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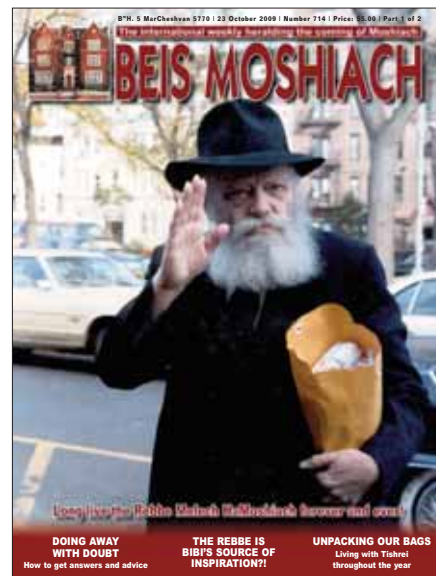
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GENUINE SATISFACTION: NOACH'S LEGACY

Sichos In English

OUR POTENTIAL FOR ACHIEVEMENT

The Maggid of Mezritch would interpret [1] our Sages' statement: [2] "Know what is above you," as follows:

"Know that everything above" - all that transpires in the spiritual realms - is "from you," dependent on your conduct. Each of us has the potential to influence even the most elevated spiritual realms. The Torah alludes to this potential in the opening verse of our Torah reading, [3] "These are the chronicles of Noach. Noach was a righteous man."

Noach refers to satisfaction and repose. [4]

By repeating his name, the Torah implies that Noach - and by extension, every one of his descendants - can spread these qualities in two spheres: among his fellow men, and also in the spiritual worlds above.

Every person affects his environment.

We can promote peace and tranquility among our fellow men, creating a setting that prompts meaningful pleasure. And by establishing such a setting in our world, we generate similar qualities

in the spiritual worlds above.

To highlight our responsibility to spread these virtues, this week's Torah portion is called Noach. [5]

TO BE SENSITIVE TO G-D'S CUES

This name is, however, problematic for the portion as a whole does not reflect these qualities.

On the contrary, the majority of the portion concerns the story of the flood, and its conclusion relates the story of the Tower of Babel.

These events - and the conduct of mankind which led to them - represent the direct opposite of the satisfaction and repose personified by Noach.

The resolution of this difficulty underscores the interrelation between the patterns G-d intends for our world and man's response to them.

Noach's birth was to begin a period of repose and satisfaction that would encompass the world at large.

Mankind had the choice to take an active part in that undertaking, but by and large, this option was not seized. Instead, each person went

about his life, concerned with his own priorities, and indeed, only with himself - what another person felt or what was right did not matter. And as a result, [6] "The world was corrupt... and the land was filled with crime."

WATERS OF BLESSING

Then it started to rain.

On the verse, [7] "And it rained for forty days and forty nights on the land," our Sages commented: [8] "At the outset, the water descended [gently,] with mercy, so that if they would repent, they would be rains of blessing. Since they did not repent, it became a flood."

The flood waters were intended to be waters of blessing. For the blessing to be openly manifest, however, the people had to make themselves fit to receive G-d's influence, and therefore t'shuva - turning to G-d and improving their conduct - was necessary.

As the rain began to descend, they continued to ignore this opportunity, refusing to make such efforts.

Even after the people did not turn to G-d in t'shuva, the rains remained waters of blessing. [9] The flood purified the land.

The forty days of the flood resembled the forty saa of mikveh. [10]

Just as immersion in the mikveh is associated with reliving the act of creation, renewing vitality, [11] so too, the forty days of the flood brought about the dawning of a new age: "Noach saw a new world." [12]

Therefore, the waters of the flood are called "the waters of Noach," [13] because their intent - and their actual effect - was to bring rest and pleasure to the world.

Unfortunately, however, because of man's conduct, this positive intent required a form of expression that was coupled with destruction - "[The flood] obliterated all living creatures that had been on the face of the earth." [14]

KINDNESS WITH PURPOSE

A similar concept applies with regard to the sin of the Tower of Babel as reflected in our Sages' teaching, [15] "There were ten generations from Noach to Avraham.... All those generations repeatedly angered Him, until Avraham our father came and received the reward of them all."

The generations that preceded Avraham shared a kindred spirit and treated each other with love. [16] Nevertheless, since they "repeatedly angered G-d," their conduct did not reflect the repose and satisfaction G-d intended for mankind. Therefore, He punished them, scattering them throughout the earth.

Avraham performed deeds of kindness and hospitality. All of these deeds had a single thrust and purpose - to make all mankind conscious of G-d. [17]

Through his deeds, he communicated the desired forms of repose and satisfaction, and therefore, received the reward generated by all the comradely deeds of the generations which preceded him. [18]

WHEN THE RAINBOW WILL SHINE

Our Torah portion also foreshadows the ultimate state of repose and satisfaction to be reached in the era [19] when "there will be neither famine nor war, neither envy nor competition, for good things will flow in abundance." [20]

On the ark were lions, tigers, and other predators and yet, they dwelt in peace with other animals, anticipating the fulfillment of the prophecy, [21] "The wolf will dwell with lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat."

By manifesting these qualities in our conduct at present, we can precipitate the coming of that age. And then like Noach and his sons, we will merit the shining of the rainbow with brilliant colors. For the Zohar [22] states "The rainbow reflects the spiritual secrets.... When you see the rainbow shining with bright colors, wait for the Moshiach's coming."

Adapted from Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XX, p. 285ff, Vol. XXV, p. 23ff

Notes:

1. Cited in Or HaTorah al Agados Chazal, p. 112b, explained in Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XX, p. 331.
2. Avos 2:1.
3. Genesis 10:9.
4. For the name Noach means "rest" in Hebrew and is associated with the word nachas which means "pleasure."
5. Were the name to have been given merely because Noach is one of the first words of the Torah portion, this Torah portion should have been called Toldos for this word appears before Noach, and the subsequent Torah portion which is called Toldos, should have been named Yitzchak.
6. Genesis 10:11.
7. Genesis 7:10.
8. Zohar Chadash 22a, quoted in

Rashi's commentary on the verse.

9. This is implied by the wording of the verse, "And it rained for forty days," i.e., the entire forty day period was intended to be one of "rains of blessing."

10. Torah Or, Noach 8c.

11. Seifer HaChinuch, Mitzvah 174, explains that just as initially, all creation emerged from a watery mass, so too, after immersion in a mikveh, a person becomes a new entity, charged with new spiritual vitality.

12. B'Reishis Rabba 30:8.

13. Isaiah 54:9, included in the Haftora of Parshas Noach. The Haftora expresses the fundamental intent of the Torah reading. It is often explained that the flood waters are called "the waters of Noach" to indicate that Noach bears a certain dimension of responsibility for the flood. For he did not undertake sufficient endeavors to reach out to the people of his generation and motivate them to t'shuva.

14. Genesis 7:23.

15. Avos 5:2. See the explanation in Likkutei Sichos, Vol III, p.753.

16. Sanhedrin 109a.

17. Sota 10a ff.

18. In contrast, as mentioned in the Mishna from Avos cited previously, Noach did not receive the reward for the generations which preceded him. There are two reasons for this: a) the conduct of these people did not generate reward for they did not show love to their fellow men; b) as mentioned in footnote 13, Noach did not reach out to his colleagues and endeavor to teach them as Avraham did.

19. Seifer HaMaamarim, Eshaleich Liozna, p. 57. Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XXV, Parshas Noach, et al.

20. Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Melachim 12:5.

21. Isaiah 11:6.

22. Vol. I, p. 72b.

FEARLESS SOLDIER

By Nosson Avrohom

The Rebbe sometimes requested that Chassidim who had recently left Russia should stand near him on the bima as he blew the t'kios. Though an explanation was never given, it was assumed that it was to highlight the z'chus of the Jews of Russia who were moser nefesh to keep Torah and mitzvos in a place of constant danger. Alexander Lokatchky exemplified this mesirus nefesh. A major supporter of the Jewish community in Moscow, he ignored the danger to his life as he reminded Jews that they were Jews.

Much has been said about the construction of the historic mikva in the old hut of the legendary Marina Roscha shul in Moscow during communist rule. The directive came from the Rebbe, but it was R' Alexander Lokatchky, one of the active Lubavitchers in Moscow, who brought the project to fruition. Armed with lots of emuna, he fearlessly followed the Rebbe's instructions that he received via emissaries from the Ezras Achim organization.

The construction of the mikva was the tip of the iceberg. The entire shul was renovated and reinforced through R' Lokatchky's exhaustive efforts. The shul was old and neglected but it was open for delegations of Jews that came to Moscow during those years, and for emissaries that were sent by the Rebbe to spread the wellsprings throughout the Soviet Union.

R' Alexander didn't fear anyone. Even when he was called

to KGB headquarters and warned, he made it clear that his mission in the world was to remind every Jew in Moscow about his Judaism. He operated with much "Gaon Yaakov" (Jewish pride) and faith in the justness of his cause.

After a bracha from the Rebbe, he left Moscow and made aliya at the end of the 80's. He was one of the first to settle in Neve Daniel in Gush Etzyon. There, too, he did not rest on his laurels, but channeled his love for action and Lubavitcher stubbornness to found a beautiful shul with the help of a few friends. He also built mikvaos for men and women according to the shita of the Rebbe Rashab.

If you ask him, he will tell you that he still has plenty to do. Last Yud Beis Tamuz he celebrated his 60th birthday together with friends including a number of celebrated personalities. Chief Rabbi of Russia, shliach Berel Lazar, sent him a gift which moved him greatly – a silver cup with a personal dedication thanking him for his devotion to the community in Moscow in those difficult years.

When R' Lazar went to Moscow the first time under the auspices of Ezras Achim, he ate and slept at the Lokatchky home.

When I interviewed R' Lokatchky he was happy to reminisce, but he is focused on the future. His current goal is to build a Chabad shul on the yishuv.

GENTILE NEIGHBORS REMINDED HIM THAT HE'S JEWISH

Alexander was born in 1948 in Moscow. His father was from Galicia and his mother was from Nikolaev. In his early childhood years he knew nothing about Judaism.

"I remember once walking in on my grandfather, without permission, and seeing him in



R' Alexander Lokatchky (standing) at a farbrengen before he left the Soviet Union

tallis and t'fillin. I had no idea what they were, but my grandfather was angry and sent me out of the room. On Shabbosos my grandfather would go to daven at the Marina Roscha shul and I would sometimes go with him. But as for Judaism and what it signified, I knew nothing about it and nobody explained it to me."

Ironically, it was his gentile friends who reminded him of his Jewishness. The children at public school called him insulting names.

"The neighbors across the way had a child my age and we would constantly exchange insults. We called one another *zhid* (Jew), without understanding what the word meant.

"When we grew older we realized that we were both Jews.

The neighbors across the way had a child my age and we would constantly exchange insults. We called one another zhid (Jew), without understanding what the word meant. When we grew older we realized that we were both Jews.

By the age of 13 I had already begun to understand that I belonged to a nation that was on the other side of a barrier; a nation that the rest of the world did not like."

Judaism began to interest him and questions such as how we are different and why we are so

despised gnawed at him.

When he came of age he was drafted and assigned to the role of personal assistant to the General in charge of communications in the Russian army. Then he went to university in Moscow, where he studied engineering. It was there that he met his wife, who was from



R' Alexander Lokatchky today



R' Alexander Lokatchky many years ago

He told me that the Rebbe had sent him to me to help me build a mikva in the Marina Roscha shul and that the construction should begin immediately. I was dumbfounded. To build a mikva in the capitol of Russia was a move of open rebellion against the government!

a traditional Jewish family, and they got married.

"In 1971, I finished my army service and began to work as an engineer in restaurant construction. My wife learned English and began teaching English in school."

During a visit at the home of a good friend who was married to a Jewess from Munkatch, they took their first steps toward their Jewish roots.

"The main push came from my wife and thanks to her, we came to know G-d. We encountered a vibrant Jewish community in this town, Jews who spoke Yiddish and kept kosher, shuls that operated openly and without fear. This way of life impressed us."

When Alexander and his wife describe the Jewish community in Munkatch, they word they use is "stunned." "We couldn't believe that there were things like this in a country under the communist boot," they explain. "It inspired us tremendously. At that time we had two children, a son and a daughter, and my wife was expecting our third. Jews in the community asked us whether we had gotten married with a chuppa and when they saw we had no idea what they were talking about, they made us a Jewish wedding with a chuppa, k'suba, witnesses and a mesader kiddushin. We left Munkatch very different than we came."

In those days many Jews

submitted requests to leave the country to unite with their relatives in Israel. A number of these requests were approved, spurring others to try their luck.

"Our plan was to go to Israel and from there to continue on to the United States. We thought we would be more successful there. We thought that Israel was a communist country, based on all the stories we had heard, and we did not want to go from one communist country to another."

REQUEST REFUSED

In 1976, the Lokatchkys submitted their request to the emigration department in Moscow along with a fictitious name of a relative in Israel. Their application was turned down on the grounds that Alexander had served in a sensitive position in the army and they were afraid he would reveal state secrets.

"We were upset with the refusal, especially with this ridiculous reason, and I decided that I would do all I could to fight this cruel regime. This feeling brought me closer to Judaism. We got to know other refuseniks who had become interested in Judaism and Chabad Chassidus. Rabbi Gershon Rosenstein in particular was greatly mekarev us and he was mekasher us to the Rebbe and his teachings."

Alexander's involvement in Chabad grew tremendously the day he received the refusal from the emigration department. He and his wife used all their energies to strengthen Jewish heritage among the Jews of Moscow.

"It began in 1976, when we started the first summer camp for Jewish children in a suburb of Moscow, with the goal of strengthening Jewish identity. We got to know more Lubavitchers and learned their way of life and

did as they did. We studied Judaism and Chassidus.”

Alexander can sit for hours and tell fascinating stories about this period of time. We asked him to share one experience that made a great impact on him.

“When I was a child, I was mischievous. My grandfather would say in Russian, ‘You are a Kohen, I can’t deal with you.’ I was sure that ‘Kohen’ meant mischievous. In 1981, when our second son was born, we looked for someone to circumcise him and found R’ Mottel Lifschitz. We asked him to come to the house and check the baby and circumcise him.

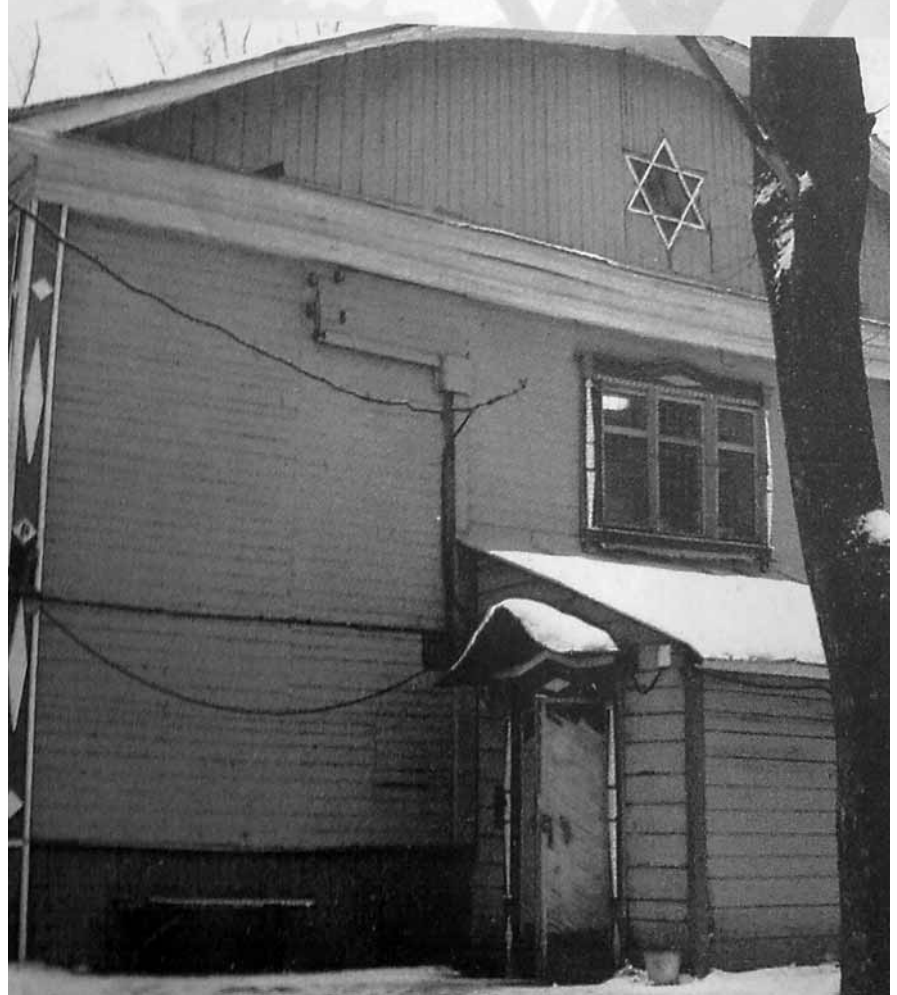
“He was happy to come and after examining the baby he said, ‘He’s a Kohen.’ I smiled and said, ‘Of course. Not only is he a Kohen but his father is a Kohen too, and his sister is definitely one; we are all mischievous. When I was a kid I was a big troublemaker and my kids got it from me.’

“He looked at me blankly and then asked, ‘Are you sure you know what the word ‘Kohen’ means?’ ‘Sure,’ I replied, ‘it’s used to describe someone who is mischievous.’ He said, ‘That’s not a Kohen. Go and ask your father what a Kohen is.’ That day, my father explained to me what a Kohen is and how they bless the people and are given various honors.

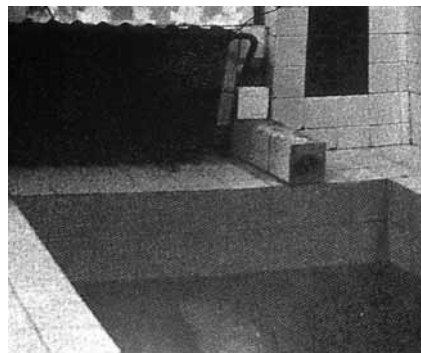
“After that incident I was a changed person. I took all matters Jewish very seriously. When I accompanied my grandfather to shul in my childhood he would tell me, ‘Don’t forget this place.’ I eventually became the gabbai of the Marina Roscha and fixed up this long-neglected shul.”

The Lokatchky home in Moscow was open to any Jewish guest who visited the city.

“People knew that our home was always open. Shluchim who



The Marina Roscha shul after R’ Alexander’s renovations



The mikva that R’ Alexander Lokatchky built in the Marina Roscha shul. It took five hours to fill the mikva.



came from Ezras Achim would stay with us. Though we were under the constant eyes of the KGB, we weren’t afraid of anyone. My wife is a wonderful hostess and she provided terrific meals. Many shiurim took place in our home and it even served as a part-time clinic when doctors from America would examine and treat the sick among the many refuseniks. It was a real Chabad House.

“One time, Rabbi Nosson Gurary, shliach in Buffalo, knocked at our door and said, ‘You don’t know how much you helped me.’ We invited him in and he related his story. He had been persecuted by the Reform community in his city, especially regarding the placing of a public menorah. They fought him in court and made things extremely difficult for him. Then a delegation

from the Reform community went to Russia and they stayed in our home. When they returned to Buffalo they dropped the lawsuit and gave their approval to the menorah.”

NEGOTIATING NUCLEAR DISARM- AMENT... AND A MIKVA?!

Alexander worked for a long time on renovating the shul, transforming it into a magnificent building with new fences around it and a well tended yard. He received all instructions from the Rebbe and financial help from Rabbi Moshe Levertov a”h, director of Ezras Achim in New York, with whom he spoke regularly.

“One morning in Av, 1984, Rabbi Gershon Grossbaum knocked at my door. He is an expert on mikvaos and he told me that the Rebbe had sent him to me to help me build a mikva in the Marina Roscha shul and that the construction should begin immediately. The Rebbe included a sum of money as his personal participation in the construction.

“I was dumbfounded by this information. To build a new mikva in the capitol of Russia was a move of open rebellion against the government! I asked him how I could undertake such a project, especially in the Nine Days.

“His answer was that he was only the ‘channel’ to convey what the Rebbe said. We sat down together and came up with a rudimentary plan about how to build a mikva that would be hidden underground. When I began to think about how to go about it, I wondered about the feasibility of beginning such a complicated endeavor so quickly. Where would I get such a huge quantity of building supplies that were unobtainable on the black

market? That much building material could only be acquired from contractors, and only after a thorough investigation as to where the material was going. And how would I find professional workers? I had no resources and at Marina Roscha there was no infrastructure for building a mikva.

“After we finished making a plan for the mikva, R’ Gershon said we would meet again the next day. The Jewish date was 6 Av. I stood in a corner of the shul and poured out my heart to Hashem, asking Him to help me. It was around four o’clock when I finished davening and left for home. Outside the yard of the shul I noticed a coarse Russian dressed in work clothes.

“I asked him what he was doing at the shul yard and he explained that this was his shortcut to reach the store that sold vodka. In a moment of inspiration, I asked him, ‘Do you want to make a lot of money?’ Of course, he said he did. I told him that I needed to build a room very quickly and I made him an enticing offer. If he would get ten workers for me who would do the job quickly, I would pay each of them nicely and even throw in some bottles of vodka. Within half an hour there were ten guys with work tools and all night they dug a pit in the floor of one of the rooms of the shul.

“The next day R’ Grossbaum came to the shul and asked me whether I had come up with any ideas. By way of reply I opened the door to the room where we had dug and stopped him before he fell in. He was amazed.

“But then new problems cropped up. The walls of this room were made of wood and in their new role as walls of a mikva they had to hold a large water pipe. They had to be rebuilt out of stone and cement. If that wasn’t enough, exactly opposite the shul was KGB

headquarters, and a special department of the KGB would frequently visit the shul. We knew that the moment they saw the construction going on at the shul, they would put an end to it.

“Subsequently, we could see how the Rebbe was a visionary. It wasn’t happenstance that he said construction should begin immediately, for it was at just at this time that all the people in that department went on vacation for a few weeks.

“Even the gabbai of the shul, who was appointed by the government and whose job it was to keep an eye on the worshippers and everything that went on in the shul and report back to the KGB, was on vacation. The fear of an informer was gone.

“Now only one problem remained. How would we obtain the material we needed within a few days? Here too, salvation came from an unexpected source. A friend of mine by the name of Sholom Yantovsky, who davened at the shul, was injured in the war and thus entitled to certain privileges, including a shorter period of time to get a building permit.

“Sholom was willing to endanger himself by giving me all his documents. I prayed that they would believe me and I went to the factory that produced building materials. When I got there, I was happy to discover that the manager had gone on vacation and his substitute was not shy to make secret deals.

“Aside from paying for my purchases, I gave him a nice sum of money and he immediately signed the forms that released the bricks and other materials. Only two hours later I was loading bricks on a semi-trailer complete with two attached compartments. The truck parked opposite the shul and blocked the street. Under the

circumstances, it was impossible for the KGB officials who worked across the road not to notice what was going on and I was very nervous.

"I immediately enlisted all the workers and organized a group of Jewish volunteers and the two groups passed bricks into the building. The next morning there was no sign that anything had taken place the night before. The bricks were stored in the building.

"The ten workers showed up in the morning and got to work. Together with the workers I quickly prepared the frame of cement and metal. We put in the pipe and then poured the cement for the floor and walls of the mikva, and we had a completed skeleton. Afterwards, we did not scrimp on expenses to make the place beautiful and the mikva was finally completed.

"The construction of the mikva took only sixteen work days. Amazing! On 13 Elul, 1984, it was finished. As the Rebbe instructed, Rabbi Moshe Posen of London came to check out the new mikva, as well as other mikvaos in Russia. The only thing left to do was to wait for the first rain.

"One day, KGB agents came to check up on the shul and unfortunately, they quickly discovered the mikva. I was called down for questioning that same day and was informed that the entire shul would be closed on Thursday night. I still didn't know what they planned on doing. They closed the shul on Thursday and opened it for the regular worshippers on Shabbos.

"Soldiers stood on guard so we would have no way of knowing what they were up to. When I got



The slaughterhouse that R' Alexander built in Marina Roscha where people learned sh'chita

to shul before Shabbos I saw two locks on the door of the mikva, one that was ours and the other that they added. I cut out the wood blocking the window of the door to the mikva and saw that they had covered the pit with a nice parquet flooring. Everyone there was stunned.

"My initial response was to break everything and start cleaning out the pit, but the elders there convinced me to stop because it was almost Shabbos. I was heartbroken. I wasn't the only one who cried.

"There wasn't much that could be done in response to this despicable act. On Sunday morning I called R' Moshe Levertov in New York and told him what they did to the mikva. He told me to calm down and promised he would ask the Rebbe what to do.

"I went back to the mikva and saw that in the meantime they had filled the mikva with sand and poured a layer of cement over it. It was then that I firmly resolved that all the work I had put in would not

go to waste and this nice floor would yet cover the area where the Torah reading took place in the shul.

"I got a phone call from R' Levertov, who told me that the Rebbe said not to publicize this to the newspapers because this could be harmful. The only thing I did was to show the closed mikva to all the Jewish representatives who came to visit us. At the same time, the people at Ezras Achim in New York exerted pressure on the Russians. They used their connections in the American

government and presented the situation to them.

"At that time negotiations were taking place between the Russians and the Americans about nuclear disarmament. At a meeting in Geneva the American representatives asked the Russians why they should trust them if they fought so childishly against the Jewish community and closed their mikva.

"Within a few days the Jewish community was told it could fix the mikva and an apology was given about some irresponsible officials who had destroyed it.

"When I was told that the mikva could be reopened, I retorted: 'The ones who closed it will be the ones to open it.' They balked but I insisted. In the end, they had to come themselves and open the mikva, but to minimize the shame they did so under cover of darkness. They removed the floor, broke up the cement, emptied the sand and restored the mikva to the way it was originally. We considered this an utter victory.

"They left the attractive wooden floor in the yard of the shul. That gave me an opportunity



Rabbi Notke Berkahan welcoming R' Lokatchky as soon as he landed in Eretz Yisroel

to fulfill my commitment, to install the floor in the shul. I saw how the Rebbe's bracha was ultimately fulfilled. If the Rebbe wants a mikva, he gets a mikva, and in a way of 'even his enemies made peace with him.'"

I FELT THAT THE REBBE WAS WITH ME

For close to a decade, R' Lokatchky was the gabbai of the Marina Roscha shul. The spiritual leader was Rabbi Dovid Karpov, who remained in Russia and was the rav of a shul in one of the suburbs of Moscow.

"I saw the revival of Judaism thanks to the bracha and efforts of the Rebbe. By the time I left Russia, after years of oppression, the shul was full. We opened a yeshiva which was very successful. Many young people returned to their roots and were filled with Jewish pride. For the first time since the revolution we published the Tanya, and this made a tremendous impression."

When R' Lokatchky looks back he acknowledges that it wasn't his abilities that made it all happen.

"The Rebbe, with his brachos and guidance, led me where I had

to go and to what I had to do. Above my house lived some secret agents who kept on eye on everyone who entered and left my house. I knew this and yet I wasn't afraid. Where did I get the courage? Perhaps it was because I knew that the Rebbe was with me and so I wasn't afraid."

THE MIKVA IN NEVE DANIEL

At the end of the 80's, R' Lokatchky asked the Rebbe's approval to leave Russia and he received a positive answer. He wanted to settle in Eretz Yisroel this time, and did not see it as a way station as he had previously.

Throughout the years, the Lokatchky family had lived on the ninth floor and they dreamed of a ground floor apartment.

"After living for half a year in an immigrant community we went to Neve Daniel. We loved the place. The yishuv is located on a mountain top. On the east we see the Dead Sea, on the west the Mediterranean Sea, as well as views of Har HaBayis and Chevron.

"We were the first Chabad Chassidim to arrive on the yishuv

and some others followed us. We would go to the absorption centers to visit our friends who came from Russia. They lived with us for a while and then moved into new homes that were built on the yishuv. Eventually, a Chabad shul formed, which was located in our house for the first four years. Due to the crowding, we were given a small building by the administration of the yishuv and then we were given another room until it finally became the beautiful shul we have today.

R' Lokatchky didn't stop with a Chabad shul. Together with the rav of the yishuv, Rabbi Matanya Ben Shachar, who holds Chassidus and the Rebbe in high esteem, a mikva for women was built in the yishuv that is according to the shita of the Rebbe Rashab. They also started building a men's mikva.

R' Lokatchky was never put off by difficulties, of which there have been many. It took time to bring Chassidishe warmth into Neve Daniel and to show that Chabad is not a bad influence on the youth; on the contrary, it's better that they hear about our faith and Chassidishe feelings than to explore other religions and wear earrings and other piercings.

Today, Chabad is much admired in the yishuv.

"The mikva is reminiscent of the one in Marina Roscha, and has the same tiles. Dozens of men from the yishuv and the surrounding yishuvim immerse there every morning. Our success was thanks to the help of other Chassidim such as R' Eliyahu Adinov, R' Shimshon Rubiski, R' Berel Friedman, and R' Moshe Tzukerman. There is someone by the name of R' Michoel Furer, a policeman by profession, who on our first day in the yishuv became a partner in our activities and now hosts a regular shiur in Chassidus in his home."

The policeman is not the only mekurav who found himself swept up in the Chassidic way of life. The k'hilla in Neve Daniel is reminiscent of a Chabad k'hilla of once-upon-a-time. R' Lokatchky brings the D'var Malchus every week. "If a week goes by and I forget to bring it, I get it over the head," he says with a smile.

Just in the last year, some bachurim joined the regular study of Chassidus and even went on shlichus. According to R' Lokatchky, success has to do with one thing only: the Rebbe MH"M. At Neve Daniel the Rebbe runs things as he did back in Moscow. R' Lokatchky receives brachos and encouragement through the Igros Kodesh.

"I will give you an example which really thrilled me. A man with a long beard came to me and asked me to put an antenna on my house. He wanted to operate a pirate frum radio program with divrei Torah and since my house is high up the broadcasts would reach many places across the country.

"When I heard that this was about spreading Judaism I immediately discussed it with my wife and we gave our consent. Some time went by and someone told me that the people who run this radio station hate Chabad and therefore, I should take down the antenna. I said that Chabad isn't a political party and if someone was spreading Judaism, I wanted to help.

"A year went by and one afternoon my wife called me and said that people from the Communications Ministry were at the house and the police were looking for me. They did not find anything since the radio studio was not in my house. I was at work in the north of the country and asked her to tell them that I would show up later.



R' Alexander Lokatchky giving the Rebbe the first Tanya printed in Russia after the Revolution

"When I went in for questioning, I said to the investigator, 'What do you want? You didn't find anything, except radio waves. Show me those waves.' They didn't find the hidden antenna. I was released and went home, where I found the person who ran the pirated station waiting for me.

"I said to him, 'You see, we didn't write to the Rebbe and that's why this happened.' He didn't understand. 'Rebbe? What Rebbe? How do you write to him?' 'Watch,' I told him. I took a towel and went to the mikva. When I came back I gave tz'daka and put my letter into a volume of Igros Kodesh. I gave him the volume, which I had taken at random, and he began to read the Rebbe's letter on the page where I had put my letter. At first he sat quietly but then he suddenly stood up, looking pale as a ghost. The Rebbe had written that he was very happy to hear about the tremendous development of the mosdos Machne Israel.

"The man exclaimed, 'Machne Israel is the name of our organization that runs the radio station!' In the other letter on the

page, the Rebbe wrote that Judaism must be spread through all means so that it reaches stores, the train, wherever Jews are. In another letter, the Rebbe wrote that Torah is not a political party and it belongs to every single Jew. The man was absolutely astounded.

"A few days later I got a letter from the police which said that the file against me had been closed due to lack of evidence."

The stories written here are just a sampling. R' Lokatchky is an indefatigable doer. As soon as he finishes a project he is already planning the next one.

Presently, he is the representative of R' Reuven Asman and his k'hilla in Kiev and he is working on building a large permanent structure to serve as the shul in Neve Daniel to replace the "caravans" they use today. He got all the necessary permits from the council and soon, with Hashem's help, there will be a Chanukas HaBayis.

THE MERCHANDISE WE BOUGHT AT THE TISHREI FAIR

By Rabbi Chaim Ashkenazi
Rav k'hillas Chabad, Tel Aviv

Whoever spent Tishrei in Beis Chayeinu-770 knows the meaning of achdus. When you sit shoulder to shoulder, the barriers fall away and hearts unite. The “merchandise” of achdus that is bought at the Tishrei fair has never been more vital than in our times, when we were told by the Rebbe to do all we can to bring Moshiach and prepare for his coming with unqualified love.

BUY! BUY ACHDUS!

Long ago, many Jews made a living at the fairs that took place twice a year in the big towns. They would buy merchandise there for their stores and sell it over the next six months, until the next fair when they would restock their shelves. A fair became a concept that expressed a situation or time where you could make spiritual “purchases.”

The most notable spiritual fair

takes place in Tishrei. Just like the merchants used to leave their homes and spend a month at the fair, Jews are lifted up in Tishrei, above all mundane concerns, and they “buy merchandise” so they will have what to sell afterwards, during the year to come.

On Rosh HaShana we buy kabbalas ol malchus Shamayim. On Yom Kippur – t’shuva; Sukkos – simcha shel mitzva; Simchas Torah – simchas ha’Torah. And that’s not all, because with each

Yom Tov in Tishrei we can make many “side deals.” A wise “merchant” takes full advantage of these profits during the rest of the year.

One of the important bonuses that we buy at the “fair” of Tishrei is the ability to be inclusive of others even if they are different, and to be b’achdus with them. Starting on Rosh HaShana, regarding which it says “you are standing all of you today,” we tie a thread of brotherly love, peace and friendship with all Jews.

This stands out on Sukkos. The drawing down of the spiritual energy that generates unity on Sukkos is something we accomplish by fulfilling the two main mitzvos of the Yom Tov:

Sitting in a sukka – which unites all Jews, for it says, “All Israel are worthy of sitting in one sukka.” The sukka binds Jew to Jew since a person leaves all his belongings, strips himself of his social standing, and sits in a temporary dwelling like all his brethren, and as such is more open to unifying himself with Klal Yisroel.

This is why he is deserving of

being visited by the Ushpizin – both the well-known ones and the Chassidishe ones. They come to visit a Jew in his sukkah, not on Pesach night or Shavuot night, since “G-d dwells in a place of wholeness.” It is only at a time when Jews are in unity on Sukkos that Hashem sends the Fathers of the nation and the Chassidishe Fathers, to be our guests.

Taking the four minim – they represent four kinds of Jews (from someone who has Torah and mitzvos to someone who has neither) who unite in one mitzva. This mitzva cannot be done if any one of the four species is missing. In addition, each of the four species has characteristics that express unity, which is why they were chosen for this mitzva.

SUKKA AND LULAV FOR THE SPECIAL NATION

The special quality of the sukkah is that it does away with the main reason we fail to connect. Too often, we feel “I’m okay, I’m protected, I’m immune, I am sitting pretty at the height of my social standing.” In Chassidus this is described (based on the Navi) as: “Only I and none but me,” and “the river is mine and I made it.” The world refers to this idea as, “My home is my fortress.” Someone who lives with this feeling sees other people as small and lacking in value, interacting with them only if he can benefit from the interaction in some way.

As soon as Sukkos begins we step out of this attitude, even before doing the mitzva of the four minim. We have a mitzva of leaving our house for a temporary home that is undecorated, that is not specially tiled, and that is nothing to boast about. One can actually make a sukkah from “the remnants of the silo and winepress.” The mitzva of sukkah is



called “an easy mitzva” in the Gemara, because it needn’t cost anything and can be made of simple boards and abandoned materials.

Since a sukkah is something that doesn’t give the owner a feeling of pride, it doesn’t give him the position from which to spout an opinion, for in our world “*baal ha’mey’a hu baal ha’dai’a*” (the one with the money is the one whose opinion prevails). He doesn’t have his fortress to shore up his self-image of invincibility. After all, he is living in a temporary structure, and if a somewhat stronger wind than usual happens by it could easily destroy the little bit that he has. There is no “Mizrach wall,” no differences in status, and consequently, no difference in views. This is the first step on the path to *achdus*, which our Sages describe as, “all Israel is worthy of sitting in one sukkah.”

But there is still room for the “plaintiff” to come and say: This is merely like that rich man that the town rabbi wants to enlist to help the poor of the community. The rabbi doesn’t enter the rich man’s heated home but remains outside, exposed to the cold of the

winter day. The rabbi wants the rich man to feel what it is like for the poor who shiver in their unheated drafty homes.

For a short while the rich man felt the cold penetrating his bones, but the reality did not change - he was still rich while they were poor. The same is true for me – during the seven days of Sukkos there is no difference between me and other Jews, but in my permanent home I have possessions, status, honor and an opinion that is respected, things that others don’t have. The comparison on Sukkos is merely external, while the distance between us is still vast. How can we unite?

The **four kinds** which, when held together, form one mitzva, answer this question. They tell a person: even with all your advantages, you still need the others, for it is only by putting all four together, including the *arava* (willow), that the mitzva is fulfilled. Even if you consider yourself to be an **esrog**, which is the best of the four and has all the good qualities – taste, fragrance, is edible and of fine appearance – you still can’t make a bracha if all you have is an esrog.

To emphasize this point, we don’t even mention the esrog in the bracha but say, “*al netilas lulav*.” Furthermore, the esrog is held in the left hand (rather than the usual right hand) and when you hold it together with the other three minim, which is done only at the end of the bracha, you put its upper portion close to the bottom of the lulav. This teaches us that the esrog’s qualities don’t provide it with any advantages when it comes to the fulfillment of the mitzva of the four minim.

Not only doesn’t the esrog have any special “pull,” but its name hints to the danger that comes with being possessed of many excellent qualities. The word esrog

A sukka is something that doesn't give the owner a feeling of pride; it doesn't give him the position from which to spout an opinion, for in our world "baal ha'mei'a hu baal ha'dei'a" (the one with the money is the one whose opinion prevails). He doesn't have his fortress to shore up his self-image of invincibility.

is an acronym for: "al tivoeini regel gaava" (do not bring me to the way of arrogance), because a person with special qualities can easily fall into the trap of arrogance about which Hashem says, "I and he cannot dwell together." The first lesson of the mitzva of the four kinds is that in order to achieve achdus, you have to feel equal to others, not above them.

However, the "plaintiff" can still say: You can't say that special qualities are worthless! Hashem didn't create them for nothing and a person will be taken to task if he didn't utilize the gifts he was given. We ask Hashem to give us wisdom, understanding, knowledge, wealth, honor etc. and if these weren't good qualities then we wouldn't ask for them in our prayers!

WHAT DO THE "FOUR KINDS" TELL US?

The lulav answers this question. All its leaves lie flatly on one another and all of them cover the spine, as Chazal expound on the words "kappos t'marim" – from the root meaning bound together and joined, that the leaves are one unit. Why? Because there is one goal, and that is to surround and be as connected as

possible to the spine, the central entity. That means that all of a person's qualities are important only when they are there for the spine, i.e. for a G-dly purpose.

Chazal express this principle thus, "Like a lulav which has one heart, so too Yisroel has one heart for Hashem," and like it says in the verse, "I am heartened my sister, my bride." It's only if a person knows that his money, talents etc. were given to him by Hashem in order to increase the glory of Hashem in the world, that they have meaning.

We can learn the lesson of the hadas (myrtle) from the story of the child who was learning to read and when he came to the two dots that signify the end of a verse he said the name of Hashem. The teacher was taken aback and the child said, "But you told me that two dots are Hashem's name!" (Referring to two Yuds that look like two dots) The teacher explained, "When two dots are side by side, at the same height, that is Hashem's name. If one is above the other, then that is the end of a verse."

Even after a person realizes that all people are created for one purpose – to sanctify G-d's name in the world - he can still say that on the way to achieving this goal there are people who have more

important roles, and I am one of those people. A person like this still places his "Yud" above the other person's "Yud," lording it over others and thinking that this is what Hashem wants.

The leaves of the hadas also lie flatly on the branch and make it "anaf eitz avos" – thick. Even sets of three leaves are supposed to come out of the same level equally. If one leaf grows higher than the others, then it's a "hadas shoteh." Spiritually this means that for Hashem, who set the goal, all are equal and every single action on the part of every single individual is important. The Rebbe MH"M gave the example of a tiny screw in a spaceship that is not tight enough and endangers the entire mission. You can't reach the goal without the tiny screw just like you can't reach the goal without the main engine. Both are equally important!

The "plaintiff," ever the wily fellow, can yet protest – that is true if we are all working towards the same goal, but so-and-so is not doing what Hashem wants so he is not even like the screw! The answer to this we learn from the arava. Willows grow together in bunches. They aren't worth anything, they have no taste, they have no fragrance, there is nothing to eat and they don't look particularly nice. They dry up quicker than the other three kinds. But they grow in bunches.

These people are in the category of "creatures," but they aren't here for nothing. They also complete Hashem's intention for the world because if they didn't, they wouldn't exist. This is why, when ten such people join together in a minyan, the Sh'china rests on them to such a degree that an angel would be nullified out of existence as a result of the intensity of this revelation of the Sh'china.

Hashem has pleasure from the brotherliness among them as it says, for example, about the generation of Achav who were idol worshippers but when they went to war they were victorious because “there were no informers among them.” Their brotherliness is the reason they refrained from informing on Ovadia who hid one hundred prophets and sustained them.

The “plaintiff” can still ask: Why do we need all the differences between people? It would have been better if we were all on a high level!

We already said that a rocket needs screws; an engine is not enough. If we look at how an esrog grows, we will have a deeper understanding of this.

The esrog is called “*pri eitz hadar*” because it remains on the tree year-round, in the heat and rain, in dry periods and those with much dew. It benefits from the changes in seasons because dealing with each one improves it, whether in taste, fragrance, fleshiness or appearance. It’s not enough to have people of differing levels; it is the joining together with those people that elevates a person’s avodas Hashem.

MAKING PEACE IN THE WORLD

This quality of the esrog is like the quality of the Jewish people as compared to angels who are called “standing,” as the Navi says, “I will give you ways to travel among these who stand.” Angels don’t make progress because they don’t need to contend with any resistance. The way they were created during the Six Days of Creation is the way they remain. The angels that are created every day and are consumed every day also remain unchanged.

It is only man, a Jew, who can

These people are in the category of “creatures,” but they aren’t here for nothing. When ten such people join together in a minyan, the Sh’china rests on them to such a degree that an angel would be nullified out of existence as a result of the intensity of this revelation of the Sh’china.

and must change from the time he is created until he completes his task. For this reason he is called a *mehalech*, one who goes, one who changes as a result of every situation he encounters. He has the ability to change from one extreme to another, to a better, a more spiritual, even a more G-dly state.

It is specifically his encounter with various people and circumstances that cause him to get out of his current state and move upwards. If he constantly remained in a hothouse with the desire to remain “standing,” he would not prevail if he encountered a new situation. He would be like those plants that shrivel up and end their existence if they are not in a stable environment. Whoever wants to join up with these plants has to adjust himself to them.

People who are *omdim* (standing, static), want to bend the entire world towards them. The person who is an esrog is different. After contending with all kinds of weather it becomes a “*pri eitz hadar*,” something special.

A THREE-FOLD TORAH

The fair of the month of Tishrei ends with Simchas Torah. Does this Yom Tov contribute

towards the achdus motif? This is but a new angle on the age-old question: What is the connection between Simchas Torah and Tishrei? It seems more suitable to have Simchas Torah in Sivan, on Shavuot!

To answer that we rejoice over completing the Torah raises another question: Why do we complete the Torah at the end of Tishrei rather than on Shavuot, or on Erev Rosh HaShana so we can begin the new year by starting the Torah anew?

The answer has to do with the principle that the Torah is connected with the number three. It was given in the third month (Sivan), as a three-fold Torah (Torah, N’viim, K’suvim), to a three-fold people (Kohanim, Leviim, Yisroelim), by three (Miriam, Aharon, Moshe) on the third day (the third of the three days of preparation).

What is special about the number three that it is so closely associated with the Torah? Why don’t we associate Torah with the number one – one Torah for one nation from one Creator through one prophet in one month given one time, etc.?

Although all those points about “one” are true, they don’t express the power of Torah or why it was given to us and not to angels. The

Rebbe explains that as long as there is just one, that doesn't signify unity, for we don't know what would happen if there would be another one like it or even something else smaller in addition to it.

Where there are two, there is something additional, different than the first, which is why arguments are natural. [This is why Kayin and Hevel couldn't tolerate one another, and in fact, Adam and Chava tolerated one another only because they were from one source that later divided into two and so they were like two hands of one person.] We need a third entity to come and resolve the differences between them. As is known, the halacha follows the *daas ha'machria* (deciding view). The reason is the deciding opinion agrees with one position, but not because of the reasoning of that view, for there is a view that opposes it. It finds a third perspective which is deeper and which both sides agree with. Practically speaking, it joins one of the two views and then they become the majority, which is why the halacha is like them.

This is the chiddush of the Torah. The Torah was given to make peace in the world. By clarifying matters according to Torah, peace is made in both the Upper and lower worlds and in all of creation.

A three-fold Torah leads a person to depth of understanding, to refinement and elevation. He does not see two separate things, but the advantage of the third perspective that sees how the differences allow one to reach greater depth, to see and experience how differences build one up, like an esrog.

SIMCHAS TORAH

This is why the celebration of

Simchas Torah follows Sukkos, because that is when we can rejoice with true simcha over the Torah. We went out of all the strictures and limitations, out of our egocentricity which prevented us from developing and becoming a meholech like a "pri eitz hadar," like a clock that goes and goes but stays in one place. Now, after the mitzva of sukka and the four minim, we are "one aguda."

This is the great attainment which a Jew is supposed to reach in his life in this world. A non-Jew's existence, on the contrary, is all about separation through the *sitra achra*, the "other side."

A non-Jew is mandated in only seven laws. These seven laws are about not bringing harm to others but it's nothing like the concept of achdus. This is why we say that there is wisdom among the goyim but not Torah, for they are lacking the true peace which can be accomplished only through Torah.

The fact that Simchas Torah is celebrated at this time of the year enables us to rejoice in the primary point of the Torah - peace. It is only now, after the avoda of Rosh HaShana which is expressed in "you are all standing today," and Yom Kippur which expresses the idea of "once a year," and the achdus of Sukkos with the four minim, that we are ready to absorb and experience the Torah which makes peace in the world. This is what we allude to when with tremendous joy we finish the Torah with the words "before the eyes of all Israel."

Based on this we can understand the Baal Shem Tov's explanation of the Mishna, "Any Torah study which does not have work along with it, will in the end cease." The Baal Shem Tov says that work is the avoda and effort to establish love and achdus Yisroel in our heart, which ought to be expressed in every moment

of life. If a person does not work on this, his Torah will cease, for the entire purpose of Torah is "to make peace in the world."

(In addition to which, he does not have the "bless us, our Father," which is when "we are all as one," and if we don't have Hashem's blessing, G-d forbid, nothing is accomplished. It would be like someone who plows and sows but whose effort goes to waste if Hashem's blessings of rain and dew and the right winds don't come).

The "merchandise" of achdus that is bought at the Tishrei fair is vital, even more so now in our times, when we were told by the Rebbe to do all we can to bring Moshiach and prepare for his coming through "ahavas chinam." At the very least we need to be like the child in a toy store who wants whatever he sees. His mother supervises him so that he doesn't do any more than touch the toys he wants.

After Tishrei, even someone who, G-d forbid, did not buy this merchandise, should at least want to see it, to touch it, even for a brief moment, in the hopes that something will stick to him of the special flavor of peace, brotherliness, friendship and baseless love for a fellow Jew.

Those who were privileged to spend Tishrei in 770 experienced tremendous achdus. At a time when gashmuis did not play much of a role and sleeping and eating accommodations were not always five star, when differences of rich and poor, big and small, were not apparent; we sat together, shoulder to shoulder, and the barriers fell and hearts opened.

May the achdus we just experienced bring us back from the fair on clouds of heaven, straight to the third Beis HaMikdash with the true and complete Redemption, amen kein yehi ratzon.

Kupas Rabbeinu

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Keren Hashono

Ato Horeiso

שיחי' To All Of Anash And Tmimim

The Rebbe was accustomed to request after the selling of the Pesukim of "**Ato Hereiso**" that the following should be announced "Your word to Hashem is equal to physically giving to a person."

In many of his Sichos the Rebbe recalled words of the Alter Rebbe concerning the greatness of the quality of alacrity in all matters pertaining to Torah and Mitzvohs, especially regarding the Mitzvah of Tzedaka, he stressed, that one should act as quickly as possible.

In keeping with this dictum we wish to remind all those who had the merit of buying a Posuk of Ato Hereiso this Simchas Torah for the Merkos (which is under the leadership of Rabbi S.M. Simpson in accordance with the Rebbe's instructions) to bring their pledge in as expeditiously as possible to the offices of either Rabbi Simpson or Rabbi Groner or to send in their pledge to the address below.

Keren Hashono: A special tzedoko fund which the Rebbe established in 5714, from which tzedoko is given twice a day (except Shabbos and Yomtov), before Shacharis and before Mincha. This assures that all participants in this fund, fulfill the mitzvo of tzedoko twice a day. One is to contribute sums in the amount of days of the coming year. This year, 5770 has 355 days. The sums can be in pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters, dollars etc., for each member of the family.

May giving of this Tzedaka speed the coming of the full Geulah through the revelation of Melech Hamoshiach.

VAAD KUPAS RABBEINU

Rabbi S.M. Simpson

Rabbi Y.L. Groner

P.S. Based on the Rebbe's Sichos those individuals who were not able to buy a Posuk on Simchas Torah can still participate by sending their donations now. Pidyon money etc. can also be sent to the above.

Please make all checks payable to KUPAS RABBEINU.

Eretz Yisroel address: KEREN KUPAS ADMU"R / P.O.B. 1247 / KIRYAT MALACHI / ISRAEL

DOING AWAY WITH DOUBT

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

“Every single Jew can be assured that he will be able to find direction and answers to his questions and doubts...”

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

[Continued from Issue 699]

In the following segment, the Rebbe clearly spells out how one should seek advice in our times:

“12. In line with what has been discussed above, it is appropriate to review and to reemphasize what has been mentioned before¹⁹² (prior to the Shloshim, etc.) regarding questions and doubts, etc., in matters of personal concern to each individual Jew. Indeed, the failure to determine the correct course of action disturbs one’s ability to serve G-d (especially Torah study) with peace of spirit and peace of body.

“The underlying principle is that every single Jew can be assured that he will be able to find direction and answers to his questions and doubts, upon the foundation of the general source of guidance and advice, [i.e.] **according to Torah**. This principle applies even in this generation. (In fact, this reliability is to be found **particularly** in this generation, as in the words of the Alter Rebbe¹⁹³ [which point out the advantage our generation possesses over all preceding generations]: The humility of Moshe Rabbeinu – ‘And the humility of the man, Moshe, far surpassed that of every man upon the earth’¹⁹⁴ – was **primarily** in virtue of [reflecting upon the unique quality of] the generation of the Heels of Moshiach [the period immediately preceding the Messianic Era], **this generation**, seeing [prophetically] how the Jews of this generation serve G-d with self-sacrifice, undeterred by

scorners, etc.)

“To be more precise: Regarding questions on the service of G-d, Torah and its Mitzvos, one should ask a local, authorized, practicing rav (or Jewish court). The latter directive includes seeking advice in the manner instructed in the Mishna,¹⁹⁵ ‘appoint for yourself a rav’ [i.e., an individual whose teaching or advice one seeks out exclusively¹⁹⁶].

“Regarding questions of livelihood and the like, one should seek out the advice of knowledgeable friends, in the spirit of the verse,¹⁹⁷ ‘salvation comes with much counsel.’

“Regarding medical issues – ‘You shall be very cautious with regard to your lives’¹⁹⁸ – the emphasis should be on preventative medicine and a healthy lifestyle.¹⁹⁹ Also, in the event that one needs to follow the instructions of an expert doctor (as the Sages expound on the verse, ‘And he shall surely provide for his healing’²⁰⁰ – ‘permission (and the capability) has been granted [from On High] for doctors to heal’²⁰¹). All the better if it is a doctor

friend. In special cases, ‘salvation comes with much counsel’ – two expert doctors should be consulted. And in a case where there are conflicting opinions, one should follow the majority (as discussed at length and in detail earlier).

“This approach has indeed been tried and tested for a period of more than thirty days [i.e., since it was last mentioned, on the 15th of Shvat] and those who did so experienced success **in real terms**. And certainly they will continue to succeed in this manner in the future. The main thing is, however, that they will not need all of this recourse, for **immediately** (not just in the future – the distant future or even the near future – but absolutely this instant) the promise will be fulfilled, ‘And I will restore your judges as at first and your counselors as in the beginning,’²⁰² referring to the Great Sanhedrin in the Chamber of Hewn Stone²⁰³ in the Third Holy Temple.

“The above is especially true in light of the fact that by following this approach those who do so will be able to add in and further delve into matters of Torah and Mitzvos, particularly Torah study (in preparation for ‘those days,’ when ‘knowledge and wisdom will become abundant’), amidst peace of spirit and peace of body. For this approach will surely also result in an increase in bodily health in the simple sense, longevity and years of good [health], in order to further hasten and precipitate the true and complete Redemption through our righteous Moshiach.”

[Continued on pg. 23]

AN EXAMINING EYE

By Nosson Avrohom
Translated By Michael Leib Dobry

“The doctors gave me a few days to consider the matter and make a decision. I felt utterly alone. I could only see my husband through the glass, unable to speak with him directly. When I came home bewildered and confused, I suddenly remembered that I had forgotten one very important thing that had simply slipped my mind – there’s the Rebbe! On more than one occasion, I had heard about the exciting miracles and stories that took place in the merit of his brachos – why don’t I ask for a bracha?”

Earlier this year, in preparation for the great and holy day of Gimmel Tammuz, a unique Chabad women’s conference was held in Ramle.

Local Chabad activities have increased in recent years, thanks to the city’s new shliach, Rabbi Avraham Madwill. The sizable number of participants constitutes a testimony to the great thirst of the city’s residents for a worthy Chabad shliach.

The speakers at this conference naturally discussed the leadership of the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, his

teachings, his army of shluchim that have embraced the entire world, and of course, the announcement of the Redemption and the identity of the Redeemer. Among the things heard were exciting miracle stories and thrilling instances of Divine Providence and salvation through the Rebbe MH”M’s brachos.

Among the many women in attendance was Mrs. Margalit Azrad, whose familiarity with Chabad chassidus and the Rebbe began forty years ago.

Now a full-time grandmother, in her younger days Mrs. Azrad

ran the local Ramle chapter of the Amana settlement movement, and she would organize numerous Torah classes and regularly invite lecturers from the relatively new community of Shikun Chabad in Lod. Although her job brought her to New York on two occasions, to her great regret, she was unable to go and see the Rebbe personally to receive his blessing. However, she was privileged to receive letters and answers, and even experience a thrilling miracle with her husband.

“I have been connected with Chabad chassidus and the Rebbe for decades, even in my youth. It didn’t take me long to grasp the unique quality of the Chabad women – the truth calling out from within them, their dedication to the Jewish People at every moment and at every opportunity – and this made my connection to them even stronger.

“As part of my work with the Amana settlement movement, I would frequently invite Chabad lecturers from Shikun Chabad in Lod for the Torah classes and workshops that I organized. Their fervent faith would strengthen many women in coming closer to Torah and mitzvos, myself included. I would go out into the street for many years without a head covering, but at the age of forty, I finally made the decision to cover my head.

“This move was prompted by the persuasive efforts of the

Chabad women. One whom I fondly remember was Rebbetzin Miriam Mizrachi, who together with her husband, Binyamin, represented a marvelous example of how the G-d's Chosen People are supposed to act. On many occasions, I would bring women and girls to her lectures in order that they would become stronger and learn something from her.

"Twenty-five years ago, we experienced an incredible and stirring miracle that connected us with the ideals of chassidus and the Rebbe twice as much. We felt the strength of the Rebbe's bracha in a most tangible manner.

"This took place when my

forbidden to enter. All food was served to him on disposal dishes.

"One day, the doctors requested that I come into their office, where they dropped the bombshell: 'In light of our findings based on the medical information we have collected thus far, we have concluded that the only available alternative is to remove the eye surgically.' Their statement hit me like a bolt of lightning. I was so stunned that I was speechless. They requested my permission for the operation, but I felt that I simply couldn't agree to this step. I was in a very serious dilemma. On the one hand, this was the advice of

After his third unsuccessful cornea transplant, it appeared that his condition had deteriorated much more sharply than on the previous occasions. He was hospitalized in a secluded room in the Tel HaShomer Hospital, and it was forbidden to enter. All food was served to him on disposal dishes.

husband began to suffer from a chronic problem in one of his eyes. The suffering he endured was indescribable. He underwent several cornea transplants, but to our regret, the transplants were not successful and he continued to suffer from inflammations and infection. The most serious problem was the weakening of his entire immune system. After his third unsuccessful cornea transplant, it appeared that his condition had deteriorated much more sharply than on the previous occasions. He was hospitalized in a secluded room in the Tel HaShomer Hospital, and it was

trained professionals far more experienced than me, and they were surely giving their diagnosis after much thought and consideration. On the other hand, however, how could I possibly give my approval to such an operation? In the meantime, I still had to deal with my own emotional state and that of my children – and this was no easy task.

"The doctors gave me a few days to consider the matter and make a decision. I felt utterly alone. I could only see my husband through the glass, unable to speak with him directly.

"When I came home bewildered and confused, I suddenly remembered that I had forgotten one very important factor that had simply slipped my mind – the Rebbe! On more than one occasion, I heard about the exciting miracles and stories that took place in the merit of his brachos – why don't I ask for a bracha?

"I immediately called Rebbetzin Devora Ashkenazi and told her everything that had happened. She told me what I had already thought: I must call the Rebbe's secretaries and ask for the Rebbe's bracha.

"At the first opportunity, I called the secretary's office, related the whole story to him in detail, and asked that he submit our request for a bracha from the Rebbe. The secretary listened and then asked that I give him my telephone number so that they can get back in touch with us.

"Impatient and filled with anticipation, I tensely waited to receive their call. A few days later, when I was at my mother's house nearby, the children burst in and told me that I had a phone call from overseas. I quickly hurried back to my house and picked up the phone with a feeling of great respect and tremendous emotion.

"One of the Rebbe's secretaries was on the line. He told me to go to the hospital and ask to speak with a certain doctor (whom he mentioned by name), a Jew who wore a kippa and who was extremely warmhearted towards all matters of Yiddishkait. The secretary then quoted the words of the Rebbe's bracha.

"I accepted the message with the utmost earnestness, and the very next day, I did exactly what the Rebbe instructed, even though I didn't know what the

connection was or how salvation would come through this person. When I found the doctor, I laid the whole problem out before him, and then added that the Rebbe had sent me to him in connection with the matter. The doctor asked me to bring him all the relevant medical documents, and after reading every one of them in great detail, he determined that there was no need to operate.

“He succeeded in calming me down by stating that according to the medical findings, it is his professional opinion that an operation is unnecessary – and surely not one similar to what his colleagues had advised.

“I left the doctor’s office with a divided heart – my joy at hearing the doctor’s opinion warred with the pain of seeing my husband lying and suffering in bed, unable to leave his hospital room and come home.

“Suddenly my husband’s condition improved and he healed rapidly. Just two days later, the doctors in charge of his treatment surprised me by declaring that he would be released the following day.

“Such a change in only two days – from the suggestion of a difficult operation until his complete release – was simply extraordinary, and I immediately connected this with the Rebbe’s

bracha. My husband was in fact released and sent home from the hospital without the need for an operation. While he still has slight problems with his eye to this very day, nevertheless, it did not need to be surgically removed (thank G-d) and continues to function – all in the merit of the Rebbe’s bracha.

“Ever since then, my connection with the Rebbe has intensified. I understood that the Rebbe is not just another spiritual leader or famous rabbinical figure, but rather a leader of unparalleled stature whose decrees here below are fulfilled above, and his blessings are realized – one after another.”



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[Continued from pg. 20]

NOTES:

192 Shabbos Parshas B'Shalach and Chamisha Asar B'Shvat, printed above, pg. 239 ff, 247 ff.

193 See Footnote 104 in the original.

194 B'Haalos'cha 12:3.

195 Avos 1:6, 1:16.

196 Rabbi Ovadia Bartenura on the Mishnayos cited above.

197 Mishlei 11:14, 24:6.

198 VaEs'chanan 4:15 – see Footnote 108 in the original.

199 See Rambam Hilchos Deios 4:20, etc. – see Footnote 109 in the original.

200 Mishpatim 21:19.

201 Brachos 60a end, where it is discussed.

202 Yeschayahu 1:26.

203 See Rambam Laws of the Sanhedrin 14:12.

THE REBBE IS HIS SOURCE OF INSPIRATION?!

By Yossi Marshall

Yechi ha melech! The words rose unbidden to my lips. It was amazing! There was Bibi Netanyahu, declaring to the media that his historical UN speech was a candle of truth bequeathed by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, and with it a mission to illuminate the darkness.

The way to *Mincha* that evening was an exhilarating experience, listening to words of pride spoken on every street corner. Finally, I thought, here is the recognition that we truly deserve, so long overdue. Within our circles, the sense of rejoicing was overwhelming. I could see a new chapter in history unfolding before my eyes. Here Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu takes a stand, not only chiding the UN with a “candle of truth,” but all in the name of the Lubavitcher Rebbe – our leader. At last, the Rebbe’s words were being brought into the public arena.

So eager was I to hear the actual speech that I found it difficult to concentrate during prayers. A few congregants were forced to share my excitement as they got shoved aside in my hasty rush to exit the shul after Maariv. I couldn’t wait to see this unbelievable spectacle for myself. Oblivious to the traffic lights,



I strode out across the street, deep in thought.

For years, the Rebbe spoke with contempt of those who absurdly remove G-d from the Jewish claim to the land, demanding that our true, eternal ownership be pointed out in The Bible. The Rebbe repeatedly warned of the mortal danger if land is relinquished, and especially to a pseudo sovereignty committed to our destruction. Even the mere “acknowledgment” of their demand for autonomy would compromise the security of millions.

Snatching my friend’s laptop off

the shelf again with excitement, and nearly damaging it in the process, I eagerly linked to the video. Tears of joy filled my eyes watching our “gallant knight-in-armor” ride forth to slay our dragons – armed with the guidance of the Rebbe. Eyes riveted to the screen, I sat in reverence and watched the historical undertaking of a G-dly mission.

I sat and waited, sat and watched. There is no doubt that Mr. Netanyahu should be commended for his diatribe against holocaust denial and the UN’s twisted standards. But that is not what I was waiting for.

“At last!” I exclaimed. “He’s coming to the core issue.” Finally the Rebbe’s plea that the land of Israel be declared a Divine bequest to the Jews is voiced amongst nations - thus bringing a candle to illuminate the darkness.

I sat and watched the screen in anticipation of something that unfortunately never happened. My heart sank in bitter disappointment. Once more we heard the same atheistic claim to the land without any mention of G-d. Indeed, if the Alm-ghty was mentioned, it was with no pertinent relevance. It seemed as though Mr. Netanyahu had stripped

our Biblical history of any spiritual significance. ‘Downsizing’ the prophet Isaiah to a mere orator by calling the verse “*Lo yisa goy el goy cherev*” a “Biblical vision” and “timeless words” seemed to have robbed this verse of any prophetic value. It seemed that G-d had been removed from the equation! The fact that it was He Who had spoken unto Joshua was not even mentioned.

The conclusion of Mr. Netanyahu’s speech made my heart sink deeper than ever. Rather than a condemnation of autonomy undermining security, as the Rebbe had demanded, he gave unmistakable recognition to Palestinian statehood. Joy quickly gave way to despair with the realization that Netanyahu had absurdly pronounced the Rebbe as his very source of inspiration.

Perhaps his mentioning of the Rebbe was sincere, or perhaps it was another manipulative ploy to rally Lubavitch support. Illuminating the darkness, however, was not the result. If anything, the darkness has been fortified manifold by the brandishing, not of a candle of truth, but a “disgraceful black candle” of appeasement at the UN. To claim the land on behalf of our entire nation with words devoid of any spiritual value is bad enough! To proclaim himself “the Rebbe’s candle bearer” while voicing repugnant views which are diametrically opposed to those of the Rebbe is adding insult to injury.

Getting carried away

with enchantment towards our “knight-in-armor,” some argue in favor of his admirable stance against the UN and cast aside his message of Palestinian recognition. However, this completely ignores all the risks and mortal danger which such recognition poses to Israel.

The assembly of nations, which applauded only his commitment to our adversary’s statehood, proves which message unfortunately carried the day.

Whether or not Netanyahu’s outspoken source of inspiration was genuine is immaterial. Bibi Netanyahu is a consummate politician, with whose duplicity Chabad is well acquainted. As such, he has enjoyed far too much adoration simply for mentioning the Rebbe, whatever the circumstances.

The excitement within Lubavitch,

demonstrators in protest.

Today, on the other hand, tantalizing us with a bit of publicity, Netanyahu has brought those sentiments under his control.

Were it not for the Rebbe’s imminent revelation, we dare not contemplate how the future could further compromise our dignity. It appears that the ideals of a once steadfast movement have been reduced to those of a miserable wretch prostrating himself before anyone who would offer the slightest crumb of attention.

Perhaps there are those among you who have some “in” to Bibi in his moment of “ardor” for the Rebbe. If so, now is the time to strike the iron, while it is still hot, encouraging him to transmit the Rebbe’s message fully and correctly, that the People of Israel are attached

I sat and watched the screen in anticipation of something that unfortunately never happened. My heart sank in bitter disappointment. Once more we heard the same atheistic claim to the land without any mention of G-d...

on the other hand, is not only shocking, but worrying. In 1993, the Oslo accords sparked a furor within Lubavitch that rallied 300,000

to the Land of Israel through the Torah of Israel from the G-d of Israel, and therefore it is not negotiable.

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UNPACKING OUR BAGS

By Yisroel Yehuda

*Even when Tishrei draws to a close, it isn't really over yet. Now a new avoda begins, to bring Tishrei to those who missed out. * Chassidim left the Rebbe and headed for home with their bags packed with treasures. When they arrived, they would unpack their bags and share the riches with those who missed out.*

Liozna, Lubavitch, Rostov, Leningrad, Riga, Warsaw, Otivotzk, 770 in Brooklyn, New York. Tishrei with the Rebbe!

For about 200 years now, Chassidim have had the joy of traveling to the Rebbe for Tishrei. “*Forren* (traveling).” That was the abbreviated expression which was said with yearning. Going to the Rebbe for Rosh HaShana meant hearing the Rebbe blow the shofar. With the first shofar blast of Elul, the question was already being asked, “When are we going?” When Tishrei was around the corner, Chassidim were focused on one place – where the Rebbe was.

Chassidim traveled hundreds of miles on tired feet. They often spent hundreds of hours in order

to be with the Rebbe, but it was all worth it! Tishrei with the Rebbe meant fistfuls of k’dusha, filling up buckets of simcha, tying up bundles of Ahavas Yisroel and Ahavas Hashem, saturating their minds with Divrei Elokim Chayim, loading up with hours upon hours of farbrengens with brotherly love.

Even when Tishrei drew to a close, it wasn't really over. A new avoda began- to bring Tishrei to those who had missed out. Chassidim have a “good eye” and didn't keep the spiritual luggage they amassed with toil and sweat for themselves. On their way home they would stop in every city, town or village and unload their bags packed with treasures and share them with those who had missed out.

This holy practice, to stop in every location and unload the Tishrei bundles for the Chassidim, was very highly regarded and became an inseparable part of Tishrei.

THE ENACTMENT OF THE MITTELER REBBE

When the Mitteler Rebbe accepted the Nesius, he quickly became known as a superb organizer. He made strict enactments that were designed to stabilize and organize the Chassidic communities. One of his rules[1] was that a Chassid could not stay more than two to three months in Lubavitch and upon his return home he had to spend a day or two in every city he passed,





where he was to review Chassidus publicly, i.e. those maamarim that he had just heard while in Lubavitch.

It was a wonderful takana which breathed life and moral support into the Chassidim, many of whom were scattered in towns far from Lubavitch and for whom the trip (by wagon, if they were fortunate) was too difficult. When a man who had been in Lubavitch arrived in a faraway town in Russia, it was like the light of the Yom Tov lit up the town. He had just come from the Rebbe and everybody looked at him with admiration and amazement. They watched as he davened with great chayus and listened to the maamarim that he reviewed. Now they didn't just believe – they

knew that there was a Rebbe among them.

When these men showed up in town they were welcomed with great honor. The residents of the town, including the most elderly Chassidim, would gather to welcome them and eagerly looked forward to hearing Chassidus. Even if he was young and they were seasoned maskilim and ovdim, he was in a different category for he had come from the Rebbe and he could repeat things he had heard from the Rebbe himself. There was no dissent; only humility before him.

During the day or two he spent in the town, a holiday atmosphere reigned. The Chassidim all came to farbreng, to hear news that he brought from the Rebbe. What did

the Rebbe do, how were his holy sons, what new things took place in the capitol of Chassidus, what maamarim did the Chassid hear?

The young Chassid reviewed all the maamarim that he had heard from the Rebbe. Sometimes, the man wasn't learned, just a simple Chassid who barely knew the words with which the maamer began. Nevertheless, the Chassidim in the town treated this like an entire maamer. The Chassid repeated the verse which was the *dibbur ha'mashchil* again and again and the entire town "lived" for months with this one phrase or verse from the Rebbe. This added enthusiasm and chayus to all the spiritual matters of the townspeople (see sidebar).

The Rebbe Rayatz writes[2] about this, "The trip to Lubavitch and back served as a soul experience for the inward Chassidim, masters of 'haskala' and 'avoda.' Each of the distinguished Chassidim, on their way to and from Lubavitch, would stop in cities and certain towns to give over to the Chassidim from what they heard in Lubavitch and to review a maamer Chassidus that they heard, and they would arrange a Chassidishe farbrengen."

The real welcome, wrote the Rebbe Rayatz, took place when he was on his way home. Every Chabad Chassid, no matter rich or poor, materially and spiritually in knowledge and avoda, would partake in this simcha.

R' YEKUSIEL LIEPLER SAYING CHASSIDUS

One of the finest fruits in the history of Chabad-Lubavitch that was harvested by those who returned from the Rebbe, was the Chassid R' Yekusiel Liepler. He was a big oved, and Chassidim said he had a "rich yechidus" with the Alter Rebbe[3], but his grasp

“Each day, as I heard this Chassid review Chassidus, as I would listen without understanding, my flesh had goose bumps and I called myself all sorts of derogatory names. A fire was lit within me to know maamarim and to understand and grasp them. I asked the Chassid to review it again and again for me, but my head was like a block of wood and my brain was blocked from understanding what he explained to me.”

of Torah was very limited.

One day, one of the Chassidim passed through Liepli on his way back from the Mittlerer Rebbe. This Chassid was brilliant and spoke beautifully. He spent a week in Liepli and every day he reviewed a maamer Chassidus he had heard from the Rebbe. These were deep and analytical maamarim.

R' Yekusiel himself told R' Shmuel of Borisov[4], “I was about 40 years old and for about fifteen years I would go to the Alter Rebbe, throughout which time I learned with all my might. Then along came this young man, a mere hatchling, and he reviewed maamarim of the Rebbe with song and chayus and I didn't understand. I felt that the topics were very deep, wondrous ideas, but I didn't understand any of it.

“Each day, as I heard this Chassid review Chassidus, as I would listen without understanding, my flesh had goose bumps and I called myself all sorts of derogatory names. A fire was lit within me to know maamarim and to understand and grasp them. I asked the Chassid to review it again and again for me, but my head was like a block of wood and my brain was blocked from

understanding what he explained to me.”

The end of the story was that R' Yekusiel traveled to Lubavitch and invested superhuman efforts until he finally became one of the great maskilim in Chassidus Chabad, able to discern deep and subtle explanations in Chassidus (although when it came to his understanding of Nigleh he was average, and maybe even less than that).

THE ELDER CHASSIDIM BECOME MEKUSHAR TO THE TZEMACH TZEDEK

Additional “fruits” who became Chassidim and mekusharim thanks to those chozrim could be found in the time of the Tzemach Tzedek too. As is known[5], the Tzemach Tzedek did not accept the Nesius until seven months after the passing of the Mittlerer Rebbe, on Shavuot 5588/1728. Many Chassidim went to Lubavitch for Shavuot 5591/1731 (three years after he accepted the Nesius) including rabbanim, melamdin, and balabatim, and most of the elder Chassidim of the Alter Rebbe.

They stayed in Lubavitch until

after Shabbos Parshas Naso. Then some of them traveled home via Dubrovna, home of the gaon and Chassid, R' Nechemya. He was the close friend of the Tzemach Tzedek and had learned together with him, for which reason he found it hard to become his Chassid and did not travel to him.

At that time, a number of great Chassidim like R' Yitzchok Isaac of Homil, the brothers R' Moshe and R' Zev (Velvel) Vilenker, R' Zalman Zezmer, R' Pesach Malestovker, and R' Yekusiel Liepler went to Dubrovna to visit R' Nechemya.

R' Nechemya told them that he had seen the Alter Rebbe in a dream and the Alter Rebbe had asked him, “Why don't you have a Rebbe? Asei lecha rav!”

He had asked the Alter Rebbe, “Who should I take as a Rebbe?” The Alter Rebbe answered him with a short drush: The verse, “This one will bring us rest (consolation) from our work and the toil of our hands” refers to Noach, and if you add the letter “Mem” to the beginning and end of Noach, you have Menachem (hinting at the name of the Tzemach Tzedek).

This story made a tremendous impression on the Chassidim, and they decided to return to Lubavitch. The following Shabbos, the Tzemach Tzedek said three maamarim, a departure from his usual custom. The Chassidim called that Shabbos “Shabbos shel Keser P'nimi,” since on that Shabbos even the elder Chassidim accepted him as Rebbe[6].

This also invigorated the activities of the Chassidim returning from the Rebbe and “making nefashos.” It strengthened the Chassidim and brought the light from Lubavitch to locations all over.

After that visit, the elder Chassidim divided White Russia,

Lithuania, Bessarabia etc. between them and they decided that when each of them took leave of the Rebbe, they would pass through those for which they had assumed responsibility and inspire the Chassidim who lived there to become mekushar to the Rebbe.

RETURNING FROM THE REBBE

The way a Chassid returned from the Rebbe became a set practice. When a Chassid returned from the Rebbe, on fire with chayus and holy enthusiasm, he looked for places to unload his spiritual baggage. Likewise, those on the receiving end wanted to hear what was new.

An authentic and moving description of a return from a stay with the Rebbe and the enthusiasm of the crowd goes as follows[7]:

“When R’ Leib Posen went to shul for Kabbalas Shabbos, he saw R’ Shmuel Brin standing there, surrounded by people crowding the floor and benches. His face was radiant and he was in good spirits. He spoke and all listened (R’ Shmuel had returned from the Rebbe) ... The gabbai R’ Hersh Hershman banged on the table and said, ‘Sha, sha, R’ Shmuel Brin will review Chassidus that he heard from the Rebbe shlita in Lubavitch!’

“My dove in the cracks of the rock, the concealment of the terrace’ – R’ Shmuel began. The shul was silent and one could see a look of contentment on the face of the listeners. That Shabbos, all the members of the shul went to the home of R’ Shmuel for Kiddush, where he reviewed the maamer for a third time. The joy of the Chassidim was boundless.”

The importance with which the Chassidim cherished the spiritual baggage that they brought from the Rebbe, transcended all else.



The Rebbe escorting guests in 5721

One time, when the Chassid R’ Nosson Nota of Manestchirna was at the Rebbe, a tragedy took place. His daughter became sick and died. He knew nothing about this and it was only when he arrived in his town that he was given the terrible news. R’ Nosson Nota tore kria and sat on the ground as the halacha mandates.

R’ Nosson Nota was one of the important mashpiim in his town and he had many mushpa’im. Naturally, as his followers, they wanted to see how their teacher reacted to this tragedy and they gathered to watch. They saw his face becoming redder and redder and they were sure he would burst into tears, but then they heard him say, “Ah, ah, what *k’savim* I brought from Lubavitch,” referring to the maamer Chassidus. Even in this mournful time, R’ Nosson Nota was preoccupied with the maamer he had brought with him from the Rebbe.

THE GREAT CHASSIDIM SAT WITH BITTUL

The thirst and passion to hear what the Rebbe had said and what

had happened in the Rebbe’s court, were sweet even for the animal soul. It was only natural that people would gather round when someone came from the Rebbe.

R’ Moshe Orenstein, mashpia in the yeshiva in Tzfas, related that when he taught in Tomchei T’mimim in Kfar Chabad, Chassidim would come from the Rebbe a few times a year. Of course they welcomed these people and farbrenged with them. The mashpia, R’ Shlomo Chaim Kesselman, as great as he was, would disregard the fact that often those who came from the Rebbe were talmidim in the yeshiva, and would sit with utter bittul and listen avidly to every word that was said.

The Chassid, R’ Yisroel Jacobson would go to the Chabad yeshiva in Brunoy, France, every year. He would travel to Italy for esrogim and stop in to the yeshiva. One could see how a Chassid welcomed someone who came from the Rebbe. The mashpia, R’ Nissan Nemenov, who was considered one of the giant

THREE “DIVREI HA’MASCHIL”

In Chassidic tradition there is the story of the simple Chassid who went to his Rebbe, one of the Chabad Rebbeim, for Tishrei. As Chassidim do, when he returned home he stopped in various towns and described what went on in the Rebbe’s court. He did not know Chassidus or understand what the Rebbe said, but the Chassidim urged him to remember something.

All the Chassid remembered were the opening words of the three maamarim that he had heard: “Tik’u BaChodesh,” “BaChodesh HaShvii,” and “Shuva Yisroel.”

The Chassidim, in their longing to hear what the Rebbe had said, put these three “dibbur ha’maschils” to a Chabad melody of yearning, for this too was “Torah,” the Torah that connected them to the great light that shone in Lubavitch.

The passengers are carrying a rich load of experiences and meaning which has the ability to illuminate the way in the coming days. This baggage now stored in the soul will need to serve as a reservoir of light and liveliness for all of life in the future.

mashpiim of the previous generation, sat before R’ Yisroel with utter bittul and listened closely to what he said. He did not interfere at all in running the farbrengen and was completely focused on listening to what the Chassid who had just come from the Rebbe, had to say.

GIVING REGARDS

Back when small groups began to travel from Eretz Yisroel to the Rebbe for Tishrei, upon their return the accepted practice was for them to “give over” the maamarim and sichos that they heard from the Rebbe and they would share their impressions and experiences.

All of Anash from all of the Lubavitcher k’hillos in Eretz

Yisroel would gather in Kfar Chabad, including the rav of the Kfar, Rabbi Shneur Zalman Garelik, and the cream of the crop of Chabad in Eretz Yisroel, in order to get a bit of the chayus that the people brought back with them from 770.

The Rebbe constantly encouraged this and demanded of the Chassidim returning to Eretz Yisroel that they “give regards,” i.e. farbreng in shuls and describe their experiences in 770 with the Rebbe.

When the Rebbe distributed bottles of mashke to certain individuals at “kos shel bracha,” this was (mainly) in order to encourage them to farbreng and “review” what they heard from the Rebbe. The Rebbe would give bottles of mashke to shluchim and

others so that upon their return to their place of residence, they would farbreng and inspire the participants with the kochos they received from the Rebbe.

One of the interesting examples of personal instructions concerning returning from the Rebbe was issued to a group of shluchim who established the yeshiva in Migdal HaEmek after Pesach 1978 (8). Before they returned to Eretz Yisroel they had a yechidus in *Gan Eden HaTachton*. The Rebbe told them, “Each of you will be given two bills, one for tz’daka in your location (in Migdal HaEmek) and one at the Kosel. Discuss amongst yourselves when you will be able to travel together.

“Take the rosh yeshiva and Rabbi Grossman with you [the Rebbe mentioned twice that they should take Rabbi Grossman] and all those who have any connection, and over there (at the Kosel) review inyanim in Nigleh and Chassidus and give the tz’daka there.

“Tell this to Rabbi Grossman in all of your names; he will probably go with you to the Kosel. Also give him this bottle of mashke so that he can make a Chassidishe farbrengen in Migdal HaEmek, in the yeshiva, and also invite the residents of the city and review points that were said here.”

This is how R’ Tuvia Blau concluded his diary of Tishrei 5723[9]:

“We faced the Rebbe as we walked backwards towards the buses. A large group of local people have joined the guests to escort them. The convoy moves. The Rebbe still stands in the doorway of the building and watches the cars as they grow distant. At the airport there is another lively dance, hugs and hearty handshakes.

“The plane is on its way home

now. The passengers are carrying a rich load of experiences and meaning which has the ability to illuminate the way in the coming days. This baggage now stored in the soul will need to serve as a reservoir of light and liveliness for all of life in the future.

“At home, the Chassidim of Eretz Yisroel look forward to hearing the Rebbe’s sichos and what happened in his holy court during this rich and ‘sated’ month, that which was seen and heard, and in the meantime the plane speeds onward.”

WHEN YOUR WELLSPRINGS SPREAD FORTH WITH MOVIES

The *chazara* (review) with all the attendant details was p’nimius’dik. It brought the teachings, the ruach and even the nuances of the nefesh and the neshama to the Chassidim wherever they were. In our generation, the seventh, with all possible technological advancements, a new form of *chazara* became possible.

The photographer, R’ Levi Yitzchok Freidin a”h, became a new, modern type of “chozer.” This professional photographer became a Chassid who was mekarev people, spread Judaism, strengthened hiskashrus with the Rebbe, and was a partner with the shluchim in spreading the excitement of “Tishrei with the Rebbe.”

R’ Levi Yitzchok spent many a Tishrei in Crown Heights, where he took pictures nonstop. Upon his return, he would rent a hall in Tel Aviv and Yerushalayim and show a slide show of his pictures and films. Although *chazara* of maamarim in shuls was important and dear, as were the stories and the descriptions, how could they compare to color film that showed



Freidin receiving kos shel bracha from the Rebbe

the Rebbe along with every nuance, sound and subtlety?

Older Chassidim still remember the excitement that the photographer brought. He would go from city to city and bring his newest inventory. Signs and flyers went up before a showing and many Jews, of all backgrounds, flocked to see the Rebbe. It was a revolutionary idea from a technological standpoint, as well as an innovative concept. No Torah figure had been photographed as much as the Rebbe at that point, and curious people came in droves.

There are many Chassidim who still remember the old film projector they had back then and R’ Levi Yitzchok Freidin turning the wheel by hand, showing picture after picture and explaining what they were looking at. They remember the excitement and longing that increased with each additional picture he showed.

The film strips he brought from 770 over the years were shown in many places in Eretz Yisroel, mainly in cultural centers, clubs, Chabad houses, and schools. The thank you letters show what a tremendous impact they made on the viewers. His wife once said,



Freidin at work

“He accepted every invitation to show his film.

“I remember that one time he had to go from one showing in Tzfas to another in Gilo in Yerushalayim. The trip began at midnight and ended at five in the morning. The entire journey took place in dense fog and I was sure that he wouldn’t make it. Even if he did, who in Gilo would go out on this wet day to see the film?

“He returned home glowing and proudly reported that 200 people had shown up. ‘I was glad that I traveled despite the difficulties,’ he told me.”

This phenomenon repeated itself in some form or another all over the country. Flyers were hung up. 50-60 people came to the first showing and 200 or 300 to the second. Word got around and people came. At one of the

We looked at the picture together. The Chassid closed his eyes and relived the five minutes of yechidus that he had with the Rebbe. He said with great emotion, 'Yes, that is our Rebbe. It looks like him, but when you see him for real, it's completely different. Something else entirely!'

showings in Yerushalayim a man in a kapote and shtraimel said to him, "You made this film? Listen, I'm not a Lubavitcher Chassid but after seeing this film from 770, I think I will one day become a Chabad Chassid."

Rabbi Gavriel Shapiro, who hosted Freidin in his home in Crown Heights, said, "As the Rebbe requested, Freidin would take his films to various places, some far from religious life, and show them in order to be mekarev people. When he returned from these trips the Rebbe would ask where he showed the films and who was in the audience.

"I will tell you a story that happened to me that will give you an idea of the impact the films from Tishrei had on viewers. Some years ago we went together to hakafo. It was after Maariv and the doors were still closed. One of the girls waiting on line noticed R' Levi Yitzchok and asked him, 'Are you Freidin? Do you remember that you showed the film in such-and-such a place? I was there and I was so impressed by it that I began to be religious. Now I am here to visit the Rebbe.

"Freidin told the Rebbe about this girl and he said that the smile he got from the Rebbe at that time was one he had never seen before."

Over the years many more testimonials came in. Numerous people said that they got the push to go to 770 while watching Freidin's films. Others, who had already, in principle, planned on going but had pushed it off, finally acted on their decision after seeing the film. Others said that watching the film prepared them for the trip. "Whoever watched Freidin's film didn't feel out of place when he arrived at 770," someone explained.

One year, R' Levi Yitzchok put on an exhibit at Beit Sokolov. The exhibit interested a wide array of people and the media latched on to this interesting event. One of the write-ups^[10] of the exhibit was written by Refael Bashan:

"A truly stunning photo exhibit of unique proportion and purpose opened this week in Beit Sokolov. This is the exhibit of Levi Yitzchok Freidin and his son Yisroel Aryeh, who spent weeks at Chabad headquarters at 770 Eastern Parkway in New York. It is a window to the inner world of this movement, with 3500 pictures that were taken with sensitivity and love, with neshama. The entire exhibit focuses on the intensely powerful and inspirational personality of the Lubavitcher Rebbe."

INVITING THE INTERVIEWERS

An interesting news item that appeared in the newspapers about the return of the Chassidim from the Rebbe's court describes Rabbi Leibov, who returned from the Rebbe and invited journalists to interview him about what he saw and heard^[11]:

"We are happy to inform you that the director of Tzeirei Chabad, who just returned from a short visit to the United States, will welcome newspaper reporters for a press conference about the visit that Lubavitcher Chassidim made to the Rebbe in New York and to hear what is going on in the Rebbe's court. Period. Next line: "We will be happy to grant an interview to your representative, who will be given very interesting information." The press release ends with a salutation and signature with a proper flourish.

"We eagerly went to Tzeirei Chabad, who had their headquarters in the bustling city in a side room of their small yeshiva. We knocked lightly on the door of the secretary's office off the yard. From behind a desk a man looked up and warmly said, 'Boruch haba, boruch haba.' We greeted him and he responded. We asked, 'Can we speak with the director of Tzeirei Chabad in Eretz Yisroel?'

"The man behind the desk fixed his gaze upon us, stroked his beard, and asked, 'What do you need from him?' We were impatient. Is this a bureaucracy too? We said, 'Newspapers.' He looked at us for a moment and said, 'You can speak with me, too.' We insisted, 'We were told to speak to the director.' He adjusted his yarmulke and smiled, 'I said already, you can speak to me. The man you are looking for is me.'

"Do you have to ask a Chassid to speak about his Rebbe? All the

more so an enthusiastic Chassid like R' Yisroel Leibov ...

"... Since he returned two weeks ago from the Rebbe's court, he has already repeated what took place there a number of times, but the well hasn't dried up. It only takes an instant to ignite the tongue of this Chassid, Leibov: 'When we came to the Rebbe's court it was a Monday. There was tremendous simcha. We waited for the Rebbe to come out to us for the farbrengen ...'

"This Chassid was talking to us and his eyes became enflamed as if boring through us and flying far away, carrying his thirsting spirit back to the Rebbe's court: 'Do you want to hear how I met with our Rebbe? It will take some time. On Thursday they told us that the Rebbe would be receiving people for five minutes each. There were several hundred who wanted yechidus with the Rebbe, but only one hundred – a little more - , were marked down for the first night. They made a raffle for the line. To describe going in for yechidus? I can't describe how one prepares. Everyone feels elevated and there is a feeling of trembling, a feeling of shivering.'

"He sighs. 'Nu, the holidays are over and we had to return. The moment finally came and we left the court and the Rebbe and came here.' We asked R' Leibov for a picture of the Rebbe. He went to the closet and took out a picture of the Rebbe, which he gave to us. Then he asked us to show it to him. We looked at the picture together. The Chassid closed his eyes and relived the five minutes of yechidus that he had with the Rebbe. He said with great emotion, 'Yes, that is our Rebbe. It looks like him, but when you see him for real, it's completely different. Something else entirely!'"

I will end this article about returning from the Rebbe with a



The Rebbe escorting the guests who were leaving for the airport, Cheshvan 5721



A Chassidische farbrengen in Kfar Chabad after Chassidim returned from the Rebbe

line from R' Zushe Partisan, "The first thing you pack in the suitcase when you have to leave 770 is the decision to return to the Rebbe soon!"

NOTES:

[1] Seifer HaToldos Admur HaEmtza'i p. 52

[2] Seifer HaToldos HaRebbe Maharash p. 96

[3] He asked the Rebbe to cut out his "left side," i.e. his Evil Inclination

[4] Seifer HaToldos Admur HaEmtza'i p.

54

[5] Seifer HaToldos HaTzemach Tzedek p. 78

[6] ibid, although even previously he had been honored as a Rebbe, it wasn't the p'nimius'dike relationship of a Rebbe and Chassid

[7] ibid p. 89

[8] HaTamim published by Beis Moshiah, issue 22, p. 77

[9] ibid p. 59

[10] ibid p. 243

[11] ibid p. 35

MY FATHER THE CHASSID

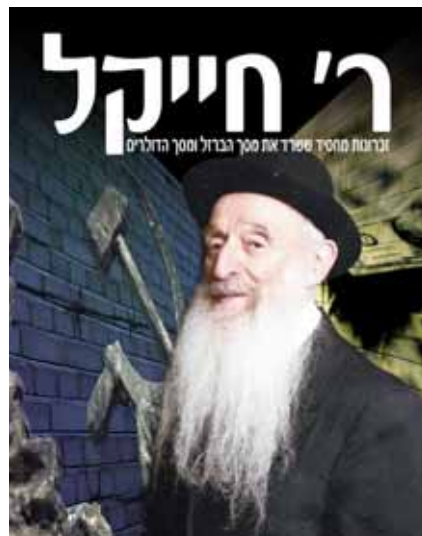
By Rabbi Shneur Zalman Chanim

Arrested on the border of France and Germany, he spent 25 days in jail. Forty years later R' Chaikel found out the spiritual reason for the arrest - and taught us a timeless lesson in sacrificing oneself for a fellow Jew.



There was routine to life in the Displaced Persons camp in Poking, but not stability. It was this routine which slowly but surely began to undermine any sense of security among the families of Chassidim who lived in the camp. It bothered them and began to disturb their peace. The Chassidim were happy, of course, with the freedom of religion, and they benefited from the financial help of the various organizations, but the bottom line was that they were displaced people, refugees without a home.

This state of impermanence and the nonstop worry of what would be and where they would go perturbed the Jews in the camp. Lubavitcher Chassidim had gotten a general instruction from the Rebbe Rayatz not to remain in Germany, which was a place of danger, but to continue to move on as quickly as possible to Paris or whatever friendly country



would agree to admit them. In the Igros Kodesh of the Rebbe Rayatz, letter #3053, we find:

"Thanks to G-d, Who gave us success. Some of Anash have already been saved and left the land of darkness en route to uniting with the rest of Anash. Many others from there are waiting to be rescued if they only

had the financial means."

We are trying to obtain visas for Anash in the camps to bring them to Paris. The danger there is great; it is necessary to take them out of there as soon as possible and large sums are needed for this ..."

My father planned a trip to Paris in order to find out how and whether he could arrange legal papers that would enable the family to emigrate to France. He obtained a visa that allowed him to visit France for a few days and he took along passport pictures of the family to have on hand in the event that he was able to obtain papers. As was typical of him, he did not just worry about himself but brought pictures of other friends and families as well, and promised to get papers for them, if it was possible.

He took some s'farim - a Siddur, Tanya, Torah Ohr, a Chumash and Mishnayos - and went on his way. He had planned



The train station in Strasbourg

to go to Paris via Austria because he hoped Hashem would send some business his way so that he could finally earn money and not need a handout. Knowing my father, though, finances was not his main motivation to detour via Austria. He wanted to see his friends, R' Yisroel Noach Blinitzky and R' Hirschel Lieberman and desired to be of help to them.

THE REBBE RAYATZ SOUGHT TO HELP R' LIEBERMAN

R' Tzvi (Hirschel) Lieberman was dear not only to my parents but also to the Rebbe Rayatz. The following letters show how the Rebbe took a personal interest in him. On 21 Iyar, 1947, the Rebbe wrote to R' Binyamin Gorodetzky:

You should endeavor that my friend R' Tzvi Liberman, who is currently in Vienna, not be lacking in any of his vital needs in food and clothing etc. First

and foremost, please give him an amount of money equal to \$100.

On 13 Sivan, 1947, the Rebbe wrote again:

**To my friend, R' Binyamin,
Shalom u'v'racha,**

From my strong friend, the loftiest from among the talmidei Tomchei T'mimim of Lubavitch in Lubavitch, R' Tzvi Lieberman, I received in its time good news, thanks to G-d that he is in Vienna and is involved in chinuch, and I was very pleased by that. At that time I wrote to you to send him money for his needs - food, clothing, shoes, etc. - and surely my friend fulfilled my order and corresponds with him to know the details of his situation.

Since it is not yet clear how much longer he will remain there, make him a visa for France and surely he will be able to use it even if he carries a bit and cannot travel together with Anash and will travel afterwards alone. Let me know if this is so or whether the visas are such that everybody must travel together. In any case, make him a visa and Hashem should give you material and spiritual success.

**B"H
4 Tammuz, 5707
Brooklyn**

My honorable friend... R' Tzvi Lieberman

Sholom u'v'racha,

I read your letter and was very pleased by your work, and there is a covenant to work and publicity that it does not return empty, especially when spreading Torah and strengthening Judaism. Surely you need to attract people with talents suitable for chinuch and to excite them with the heat of fire of Judaism that they devote

themselves to this holy work with great alacrity. Be assured that you will be successful in your work as in the blessing and promise of the Alter Rebbe that in every positive activity that Chassidim engage in, they will succeed with outstanding success with Hashem's help.

I am saddened [to hear] about your dispirited feelings. You need to strengthen yourself with hope and trust in Hashem Who will surely help you to be settled soon in a life of repose. Please let me know in detail how much you need, because I want you to be dressed respectably and settled in a home with the food that you require. Let me know how much you need for this and with Hashem's help I will try to provide as soon as possible. Also, please let me know how much is needed per month to provide for the talmidim that you mention in your letter.

It is most proper that you try as much as possible to travel to Paris and as my friend, R' B. Gorodetzky writes me, if you will be together with the group of Anash in some camp, it will be easier to bring you to Paris.

I wrote the letter to Mr. Schreiber as you requested and I enclose it. Please give it to him and inform me of the results.

May Hashem strengthen your health and bring you to the "rest and portion," to become settled in a life of Torah and avoda and involvement in spreading Torah and strengthening religion with ample parnasa, with peace of mind, materially and spiritually.

Who seeks your welfare and blesses you,

Yosef Yitzchok

On 28 Tammuz, 1947, the Rebbe wrote to R' B. Gorodetzky a third time:

“The situation here is terrible. We are living in open summer homes. There is no fuel for heat and there are twelve of us living in one room which is 4 by 7 meters... What we receive for an entire week is barely enough for one day.”

Regarding my friend R' Tzvi Lieberman, what you did is good and regarding the question about what else to do, what you can and ought to do is to arouse the Chassidishe brotherly feeling which Tomchei T'mimim in Lubavitch established in people's hearts, and you need to do this diligently and with feeling, not just to get it done but in an orderly way, doing it and knowing that more must be done.

By the beginning of the winter of 5708, R' Tzvi Hirsch had still not gotten papers and he remained in a DP camp near Vienna.

EMOTIONAL MEETING

The joy of their meeting, said my father, was clouded by the pathetic conditions his friends were in. In a letter that R' Lieberman sent to his brother Chaim, the Rebbe Rayatz's secretary, at the time my father visited him, he described his situation and bemoaned the state of his fellow T'mimim who were in the DP camp. The letter speaks for itself:

“The situation here is terrible. We are living in open summer homes. There is no fuel for heat and there are twelve of us living in one room, which is 4 by 7 meters: R' Eliyahu Haft and his son-in-law [R' Elchonon Levin] with his family, me, and the widow Doba Raskin, the daughter of Shlomo Raskin.



R' Tzvi Hirsh Lieberman

The food supply is meager. What we receive for an entire week is barely enough for one day. For example, this week we received ½ box of milk per person, 400 grams of flour, 50 of salt, and 100 of noodles. That's for a week. You can figure out that for a person like myself, for whom the salt and flour are useless, it's as though I did not get anything.

If I can travel soon, my money will last me until Paris, but what will a poor widow like Doba with four weak children do when she doesn't have any support and she suffers the shame of hunger? Only a few of Anash have remained here and they cannot supply her with what she needs. There simply isn't enough, and she is especially

pained to the point of despair about being left here. And lately there has been a rumor that there is a visa to go to Paris for five people and she is not among them, and she cries nonstop day and night ...

From Paris I hear nothing ... I don't know your circumstances but if I knew that it wasn't more than you can handle, I would speak to you entirely differently.

... To travel to Paris, it is possible to travel another, easier way. In two weeks you can prepare everything you need, but it costs a lot of money ... If you agree, contact our friend, Mr. Chaikel Chanin through a telegram (he is here now and tomorrow he is going home) and you can immediately, upon receipt of my letter, send him a telegram with the money (you probably have some way to get it to Paris), and he will take care of it immediately for me.”

Of course, my father also took all the details, names, dates of birth, and pictures from his friends in Vienna and he promised to try and help them get their papers.

THE BLACK MARKET FOR ILLEGAL DOCUMENTS

All this happened at the beginning of 5708. Thousands of Jews were still in DP camps, with only a handful able to leave the camps legally for countries like France, Canada, the US, and South America. England had stepped up its guard of Israel's borders and refused to allow refugees to enter. Therefore, a great need arose for illegal papers to enable Jews to move on to free countries and some Jews began producing and selling false papers.

In addition to forging papers, they also bought legal papers of people who had already used them to cross the border. They sold

these papers to other Jews who were in the camps. Of course most of the Holocaust survivors had no official papers so they could use whatever names they liked.

The governments of France, Austria, Germany and other countries in western Europe, aware of this burgeoning black market among the refugees and the men who transferred papers and smuggled refugees among countries, intensified their watch of their borders and the main traffic arteries.

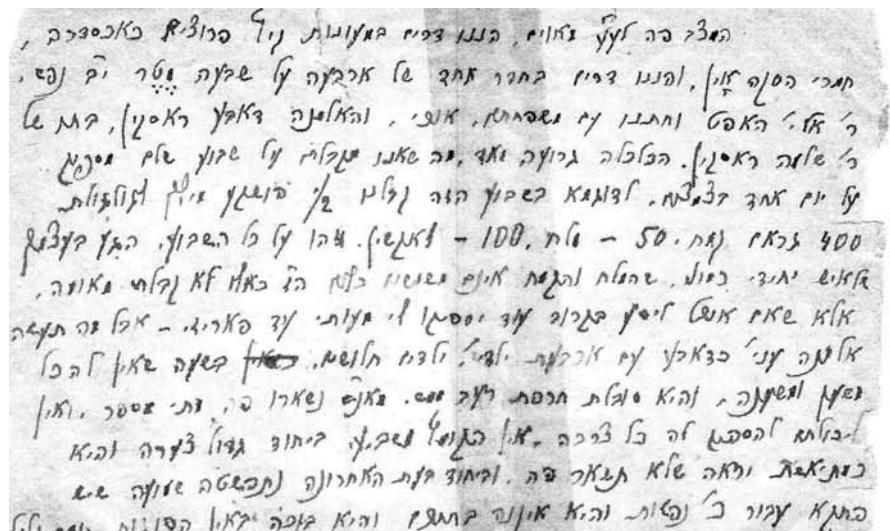
ARREST ON A TRAIN

On his way from Austria to France, my father entered a train compartment and looked around. He saw a man who looked obviously Jewish and he sat down next to him. What do two Jews do when they meet? They play Jewish geography and ask what the other does for a living. They then spent some time discussing the war and soon felt like old acquaintances.

As the train approached the border of Austria-France, police agents boarded the train. They examined the passengers' papers, took something out of their bags, compared and checked again. They searched suitcases, briefcases and in pockets. They checked every paper that was there and then asked my father and the other man to accompany them. They were handcuffed and led to the police station together with another two Jews who were arrested on the same train.

My father managed to hear his new friend whisper in his ear, "Don't worry. They're looking for me and not you."

This man was one of those people who dealt in transferring papers and smuggling Jews between western European countries. The government had gotten information that they could



The letter that R' Tzvi Lieberman sent to his brother Chaim

nab the smugglers on the train that was traveling to France. When they found passport pictures and a list of names with dates of birth in my father's possession, they were sure they had caught the big fish.

My father did not know the language so he couldn't communicate with the police and prove that this was a mistake. He was put in jail without for the option of a lawyer or at least a translator. As luck would have it, that week was the gentile holiday and all government offices were closed, as was the courthouse, so he had to wait until the end of the holiday recess so that someone could check whether he was the right man.

THE REBBE WAS REASSURING

The Chassidim in Vienna and then the Chassidim in Peking found out that my father had been arrested by the border police and they were hysterical. All of them knew of the longstanding anti-Semitism in Austria and they pictured my father suffering in a jail like the ones they knew in Soviet Russia.

They sent a telegram to the

Rebbe Rayatz to ask for a bracha for my father and in response the Rebbe wrote that they should not worry and that he would be freed shortly "for he is an upright person."

R' Shmuel Betzalel Altheus, my father's dear friend, went to Strasbourg immediately in order to encourage him and to help him hire a lawyer who would prove his innocence. R' Altheus related the Rebbe's answer to my father. The Rebbe's encouraging words brought hope and reassurance not only to him but to the entire worried Chassidic family.

In the meantime, the Chassidim sent telegrams to all the Jewish organizations and to various key influential people, to try and get my father out of jail. The organizations wrote letters in which they criticized the police that would arrest an innocent Jew. The local newspapers protested mightily and in large letters asked: Is it possible? An innocent Jew, a Chassidic rabbi, was traveling on business and he was arrested for no reason?

The story spread to papers that were published outside the country too.

At first my father was shaken

up, but when he saw the jail conditions and how the police treated him, he relaxed. He shared a clean room with three other Jews who were arrested on the train. The room had four beds and adjacent facilities. In Russia, he thought, a room like this would get a 5 star rating.

My father began receiving packages and kosher food from Jewish organizations that worked on his behalf and he and his friends had plenty to eat. The police treated him with great respect. Apparently they realized their mistake but were powerless to release him without going through proper legal procedure, which had been postponed because of the holiday.

My father always davened slowly. While in jail, with plenty of time on his hands, he spent a lot of time on his davening. He used the opportunity of being with other Jews to farbreng daily and he was also able to teach them Tanya.

And yet, even after spending time learning and davening he still had enough time to think and make a spiritual accounting. My father told me about his thoughts at that time:

“I deserved to be arrested in this physical world but boruch Hashem I was arrested in Austria and not in Soviet Russia, by the border police and not by the NKVD. I was in a spacious, clean cell and not in a cellar being tortured. So what complaints could I have to G-d?

“With the spies it says, ‘and they returned from checking out the land at the end of forty days.’ Rashi says, ‘But the land is 400 parsas by 400 parsas? An average person walks 10 parsas a day and they walked for forty days, from east to west, and the length and the width. It was known before Hashem that He would decree one

year for each day and so He shortened the way for them.’ Hashem made a miracle for me too. He knew that I did not make this trip only for myself. The merit of tz’daka that I gave, and the merit of Tomchei T’mimim which I supported, stood by me in my time of distress. If I had been caught in Russia, they would have sentenced me to at least 25 years. Hashem decreed one day for each year and I sat in jail for just 25 days.”

On 4 Kislev, 5708, R’ Gorodetzky reported to the Rebbe Rayatz:

“Regarding the visas, the situation has greatly worsened. They arrested people. Even the man who was my emissary to bring people from Austria was caught on the border with another two men. R’ Chaikel was arrested too. That is, R’ Chaikel was traveling from Austria, where he had been on business (and he brought some pictures of people to make them papers), and he sat next to that man. The police, who had received an order from Paris to arrest the man at the border, took the people sitting next to him, too, assuming that they were people he was bringing. That was, in fact, true of the other two people. They found some pictures on R’ Chaikel so they took him too, saying that he was also involved in this.

On Sunday, when I found out about it, I went to the Joint and they called Strasbourg to get them to work on R’ Chaikel’s behalf. They also gave me a letter which testifies that R’ Chaikel is loyal and not involved in anything, which R’ Altheus brought to Strasbourg, but even the Joint can’t do anything without a court case, so they hired a lawyer in Strasbourg.”

On the second day of Chanuka, R’ Binyamin wrote what happened next:

“I just came back from the police. R’ Chaikel showed them the pictures he had brought to give to me. Among the pictures was also a passport from Vienna belonging to R’ Tzvi Lieberman and six pictures of his and a letter that says I should try to hurry with the visas. Otherwise, I should give what I have from the US from his brother to R’ Chaikel and he will try.

I explained to him about our Bureau, and verified that I had requested pictures from all the people on his list. I needed these pictures to send to the US, so that relatives can recognize them or to raise money on their behalf. These pictures would also help to bring them to the US or nearby countries. I showed him that I receive visas legitimately, thank G-d, and a list of those that I sent visas to in the past, like Lieberman, who was sent a visa as a shochet to Ireland, all with clear proof. In the end, I took the responsibility that Chanin does not belong to anything fraudulent and that his bringing these pictures for me is entirely aboveboard, and not for the purpose of forging papers.”

About two months after his visit to Vienna, my father arranged papers for R’ Tzvi Hirsh Lieberman and he went directly from the DP camp to Paris and became a member of my parents’ household once again. In the letter pictured here, R’ Lieberman wrote to his relatives in Russia, telling them to write letters to him at R’ Chaikel’s address.

DISTURBING DISCOVERY

Years went by and the Rebbe appointed us, the members of the Vaad L’Hafotzas Sichos, in charge of publishing s’farim for Kehot. In 1987, the Rebbe said we should publish the series of Igros Kodesh of the Rebbe’s letters. The Rebbe did not want all letters in the

archives to be published, just those that were of benefit to the public. He gave clear instructions to his secretary, Rabbi Sholom Mendel Simpson, the person in charge of the archive, as to which letters to publish and which not, which letters should have the addressee's name and which not, etc.

One day, I was sitting with my colleagues sorting the letters and I noticed a copy of a typed letter that was written in Adar, 1948, which mentioned my father's name. The letter was written on Kehot stationery and was signed by the Rebbe.

I am sure my father would not want the person's name to be known and so I deleted it. For the same reason I did not copy the full letter and I changed some details so that the person's identity will not be known. My intention is not to speak lashon ha'ra about the dead, but to tell the story and to learn the appropriate lesson.

B"H ... Adar 5708

.....

Certainly you are aware that it has been some time since my father-in-law, the Rebbe, named the members of the branch committee for Beis Rivka and publication. Amongst them are also R' C. Chanin and ... and it seems that they immediately began to evade doing this.

After some time, word arrived here of their complaint with the excuse that since they were subsequently appointed – after the aforementioned appointment – to the committee for Tomchei T'mimim, and one cannot be in

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הוצאת ספרים
"קֶהוֹת"
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בְּרוֹקְלִין, נ. י.

הַסִּימָה, בִּימָה

שְׁלוֹם וְכַרְמָה:

כִּסְּחָ יִדְעוּ לִי זֶה סִפְרָא אֶפְרַיִם כִּימָה מִיִּתְּ אֲדִישׁ קִרָּא בְּסֵם חֲבֵרִי וְעַד
הַמְּנִישׁ לִבִּית רִבְקָה וְהַדְּפָסָה. וְכַתּוּבָם בֶּם מִתְחַיִּים חֲאֲנִין וְסִפְרֵי לִי-בְּאִוֵּר.
וְכִנְרָא שְׁתּוּמִּי הַחֲחִיל לְהַשְׁמֵם מִתָּה. כְּעִבּוֹר זֶפֶן הַיּוֹעָה לִכְאֵן שִׁנְתָם
בְּאִתְּלָא שְׁכִינֵי שְׁתַּמְנִי גִימָם - לְאַחַר סִיבּוּי הַנִּיל - לִוְעֵד תְּרִיתָ וְאִיא
לְהִיֹּת בְּשִׁנֵּי מְקוּמוֹת לִכְן אִין מִתְּעַסְקִים בְּרִאשׁוֹן. עִיז כִּתְבֵּם לֵהֵם כִּימָה מִיִּתְ
אֲדִישׁ מְסִיבּוּי הַשֵּׁנִי הִי רָק בְּאוֹפֶן שֶׁלֹּא יִכְלֹל וְיִגְרַע מִתְּעַבְדוֹת הָרִאשׁוֹנָה.
וּכְיִזֵּן שְׂאִיא לֵהֵם לְהַתְּעַסֵּק בְּשִׁנֵּי הַיּוֹעֲדִים, הָרִי מְסִיבּוּי הָרִאשׁוֹן בְּתַקְשׁוֹר עוֹרֵד
וּמְסִיבּוּי הַשֵּׁנִי בְּסֵל. וְסֵאז, הָרִי כִנְרָא מִאֲפֵס הַיּוֹעֲדֵה, כִּפֵּי מְקוּרֵם כֵּן
הָוָה בֶּם עֵתָה, שְׂאִין עוֹשִׂים מִאֲרֵפֶת כְּנֹעַד לִבִּית רִבְקָה וְהַדְּפָסָה. - מְסִיבּוֹן
שְׁעִלֵי הַסִּיל כִּימָה מִיִּתְ אֲדִישׁ עֲנִיבִי בִּינֵר וְהַדְּפָסָה, רְצִיתִי מְקוּרֵם לְכַתֵּב
יִשְׂרָאֵלִים וְלִשְׂאֵלֵם שֶׁר דְּבַר: אִם זֶהוּ שֵׁם מְסִיבֵי דְּהוֹרֵאִת עֲדִיף וְנִיחָא
לִי לְעֹד וְלַעֲפֹדִיז, אוֹ שְׁוֹהוּ עֵינֵי שֶׁל שְׁוֹלִישִׁיקָא (עַם מִיץ), אוֹ שְׁוֹשְׁבִים
זֶה לְשִׁחִיתוֹת כְּכּוּרֵם חִינֵי וְחִינֵי הַיִּלְיָה (אִף דְּכִימָ מִיִּתְ אֲדִישׁ מִשְׁתַּדֵּל וְהַתְּעַסֵּק
בְּכִיז, וְהַרְבֵּה יוֹתֵר סִפְרֵי מִשְׁתַּעֲרִים הַכְּרִיזוֹת).
הַמִּסְטֵר שֶׁל מִתְחַיִּים, אֲפִרְתִּי נִשְׁתַּרְתִּי מִתְחַיִּים, כִּי מִיד כְּסִימְכּוּכְנֵי שְׁעִיעַ הִי
הַכֵּל כְּסוּרָה, וְרוֹקָא כִּאֵן קִרָּא כְּעִינֵן כִּתְבִי מְסִיבֵי עוֹד, כְּדוּרֵא אִיא שְׁשִׁמּוֹ
וְיִתְלֵה כְּעַבְדָּה עַל דְּבִרֵי הַכֵּר. אִל כִּנְרָא מִתְלֵה הַתְּקִירָה בְּדִבְרוֹן הָאֲנִיב
יִתְחַיֵּי שְׁעֵל הַמְּכַר, מִסְּפִילֵה אִיא בִּישׁ בּוֹנֵעַ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂרָאֵל רְבִיזֵין. וְלִכֵּל
הַיּוֹתֵר - הָרִי יִכְוֹל לְשַׁמֵּר עֵינֵי הַתְּחַשּׁוֹת בְּנִשְׁתָּה. וְהַתְּחַיֵּי יִשׁ לְהַאֲרִיךְ בְּאוֹפֶן
יִתְקַשְׁרוּתִי דִּבֵּר, מְסִיבֵה מִה שְׁשִׁמּוֹת עֲלִי-כִתְנָאִי אִן זֶהוּ מִתְחַיִּים לֵהֵם
שְׁרִיבָה בְּלֹא הִלֵּי

אִל לְאִידִין גִּימָה עֲלֵה בְּרִעִיבּוֹי: מְסִיבֵים שְׂאֵן, מְסִיבֵים, אִפִּי מִוִּרְתִּי
בְּלִישִׁיא מְסִיבֵי וְהַכֵּר מִשְׁתַּמְנֵם טוֹב לִיִּתְ, וְלֵהֵם חֲחִי רִאשִׁיתֵם הִיתָם. בִּינִיבֵי
כְּדִיבְרוּרִים הַרְפִּישִׁים, וְאַפְרִי יִשׁ דְּכִרִים כְּנֵן.

וְלִכְן בֶּם בּוֹת אֲפִנֵה לְהַתִּיר, מִכִּסְחָ יִדְעוּ הַתְּחַיִּים, מִכִּסְחָ אֲפִרְתִּי מִיִּתְ
הַתְּחַיִּין כִּלִּי אֲפִרְתִּי מִסוּרֵה הָרִי מִה טוֹב. וְאִם אִיא לְאַחֲחִים, הָרִי כְּדוּרֵא
יִסְמָא אֲוֵן מִתְקָרֵם כִּיּוֹתֵר לֵהֵם (וְשִׁישִׁטֵּם שִׁיכּוֹל לֵאמֹר מִתְחַיִּים לִי כִתְבִיל
וּבְקִשְׁתִּי עֲדִיז) - מִה רְחִמְכּוֹת אֲוִיף זִינִי. וְהַתְּחַיֵּי שִׁיעָה כְּנִיל וְלֹא יִשְׁפִּיר
עַל הַשְׂרָא (מִתְחַיִּים מִכִּסְחָ) בּוֹת.

הַמִּסְטֵר לְמַכְתְּבוֹ מִסְפֵּר אֶר שְׁנֵי
הָרֵב מִכִּסְחָ שְׁנִיאֲוֹרִסְתָּא

The Rebbe's letter that was discovered forty years later

two places at one time, therefore they are not working on the first. In response to this, my father-in-law, the Rebbe wrote to them that the second appointment was only in such a way that it did not disturb and detract from the work of the first. And since they are incapable of working on the two committees, the first appointment stands and the second appointment is null. Since then, apparently due to their not knowing, the current situation is as it has been in the past, that they are still not doing a thing on the committee for Beis Rivka and publication.

Since my father-in-law, the Rebbe placed upon me matters pertaining to Beis Rivka and publication, I originally thought to write them directly to ask for an explanation: if it is simply because passivity is better and preferred by the side of the

"opposing forces," or if it was a matter of politics (with who?), or if they considered it beneath their dignity, Heaven forbid, may it not be so (even though my father-in-law, the Rebbe endeavors and is involved in all of this, and far more than people imagine).

Afterwards, when it was heard... the imprisonment of R' C. , I decided that I was absolved from writing, since immediately upon contemplating how up until now everything was going along fine, and suddenly such an unusual event took place, they wouldn't have to investigate and would certainly hinge it upon transgressing the words of the Rebbe.

However, apparently, they attributed the event to the wishes of the gentile on the border, and therefore there is no need to acquit himself before the Rebbe. And at the worst – he can offer a bribe by participating in Nifneh [code word for Maamud – Ed.].

There is much to be said about this sort of "hiskashrus," that he does what he is commanded – on condition that it comports with what he wants anyway.

On the other hand, I had the following thought: People that I don't know personally, and I heard my mother speak only well of them, and so, why should our first involvement with each other be with harsh words, and perhaps there is something else going on here.

Therefore, I turn to you in this matter as well, as you certainly know the details, that if

it is possible to correct the matter without words of reproach, good and well, but if it is impossible otherwise, you will certainly find the most appropriate manner for this (and obviously you can say that I wrote you the above and asked you about this). It is a pity on them. I hope you will do as mentioned and will not be put out over the bother (bother of the soul) in this.

THE MYSTERY GROWS

When I saw this letter, my heart began pounding. I had never heard from my father that the Rebbe had appointed him as a member of the hanhala of Beis Rivka or Kehot. How could my father, the Chassid, who was so careful to follow the Rebbe's instructions, transgress any of his commands?

I copied the letter and brought it to him for an explanation. My father washed his hands, put on his glasses and with awe and adoration began to read the letter. I looked at him and saw the color leave his face. He read the letter once, twice, and three times and could not believe his eyes. He had never gotten an instruction from the Rebbe Rayatz, neither personally or through a shliach, to be on the vaad of Beis Rivka under the central administration of Merkos L'Inyanei Chinuch. He had never been asked to help acquire funds to publish books in Europe by Merkos L'Inyanei Chinuch and Kehot. He had been involved in supporting Tomchei T'mimim since he was a young bachur, of his own good will (as I wrote previously), and not because someone appointed him to the task.

When I brought this letter to my father I thought I would get an explanation but instead, he was confused and dismayed. I did not sleep all night and apparently his

sleep was affected as well.

The next morning, after immersing in a mikva, learning the daily shiur of Chassidus and Nigleh and davening Shacharis, he put on his glasses and sat down to read the letter again.

He spent a long time with it, sighed, smoothed his beard, and removed his glasses.

"Now, after forty years, I understand things from a different perspective. If I understand this letter of the Rebbe correctly, the Rebbe Rayatz appointed me as a member of the vaad of Beis Rivka and as a member of the vaad of Kehot, an appointment I was unaware of until last night.

"The Rebbe MH"M, as the one responsible for the Beis Rivka schools (Merkos L'Inyanei Chinuch) and publishing (Kehot), writes to so-and-so and maintains that I did not obey. How could I have obeyed if I didn't know about this appointment? According to the letter I understand that at some later point the Rebbe Rayatz also appointed me as a member of the hanhala of Tomchei T'mimim but then he got word that supposedly I had said that I could not serve on both administrations and therefore decided to abandon Beis Rivka and only be involved with Tomchei T'mimim; and that later I received a response that if I cannot be on two committees then I should leave the hanhala of Tomchei T'mimim.

"Something did not sound right. Who hid these two letters from the Rebbe from me, and why? Who had the nerve to write to the Rebbe in my name that I could not be on two committees at the same time? Why did so-and-so, who was my good friend, hide this letter he received from the Rebbe? The Rebbe writes very sharp words here: He wanted to write to me himself but he did not know me personally and did not

want the first contact with me to be words of rebuke.

"At least it was nice to hear that his mother, Rebbetzin Chana, had nice things to say about me. The Rebbe attributes my arrest to the fact that I transgressed the Rebbe [Rayatz's] instructions, but if I had known about them, I would have surely obeyed! Perhaps I might have avoided the aggravation of being under lock and key? Believe me – (and my father sounded pained) – I searched my deeds but couldn't think of anything for which Heaven would punish me ... What should I do now that I inadvertently and unknowingly transgressed what the Rebbe said?"

I wanted to console my father but did not know how. He was quite incensed that the letters did not reach him. He was distressed that so-and-so, his dear friend, did not tell him or even hint that he had received an order, "If the matter can be corrected without rebuke, fine; and if that is not possible, then surely you will find the right way to do so." But more than anything else, my father was beside himself for not listening to the Rebbe.

THE LETTERS THAT DID NOT REACH THEIR DESTINATION

I was curious to see the letters from the Rebbe Rayatz in which he appointed my father to those positions. I opened the Igros and easily found the two letters, as follows:

B"H

27 Tammuz, 5707

Brooklyn

To the Hanhala of Merkos

L'Inyanei Chinuch

Sholom u'v'racha,

With this, I certify the founding of the branch

committee of Merkos L'Inyanei Chinuch in its European work in the following area: 1) Organizing Beis Rivka and Beis Sarah schools under the administration of Merkos L'Inyanei Chinuch in European countries; administering them and acquiring the financial means to provide for them in the future, as well as paying their existing debts. 2) Acquiring the financial means necessary for the publication of the s'farim published in Europe through Merkos L'Inyanei Chinuch and Kehot.

As members of the aforementioned committee, I hereby appoint those listed as follows:

Zalman

Katznelenbogen, Chaikel Chanin, Yehoshua Pinson, Yaakov Lipsker, Yisroel Leibov, Nachum Zalman Gurevitch, Naftali Gluskin.

Permission is granted to the aforementioned branch committees to add additional members whom they deem necessary for the ongoing work, and to forward to here the names of the new members.

With blessing

B"H

27 Elul, 5707

Brooklyn

To my friends, Anash, and the honorable and most elevated talmidei ha'T'mimim...

... and I hereby appoint as the committee for spiritual management of yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Paris...R' Avrohom Eliyahu Plotkin, chairman; R' Nochum Shmaryahu Sassonkin, R' Yisroel Noach Belinitzky, R' Shlomo Chaim Kesselman and R'



R' Chaikel with his son-in-law, R' Isaac Schwei

Betzalel Wilschansky, deputies.

As to the committee for management of financial matters and material arrangements, I hereby appoint my noble friends...R' Yisroel Noach Belinitzky, chairman; R' Peretz Mochkin, R' Isser Klugant, R' Chaikel Chanin, R' Yisroel Leibov, R' Chaim Minkowitz, R' Shmuel Betzalel Altheus and R' Bodnevitz, deputies...

Yosef Yitzchok

Till this day I have not found the letter in which the Rebbe Rayatz excused him from the vaad of Tomchei T'mimim.

I showed the letters to my father and they made him wonder all over again: How was this possible?

THINGS BEGIN TO BECOME CLEAR

In the meantime, my brother-in-law, R' Isaac Schwei a"h, came

to visit. We sat together and my father began to recount the attitudes prevalent in those times:

"We left Russia in groups of Chassidim. We were dispersed among the countries of Europe, but most Lubavitchers were with us in Peking. That is where the yeshiva Tomchei T'mimim was founded, as well as a girls' school that was called Beis Rivka. The great Chassidim and mashpiim put all their energy into the yeshiva and educating the boys because they looked askance at formal chinuch for girls.

"The daughters of Chassidim in Russia were always taught by their parents and they learned about Judaism at home, not in a formal program. Aside from the danger of studying Judaism officially, who had ever heard of a school for girls? In Poland there had been Beis Yaakov schools since 1927, but Chabad Chassidim continued to strongly criticize those who taught their daughters Torah.

"When the first instructions from the Rebbe Rayatz came to Peking to make a girls' school, the Chassidim obeyed as loyal soldiers, but without enthusiasm. It took time until the Rebbe instilled within them the need for formal education for the daughters of Chassidim.

(By the way, whereas R' Avrohom Eliyahu Plotkin reported about 120 talmidim in Tomchei T'mimim in Peking, in Beis Rivka there were about a sixth of that number. That is what it seems from a letter (#3001) from the Rebbe Rayatz to Rashag, dated 29 Adar, 1947: "... I am surprised by the small number of girls, just about twenty ... as well as the

condition of the girls, and surely you will write in more detail and in an orderly way and Hashem should grant you success both materially and spiritually.”)

“Now you understand why the Rebbe mentions politics and it being ‘beneath their dignity.’ I am imagining that the person who received the two letters from the Rebbe Rayatz, and so-and-so who received the letter from the Rebbe, thought: Tomchei T’mimim is one thing, it’s a mosad that was founded way back when and it is a holy obligation for every Chabad Chassid to support it. But new mosdos? If Chaikel Chanin will get involved in them, it will be at the expense of Tomchei T’mimim. Which is more important?”

My father recalled that this friend once said to him that “if the one who received the letters came and said to me, quoting the Rebbe, that I had to help establish Beis Rivka and Kehot, I should know that it’s a lie he made up and I shouldn’t listen to him. I didn’t think much about it since that other individual never said anything to me.”

A CLARIFYING LETTER WHICH WASN’T SIGNED OR SENT

My brother-in-law Isaac Schwei was an uncompromising Chassid. He was a clearheaded thinker and aside from his other fine qualities he was also a man of intelligence. He pointed out the words of the Rebbe, “transgressing the words of the Rebbe” as well as “there is much to be said about this sort of ‘hiskashrus,’ that he does what he is commanded – on condition that it comports with what he wants anyway.” Whereas I was more affected by the words in the letter, “It is a pity on them.”

We reread the letter, trying to analyze every word, and then my

brother-in-law said, “Since the letter was written by the Rebbe and the Rebbe is the Rebbe, it makes no difference whether it was written before the nesius; as long as Abba does not apologize to the Rebbe and tell him what happened, his ‘disobeying a command’ is still in force.”

My brother-in-law suggested that my father write it all to the Rebbe (in 5748) and apologize and ask for forgiveness, which would remove from him the taint of disobedience.

My father agreed but since writing was difficult for him, he asked my brother-in-law to write it for him and he would look it over and sign it.

My brother-in-law wrote a letter and cited all the facts and asked forgiveness from the Rebbe. My father made some corrections and the letter of apology was ready. Only the signature was missing.

A CHASSID HARMS HIMSELF SO OTHERS ARE NOT HARMED

After a few days, I noticed that the letter was still on the table.

“I decided,” said my father, “that I cannot sign this letter. In any case it sounds from the letter that the Rebbe knew that the letters and instructions did not reach me. The fact that it says “perhaps there is something else going on here” “apparently due to their not knowing,” means that the Rebbe was aware of the possibility that I did not know of the appointment. How can I badmouth and blame the Chassid so-and-so, who is now in the World of Truth, for not giving me the Rebbe’s letter? Why should I speak negatively of a dear friend? I don’t want to besmirch his honor, under any circumstances. Better that I cast myself into a

fiery furnace and not shame my friend.

“Ai, if you will say that there is a *k’peida* on me? What was decreed about me was decreed! Forty years have passed since then and the Rebbe never mentioned a word about it. How will it help me to close accounts now? Everything will be all right, the main thing is that up Above they know the truth,” he concluded firmly.

After a pause he added, “It says ‘and He will return the hearts of the fathers through the sons.’ I came to the conclusion that it was not coincidental that the Rebbe appointed you to head the Vaad L’Hafotzas Sichos and Kehot. This way, you are fulfilling the desire of the Rebbe to publish works of Chassidus, with mesirus nefesh. Apparently you are atoning for my inadvertent transgression.”

It says in the Gemara (Mo’ed Katan 18a), “Three things are said regarding fingernails: the one who buries them is a tzaddik; the one who burns them is a Chassid; the one who tosses them away is a rasha. Why? Lest a pregnant woman pass over them and miscarry.”

Why is the Chassid better than the tzaddik? The answer given is that even if they are buried, they can become uncovered and a pregnant woman could walk on them. By burning them, the Chassid takes them out of this world and removes any possibility that they will be uncovered.

Why is someone who burns the nails called a Chassid? Because burning anything that was part of the body can cause harm to the person, yet the Chassid is willing to suffer the damage as long as he doesn’t hurt someone else.

My father the Chassid chose to harm himself.