the age of eighteen. I could restrain myself no longer and I told everyone about how the Rebbe had blessed me several years ago that

when my daughter reached the age of eighteen, all of her eye problems would be rectified.

"That same year, in a special and symbolic example of Divine Providence, she won a raffle for a ticket to spend Tishrei with the Rebbe.

"When she returned to Eretz Yisroel, I told her that since we already had an appointment with that ophthalmologist at Poriya Hospital, perhaps it would be a good idea to take advantage of the opportunity and go see her anyway.

"The ophthalmologist had my daughter read numbers and letters

"Continued observation convinced me that this was an ongoing condition, not just some momentary phenomenon. I was gripped by a feeling of panic."

from the board in various shapes and sizes, which she did without any problem. Afterwards, she checked her eyes with a series of electronic devices, and when she finished her examinations, she told us that she didn't understand what we wanted. Not only did she detect no vision disorder, there wasn't even a sign of the problem that the doctors had written about in their diagnoses. Her eyesight was at a level of ninety-five percent!

"When I asked her what we should do with the eyeglasses, she smiled and said we can save them

for Purim.

"I felt as if I was fantasizing. This was something totally unrealistic; everything has disappeared at once. More than one doctor had confirmed our daughter's disorder, yet now there was nothing. The current diagnosis was clear and final.

"During Chanukah, Zelda Rochel had a sty in one of her eyes, and we took her to Dr. Rosenfeld from Rosh Pina for a checkup. He immediately recalled his previous diagnosis, and asked in puzzlement what had happened to her squint. We replied that it had completely disappeared. Dr. Rosenfeld, a native Italian, had little in the way of G-dly faith, and he had some difficulty grasping what we had just said. 'What you do mean, it disappeared?' he asked in perplexed bewilderment. He proceeded to examine her again, the examination taking much longer than usual. We later learned that he had conducted more thorough tests to verify our claim. When he concluded his final test, he typed onto his computer that he is classifying our daughter's case as a miracle with no medical explanation."

Mrs. Ester Houri concluded her story in a voice choking with emotion:

"This miracle was witnessed not only by our family, but also her friends, her classmates, and our neighbors – all of whom were accustomed to seeing her wearing those thick glasses. One of my daughter's classmates in Beis Chana, who is not from an Anash family, said that she has always had a hard time believing the stories about brachos from the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, especially those received via Igros Kodesh. However, after personally witnessing such an amazing story, she's a non-believer no longer..."

'YOUR FATHER WAS ONCE HERE'

By Nosson Avrohom

"I wondered whether it was worth investing so much effort and money. Perhaps it was time to discontinue this nice tradition and turn our energy toward other areas. I didn't want to be disappointed again."

For years, Rabbi Shmuel Gloiberman of Shikkun Chabad Lud has been giving a weekly Chassidus shiur in the Georgian "Beis Aharon" shul. He doesn't focus on one aspect of Chassidus, but covers anything from Tanya to maamarim of the Rebbe Rayatz. Most of the participants became acquainted with Chabad back in Georgia; many even attended Chabad schools. His shiurim draw people of all types and of various backgrounds.

R' Gloiberman has a special rapport with the young people, many of whom won't miss a shiur of his. Eventually, this led to him hosting them each year for a special Purim seuda in his home, for which his wife, Rivka, always prepared a bountiful repast. They looked forward to this seuda all year. Last year, however, the turnout was far less than in previous years, and it just didn't have the same special feeling.

"A couple weeks ago, my wife and I sat down to plan the Purim seuda, as we do every year. For



Rabbi Shmuel Gloiberman

many years, many young people had attended, and it was a wonderful opportunity for these young people to have an authentic Chassidic experience, hear about Purim from a Chassidic perspective and to make hachlatos. The poor turnout last year, though, had been a disappointment and put a damper

on our enthusiasm. We were unsure how to proceed.

"I wondered whether it was worth investing so much effort and money. Would we be disappointed again? My wife always worked so hard to prepare the feast, and last year so much had been left over. Perhaps it was time to discontinue this nice tradition and turn our energy toward other areas. I didn't want to be disappointed again."

THEN THE REBBE ADDED A LINE...

For a few days, R' Gloiberman vacillated, until the Rebbe, the "faithful shepherd," found a way to remove his doubts:

"The following Sunday afternoon, when I returned home from my work as a shochet, I lay down to rest. Within minutes, I was sound asleep and began to dream. I saw the Rebbe in all his glory, as I remembered him from the time I spent in Beis Chayeinu in the 70's. The Rebbe was in the hallway between the small zal and the steps lead down to the large shul. His face was full of expression. He turned to me and said to tell my wife to prepare challos for Purim and to smear mashke on them, which would increase the bracha for rain to fall.

"Those who know me know that I am not a believer in dreams. If I pick up a brochure or article and start reading a story about a dream,

I don't continue reading. My own dream was no exception. When the Rebbe appeared to me in a dream, I thought to myself, as I dreamt, 'What are you excited about? It's just a dream. You're dreaming this because you're not sure whether to make a Purim seuda or not.'

"But then the Rebbe added a line, 'And your father was once here.' Right after the Rebbe said that, I woke up.

"It took me a little while to digest this powerful experience. I had never dreamt of the Rebbe before and this was so vivid, more like a vision than a dream. I sat on the bed and thought to myself, 'I understand the beginning of the dream; the Rebbe wants me to continue organizing a Purim seuda and I will, but what was the last line the Rebbe said in reference to my father about?'

"I came up with different theories, recalling my father's visit to 770. Finally, realization struck – and I was taken aback."

THE REBBE READ MY FATHER'S MIND

"I spent the three years from 5744 to 5746 in communist-ruled Romania with Rabbi Yisroel Heber a"h. We were there on behalf of Merkos L'Inyanei Chinuch, on the Rebbe's shlichus. In a phone conversation with my mother at the end of 5744, she told me that my father, Rabbi Asher Gloiberman, a distinguished Karlin Chassid in Yerushalayim, had traveled to the United States with a delegation of Chassidim. He would be staying in New York, in Boro Park, for Rosh HaShana.

"I immediately called my brother Yaakov in Lud and told him that he had to get our father to spend Rosh HaShana in 770. He convinced our father to spend Rosh HaShana with the Rebbe and arranged for him to stay at the home of a cousin on his wife's side, R' Michel Raskin, the owner of the fruit store.

"My father was tremendously impressed by the davening and farbrengen in 770. Once Tishrei was over, he wrote me a letter describing everything he had experienced on Rosh HaShana in Lubavitch.

"He told me about the amazing hospitality that he had received and that Rabbi Binyamin Klein, one of the Rebbe's secretaries, remembered him from Yerushalayim and had arranged for him to sit behind the Rebbe's bima for the davening. He described the Rebbe's royal ways in astonishment, saying that every move the Rebbe made was amazingly thought out. The highlight of his trip was the big farbrengen Rosh HaShana afternoon, when he experienced the Rebbe's ruach ha'kodesh.

"Ordinary farbrengens were packed, but on Rosh HaShana, hundreds of guests who had come from far and wide to spend Rosh HaShana with the Rebbe joined the masses for the davening and the farbrengen with the Rebbe. Beis Chayeinu was one big can of sardines.

"My father, who wasn't used to the pushing, was pushed further and further until he found himself at the end of the pyramid to the right of the Rebbe, quite a distance away. Those who remember know that from this spot it was very hard to hear what was being said.

"My father was intrigued to notice the Chassidim raising their cup for l'chaim to the Rebbe, and after receiving a nod from the Rebbe, they would say l'chaim and drink. He, too, wanted to say l'chaim to the Rebbe, but wondered whether the Rebbe really noticed each Chassid as he seemed to do. He thought that perhaps the Rebbe didn't really notice each person, and it was just a game the Chassidim perpetuated to impress people.

"My father is a very serious person; there are no games with him. Truth is truth and the opposite

of truth is a lie. There is nothing in between. While these thoughts ran through his mind, he noticed the Rebbe looking in his direction and motioning to him to say l'chaim. There were many people around him and it took some time until he and those around him realized that the Rebbe meant him and not the other people. He got a cup and the Rebbe nodded at him.

"It took him some time to recover from the open expression of the Rebbe's ruach ha'kodesh. The Rebbe had showed him how he read his mind. With the Rebbe, every act is truthful.

"When I recalled my father's letter, the Rebbe's comment became clear. I had been convinced that 'dreams speak of vanity,' and that I didn't have to take my dream seriously. But the Rebbe was reminding me that my father, too, had thought that not everything is real, until he experienced it for himself."

When R' Gloiberman figured this out, he was dumbfounded. That week, he related this story to the participants at his shiur and asked them all to attend the Purim seuda.

"The Rebbe showed me that with him there are no games. Every inyan from the Rebbe is holy of holies. In simple words, the Rebbe was telling me, 'Keep up the good work. I know everything you're doing; I'm following and enjoying...'"

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EVENING DEDICATED TO THE REBBE AND THE REDEMPTION UNITES BROOKLYN

*Three thousand Jews from all walks of life participated in a Hakhel gathering that took place Yud-Alef Nissan in Brooklyn College's Whitman Hall * The Kinus, was organized by the "International World Center to Greet Moshiach,"* The evening interspersed many moving and powerful moments in a program of music, joy, and great faith and anticipation of the coming Redemption. * The atmosphere was of a Chassidishe Farbrengen and Welcome for Moshiach fitting for a celebration of the Rebbe MH"M's birthday.*



Israeli Chief Rabbi,
HaRav Yona Metzger





Rabbi Shlomo Majeski



Mordechai Ben David



Rabbi S.B. Kalmanson



Rabbi Chaim Serebryanski

YUD-ALEF NISSAN, Sunday night at 7:00 at Brooklyn College's Whitman Hall. The lights went down and the count-down began on three huge screens. As the seconds ticked down to the start of the program, a feeling of anticipation fell on the crowd.

Preparations for the event had begun about two weeks before with a massive advertising campaign: posters hung in Jewish areas; ads placed in Jewish newspapers; and radio announcements inviting the public to join the Kinus in honor of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. The ads were in English, Ivrit, and Russian so as to reach as broad a public as possible.

A NEW YORK HAKHEL EVENT

Though gatherings of this type have become frequent in Israel, this was the first of its type held in America, in accordance with the saying of the Friedlike Rebbe, "America iz Nit Andersh."

Despite the time pressure before Pesach, thousands of people flocked to Brooklyn College. In addition to Lubavitchers there were Litvisher Jews from Flatbush and Shtraimel wearing Chassidim from Boro Park and Williamsburg, alongside modern orthodox, and those

who have only recently begun to learn about their Jewish tradition. All chose to attend this event in honor of the Rebbe.

Throughout the night the program, whose production team was led by Shneur Cohen, was executed promptly with the transition from one program segments to the next taking place seamlessly and professionally. First up were the children of the Sparks Choir, conducted by R' Danny Finkelman. Their opening song, "Hakhel es ha'am," was perfect for this Hakhel event. It segued into "Yechi Adoneinu."

The evening's emcee was Rabbi Sholom Dovber Kalmanson, shliach in Cincinnati, who set the tone with his moving message of the special feelings of closeness to the Rebbe and longing for the end of the long and bitter exile that Yud-Alef Nissan, the Rebbe's birthday, awakens in us all. Rabbi Chaim Serebryanski, a senior Chassid in Crown Heights, was honored with reading the new chapter of T'hillim 108, corresponding to the Rebbe's years.

Yisrael Ettelson, a world class pianist, graced the event with his presence. His fingers skipped over the keys and he moved the audience with a soulful selection of niggunim. After playing a few solo niggunim, he accompanied Chazan Yehoshua Samuels in the soul stirring Russian melody, "*Stav ya pitu*."

Then the voice of the Rebbe resounded through the hall, as the audience watched a series of video clips of the Rebbe's call to everyone to work on bringing redemption. From the words of encouragement to the members of the Machne Israel development fund, to the response to small children who proclaimed "We want Moshiach Now!" From the Rebbe's "message to the world" in the famous response to a CNN reporter in 1991, to the gathering where the Rebbe exhorted "Turn over the world right now," to help build the Beis HaMikdash, the focus was clear, Moshiach is about to arrive and we need to be ready to greet him.

Rabbi Shlomo Majeski, dean of Machon Chana, spoke next. He demonstrated how even recently we have continued to see the unfolding of events as predicted in the Rebbe's prophecies about the coming Redemption and that we are certainly on track to see the complete and total Redemption very soon.

King of Jewish music, Mordechai Ben David, was next on the program. He sang the popular, "Melech," "Maaminim B'nei Maaminim," and "Higia Z'man Geulas'chem," as the Rebbe's image appeared on the screens, encouraging the singing. The crowd danced around the hall, up and down the steps and through the aisles. When this segment was over, the emcee surprised him with an announcement, "Mazal tov to Mordechai Ben David – today is his birthday!"



THE REBBE'S AFFECT ON THE WORLD

Rabbi Yona Metzger, Israeli Chief Rabbi and the evening's guest of honor, was introduced. His speech touched on one of the unique lessons of Birkas HaChama, that when it comes to the Jewish people quality is more important than quantity, and how the Rebbe's emissaries around the world preserve that quality. He concluded, with a personal story that he had with the Rebbe concerning his election to the post of Israeli Chief Rabbi exactly six years earlier to the day. More than twelve years before the election the Rebbe had indicated to Rabbi Metzger that he would be Rabbi of Israel and that the election would take place before Pesach. The Rebbe's words had been fulfilled to the letter, when the election was surprisingly postponed to the month of Nissan.

One of the surprises of the evening was the Chayaleinu ensemble, directed by R' Zalman Niggen. The boys are seventh graders in Ohr Menachem in Crown Heights with a mixture of instruments, which they played in beautiful harmony. They played two melodies: one a soul stirring melody for preparation for

yechidus; and the other a dance melody sung after yechidus. One of the boys, Sholom Dovber Liberow, explained the significance of these niggunim.

CONNECTING WITH THE REBBE TODAY

The Kinus maintained a flavor of a Chassidishe farbrengen throughout. The next speaker was Rabbi Gershon Avtzon, dean of the Chabad mesivta

in Cincinnati, who demonstrated through personal stories and anecdotes how the power of the Rebbe's blessings, guidance, and encouragement continue to provide the fuel that keep his institutions running. Rabbi Avtzon told of a student who wrote to the Rebbe about wanting to learn in the Chabad yeshiva in France, and who then opened to precise instructions from the Rebbe in the Igros Kodesh.

In another story, R' Avtzon told of a student that the directors of the Yeshiva felt they needed to expel, but when they wrote to the Rebbe, they opened to a letter which spoke about the mesirus nefesh needed to educate a Jewish child and how this will help materially too. Of course the bachur remained in yeshiva.

The Rebbe's response was fulfilled when a short while later, a friend called spontaneously to inform Rabbi Avtzon that he wanted to give his maaser money to the yeshiva. Every month, R' Avtzon received a check from him. One day, he received a text message which said they had to talk about the following year. When R' Avtzon called him, expecting to hear a tale of woe about the economy, his friend said, "I would like to give



"Hakhel es ha'am": R' Danny Finkelman and the Sparks Choir



Rabbi Gershon Avtzon



R' Shneur Zalman Kurinsky

you more.”

“Today, he called me again and said, ‘Today the Rebbe became a year older and my donation has become bigger.’” The inspiration from Rabbi Avtzon’s words certainly drew the audience closer to the Rebbe, even those who do not consider themselves to be adherents to the Chabad movement.

GIVING THANKS FOR MIRACLES

An important aspect of preparing for redemption is to express appreciation for the miracles we see in our own lives. After Rabbi Avtzon’s presentation, another video was shown that was produced for this Hakhel event. In it, Danny Finkelman related a personal story of how his eyesight was miraculously restored with the Rebbe’s blessing. Thanks to this miracle he came to Chabad and is now a shliach. The background music and visual effects enhanced his touching story.

Right after this video, Danny Finkelman himself went up on stage together with his Sparks choir. They captivated the audience with their wonderful presentation.

R’ Kalmanson followed with

stories he heard from soldiers on his last visit to Eretz Yisroel, about the miracles that took place in the recent “Cast Lead” war.

The theme of the Kinus, which was mentioned time and again, was a request that people give the Rebbe gifts for his birthday. After being wowed by the miracle stories, this topic was mentioned again by a young soldier in Tzivos Hashem, Yosef Popper. As only a sweet child can do, he “farbrenge” with the audience and demanded the hisgalus of the Rebbe. He moved the crowd when he said, “Although I never saw the Rebbe, my entire life I am waiting and yearning to see the Rebbe. I think about the Rebbe, talk about the Rebbe and dream about the Rebbe.”

“We haven’t had an event like this in years, in the United States, at least not since the Yud Shevat satellite in 5756,” said one participant. Apparently, the organizers of the event had that same feeling, for on the screen appeared a clip of Chaim Fogelman singing “Can’t you hear the footsteps of Moshiach,” which was shown on that Yud Shevat.

“It brought me back 13 years, to the days when the belief in the Rebbe as Moshiach, despite what occurred

on Gimmel Tammuz, was first being publicized in a big way,” one Chassid told me. For the Israelis in the audience, the English song was translated into Ivrit.

Mordechai Ben David returned to the stage and once again he got the audience up on its feet and dancing in the aisles.

A GIFT TO THE REBBE

“What are you giving the Lubavitcher Rebbe for his birthday?” That was the question asked by Shneur Zalman Kurinsky in a video as he roamed the streets of New York seeking out responses from a variety of interviewees. It was a nice touch when Kurinsky himself appeared on the stage live and asked the audience the same question, “What are you giving the Rebbe?”

R’ Kalmanson read the positive resolutions of the Kinus for additional good deeds in the three areas of Torah, Avoda, and G’milus Chassadim, and ended with thanks for all those who helped make the evening a success, from R’ Sholom Dovber Drizin (l’ilui nishmas his father, R’ Avrohom Maiyor whose yahrtzeit is 10 Nissan,) to the bachurim who worked so hard on all aspects of the production.

The Kinus ended with a video clip of Chassidim standing before the Rebbe, uttering the proclamation and prayer with which we live until today, *“Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V’Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach L’olam Va’ed!”*



EDUCATING THE EDUCATORS

By Nosson Avrohom

Photographs by Meir Alfasi

Reb Yisroel Zalmanowitz received the Rebbe's bracha for his shlichus in chinuch and he serves as an educational consultant to many Chabad schools. * Originally with B'nei Akiva, the Rebbe illuminated his soul.

From a young age, Rabbi Yisroel Zalmanowitz of Rechovot felt that his calling was chinuch. At every stage in life he was involved in chinuch in some form or another. In his youth, as a member of the B'nei Akiva movement, he became the organizer for the educators. Later on, when he learned in the Hesder yeshiva in Karnei Shomron, he ran Mesibos Shabbos and the recitation of T'hilim for the children of the yishuv. After he married, he was a teacher in the yeshiva high school, Yeshivat HaDorom.

Eventually he was promoted to educational supervisor but his career was realigned because of his interest in Chabad. With the Rebbe's bracha, he accepted the job of a melamed in a Chabad elementary school in Rechovot under the direction of the menahel, Rabbi Elimelech Shachar. He went on to become an educational consultant. With the guidance of the

Rebbe and blessings of Chabad rabbanim, he went on to pursue his own continued education and since then, has become an educational consultant, planning curriculum and educational objectives for many schools.

EARLY DAYS

Rabbi Zalmanowitz was born in Rechovot to a religious-Zionist family. His maternal grandfather went to Eretz Yisroel from Poland in 1935. He had been one of the heads of the Zionist movement in Galicia. His father was the only member of his family to survive Auschwitz. After the war, he made aliya, spent some time in the transit camps of Atlit and Cyprus, fought in the War of Independence in Yerushalayim, and then settled in Rechovot.

"I remember my father waking up at night from nightmares, sometimes screaming as the terrifying experiences he went

through surfaced. We spoke a lot about the Holocaust."

R' Zalmanowitz's aptitude and feeling for chinuch may well have been inherited from his paternal grandfather, who lived in the Marmorash district of Hungary and was well-known for his pedagogical skills.

"I heard that when the death train which he was on entered Auschwitz, he asked everyone to recite Vidui. He was a yerei Shamayim. My father, because of the exigencies of the times, could not always follow the course his father had walked."

When he finished high school, R' Zalmanowitz was one of the founding students of the Hesder yeshiva in Karnei HaShomron. Even while in the army, he did not abandon his love for education and instilling values and was appointed to the staff that worked with "Raful's boys."

"The then Chief of Staff, General Raful, thought it important that soldiers who left the army for civilian life have an education and profession in hand. I was in charge of directing soldiers to professions that suited them.

While still learning in Karnei HaShomron, he married and his first two daughters were born. In 1987 he became very involved with Chabad. But the seeds for this transformation were planted long

before, when he was still in ninth grade.

His school announced that they were going to a convention of yeshiva high schools that was taking place in honor of 19 Kislev in Kfar Chabad. When they later specified that only the upper grades were going, he was upset. Without knowing what was so interesting in Kfar Chabad, he staged an uprising among his classmates and they all went out to block the buses. They agreed to move only when they were promised that the following year, they would go too.

“Many graduates of Yeshivat HaDarom later became involved with Chabad. A year later, the hanhala of the yeshiva fulfilled its promise and we went on the trip to

the farbrengen in Kfar Chabad. Though we did not understand all the speeches, we were moved when they began singing “Pada v’Shalom Nafshi”; the Chassidic niggunim made a tremendous impression on us. The atmosphere in the hall was electric.”

A year later, he was introduced to the power of Chabad’s influence in the form of the Lag B’Omer parades they organized. He and his fellow students were among thousands of children from all segments of the population participating at the Maccabee stadium in Rechovot.

“I’ll never forget the moment when thousands of children of various backgrounds proclaimed the Shma together. I was thunderstruck

by it. It was so powerful. I began to realize that only Chabad – a movement that bridged various sectors and views – could organize something like this.”

His next and decisive encounter with Chabad was during the 1982 Peace in Galilee War.

“Religious-Zionists played a prominent role in the fighting and sustained many losses. The most tragic events took place during the Sultan Yakub battle, in which many yeshiva students were killed, including Dovid Chaviv, a roommate of mine. I went to many funerals and paid many Shiva calls.

“As a result of this war, two roshei yeshiva of Har Tziyon, Rabbi Amital and Rabbi Lichtenstein, said that perhaps the time had come to



make territorial compromises with the Arabs. They were the ones who started the Meimad movement. They created a furor within the religious-Zionist movement.”

The rabbanim in the Hesder yeshivos and yeshiva high schools presented a united front against them. They came out with a signed proclamation saying that such talk weakened the Jewish people.

“I was a talmid in shiur beis in the Hesder yeshiva in Karnei HaShomron at the time. The rabbanim of the yeshiva, led by the roshei yeshiva, Rabbi Shmuel Heber and Rabbi Avrohom Kurtzweil, were among the few who did not sign.

“Before we had a chance to question this, we were called to an assembly and Rabbi Kurtzweil addressed us, explaining why he did not sign. This was a bombshell for me. He explained that he held as the Lubavitcher Rebbe, the gadol ha’dor, did – that it was forbidden to give away land because this endangered lives, and not because

of the holiness of the land.”

R’ Kurtzweil told the talmidim that even if other rabbanim said otherwise, the Lubavitcher Rebbe was the gadol ha’dor and his view took precedence.

“I left the room confused and flabbergasted. It was only years later, when I came across a booklet of Likkutei Sichos while learning in Kollel in yeshivas Merkaz HaRav, that I began to understand. I saw that the Rebbe spoke about Eretz Yisroel and analyzed things from a halachic and spiritual perspective. I was amazed. I felt I had to look into Chabad. I realized that the Rebbe wasn’t just another rav, but someone whose influence crossed all lines.”

FIRST ENCOUNTER

After his first two daughters were born, R’ Zalmanowitz returned to Yeshivat HaDarom – this time, as a teacher. The menahalim of the yeshiva, who had observed his

talents when he was still a boy, gave him a prestigious position.

By this time, the Chabad community in Rechovot had begun to develop. As 19 Kislev approached, he decided to mark the occasion with his talmidim. He took his class to the Chabad shul.

“That farbrengen was followed by other farbrengens and other Chabad activities. I began davening all three daily prayers in the Chabad shul. That year I went for the first time to celebrate Hakafof Shniyos with Chabad.”

“I could feel that the simcha in the Chabad shul was different, more genuine, more p’nimius’dik and deeper. One of the Chassidim who farbrenged was Rabbi Erez Karelinstein, who serves today as vice principal of the Chabad mosdos here. When he had something to drink he inquired about me. The words seem to come from the depths of my soul as I found myself answering him, ‘I work in Yeshivat HaDarom but I’m a Chabad Chassid in every way.’”

“Rabbi Yitzchok Arad, now the rosh yeshiva of Daat in Rechovot, helped me very much at that time. He was my mashpia and he greatly eased my entry into the world of Chabad.”

“Rabbi Yechezkel Sofer had a great influence on me. It was at one of his shiurim that I decided – along with my wife, with whom I made my transition to Chabad – to start wearing a black yarmulke. I thought the time had come to make a move and stop being ‘shatnez’ – of mixed philosophy. I felt that I had discovered a deep and ordered outlook which was tremendously appealing to me.”

In light of his success in chinuch, Yeshivat HaDarom asked him to take on a more demanding job. They offered him the choice between the job of Merakeiz Chativa or being a Rebbe in the upper



grades. At this time, the menahel of the Chabad mosdos, R' Elimelech Shachar, who had gotten to know him from his frequent visits to the community, offered him a position.

"As a Chassid, I knew where to address my questions and I wrote a letter to the Rebbe. Days went by without a response. I realized the Rebbe wanted me to make my own decision, and though there was no comparison between the prestige of the two positions, the pendulum swung towards working in the Chabad School. I came to the realization that you can't turn the clock back. I was with Chabad and with it all the way. When I informed the Rebbe of my decision, I received a response: **It should be in a good and auspicious time.**"

On 18 Elul, 1987, R' Zalmanowitz put on a black hat, and by Rosh HaShana he was wearing a gartel over the sirtuk that he had started wearing every Shabbos. It seems that when the inner journey to Chabad and the Rebbe was stable, changing the externals was easy.

"I spent Sukkos 5748, a Hakhel year, with the Rebbe. Rabbi Shlomo Eidelman a"h guided me and took care of me."

"As R' Eidelman told me to do, I went up near Gan Eden HaTachton in order to see the Rebbe. Suddenly the Rebbe appeared from the sukka with the four minim he had just finished binding, and I ended up standing right near the Rebbe. Moved and taken aback, I recited the SheHechiyanu blessing. The Rebbe heard the bracha and answered amen. It took me several minutes to recover from this encounter, which remains engraved in my soul. I trembled. The Rebbe's face was full of expressiveness and authority, such I had never seen before in my life. I felt that the Rebbe had adopted me as his Chassid."

"My next encounter with the

Rebbe occurred a few days later. We had just returned from doing mitvtzaim at Kennedy airport – a very special experience. When I went to 770, I was told that there was a children's rally going on and the Rebbe was about to address the children. Only the children and madrichim were allowed inside. As I stood in the other room asking permission to enter, the door opened and the Rebbe came in. I found myself facing the Rebbe and I nodded submissively. The broad smile I received from the Rebbe has accompanied me ever since."

THE REBBE HAD ME CHOOSE ON MY OWN

Three years later, in 5751, R' Zalmanowitz spent another Tishrei in 770 and was given a shlichus from the Rebbe.

"As I did every year, as Erev Rosh HaShana approached, I wrote up all the good things that had happened to me in the previous year and sent it to the Rebbe. This was in addition to the letters that I wrote throughout the year, whenever I had a question or wanted advice. This year, it had been quite some time that my letters had gone unanswered."

R' Zalmanowitz was unable to fly before Rosh HaShana since he was a fulltime teacher. That Tishrei he went by for "dollars," and from the manner of the Rebbe's blessing, he determined his life's work in chinuch.

"When I stood before the Rebbe, I asked for success in my work of chinuch al taharas ha'kodesh. Before I could finish my sentence and say 'in the Chabad School in Rechovot,' the Rebbe blessed me, 'it should be with great and outstanding success.'"

Despite his impressive resume in chinuch, he decided to expand his educational approach, which he had already begun to solidify for himself

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with the experience he had amassed, and he went to study at an institute for academics. He completed his studies at Machon Lifschitz for teachers and debated whether to continue to Beit Berl or Professor Feurstein's program. He wanted to learn how to help children who experienced problems with reading and comprehension. From his extensive experience in chinuch, he knew the problem begins at a young age but if it's not dealt with properly it can become a bigger problem and prevent the child from progressing socially and behaviorally.

"Having decided that I was going to advance my professional credentials in chinuch, I was disturbed to hear the rav of the k'hilla, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Gluckowsky, relate at a farbrengen that the Rebbe had told someone in regard to studying in university that although he had done so, the man should not. When the farbrengen was over, I went to R' Gluckowsky with my question, and he invited me to come to his office to discuss the matter."

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R' Zalmanowitz was inclined to going to Beit Berl, but the three rabbanim of the beis din thought otherwise. They attributed great importance to the study of this subject, because of the need to know how to deal with situations in which children had learning problems, and decided that the best place for him was with Professor Reuven Feurstein.

"After I finished learning about the ten thought faculties as a solution to the reading problem, I took additional courses, including one on educational assessments from the Education Ministry."

PAY ATTENTION TO THE LITTLE CHILDREN

In educational circles, R' Zalmanowitz is known as a progressive educator with a profound educational philosophy. His method has proven itself with many students who have gotten back into mainstream classes. He says that many children drop out because of the lack of attention when the children are taught the letters in the early years of their schooling.

"My many years of study that I invested with the blessings of the Chabad rabbanim enable me to help teachers understand that they must look at their students and not just at the material they need to cover."

When I asked him what the magic word is, he said that in

chinuch there is no magic word. Each student is an individual. He believes in helping the weaker students while challenging the stronger ones.

"In chinuch one has to think in multiple directions. You can't lock yourself into a certain way and ignore all other approaches. You have to develop new methods to give teachers the ability to develop skills in their students and to be on top of problems when the children are young; if they are allowed to fester until they're older, the problems grow and intensify.

"As revolutionary as it sounds, you have to be open to other approaches in addition to the traditional way in which our children learn the Alef-Beis. In general, the traditional way is best – I recently explained to a researcher in the Education Ministry why the traditional way of learning to read is the best of all the methods and she validated what I said – but at the same time, we have to be open to other approaches. If a child is having a hard time, and many do, other creative ways must be found to help them."

R' Zalmanowitz notes that when a child has a hard time learning and grasping material when he is young, he becomes frustrated. His frustration only worsens with time, leading to a slippery slope which causes the child to drop out of school later on because he feels he does not belong.

"There are many children who have a hard time putting together two pieces of information. They don't understand when the teacher combines letters and vowels. The parents don't always have time to review the material taught in class, increasing the child's frustration."

R' Zalmanowitz was happy to recommend other methods; after all, this is his life's work. He has had great success with the following method in a number of schools

where he serves as an educational consultant:

"It's very important to work with the children from a young age on identifying the sounds that letters make. Hashem created us with many abilities and we need to use all of them so that the letters are engraved in the child's soul. One way of doing this is to use the visual and tangible aspect of the letters through touch, much as we have children lick honey from the letters when they have their hachnasa l'cheider."

According to surveys that were done, the number of children who have reading difficulties in Israel is growing – last year it reached 25 percent. R' Zalmanowitz says that although this problem is not as big in the frum schools, we are not immune.

"A lot of work must be done, especially at these young ages."

When asked until what age is it considered normal to have reading difficulties and at what stage it becomes a serious problem, R' Zalmanowitz said:

"Reading readiness can develop until age seven. A student in first or second grade who still can't read well does not necessarily have a real problem; it could be a matter of maturation. Stigmatizing a child in second grade who is still not reading well as a failure may not only be inaccurate, it could deeply and negatively affect the child."

When R' Zalmanowitz speaks about reading he doesn't refer merely to the technical ability to read but to being able to combine letters into words and words into sentences.

"You have to understand that reading is also comprehension. There are many children who read well but don't understand what they're reading. I have heard from teachers in yeshivos that there are talmidim who read nicely but when they are asked to explain what they

read, they're stumped. It's better to learn less quantitatively, but ensure that the students understand. Those talmidim who have a hard time with the technicalities of reading quickly often understand what is read better than others, because they are not reading so much with their eyes as with their minds."

DROPPING OUT

The most painful topic for R' Zalmanowitz, which comes up several times during the interview, is children dropping out, and how to prevent it or minimize it.

"Aside from those who leave because of emotional and social problems, a large number of

children drop out because of learning problems and a problematic relationship between educators and students.

"At one of the schools I work at, we discussed boundaries and rules. Someone asked – what should be done to a child who breaks the rules. All the educators there said he should be punished. I was the only one who said that punishing him was not a solution, not even for chutzpa. Running to punish is easy, but it doesn't take into account what motivated the child to do what he did. A child's behavior, such as aggression or chutzpa, does not come from a vacuum. As big as the punishment will be, it won't address the reasons that caused the child to

misbehave, and it will merely serve to assuage the feelings of the teacher whose authority was flouted."

The world has changed and is constantly changing. What teachers knew when they were kids is not relevant now.

"We adults also permit ourselves independent thinking vis-à-vis those who are appointed over us, so how can we expect otherwise from our children? We don't provide them with a positive example of authority and yet we expect them to obey authority. The most important thing we can provide for our children is a listening ear to their ambitions and challenges. A punishment will only strengthen his feeling of



rebelliousness. We see that children are more obedient to their young counselors in the summertime than to their teachers. This is because the counselors listen to their problems and are role models for them.

"In the past, a teacher could say, 'So what if the children don't understand me?' This attitude no longer works. Today, in order to identify with someone, you have to love them. It's not that you can't get upset; you can, but it's important that the child see that it comes from love, not from hate.

"Go find out whether the policy of fining children in the yeshiva world has led to greater yiras Shamayim. Obviously then, more work is required of us mechanchim in paying attention and giving more of ourselves."

R' Zalmanowitz attributes his expectations of teachers to invest more effort, energy and time into their students to the role model he has adopted for himself – the Rebbe.

"Look at how much time the Rebbe devoted to listening to people's problems. The Rebbe spent hours hearing the problems and stories of Jews from all over the world and he had patience for them all. We need to implement this in our classrooms. We need to listen more, to be more involved. In every situation we must see the child as the focal point and not ourselves. It is absolutely forbidden to hurt the child."

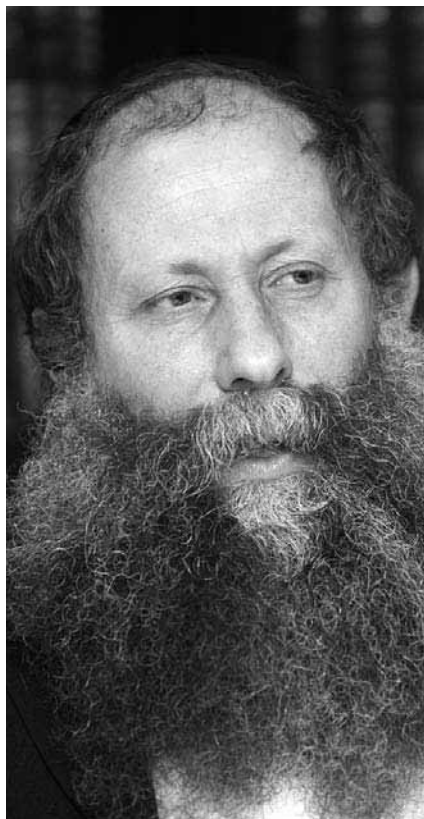
I asked R' Zalmanowitz what to do when a child has already dropped out of the system.

"There is no point in pointing an accusatory finger towards the hanhala. Long before the school says they can no longer work with the child, there are many signals that professionals in every school have to be aware of and address in ways we spoke about earlier. If, as a last resort, the child is leaving the

school, the parents must hug him, not push him away, and talk to him a lot, focusing on his good points. All children have good points.

"It must be emphasized to the child that he is a good talmid, and the factors for which the hanhala to suspend or expel him are external things which don't affect his p'nimius, which has so much good. Every parent knows his child and his good points.

"When I meet with teachers I



explain that when parents call to discuss their children, they have to emphasize the good points. The parent is well enough aware of their child's issues without you having to specify them."

In general, says R' Zalmanowitz, chinuch needs to be according to the long-short approach and not the short-long approach.

"The learning has to be quality and not just quantity. The teacher

needs to take pride in the class, collectively, understanding the material that was taught, and not in the number of pages that he taught without the class comprehending. We need to place greater stress on thinking and depth in learning. For example, when learning in Chumash about Avrohom Avinu or about Noach, it's a good idea to say who came first, to spend time on the material, not to run through it. The students need to develop their way of thinking so that it's creative and deeper."

Although these days, the responsibility for shaping a child falls mostly on teachers, parents are vital.

"A parent must make time, at least once a week, to look at his children's notebooks, to take an interest and be involved. A child must be given a chance, at least once a week, to talk to his father. The Avos U'Banim program is terrific.

"I suggest that parents look kindly on the teachers. If a parent reacts negatively to what a teacher said, he is weakening his own authority as well. You don't have to justify what the teacher said, but you must show your child you respect it."

CHINUCH IS IN HIS BONES

During the course of this interview, it was obvious how chinuch is dear to R' Zalmanowitz's heart. He lives and breathes it.

"A big change has taken place in recent years in the field of education, but the work isn't finished yet; we're just at the beginning. At the same time that we cling to our old, tried and true chinuch methods, we have to be open to changes that can improve what we do so we can prevent children from becoming frustrated in school and dropping out."