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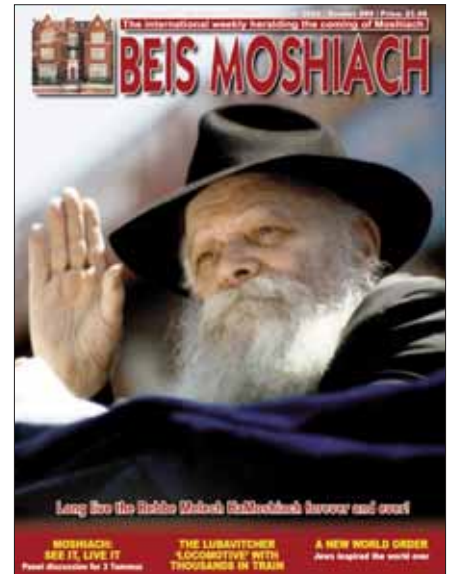
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Beis Moshiach (USPS 012-542) ISSN 1082-0272 is published weekly, except Jewish holidays (only once in April and October) for \$160.00 in Crown Heights, Brooklyn and in all other places for \$180.00 per year (45 issues), by Beis Moshiach, 744 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY and additional offices. Postmaster: send address changes to Beis Moshiach 744 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409. Copyright 2009 by Beis Moshiach, Inc.

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# UNRAVELLING THE MYSTERY OF G-D'S DECREES

By Boruch Merkur (based on *Seifer HaSichos* 5748 Vol. 1, pg. 306-319)

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

[Continued from last issue]

The Rebbe continues:

“In any case, it is needless to say that with respect to behavior there is a change in conduct after the first 30 days of mourning...but one should even strive to do all that is dependent upon him in order to affect the **feelings of the heart**. And when one does all he can, it is considered true Divine service, even if it is not the absolute truth (*emes l’amito mamash*).”<sup>179</sup>

Behaviors are easy to adapt, relatively speaking. But to bring about internal change, to have an impact on our emotions, is a truly formidable challenge. Nevertheless, it is the call of the hour and our efforts are valued even if they do fall short of perfection.

### **TOTAL PURITY ONLY POSSIBLE WITH MOSHIACH**

Similarly, there is inspirational value and auspiciousness in reading the Torah portion of the Red Heifer, which helps to thwart the impurity associated with death, but the ultimate purification from death is only possible with the advent of Moshiach:

“Moreover, and this is the main thing:

“The ultimate nullification of the impression left by death (the subject matter of the Torah portion of the Red Heifer) is as it is understood in the literal sense. [It

will take place at the time of the Resurrection of the Dead, when there will be the fulfillment of the verse] ‘**awaken and sing, you who dwell in the dust.**’ Then there will be no need to strive towards assimilating intellectual explanations in order to affect the feelings of the heart, for it

will be visible to the eye that those who dwell in the dust ‘awaken,’ and it will be audible to the ear<sup>180</sup> the sound of their singing – ‘awaken and **sing.**’

“When we read about the Red Heifer in the Torah, this concept is boldly underscored:

“The portion of the Torah describing the Red Heifer is only complete when there are the actual ashes of the heifer (from which purification is achieved), which will take place with the advent of Moshiach: ‘The Messianic king will prepare the tenth<sup>181</sup> (heifer).’<sup>182</sup> (Mixed with these ashes, there will also be some of the ashes of the red heifers that preceded it, including the first heifer, which was prepared by Moshe Rabbeinu.)

“And then the entire concept of impurity will be nullified – ‘the spirit of impurity I will remove from the earth’<sup>183</sup> – including the notion that death originated and resulted from the sin of eating from the Tree of Knowledge,<sup>184</sup> until the resurrection of the dead is attained, ‘awaken and sing, you who dwell in the dust,’ as discussed above.

“And this concept is emphasized in a more overt manner in the **Haftora** (the conclusion and seal of the Torah reading) of the Torah portion of the Red Heifer: ‘I will cast upon you pure waters and you shall be purified, etc.,’<sup>185</sup> ‘and My spirit I will place among you, etc.’”<sup>186</sup>

## NOTES:

179 As explained in *Tanya* Ch. 13 regarding the nature of the love of G-d attainable by Beinonim – that “in comparison to the level of Tzaddikim, who serve G-d with absolute truth, this level of love is not called ‘true Divine service’ at all, etc.” – see Footnote 53 in the original.

180 To note the especial advantage of the sense of hearing (even in comparison with seeing [which is usually described as being superior to hearing]), as understood from the law that “if someone [was injured and] became deaf, he is monetarily compensated in full” (Bava Kama 85b). That is, specifically if the person is deafened, not blinded. For when one is blinded, he is only entitled to be compensated for the loss of that eye. From this it is understood that the sense of hearing is connected and pertains to the general being of the person, more so than the sense of sight. (This topic is discussed in *Ohr HaTorah* Eikev, pg. 721, end ff; Nach Vol. 2, pg. 901,

end ff., among other places.)

181 Rambam’s Laws of the Red Heifer, Ch. 3, end.

182 The Rambam continues with, “**may he be speedily revealed – amen, may it be G-d’s will**” (discussed in *Likkutei Sichos* Chukas 5746).

183 Zecharia 13:2.

184 As it is written (B’Reishis 2:17), “From the Tree of Knowledge, etc., you shall not eat, **for** on the day that you eat from it you shall surely die,” which is discussed in the Chassidic discourse beginning with the words, “Death will be swallowed up forever” of 5725 (*Seifer HaMaamarim Meluket* Vol. 2, pg. 272 ff). See also the commentary of Rashi on Bava Basra 17a.

185 Yechezkel 36:25.

186 Ibid 27

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Upon this statement I affix my signature, Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> Tamuz 5766



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# Sivan 28 - Gimmel Tammuz Magbis

B.H. Sivan 15, 5769

**To all Anash, Men and Women, G-d bless you.**

We are soon approaching the very auspicious day, Gimmel Tammuz. This day comes in close proximity with Sivan 28, the auspicious day that the Rebbe MH"M and the Rebbetzin arrived in the United States.

Obviously, these are very opportune days, especially when it is connected to the number ten, when one should again evaluate his or her "Hiskashrus" (connection) with the Rebbe, and more important, to utilize these special days to 'strengthen' the Hiskashrus to the Rebbe.

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With this in mind, we therefore urge each and everyone of anash, men and women to support Kupas Rabbeinu in every possible way.

In this merit may we be "zoiche" that much before Gimmel Tammuz, the Rebbe will be revealed as Melech Hamoshiach and redeem us from this deep and bitter Golus and lead us all to the true and final Geulo, NOW MAMAOSH.

VAAD KUPAS RABBEINU

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# MOSHIACH: SEE IT, LIVE IT

*A panel of mashpiim addressed many questions pertaining to the Rebbe's horaos about preparing to greet Moshiach and spreading the Besuras HaGeula. \* In advance of Gimmel Tammuz, we present part one of this symposium.*

The Geula has always been one of the fundamentals of our faith. Two out of the thirteen Principles of Faith of the Rambam relate to Geula (the belief in Moshiach's coming and the belief in resurrection of the dead). The Gemara in the tractate Sanhedrin says, "The world was not created for anything except for Moshiach." Chassidus explains that the Geula is the ultimate goal of the creation of the world and the purpose of all the Torah and mitzvos we do while in exile.

We have merited to be the generation chosen to realize the goal of creation, bringing the Sh'china down to earth, to this physical world. It's not an easy job. The Rebbe himself said in his inaugural maamer that we were chosen to be the seventh generation, "not by our choice and not by our desire." But the job was given to us, and the very fact that

such a momentous task was assigned to us indicates that we were given the ability to carry it out, and that we must do so in the best possible way.

The best way of doing the job is, obviously, by following what the Rebbe says in the sichos. The Rebbe paved the way in hundreds of sichos but due to the exigencies of the times and the confusion since Gimmel Tammuz, some people remain at a loss as to what to do. It is for this reason that we convened some distinguished mashpiim to answer important questions on this topic.

In the Rebbe's sichos of 5751-5752, there are two main things that the Rebbe demands of us: 1) **To prepare oneself and the world to greet Moshiach** – we will ask the mashpiim to explain how we need to live with Moshiach and how we can get *others*, the people we meet on mivtzaim, to live with

Moshiach. 2) **To publicize the Besuras HaGeula** – We need explanations, based on the Rebbe's sichos and responses, about what needs publicizing and how to go about it.

Let us begin with a general question: We all know that the topic of Geula and the hisgalus of Moshiach have always been at the forefront, starting with the Rebbe's first maamer when he accepted the Chabad leadership in 5711. However, it took on momentum in the 80's and reached a crescendo in 5751-5752. How did the Rebbe explain this unusual emphasis?

**R' Schapiro:** As you said, the centrality of the belief in the coming of Moshiach has always been a foundation of Jewish life. In Tanya, at the beginning of chapter 37, the Alter Rebbe shows the connection between life in galus and the promises of Geula and says that all future revelations depend on our actions now.

That means that a Jew's avodas Hashem throughout the generations was supposed to be permeated by the knowledge that it was all leading to the revelations of Yemos HaMoshiach. However, we don't find that Jews constantly lived with this feeling that all future revelations depended on their daily avoda.

This connection between avodas Hashem and the coming of



Moshiach became much more practical after the ascent of the Baal Shem Tov's soul on Rosh HaShana 5507 (1746), in which he reached the chamber of Moshiach and was told he was coming "when your wellsprings spread forth." That means that a new avoda began, to spread the wellsprings of Toras HaChassidus in order to hasten Moshiach's coming. This avoda intensified after the release of the Alter Rebbe from jail in Petersburg (which is referred to as "after Petersburg" in Chabad), and continued to intensify as the generations passed.

A particular emphasis was seen when the Rebbe Rashab started Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim. He said that the T'mimim are "soldiers of the house of Dovid" whose job it is to fight against those who "mocked Your enemies Hashem, who mocked the footsteps of Your anointed one." But even then, the avoda was not to live each day and moment with the inyan of Moshiach. They knew that learning Chassidus and the avoda of iskafia and is'hafcha breaks the klipos of the world, but they didn't constantly live with the idea of Moshiach.

Even during the generation of the Rebbe Rayatz, whose hallmark avoda was the kind of mesiras nefesh that transforms galus to geula as explained in Tanya, Moshiach was still not the primary focus of everything.

**R' Offen:** The turning point was in the Rebbe's inaugural maamer "Basi L'Gani," in which he defined the role of the seventh generation. The Rebbe explained that there were six generations preceding Moshe Rabbeinu who brought the Sh'china progressively lower until Moshe brought it down to earth at Mattan Torah.

So too today, the Alter Rebbe began the series of seven generations who bring the Sh'china down to earth. The revelation of Moshiach descends from heaven to heaven and the role of the seventh generation is to bring the Sh'china down to earth.

The Chabad leaders in previous generations were also involved in bringing the Sh'china down to earth. The Tzemach Tzedek said that the printing of Likkutei Torah was a revelation of Moshiach as it was in the upper heavens. The Rebbe Maharash countered that we need Moshiach down here.

This goal, of bringing the



***The Rebbe once announced at a farbrengen:***

***"Yidden, get out of galus!" What does that mean? How can we get up and get out of galus?***

--Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Offen

Sh'china down, was established from the start of the Rebbe's nesius and he instructed us that the way to accomplish it is by spreading Judaism and the wellsprings.

**What was new in the 80's?**

**R' Offen:** In the sicha of Purim, 5747, the Rebbe spoke about kitzim (end points of galus). He asked how it was possible for g'dolei Yisroel to publicize kitzim when so many years have passed since then and Moshiach still did not come! In this sicha, the Rebbe mentioned the kitzim of the Alter Rebbe, the Rebbe Rashab (5666, which was connected with that

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famous Hemshech) and the Rebbe Rayatz (5703-4), and said that the only explanation that he found was that until today, the job to bring Moshiach was given to the Jewish leaders and the time has come for the job to be given to every Jew.

Since then, the Rebbe began giving the job over to us. What until then had been the job primarily of the leader, became our inyan. The Rebbe began to demand more of us – that *we* get ready for Yemos HaMoshiach, that we prepare ourselves and our household, that we breathe the air of Moshiach, and that we open our eyes and see how everything is already prepared for the seuda (which comes through learning about Geula and Moshiach). Furthermore, the Rebbe demands that we live as we would in Yemos HaMoshiach.

In a sicha in 5752, the Rebbe explained the maamer Chazal, “all the days of your life to bring to Yemos HaMoshiach,” that at every moment of a person’s life, he has to live for the purpose of bringing Moshiach, turning a moment of galus into a moment of Moshiach. Like the Rebbe says in another sicha, that the letter Alef which makes “gola” (exile) into “Geula,” is Elokus. Bringing G-dliness to the world, that’s what Moshiach is about.

Now, says the Rebbe, our job, in every aspect of our avodas Hashem – whether it’s Torah study, mitzvos, or “all your deeds for the sake of heaven” – has to be centered on this point: how does it bring Moshiach?

**We talk a lot about the concept of “living with Moshiach” but we don’t explain enough about how to do it in our daily lives. How is a Chassid’s day different in 5769 than a Chassid’s day twenty years ago?**

**R’ Offen:** The question that

needs to be asked is: How can a Jew live Geula when he is in galus?

The Rebbe once announced at a farbrengen: “Yidden, get out of galus!” What does that mean? How can we get up and get out of galus? It depends on us?

When you learn Chassidus you understand what Geula is. Galus is a concealment of “ay nod milvado – there is nothing but Him,” and Geula is the revelation of that. When the Rebbe demands that we leave galus and live Geula, it means to get out of our inner galus in our avodas Hashem and start living the reality of Elokus in a way that nothing else interferes or overshadows it. In order to “live Moshiach” you have to learn Chassidus.

**R’ Schapiro:** There are two inyanim, “to bring to Yemos HaMoshiach” and “kabbalas p’nei Moshiach.”

The first inyan, as was mentioned before, is that everything you do be for the purpose of bringing Moshiach. The Rebbe spoke about this several times, most notably on Shabbos Parshas Tazria-Metzora, that the avoda of a Jew in galus is the sowing which makes the revelations of Moshiach blossom. In this there are several levels:

The first level, which was the avoda throughout the generations, was doing one thing which led to something else, investing a potential to bring about a related but different actuality.

There is a higher level in which the entire avoda is permeated with Moshiach. In everything one does, he lives with the goal of “bringing Yemos HaMoshiach.” The goal, the purpose, is felt in every detail of the avoda. He does a mitzva for the purpose of bringing Moshiach. He learns Torah in order to hasten his coming. The result – Geula –

is not disconnected from the avoda that brought it about.

We can see this already in the 80’s. For example, when the Rebbe said that the slogan of Tzivos Hashem is “We Want Moshiach Now,” the Rebbe instilled the desire for Moshiach in every detail of the children’s lives. We do mitzvos because “We want Moshiach now,” we learn Torah because “We want Moshiach now,” and so on. Children were never educated previously about Moshiach in this way, in every detail and that it should be the main issue. It’s the Rebbe’s chiddush.

Then the Rebbe speaks of an even higher level, a level within a level: not only that our avoda brings Moshiach, but it’s one unified thing. Since Moshiach is about perfection in Torah and mitzvos, when we succeed in fulfilling the Rebbe’s horaa to live as in Yemos HaMoshiach, i.e. we fulfill Torah and mitzvos as fully as can be we start to realize what Yemos HaMoshiach is all about.

That is all within the first category of bringing to Yemos HaMoshiach. Then the Rebbe announced, “The time for your redemption has arrived.” The Rebbe spoke about kabbalas p’nei Moshiach. This is a new inyan which is connected with the Rebbe’s emphasis that the Nasi HaDor is Moshiach and we have not only the existence of Moshiach but also his hisgalus (VaYeira 5752). It’s not merely about leading to Yemos HaMoshiach. It’s something new.

The analogy is given of a wedding. The chassan and kalla prepare for the wedding, as do the parents. All preparations are made with the goal in mind, the upcoming wedding. The day of the wedding, at the reception, it’s completely different. The emotions

are different, the preparations are different.

I remember when I was a young bachur, we spoke at a farbrengen about this topic, how we can live it now. The mashpia said that if it was a given for the T'mimim that the Rebbe is Moshiach, they would look completely different. This was spoken about years ago. Long before "the time for your redemption has arrived," we knew that the Rebbe is the Nasi HaDor, the yechida of the Jewish people, and consequently, the Moshiach of the generation.

However, this was a private thing only spoken about among Chassidim. In later years the situation changed completely when the Rebbe himself repeatedly said that the Nasi HaDor is the Moshiach of the generation. In the sichos of 5752 the Rebbe emphasized that in every generation there is one person who is fit to be Moshiach, and in the sicha addressed to the Kinus HaShluchim, 5752, the Rebbe said the only avoda now is kabbalas p'nei Moshiach, that all the avoda has been done. The Rebbe said, "The shlichus of Moshiach, the only shliach of our generation, the only Moshiach of our generation, has begun to be fulfilled," and we have not only the existence of Moshiach but also the revelation of his existence and his activities...

When the Rebbe agreed to and encouraged accepting him as Moshiach, the topic that until then had been an inside matter became something that the Rebbe himself brought out into the open. From then on, the avoda is completely different. This was expressed on Shabbos Parshas VaEira, 5752, before Yud Shvat, when the Rebbe looked at the door and said that everybody has to think about the Rebbe [Rayatz] walking into the beis midrash at that



***When the Rebbe said that the slogan of Tzivos Hashem is "We Want Moshiach Now," the Rebbe instilled the desire for Moshiach in every detail of the children's lives. We do mitzvos because "We want Moshiach now," we learn Torah because "We want Moshiach now," and so on.***

--Rabbi Nachman Schapiro

moment and looking at each one of them, to see how they completed the avoda. Of course, when you think that way, your avoda is completely different.

Back then we compared it to a Tamim getting ready for yechidus. The bachurim would go to the Rebbe once a year, before their birthday. Long before their birthday, the bachur would get ready. When the day of the yechidus finally arrived, it was altogether different. The way he dressed, his thought, speech and action, and the shmiras ha's'darim were different, and the hiddur mitzva was far greater.

If every one of us, when getting up in the morning, would feel that today is the day of the Rebbe's hisgalus, and the Rebbe will want a report about how he davened that day, what he learned, how he acted with Ahavas Yisroel and helped a weaker friend, how he fulfilled the Rebbe's horaos in inyanei Moshiach and Geula – that would get him ready for the kabbalas panim of the Rebbe. This is far greater than "bringing to Yemos HaMoshiach" in which you do something for the purpose of something else.

In the sichos of 5752 there are new concepts that were not mentioned earlier. Probably the most famous term is "to open your eyes" and see how everything is ready. On the one hand, the darkness is great and it's hard to see Geula. On the other hand, if the Rebbe tells us to see it, that means we can. How can we open our eyes and see Geula?

R' Offen: On Shabbos VaYitzei, 5752, the Rebbe said, "The only thing is for a Jew to open his eyes and see how everything is ready for Geula. We already have the 'set table,' we

have the Leviasan, Shor HaBar and Yayin



HaMeshumar and Jews are already sitting around the table, their 'Father's table' together with Moshiach..."

What does this mean? We see ourselves in galus with no change. Where's the meal? Where are the Leviases and the Shor HaBar?

Perhaps we can understand this after we take note of another interesting thing which is also connected with a typical expression of the Rebbe. In the early years, when the Rebbe spoke about Moshiach, he always added the words, "below ten *t'fachim*" (handbreadths), while in later years he hardly said that. How come? Perhaps we can suggest as follows:

In Chassidus it's explained that "ten handbreadths" is Atzilus and "below ten handbreadths" refers to the worlds of Beria, Yetzira, and Asiya. For nearly forty years, the Rebbe worked to bring the Sh'china down from the world of Atzilus to "below ten handbreadths," the worlds of BiY"A. After years of avoda, the Rebbe brought down the Sh'china not only below ten handbreadths, which would still be spiritual worlds, but even down to this physical world, which is much closer to us than "below ten handbreadths."

When the Rebbe, the 7th Nasi who brings the Sh'china from heaven down to earth, tells us to open our eyes, he is saying that he already brought the Sh'china down to this physical world!

This is also the point of "Kabbalas HaMalchus," that it needs to come from the people. The Rebbe said that he already did his part and now we have to do all that we can. The Rebbe brought the Sh'china down. Now we have to accept it. If the Rebbe did it for us, it would be coming from the mashpia and not from the mekabel.

**So how do we truly open our eyes?**

**R' Offen:** The first thing is to know that the inyan



***The last time the Rebbe gave out dollars for tz'daka, on 26 Adar I, 5752, he was asked by a journalist what his message is to the world. He replied, "That Moshiach is coming." Then the Rebbe added, "He is not only coming. He is on his way."***

--Rabbi Shmuel Chaim Bluming

of Moshiach is, as the Alter Rebbe says in Tanya, the Alef of Geula, Alufo shel olam, the revelation of the Ohr Ein Sof in the physical world. The material prophecies will also come true, but this is not what we are referring to when speaking about Yemos HaMoshiach. The main point of Moshiach is the revelation of G-dliness in this physical world.

So what does it mean to open your eyes? It's kabbalas ol. It is when a Jew contemplates "behold, Hashem stands over him," and, as it says in chapter 42 of Tanya, to "translate" all things in this world as the outer garments of Hashem. The Alter Rebbe explains this with an analogy of a king. One doesn't fear his outer garments but the king himself, his nefesh. Though we don't see his essence, by seeing his living body it's like seeing the nefesh. So too with the world, we have to remember that it is only a garment to the One who gives it life.

Like in the analogy, if a person doesn't realize that the king is alive, he won't fear him. So too, opening your eyes refers to learning and internalizing Chassidus, in particular chapter 42 of Tanya. Then your eyes will see properly, because if you live with Chassidus, you live with the revelation of Elokus; you live with Geula.

One may ask, but what about tzimtzum/concealment? The answer is that you need to know that the Rebbe gives strength even to people like us to remove the concealment. In the time of the Alter Rebbe, Chassidim of a lofty stature could not perceive Elokus.

They say about the great Chassid, R' Hillel of Paritch, that he worked very hard just to internalize a vort of Chassidus. In our generation, though, the Rebbe brought the Sh'china down so that even coarse people can sense it. The problem is that we lack faith. We don't believe that we can comprehend G-dliness.

If we take things seriously, we will learn chapter 42 in Tanya with the proper contemplation and see the revelation of G-dliness. That is the whole essence of Chassidus. That is the foundational premise conveyed in the letters of the word Shma (Yisroel), which form the acronym: *s'u marom eineichem* – lift up your eyes and see the G-dliness in everything.

That is what is meant by opening your eyes, and this is the avoda of Tomchei T'mimim. When a Tamim learns Chassidus, it's not just for the sake of learning, but for the revelation of G-dliness to permeate his being, which is what Moshiach is about.

This also explains what the Rebbe meant by “living Geula” – that we accustom ourselves to

viewing the world as illusory, with only Elokus on our minds. It will soon be this way in Yemos HaMoshiach. The preparation for this is our avoda today, in the merit of which we will see the Rebbe come to redeem us and revealed Elokus in all of creation.

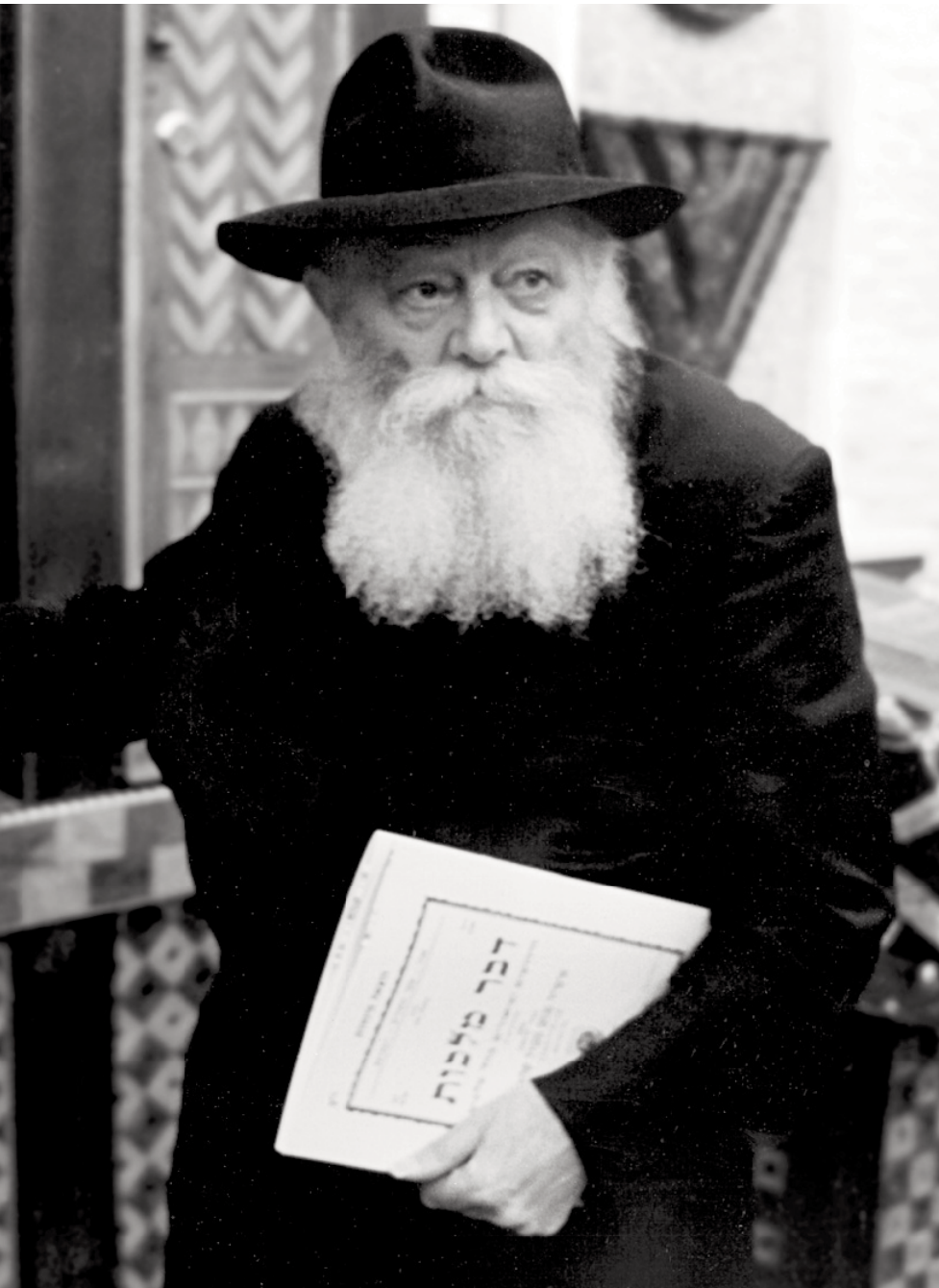
**R' Ginsberg:** I'd like to add to that and mention something important that pertains to us all. The Rebbe says explicitly in the sicha of VaYeitzei, 5752, that we open our eyes through learning p'nimius ha'Torah, which was revealed in our generation as Chassidus, and the Rebbe emphasizes, “including learning inyanei Geula.”

When we were bachurim, we were taught that we have to learn and meditate on the maamer “Ha'umnam” 5643, or Shaar HaYichud V'HaEmuna, and this would enable us to live and breathe Elokus. You might think it's the same today, that if you want to live and breathe Elokus, you have to meditate on these topics.

But now we are talking about something unprecedented. Nothing changed, G-d forbid, but it all has a new perspective. On the day that Moshe came to the Jewish people and said, “*pakod pakadti*,” the Jewish people were not instantly taken out of galus. They were in the same situation they were in previously but with totally different perspective and expectation.

The Rebbe came and told us as a prophecy, “The time for your redemption has arrived.” The situation today is completely different than what it was until now. Today, we have Moshiach announcing that the time for Geula has arrived and we were given the job to publicize this prophecy.

Therefore, when you want to open your eyes, it's vital to study



the weekly D'var Malchus. You need to resolve to complete it every week, not stop in the middle. The Rebbe builds the sichos in stages and if you stop before the stage in which the Rebbe speaks about our generation, you missed the point. It needs to be learned and reviewed, individually, in shiurim, and with chavrusas; it needs to be lived and davened with.

Sometimes it seems there are easier, simpler sichos, but if you want to know and understand the avoda of our generation, you must learn the D'var Malchus. There are two aspects to this:

In 5710 (1950), after the passing of the Rebbe Rayatz, the Rebbe said that his father-in-law had *altz bavovent* (forewarned everything), and the Rebbe added, "if only Anash and the T'mimim paid special attention to the sichos and maamarim, especially of the last year." If the Rebbe said this in 5710 when there was a new Rebbe with new sichos, all the more so today. It's such a simple thing – the Rebbe prepared us for what will happen and left us answers to all questions. If even a simple Jew wants to know what the Rebbe wants of us, he needs to learn the maamarim and sichos of that last year in which we heard the Rebbe (though of course, in order to understand the answers, you have to learn the sichos well and review and internalize them).

In 5751-2 the Rebbe spoke constantly about inyanei Geula and Moshiach. I don't remember a week going by without the Rebbe mentioning it again. The Rebbe said this is the straight, easy, and quick path to bring the Geula; it's the way to get us to open our eyes. He said about this study that it's a "Jewish practice which is spreading."

In the unedited sichos the

expressions are even stronger than in the edited version. In even the edited sicha of Tazria-Metzora, 5751, the Rebbe stressed learning inyanei Geula and Moshiach, especially the maamarim and Likkutei Sichos of Nasi Doreinu. And especially, said the Rebbe on Parshas Balak, to know the situation we are in, on the threshold of Geula. These inyanim – to know the situation we are currently in, that we are standing on the threshold of Geula – are not written in other sichos, not even in the amazing sichos the Rebbe handed out to us personally. It's only in the D'var Malchus of 51-52.

Today we cannot daven at length solely with the avoda of the maamer, "Ha'umnam." Today we need to be cognizant of the fact that the Rebbe, our Moshe Rabbeinu is here, and live with this.

**Why is it so important to "live" the fact that we are in the era of Moshiach?**

**R' Bluming:** In the sichos of the 5751-2, we see that the main emphasis is not so much on avoda but on the awareness of the fact that we are living in the time of Geula. Throughout the winter months, until 28 Nissan, the emphasis was on driving home the idea that we are in a new era.

In one of the sichos, the Rebbe said "we need to know the 'essence of this period,' to stand all of you at the ready to greet Moshiach, including and especially by increasing in Torah and mitzvos." In other words, since it's the time of Geula and this is something real, each of us needs to prepare ourselves to greet Moshiach.

Even in the sicha of Parshas Balak, in which the Rebbe spoke about living with Moshiach, the Rebbe spoke about two inyanim

together, to live with Moshiach and to live with the time of Yemos HaMoshiach. Then the Rebbe said we need thought, speech and action that is appropriate for this special time.

The Rebbe makes demands and gives us the kochos to experience this reality because this is the time. It's happening now. It's not that we are learning about something that will take place in the future – we always had that. The chiddush is that it's happening now. As R' Offen said earlier, the Rebbe brought the Sh'china down below ten handbreadths.

The Rebbe says, "we are standing already on the threshold of Geula, on the threshold of Yemos HaMoshiach, and can point with a finger that behold, Moshiach comes." The time of Geula is connected with the appearance of the Redeemer. Each time the Rebbe quoted the Midrash that says "the time for your redemption has arrived," he connected it with the fact that the one who makes the announcement is Moshiach. This is because all of the manifestations of this unique time are derived from the fact that the Redeemer already appeared.

Even when the Rebbe spoke on Parshas Shoftim about the prophecy of L'Alter l'Geula, he emphasized that this prophecy doesn't come in a vacuum. It is part of the unique time we are in. The Rebbe said that since the time for redemption has arrived, the time has come for the fulfillment of the prophecy "your advisors as at first," and that we already see a start to this. Accordingly, the Rebbe says the world can accept this because it's not a novelty but something which already has begun to be actualized in the world.

I think that this is the most significant point in the book



*Besuras HaGeula.*

The last time the Rebbe gave out dollars for tz'daka, on 26 Adar I, 5752, he was asked by a journalist what his message is to the world. He replied, "That Moshiach is coming." Then the Rebbe added, "He is not only coming. He is on his way." This entire process, which began with the hisgalus of the Rebbe as Moshiach, consists of stages. The final stage, may it be speedily in our day, is the hisgalus of the Rebbe to the entire world with the true and complete Geula.

**R' Ginsberg:** As mentioned, on the day that Moshe went to the Jewish people and told them, "pakod pakadti," the Jewish people did not leave galus. They were apparently in the same situation they had been in all along, but obviously something changed.

So too now, the Rebbe said to the Jewish people: "the time for your redemption has arrived." The situation today is completely different than what it was. Therefore, we have a job to do, to tell everyone that we already have Moshiach. Not like it was throughout the generations, when there was a Moshiach of the generation deserving to be Moshiach, who had the potential to be Moshiach, but Moshiach who is already revealed and is impacting the world.

"The year that Melech HaMoshiach is revealed ... the time that Melech HaMoshiach is revealed." The Rebbe said the year for this was 5751. The Rebbe emphasized that this Midrash is not talking about Moshiach *after* the Geula, because if so, he would not have to announce that the time had come for redemption. An announcement isn't necessary if you have the Geula and the Beis HaMikdash.

Rather, it is about Moshiach



***The Rebbe emphasized that this Midrash is not talking about Moshiach after the Geula, because if so, he would not have to announce that the time had come for redemption. An announcement isn't necessary if you have the Geula and the Beis HaMikdash...***

--Rabbi Chaim L.Y. Ginsberg

*before* the Geula, when he stands on the roof of the Beis HaMikdash and informs the Jewish people,

"The time for your redemption has arrived." The Rebbe concludes (Chayei Sara 5751), "as they announced and are announcing, especially lately." This is not about a tzaddik who is fitting to be Moshiach, but Moshiach who is actively doing what Moshiach does.

And here there is a widespread misconception. People think that if Moshiach has already started to be revealed, we are already after the Geula, but this is not necessarily so. We address this question often on mitvtzaim.

In the Torah there is a story which illustrates this point. When Moshe came and told the Jewish people "pakod pakadti," it says, "and the nation believed." But when he went to Pharaoh and said to him, "Thus says Hashem, send out my nation and they will serve Me," Pharaoh wasn't impressed. "Who is Hashem that I should listen to Him?" And he made their work conditions harsher.

The Jewish people came complaining to Moshe. Even Moshe asked Hashem, "Why did You do bad to this nation, why did You send me?" Where is the promised Geula? The situation has become worse!

As for Moshe Rabbeinu, the Midrash says that he fled to Midyan. There was no one to turn to. Moshe put the people into this situation that was a tremendous test of faith and then he disappeared. Chazal say, "In the merit of their faith, our ancestors were redeemed from Egypt."

When do you need emuna? When you don't see, you don't understand, you don't feel, and it all seems just the opposite. We need to know that there is a Moshe Rabbeinu and we have to follow him. In our case, it's not just about following him but "lekabel p'nei Moshiach!"



# A NEW WORLD ORDER

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelewitz, Shliach, Beit Shaan

*In the following stories we will see many examples of people who are not Lubavitcher Chassidim in the common sense of the term, yet the Rebbe's teachings have gotten through to them and affected their way of life. They help other Jews do mitzvos, do mitvtzaim, spread Chassidus, and even use their free time to start new Chabad yeshivos around the country.*

In a weekly sicha for Sukkos, the Rebbe explains that there is no contradiction between “all mitzvos will be nullified in the future,” and “the halachos of the Torah will not be nullified.” The Rebbe explains that with the coming of Moshiach, everybody will want to fulfill Hashem's will and therefore, there will be no need for commandments. People will naturally behave according to halacha and the ratzon Hashem.

In the following stories we see many examples of people who are not Lubavitcher Chassidim in the common sense of the term, yet the Rebbe's teachings have gotten through to them and affected their way of life. They help other Jews do mitzvos, do mitvtzaim,

spread Chassidus, and even use their free time to start new Chabad yeshivos around the country. Just as the Rebbe says – even those who are not commanded, act according to the Divine Will and hasten the Geula.

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Rabbi Yashar Edery, shliach and menahel of mosdos Chabad for many years in Netivot, told me about Rabbi Yoram Abergil, Rosh Kollel in Netivot and head of a network of kollelim around the country. He gives shiurim all over the country to hundreds of students and thousands of admirers. R' Abergil is even considered like an Admur to thousands of his talmidim. Though he is not a Lubavitcher,

many of his customs are in accordance with Chabad custom and the Rebbe's sichos.

Shacharis in his shul takes place at dawn, and is followed by a shiur in ... Chitas! At a recent dinner he gave a beautiful leather Chitas as a gift to donors.

Several months ago, R' Abergil instituted the custom to say all of T'hilim on Shabbos Mevarchim before davening. This is a sunrise minyan, so the T'hilim begins at four a.m.

R' Abergil added his signature to the p'sak din about the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach and he helps the inyan to the best of his ability with lectures and participation in Moshiach awareness events that Chabad houses have around the country.

## “SH'YIBANEH BEIS HA'MIKDASH” AT THE JAIL IN ATLIT

Rabbi Moshe Akselrod, shliach in Atlit, often visits the famous jail there. There too, he finds “hidden and open Chabadnikim.”

“One Friday, I arrived at the jail and suggested to the young man imprisoned there that he put on t'fillin. By way of response he began loudly singing, ‘Sh'yibaneh Beis HaMikdash...’ I asked him which Chabad house he davened in and he told me the one in Tirat HaKarmel.”

R' Akselrod has stories about other inmates in Atlit who put on t'fillin with one another, organize chavrusos to learn D'var Malchus, organize shiurim and hasten the Geula.

He tells about his partner in shlichus, Rabbi Avrohom Sebbag. R' Sebbag was asked to blow the shofar at a ceremony to toast the new year. The invitation came from the teachers at the high school at kibbutz Maagan Michoel. This school has 1500 students from all the kibbutzim in the area. Though these are known as secular kibbutzim, in the era of Geula they want to hear the shofar blown before Rosh HaShana.

The plan was ruined the moment R' Sebbag entered the school's premises (accompanied by a fresh baal t'shuva, a graduate of the school, who was already sending his two daughters to Chabad preschools in Atlit).

Two students approached him and asked to put on t'fillin. Obviously, he wasn't going to refuse and they began putting it on.

Suddenly the principal appeared and he began screaming, "Take it off right now!" But the student told him he couldn't since he couldn't interrupt between the t'fillin shel yad and the t'fillin shel rosh and if you took it off you incurred a curse from G-d... There was no shofar blown, but Jewish souls were inspired and sought to do mitzvos. Nobody can stop it; the Geula is already here.

### YESHIVAS CHABAD CHAMRA

On Hoshana Raba, 5752, the Rebbe spoke about starting new divisions of Tomchei T'mimim wherever there is a Jewish settlement, just like the Tanya was printed all over the world, to

***Although she was not religious, and had been raised on an irreligious kibbutz, there in Italy she was the only one who knew Ivrit and so people turned to her with their Jewish questions. She wanted to help so did her research and began preparing boys for bar mitzva, guided the chazan in shul, and gave shiurim.***



Rabbi Yoram Abergil  
on a visit to 770

spread Chassidus everywhere. We are witnesses to the realization of this vision as Chabad yeshivos open in more and more places. Just 15-20 years ago, it wasn't even a dream. In recent months, yeshivos Chabad or branches opened in Chadera, Teveria, Itamar, Chamra and beyond.

I was called to serve as the Rosh Yeshiva in Chamra, a yeshiva in the Jordan Valley on the Shomron border. Among the founders of the yeshiva are people who would never have dreamed of starting a yeshiva. Providence, along with clear answers in the Igros Kodesh, compelled them to

***“What are you talking about?” the man exclaimed. “In Russia we were careful not to cross the street near the shul. We were terrified of anything Jewish, and you’re asking me whether I put on t’fillin?!”***

do it. Someone in the area allowed them the use of a huge property with all the necessary buildings, the committee of parents raised the money, and the yeshiva got underway. In the meantime, more and more bachurim are registering and there are residents and soldiers in the area who go to the yeshiva to join in the davening or a shiur. With Hashem’s help, it will turn into a center for the spreading of Chassidus and kiruv of Jews to Torah and mitzvos.

### **KIBBUTZ WOMAN – REBBETZIN IN ITALY**

One of the bachurim in the yeshiva in Chamra went to Rechovot for Rosh HaShana to be with his family. Erev Rosh HaShana, he went with his father to arrange davening and Kiddush at a nearby kibbutz. The kibbutz is not religious but about twenty people attended.

After the Kiddush and a short

meal, a young woman approached the person in charge and said, “I noticed that you took a piece of apple and dipped it in honey. Why did you do that?” The Chassid told her and then she explained why she had asked.

She said that the kibbutz movement had sent her to a big city in Italy for a year and a half. Although she was not religious, and had been raised on an irreligious kibbutz, there in Italy she was the only one who knew Ivrit and so people turned to her with their Jewish questions. She wanted to help so she did her research and began preparing boys for bar mitzva, guided the chazan in shul, and gave shiurim. I suppose you could say that other than bris mila, she did everything...

This shows us how the Rebbe’s vision is taking place before our eyes. Jews of all kinds are searching and finding their way in Judaism. Even Jews who don’t define themselves as religious, certainly not as Chassidim or shluchim, suddenly find themselves as shluchim and mashpiim to teach Judaism to others.

### **JAPANESE AT A KIBBUTZ SAYING “YECHI”**

A woman from Beit Shaan who learned for a while at Ohr Chaya in Yerushalayim, got married to a Lubavitcher and settled in Tzfas. A year later, they moved to Beit Shaan to be near her parents. The father noticed that his young son-in-law not only did mitzvos but constantly looked for ways to help other Jews do mitzvos. The father-in-law liked what he saw and was inspired to do the same.

Since then, the father-in-law,

and the mother-in-law too, give out dozens of D’var Malchus (the colorful one) books every week. The father-in-law works in a factory at a kibbutz where there is a group of Japanese gentiles who love Israel. Every year or two a new delegation of Japanese shows up to contribute towards the kibbutz. By now all the Japanese at the kibbutz know how to say “Yechi” by heart.

### **“ATHEISTIC” MOTORCYCLISTS PUT ON T’FILLIN**

Rabbi Menachem Turnheim, shliach in Kfar Yona, relates:

“I went to a certain butcher shop and put t’fillin on with the owner. Just then, two motorcyclists showed up, a father and son from Russia. I suggested that they put t’fillin on too. The father ignored me while the son explained that he and his father were atheists who did not believe in any religion and any Ruler of the world. Nonetheless, he inquired about what t’fillin are, and said he had never put them on and had no idea how to do so.

“It was only after I promised that he didn’t have to know and that I would put them on him that he agreed. When the father saw that the son wasn’t coming out, he came back into the store and began to ask questions. I, in turn, asked him whether he had put on t’fillin at his bar mitzva.

“‘What are you talking about?’ the man exclaimed. ‘In Russia we were careful not to cross the street near the shul. We were terrified of anything Jewish, and you’re asking me whether I put on t’fillin?!’

“The father finally agreed to put on t’fillin. Not for naught did the Rebbe say the world is ready for Geula.”

# THE LUBAVITCHER 'LOCOMOTIVE' WITH THOUSANDS IN TRAIN

By Sholom Ber Crombie

*A few years after they married, the Rebbe told the Kanelskys to move to New Jersey. Under the auspices of Bris Avrohom, thousands of brissin and hundreds of weddings have taken place.*  
\* Part 1 of 2.

## MOVE TO NEW JERSEY

In 5742 (1982) Rabbi Kanelsky, the director of Bris Avrohom, married his wife, Shterna Sarah (nee Zaltzman). Their l'chaim took place a few days before Bris Avrohom's first dinner and the wedding took place close to Chanuka. Before the week of Sheva Brachos was up, R' Kanelsky was already back at work at Bris Avrohom. In fact, one of the Sheva Brachos meals took place at the Menora lighting ceremony that the organization hosted, with the participation of 600 people!

Rebbetzin Kanelsky joined in her husband's work and also worked as a teacher in Rabbi Mintz's school in New Jersey.

For the first few years following their wedding, they lived in a small apartment in Crown Heights, and R' Kanelsky traveled to New Jersey every day to run Bris Avrohom. Their one bedroom apartment also served as the organization's makeshift office, with stacks of papers all over the bedroom.

Every Shabbos they hosted groups of young people visiting Crown Heights for a Jewish experience. After the meal they

would move the small table to a corner of the living room and spread out mattresses for the guests. These Shabbasos did a lot for their guests, many of whom attended Jewish programs afterwards and established Jewish homes.

"Till this day, my wife and I keep in touch with those 'kids'. They have since married and have families. Although 25 years have passed, they are regular participants in our programs and I have been the sandek at the brissin of many of their children."

After they had been blessed with a number of children, the crowding in their apartment became intolerable and they decided to move. Their dilemma was whether to remain in Crown Heights where they could provide their children with a Chassidishe education or to move to New Jersey to be near the center of their activities.

They put this question to the Rebbe in a note submitted before Mincha. Right after the davening



they received an answer, "It pays to buy a house in New Jersey, albeit in a religious neighborhood."

Half an hour later, R' Kanelsky wrote to the Rebbe again and suggested several religious areas in New Jersey. The Rebbe picked Elizabeth, a city where Bris Avrohom already had a center.

The Kanelsky family moved Erev Pesach. The rav of the Elizabeth community, Rabbi Pinchas Mordechai Teitz a"h, who was close to the Rebbe, welcomed them warmly. The

Kanelskys began their shlichus by hosting a Pesach seider for dozens of Russian immigrants, which took place in Rabbi Teitz's shul.

At first, R' Kanelsky was based in Rabbi Teitz's shul. In addition to the Kollel Tiferes Z'keinim that was already up and running, he founded three other kollelim. By 5747 the kollelim had close to 300 people coming to learn.

Rabbi Boruch Levkivker, who was appointed to give shiurim in the kollelim, is still involved in this work. He directs a network of kollelim for seniors, as well as the

Jersey City branch of Bris Avrohom.

A half a year after arriving in Elizabeth, Bris Avrohom inaugurated its first permanent place and a Chabad shul opened. R' Kanelsky remembers how he had to go knock on doors to get a minyan that Rosh HaShana. Today, the beautiful shul has hundreds of Jews attending the davening on the Yomim Nora'im.

Opening the shul was the forerunner in founding Chabad mosdos in Elizabeth. The next step was renting a store in the business district which was



Rabbi Kanelsky  
at kos shel bracha

## ***R' Kanelsky remembers how he had to go knock on doors to get a minyán that Rosh HaShana.***

designated as a center for their programs. There they hosted “Evening With Chabad” events for hundreds of Jews. Once every few weeks they would have a concert that was combined with Jewish content and lectures.

These evenings were extremely

successful and made a powerful impression on the thousands of Jews who participated over the years. Attendance at each event numbered in the hundreds, and swelled before holidays.

### **DO IT TODAY AND DON'T DELAY**

The expansion of their activities necessitated moving to a larger building. The number of participants at the shul grew to hundreds of people and the building was not large enough to accommodate them.

Members of the Conservative community in Elizabeth suggested that Chabad join with them. Their

membership was dwindling since young people did not attend and the older members were dying off. Of course, R' Kanelsky was not interested in joining them, but he told them that he was willing to buy their building and turn it into a Chabad house.

The members of the Conservative community discussed it and the sides began negotiations. A few weeks later, Danny Kahane, the main supporter of Bris Avrohom, was at a yechidus for wealthy members of Machne Israel. When dollars for tz'daka were given, he asked the Rebbe whether to buy the building for Bris Avrohom.

The Rebbe answered, “Do it today and don't delay!” As soon as he heard this, he left 770 without waiting for the special lunch that had been arranged for them and went directly to the president of the Conservative community to finalize the purchase. The Rebbe's words echoed in his mind, “Do it today and don't delay.”

The contract was signed in the presence of a lawyer and the building was transferred to the Chabad shul. Two hours later, a wealthy man went to the president of the Conservative shul and said he was interested in buying the building. He had a blank check with him and was prepared to pay any price.

“You are two hours late,” said the president, “I don't own the building anymore.”

A few years later, when Danny Kahane finished the last payment on the building, he presented the Rebbe with a model of the building. The Rebbe looked quite pleased. He gathered the dollars that were there on the table and gave them to Kahane with the words, “In the future, shuls and battei midrash from outside Eretz

### **THE PARTNER**

Rebbetzin Shterna Kanelsky has been at her husband's side for 26 years and shares all of Bris Avrohom's work with him. She talks about the difficulties of the shlichus in a calm way, as someone who has become used to these difficulties and sees them as challenges. In the early years, the greatest hurdle was to raise her family in a place without a Chabad community. The children went each day to Crown Heights.

Today she is a grandmother, and the challenges are somewhat different. “Helping the children who are shluchim is something else entirely,” she explains. She spoke about her part in supporting her children who work as shluchim in the area.

Then there are the technical details in being a shlucha. When her husband invites dozens of mekuravim for the Shabbos meal, she supervises the work to ensure that everybody is happy.

“Sometimes, people call shortly before Shabbos to say they are coming and we have to quickly add another chicken to the pot or meat to the chulent. Other times, families come for Shabbos and we have to crowd the children into fewer rooms so everybody has a place to sleep.”

One time, when the Kanelskys took a group of brides and grooms to the Rebbe, R' Groner introduced her as Rebbetzin Kanelsky who was involved in preparing the kallos for their wedding. The Rebbe gave her another dollar and said, “This is for my participation for you to marry off your children,” and the Rebbe motioned towards the child in her arms.

“This encouragement gave me tremendous strength in my work of shlichus, and enables me to go on despite the difficulties we have had over the years.”

Another time, when she went for dollars, the Rebbe said, “This is for your partnership with your husband.”

Yisroel will join the Beis HaMikdash, and this shul will too.” The Rebbe added with a smile, “Don’t worry – their silver and gold [will be taken along] with them.”

With the purchase of the building, Bris Avrohom got a tremendous boost. That Pesach, 1000 people took part in four public s’darim.

Today, the building also houses a school for dozens of children in four classes. Rebbetzin Kanelsky started and

runs the school, as a result of a series of answers she opened to in the Igros Kodesh in which the Rebbe wrote about chinuch. At first, she thought the letters meant she should intensify her efforts in the chinuch of her own children, but after opening to other answers about chinuch she decided to write and ask the Rebbe whether he wanted her to start a Chabad school.

When she opened the Igros Kodesh, she was amazed to see the words, “that is the kavana (intention) of the inyan (matter),” and the letter was about chinuch. The Rebbe wrote that he knows how hard it is and how much mesirus nefesh is needed for it, but despite the difficulties, mesirus nefesh was needed.

The first Chabad school in the area opened seven years ago. Many parents have registered their children for a Chabad

***“In the future, shuls and battei midrash from outside Eretz Yisroel will join the Beis HaMikdash, and this shul will too,” the Rebbe said with a smile.***

chinuch. The teachers come from Crown Heights every day.

Since the school was started, all those involved in it have seen blessings from it. The education the children receive has inspired entire families to strengthen kashrus and care in mitzva observance, as the children share



The shul that was bought at the last minute with the Rebbe’s guidance





***The man left 770  
in despair. He had  
asked for a bracha  
for children and  
had gotten a  
response about  
wealth.***

with their parents what they learned.

“For a city like Elizabeth, where the education is Litvish-style, this school is quite different,” says Rebbetzin Kanelsky. The school proudly

bears the name “Yaldei Menachem.”

**LUBAVITCH PRIDE**

One day in the year 5746 (1986), Rabbi Kanelsky’s phone rang. It was the secretary of an important businessman, whose boss wanted to speak with him. R’ Kanelsky was on his way to a meeting with the mayor of Jersey City and told the woman he was very busy but would take down the businessman’s phone number. He promised to call when he had time.

When he got into his car to drive to the meeting, he turned on his radio to listen to the traffic report and was startled to hear

the radio announcer mention the name of the businessman whose secretary had just called him. He had made the news for donating \$100,000 to combat terrorism.

This news item let him know that the man was capable of being a major help to Judaism in the area. As soon as he finished his meeting with the mayor, he returned to his office and called him.

In the phone conversation, the man said his father had emigrated to the United States from Russia and after reading in the local paper that Bris Avrohom provided educational programming for Jewish children, he decided to donate \$1000.

When R’ Kanelsky responded

**WHAT ONE NESHAMA ACCOMPLISHED**

The Kanelsky’s daughter Batsheva tragically passed away only 65 days after she was born in 2003. She had been born with serious health problems and the doctors had predicted she would live only a few days.

This period was one of the most difficult that these loyal shluchim ever lived through. The Kanelskys had written to the Rebbe asking for a bracha. The answer they opened to in the Igros Kodesh was that doctors were given permission to heal and not the opposite. Despite the doctors’ opinion and their preference not to connect her to machines, the Kanelskys did all they could for her spiritually. They began a series of activities to spread Judaism and be mekarev people to Chassidus and the Rebbe.

In the merit of their daughter, hundreds of men committed to putting on t’fillin and thousands of women committed to lighting Shabbos candles. The Chabad community got involved, too, and they promoted the saying of Chitas.

With all means available to them, they turned to the broader community, requesting people do mitzvos in the merit of their daughter, each according to where they were “holding.” They visited Chabad schools, asking the children to be particular about netilas yadayim and hiddur mitzvos, and to say Chitas and T’hillim. Chassidim were asked to increase their study of Chassidus and to commit to learning

Chassidus every day before davening. People who had previously refused to be circumcised agreed when R’ Kanelsky asked them to do so now in the merit of their daughter.

The Rebbe’s answers in the Igros Kodesh encouraged them to continue and for 65 days the Kanelskys worked around the clock to convince more and more Jews to commit to fulfilling the Rebbe’s horaos in all areas. Whoever they came in contact with at that time was drawn in to do something in the merit of their daughter.

On the 10th of Adar I, 5763, R’ Kanelsky was putting up mezuzos in the office of someone who had long refused to do so and was willing to do this mitzva only for the z’chus of the baby, and Rebbetzin Kanelsky was in the middle of talking to women about Family Purity and she asking them to commit to this mitzva in the z’chus of her baby when the hospital called them to come. They made it there moments before she returned her pure soul to her Creator. Up to the last moment, they were busy with activities in the merit of their daughter.

Two days earlier, the phone rang in their home late at night. It was one of the doctors calling. He asked them to come the next day to the hospital to say goodbye to their daughter. When Rebbetzin Kanelsky asked the Rebbe for a bracha that night, she opened to a letter which mentioned, “The soul of the



with the words, “*tizkeh l’mitzvos*,” the man asked what that meant since he was hearing it for the first time. R’ Kanelsky explained that Jews don’t say thank you for *tz’daka* – instead they bless, “may you merit to do *mitzvos*,” so that you have the ability to continue helping.

The man said, “I’m giving you a donation and instead of saying thank you, you try to give me a lesson in Judaism?” R’ Kanelsky repeated his explanation and said that he acted according to Jewish values even when the matter involved money.

The man exclaimed, “Rabbi, I love it! You got another \$1000 from me.”

A week later, R’ Kanelsky met

with him again. The businessman told him that he wanted to make weddings for Jewish couples who left Russia, complete with a big celebration, and he was looking for someone to organize this event for him.

The surprised R’ Kanelsky replied that this was a dream of his as well. Three years earlier, R’ Chadakov, the Rebbe’s secretary, had told him that there were couples in New Jersey who were living together without *chuppa* and a *k’suba* and he should do something about it.

At the time, R’ Kanelsky did not realize that it was the Rebbe who wanted him to do this and he pushed it off until the right time arose. Now that he heard what

his host had to say, he was happy to oblige.

“If I have this dream and you have this dream, we have a deal,” he said.

That settled, preparations for the big event began. They decided it would take place in the summer at an expensive hotel in New Jersey whose manager was a personal friend of the businessman, and that twenty couples would be married under twenty *chuppas*.

As the date drew closer, the businessman enlisted a group of wealthy friends so that each one could take responsibility for some of the expenses. He invited them and R’ Kanelsky to a festive dinner in his home where they

departed.” Frightened, she closed the volume immediately.

After the tragedy, she opened to that letter again. The Rebbe was instructing that all the blessed activities that were done before, for the *refua* of the child, should continue. This letter gave her the strength to rise above her personal tragedy and resume her efforts. In the letter (volume 8, #2355) the Rebbe writes, “I was saddened to hear about the passing of your father ... it is known that the greatest pleasure for the departed is when their matters are continued.” Then the Rebbe goes on to cite the statement of Chazal, that just as his children are alive, so too he is alive and “through this was cancelled even the eulogies that were eulogized, the embalming that was done and the burial that was done.”

During the Shiva, over a thousand people visited the Kanelskys, including many who were involved in activities for the baby’s merit. Buses brought students from the schools where they had spoken before the tragedy. Many people who did not even know the couple went to the Shiva and related that they had undertaken this or that when they heard about the Kanelskys’ campaign on behalf of their daughter.

The visitors were all amazed by the strength of spirit that the Rabbi and Rebbetzin exhibited. People came to support the Kanelskys and found themselves inspired in return.

On the first day of the Shiva, a young Russian Jew showed up with his family. The week before, he had

promised R’ Kanelsky that he would come to his house for a *bris* in the merit of his daughter. He hadn’t heard that the baby had died and he had come on the appointed day for the *bris*.

When he realized what had happened, he turned to leave. He didn’t want to disturb the Kanelskys the day after the funeral. However, R’ Kanelsky was determined that the *bris* take place as planned. He arranged for a *mohel* to come immediately and made sure that everything was taken care of for the *bris*. As they waited for the *mohel* to arrive, it became apparent that the father of the young man, who had accompanied his son, had never been circumcised either.

Hearing this, R’ Kanelsky asked the father to have a *bris l’ilui nishmas* his daughter. Despite the opposition of the mother, he continued to urge him to have a *bris* done. The man finally agreed. After both *brissin* were done at the *Bris Avrohom* center, the family returned to console the Kanelskys. When it came out that the parents had not been married according to Jewish law, Rebbetzin Kanelsky took the opportunity to ask them to be one of the ten couples who marry in the grand wedding celebration they hold each Sivan.

After the parents married according to *halacha*, the family became more involved in Jewish life and the son was sent to a Chabad yeshiva. Today he is a *Tamim* in a Lubavitcher yeshiva in the US.



Twenty grooms with twenty mesadrei kiddushin. Second from the left: Rabbi Teitz, rav of Elizabeth

would discuss the plans for the multiple weddings.

When he arrived at the meeting, he was surprised to discover some of the richest Jews in America, including members of the Jewish Federation, the Joint and other well-known Jewish organizations.

After the host formally began the meeting, telling how he became acquainted with Bris Avrohom and about his idea to have an event so that twenty couples could get married, R' Kanelsky was asked to speak. R' Kanelsky told of his plans for the weddings, how twenty rabbis would officiate at the marriages of twenty couples, following which there would be a wonderful celebration.

When he finished, people had questions. Would Bris Avrohom have a wedding or bar mitzva for someone who was uncircumcised? Could one of their rabbis, who was not Orthodox, officiate at a wedding? R' Kanelsky politely but emphatically refused. The men shifted uncomfortably in their

seats and muttering could be heard.

Then one of the men wanted to know, "Are you a Lubavitcher and is it your Rebbe who screams about 'Who is a Jew?'" When R' Kanelsky said yes, the men got up in a huff and left the house, saying, "Your Rebbe does not recognize our grandchildren as Jewish and we won't have anything to do with you."

The host himself was furious. As far as he was concerned, R' Kanelsky had ruined his plan and had embarrassed him in front of his distinguished friends. "I brought you a group of men, each of whom could write a check for \$100,000, and you chased them away with your answers," he berated him.

Despite the very uncomfortable situation, R' Kanelsky replied firmly, "I am a Lubavitcher forever! President Brezhnev of Russia did not change my father's mind and a million dollars won't change my mind. I was born to be a Lubavitcher and I am proud all my life to be Lubavitch."

His host did not expect a response like this. He was taken aback by R' Kanelsky's answer and left the room with a slam of the door. R' Kanelsky remained in the room alone to face the termination of his dream. He could hear the man talking to his wife, presumably telling her how he had been embarrassed in front of his friends and asking her what to do.

The minutes seemed like an eternity until the man returned. To R' Kanelsky's great surprise, he said, "I admire you as a Jew, as someone proud of who you are and unwilling to compromise. As a sign of my esteem, I pledge to donate \$50,000 of my personal money to pay for the weddings."

He took out a checkbook and wrote a check for \$25,000, and promised he would give the other half immediately after the preparations for the weddings were made.

The big day arrived. Twenty couples participated. The youngest bride was 65. The weddings had tremendous media coverage, with all the television

stations and newspapers covering the event. It was even a headline in the next day's *New York Times*.

The 600 attendees included leading businessmen, politicians, senators and a variety of Jewish figures. The first floor of the hotel held the couples, their families and their escorts, and the rest of the hotel was teeming with the large crowds and numerous reporters who attended the event.

The Rebbe sent 21 letters of greeting, a separate letter for each couple and a general letter that was written in English in which the Rebbe explained the significance of having a wedding in the month of Sivan. He wrote that this event would serve as a symbol for the entire state of New Jersey.

R' Kanelsky read the Rebbe's general letter out loud with tremendous emotion... and fainted. The great excitement after months of work had taken their toll. It took him three hours to recover. He finally went out and awarded a token of appreciation to the donor who made the event possible.

At the conclusion of the event, as the crowd began to disperse,

an older woman who supported the organization approached R' Kanelsky with a request. In another year her husband would be celebrating his 70th birthday and she wanted to sponsor an affair like this one, in his honor. Another event was underway...

The second wedding event took place on 17 Sivan, which was R' Kanelsky's 26th birthday. The elderly sponsor was not the only one who wanted to do something in her husband's honor. As a surprise for her husband, Rebbetzin Kanelsky arranged that instead of 20 couples, like the first year, 26 couples were married.

### THOUSANDS OF JEWS WERE BROUGHT TO THE REBBE

After Bris Avrohom performed a bris mila, the newly circumcised person was brought to the Rebbe for "dollars." This trend began one Sunday, when the sandek asked to go to the Rebbe for a dollar after the bris. He, the newly circumcised man, and R' Kanelsky, went together to the Rebbe.

***The Rebbe looked at Sholom Ber and said, "A Jew does not have to be convinced to have a bris; you just need to explain the importance of the mitzva and he will do it."***

When it was their turn, R' Groner introduced them. The Rebbe blessed them and then said to the newly circumcised man, "Thank you for letting me be the first to bless you after the bris." Needless to say, all the participants were thrilled.

When R' Kanelsky saw how pleased the Rebbe was, he decided to do this on a regular basis. Every Sunday, after the weekly bris, the men went to the Rebbe and received his bracha.

"We would run from performing the brissin to 770," relates R' Kanelsky. "Every Sunday we had to make sure we had a fleet of cars to bring the circumcised, one after the other, to 770 for dollars. After each bris, we would wait a bit until the man recovered and then he and the sandek and the sponsor, together with their families, would pass by the Rebbe for dollars."

This went on for four and a half years and thousands of Jews were brought to the Rebbe. The last time he brought people to the Rebbe was the Sunday before 27 Adar, 5752, when he came, as



**Rabbi Kanelsky at a Menora lighting at the office of the mayor of Elizabeth. From left to right: Rabbi Kanelsky, the mayor, Danny Kahane, Rabbi Boruch Levkivker, Rabbi Dovid Wilansky**



always, with a group of newly circumcised people and their entourage.

“One Sunday, someone by the name of Sholom Ber Friedman (a”h) called me and asked to be the sandek at a bris that day so that afterwards, he could go to the Rebbe for dollars with the circumcised person and ask for a bracha for something personal. I told him that the sandakim for that day had already been arranged and he had to wait for the following week. He insisted that he had to be sandek that day.

“When I saw that this was very important to him, I made a deal with him. I said that a man was bringing his two sons that day for brissin, but the father himself was not circumcised and refused to have a bris. If he was able to convince the father to have a bris, he would be able to be his sandek and then go to the Rebbe.

“Sholom Ber liked the idea and went to Crown Heights to meet with the father. After a long talk with him, he managed to convince the father to undergo a bris. When he passed by the Rebbe, I introduced him and said that this was Sholom Ber Friedman who had convinced a Jew to circumcise himself.

“The Rebbe looked at Sholom Ber and said, ‘A Jew does not have to be convinced to have a bris; you just need to explain the importance of the mitzva and he will do it.’ The Rebbe smiled and gave R’ Sholom Ber two dollars.”

## TWO DOLLARS STUCK TOGETHER

A man who had been married for six years and still did not have children asked to be a sandek for Bris Avrohom so he could pass by the Rebbe and ask for a bracha. He hoped that after the Rebbe



**Rabbi Kanelsky saying l’chaim with newly circumcised men and their families**

heard that he was a sandek and paid for a bris, he would bless him with a son.

When he asked the Rebbe for a bracha, the Rebbe gave him a dollar and said, “Being a sandek is a segula for wealth.” The man left in despair. He had asked for a bracha for children and had gotten a response about wealth. He decided to donate towards another bris so he could again be sandek and pass by the Rebbe after the bris.

Once again, when he passed by the Rebbe, the Rebbe said that being a sandek is a segula for wealth. The same scene repeated itself a third time.

The man was persistent and decided to donate towards a fourth bris. He resolved not to leave the Rebbe until he got a bracha for a child. He was sandek once again and then he and his wife, along with all the other people involved, went to the Rebbe. The Rebbe repeated that being a sandek is a segula for wealth and although he begged the Rebbe for a bracha for children, he did not receive one.

He had to move on as the Rebbe continued giving out dollars for tz’daka to the other

people on line. However, after he and his wife had walked away, the Rebbe motioned to R’ Meir Harlig to call them back. The Rebbe gave them a dollar and said, “For the children who will be born.” The couple left and burst into tears of joy and emotion that they had finally received the Rebbe’s bracha for children.

That evening, the woman noticed that the dollar she had received from the Rebbe was actually two dollars stuck together. Although they had been handled by people at the bank and the Rebbe’s secretary, they remained stuck together so that they looked like one dollar. When she told R’ Kanelsky about it, he asked her to keep it to herself. Ten months later, her husband called R’ Kanelsky and told him they had had twins.

The couple received a letter from the Rebbe in honor of the bris and they invited R’ Kanelsky to read it before the hundreds of friends who had come to celebrate with them. Although the crowd included wealthy and distinguished people who belonged to groups that oppose Chabad, the father of the babies





**Rabbi Levkivker giving a shiur**

announced emotionally that they owe their children to the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

A few years later, in 5753, the father of the twins told R' Kanelsky that they wanted another child. "We used to be able to turn to the Rebbe, but now what can we do?" He told them to write a letter which the secretary would read to the Rebbe. R' Groner read the letter and the Rebbe nodded his head in blessing. A year later the couple had a daughter.

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The hour was growing late. The interview in R' Kanelsky's office was fascinating, but it was Friday afternoon and it would be Shabbos in a few hours. I had to return to Crown Heights. Before he drove me to the train station I

went to immerse in his magnificent mikva in honor of Shabbos.

When I passed the big shul I saw that all the tables were arranged and set. R' Kanelsky explained that they would be having a big farbrengen on Shabbos, with the participation of dozens of mekuravim and members of the community. R' Dovid Wilansky was in charge of the technical details and he ensured that all was taken care of in the best possible way.

On the way, R' Kanelsky said to me, "I feel like a small child whom the Rebbe took with his two hands and raised." I noticed a tear as he spoke emotionally about the nachas that the organization gives the Rebbe. He told me about the many mosdos that currently comprise Bris Avrohom. Among them is Bris Avrohom in Old Bridge, which includes a Sunday school and many programs, and is run by his son Yosef Yitzchok, who also serves as rav of the community.

That is in addition to the four centers that were founded over the years which operate under the organization. One of these centers is run R' Kanelsky's father-in-law, Rabbi Chaim Dovber Zaltzman, who came 15 years ago on shlichus to Fairlawn. R' Zaltzman has done tremendous work and has established a beautiful community with dozens

of mekuravim. Many of them have become Chassidim and mekusharim to the Rebbe. R' Zaltzman's son, Menachem Mendel, runs the school and summer camp in Fairlawn.

Today, Bris Avrohom operates all over New Jersey. From all their programs, the weddings they host every year have become the most associated with the organization. Every year, dozens of couples are brought under the chuppa to be married according to Jewish law. Rabbi and Rebbetzin Kanelsky meet with all the couples and explain the tremendous importance in having a Jewish marriage and then prepare them for their wedding. The complicated event is directed by Rebbetzin Kanelsky, who said they sometimes meet with fifty couples in order to get ten of them to have a proper Jewish wedding.

R' Kanelsky told me that often, when he brought wealthy people to the Rebbe for dollars on a Sunday, the Rebbe asked them whether they were connected with the big weddings that Bris Avrohom sponsors. This showed the Kanelskys the Rebbe's high regard for this project. Every year, before the event, all the brides and grooms would pass by the Rebbe along with their escorts and the donors and the Rebbe gave each of them two dollars for tz'daka and a bracha.



# AS ZILBER REFLECTS

*R' Yitzchok Zilber suffered greatly during the decades he spent in the Soviet Union. He lived a life of mesirus nefesh to spread Judaism and study Torah. In his book, written in Russian, he describes his friendships with Lubavitcher Chassidim who were moser nefesh to keep mitzvos. The following are some examples*

*The gaon, Rabbi Yitzchok Zilber (1917-2004), known as R' Yitzchok Kazaner, demonstrated tremendous mesirus nefesh in his dedication to Judaism in the Soviet Union. When he finally was able to move to Eretz Yisroel, he continued his holy work with great devotion, remaining in touch with Chabad Chassidim whom he had met earlier.*

## THE SHADCHAN – RABBI MORDECHAI DUBIN

Rabbi Mordechai Dubin (may Hashem avenge his blood) was brought from Moscow to Kuibyshev after the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. Searching for a kosher home, he met the Zeidmans, the parents of Gitta, my future wife.

During his stay in their home, R' Dubin helped the Zeidman girls understand what was happening around them. He explained the truth about Lenin and Stalin, who were regarded as gods at that time. Until then, the sisters considered them almost holy, and they were greatly shaken up by what he told them.

It was around this time that I arrived in Kuibyshev. In my hometown of Kazan, the shul had

been closed down and we prayed in a secret minyan. In Kuibyshev, the shul was officially open, so of course I continued my practice of attending daily.

R' Dubin regularly sat there in the shul, bent over his learning. I would join him as he dissected three topics at a time in various tractates of the Gemara.

One Thursday, a policeman apprehended me as I was crossing the street. I protested that I wasn't

***I realized they  
must have been  
helped by an  
informer from the  
shul, who had  
helped them  
decipher the  
Hebrew notes I  
had written.***

the only person who crossed the street over there, yet he only accosted me. I proffered the standard half ruble fine, but he shook his head in refusal. I had to accompany him.

My blood froze when I read the sign on the door of the office to which I was brought: Anti-Espionage – Death to Spies!

They led me to a room and told me to sit at the desk. Three men took their places opposite me. They

smacked me forcefully in the face, breaking my glasses and nearly knocking my teeth out.

"What are your dealings with Dubin?" they demanded.

I explained that I came from Kazan where there was no shul and here, there was. A teacher by profession, I came to study at the shul, where I had met Dubin.

"What is this?" they then inquired, handing me a slip of paper on which a phone number was written.

I could not figure out how that number got into their hands. At some point I had asked R' Dubin whether there was anything I could help him with, and he'd asked me to arrange a phone call for him with his sister, who lived in Moscow. When I saw his sister's number in their hands, I realized I had gotten entangled somehow. Still, I maintained that we met at shul and I had merely fulfilled his request.

They continued to beat me, confiscated whatever papers and documents I had on me, and then threw me in jail. Even after careful examination, they had trouble deciphering my papers. My notes were scrawled across both sides of the papers, including the margins, without any logical sense or order. In addition, the notes were written in Hebrew.

The next day they brought me back before the interrogators. "Do you organize meetings with a man known, in your notes, as NTTY?"

I realized they must have been helped by an informer from the shul, who had helped them decipher the Hebrew notes I had

written.

I explained that NTTY (*nasati*) in Hebrew means “I gave.” “You can see that wherever that word appears it is followed by an amount: half a ruble, three kopeks, a ruble.”

They accepted my explanation.

*R' Zilber describes the interrogations and suffering he went through until he was finally and unexpectedly released on Friday night. It was just four days before his wedding to Gitta Zeidman.*

The wedding took place on 14 Elul, 5705 (1945). R' Mordechai Dubin asked me whether I wasn't afraid to have a chuppa on the street where



people would see me, as I had just gotten out of jail. Knowing the importance of having a chuppa under the heaven as a sign of blessing, that the children should be as numerous as the stars of the sky, I insisted on having it in the street. Till this day, I remember R' Dubin's speech at the wedding.

*R' Zilber's wife worked as an electrical engineer in Kuibyshev and it was no easy matter to be released from work to join her husband in Kazan. The government in those days was very particular about one's place of work. Then came R' Dubin to the rescue:*

R' Dubin's connections were a tremendous help. He knew Shlomo Vovsi (Solomon Michaelos), principal actor and producer at the Jewish theater and also head of the Anti Fascist Jewish Committee. Michaelos made efforts on our behalf, and less than a year after we were married, Gitta was released from her job. Sadly, Michaelos was murdered by personal order of Stalin in 1948. It was made to look like a car accident.

*R' Zilber and his wife visited R' Dubin's grave before making aliya in 1972, and then again thirty years later when they traveled to the CIS.*

## FRIGHTENING MESIRUS NEFESH

This story happened in the fifties. Erev Shabbos Chanuka, I was on my way to daven when a man on crutches came towards me. He asked where Jews lived and I invited him to join me. The minyan met in a small room which was no bigger than six square meters, but when he entered he exclaimed, “Ah, this is real Gan Eden!”

His name was Berel Gurewitz (Rabbi Dovber Gurewitz, Moscow-Kfar Chabad) and he was a Lubavitcher Chassid who was actively involved in organizing shiurim in secret.

R' Gurewitz was arrested in Lvov after the Holocaust while attempting to smuggle himself across the border. He had just been released from ten



years of exile and was on his way to Moscow. Seeing from the setting sun that Shabbos was about to begin, he got off the train and began asking passersby where Jews live.

After the davening I invited him to my home, where he told a little about his years in jail and exile. It was extremely hard to keep Shabbos there. The commandant always yelled at him, "With me, you will work on Shabbos!" But he persistently refused to work, with mesirus nefesh, and was punished mercilessly until he needed crutches. "Not because of my legs, but because of my heart," he told me.

*The other inmates in the prison were little better than the commandant, and R' Gurewitz was once on the verge of death. A Chechnian prisoner, who was a stranger to R' Berel, ran towards him with a knife and stabbed him in the back. The powerful blow could have badly injured his spine but miraculously, the knife missed its mark. R' Berel was taken to the hospital and a short while later the Chechnian was brought there too. Frustrated that his assault had been unsuccessful, he had tried to hurt someone else, but the potential victim was faster than he was. Despite the severity of his injuries, R' Berel opted to return to jail for fear that the Chechnian would try to attack him again. Then he said:*

On Motzaei Shabbos I will continue on my way. It has been years since I've been home! I don't know what happened to my children in all this time, whether they remained Jews. If they became like everyone else, I will be heartbroken."

I poured him a cup of milk but he only accepted half. "You have children," he said considerately.

On Motzaei Shabbos, when we parted, I wanted to give him ten

rubles but he refused to take it. "It's not necessary. I have a loaf of bread. I have a train ticket. Just one thing I'll ask of you – when I was imprisoned, I was fortunate enough to be able to take my t'fillin with me, but over time, the strap became worn through. If you could give me a strap, that would be very helpful.

I gave him a strap and escorted him to the train station. On the bus, someone offered him a seat but he declined, despite his crutches. Another passenger, a soldier, observed, "Comrades, you can learn decency from this man.



Rabbi Mordechai Dubin

He refuses to take advantage of his disability."

His comment was right on the mark. Indeed, as soon as he arrived in Moscow, he sent me fifteen rubles for the strap.

R' Berel lived far from the shul. On weekdays he went there by bus but on Shabbos, of course, he walked. When he returned from Shacharis, it was after twelve in the afternoon and he hadn't eaten before davening.

As time went on and he became weaker, the doctors forbade him to

leave his house without eating a least a slice of bread and butter, but he couldn't do it. Then he had a dream. Three great men, one of whom introduced himself as the Chida, appeared. They chided him, "You already asked a rav and he told you to eat, yet you still refuse to follow the doctors' directive. We order you to eat.

From then on, he ate in the morning before Shacharis.

He was always concerned about the material and spiritual welfare of his children. One of his sons, who later moved to Tashkent (Rabbi Abba Dovid, who is back in Tashkent today as shliach and chief rabbi of Central Asia) taught my children.

The family later moved to Eretz Yisroel, where R' Berel lived 17 happy years. He was over 90 when he died, and it was heartwarming to see the respect that his children gave him. I visited him now and then in his home in Kfar Chabad. One time, I encountered him at a wedding there and returned a few days afterwards to sit and talk. That turned out to be our last encounter. He passed away two days later. May his memory be for a blessing!

## HOSPITALITY WITH MESIRUS NEFESH

*The KGB pursued R' Zilber until he had to flee alone from Kazan, leaving behind his wife and children. After a difficult time, he arrived in Tashkent, where he was hosted by the Rabinowitz family. After a short time he moved to the family of R' Zev Krogliak, but he was afraid to endanger his hosts:*

I knew that by providing me with shelter, both families were endangering themselves and their positions. To minimize this risk, I divided my time between the two families, sometimes sleeping at one home and sometimes at the other. I



was constantly worrying over the fate of my wife and children. My biggest fear was that they would take the children from her, but I couldn't call her [lest I be discovered by the KGB].

Compared to Kazan, the spiritual life in Tashkent was far better. There was an Ashkenazi community, about seventy families, among them many Lubavitchers. When someone acted improperly, others influenced him for the better. The children had Jewish friends and they lived in a Jewish environment, which was so important for their education and development.

*R' Zilber tells about the special friendship with R' Zev and his wife Leah:*

They were lovely, good-hearted people and despite R' Zev's important position as manager of a department in a big factory in the aircraft industry, he did not hesitate to endanger himself. He provided shelter for all who were hiding from the authorities, myself included. One of the men hid in their house for a year and a half and died there. They were able to bury this man despite his concealed identity.

The Krogliak family arranged weddings free of charge, and Leah cooked the food. They dealt a lot in shalom bayis without taking a penny, and loaned money freely.

Although I didn't have all the proper papers to enable me to get an official job, R' Zev managed to find work for me.

*He was continuously switching jobs on account of his Shabbos observance. He finally found peace when R' Mendel Garelik arranged work for him in a small government factory which the Gareliks managed:*

I worked there until I made aliya, along with my son and daughter. At a certain point, R'

Mendel asked Alexander Yudin, a former KGB agent, to run the place. In the past, Yudin had been one of Stalin's personal bodyguards and he had even been a Soviet spy in New York, but his affinity for liquor released him from his job.

R' Mendel told him, 'I have fifteen employees who are all upstanding individuals. There is one issue, though, which you will need to ignore. On Saturday we will come to the factory but won't actually do any work. In exchange, you will get half our salary for



**Rabbi Zev Krogliak**

Saturday, enough money to even bathe in a bathtub of vodka. Are you willing to be the manager and write reports?'

Yudin jumped at the opportunity and even brought his wife and mother-in-law into the factory. The job entailed making big aluminum plates oil resistant by immersing them in a bath of caustic soda solution. Then we would stamp them with various engravings.

The terms of employment were excellent for me except that

working with these materials ruined my health. The damage caused by the caustic soda was so great that the government, that was never generous, gave us a bonus of seltzer, three liters of milk, and a kilo of butter every month.

As a result of the noxious fumes, I would simply fall asleep against my will, sometimes even as I walked in the street. This often caused me to be late to work.

I would occasionally be delayed for other reasons, such as taking care of the burial of a childless old timer or being involved in other mitzvos that could not be postponed. The matter of my lateness could not be known to the other workers lest it be leaked to the authorities. I was often aided by R' Sholom Ber, the son of R' Mendel Garelik. He brought out my work smock so I could quickly put it on and enter the factory as though I was coming back after a short break.

Often, in my hurry to start working, I didn't put on a mask and gloves, which didn't help my health at all, to say the least. I wanted to do everything quickly so I would have time to learn.

I suggested to my friend that we secretly eat our sandwiches an hour before the lunch break, without stopping our work. That way during our lunch break (between one and two – earlier on Friday), when the gentile managers went home or to a restaurant to eat, we could learn Mishnayos.

On Shabbos we would go to the factory but did not work. At one point it seemed that someone had informed on us, for one Shabbos, a committee came to check. When we saw the supervisors standing in the gate, we asked Yudin's wife to surreptitiously pour ammonia in all the rooms. When the supervisors came in, they held their noses and said: 'Oh, how can they work here?'

***When the supervisors came in, they held their noses and said: ‘Oh, how can they work here? How can they stand it? They should be paid compensation for this harmful work.’***

How can they stand it? They should be paid compensation for this harmful work.’ They quickly left but the promised compensation never came. None of us had any expectations for it to materialize.

One Shabbos, government people came to pay salaries. We ran away because there was no way we could explain why we couldn’t accept money or sign that we had

received it.

The factory was on the banks of Lake Komsomolsk and we hid behind the boats. Yudin couldn’t figure it out – he had invited us to receive our salaries and everybody disappeared, leaving him in an awkward position. When we returned, he attacked us bitterly, ‘I understand that you don’t work on Saturday, but why can’t you take money?’ He just didn’t get it.”

### **MESIRUS NEFESH FOR SHABBOS**

In addition to his family, Yudin temporarily arranged work for a friend of his by the name of Ivan Levdiv. This man had worked for the KGB previously and Yudin took him, his wife and daughter as employees. He appointed Ivan in charge of the manufacturing process.

Two months passed and Ivan suddenly announced, ‘I’m not leaving here for any other job. I am the manager here!’

A surprised Yudin reminded him that he was the manager and had appointed Ivan only temporarily,

but Ivan insisted that he was the manager.

He had always seemed like a refined, well-mannered person. Often I would look at him and think how we could learn from him how to speak to people and if only all Jews were like him. He made such a wonderful impression that I would vouch for him. And then a group of men came to the factory and read to us this man’s declaration: I refuse to oversee the manufacturing process in this factory because of the prevailing conditions in which all the workers are Zionists and religious. He had informed on us!

He enumerated the facts: ‘On the following holidays (which were the days of Rosh HaShana, when the factory was closed for two days) absent from work were...’ and he provided a list of names. ‘As much as I try to fight these religious and Zionist individuals, nothing helps and they continue to yearn to emigrate to Israel. Since working together with these people is impossible, I request that you restore order here.’

The men turned to us and said, ‘Comrades, where are you, in the Soviet Union or the United States? What’s going on here?’

The question was serious and it was only by a miracle that we were able to extricate ourselves. Till today I still don’t understand how; Hashem helped.”

It was R’ Sholom Ber, the son of R’ Mendel, who saved the situation. He was the union representative in the factory. When he saw Yudin quarrelling with his friend, he sensed where that was heading and he planned well.

With regard to Chol HaMoed Sukkos I had insisted that we not work... unless the top management came for inspection. In the Soviet Union, everything was planned out to the smallest detail. Every factory

### **WE FELL INTO THE DOUGH**

His daughter Chava relates:

When I was seven, I did not start attending school as the law required. I wanted to learn Torah and I was provided with a melamed, Rabbi Abba Dovid Gurewitz. I learned with his daughter (Bracha Gansburg of Kfar Chabad) who was my age, and my brother learned with his sons. We always knew that if anyone knocked at the door, we had to hide in another room.

One Friday we heard knocks. My friend’s mother, Malka Gurewitz, was busy making challa. The vat of dough was on the bed and in our panic, we jumped right into it.



**Rabbi Gurewitz, who taught  
Rabbi Zilber’s daughter**

had a fixed quota for each time period. We worked during the period following the holidays, at night and on Sundays, in order to make up the quota. I still remember going to work on Motzaei Simchas Torah.

R' Sholom Ber decided to take advantage of this fact. He slipped out and went over to the guard and asked, 'Would you be willing to say that we came to work on Sunday on this-and-this date?' The man readily agreed. 'Of course I remember that you worked on this date.'

R' Sholom Ber managed to re-enter the factory without anyone noticing that he had left. After the accusatory speeches were made, the committee turned to him and asked, 'What does the union representative have to say about all this?' He replied, 'This factory does all it can to provide its quota and to do so, many of us even show up for work on Sunday!'

He went to his notes and began to read: Zilber worked on this day and that day – for the two or three extra days that I worked, he wrote that I worked six or seven days. For no less than half an hour he read through his notes. He noted the Sundays that everybody came to work and the Sundays when some of us worked.

The members of the committee soon grew bored and did not want to hear anymore, but he kept going. He said, 'Actually, these men deserve extra vacation days. I didn't excuse them from any work days. To me, what's important is sticking to the schedule. Nobody got extra vacation days, so what are we talking about?'

Then he began to read other 'facts': 'the copying machines have been needing repairs and when we finished our monthly quota I called in the technicians, who worked on the following days...' and he

enumerated the dates including Rosh HaShana. 'That's the reason people were absent from work on those days.'

Sholom Ber paused to breathe and then repeated his question: 'I don't understand – what are we discussing here?'

Convinced, they turned to Ivan and said, 'It appears that everything here is legal. Why did you write otherwise?'

'True,' Ivan had to admit, 'superficially everything looks legal, but I can tell you one thing – even if you tie these people up and beat them, just try to bring them to



**Rabbi Sholom Ber Garelik**

work on Saturday. They'll never do it!'

The men weren't impressed by this and retorted, 'That's another matter. We are talking about the things you reported in writing. What can you tell us about the matter under discussion?'

He was quiet, since he had nothing to say. For me, this was an important lesson in life. You cannot judge someone by your general impression of them. The man seemed restrained, calm and decent – and this was an example of his

decency!

Right after this happened, Ivan became sick and left. Even the non-Jews said that G-d had punished him for trying to hurt the Jews.

## **A "POOL" AT THE SHUL**

In the 60's, the government closed the one official mikva in Tashkent. About 200 religious, Ashkenazi families lived in the city and another 50,000 Bucharrians, and this was a harsh blow for all.

The gabbai of the 'Sagvan' shul, which had housed the mikva up until then, was named Berel Lifschitz (a mekurav of Chabad in Tashkent). For 40 years he worked in a factory and he was awarded many awards for his exemplary work. His children, unfortunately, were not drawn to a life of Torah and pursued careers. One of them was an admiral and another was a dean in a university.

A secret mikva was built in the home of one of the Jews, and the devoted R' Berel contributed 400 rubles that they were unable to gather for its construction. The floor boards in one of the rooms of the house could be lifted and underneath was the mikva. When the boards covered the hiding place, nobody would imagine that there was something underneath.

This mikva could not service the entire community because they couldn't allow everyone in. Some people were suspected of being informers or had relatives that were suspected of being informers while they observed the purity laws. They could only allow those they trusted to use this mikva.

Salvation came when Rabbi Shmuel Menachem Klein, a Chabad Chassid and someone who was particularly clever, pressured R' Berel to open another mikva. "Listen Berel, if you don't open a mikva, all of hell with its seven



levels will be too small for you.”

This made a tremendous impression on Berel and he began making mighty efforts to establish contacts with government officials or, to put it more simply, to find the right person to bribe. He was told that an official in the city municipality, upon whom the issue depended, would take a bribe. When he spoke to this official, the man sighed and said, “I would be happy to take your money but I can’t do anything. We didn’t close the mikva on our own but by order of the KGB.”

Berel put on his most expensive suit and attached all the medals of excellence he had amassed over the years and went to the KGB building. They asked him what he wanted and he said: “I am a veteran worker and I want to pray in shul. It is permissible to pray, right?” “Yes, certainly,” they answered.

“One of my sons is an admiral and the other is a dean of a university. Whenever they ask me whether I am satisfied with the Soviet government, I unhesitatingly reply, ‘Yes, it should last many years!’ Sometimes tourists come to the shul and ask, ‘Do they bother you about praying?’ I tell them, ‘No, we pray freely.’

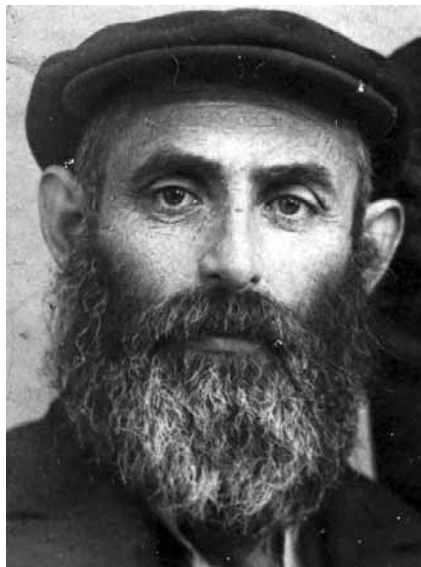
Assessing what impression his words were making on them, he continued, “I have to explain something to you. A shul must have a pool in which the chazan immerses twice a year, on Erev Yom Kippur and before Pesach. The tourists ask, ‘Do you have a pool?’ Until now I would tell them yes, and show it to them, but lately, a number of terrorists, enemies of the Soviet state, closed it. We recently had a delegation from the United States and I showed them around they were impressed, but then they asked, ‘Where is the pool?’ I blushed. I couldn’t show it

to them.”

The KGB man said, “We hear you. Now go and you will be given the green light.” A short while later, the mikva reopened. I heard this story from Berel himself,

## RABBI ZALMAN PEVSNER

My son, Ben-Tzion, began to learn Gemara with Rabbi Zalman Pevzner. R’ Pevzner came from White Russia and was nicknamed Zalman Buber, after the name of the city he came from. When I met him, he was about seventy. For ten



**Rabbi Shmuel Menachem Klein**

years he was in Stalin’s labor camps and he came out half alive and without a voice. It was terrible to listen to him. He could barely talk and he would make choking sounds and cough.

He was very sick. Others in his situation would lie all day in bed, but he continued to secretly teach his three grandsons and some other children. Every day, starting at eight o’clock until six in the evening, he would learn Gemara with them on a very high level, without being paid for it.

He had been arrested for this very same ‘crime’ but despite this, after his release he continued doing the same thing as though nothing had happened. Thanks to ‘crazy’ people like him, we lived! I arranged for my son to learn with him and he learned as though in yeshiva.

There were two rabbanim in Tashkent, this Rabbi Zalman Pevzner and Rabbi Shmaya Marinovsky, and both had great authority within the community. I was closer to R’ Zalman. He did things uncompromisingly; if only here in Eretz Yisroel we had rabbanim who acted like him.

In R’ Zalman’s shul there was an informer. One day, he decided he wanted to be the chazan, but most of the congregants did not want him to daven at the amud, and walked out. The informer went to the rav and complained, ‘They left me without a minyan!’

The rav answered, ‘You should know that it is forbidden to say ‘amen’ to your brachos. I am aware that you’re inclined to inform on me to the authorities because of what I’m saying, but let me advise you that I will be bored in prison without your company and will see to it that we be jailed together.’

I heard this myself. The informer said nothing; he just got up and left. This took particular courage, for this was a time when they davened in secret, in an unofficial place and illegally. Who had the gall to speak up that way under these conditions? But R’ Pevzner was not afraid of anyone. I did not meet many people who dared to act like him. He was a real rav!

“R’ Pevzner passed away on 13 Nissan 1971. My son and I tore our clothes in mourning, just as we would do for a relative.”

**BY THE REBBE**



*R' Zilber and his family arrived in Eretz Yisroel in Shvat, 1972, and shortly afterwards he was asked to travel to the United States to fundraise for chinuch. On this trip he had yechidus with the Rebbe.*

My meeting with the Lubavitcher Rebbe took an hour and a quarter. It began at four in the morning and ended at 5:15. I asked him what I should be involved with in Eretz Yisroel. On the one hand, my strong background in algebra could get me a job in a university, which would leave me a lot of time to

dedicate to Torah study. On the other hand, I could teach Tanach and Talmud. Where would I do the most good?

“The Rebbe responded that the multitude of immigrants from the Soviet Union needed to be drawn towards Judaism. While in Russia, they dreamed of making aliya for ‘national-religious’ reasons. When they actually arrived in Eretz Yisroel, however, not only was there no chance that they would improve spiritually, but on the contrary, there was a great danger that they would be influenced by

the street. Many of them would try to emigrate to America or other countries, which would cause a chilul Hashem since when they left the Soviet Union they cited religious reasons. Therefore, I see no greater mitzva than for you to be mekarev the immigrants from Russia to Torah.”

Indeed, from when he arrived in Eretz Yisroel until he passed away on Erev Tisha B’Av, 2004, at the age of 87, he was mekarev new immigrants from the former Soviet Union and was very successful.



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# WHERE CHILDREN DO THE GATHERING

By Dafna Chaim

*With the guidance and encouragement of Rebbetzin Tila Hecht, the schoolchildren bring the spirit of Hakhel to the City of Eilat.*

The first Hakhel gathering of the year was held at the beginning of the year, right after the yomim tovim of Tishrei, for all the students in the school. We explained the mitzva of Hakhel and described the scene, while emphasizing that Hakhel has significance today too. We wanted to get the children excited about it.

We told them that today, every one of them is like a king and each of them needs to gather as many children – and even adults – as possible, and inspire them to increase in yiras Shamayim. Every week we had a different assignment. The first assignment was for each student to gather their immediate family and tell them a Chassidic story or a d’var Torah.

It was amazing. Many children got their families swept up in the atmosphere of Hakhel. This was an incredible success, especially when you consider that most of the children are not from Chabad homes.

Then we widened the circle

and asked the students to gather children in the neighborhood, on the street, or at the playground and make a Hakhel with them. Here too, there was great success. One girl brought in signatures of a hundred Hakhel gatherings she organized.

The circle of influence continues to widen as the children encourage relatives and friends outside of Eilat to participate.

The spirit of Hakhel permeates the school. There is a big wall decorated with the Hakhel theme, and we make sure to mention it in every event. Even the invitations for the Siddur party noted that it’s a Hakhel year.

The children live with it. A teacher told that my son who is in third grade told her, very excitedly, that he was looking forward impatiently for Erev Pesach. When she asked him why, he said that he was looking forward to Moshiach’s coming. He had heard from his father that this year is an auspicious time for Moshiach since it says that Ben-

Dovid comes Motzaei Shmita.

I always find it moving to see the *t’mimus* of children. The *emuna p’shuta* that they have gives me so much strength and warms my heart.

Every Rosh Chodesh we have a school assembly in which I try to instill Jewish pride, that the children should be proud and happy that they learn in the Rebbe’s school and they should want to be “neiros l’ha’ir.” Of course, that obligates them to be role models for all who see them, and that it should be obvious in their behavior that they learn in the Rebbe’s school.

We have regulations in school that cover all sorts of things such as coming on time, dress, t’filla with kavana, middos tovos, ahavas Yisroel etc. Every child who does well in all areas gets a coupon and when they have accumulated five coupons they come to my office for a talk. I ask the children how they feel about school and if they were asked to recommend the school to a friend, what would they say is special about it.

The answers I get give me much nachas. Recently, a boy told me he would recommend the school because there is k’dusha here. A girl said it’s fun here, especially the Rosh Chodesh assemblies. I’ve noticed that the children love the Rosh Chodesh

assemblies. I have heard from many graduates that this is what they miss the most.

All the children participate in these assemblies. We daven and sing Hallel together. I talk about the new month, tell a Chassidishe story, and then give out awards – not just for academic excellence but for behavior, t’filla and so on. The awardees are applauded loudly by the entire school and it encourages others to excel.

Tomorrow, Rosh Chodesh, I will talk to the children about the power of simcha. There is a story about a Chassid who had a very sick son. He traveled to his Rebbe and cried bitterly as he told the Rebbe his plight and begged for a bracha. To his dismay, the Rebbe did not respond.

The Chassid left the room, a broken man. He headed for home with a heavy heart, worried about the fate of his son.

On the way home he stopped at an inn, where he met his fellow Chassidim who were on their way to

***We widened the circle and asked the students to gather children in the neighborhood, on the street, or at the playground and make a Hakhel with them. Here too, there was great success. One girl brought in signatures of a hundred Hakhel gatherings she organized.***







alleviate his sorrow a bit and to boost his morale. He slowly forgot his sadness and even danced with the other Chassidim.

At the end of the farbrengen, the Chassidim prepared to continue their trip and they urged him to join them. He told them that he had just been to see the Rebbe and had returned empty-handed. How would it help to go back? Nevertheless, their persistent urging won him over and he agreed to join them.

When he saw the Rebbe once again, the Rebbe smiled and said, "You should know that there was a decree against you that could not be nullified, but your simcha, when you farbrenged with the Chassidim, brought your salvation. Go home and your son will soon fully recover."

That is the power of simcha. It can break the barriers of galus and finally bring the Geula.

These monthly Hakhel gatherings help keep the students inspired and motivated. The influence of the children is felt throughout the city, and certainly within the Lubavitch community.

It is not only through the children that the power of Hakhel is felt. We have done things in a big way this year. All parties and gatherings have been bigger than usual. For example, my son got married in Kislev. On Yud-Tes Kislev we made a big Sheva Brachos celebration in a hall at a hotel. It was a Hakhel which included men, women and children from all sectors of the city and it was a grand celebration. In addition, many shiurim were added this year, and the uniqueness of the year is definitely felt.

We await the grand Hakhel with Moshiach Tzidkeinu.



the Rebbe. They had also stopped to rest up. Nu, what do Chassidim do when they meet as

they are on their way to the Rebbe? They farbreng, of course. He joined the farbrengen to