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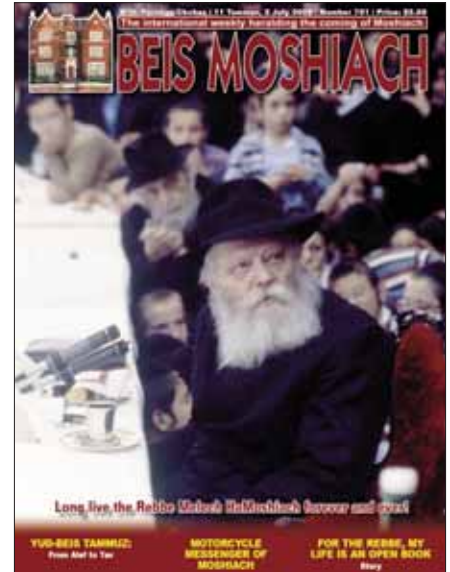
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BEYOND THE DESERT

Translated by Boruch Merkur (*Likkutei Sichos* Vol. 33, pg. 85-94)

The resolution of the opinion of Rebbi Akiva – that “The generation of the desert has no portion in the World to Come” – is that they have no need for the World to Come. On the contrary, they are above it!

1. Our Sages learn [Megilla 23b] from the fact that (in our Torah portion [Shlach 14:27]) the spies are called an “assembly” [or “congregation”], and since they were ten in number (for Yehoshua and Kaleiv were not counted among them [in this instance]), that all groupings of ten Jews are considered a complete assembly. [Footnote 3 in the original: See Rambam Laws of Prayer 8:5; *Shulchan Aruch of the Alter Rebbe* Orach Chaim 55:2.]

Investigation is required into this matter, for the source of this law, regarding the especial virtue of an assembly in matters of sanctity (for “all matters of **sanctity** shall not have less than [a quorum of] ten [adult men]” [Megilla *ibid*; Brachos 21b]), is learned specifically from the spies (of whom it is written, “how long [can] this **wicked** assembly [be tolerated]?” [Shlach *ibid*]).

One might attempt to respond on the basis that the law regarding a sanctified assembly (for “all matters of sanctity shall not have less than a quorum of ten”) is that also a wicked person “is included for a quorum of ten in all matters of sanctity...(because) ‘a Jew, irrespective of whether he has sinned, is a Jew’ [Sanhedrin 44a, *beg.*], and he maintains his sanctity and does not become excluded from the Jewish body” [*Shulchan Aruch of the Alter Rebbe* *ibid* 55:14 – see FN 9]. However, at first glance, this rationale falls short of justifying the matter. Namely, because (in addition to the fact that if you maintain (according to the simple reading) that the spies are considered to have been **rebellious** against G-d (as expressed by Kaleiv, “Don’t rebel against G-d” [Shlach 14:9 – see FN 10]), it is not obvious in Torah law [see FN 11] whether those who are “rebellious” may be including in a quorum of ten for matters of sanctity, and surely this is so when **all** ten are rebellious) the lesson learned from Scripture regarding the spies – that an “assembly” is a group of ten – also applies to the law of an “assembly” of the **Sanhedrin**, the Supreme Court (“The assembly shall judge...and the assembly shall rescue, etc.” [Massei 35:24-25]), which is [composed of a quorum of] ten [Mishna in Ch. 1 of Meseches Sanhedrin (2a, end)]. In this

context it is obvious that there is no wicked person included. [FN 14: Although we may point out a distinction here – that this case of exclusion differs insofar as the person is excluded not on the grounds that he is not considered part of the “assembly” per se, but because he is not a member of the Sanhedrin.]

[Thus, we are left with a case whereby we derive a concept regarding the sanctity of a “congregation” from an apparently wicked assembly.] We may answer that this is one of the allusions in

the revealed dimension of Torah to that which is explained in the inner dimension of Torah, namely, that the spies were actually on a lofty level [of holiness]. [FN 15: To note the saying of our Sages: “The intentions of Satan and P’nina were for the sake of Heaven” (Bava Basra 16a).] That is to say that not only was their intent not, G-d forbid, to rebel in the literal sense, but on the contrary, “They were on an extremely lofty level” [*Likkutei Torah* Shlach 36d, end], as will be discussed at length.

(As it is explained in several places, the revealed part of Torah and the inner dimension of the Torah together compose a single Torah. Therefore, although each part has its own definition and principles – for example, we do not learn Torah law from Agada [Yerushalmi Peia 2:4 – see FN 17] – nevertheless, since in essence they are [aspects of] one Torah, it is understood that they have an association between them, a connection, in fact, a union (to the extent that they relate to each other as body and soul, as it is said in the Zohar [III 152a]). Even the concepts in the inner dimension of the Torah that don’t run in accordance with the literal reading and not with Torah law have a foundation and source in the revealed dimension of Torah, whether by allusion or in its interpretation.

(So too with regard to our present concern. Although according to the literal reading of the text (and the revealed dimension of Torah in general), the spies committed a serious sin – as a result of which they themselves were punished and on account of them, the entire generation of the desert, etc. – nevertheless, it is necessary to say that also in the revealed dimension of Torah there is at least an allusion to the virtue of the spies that is discussed in the inner dimension of the Torah.)

2. In the teachings of Chassidus (the inner dimension of the Torah) it is explained [*Likkutei Torah* Shlach 37b, 38b, citing Kabbala texts – see FN 20] that the fact that the spies did not want to enter the Land of Israel was actually on account of their greatness of stature in the service of G-d; they did not want to enter the Land of Israel because they refused to

degrade themselves with the lifestyle of “six years you shall sow your field, etc.” [B’Har 25:3], being occupied in physical and coarse matters, reflecting the saying of Rashbi: “Could it be that a person plows, etc., and sows, etc. – what will become of Torah [study]?” [Brachos 35b]. Their will and desire was to remain secluded in the desert (as a continuation of the Giving of the Torah), cut off from the life of settling [the land], without the hardship of earning a livelihood and etc. (for G-d provided their needs in the desert by means of the *mahn* (manna), food from the heavens [B’Shalach 16:4 ff.], water from the well of Miriam [Rashi, Chukas 20:2], and through the Clouds of Glory, which escorted them, killing the snakes and scorpions, pressing their clothes [Rashi, B’Haalos’cha 10:34, Eikev 8:4], and etc.). In fact, this is the true way to study Torah and to cleave to G-d, as reflected in the saying of our Sages, “The Torah was only given to (be expounded by) those who eat *mahn*.”

(They failed to recognize, however, that – even in comparison to the virtue of cleaving [to G-d] and etc. that was achieved in the desert – there is a greater advantage in serving G-d through the way of life in the Land of Israel, namely, the fulfillment of Mitzvos that depend on the land, and Mitzvos that require action in general.)

Accordingly, we may say that the concept mentioned above – that we learn that ten Jews are considered a sanctified assembly specifically from the mention of the term “assembly” with regard to the spies – alludes to the fact that the sin of the spies is not to be understood in the simple sense; they merely were mistaken in considering the path they had chosen (mentioned above) as the principal pathway in the service of G-d. [FN 28: To note that, although the Mishna (Sanhedrin 108a) states that the spies have no portion in the World to Come, it is implied in Zohar III (Raaya Mehemna) 376a that they do have a portion in the World to Come. It is known that the resolution provided by the text *Asara Maamaros* (Maamer Chikur Din 2:8), among other places, of the opinion of Rabbi Akiva (Sanhedrin *ibid*) – that “The generation of the desert has no portion in the World to Come” – is that they have no **need** for the World to Come. On the contrary, they are above it. (See *Likkutei Levi Yitzchok* Igros pg. 358 ff). See *Likkutei Sichos* Vol. 23 pg. 102, where this topic is discussed.]

But considering their greatness of stature and their prodigious level in the service of G-d – moreover (and this may be deemed primary), their efforts to influence the Jewish people in this matter – this was a great and severe sin.

3. Furthermore, we may assert that the fact that the source of the conduct of the spies is within the realm of holiness is alluded to and derived also from the fact that the people of the generation of the desert remained in the desert for forty years [FN 29: as this is expressed in several places (in the Written Torah as well as the Oral Torah), although in actuality it was less than 39 years. See the commentary of Rashi (on our Torah portion 14:33).] but they did not live a life of suffering and hardship. On the contrary, they lived a life of tranquility, for the entire forty years they had *mahn* as sustenance and water from the well of Miriam and etc., the Clouds of Glory protected them and etc. (as mentioned above).

At first glance, this was the argument and will of (the spies and) the generation of the desert: to remain in the desert and not to enter the Land of Israel. So how is it appropriate that their request was fulfilled and they remained in the desert in tranquility, the cloud being upon them day and night, etc.?

(Moreover, according to what is known [FN 30: see *Likkutei Sichos* *ibid* pg. 98 ff., where it is discussed] that the concept of the punishments of Torah is to **correct** the blemish resulting from the sin, to the extent that the state [after the punishment] would be rendered the opposite of the concept of sin, it is extremely wondrous that in the topic at hand their will was not annulled and their sin was not corrected and negated ([by means of compelling] entry into the land). Rather, they were directed in accordance with their will, the entire generation remaining all their years in the desert! Even if you want to say that as a result of their sin they were not deserving entry into the Land of Israel (for since they rejected the Land of Israel, they did not merit entry into it), nevertheless, how can we explain that the punishment should be that they would remain in the desert in a life of tranquility, etc., within the Clouds of Glory and with Moshe and Aharon at their head and etc.?)

On the basis of the explanation provided above (according to the inner dimension of the Torah), we may assert the following reason for the matter:

[Striving to attain and remain steeped in] the elevated spiritual status of the desert (which was their intent and it was for the sake of Heaven) **is not an error**. (It is just that through that approach – and as an outgrowth of it – something **mistaken** resulted.)

That is to say that residing in the desert within the Clouds of Glory and etc. unto itself has holiness, but they [erroneously] considered this to be the ultimate purpose – although this virtue is (must be) a **preparation** to entrance into

The meaning of involvement in Torah and Mitzvos “in order that they shall merit the life of the World to Come” is not in order to receive the reward of the World to Come per se, but in order to advance to the continuation of involvement in Torah and Mitzvos in the manner that it is in the World to Come.

the Land of Israel. For in order to arrive at the lofty phase of entry into the Land of Israel, the preparation and certification brought about through spending forty years in the desert is required.

4. It is relevant here to discuss the words of Rambam in the Laws of Repentance, for thus we may elucidate the latter explanation (which is according to the inner dimension of the Torah) in terms of **Torah law**.

In Chapter 10 [Law 1] of Laws of Repentance the Rambam writes: “One should not say, ‘I am doing the Mitzvos of the Torah and delving into its wisdom in order to receive all the blessings written in it or in order that I may merit the life of the World to Come, and I shall stay away from the transgressions which the Torah cautions against in order to be saved from the curses written in the Torah or so I shall not be cut off from the life of the World to Come.’ It is not appropriate to serve G-d in this manner, for the service of one who serves in this manner is motivated by fear. It is not the virtue of the Prophets nor the virtue of the Sages. Only the ignorant, as well as women and children, serve G-d in this manner, for they are educated to serve out of fear – until their minds expand and they may [then] serve [G-d] out of love.”

In the preceding chapter [Chapter 9, Law 2], Rambam writes: “For this reason all the Jewish people – their Prophets and their Sages [included] – eagerly anticipated the Days of Moshiach. That is, in order that they may rest from the kingdoms which do not permit them to occupy themselves with Torah and Mitzvos properly. They will [then] find themselves calm and will increase in wisdom **in order that they shall merit** the life of the World to Come.”

At first glance, this begs the question: How is it possible that in Chapter 10 it states, “It is not appropriate to serve G-d in this manner ... **It is not** the virtue of the Prophets nor the virtue of the Sages,” when preceding this he writes explicitly that this is the way of the Prophets and the Sages (for which reason “all the Jewish people – their Prophets and their Sages [included] – eagerly anticipated the Days of Moshiach”)? This is indeed the virtue of the Prophets and the Sages!

Simply speaking, we may answer that there are two separate matters here: Chapter 9 does not address the manner of the **fulfillment** of Torah and Mitzvos; it outlines, rather, the definition and nature of the reward for Mitzvos that is [received] in the life of the World to Come [FN 36: and it comes as a continuation and conclusion to what he began in Chapter 8: “The good that is hidden away for the righteous” is life in the World to Come], which is “the end of all the reward in its entirety and the final goodness which has no interruption nor diminishment” [Rambam 9:2]. Therefore, “all the Prophets eagerly anticipated it” [ibid 8:3, end], and “to what an extent did [King] Dovid pine and yearn for the life of the World to Come” [ibid 8:7, beg.]. For this very reason all the Jewish people – their Prophets and their Sages included – eagerly anticipated (for this state to be manifest **in the world** [see FN 40] in) the Days of Moshiach, for specifically through this (they would be able to occupy themselves with Torah and Mitzvos properly and) they shall merit the life of the World to Come.

Whereas, in Chapter 10 the Rambam elucidates the desired manner of the **fulfillment of Torah and Mitzvos**. Namely, that

the intent of being occupied with Torah and Mitzvos should not be for the sake of meriting the life of the World to Come; it should be motivated, rather, by love [of G-d]. Thus, although there must be the yearning for the life of the World to Come, this is not the purpose of the fulfillment of Torah and Mitzvos, but a matter unto itself.

However, this distinction is, at first glance, contrived, for the wording, “(they will then find themselves calm and) they will **increase** in wisdom **in order** that they shall merit the life of the World to Come,” implies that ultimately their thought and their intent (even when not during the fulfillment of Mitzvos) is that being occupied with Torah and Mitzvos is in order to merit the life of the World to Come.

5. The Rambam continues in Chapter 10 [Law 2] (in a law unto itself): “The one who serves [G-d] out of love, occupies himself in Torah and in Mitzvos and goes in the ways of wisdom – not for the sake of any thing in the world, not because of the fear of bad fortune and not in order to inherit the good fortune, but – acts in accordance with the truth [simply] because it is the truth, and in the end, good fortune will come as a result of it. The virtue of this approach is exceedingly great. But not every Sage merits it. This is the virtue of Avrohom our Father, whom the Holy One Blessed Be He called ‘His Beloved,’ for he served [G-d] solely out of love.”

This requires explanation, for also this passage seems to pose the following contradiction: In Law 1 Rambam writes that service out of fear is the way of the ignorant, as well as women and children: “It is not the virtue of the Prophets nor...the Sages” – implying that the service and virtue of the Sages and the Prophets is service motivated by love. Whereas, in Law 2 he writes regarding serving out of love that “The virtue of this approach is exceedingly great. **But not every Sage merits it.**” Thus, this is not the virtue of (all) the Prophets and **all the Sages** [to which he refers in Law 1].

Furthermore, in Law 1 he concludes that even with regard to the ignorant, etc., who serve G-d in this manner, they “are educated to serve out of fear – until their minds expand and they may [then] **serve [G-d] out of love**” – implying that service out of love is within the reach of every single person. Whereas, in Law 2 Rambam explicitly writes that “The virtue of this approach is exceedingly great. But not (even) **every Sage** merits it.”

6. Therefore, it appears correct to say that the meaning of involvement in Torah and Mitzvos “in order that they shall merit the life of the World to Come,” mentioned in Chapter 9, is not in order to receive the **reward** of the World to Come per se, but in order to advance to the **continuation of involvement** in Torah and Mitzvos in the manner that it is in the World to Come. [FN 45: Among the resulting practical differences is that progress in a given **matter** arouses and spurs the person to further advancement – as our Sages say, “One who has one hundred wants two hundred; [one who has] two hundred wants four hundred” (Koheles Rabba 1:13) – and he has no rest, whereas, with regard to reward, one is liable to be happy with his portion and that is his rest.]

The explanation of the matter: Regarding love of G-d, Rambam continues [10:3]: “How is the appropriate love [of G-d expressed]? It is that one should love G-d with a love that is overwhelming, extremely powerful, to the extent that his soul is

bound in love of G-d and he is constantly engrossed in it..." (and in the end of the chapter [10:6]), "It is something that is known and clear that the love of G-d is not bound in the heart of a man until he is constantly engrossed in it, etc., loving G-d intent on coming to know Him, etc. Thus, a person must devote himself to understanding and intellectualizing teachings of wisdom and understanding which inform him about his Master, etc."

That is, the definition of love of G-d is that one's soul (and mind) is **bound** to G-d. The (quintessential) experience of this concept is in the World to Come. As Rambam writes in Chapter 8 [Law 2], describing the World to Come [in the words of the Early Sages], "the righteous sit with their crowns on their heads and they derive benefit from the ray of the Divine Presence, (explaining) 'their crowns on their heads,' (as) referring to knowledge – that they will know that on account of it they merited the life of the World to Come – is found **with them**. This is the crown ... And what is the meaning of their saying, 'they derive benefit from the ray of the Divine Presence'? That they possess knowledge and comprehension of the truth of the Holy One Blessed Be He, which they knew not when they were in a dark and lowly body." Thus, Rambam writes [ibid Law 3, end] that "this is the reward of which there is no reward greater than it and the good fortune of which there is no goodness beyond it."

But at the same time, they have no rest (the opposite of "(the righteous) sit" and "they derive benefit" [see FN 45]).

That is, the life of the World to Come is not (only) "reward" for the involvement in Torah and Mitzvos but a continuation and **advancement**, a perpetual progression towards the ultimate cleaving to G-d that is accomplished through Torah and Mitzvos.

Accordingly the distinction will be understood between what Rambam writes in the beginning of Chapter 10 – "One should not say, 'I am doing the Mitzvos of the Torah and delving into its wisdom in order to receive all the blessings written in it or **in order that I may merit** the life of the World to Come" – and what he writes in Chapter 9 – that "all the Jewish people – their Prophets and their Sages [included] – eagerly anticipated the Days of Moshiach...in order that they may rest from the kingdoms which do not permit them to occupy themselves with Torah and Mitzvos properly. They will [then] find themselves calm and will increase in wisdom **in order that they shall merit** the life of the World to Come":

In writing, "all the Jewish people – their Prophets and their Sages [included] – eagerly anticipated the Days of Moshiach...in order that they may rest from the kingdoms ...

They will [then] find themselves calm and **will increase in wisdom in order that they shall merit** the life of the World to Come," Rambam's intent is not that the objective, "in order that they shall merit the life of the World to Come," is (for the sake of receiving a) reward, the **receipt of compensation** for their service. Rather, [Rambam's intent is that] in order to merit the ultimate expression and perfection of the love of G-d and cleaving to Him (which he discusses before this), to be **constantly** engrossed in it – this is accomplished through constantly being **plentiful** in and increasing in wisdom in the Days of Moshiach.

Whereas in Chapter 10, Rambam negates the notion of the performance of the Mitzvos of the Torah, etc., with the intent to merit life in the World to Come **as the receipt of reward** for one's service, for which reason Rambam includes it [i.e., this misguided intent] among the other matters of personal benefit and reward for one's service: "**in order to receive all the blessings** written in it...in order to be saved, etc." And since the person's intent is not to advance to the perfection of his service of G-d but simply to receive a reward, therefore, the laws is that "One should not say, etc."

(However, in this matter itself there are two approaches:

(Regarding what Rambam writes in the beginning of Chapter 10, "One should not say, etc., in order to receive all the blessings, etc., or in order that I may merit the life of the World to Come, and I shall stay away from the transgressions, etc., in order to be saved from the curses, etc., or so I shall not be cut off from the life of the World to Come," he means to rule out serving G-d out of **fear**. That is to say that the intent of the one who serves G-d is because he is fearful for his own life [FN 53: or, in the wording of Law 5, "that punishments will not be meted out on him], and therefore, he serves G-d in order that he should have a life of rest in this world (and he will be saved from the curses, etc.) or (regarding one who is concerned about the life of his **soul**) in order that his soul merits the

eternal life of the World to Come (and he will not be cut off from the life of the World to Come).

(Whereas later, in Law 4, Rambam writes: "The Early Sages said: Lest someone say, 'I hereby am learning Torah in order that I will be wealthy, etc., in order that **I shall receive reward** in the World to Come' [FN 54: That is, his intent is not to merit the life of the World to Come (which is the purpose for the fulfillment of Torah and Mitzvos, "the ultimate reward for Mitzvos") – as Rambam puts it in Law 1, "in order that I may merit the life of the World to Come – rather, he wants to receive a side benefit (in his understanding) along the lines of,

In order to merit the ultimate expression and perfection of the love of G-d and cleaving to Him, to be constantly engrossed in it – this is accomplished through constantly being plentiful in and increasing in wisdom in the Days of Moshiach.

[Continued on pg. 40]

DOVID GLAZER – T’MIMUS ON TWO WHEELS

By S. Malachi



We have already profiled R' Dovid Glazer, an indefatigable mitzvaim-man in issue 508. There, his background was detailed, how he grew up in Brooklyn, studied psychology and Eastern religions, tried some Litvishe baal t'shuva yeshivos in Israel in 1974, and then became a Lubavitcher baal t'shuva upon attending Rabbi Gafni's yeshiva in Kfar Chabad. We read about his marriage and his move to Tzfas.

Dovid felt he was still searching and he explored Breslov. When he consulted with Rabbi Yitzchok Ginsburg, he was told: Go to Breslov and it will be good for you there and then you'll come back to Chabad. Because you will have experimented, you'll be a better Chabadnik. And that's what happened. Five years later, Dovid was back in Chabad.

In 5750 the family with eight children moved to Nachalat Har Chabad. The Rebbe's amazing answer was: "Move to Nachalat Har Chabad and put **our children** into Chabad schools."

The move wasn't easy. The only apartment they could find was on the fourth floor and was a tiny 72 meters. And the Rebbe had said nothing about parnasa.

Within a short time, he was asked to substitute for a teacher who had gone to 770, and he discovered that he was terrific at teaching Alef-Beis to little children.

When his financial situation became precarious, Dovid wrote to the Rebbe: Since I am working as a teacher for just an hour a day, and cannot, by natural means, support my family, I would like to go back to university and finish my doctorate in clinical psychology. Then I will be able to support my family with dignity.

He received the Rebbe's answer within a day and a half (this was 5753) and it was to continue as he

was doing.

So Dovid understood that the Rebbe was guiding him to living a life that was completely above the natural order of things. Today, sixteen years later, he can see the bracha with his large family and the weddings he has made, three of them in the last year and a half.

Aside from the hour of teaching, Dovid is busy most of the day with mivtzaim – mivtza t'fillin by day and house calls at night. His wife Nurit gives shiurim in Chassidus, especially in D'var Malchus, the sichos of 5751-2.

When Dovid speaks about this, he quotes the answer of the Alter Rebbe to the Chassid who complained about parnasa problems: "You do what you have to do, and Hashem will do what He has to do." We do the Rebbe's mivtzaim and the Rebbe takes care of us.

REVEALING THE INNER GOOD

R' Dovid Glazer remembers the first time he paid a house call. It was around the year 5738/1978 and he and his Rosh Kollel in Kfar Chabad, Rabbi Avrohom Tzvi Hirsh Cohen a"h went to a nearby moshav.

They knocked on the door and an older woman opened up. R' Cohen said, "We are from Chabad and we came to check mezuzos."

She responded coldly, "I am not religious and I don't have mezuzos in the house, just this mezuzah in the entranceway."

R' Cohen smiled and said, "You are very religious – you have a mezuzah on the entrance to your house!"

The tension dissipated and the woman's face lit up as she exclaimed, "Really? Then I'll buy mezuzos for the entire house!"

Dovid realized he was seeing what he had learned in the maamer

MOSHIACH'S IDENTITY AND MEZUZOS IN THE BASEMENT

Dovid begins every house call with the topic of Moshiach. One evening, he knocked at the door of a nice villa that was opened by a man wearing a knitted kippa. Dovid explained the purpose of his visit and was invited down to the basement. When he noticed that the doors had no mezuzos, he gently pointed out that all doors in a house need a mezuzah.

The homeowner said it wasn't necessary. He took Dovid over to his computer and said: I have a disc with a large collection of Halacha works, and to my knowledge, there is no obligation to put a mezuzah on basement doors.

Their conversation moved on to inyanei Moshiach and Geula and they soon came to the topic of who is Moshiach. The man was strongly opposed to Dovid's identifying the Rebbe as Moshiach. He showed Dovid that on his computer he had many s'farim and he asked Dovid: Show me where it appears in the sources, otherwise, I reject what you say.

When Dovid referred him to the Rambam's description of someone we designate as "b'chezkas Moshiach," the man agreed that the Rebbe fit the description but said, "After 3 Tammuz, how can you still say he's Moshiach?"

It was 5755 and the various statements of Chazal on the subject were not on the tip of Dovid's tongue. He promised to check out the sources and get back to him.

When he returned a few days later, he was warmly welcomed and invited down to the basement again. The man turned on his computer and Dovid directed him to Tanach with commentaries and told him to look up Daniel 12:12 and what Rashi says there. Within seconds, the following words appeared on the screen, "Fortunate is the one who waits" – Rashi: "... in the future, Moshiach will be concealed after he is revealed and then he will be revealed again."

The man read the Rashi again and again and said, "Okay, now I see you have a source for what you're saying." After a few seconds of thought he added, "You know what? Get me four mezuzos for the basement rooms."

in *Derech Mitzvosecha* that he had just learned in Kollel, where it explains that by praising a character trait, you strengthen and reveal it.

Dovid adopted this approach for the mivtzaim that he does all week, as we can see in the following story that took place many years later.

THINK POSITIVELY – AND IT WILL BE GOOD

It was the winter of 5764 and Dovid was making his usual house

calls when a child ran over to him and said, "My mother wants a tz'daka box."

Dovid gave him one and added a bumper sticker which said, "Think positively and it will be good." The child ran back to his mother who immediately stuck the sticker on her car.

Just then, the boy's grandfather, a man named Yaakov, about seventy years of age, came out of a nearby villa and went over to Dovid and asked, "You're a Chabadnik?" When



Dovid said that he was, the man shared his woes with him.

He had built a large villa and had incurred many debts. He had no idea how he could pay them off. One day, he dreamt that he was entering his house and he saw the Rebbe sitting in his room and waiting for him. Yaakov was stunned at the sight of the holy man appearing in his house.

The Rebbe asked him, “Why are you so worried?”

Yaakov answered: Because of the many loans I took to build the house and I have no way of repaying them.

The Rebbe said, “Think positively and it will be good.”

He was still not worry-free. Dovid smiled and said, “Come and see what I brought for your grandson. When Yaakov saw the sticker on the car he was both taken aback and happy about the wonderful hashgacha pratis in getting this sticker from a Chabad Chassid when this was the Rebbe’s message in his dream.

THE POWER OF THOUGHT AND THE POWER OF SPEECH

Four months later, Dovid was

In 5750 the family with eight children moved to Nachalat Har Chabad. The Rebbe’s amazing answer was: “Move to Nachalat Har Chabad and put our children into Chabad schools.”

back in the neighborhood and when he saw the villa he was reminded of the story of the dream. He was curious about how things had turned out. As he stood there he noticed Yaakov working in his yard, but Yaakov did not recognize him.

Dovid turned to go when Yaakov suddenly spoke up, “What do you want?”

Dovid smiled and gave his usual answer, “I want Moshiach.” He was invited in.

After they renewed their acquaintance, Dovid said to him, “So, what happened? Did you start

paying off your debts?”

The man said, “Baruch Hashem, it’s much better.” Dovid wanted to hear about the miracles but Yaakov said, “There were no open miracles. It’s just that I started thinking positively and everything started becoming much better, Baruch Hashem.” Every other word the man said was “Baruch Hashem.” He was relaxed and happy and he recommended that everybody take the Rebbe’s advice and think positively.

Dovid figured it was the right moment to suggest that the man commit to something additional in Torah and mitzvos to hasten the Geula. He suggested that he start learning Chumash in the daily Chitas. Yaakov said he did not understand Chumash but he read a lot of T’hillim every day.

Dovid rejoined, “And T’hillim you *do* understand?”

Yaakov brought over a box of Jewish items that he had and took out a kippa and put it on and showed Dovid a Siddur, Chumash, T’hillim, and t’fillin which he said he put on every day.

Dovid said, “What you’re doing is terrific but the Rebbe told us that to serve Hashem and bring the Geula is like climbing a mountain – either you’re going up or you’re going down. You cannot remain stationary.”

He suggested that Yaakov add something like keeping his kippa on. Yaakov said he wasn’t religious. Dovid said, “You are very religious – you say T’hillim, you put t’fillin on every day, you have mezuzos in your house and you give tz’daka!”

Yaakov said, “Really? I didn’t think of it that way.”

He thought a bit longer and then said, “You know what? I’ll keep my kippa on.”

THE EFFECT OF A VIDEO

Dovid’s house calls started with

the campaign to sign people up for a letter in a Torah scroll but it soon encompassed all aspects of Jewish life with the emphasis on Moshiach. Dovid travels around on his bicycle and brings people the light and joy of the Geula. Sometimes, he sees the results only many years later as in the following story:

One day, after returning home following a house call, Dovid saw that he had taken five shekels too many for letters in a Torah scroll because of an error in the number of children. He called the family and the mother suggested he give the money to tz'daka. Dovid countered that with an offer of a CD, "Living with Moshiach." The woman was happy with this offer and Dovid got back on his bike and got to her home a few minutes later.

There was another woman there, dressed as a religious woman, who when she saw Dovid said, "It was you!"

She immediately launched into her story:

"You may not remember but ten years ago you visited our house when I was not yet religious. You spoke about Geula and Moshiach and you suggested that I get some neighbors together and show them the video of the Rebbe – 'Simchas Ha'Geula.' Within a few minutes I had gotten eight neighbors who watched the Rebbe. You should know that that night changed my life! I bought a Tanya and Igros Kodesh and began to become religious.

"At the same time, I dreamt that Eliyahu HaNavi came to me and said that I had cancer. I went for tests and was told that it was 95% likely that there was nothing, but I insisted that they do more tests. I spoke with a friend who arranged an appointment for me with a top doctor that she knew. He discovered a malignant tumor and I began chemotherapy while arranging



THINGS I'VE LEARNED

-When you approach someone positively, and look at his good qualities, he will respond that way.

-Sometimes, you have to use "strength of holiness" which makes people have more respect for Torah and mitzvos.

-As soon as you talk to someone, mention Moshiach as in, "Come, put on t'fillin to hasten the Geula."

Tanya classes in my house.

"I continued growing in my Jewish practice. I have written to the Rebbe a lot and opened to clear answers. Women began calling me to ask for my help in writing to the Rebbe and I was mekasher many women to the Rebbe. It all started because of your visit and that video of the Rebbe."

A JEW, AN ARAB, AND T'FILLIN

One of Dovid's regular activities is manning a t'fillin stand near a local high school. When school is out, he stands in the entrance and for forty minutes, with barely a break, he puts t'fillin on kids one after the other, putting it on dozens

She responded coldly, "I am not religious and I don't have mezuzos in the house, just this mezuzah in the entranceway." R' Cohen smiled and said, "You are very religious – you have a mezuzah on the entrance to your house!" The tension dissipated and the woman's face lit up as she exclaimed, "Really? Then I'll buy mezuzos for the entire house!"

of them with the help of three pairs of t'fillin.

"One day, I was there early and the students weren't out yet. I called out to someone on the other side of the street and asked him to put on t'fillin to hasten the Geula. He said he didn't have time as he was in the middle of working. He entered a building and two minutes later he was out again, running towards me as he rolled up his sleeve. Without asking questions I put on the t'fillin and only after he took them off did I ask him what happened.

"I'm doing renovations in that building with an Arab worker. When I entered the building I saw that the Arab was bowing on the floor in the midst of his prayers while the boss was standing there and not saying a word. If the Arab could do his religious obligations, so could I!"

THE WORLD IS READY FOR THE BESURAS HA'GEULA

Store owners in Kiryat Malachi are Dovid's regular "customers" for mitvza t'fillin. Mr. Simchoni is one of them. Usually, Dovid had to wait a few minutes until Mr. Simchoni was available before he could put on t'fillin. One day, he waited and waited and finally decided that he could be putting on t'fillin with other people and he left the store.

I'm doing renovations in that building with an Arab worker. When I entered the building I saw that the Arab was bowing on the floor in the midst of his prayers while the boss was standing there and not saying a word. If the Arab could do his religious obligations, so could I!

The next day, after apologizing for leaving, he explained that although he wanted to put t'fillin on with him, if he was held up for a long time in the store, it was at the expense of other people who could

be putting on t'fillin. Dovid also explained the Gemara which says, "Eliyahu doesn't answer except during the Mincha prayer" – that Mincha is prayed in the middle of the day, in the middle of work. We "steal" a few minutes away for our avodas Hashem and this gives Hashem special nachas.

The next day, when Dovid showed up, he saw that Mr. Simchoni was in the middle of talking to a salesman. After waiting briefly he decided to see whether his message had gotten across and he turned towards the door as though he was leaving. Mr. Simchoni then said to the salesman, "Excuse me, I have to put on t'fillin now." He didn't wait for a reaction and went over to Dovid as he rolled up his sleeve. The salesman said, "Do you have another pair of t'fillin?" and he put t'fillin on too.

As far as spreading the Besuras Ha'Geula, Dovid has this to say, "The world is ready. People are waiting to listen; you just have to get out there and talk.

"All our activities have to center on Moshiach. It's not just another mitvza of the Rebbe. Everything, t'fillin, mezuzos, have to go along with an explanation that it hastens the Geula. We have to ensure that people are aware of the goal of the mitvza. We don't just do mitzvos; we do mitzvos to bring the Geula."

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FOR THE REBBE, MY LIFE IS AN OPEN BOOK

By Nosson Avraham

Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry

R' **Reuven Chaimov** told the following amazing story during a chassidic farbrengen at the legendary “Nachlat Binyomin” shul in Tel Aviv.

Rabbi Chaimov, who today resides in Tel Aviv’s Shapira neighborhood, emigrated to Eretz Yisroel from Tashkent in the early seventies, as did many other Jews including numerous chassidim from behind the Iron Curtain. His first connection with Chabad chassidus and the Rebbe took form when he was still in Tashkent. This connection became stronger when he emigrated to Eretz Yisroel, and in 5741, he was privileged to spend a lengthy period of time in the court of the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach. He even had the opportunity to study in Yeshivas “Chovevei Torah” in the king’s neighborhood.

He also had the tremendous z’chus of receiving of an abundance of holy answers from the Rebbe on a variety of subjects and issues. “In Tishrei 5742, when my mother came

to Crown Heights to sit in the Rebbe’s spiritual shade, and after a month filled with lofty experiences, she decided to write a letter to the Rebbe in request of a bracha for the members of her family before her return to Eretz Yisroel. She took several sheets of lined paper and started filling them with the names of all her family members on both sides, both those who had already emigrated to Eretz Yisroel and those who still remained in the Soviet Union.”

“When she was about to write my name, I told her that there was no need since I was in 770 anyway, and if I wanted to write the Rebbe, I could do so myself. After she finished writing, we submitted the letter to the Rebbe’s secretariat and then traveled to Manhattan. This was at approximately half past ten in the morning. When we returned at around two-thirty in the afternoon, I was told that the secretary, Rabbi Binyomin Klein, was looking for me.

I rushed over to the office, and when I got there, Rabbi Klein told me that there was an answer for us and asked where my mother was. Naturally, I quickly went to call her. She had written her letter in Russian, and the Rebbe’s response was also in Russian: ‘And what about your son who is in the United States now?!’... From out of the thousands of guests, letters, and names in Panim, the Rebbe noticed that my name was missing from my mother’s list...”

A person could sit for several hours in the company of Rabbi Chaimov and remain spellbound by his tales of Divine Providence and the holy answers he was privileged to receive over the years. But the following story outshines them all:

“This took place in the winter of 5741. During that time, there was a flood of Israelis traveling overseas, especially to the land where anything is possible – the United States. The ultimate aspiration of all young Israelis after compulsory military service was to pack up their belongings and travel to a foreign country.

“I was then studying at Yeshivas ‘Chovevei Torah’ in Crown Heights, and I had heard about many of my friends and acquaintances who had emigrated to Eretz Yisroel together with me several years ago – early in the seventies – and were running now around ‘in search of themselves’ in various countries all over the globe.

“One night, I left the yeshiva ‘zal’ and headed in the direction of 770, when I saw a Jew with a very familiar face coming towards me. I racked my brains, but I couldn’t seem to remember who he was. As our eyes met, it suddenly ‘hit’ me: He had lived in Tashkent when I was there, and had emigrated to Eretz Yisroel shortly after I did. I knew him quite well, and I was surprised



to see him in 770, as he was neither known to be a Lubavitcher chassid nor had he been influenced by Chabad's outreach activities. My bewilderment grew as I remembered that he had opened a diamond business in Eretz Yisroel and had actually done quite well. As we approached one another, we naturally embraced warmly, this being our first encounter in such a long time. After a brief friendly exchange, I asked him how he and his family were and what brought him to the big city.

"He gave me a superficial 'everything's all right'. When I asked him why he still looks as if something is distressing him, he told me that he wants very much to go in to the Rebbe for 'yechidus', but the secretaries won't allow it. I told him that I would try to help arrange it for him, but on the condition that whatever the Rebbe instructs him, he must promise to do it. He gave me his word, but there was one thing

She had written her letter in Russian, and the Rebbe's response was also in Russian: 'And what about your son who is in the United States now?!'... From out of the thousands of guests, letters, and names in Panim, the Rebbe noticed that my name was missing from my mother's list..."

that he refused to do if instructed by the Rebbe – go back to Eretz Yisroel.

"We continued to speak for another few hours, like two old friends reuniting after not seeing one another for ages. His father was very close to Chabad chassidim, and this obviously influenced him to come to 770 and try to have a yechidus with the Rebbe. Yet, I hadn't been able to discover what exactly had brought him here. It was ten days before the great and auspicious day of Yud Shvat, and he told me that he was staying at the home of his sister and brother-in-law. I asked him to come back the following evening, and I'll have an answer for him regarding whether he can have an appointment for yechidus.

"I spoke with the secretaries, Rabbis Groner and Klein, and I was most pleased to hear them promise that it would be possible for my friend to go in for yechidus right after Yud Shvat. The following

evening, we met as scheduled, and I happily told him that he would have a private audience with the Rebbe in another ten days. I used the opportunity to emphasize the relevant chassidic customs for someone before he goes in for yechidus.

“During our conversations, I understood that he had already heard some thrilling miracle stories about the Rebbe’s spiritual and G-dly power and the many people who were saved through his advice and blessings, adding a few personal stories of my own.

“On the holy day of Yud Shvat, he arrived in Crown Heights and even had the privilege of participating in the Rebbe’s farbrengen. He was very energized by the niggunim and the overall atmosphere. I could see that he was deeply moved.

“On the day of his scheduled private audience with the Rebbe, he came to Crown Heights again. He went that morning to the mikveh, and I told him that he should fast until the yechidus. He said T’hillim the entire day and prepared himself as best he could. When his turn came, he went in for a short yechidus, while I waited for him outside.

“When he left the Rebbe’s room, I saw tears streaming down his face and his voice cracked with emotion.

“I instinctively asked him what had happened that got him so upset, but he just waved his hand and said, ‘Nothing special happened.’ From there we went together to get him something to eat and break his fast, but he didn’t seem to have much of an appetite. He looked positively thunderstruck, totally absorbed in his thoughts. I asked him again what was bothering him and what had happened in the Rebbe’s room, but he refused to open his mouth. It was already getting late, and we went to the dormitory to turn in for the

When he entered, the Rebbe read his letter and then said to him, ‘When you left Russia, you promised that you would give ten percent of all your profits to G-d, and you didn’t do that. When you fulfill your obligations, your financial situation will become good again.’ That was the end of the yechidus.

night.

“I said the bedtime Krias Shma, gave him a bed near mine, and then lay down to sleep. In the middle of the night, I was awakened by the terrifying feeling that someone is shaking me. When I opened my eyes, I saw that he really was trying to wake me up. I washed *neggelvasser*, washed my face, and then asked what he wanted. ‘I want to tell you what took place in the Rebbe’s room,’ and he began his monologue, as I listened most attentively.

“In a trembling voice, he started by telling me what I already knew. He had been a member of the Communist Party, and as a result, he was ‘lucky’ to be able to run a large

store that sold food items. During the seventies, there was a period when the gates of the Iron Curtain were opened to Eretz HaKodesh, and many Jews took advantage of the opportunity, asking to do whatever was required to get the precious exit visa in order to leave the darkness and go into the light.

“One day, his father told him that like many other Jews, he wanted to leave Russia. For my friend, this was a request totally detached from reality, because he was a party member and he would therefore be the last person to get an exit visa from the Soviet authorities. But not only that, he would be immediately fired from his job and who knows how he would be punished.

However, his father was adamant. Not only did he want to leave the Soviet Union, he wanted to cross the border with the entire family together, including him. ‘Just as you bribed whoever you had to in order to get your red party membership booklet,’ my father said, ‘you’ll do it again to get yourself an exit visa.’

“On the one hand, due to his official status, he was very concerned if he would show that he wanted to leave the country and about the ill-treatment he might receive as a result. On the other hand, there was a strong desire to leave the Russian exile and go into freedom, where there would be no fear of the ever-present Soviet eye watching every step he makes. It was a most complicated dilemma.

“In the end, the latter option won out. He bribed those who he had to bribe and got his exit visa. He left Russia with half a million rubles in cash, a tremendous sum of money in those days. He decided to invest this money in the diamond market in Eretz Yisroel. At the start of his journey into the business world, his investments reaped a considerable profit, doubling and even tripling their original value. However, the

wheel of life began to turn, and after a period of success and prosperity, the business hit a serious dry spell. He lost all of his money and capital. While his profits were earned over years, they were lost very quickly.

“He was beside himself in anguish and confusion, primarily because he didn’t understand the logic behind this frightening combination of events. He went to Bank Igud and borrowed \$350,000 (at the time, all stock exchange members could receive large loans without guarantors), hoping that things would now work out as they should. However, this huge sum of money also went down the drain in a failed business deal. The bank went to the courts to prevent him from leaving Israel until he had repaid his debts.

“He pleaded with the bank

manager to allow him to go overseas for a limited period of time to raise these funds. The bank manager eventually relented and agreed to rescind the travel ban. He wrote this entire story in his letter to the Rebbe, submitted before he went in for yechidus, as is customary. When he entered, the Rebbe read his letter and then said to him, ‘When you left Russia, you promised that you would give ten percent of all your profits to G-d, and you didn’t do that. When you fulfill your obligations, your financial situation will become good again.’ That was the end of the yechidus.

“He left the room totally stunned and told me that he felt his legs buckling from the flood of emotion. He recalled that as he was leaving the Soviet Union, he had made a promise in his heart that he would

give maaser if he would have success in his business, and here the Rebbe is reminding him of that promise. He told me that it took him several hours to recover from the very fact that the Rebbe looked at him and knew his entire past and future, as if it was spread out and written before him.

“Of course, he promised that he would be stringent from now on about giving maaser.

“He came back to Eretz HaKodesh, and began to return slowly to the diamond world, where he kept his promise. Today, he is a successful diamond merchant, back on his feet with even greater capital. His sons have entered the business with him, and he runs a worldwide diamond network from his offices located in Eretz Yisroel, New York, and Hong Kong.”

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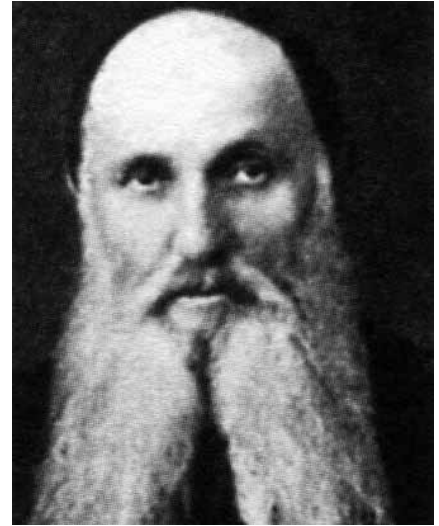
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YUD-BEIS TAMMUZ: FROM ALEF TO TAV



Rabbi Eliyahu Chaim Altheus

By Shneur Zalman Berger

*Much has been written about the imprisonment of the Rebbe Rayatz – by the Rebbe Rayatz himself, in sichos of the Rebbe, letters of R' Eliyahu Chaim Altheus, and even documents on file at the GPU * To refresh our historic-Chassidic memory, here is a special 'dictionary' that describes 22 key ideas connected to the arrest, exile, and Geula that happened 82 years ago*

ALEF – ELIYAHU CHAIM ALTHEUS HY'D

R' Altheus was a close friend and confidant of 'Beis Rebbe,' the Schneerson family, and a distinguished Chabad activist in Leningrad and Riga, working tirelessly to have the Rebbe released. He actually accompanied the Rebbe to exile in Kostrama.

On the 15th of Sivan 5687, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka said to her husband-to-be, "Schneerson, guests have come to visit us." Hearing this, the Rebbe understood that the secret police had entered the Rebbe's home and he immediately ran to see R' Eliyahu Chaim Altheus. Together, they hurried to the home of the Rebbe's

secretary, R' Chaim Lieberman, who proceeded to burn any and all potentially incriminating documents. R' Altheus watched on as the Rebbe was driven off to prison in the GPU car.

A description of that terrifying time following the arrest can be found in Likutei Dibburim. R' Eliyahu Chaim did not get caught up in the emotions of the moment but immediately began working on obtaining the Rebbe's release.

Finally, on Tuesday, 12 Tammuz 1927, the Rebbe appeared in the offices of the GPU in Kostrama accompanied by R' Eliyahu Chaim, for his weekly registration. The GPU official graciously welcomed them and told them that the order had come to release the Rebbe. R' Eliyahu Chaim was so overcome by the news that his face turned colors and the Rebbe had to calm him down.

BEIS – BNOS HA'REBBE RAYATZ

Before the Rebbe was taken to prison, the GPU agents made a thorough search of the house. As they searched, a discussion ensued between them, the Rebbe and his daughters. The three girls had been

educated by their father to mesirus nefesh and they were not afraid of these 'angels of destruction.'

The search began in the room of the two younger daughters, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka a”h and Rebbetzin Sheina Hy”d. When they entered the room, they asked the girls what party they belonged to. The girls cleverly answered that they were in their father’s party since B’nos Yisroel are not political and they despise modern ambitions. The Jewish GPU agent Nachmanson was indignant over what they said and Reb. Sheina said that she did not have to explain why this was their ideology. Nachmanson got even more annoyed and warned them that the GPU was capable of even opening even the mouth of a mute to spill his secrets.

Reb. Sheina wasn’t frightened. She said, “The tragedy is that you want to take everything by force, with violence. How disgusting and unprincipled is this way to take intelligent people with the might of the fist and intimidation with the end of a rifle.”

The Rebbe Rayatz writes about this that he enjoyed hearing the wise words of his daughter who restrained herself in the situation, but the Rebbe was afraid she would get arrested.

The Rebbe’s oldest daughter, Reb. Chana Gurary, a”h, emotionally demanded that she and her sisters be arrested in place of their father, and burst out crying, but to no avail.

The Rebbe was taken to prison and two and a half weeks later he was sent into exile to Kostrama with three people, one of them his daughter Reb. Chaya Mushka. The Rebbe explained that she was most suited to this of all his daughters.

On 12 Tammuz, when the Rebbe was told of his release, Reb. Chaya Mushka couldn’t help but do a Chassidic dance before her father to

Reb. Sheina wasn't frightened. She said, "The tragedy is that you want to take everything by force, with violence. How disgusting and unprincipled is this way to take intelligent people with the might of the fist and intimidation with the end of a rifle."

the tune of, “Nyet, Nyet Nikavo.” She was the one who told the family in Leningrad about the Rebbe’s release from exile.

GIMMEL – GEULAS YUD-BEIS YUD-GIMMEL TAMMUZ

On 12 Tammuz they received news of the Rebbe’s release and on 13 Tammuz the Rebbe was given his release papers. The next day he took the train for Leningrad.

It wasn’t only a Geula of returning home for symbolically it was an enormous victory over the communists who had exiled the only person who dared to lead the warriors on behalf of Torah. The release was a real victory over the terror-inducing forces of evil who had to let the leader out of their

hands. The Rebbe Rayatz himself wrote, “It wasn’t [only] me that Hashem redeemed on 12 Tammuz but also all those who cherish the holy Torah, those who observe mitzvos, and those who are known as Yisroel only in name [i.e. all Jews].”

The Rebbe MH”M explained that it wasn’t a personal Geula but one of all Klal Yisroel since it became known to all that the spreading of Torah and the strengthening of Judaism was permissible by law of the land: “This day, on which the light of the merit of public Torah study has chased away the clouds of darkness, slander and treachery, is most fitting to be fixed as a day of farbrengen and inspiration in the strengthening of Torah and Judaism in every location.”

These days of Geula are a Yom Tov in which Chassidei Chabad and their mekuravim hold joyous farbrengens to thank Hashem for the great miracle.

DALET – DUBIN, MORDECHAI

He was a representative to the Latvian parliament working indefatigably to effect the Rebbe Rayatz’s release in conjunction with the intense efforts of Agudas Chassidei Chabad in the United States and Chassidei Chabad in the Soviet Union.

After the Rebbe’s release, R’ Mordechai Dubin spared no effort so that the Rebbe could leave the Soviet Union with his entire household and all his s’farim. His efforts bore fruit and R’ Mordechai obtained permission for the Rebbe to emigrate with a visa to Riga, Latvia, where the Rebbe Rayatz lived for the next several years.

HEI – HEI TAMMUZ

The Rebbe Rayatz and his entourage arrived in Kostrama, the

town of his exile, on the eve of 5 Tammuz. The Chassid, R' Michoel Dworkin was sent there before the Rebbe arrived and he is the one who arranged a place for the Rebbe and his retinue to stay at the home of the local shochet. He also prepared a mikva and gathered some children of the town for a school. To him, the Rebbe applied the verse, "He sent Yehuda before him to Goshen."

The authorities had stipulated that the Rebbe had to present himself at the GPU office immediately upon his arrival. The Rebbe however decided that he would not go to them at night and would only show up the next day. The local GPU official was angry and after the Rebbe filled out the required papers he berated him, "You are a prisoner in exile, a criminal who is here as a prisoner to serve out his punishment for his sins against the Soviet regime." He warned the Rebbe not to leave the city and instructed him to come once a week to the GPU office to register.

VAV – V'IDA KLALIS DATIS (GENERAL RELIGIOUS CONFERENCE)

The Rebbe Rayatz was greatly opposed to this conference that was organized by the Jewish community in Leningrad under GPU pressure.

It began at the end of the summer 1925 when the chairman of the Jewish community in Leningrad, a Mr. Gurevitz, approached the Rebbe with a suggestion that all rabbanim and community leaders in the Soviet Union meet publicly. The Rebbe Rayatz strongly opposed this public meeting. He said it was preferable to convene the rabbanim and askanim who were G-d fearing in a secret meeting. The Rebbe knew that the Yevsektzia, the dreaded 'Jewish Section' of the communist party, were the ones



The Rebbe Rayatz in Riga. Second from right: R' Mordechai Dubin

On 12 Tammuz, when the Rebbe was told of his release, Reb. Chaya Mushka couldn't help but do a Chassidic dance before her father to the tune of, "Nyet, Nyet Nikavo." She was the one who told the family in Leningrad about the Rebbe's release from exile.

behind this new initiative and it was they who were urging the community leaders to meet under their supervision.

The commotion and controversy over this conference led to the opening of a new community structure in Leningrad. Chassidei Chabad were appointed over it, led by Rabbi Shimon Lazarov, rav of the Lubavitcher community in Leningrad. The beis midrash Tzemach Tzedek was founded at that time. R' Lazarov, who was a great scholar and baal middos, served as rav and leader of it.

The chairman of the first group, Mr. Gurevitz, worked hard to organize the conference as originally planned while members of the Yevsektzia invited rabbanim and heads of k'hillos to meetings to 'persuade' (i.e., force) them to take part in the conference.

Every initiative they took to convene the dreaded meeting was forcefully opposed by the Rebbe Rayatz out of concern lest it result in new decrees against religious

Jews in general and Chassidim in particular. This opposition was the last straw that broke the patience of the GPU and led to the Rebbe's arrest.

ZAYIN – ZICHRONOS (MEMOIRS)

Three important sets of memoirs describe the arrest, exile, and geula: the account that the Rebbe Rayatz wrote, the letters of R' Eliyahu Chaim Altheus, and the book, *Di Yisurim fun Lubavitcher Rebb'n in Soviet Russland*. This book is based on the notes of the journalist D. L. Meckler, which were published as a series in the *Morgan Journal* at the beginning of 1930 following interviews he held with the Rebbe Rayatz when he visited the US at that time.

When the Rebbe returned to Riga at the end of this visit, the articles appeared as a 79 page book which detailed the Rebbe's horrific sufferings during his incarceration.

CHES – CHAKIROS (INTERROGATIONS)

The main interrogators of the Rebbe Rayatz were those who went to arrest him, Lulov and Nachmanson. They were grandsons of Chassidim and they, sad to say, veered far away from their roots and served the GPU with great devotion. These two denigrated the Rebbe in the interrogations but the Rebbe retorted with strong, Schneersohn pride.

During the first interrogation, the interrogator told the Rebbe that he would be taken out to be shot within 24 hours, but he 'jumped the gun' and in fact, it was they who eventually wound up being killed.

TES – TELEGRAMS

The Rebbe Rayatz did not allow them to intimidate him in prison.

On the contrary, even in the most difficult moments he demanded his rights from every official, junior or senior. Upon his arrival at the prison, his t'fillin were taken away which pained him greatly and at every opportunity he demanded that they return his t'fillin.

When he was in the office of the GPU official, he noticed a sign hanging on the wall with the prison regulations. It said that a prisoner had the right to send a telegram with the money taken from him when he entered the prison. The Rebbe demanded to write telegrams and when he was begrudgingly allowed to do so, he sent three telegrams to various officials saying, "I request that the official in charge of department six be immediately ordered to give me my t'fillin. A religious rabbi, Y. Schneersohn, department 6, room 160."

The telegrams were sent to the chief prosecutor of the Soviet Union, to the director of the Spalarka prison (who was also the director of the GPU in Leningrad), and to Nachmanson.

The Rebbe gave the telegrams to the official who began to laugh and said, "He has grandiose ideas. See how he writes to the chief prosecutor, to the director of the GPU and to the interrogator."

YUD – YEHI HASHEM ELOKEINU IMANU (MAY HASHEM, OUR G-D, BE WITH US)

This was the main message in the emotional speech the Rebbe gave to the crowd gathered at the train station in Leningrad on Sunday, 3 Tammuz. The Rebbe stood in the train compartment and encouraged the crowd: "We ask Hashem, may Hashem our G-d be with us as He was with our fathers, may He not abandon nor leave us. Hashem will be with us as He was with our

fathers, even though we are not just like our fathers who were baalei mesirus nefesh for Torah and mitzvos, and like the famous statement made by one of our holy ancestors who said:

"Not by our will were we exiled from Eretz Yisroel and not by our strength will we return to Eretz Yisroel. Our Father, our King took us to galus and He will redeem us and gather our outcasts ... to our holy land, speedily in our day, amen.

"Let all the nations on the earth know that only our bodies were put into galus and servitude of the kingdoms while our souls were not put into galus and servitude of the kingdoms. We must announce openly to all that anything regarding our religion, Toras Yisroel, mitzvos and minhagim – nobody can force his view on us ... and this is our request of Hashem, do not leave us and do not abandon us ..."

KAF – KISVEI YAD KODESH (HOLY MANUSCRIPTS)

There were priceless Chassidic treasures in the Rebbe Rayatz's possession when the house search took place. It was a miracle that they were not confiscated.

The GPU agents in their search uncovered an immense cache of irreplaceable and historic documents including letters of the Baal Shem Tov and his talmidim, and letters from the Rebbeim starting with the Alter Rebbe and ending with 2000 letters of the Rebbe Rashab. In addition there were notes and minutes of the all the meetings that took place over decades as well as documents and notes connected with important episodes in Chabad history such as: how yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim was founded in Lubavitch and Warsaw and the founding of yeshivas Toras Emes, things said at various occasions by

the menaholim of Chabad yeshivos, plus many other Chassidic gems.

Praise G-d, somehow the Rebbe Rayatz managed to convince the GPU not to take these documents.

At the same time, there were also many documents in the home of the secretary, R' Chaim Lieberman. The Rebbe MH" M and R' Eliyahu Chaim Altheus went straight there after the arrest, informed him about what had happened, and then immediately left. The secretary quickly burned all the mail he had recently gotten as well as anything that could arouse suspicion. Before the fire died down the GPU men were there and when they saw the flames they realized what he had done but it was too late. The secretary was arrested.

In the meantime, the Rebbe returned to his father-in-law's home, took many bundles of manuscripts and brought them to various hiding places that had been arranged ahead of time.

Worry about his family and the manuscripts disturbed the Rebbe Rayatz greatly and he wrote about this in his description of the arrest.

LAMED – LENINGRAD

Leningrad – the second largest and most significant city in the Soviet Union – was also a stronghold of the Chabad movement in the years before the arrest. A large group of Chabad Chassidim lived there. Aside from minyanim that took place in the home of the Rebbe Rayatz, there was another official Chabad beis midrash in the courtyard of the big shul in the center of the city. Many shiurim were given in this shul.

In those days there were secret Chabad chadarim with 200 talmidim, an underground yeshiva with dozens of talmidim, and the Tiferes Bachurim organization for bachurim and men who worked during the day and learned in the

The Rebbe proclaimed, "Let all the nations on the earth know that only our bodies were put into galus and servitude of the kingdoms but our souls were not... We must announce openly to all that anything regarding our religion, Toras Yisroel, mitzvos and minhagim – nobody can force his view on us ... and this is our request of Hashem, do not leave us and do not abandon us..."

afternoon and evening.

R' Altheus described a little of the Chabad k'hilla in Leningrad in his letters:

"The k'hilla of the G-d fearing Jews in the Tzemach Tzedek beis midrash did its work secretly. Many teachers in Leningrad received their salaries from the Rebbe [Rayatz] by way of the Tzemach Tzedek k'hilla. The women's mikva was also under the supervision of this k'hilla and shiurim in Gemara, Rashi, and

Tosafos were established in all the minyanim and the teachers and mashpiim also received their salaries from the Rebbe through the Tzemach Tzedek k'hilla."

MEM – MAAMORIM AND MEMOIRS

Even while sitting in darkness, the Rebbe Rayatz wrote maamarim and memoirs on cigarette rolling papers. Every day he would say divrei Torah to the Jewish prisoners in the cell and afterwards would write them down on these papers. In addition to his Toros, he kept a diary of what he was going through interspersed with memories of his childhood.

Permission to write in his cell was one of the big advantages he had. Prison regulations forbade writing in the cell except for writing requests to the prison director which could be written once a day. For this purpose, each prisoner was given a sheet of paper and a pencil and as soon as he finished writing, they were taken away. Only the Rebbe had writing implements for most of his stay in prison and he wrote in every free moment.

NUN – NYET, NYET NIKAVO

These are the words that the Chassid, R' Michoel Dworkin sang when he heard the news of the Rebbe's release. The Rebbe MH" M explained in the sicha of 12 Tammuz 5725 that by nature, R' Michoel was always a very emotional person so when he heard of the Rebbe's release, he took a bottle of mashke and danced with it for a long time all around the house where the Rebbe Rayatz had been staying at the time.

While dancing, he sang a song with Russian words. He worked for years in a forest and he had dealings with goyim and so he was familiar

with Russian words and phrases. It was a niggun on the concept of “ein od milvado” which Chassidim call “Nyet, nyet, nikavo.”

SAMECH – SIVAN 5687/1927

This was a month of sorrow and pain for Chabad Chassidim in particular and Judaism in the Soviet Union in general. In the middle of the month, on the eve of 15 Sivan, the Rebbe was arrested and the spirit of Russian Jewry and Chabad Chassidim fell. News began to leak out to the world only at the end of Sivan.

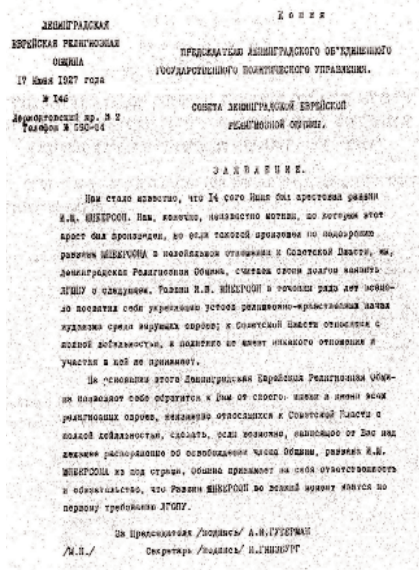
AYIN – ONESH MAVES (DEATH SENTENCE)

At first, the Friedrike Rebbe was sentenced to death but with the efforts of many people led by Mrs. Fishkova, director of the Red Cross in the Soviet Union, the sentence was commuted to ten years in exile in the Slovaki islands.

Wednesday, 29 Sivan, two weeks after the arrest, the Rebbe was supposed to be sent to exile in Slovaki. The news spread around Leningrad and the Rebbe wrote to his family to come on that day to the prison to say goodbye. The family went to the prison but nobody was willing to tell them anything about the Rebbe.

In the meantime, a large crowd gathered around the prison in order to see the Rebbe when he would be taken out to be brought to the train station. Suddenly, the Rebbe could be seen peeking out the window on the third floor. The crowd was thrown into confusion. One person said they should go to the train station and many did so, but the Rebbe did not show up.

Mrs. Fishkova met with the head of the GPU, Mr. Manzhinski who promised to delay implementing the sentence of expulsion to Slovaki.



The Jewish community in Leningrad asking the government to release the Rebbe Rayatz

The order to commute the sentence to three years in Kostrama came while the GPU in Leningrad had already prepared to bring the Rebbe to the train station.

The next day, when he was interrogated, the interrogator Lulov showed the Rebbe the official document which said:

“Death by shooting” with a line through it and the word “nyet.”

“Ten years exile Slovaki” and a line through that with the word, “nyet.”

“Three years exile in Kostrama.”

The Rebbe was sent to Kostrama a few days later, on Gimmel Tammuz.

PEI – PURIM KATAN 1927

The Rebbe Rayatz’s activities in Moscow greatly annoyed the authorities and they constantly followed him around. In Adar I 1927, during the Rebbe’s stay in Moscow, they went so far as to call in the head of the Jewish community in Moscow to the office of the GPU and ask him about the Rebbe’s activities in Moscow.

Members of the Yevsektzia

conducted a search in the Rebbe’s room at the hotel. Nonetheless, the Rebbe did not refrain from holding a public farbrengen on Purim Katan with talmidim of Tiferes Bachurim and their teacher, Rabbi Yaakov Landau in attendance and with the participation of R’ Itche der Masmid.

A great crowd attended that farbrengen and the shul was packed. The overflow crowds filled the foyer and spilled out onto the steps of the shul. The participants noticed that members of the Yevsektzia were there too but still, the farbrengen went on.

The presence of those wicked people did not deter the farbrengen. On the contrary, the Rebbe sharply attacked the Yevsektzia as the Rebbe described in a letter that he wrote years later:

“I reviewed the maamer, “V’Kibel HaYehudim es asher Heicheilu” and in many places in that discourse it discusses mesirus nefesh for Torah and mitzvos. I emphasized this in the talk without taking into account that the walls had ears. During the farbrengen I reviewed those parts with a special flavor to arouse the hearts as per the call of the hour.”

In another entry he wrote about the harsh words he directed at the Yevsektzia:

“The directors of the Yevsektzia are a disease of humankind, liars, frauds, and cruel and without a doubt their shame will be revealed as regards thefts and betrayals. And each will inform on the other to bring him down and strengthen his own position, and his fellow will come and expose his treachery in order to bring him down as well, but until then, they can destroy the fortresses of religion, may it never come to pass.”

Right after the farbrengen, Mr. Fuchs, head of the Jewish community in Moscow, told the

Rebbe that the GPU had called him to their office and interrogated him about the Rebbe's activities. He advised the Rebbe to leave the city. The Rebbe did not stop his activities in Moscow, of course, and continued to do all that was necessary despite the danger.

In the seventh booklet of *HaTamim* which was published in Warsaw, it says that what the Rebbe said on Purim Katan motivated his arrest a few months later.

A month later, at the Purim farbrengen, a drama played out at the Rebbe's house. The Rebbe spoke very sharply about the mesirus nefesh necessary for those times even though the GPU was there and it was obvious that they were furious. R' Eliyahu Chaim Altheus feared the consequences and called for Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah, the Rebbe's mother, and she asked her son to stop talking like this and go rest, but the Rebbe told her, "I don't do anything on my own, I asked Father."

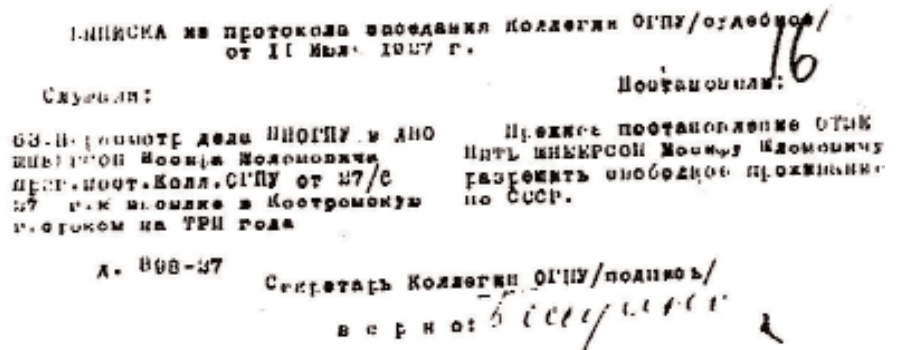
The Rebbe continued to speak sharply for a long time and the following lines stood out and echoed in the ears of the Chabad Chassidim in Russia for years to come:

"When they tell someone, put your daughter in [communist] school, and if not, your head will be cut off, he has to allow his head to be cut off and not send his daughter to school. When they light a bonfire and want to burn him, he should say please, do with me as you wish but this [sending children to school] no."

The Rebbe fainted during the farbrengen and he was taken to his room. He returned to the farbrengen two hours later and did not speak again about these topics.

TZADIK – TZETEL (NOTE)

The Rebbe was taken to prison and some distinguished Chassidim went to the Rebbe's house and



The decision about the release from Kostrama



The lookout tower for the fire department in Kostrama

began making order in the mess the GPU had made in the yechidus room. They found a note that was written by the Rebbe Rayatz with instructions for the recitation of T'hillim etc. R' Altheus, who was one of the men who found the note, asked the Rebbe when he was in Kostrama when he had written it, but was not answered.

This is what the note said, the contents of which the Chassidim observed while the Rebbe was in prison:

"Hearken Chassidim and all Jewish people who hope for Moshiach, tell all Chassidim in the

world in my name that I commanded that in all Chassidic shuls they should say every day after Shacharis, including Shabbos, a portion of T'hillim as it is divided over a month, in a minyan.

Afterwards they should say Kaddish.

"All market people, businessmen, should go to the shuls to daven and be present when they learn Ein Yaakov, and Hashem should help them with ample parnasa. Tell the Chassidim that I ordered, and tell other Jews that out of Ahavas Yisroel and the good of Israel I request, that they do this, and Hashem should help them with a good year, spiritually and materially, and may we merit the Geula shleima through Moshiach, amen."

KUF – KOSTRAMA

Kostrama is a city in the center of Russia where very few Jews lived, only about 100 families. The Rebbe Rayatz was exiled there for three years but was actually released after about a week. This was a typical punishment of the GPU to exile a prisoner so he had to live in a distant city, far from friends and family so he would suffer from the distance and separation.

In those days, there were hardly any telephones and letters were heavily censored, so someone who was exiled was truly cut off. Still, the Rebbe's arrival made an impression on the Jews who lived

there. The Rebbe davened in the one shul in Kostrama and when he arrived at shul all the Jews gathered to see him. This shul still exists and it is used by the shluchim in the area.

REISH – RAKEVES (TRAIN)

The primary mode of intercity travel at that time was the train and the Rebbe Rayatz was supposed to travel to Kostrama by train. On Thursday, Rosh Chodesh Tammuz, the Rebbe was informed that he was exiled to Kostrama. When the Rebbe asked when he would arrive there, he was told - Shabbos.

“I will not travel on Shabbos. They will only be able to remove me from here by force,” he said, and the GPU said nothing.

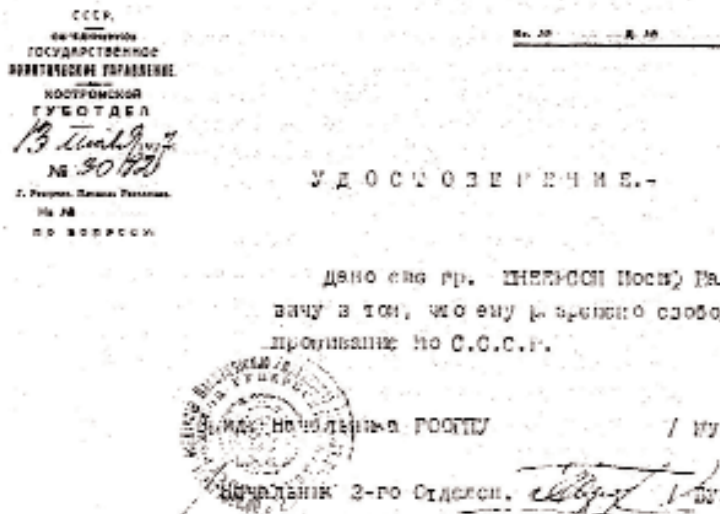
In the evening, they allowed the Rebbe to meet with his family, including his sons-in-law and daughters. They saw the Rebbe behind bars and he asked them to make sure he did not travel on Shabbos. The family left the prison and immediately got to work on this.

Mrs. Fishkova met with the premiere of the Soviet Union, Mr. Rikov, and asked him to postpone the trip to Kostrama. In her presence he called the head of the GPU and asked him to postpone the Rebbe’s trip until after Shabbos.

The Rebbe left on Sunday, 3 Tammuz.

SHIN – SHEVISAS RA’AV (HUNGER STRIKE)

The Rebbe’s t’fillin had been taken from him when he was arrested and the next morning, when they refuse to return them to him for davening, he started a hunger strike. Whenever food was given to the prisoners he refused to take any and he announced, “I will



The release form and permission to stay anywhere in the Soviet Union

“When they tell someone, put your daughter in [c o m m u n i s t] school, and if not, your head will be cut off, he has to allow his head to be cut off and not send his daughter to school. When they light a bonfire and want to burn him, he should say please, do with me as you wish but this [sending children to school] no.”

continue my hunger strike until my t’fillin are returned.”

His hunger strike lasted two days and on Friday afternoon he received his t’fillin and s’farim. The guard brought in three challos for lechem Mishna for Shabbos that had been brought for him from home. These challos saved him for he hadn’t eaten anything in two days.

TAV – TIK HA’CHAKIRA (INVESTIGATIVE FILE)

The Rebbe’s file is a record of the interrogations he underwent as well as the statements of witnesses who were interrogated about him.

From his file, we learn that the Rebbe spoke sharply, without fearing the interrogators who constantly tried to degrade and threaten him, thus breaking his spirit. Not only did the Rebbe not bend his head, he responded proudly and time after time he castigated his captors and interrogators, many of whom themselves were descendents of Chassidim.

Sources: Igras Kodesh Rebbe Rayatz, Seifer HaSichos 5680-5687, Likkutei Dibburim, Seifer HaToldos Rebbe Rayatz, Sichos Kodesh, Yemei Melech, Chassidim Rishonim, Kitzur Toldos Chabad, the Rebbetzin, Beis Moshiaich, Kfar Chabad

MOTORCYCLE MESSENGER OF MOSHIACH

By S. Malachi

The story began four years ago. Gur Aryeh and Liat Tawig had a baby boy they named Michoel in addition to two daughters. They were very happy until their lives turned into a nightmare. At the age of one month the infant caught a virus which usually only causes slight cold symptoms. The new parents weren't overly concerned. He was given inhalants and they hoped he would get over the cold quickly.

Apparently though, the baby's immune system was weak and the virus affected his respiratory system. A week went by and during a



R' Gur Aryeh
working with children

feeding he suddenly stopped breathing and began turning blue. The frightened parents ran to the clinic and were sent from there by ambulance to the hospital. On the way there, the baby was given injections and steroids and as soon as they arrived at the emergency room, he was whisked to the neonatal intensive care unit.

The nightmare became their routine. Every few weeks the baby would stop breathing and they would rush to the clinic where the secretary would quickly call for an ambulance (“if we have to, we’ll cancel,” she would say). Sometimes, treating him on the spot was enough and sometimes they rushed to the emergency room.

HASHEM, WHAT DO YOU WANT?

It was a difficult period. Worry over the baby gave them no rest. Even before the mother had recovered from the birth they began going to doctors, making hurried trips in ambulances and had extended stays at the hospital. Even when they slept at home, they could not sleep well.

Mrs. Tawig relates: “I didn’t dare sleep relaxed at night. I would sleep for an hour and wake up in a panic. I didn’t even have the strength to get out of bed. I would wake up my husband and ask him to check to see whether the baby was breathing.”

One week and then another week went by but the situation did not improve. They spent days at the baby’s bedside where he was hospitalized in an oxygen tent. Sometimes he even stopped breathing in the tent and they would take him and suction his lungs as the worried parents stood outside and prayed that the doctors would emerge with a live baby.

Mrs. Tawig felt she was falling into an endless black pit. She had grown up in a religious home and had attended a Litvishe seminary and was quite observant, but in this crisis various questions arose in her mind.

BIO

R’ Gur Aryeh Tawig grew up in a traditional home in Tel Aviv. From as far back as he can remember, he always sought the best, in yeshivos, in his army service in Lebanon, and in all aspects of life.

Once acquainted with Chassidus and the Rebbe, he knew that this was it and that this truth had to reach everyone. In his opinion, a Chassid’s workplace is the best place for hafatza. In his job of making deliveries by motorcycle, he comes into contact with many Jews who turn to him with their questions about Judaism.

Gur Aryeh and his wife Liat have a Chassidishe daycare center, a Tzivos Hashem club, and they do other activities that prepare Elad to greet the Rebbe MH”M.

I davened: Master of the universe, I believe You are here and running the world. Is this what you want? That we be sad all the time? That we deal with constant hardships?

“I did not doubt for a moment in the existence of the Creator and the One who rules the world, nor in the need to keep Torah and mitzvos, but questions bothered me. I davened: Master of the universe, I believe You are here and running the world. Is this what you want? That we be sad all the time? That we deal with constant hardships?”

“One of my questions was based on the little bit that I knew about the Geula. If at Moshiach’s coming, nobody will deserve to live, why should I look forward to his coming?”

She spoke to rabbanim but did not get answers. Each rav referred her to another rav. One rav said: I don’t know how to answer questions like that. Another rav said: I’m not expert in that area. This rav apologized, saying he did not have time and although these were famous rabbis, she saw that they did not have answers for her.

She would make an appointment, sit with the rav and ask her questions but instead of answers she got evasive and convoluted digressions.

“Every night, after saying Shma, I would say: Hashem, I know there is a purpose in the world, but what is my purpose? To fulfill mitzvos with sadness? Hashem, please show me the way. I know there is light but for me it is dark.”

MEETING THE REBBE IN A DREAM

Throughout this time, the couple continued going to doctors and hospitals. The steroids and treatments had ruined the baby’s immune system and with every little problem for which another baby would not need a doctor, this baby was hospitalized.

A year went by, a very hard year. One Friday night, Mrs. Tawig had an unusual dream:

“I saw the Rebbe in a large building (which she later learned was 770) and he looked at me and asked: Why are you sad? I began to cry and said: All I want to do in

the world is to be a good Jew and I don't see how to do that with all this darkness.

"The Rebbe calmed me and said: Don't worry. He turned to one of the rabbanim near him and said: You see this woman? Take her phone number and be in touch."

Mrs. Tawig woke up in a turmoil. "You've really lost it," she thought. "You are starting to hallucinate, inventing brachos for yourself in a dream.

"I didn't tell my husband this dream even though I told him my other foolish dreams. I was embarrassed."

At that time, the sum total of her knowledge of Lubavitch was that they had a big Rebbe whose followers think he is still alive.

"I remember how we would sit in seminary and laugh at the people who pick up the phone and say, 'Yechi HaMelech HaMoshiach, hello.' Today, when I think of that, I laugh at myself because now I am one of them."

Either she forgot about the dream or she pushed it out of her mind but the Rebbe was on the case. A few days went by and a friend called and tried to convince her to attend an evening's program for Yad L'Achim. She had no interest in going between infusions and injections, but her husband was happy to enable his wife to get out and relax and he persuaded her to go.

KNOCKING ON THE DOOR

It was an enjoyable evening and as the program was winding down, Mrs. Tawig reverted to her perpetual anxiety about the baby at home. She half heard the emcee ask people to make a donation to the organization, promising special gifts. He mentioned a certain amount and she froze in place in surprise.

Just a few days earlier her husband had said that they had

"I remember how we would sit in seminary and laugh at the people who pick up the phone and say, 'Yechi HaMelech HaMoshiach, hello.' Today, when I think of that, I laugh at myself because now I am one of them."

some maaser money and that he hadn't decided what to do with it. Moved by the rescue story she heard that evening, and surprised by the matching amounts, she decided to donate that amount. She was given the gift, a framed picture with a dollar from the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Mrs. Tawig left the hall with her friends. Suddenly she stopped in her tracks and her friends asked, "What's with you?"

"You don't understand," she said, "this is a dollar from the Lubavitcher Rebbe! I dreamt about him two weeks ago." She felt unsuccessful in conveying her feelings.

When she arrived home she told her husband about her dream, still unsure about its meaning. Gur Aryeh said firmly, "Tzaddikim don't just appear in dreams by chance. You cannot choose to dream about the Rebbe. If he doesn't want to come to you, you won't see him. There is definitely something to

this."

It was moving and inspiring but life went on as usual, at least that's the way it seemed at first. In hindsight though, they saw that the miracles began at this point with the Rebbe making sure to 'call out to them' every week or two.

Gur Aryeh remembers one particularly moving incident. About a month after the picture incident, Gur Aryeh went with his father-in-law to the gravesite of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai on Lag B'Omer. Her father-in-law said: See Chabad's stand over there? Why don't you go and ask the Rebbe for a bracha?

FOUR LETTERS AND THEIR MEANING

Gur Aryeh was surprised. As far as he knew, his wife's family was Litvish. His brothers-in-law learned in Litvishe yeshivos and he couldn't understand why his father-in-law was suggesting that he go to the Chabad stand. What he didn't know was that his father-in-law had been learning Tanya secretly for years. At the time, nobody in the family knew about it.

He went to the stand and heard for the first time about writing to the Rebbe. He sat down to write. On the page where he put his letter there were four amazing answers:

The first letter was written to someone who worked on the highways and the Rebbe suggested that he read the T'fillas HaDerech with Hashem's name every day. Gur Aryeh worked for an interoffice messenger service, and he traveled on his motorcycle every day.

The second letter was written to parents who were uncertain about where to send their daughter and the Rebbe wrote, "It pays to send her to a place with a Chassidic education." Gur Aryeh was stunned. He hadn't mentioned it in his letter but it was registration time in the schools and his oldest daughter needed to be

registered and he didn't know where to send her.

In the preschools of the Agudas Yisroel network he was told he had to change his large knitted yarmulke for a velvet one. The attitude behind this bothered the couple. Friends recommended Chabad's preschools that were considered the best but they were uncomfortable with that idea. Their daughter would learn about the Rebbe and she might come home and say Yechi... And here the Rebbe was referring to his unasked question.

The third letter was written to someone who wrote to the Rebbe about family problems and Gur Aryeh realized that the Rebbe's answers were prophetic because even if he hadn't written about the topic, the answer was definitely pertinent. An entire year of tension and fear with long periods in which one of them watched Michael at the hospital, along with nights of worried sleep did not help create a pleasant, healthy atmosphere in the home. The Rebbe suggested that he learn Tanya with his wife every day and this would lead to an improvement.

The fourth letter was a letter of bracha and hatzlacha which ended with the words, "I will mention it at the gravesite."

WHAT'S TANYA?

Gur Aryeh tried finding out from the bachur at the stand what the Tanya is and where he could get one. The bachur recommended the commentary *P'ninei HaTanya*. He wrote it down and when he got home he told his wife about the Rebbe's amazing letters. They, who had already despaired, were buoyed by this ray of hope and they decided to try it. It couldn't hurt, they figured.

Mrs. Tawig made an appointment with Galit Mizrahi at the Chabad pre-school to register

Her father-in-law said: See Chabad's stand over there? Why don't you go and ask the Rebbe for a bracha? Gur Aryeh was surprised. As far as he knew, his wife's family was Litvish... What he didn't know was that his father-in-law had been learning Tanya secretly for years... On the page where he put his letter there were four amazing answers.

their daughter. In the course of conversation she asked her where she might buy a copy of *P'ninei HaTanya*. Galit looked at her in surprise. Why do you need it? Mrs. Tawig explained about the Rebbe's letter and Galit advised her where to get it.

Then Galit said: Just a minute. The author of the book is Rabbi Chaim Levi Yitzchok Ginsberg, and he gives shiurim here on Wednesdays. Why don't you come?

Without waiting for an answer, Galit took her number and on Wednesday made sure that the

couple attended the shiur that takes place at Midreshet Maayan Chai. At the conclusion of the shiur, Gur Aryeh asked to buy R' Ginsberg's book and the rabbi said he would bring it to the next class. Once out on the street, they exchanged their impressions of the class – neither of them had understood any of it! But they decided to attend another shiur or two and hoped they would understand a bit more.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

One shiur led to another and Chassidus became more understandable and appealing. The Segal and Mizrahi families played major roles in the couples' progress. They hosted them for Shabbasos, directed them to shiurim, and cheerfully guided them in the ways of Chabad. They inspired the Tawigs to get more involved and to be mekarev other people as well.

One day, the director of the midrasha, Mrs. Rivka Iris Segal suggested: Maybe you should write to the Rebbe again?

This time, the letter said: think positively and it will be good. In addition, the Rebbe wrote: it would be very worthwhile to make the effort and be involved in spreading the wellsprings.

The concept of spreading the wellsprings was new to Mrs. Tawig. Mrs. Segal explained it and suggested: Maybe you could help me in the midrasha. That's also spreading the wellsprings. Mrs. Tawig didn't know how she could help so she offered to look over the budget. The two of them sat down to look it over and Mrs. Tawig observed that one of the biggest costs was the taxi that brought Rabbi Ginsberg to give the shiurim.

She happily offered to have her husband drive him and since then, nearly every week the couple enjoys a private shiur on Chassidus as he

A GIFT FROM THE REBBE

After renting for a while, they decided to buy their own apartment while living with their parents in the meantime. They received a tentative approval for a mortgage, signed a contract to buy an apartment in a project, but then were told by the bank that since the two of them were self-employed the mortgage was cancelled. They asked the Rebbe whether to cancel the purchase and to their surprise, the answer was clear: not to cancel.

A year went by in the course of which their debts grew along with threats from the bank and the real estate office that sold apartments. Just the interest alone on their debts totaled 100,000 sh'kalim! But the Rebbe continued to write: don't cancel.

Mrs. Tawig went to the real estate office and told them: We don't have the money but the Lubavitcher Rebbe said not to cancel the deal. The interest is mounting, I am living with my parents and I'll be giving birth soon...

Amazingly, the real estate office came to their aid. They used connections and applied pressure to cancel the interest, get them a mortgage and even another apartment in the project that was cheaper and better. They got the keys on 11 Nissan, the Rebbe's birthday. It was clear to them that they got the apartment as a gift from the Rebbe.

drives Rabbi Ginsberg.

"My husband would drive and Rabbi Ginsberg would sit next to him and I would sit in the back and interrogate the rabbi. How come in Chabad they say such-and-such and why do they do this... I would come with a notebook of questions that occurred to me during the week. I would write down the answers and the following week show up with new questions."

At first, Gur Aryeh was wary of the intellectualism in Chabad for it seemed too cold for him. He wanted to serve Hashem with simcha and chayus. Later on he discovered it in the davening, farbrengens, and dancing. Then he realized that this is what he had been missing all along: "We served Hashem but we didn't feel a chayus. When we came to Chassidus we felt that we had come home."

The transition from the Litvishe world to the world of Chabad wasn't easy. Gur Aryeh and even more so, his wife, had many questions, but their conversations with the

venerable mashpia along with his remarkable personal example, did the job. Slowly but surely they began to realize that their place was in Lubavitch, mekusharim to the Rebbe MH"M.

From R' Ginsberg, Gur Aryeh learned what mesirus nefesh for a Jew is, materially and spiritually:

"He is always available by telephone and he graciously answers our questions. Every night he travels by bus throughout the country to light up the lives of more and more Jews with the light of the Rebbe. When I needed a loan to buy an apartment, he did his utmost to help me. I learned from him what it means to be devoted to another Jew."

THE FINAL HOSPITALIZATION

At the stage where the couple had become acquainted with Chassidus but hadn't yet changed their way of life, is when the final hospitalization took place. After that, there was no more hospital, no more

inhalants. The hospitalizations had been one of the main impetuses on their way to Chabad and when the way was clear, the illness vanished.

During the final hospitalization, Mrs. Tawig spent the week alongside a Lubavitcher woman from Tzfas whose going to Schneider Hospital is an amazing hashgacha pratis story in itself.

The two women did not sleep much that week and not only because of the hospital routine. The other woman was also not from a Lubavitcher family and Mrs. Tawig felt it was easier for her to open up to her. At the end of the week Mrs. Tawig said to her: Now I know that our place is here. We need to be Lubavitchers.

The switch did not happen overnight, but nonetheless the brachos from the Rebbe continued to flow.

They found an alternative doctor and following treatments with him, their son's condition improved dramatically and his breathing problem disappeared. During a routine visit to the doctor, the doctor looked at his file and said: I see that this child is listed in the computer as an asthmatic yet he breathes normally. How is that?

A week after that hospitalization, her friend from Tzfas called Mrs. Tawig and asked, "Nu Liat, what's happening with you? Did you make any commitment regarding Chabad? How about committing to wearing a wig?"

"In theory, that's fine, but I don't have the money to buy one just now." A week later, Mrs. Tawig got a text message which said: I arranged for a wig at a low price, come to Tzfas.

Gur Aryeh took off a day from work, they hired a babysitter, and they went up north. At the end of an exhausting day she had a new wig which was the first step. Afterwards, things moved quickly.

LUBAVITCHER FAITH

Mrs. Tawig's family found the change difficult at first. For example, in the extended family, women wore only kerchiefs and hats to cover their hair. Remarkably it did not cause a rift and they continued to respect and accept them in an admirable way.

As the years went by, the family learned to see the good in Chassidus and its positive effects. Mrs. Tawig says: "Today, my mother says to me: I know that Lubavitchers have a special emuna; if I want chizuk, I talk to you."

Nevertheless, it's hard to talk to them about the Rebbe as Moshiach. But not so little Michael! When he got bigger and started to talk, some of his first words were "Rebbe Moshiach" as he pointed at the Rebbe's picture. The relatives got a big kick out of this and they would take him to the Rebbe's picture to hear him say it again and again.

CHASSIDIC DAYCARE

They moved to a new apartment in Elad, where they met Rabbi Shneur Zalman Yaroslavsky, the rav of the young k'hilla. At this point, they already felt themselves like Lubavitchers and they fit into the community and became examples of people who spread the wellsprings in a pleasant way.

The Rebbe guides them with instructions and open miracles. Before any significant move, they ask the Rebbe through the Igros Kodesh.

Before getting involved in Chassidus, Mrs. Tawig ran a daycare center in Elad. At that time, she decided to close it and in a report to the Rebbe she mentioned this. The answer she opened to said that in a place where there was no study of Chassidus, it was important to open a class for the study of Chassidus.

The couple was very hesitant. It was a month before school would



The children of Tzivos Hashem

***“When I think about what Chassidus says, that every Jew has a hidden love, it gives me the drive to approach anyone, whether I’m filling up my car with gas, on line at the bank, or waiting in an office for a delivery to be made ready. I overcome my reticence and discomfort and talk to Jews because I remember that there is a hidden love.*”**

begin and opening a daycare center at this point did not have a reasonable chance. But they kept on opening to letters on this topic so they took some steps in this direction. The brachos kept coming and sure enough the daycare center opened at the beginning of the year with thirty children!

The fee they set was low as they counted on getting government funding, but the budget wasn't approved and the center ended up being funded by them, out of their own pocket. It wasn't an easy year but the Rebbe continued to encourage them (see box). At the end of the year, to cut expenses they moved the daycare center to their home.

HAKHEL WITH THE CHILDREN

At a certain point they began to repeatedly open to answers about chinuch. "We would write about something else and the answer would be about Tzivos Hashem." One of the letters said that even if a person sent their children to the best schools, if there was no supportive educational environment in the afternoon, the gains of the morning could be lost.

AN AMAZING STORY ABOUT TRUST IN HASHEM

When the government money did not come through for their daycare center, they found themselves with a huge deficit. The Rebbe told them again and again not to close the center. Gur Aryeh worked overtime and sometimes returned home at ten at night but their deficit only grew. Gur Aryeh relates:

I was learning the Rebbe's sichos about emuna and bitachon and I resolved to act as the Rebbe said to do, to think positively and not to be fazed by obstacles at which point you see that the obstacles turn into something positive.

One Friday I was with my father-in-law in Yerushalayim and I had to make an urgent payment at the bank of 5000 shekels. I had no idea where I would get the money but I knew that if I did not make the deposit before it closed, I would be in serious trouble.

My father-in-law asked whether we could stay a bit longer so he could take care of some things and I overcame my concerns and put my trust in Hashem and remained calm.

Then my cell phone rang. The number was familiar. It was the person who rented us the apartment for our daycare center to whom we owed a few months rent. I thought, he's going to yell at me. Why bother answering the phone and increase the tension that I'm feeling. But then I decided to have bitachon and believe that if he was calling me now, it was from Hashem.

I answered the phone and was yelled at, as I had anticipated. I began to apologize. I explained that we were running a Chabad preschool and the Rebbe told us not to close it, which is why even though I was losing money I was continuing to run it.

When I finished my story, he began to tell me that when he lived abroad he did not have the money to pay for the Jewish education of his two children and Chabad agreed to take them without tuition so that they would be attending a Jewish school.

On the spot he decided to donate the sum of 5000 sh'kalim. The problem was that the branch near my house was closed already. He actually left his house in the middle of Shabbos preparations and made the transfer twenty minutes before closing time. This showed me how, as the Rebbe said, the obstacles (the man we rented from) turned into something positive (5000 sh'kalim).

The amazing thing is a few months later, when I called to tell him that I still found it hard to pay him what we owed, he donated another 5000 sh'kalim. He said that the tuition for his two children was supposed to be 10,000 sh'kalim and he felt he was repaying his debt to the Rebbe.

I couldn't get over this story. Instead of getting money from me, he gave me a donation. It's hard to believe such a thing could transpire in these times when most people send lawyers' letters and turn to bill collectors.

The most amazing thing of all is that I would not have answered the phone if I had not learned the sicha which says when you have bitachon the obstacles are transformed into help.

They asked the Rebbe whether he wanted them to open a Tzivos Hashem club and the answer, which was addressed to "the administration of the Gan," said, "whoever is involved with this and helps out, one cannot imagine his reward."

So they opened a club, Hakhel-Tzivos Hashem, which operates under the Chabad house run by shliach, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Silberman, who directs them in the activities. At first, the programs took place at the Tawig house. When it expanded, it moved to one of the Chabad preschools.

The weekly programming for boys is run by Gur Aryeh with the help of members of the Mizrachi family. The separate programming for girls is run by Mrs. Tawig with help from members of the Marciano family. In addition, Mrs. Tawig has Mesibos Shabbos for girls on Shabbos.

The sight of the children filling the preschool is heartwarming. In addition to the Lubavitchers who attend, there are children from Shas, Mizrachi and even Litvishe families. Some parents do carpool in order to bring their children.

The parents are constantly impressed by the programs that include hands-on activities, games, p'sukim and crafts whose goal is to engender love for mitzvos: candlesticks for Shabbos, a pushka, etc. The couple gives it their all for an hour and a quarter so that the children are instilled with Chassidishkait and Yiddishkait.

They don't rest on their laurels. They plan on moving to a municipal building and running a club for hundreds of children. There are also plans for the upcoming school year to re-open a legally approved Chabad preschool for 2-3 year olds.

The high level of their programs sometimes generate comments from parents like: How nice that Chabad has the money for programs for

children. Gur Aryeh then explains that “Chabad” is “us” and that they personally pay for it out of their own money and from contributions. Any monetary help will enable them to expand their work further.

FARBRENGEN AT THE MAIL ROOM

A large part of Gur Aryeh’s hafatza is done while making deliveries. “I would call myself a shliach of the Rebbe on a motorcycle,” he says with a smile. “I go into offices and look for someone to talk to about t’fillin, check mezuzos, or convince the receptionist to light Shabbos candles. Thanks to my job I get to go in and I take advantage of the opportunity.

“Sometimes I show up and people gather round and ask questions. A discussion ensues and as the conversation continues the pressure mounts because I have other deliveries to make. I start getting phone calls from customers but I’m talking to someone who wants direction in life. He is listening to things that he has no access to anywhere else. I try to complete the conversation even if I’ll have to work late because of it or will have to apologize to customers for the delay.”

Here are some typical daily incidents:

I went into a mail room of a large

insurance company in order to pick up packages. One of the employees who already knows the “Chabadnik who gives out flyers” came over and asked a question. The answer to his little question grew lengthy and quickly turned into a farbrengen.

I was offered a chair and within minutes a crowd of six people had gathered who were listening wide-eyed. They’re using to hearing things like: If you don’t keep Shabbos and put on t’fillin, Moshiach will come and nothing will remain of you. Here was a religious fellow who, instead of talking about Gehinom and Gan Eden was speaking about the Jewish neshama, about the Jewish spark in each person and how much Hashem loves every Jew.

At one office, someone said to me that he had put t’fillin on from the age of thirteen and then stopped because “the davening was too long.” I said to him: I will bring up an abridged version so that at least you will do the mitzva of t’fillin. A while later he told me: What you gave me is too short; I daven the whole davening with t’fillin now.

I once asked the gas station attendant if he put on t’fillin. “I used to, but I stopped,” he said. “Start again. It’s easy.” I gave him a card with the how-to and he started putting t’fillin on again; he just needed someone to get him started.

In many cases I suggest to owners of offices that they put up

mezuzos where there aren’t any, or to check the mezuzos that are up. They are always amazed by how Lubavitchers care.

WORK? THE BEST PLACE FOR SHLICHUS

In Gur Aryeh’s opinion, the best place to do mitvzaim is the workplace. “They are people who know you. They trust you and they are far more open to listening to you than the people who are putting t’fillin on in the street (not to diminish from putting t’fillin on with people in the street, of course). The influence of someone in the workplace is tremendous and the proof is that people usually stop me to talk about Judaism and it’s not me who turns to them.

“When I think about what Chassidus says, that every Jew has a hidden love, it gives me the drive to approach anyone, whether I’m filling up my car with gas, on line at the bank, or waiting in an office for a delivery to be made ready. I overcome my reticence and discomfort and talk to Jews because I remember that there is a hidden love.

“Every Jew, and surely every Chassid, has an aspect of Moshe Rabbeinu within him which gives him strength to influence another person. You just have to seek out what your shlichus is in every place and time.”

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THE RAYATZ AND THE REBBE WERE OUR GUESTS

By Shneur Zalman Berger

*“On Friday nights the Rebbe Rayatz would sleep at my parents’ house in Paris. I remember that on Shabbos morning, his sons-in-law would come and escort him to shul.” * R’ Buni (Berel) Lax of London tells of the special connection between his family and the Rebbe’s.*

It was the spring of 1940. The Nazis were about to enter Paris and news of German victories in Europe were spreading quickly. The French prepared for imminent attack, relying on the Maginot Line, a line of concrete fortifications on the French-German border. The Germans cleverly misled them and swiftly penetrated France. The invasion began on 2 Iyar and its rate of progress was so incredible that the Nazi command was itself amazed by the irrepressible power of their army.

In the face of the advancing Nazi invasion, the masses fled to the south of France. But not everybody rushed to leave their homes and

belongings in Paris. Some hoped that the Nazis would not reach Paris, some feared for their possessions, and there were those who simply did not accept the fact that they had to be refugees.

The Rebbe and Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka debated whether to leave Paris, particularly as they did not have money for long journeys. The one who pleaded with them to flee and who provided them with money was Rabbi Yaakov Lax, *Hy”d*.

I discovered Rabbi Lax’s name by accident while doing research on Chabad communities during the Holocaust. R’ Yaakov died long ago and his son Berel is in his 90’s. The family encouraged me to talk to him



Left: R’ Berel Lax in 1946R
Right: The Rebbe and the Rebbe Rayatz

and find out additional details of interest to Chabad. “Although he celebrated his ninetieth birthday, R’ Buni has many stories about the past and he tells them with care for accuracy. He would definitely enjoy telling you about the Admurei Chabad who visited his parents’ home.”

R’ Buni, a former businessman who lives in London now, was very surprised when I contacted him regarding the rescue of the Rebbe during the war, and was happy to oblige me. First he told me about the help his father provided the Rebbe so he could leave Paris. In subsequent conversations he



usually davened in the Belzer shul at number 25. I think that the Rebbe davened there because in the shul at number 17, everybody knew that he was the Rebbe's son-in-law and they honored him and the Rebbe tried to escape this honor."

THE REBBE DAVENED AT GREAT LENGTH

"On Friday nights, the Rebbe Rayatz would sleep at the home of my parents (Yaakov and Baila), at 52 Strasbourg Boulevard in the center of Paris. I remember that on Shabbos morning, the Rebbe's sons-in-law – Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn and Rabbi Menachem Mendel Horenstein – came and escorted him to the shul near our house.

Why did the Rebbe stay at your house?

At that time, the Rebbe Rayatz suffered from illness that limited his movement and his speech which is why he came to the sanatorium in Paris where he was treated by the best doctors. On weekdays a minyan was arranged for him at the sanatorium but on Shabbos, the Rebbe wanted to daven in a regular shul. Since there was no shul in the vicinity of the sanatorium, he slept at our house and on Shabbos morning his sons-in-law came to support him as he walked. At that time, he had a hard time walking and it was only when the two of them held him on the right and left that he was able to walk.

The Rebbe Rayatz would daven at great length and usually finished davening after two in the afternoon. I remember that one Shabbos he had an aliya for Maftir and he read the Haftora, "The heaven is My throne," for a long time with great emotion.

I don't remember whether he had the Shabbos meal in our house. What I can say is that in our house many famous rabbanim and talmidei chachamim were hosted and my

described the special connection between 'Beis Rebbe' and his own family, mainly because of his father, R' Yaakov Lax, "a modern Galicianer Chassid who was very hospitable."

R' Buni told me about the visits of the Rebbeim to his parents' home as well as the meeting decades later in 770 when the Rebbe identified him instantly and asked about each family member. R' Buni does not remember the exact dates when the Rebbe Rayatz and the Rebbe visited. He remembers that it was between 1936-1938 and the following stories are from those years.

WHY DID THE REBBE DAVEN IN THE BELZER SHUL?

In Chabad writings describing the events of those days, it is said that the Rebbe davened in the shul at 17 Rue De Rose where the Rebbe Rashab and the Rebbe Rayatz davened when they visited Paris. He sometimes went to a nearby shul on the same street, which was located at number 25. R' Buni explains it like this:

"On Shabbos, the Rebbe davened in the shul at number 17 since that is where the previous Admurei Chabad davened when they visited Paris, but on weekdays the Rebbe



The Chabad shul in Paris



R' Yaakov Lax

mother had special pots for them. The only one whom I remember that did not eat a morsel in our house was R' Itche “der masmid” who was extremely stringent. He had many more stringencies which we discovered when he stayed with us. He was a real tzaddik and you don’t find many like him.

THE REBBE CARES ABOUT EVERY JEW

We had a terrible tragedy happen at that time. My older brother Efraim drowned. I was in Stockholm, Sweden at the time doing business on my father’s behalf. My family didn’t know whether or how to tell me the news.

The Rebbe Rayatz and the Rebbe visited my parents to console them. Somehow this information got out

to the Jews in the area and they crowded into the house to see the Rebbe Rayatz. The Rebbe’s son-in-law [Ramash] asked why I wasn’t sitting Shiva with the rest of the family and my sister said that I was in Sweden and they didn’t know whether or how to inform me. The Rebbe said it would be difficult for me to hear the news in a distant place and to sit Shiva alone and so he would arrange that I be informed after the Shloshim when I would in that case sit Shiva for only an hour.

The Rebbe contacted two Chabad Chassidim in Sweden – Rabbi Yaakov Yisroel Zuber and Rabbi Yisroel Chasdan – and told them to make sure I did not find out about my brother’s passing and to inform me at the end of the Shloshim. That is what happened and I sat Shiva for an hour.

We know that the Rebbe was concerned about every Jew but till this day I am touched by how the Rebbe handled this so sensitively in order to minimize my mourning.

THE REBBE’S WORDS REVERBERATED IN MY EARS

The Rebbe Rayatz’s last visit to Paris was in 1938 and when he left, my father and I escorted him. The Rebbe Rayatz was on a coach carriage which took him to the train station. My father sat alongside the Rebbe inside the coach and I walked next to it. The Rebbe called out to me and once I got in, the Rebbe told me:

“Berele, arrogance is a bad midda, the source of all bad middos. You must not forget whose son you are; remember that you are the son

of R' Yaakov Lax.”

This rang in my ears for many years to come.

* * *

During the war, R' Buni was drafted into the Polish army and when Poland was defeated, some of the soldiers, including R' Buni, escaped to England where they continued to serve in the war effort.

“What the Rebbe said, that I am the son of Yaakov Lax, kept resounding in my ears. I was surrounded by *shkotzim* and I just couldn't take it anymore. At a certain point I left the army and joined Jews in London where I studied Torah despite the nonstop bombing of the German Luftwaffe.”



“The Rebbe Rayatz called out to me from the carriage”
(picture for illustration purposes)

THE REBBE SENT AN AFFIDAVIT

When the Germans approached Paris, the Rebbe went to the Lax home and said he was uncertain whether to leave Paris. My father encouraged the Rebbe to leave Paris and even gave him \$1000 for expenses.

After the Rebbe went to the United States, the Rebbe sent my father an affidavit [in support of his emigration] but the affidavit arrived two days after my father was taken by the Nazis from his home and he never returned. May Hashem avenge his blood.

My mother and other relatives in France were in the area under Italian control and were saved. At the end of the war, when the Rebbe went to Paris to take his mother to the United States, the Rebbe repaid my mother the money that he was given

The Rebbe told me: “Berele, arrogance is a bad midda, the source of all bad middos. You must not forget whose son you are; remember that you are the son of R' Yaakov Lax.” This rang in my ears for many years to come.

at the beginning of the war.

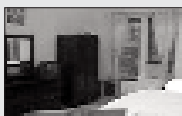
THE REBBE RECOGNIZED ME INSTANTLY

Years passed and I went to New York on business (this was in the 70's). I wanted to see the Rebbe and I went for Mincha. After Mincha, one of the secretaries came over to me and said that the Rebbe asked that I go to him. I was flabbergasted. The Rebbe had recognized me although decades had gone by. He even inquired about my brothers and sisters.

* * *

This is what R' Buni remembers of the Rebbe Rayatz and the Rebbe and their stay in Paris. During the lengthy phone conversation R' Buni praised the Rebbe Rayatz and the Rebbe for their work on behalf of the Jewish people in general and for individual Jews in particular.

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[Continued from pg. 7]

“in order that I will be wealthy...that I will be called Rabbi.” It is just that the ‘**location**’ of the receipt of this reward happens to be “**in the World to Come.**”], Scripture states, “to love, etc.” That is, his intent “**to receive a reward**” is (not because he is fearful for his own life, but) because he wants to receive **compensation and payment** for his service (material compensation, “that he will be wealthy,” or spiritual compensation, “that **I shall receive reward in the World to Come**”). Indeed, this is a lesser level of one who serves G-d not for His sake.)

7. However, notwithstanding the fact that the eager anticipation of the Sages and Prophets for the life of the World to Come was a further continuation and advancement of their service out of **love**, there is still a higher level of service out of love that “not every Sage merits.” Namely, that which Rambam innovates in Law 2 regarding “the virtue of Avrohom our Father,” that one “acts in accordance with the truth [simply] because it is the truth.”

We may assert that the following is among the advantages of this approach:

When service of G-d is motivated by a regular love (that which is inherent to every Jew (and how much more so with regard to) – their Prophets and their Sages), then being involved in Torah and Mitzvos is **in order** to attain a bond with and the experience of cleaving to the Holy One Blessed Be He [i.e., an ulterior motive, albeit very subtle]. The involvement in Torah and Mitzvos is in a manner that is not for its own purpose and sake but for the purpose of attaining the object of desire, which is like something additional [to one’s service of G-d]. But when one’s service out of love is in a manner that he “acts in accordance with the truth [simply] because it is the truth,” this rules out not only service for the **purpose** of receiving reward; he does not seek out anything else in his service, not even that he should cleave to the Holy One Blessed Be He, which is the manifestation of the knowledge of G-d and the love of G-d. Rather, he “acts in accordance with the truth [simply] **because it is the truth,**” being the commandment and the will of G-d, for the fulfillment of the commandment of G-d is true unto itself.

Regarding this quality, the Rambam writes, “The virtue of this approach is **exceedingly great**” (and not as he writes in the preceding law, simply, “the virtue of the Prophets,” “the virtue of the Sages”). Indeed, one cannot say regarding this quality that it is the virtue of **all** the Sages. On the contrary, as Rambam continues, “not every Sage merits it.” Rather, “it is the virtue of Avrohom our Father, whom the Holy One Blessed Be He called ‘His Beloved.’” For in order to attain this great quality (he “acts in accordance with the truth [simply] because it is the truth”), one must ascend to an extremely lofty level in the love of G-d.

8. According to all the above we can also shed light on our understanding of the spies and the generation of the desert:

The spies (and the generation of the desert in general) were, as mentioned above, “on an extremely lofty level,” “and they did not want to lower themselves [FN 59: for it is obvious that one must **ascend** in holiness] to enter the Land of Israel, to the order of service of “six years you shall sow your field, etc.” – a person plows, a person sows, etc. (as mentioned in

Section 2) – for this order of service would not allow them to be involved in Torah study, etc., “properly.” The majority of their days would have been devoted, rather, to “matters that the body requires” [Rambam *ibid* 9:1]. They wanted to remain and proceed and to **journey and ascend** in the order of life in the desert, for good things were amply provided there, as mentioned above (*mahn* from the heavens, water from the Well of Miriam, and the Clouds of Glory that traveled with them, as noted above). They had no distractions from the service of G-d; they were able to sit freely to seek out tranquility and to **increase** in wisdom to merit the life of the World to Come, **resembling** how “the Jewish people – their Prophets and their Sages [included] – eagerly anticipated, etc., in order that they may rest, etc. They will [then] find themselves calm, etc.”

However, notwithstanding the fact that their will and desire for the latter experience in the desert constitutes a lofty level in cleaving to G-d – service out of love – nevertheless, entry into the Land of Israel brings to a higher level still. Namely, fulfilling the commandments of G-d without any personal interest at all: “acting in accordance with the truth [simply] because it is the truth.”

But in order to attain this level, it requires an even loftier love of G-d. And since the spies and the generation of the desert wished to remain in the desert and did not want to enter the land, this indicates that they still had not attained this level of complete rapture and exaltedness in the love of G-d.

Thus, the Jewish people remained in the desert in a state of being removed from all obstacles from the ultimate experience of Torah study and cleaving to G-d, enjoying rest and calm in order that they may “increase in wisdom.” For in such a state they would attain the perfection of the soul’s cleaving to G-d, etc. [FN 61: Accordingly we can explain also the commentary of *HaAsara Maamaros* (cited above in FN 28) that the generation of the desert has no need for the World to Come, although it was explained above that their will and desire to remain in the desert is an example of “the Jewish people – their Prophets and their Sages [included] – eagerly anticipated, etc., in order that they shall merit the life of the World to Come.” For by being in the desert in actuality for forty years, they traveled and ascended from strength to strength until they attained a superior height while being below, a soul in a body. Indeed, the level of life in the World to Come for souls (for the most part), whereby “the righteous sit...and they derive benefit from the ray of the Divine Presence” (Rambam *Laws of Repentance* 8:2), is a degradation and a descent for them for which they have no need (to note from *Shaar Maamarei Razal* on the beginning of Perek Cheilek regarding the various levels of the World to Come, but this is a separate discussion) —from the address of Shabbos Parshas Shlach 5747.] Afterwards, in the following generation, a new generation and a new level, they entered the Land of Israel to fulfill the commandments of G-d, both with regard to the entry itself into the Land as well as the fulfillment of Mitzvos that require action there, for specifically in this is perceived the concept of “acting in accordance with the truth [simply] because it is the truth.”

In fact, we may assert that this is the meaning of the words of Yehoshua and Kaleiv in response to the assembly of the entire Jewish people [FN 61*: Our Torah portion [i.e., Shlach] 14:8. See *Likkutei Torah* on our Torah portion, pg. 38c.]: “If

G-d is **desirous** of us, He will bring us, etc.” [From the latter verse we see] that entry into the Land is connected with “G-d is **desirous** of us”; this is the desire and will of G-d. Of consequence then, its fulfillment reveals that “G-d is **desirous of us**,” the cleaving of the Jewish people to G-d in a manner that is loftier than the rapture brought about through the “increase in wisdom” **in the desert**.

9. Now, the Rambam, in discussing the one who “acts in accordance with the truth [simply] because it is the truth,” concludes, “and in the end, good fortune will come as a result of it.” At first glance, how is this conclusion relevant here? We are speaking about a sage of the likes who is not at all concerned with the good fortune he will attain from his service!

We may answer that this is understood in light of the precise wording of the Rambam, “in the end, good fortune will come **as a result of it**” (*big'lala*) [FN 63: In several versions the text reads, “*bich'lala*” – “included in it.” (See Rambam *Seifer HaMada* *ibid.*)], meaning that when one’s service is in a manner whereby he “acts in accordance with the truth [simply] because it is the truth,” then the **good fortune** that results is loftier than that of the typical good fortune of the World to Come [being a “result of” or being “included in” this loftier approach to serving G-d]. Conversely, also with respect to his soul’s **connection and cleaving to G-d**, he attains a higher degree of perfection with this [approach] than one whose Torah study and fulfillment of Mitzvos is in a manner that he has the objective of connecting and cleaving to G-d.

Accordingly we can elucidate the continuation of the words of Yehoshua and Kaleiv, who said (prior to this [14:7]), “the land is **exceedingly good**” (*tova ha'aretz m'od m'od*). [FN 68: See *Likkutei Torah* on our Torah portion 37a, 38c; *Likkutei Sichos* Vol. 4 Parshas Shlach; as well as several other places.] [This was said] notwithstanding the fact that through the approach of serving G-d in the desert – Torah study in a manner that they were free to devote themselves to the pursuit of wisdom – they merit “to see the **goodness** of G-d in the **land** of life” [T'hillim 27:13], a reference to the World to Come, which is “**goodness** that is **exceedingly** great, having no comparison among the good things of this world” [Rambam Laws of Repentance 8:6]. Indeed, “this **goodness is great** beyond one’s ability to fathom, having no comparison or likeness. It is what Dovid said, “How great is **Your goodness** which you have hidden away for those who fear You, and etc.” (as Rambam writes in Laws of Repentance [ibid]).

[Yehoshua and Kaleiv were able to see beyond the lofty service of the desert knowing that] through entering into the Land of Israel and the fulfillment of the Mitzvos there – that is, the manner of service of “If G-d is desirous of us,” “acting in accordance with the truth [simply] because it is the truth” – they would merit goodness that is even greater. Namely,

goodness that is not only “*m'od*” (extreme) one time (signifying a goodness that is so great that it is beyond the capacity of man to accommodate in this world; the goodness of the World to Come) – which is a result of the service of G-d at the level of “*m'od*,” “a love that is overwhelming, **extremely** powerful, to the extent that his soul is bound in love of G-d and he is constantly engrossed in it” – but “*m'od m'od*,” the word being repeated. As Rambam writes, “he acts in accordance with the truth [simply] because it is the truth and in the end, good fortune will come **as a result of it**,” indicating that there is a [unique quality of] goodness that comes specifically as a result of this lofty service, [a service of G-d that is so great] that even when compared to “a love that is overwhelming, **extremely** powerful,” it is at the level of “*m'od*” (extreme), for this refers to the utter nullification of the person to the Holy One Blessed Be He.

10. Now, from the fact that the Torah, which is (an) eternal (teaching), relates the story about the spies and the generation of the desert, as well as the response of Yehoshua and Kaleiv to their claim, it is understood that it is within the power of every single Jew to conduct themselves according to what was required of Yehoshua and Kaleiv, surpassing the heights of the service of the spies (and the generation of the desert), which is [described as being] “an extremely lofty level.”

That is to say that this advantage of fulfilling Mitzvos that require action in the land they were entering – “the land is exceedingly good” (“*tova ha'aretz m'od m'od*,” [the word “*m'od*” being] repeated) – is not only for those whose entrance into the land comes after being in the desert (and for forty years), but it exists within every single Jew. For when one fulfills Mitzvos with acceptance of the yoke of Heaven, because so does G-d command, this obedience entails an additional advantage over the cleaving to G-d stemming from the love of Him.

We may assert that this as well is alluded to in the wording of the Rambam:

In continuation of his words regarding “the virtue of Avrohom our Father, whom the Holy One Blessed Be He called ‘His Beloved,’ etc.,” Rambam writes, “This is the virtue regarding which the Holy One Blessed Be He commanded us through Moshe, as it is said, ‘You shall love the L-rd, your G-d’ [VaEschanan 6:5]. At the time when a person loves G-d with a love that is appropriate, immediately he will do all the Mitzvos out of love.” (And in the following law, Rambam continues to explain “How the appropriate love [of G-d is expressed].”) At first glance, however, it is not understood: After writing that “The virtue of this approach is exceedingly great. But not every Sage merits it,” how does it fit to say, “This is the virtue regarding which...He **commanded us** through Moshe?” All the Jewish people are commanded [to strive to attain] it!

The explanation is that Rambam is coming to relate to us

The service out of love “which the Holy One Blessed Be He commanded us through Moshe” is relevant to every single Jew, even one who still is at an extremely low level.

that that which he writes, “But not every Sage merits it,” means of his own capacity and effort, but (through and) with the power of the **commandment of G-d** (through Moshe), **every single individual** is capable of attaining it.

11. However, at first glance, further investigation is required. Love [of G-d] is an emotion of the heart, attained through contemplating G-d’s greatness, as Rambam discusses at length at the end of the chapter (likewise in the Laws of the Foundations of the Torah [Chapter 2, beg.]). What then is the meaning of saying that every single Jew is capable of attaining “a love that is appropriate,” a love that is comparable to the especial love of G-d attained by our patriarch Avrohom?

This will be understood in light of what Rambam writes in Law 4: “The Early Sages said: Lest someone say, ‘I hereby am learning Torah in order that I will be wealthy, in order that I will be called “Rabbi,” in order that I shall receive reward in the World to Come,’ the Torah says, ‘to love G-d,’ [meaning that] all that you do should only be out of love [of G-d]. Furthermore, the Sages said, etc., Thus did the great Sages command their understanding disciples, etc.: ‘Do not be as servants who, etc.’”

At first glance, it is a wonder: Why did Rambam wait until after discussing the greatness of the virtue of service out of love (the virtue of our patriarch Avrohom (in Law 2), described as “a love that is appropriate” (in Law 3)) before ruling out the intention of “in order that I will be wealthy and etc.,” and he did not include it in Law 1 in the context of serving out fear, [where it says] “One should not say, ‘I am doing the Mitzvos of the Torah, etc., in order to receive all the blessings, etc.’”?

(For since this is a very low level of serving G-d “not for His sake” (as discussed in Section 6), therefore, he should have ruled out this level of “not for the sake of G-d” before the lengthy discussion about the great virtue of our patriarch Avrohom, “a love that is appropriate.”)

We may assert that in this way Rambam emphasizes that the service out of love “which the Holy One Blessed Be He commanded us through Moshe” is relevant to every single Jew, even one who still is at an extremely low level, one who of his own accord would “learn Torah in order that I will be wealthy, etc.”

The explanation of the matter:

Regarding “a love that is appropriate,” there are two levels:

a) The feeling of love in the heart, regarding which it says, “The virtue of this approach is exceedingly great.” This is the virtue of Avrohom’s distinction, as Rambam elaborates in Law 3: “How is the **appropriate** love [of G-d expressed]? It is that

one should love G-d with a love that is overwhelming, extremely powerful, to the extent that his soul is bound in love of G-d, etc.”

b) Even regarding one who has not attained the level of Avrohom, to love G-d with a love that is **appropriate** (which brings the person to a state whereby he “acts in accordance with the truth [simply] because it is the truth”), but of his own accord he is at the level whereby he says, “I hereby am learning Torah in order that I will be wealthy, etc.” – the Torah instructs even him that “All that you **do** should be **done** only out of love.” That is, even one who does not feel in his heart the appropriate love, can, nevertheless, effect in himself to **act** out of love, on account of the fact that thus did the Holy One Blessed Be He command. [This level, whereby one lacks the feeling associated with the appropriate love of G-d, but he nonetheless acts in accordance with it] resembles the level of “The virtue of this approach is exceedingly great,” “he “acts in accordance with the truth [simply] because it is the truth.”

And this is what Rambam continues with in the next law (after discussing the concept of service “for the sake of G-d” and “not for His sake”: “One should always be involved in Torah and Mitzvos even if it is not for G-d’s sake, for as a result of [doing so] not for G-d’s sake he will come to [doing so] for G-d’s sake”): “Therefore, when educating children and women, as well as ignorant people in general, they are only educated to serve out of fear and in order to receive a reward, until they are rich with knowledge and they become wise with an abundance of wisdom. Then this secret may be revealed to them little by little. They are to become accustomed to this concept gently, until they grasp Him and know Him and serve Him out of love.” For at first glance [this is redundant in that] he had already written in Law 1 that “they are educated to serve out of fear – until their minds expand and they may [then] serve G-d out of love.” Why then is this concept reiterated?

The explanation is that this comes to emphasis that even “**this secret**” – meaning the most lofty virtue of “a love that is appropriate” of “Avrohom, My beloved” – is within the power of children and women, as well as ignorant people in general, to attain (it is just that they must be accustomed to this “little by little...gently”). For after “the Holy One Blessed Be He **commanded us** through Moshe,” then through the Torah study and the fulfillment of Mitzvos of every single Jew on account of the fact that they were commanded by G-d, even if he doesn’t have love revealed in his heart, certainly he will come to be involved with and study for the sake of G-d, etc., and he will serve Him out of love.

(From the address of Shabbos Parshas Shlach 5746)



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