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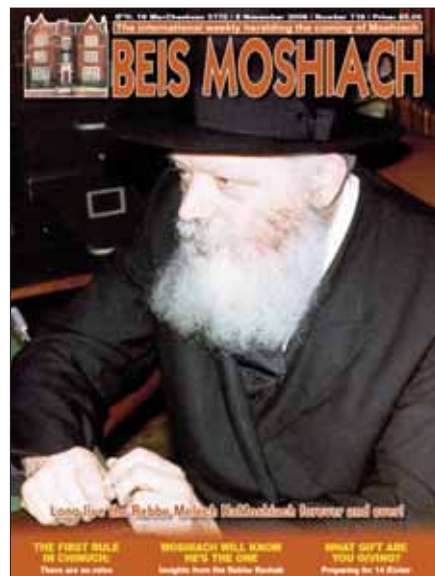
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# SEEING TRUTH

Sichos In English

## A CHILD'S TEARS

When Rabbi Sholem Dov Ber, the fifth Rebbe of Lubavitch, was four or five years old, he was taken to his grandfather the Tzemach Tzedek, for a birthday blessing.

When he entered his grandfather's room, he began to cry. After calming him, his grandfather asked him the reason for his tears. The child replied, "In cheider, we learned that G-d revealed Himself to Avrohom. Why doesn't He reveal Himself to me?"

The Tzemach Tzedek replied, "When a Jew [1] who is ninety-nine years old recognizes that he must circumcise himself, he deserves that G-d reveal Himself to him." [2]

## REDEFINING LANDMARKS

The Zohar [3] also highlights Avrohom's circumcision as a turning point in the nature of the Divine revelations he received.

When describing the revelations Avrohom was granted before the circumcision, the Torah states, [4] "And G-d appeared to him in a vision," using the Aramaic term "machezeh" for the word vision.

In contrast, Parshas VaYeira begins "And G-d appeared to him," [5] using a Hebrew term "VaYeira" which implies a direct revelation.

Hebrew is Lashon HaKodesh, "the holy tongue," the language which G-d employs to express Himself. Other languages, by contrast, are human inventions.

By using an Aramaic term, the Torah implies that the revelations

Avrohom experienced before circumcision were clothed in the material trappings of our world.

He could conceive of G-d only in human terms; he could not appreciate Him as He truly is. A great gap separates mortal man from G-d's infinity.

By definition, any human conception can be only a restricted and narrow view.

The act of circumcision transformed the nature of Avrohom's being, enabling him to perceive G-d as He is. Therefore the revelation of VaYeira was direct, without any veils or constraints. G-d manifested Himself for Avrohom openly; this spanned the gap separating a created being from its Creator.

## MAN'S STRIVING, G-D'S RESPONSE

The above clarifies the distinction between Parshas Lech Lecha and Parshas VaYeira.

Parshas Lech Lecha describes Avrohom's striving to go beyond the limits of mortal existence and develop a complete bond with G-d. [6]

The culmination of this spiritual journey was his circumcision, which established a bond with G-d in his actual flesh. [7]

Parshas VaYeira, by contrast, represents a different mode of conduct.

The direct revelation of G-dliness remade Avrohom's nature.

As he existed within a material body and functioned within his worldly environment, he was able to

share a complete and all-encompassing bond with G-d.

Avrohom left this heritage to his descendants, for the deeds of the forefathers serve as a sign to their children. [8]

Every person has the potential to transcend his individual nature and to enter into a limitless bond with G-d through his observance of the Torah and its mitzvos.

## SICKNESS AND HEALING

The revelation of Parshas VaYeira is associated with healing.

Avrohom was suffering from the pain of the circumcision. G-d came to "visit the sick," [9] and with that visit, healed Avrohom. [10]

To explain this phenomenon: The Hebrew word "choleh" meaning "afflicted by sickness," is numerically equivalent to 49. [11]

Our Sages [12] speak of "50 gates of understanding" which grant man knowledge of G-d.

Within the scope of mortal knowledge, it is possible to "enter" only 49 of these gates. The fiftieth level is by definition above our limited grasp.

A person who has attained the forty-ninth level appreciates his inadequacy [13] and wants to rise above it. And the fact that the very nature of his humanity prevents him from doing so makes him sick, pained with a yearning for a complete bond with G-d. To this sickness, King Solomon alluded with his allegory, [14] "Support me with the stout trunks; let me rest among the apple trees, for I am lovesick."

This sickness is healed through

the consummate revelation of VaYeira.

The direct manifestation of G-d fulfills this yearning, and remakes the person's nature, allowing him to realize his innate G-dly essence, and function above his mortal limitations. [15]

## WITH THE HEART OF A CHILD

Since the desire for a direct bond with G-d is a fundamental element of a person's makeup, when the Rebbe Rashab (rabbi Shalom Dovber) came to his grandfather for a birthday blessing, he expressed this longing.

The truth this story points to is not merely individual in nature.

Within every one of us there is a childlike dimension that enables us to relate to G-d with youthful simplicity and single-mindedness.

Without ceasing to function with mature responsibility, each of us can share an all-encompassing relationship with G-d. [16]

The above is particularly relevant in the present age, brief moments before Moshiach's coming.

For the essence of the Era of the Redemption will be the direct revelation of G-d; "Your Master will conceal Himself no longer, and your eyes will perceive your Master." [17]

As we stand on the threshold of this era, the inner thirst within us can be felt more powerfully.

Moreover, the potential exists to anticipate the Redemption, and experience a foretaste of its revelations in the present age.

We can enrich our lives by developing an awareness of G-d, relating to Him not only on a conceptual level, but as an actual force pervading every aspect of our daily activities.

## MEASURE FOR MEASURE

The Torah tells us that G-d appeared to Avrohom while "sitting

at the entrance of his tent, in the heat of the day." [18]

Why was he sitting there? To look for guests. [19]

Avrohom dedicated himself to deeds of kindness, feeding hungry wayfarers in an effort to heighten their awareness of G-d. [20]

Because he extended himself [21] to bring others closer to G-d, G-d showed him a supreme expression of closeness.

"Days are coming..., [when people will be] hungry - but not for bread, thirsty - but not for water, but to hear the word of G-d." [22]

At times, as in the story of the Rebbe Rashab, this thirst is consciously felt, and in other instances, a person may be unaware of his own thirst. Nevertheless, when we emulate Avrohom's example and extend ourselves to these individuals, we will discover a readiness to respond that reflects their inner nature.

And as in the example of Avrohom, these outreach efforts will benefit not only the recipients, but also those who give, precipitating a deeper and more inclusive connection to G-dliness. And this connection will continue to grow and blossom until it reaches consummate perfection in the Era of the Redemption; may this take place in the immediate future.

*Adapted from Likkutei Sichos, Vol. X, p. 49ff.  
Sichos Shabbos Parshas VaYeira 5749, 5750, 5751,  
5752*

### NOTES:

1. According to an alternate version "a tzaddik."
2. Sichos Chaf Cheshvan, 5693; appears in a condensed form in HaYom Yom, p. 103.
3. Vol. I, p. 88b, see also p. 98a.
4. Genesis 15:1.
5. Ibid. 18:1.
6. See the previous essay in this series, entitled "A Journey To One's True Self."
7. See Genesis 17:13.
8. Or HaTorah, Lech Lecha; cf. Ramban on Genesis 12:6, B'Reishis Rabba 40:6.
9. Sota 14a.

10. See the commentary of the Ramban to Genesis 18:2.

In explanation, one might say that with regard to the visiting the sick, our Sages (Nedarim 39b) state that the visit removes a sixtieth of the person's infirmity. When, however, a sick person is visited by G-d Himself, the infirmity is removed entirely. See Likkutei Sichos, Vol. V, p. 84.

11. Taamei HaMitzvos from the Arizal, Parshas VaYeira.

12. Rosh HaShana 21b.

13. Needless to say, this also should apply to a person on a lower rung. Nevertheless, often, when an individual has not developed himself, he is content with his inadequacy and does not realize the need for growth and change.

A person who has attained the forty-ninth gate, by contrast, is concerned with his personal development, understands the nature of his limitations, and desires to transcend them.

14. Song of Songs 2:5. See the interpretation of this concept in Or HaTorah, Parshas VaYeira, 88b.

15. With the expression "And G-d appeared to him," the Torah indicates that the revelation permeated Avrohom entirely, suffusing every aspect of his personality with a deeper bond with G-d. Moreover, the Torah mentions that this revelation took place "in the plains of Mamrei," indicating that the intent was that Avrohom extend the revelation beyond his own person, transforming the nature of his surrounding environment.

16. In addition to the lesson the story holds for us as individuals, it also communicates an important lesson for us as parents: we must appreciate the unique sensitivity our children possess and educate them in a manner that makes G-d a real and powerful force in their lives. They should desire a bond with G-d with the intensity that can bring them to tears.

17. Isaiah 30:20; see also Tanya, ch. 36.

18. Genesis 18:1.

19. Rashi on this verse.

20. Thus after providing them with food and drink, Avrohom insisted that his guests bless "He from whose bounty you have eaten... He who spoke and brought the world into being" (Sota 10a).

21. Avrohom's dedication can be seen in the fact that he sought guests despite the fact that he was: a. ninety-nine years old; b. recovering from the circumcision; and c. exposed to the heat of the day.

22. Amos 8:11.

# A BEAUTIFUL SIGHT

By Menachem Ziegelboim

*These two Chassidim had made the trip from Beshenkowitz to Lubavitch on foot every year since 5631/1871, when the Rebbe Maharash was the Nasi. For 33 years they had walked to Lubavitch to receive the Torah in the shadow of the Rebbe... \* A story for Chaf Cheshvan, the birthday of the Rebbe Rashab.*

## PART I

It was Shavuot, 5662/1902, and Lubavitch was bustling with guests. They came from towns near and far, from villages and cities in the district and beyond in order to receive the Torah again in the presence of the Rebbe Rashab.

The days before and after Yom Tov, were extremely busy for the Rebbe. He made prodigious efforts to accommodate all the guests for yechidus. For this purpose two times for yechidus were arranged, from eleven in the morning until two in the afternoon and from five in the evening until ten at night.

If that wasn't enough, the senior Chassidim asked the Rebbe to repeat the maamer Chassidus that he had said on Shavuot, "And Hashem descended on Har Sinai." They claimed that the chozrim and talmidim were unable to review it properly and so they needed to hear it again.

Then another thirty or so more guests arrived, and of course, they

also needed to be given time for yechidus. When yechidus was over the Rebbe went to his mother, Rebbetzin Rivka's home, as was his daily custom, to honor her by serving her a cup of tea.

These were tense times for the Rebbe. Only a few days earlier, representatives from the Russian government had come to yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in order to check out the talmidim's status and to see how it was that none of them had been drafted. It was only Hashem's mercy that enabled them to clear the inspections safely.

Though that hurdle was behind him, the Rebbe Rashab still had a lot on his plate. He was very busy with communal work concerning the leadership of Jewry in Russia. There was no shortage of problems that threatened authentic Jewish life. The Maskilim were doing their best to infiltrate the hearts of Jews through their "updated" curriculum. In addition, government ministers were trying

to pass harsh decrees on Jews living within the Pale of Settlement. Anti-Semitism was growing and there was fear of pogroms against the Jews who lived in the small towns and villages.

The Rebbe Rashab expended much effort on behalf of the Jewish people, in addition to his personal avodas Hashem and his leadership of Chabad Chassidim. To top it off, the Rebbe Rashab's health was precarious and he often had to travel to other European countries in order to consult with doctors.

No wonder, then, that when at last his holiday obligations were concluded, the Rebbe left his home in Lubavitch and went to vacation in the countryside. It was four in the afternoon when the Rebbe boarded the wagon waiting for him outside his home. The guests, talmidim and residents of Lubavitch came out to see him off.

Many people stood in the street and others peered out the windows of the small zal. The courtyard was full and yet more and more people were joining the throngs. As the horses began moving the crowd called out to the Rebbe, "Travel in good health and return in good health!"

The wagon set off on the path from Lubavitch through the streets of Shileva and Zaritsha, passing through the villages of Slavadishatz, Shuvkas and Rudnia. The Rebbe recited the Tikkun Leil Shavuot for the second time, as was his custom.

Shortly after the wagon passed by the inn called Chaimovka



(named for its first owner, Chaim, who had lived seventy years earlier) the Rebbe instructed the driver to stop. He washed his hands and recited T'fillas HaDerech, his eyes closed in concentration.

After some further distance on the highway, the wagon continued on a side road. There was only a short distance remaining to their destination, the resort area of Serebrinka.

## PART II

The winding road went through a grove of trees. It was quiet and the air was clean. The only sound

to be heard was the swishing of leaves.

The Rebbe sat in the wagon, tired and worn-out. He told the driver to slow down to enable him to breathe deeply of the fresh air. He leaned on the windowsill and closed his eyes. His son, later to be the Rebbe Rayatz, sat opposite him and watched. He so wanted to tell him about the recent difficulties he had faced in which he was suspected of covering for his talmidim so they could avoid the draft, and about his success, "But seeing his tiredness I couldn't open my mouth and tell him, knowing that it would be painful for him."

The Rebbe opened his eyes and looked at his son tenderly and said, "It says in the *Book of Yetzira* that Hashem created opposites, good versus evil and evil versus good, good from good and evil from evil, good discerns evil and evil discerns good, good hidden away for those who are good and evil hidden away for those who are evil. These four categories – each one fits those for whom it is appropriate – they serve as the order of avoda."

Then he began speaking about ways of serving Hashem and clarified them.

## PART III

In the distance they could see two bearded men sitting on the side of the road. They were obviously resting from a long trek. As the wagon approached, the Rebbe Rayatz noticed that the two men were R' Peretz HaKohen and R' Menachem Mendel, schoolteachers from Beshenkowitz.

"Father, look!" said the Rebbe Rayatz as he pointed at the two figures.

The Rebbe Rashab gazed at the two men. As the wagon drew closer they became clearer. He instructed the driver to slow down and to pass as closely as possible to where the men were sitting.

The men did not notice the wagon passing near them. Nor did they notice the Rebbe looking at them from the window. They sat in the shade wearing their tallis katans and yarmulkes while their outer garments, shoes, hats and walking sticks were lying beside them.

R' Menachem Mendel leaned on his elbows which were supported by his thighs and he had his eyes closed. He was listening closely to what R' Peretz was saying. R' Peretz also had his eyes closed as he reviewed a maamer

(Drawing by Zalman Kleiman)



***Many people stood in the street and others peered out the windows of the small zal. The courtyard was full and yet more and more people were joining the throngs.***

out loud in the special tune for reviewing Chassidus. With hand motions he explained, questioned and resolved, in the manner of those engaged in deep analytical learning.

When the Rebbe saw that the two were sitting with eyes closed and oblivious of their surroundings he motioned that the wagon should stop. The wagon driver stopped and the Rebbe continued to gaze upon them with a look of great satisfaction on his face. The pair of Chassidim were affording him a bit of nachas after so much heartache.

As they continued on their way, the Rebbe told his son that they were reviewing the maamer, "Mi Modad B'Shaalo Mayim," which he had delivered on the second day of Shavuos.

The Rebbe Rayatz nodded and told his father that these two Chassidim had made the trip from Beshenkowitz to Lubavitch on foot every year since 5631/1871, when the Rebbe Maharash was the Nasi. For 33 years they had walked to Lubavitch, even during the years when the Rebbe Rashab had not officially accepted the nesius and

was not in Lubavitch and they seemingly had no reason to go. Nevertheless, they had kept up their practice of going to Lubavitch to receive the Torah in the shadow of the Rebbe. They would set out on the road to arrive in Lubavitch for the Shabbos before Shavuos and they stayed until the first Shabbos after Shavuos. Then they walked home to Beshenkowitz.

"Apparently the sight of R' Peretz and R' Menachem Mendel made a great impression on my father," wrote the Rebbe Rayatz. The wagon continued on its way and it was quite some time until the Rebbe was roused from his thoughts and said emotionally, "5661 years, nine months, thirteen days, fifteen hours, and such-and-such many minutes this piece of earth waited until Peretz and Mendel would come, sit on that mound of earth and review divrei Torah.

"They fulfilled and revealed the G-dly will hidden away in the Primordial Thought of Adam Kadmon, which was sealed off in the Ohr Ein Sof, to illuminate the worlds prior to the *tzimtzum*. It is

hard to imagine the pleasure caused up Above by this; hard to imagine the envy that the "Supernal Forms" (high levels of G-dliness) have for these melamdin from Beshenkowitz. The Rebbeim who are in Gan Eden are happy with descendants like these."

## PART IV

When the wagon arrived in Rudnia, a small town on the highway between Lubavitch and the vacation spot, Rabbanim, shochtim, distinguished balabatim and three melamdin with about fifty talmidim were there to greet the Rebbe. The Rebbe told the wagon driver to stop and he spoke to the rabbanim and those who greeted him for a few moments and blessed them with a peaceful summer and good parnasa.

Then the wagon continued on its way to the summer home in Serebrinka. After a short drive along a dirt road which veered off the highway, the Rebbe and his son noticed the resort on the mountaintop. The house was in the midst of a large garden with many trees and the blue sky stretched above it. Tea and warm milk were already waiting for them.

"May Hashem bless our coming with success," the Rebbe Rayatz concluded his diary entry in the tranquil atmosphere, nestled among the trees.

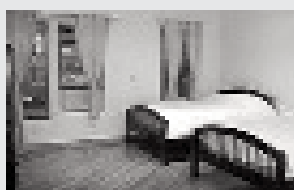
*(Based on Seifer HaToldos Admur Rashab p. 281 and on)*

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# THE REBBE'S HOUSE IN GEDERA

By Nosson Avrohom

Translated by Michael Leib Dobry

*Will the phenomenon of constructing buildings similar to 770 move from the realm of public institutions to encompass private structures as well? That remains to be seen, but Gedera residents Rabbi Nes Carmon and his wife have already started the trend by building their private home as a replica of 770, and they have become a magnet for the citizenry of Gedera and the surrounding area. "To live in such a house is most compelling. Jews know that they can enter such a house, ask questions on Judaism, and even receive advice and guidance. This house is the Rebbe's house." Another article in the series on replicas of 770 Eastern Parkway throughout the world, presented in honor of the Year of 770.*

Tens of thousands of Lubavitcher chassidim worldwide recently commemorated the 21<sup>st</sup> of Elul, the day in 5700 when the Rebbe Rayatz, *nishmaso Eden*, established 770 Eastern Parkway as his place of residence. Ever since then, this location – commonly referred to as "Beis Chayeinu" or "Beis Moshiach" – has been transformed into a magnet and a source of inspiration for hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of Jews throughout the globe.

While in this building, many Jews from all walks of life have revealed the deep inner Jewish spark hidden within them. Many non-Jews, too,



discovered there the source of inspiration for their life's values and true ethics. It is no wonder that the edifice revered by all has turned into a symbol and an example that has been imitated in many places.

In recent years, dozens of replicas of the original structure on Eastern Parkway have been constructed all over the world. These buildings are almost always Chabad institutions

Chabad Houses, community centers, or other bases of outreach activities. They constitute a source of tremendous influence not only upon those who enter the building, but also those upon who pass nearby.

Will this phenomenon begin to penetrate the private realm? Will private individuals also begin to build their own homes according to a design similar to 770? It still isn't possible to know that for certain, but what we do know is that Gedera residents Rabbi and Mrs. Nes Carmon have already built their private home in the model of 770, and they have a thrilling life story to accompany it...

I just now finished a conversation with the reporter Shaul Meizlish, who wrote a book about the history of the city of Gedera and its interesting sites," said R' Nes Carmon with a twinkle in his eye.

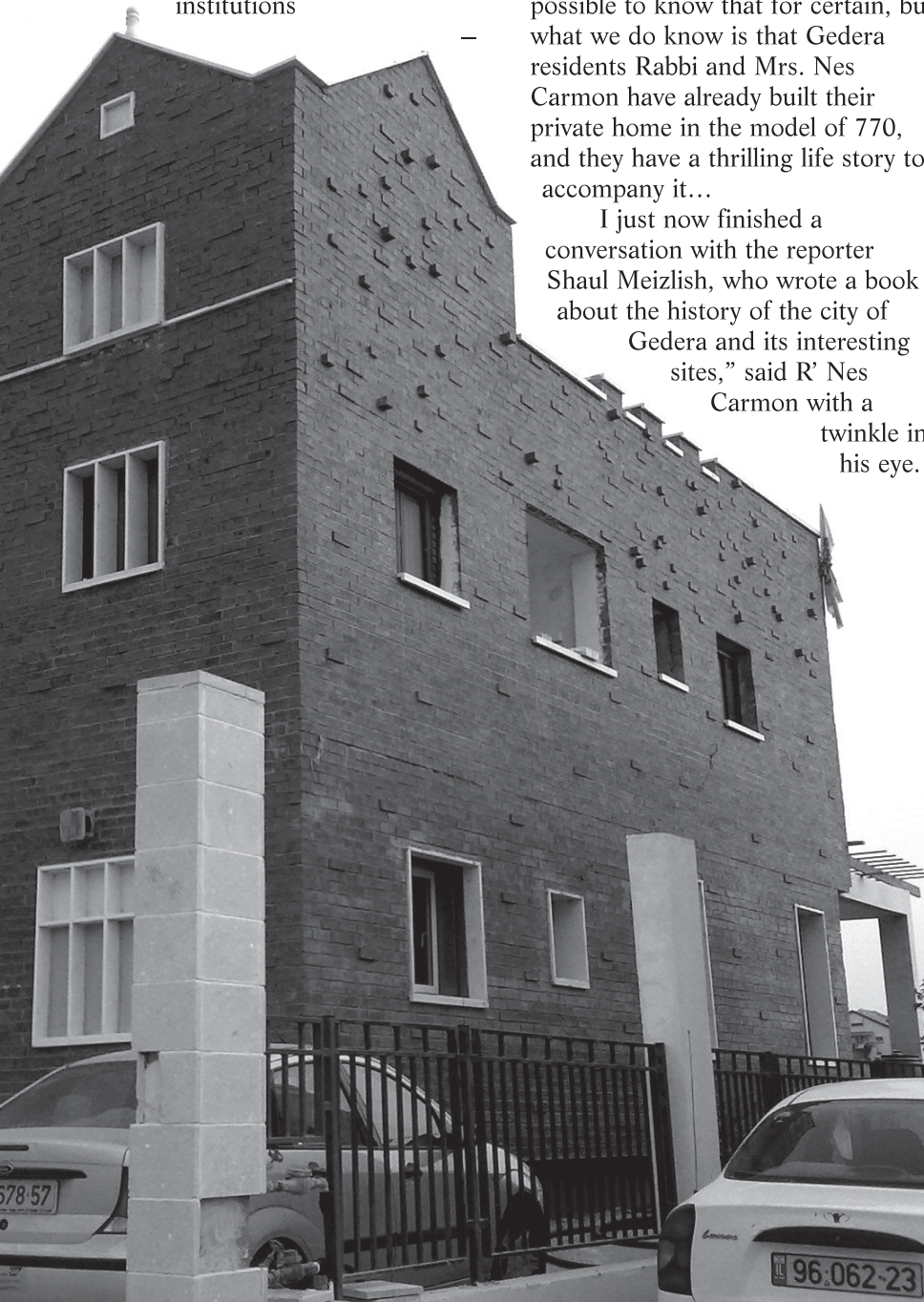
Apparently his home, which has become a literal tourist attraction among the city's residents, is worthy of mention. "You have to understand that to live in such a house is most compelling. Jews know that they can enter such a house, ask questions on Judaism, and even receive advice and guidance. This house is the Rebbe's house. We hold farbrengens and Torah classes here, and many local residents write to the Rebbe and experience personal salvation."

## MITZVOS IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF SIMCHA

Just five years ago, the Carmon family arrived in Gedera. The local shliach of the Rebbe MH"M, Rabbi Binyomin Karniel, invited them to assist in shlichus activities. R' Nes was already familiar with Gedera long before.

Nes was born in Bat Yam, and even in his youth, he began giving off very antagonistic vibes towards anything that even had a whiff of Judaism. "I was totally into my personal outlook of the world – if there is nothing; then there is *really* nothing. I didn't even observe the prominent fast days out of sheer defiance."

His journey to the path of his forefathers did not follow the normal route of a nagging sense of spiritual emptiness or lack of fulfillment. Rather, a bit of contemplation led him to decide that if someone wants to have a happy married life, he must follow the path of Torah and mitzvos. "The path of a Torah observant Jew has certain fences and barriers that enable him to live a balanced life. Though these barriers had no meaning for me, I found that I was no longer so opposed to them. Perhaps it was worth it? After much thought and consideration, I decided that I would try to be an observant Jew for a period of two years. I began putting on t'fillin and kissing the mezuzah, but only in the





outward sense.

"I received an explanation of the halachos and customs from the Sephardic rav whom I knew from Bat Yam. This was a cold, calculated, and psychological decision that this was the best way to live, made without any inner Jewish feeling or deep understanding. I went through the motions, but I didn't feel any of the inner Divine energy that Torah and mitzvos possess."

The first occasion when he began to feel some inner "stirrings" was when he and his wife took part in seminars sponsored by kiruv organizations, designed to bring proof that everything pertaining to the conduct of the world has its basis in Torah. "The speakers presented us with examples and research studies that left us positively astounded. I began to feel that perhaps that there was something deeper and more serious here than just the way to live a proper life. We took an active part in these lectures and seminars over a period of four years, while developing a closer relationship with the Rebbe's shliach in Gedera, Rabbi Benny Karniel, and we would participate in his Torah classes and farbrengens."

The Carmons knew there had to be more to it than the rigid, demanding and meticulous lifestyle the lecturers portrayed. They were searching for warmth and feeling. In the chassidic teachings from Rabbi Karniel, they found it. "Our great move towards chassidus and the Rebbe was when we decided to live for a period of several years in nearby Rechovot. We were looking for a more chareidi location, and it turned out that changing one's place really does change one's fortune. We began to visit the Chabad shul, became acquainted with the chassidim and mashpiim, participated in shiurim and farbrengens, and...we were swept

up.

"It was like cold water for a thirsty soul. Chassidus illuminated and awakened us. The spice of chassidus gave each mitzvah a new flavor. I began to feel a sense of true inner fulfillment. Everything was now done in an aura of chesed and simcha, without any sadness or inner fear. I became a chassid and I felt like a long-lost son who had finally found his home – chassidus – and his father – the Rebbe."

## THE REBBE WANTS US TO BUILD A HOUSE!

Not long afterwards, the Carmon family was asked to return to assist in the shlichus in Gedera, where they had already acquired a plot of land. "The plan was to rent out our house in Rechovot, and we would use the money to rent a place in Gedera until we finished building our new home on the plot of land we had bought. We wrote to the Rebbe about our plans, and we were privileged to receive an answer in Igros Kodesh, Vol. 24, in which the Rebbe writes that everyone must build a house, even though the Gemara states that someone who buys a house becomes impoverished. Nevertheless, the Rebbe stated that a Jew must build, and it should be done in the fullest sense, from top to bottom. The Rebbe concluded the letter by stating that all this would be a victory for the Alter Rebbe. We didn't understand how this would constitute a victory for him, but one thing we understood clearly: The Rebbe wants us to build a house!

"We decided to take the plunge, and began to inquire about the actual construction process. Over a period of several months, I found out exactly how to start to build a house, what must be done first, how to save money on building expenses, and a thousand other questions and considerations. Anyone who has built a house knows how complex

the whole process is.

"When I completed all the administrative procedures and received all the necessary building permits, I decided to get right to work. I received some initial guidance from one of my co-workers, who recommended a qualified and honest building contractor. I work for a steel company, which had previously dealt somewhat with the import of bricks from South Africa and their sale to building contractors throughout Eretz Yisroel. This friend of mine was acquainted with a certain contractor through their joint business ventures, and after meeting with him, we immediately put the wheels in motion.

"Just before the bulldozers got to work on the land, I suddenly came up with a revolutionary idea. If we're already building a house, and we received a marvelous bracha from the Rebbe MH"M on the project, why not build it to resemble 770? It will be a replica of 'Beis Chayeinu', and the house will also serve as a beis midrash and a place of mitzvos, in addition to being our private home! My wife agreed with the idea, on the condition that we first write to the Rebbe.

"We went to the architect, bringing with us a picture of 770. We requested that she change the external appearance of the house to make it as identical to the one in the picture as possible. We weren't at all surprised when afterwards, during the months of construction, we felt how the sitra achra was trying to trip us up at every opportunity. Everything became extremely difficult and complex. It was clear that this was not just your average house building. For example, the contractor who arranged our doors, an Arab living in the territories, had started putting in the doorposts, and just before he returned to finish the job, he suddenly died... Professional builders were replaced quite

regularly. We didn't know what to do, but we also saw how the entire building process was accompanied by a series of amazing answers from the Rebbe.

"On Erev Rosh Hashanah, the building had still not been finished. Nonetheless, we moved in and the painting, construction and final details were completed with the passage of time."

Only a few months after the house was finished, the Carmons began to understand why there had been so many delays and obstacles in the process of building their home. Its very existence represents another stage in the spreading of the wellsprings of chassidus throughout Gedera. Many Jews pass near the house and are confronted with the concept of the Rebbe for the first time, not to mention the entire subject of Moshiach and the Redemption. "On their own, these people make the connection with the original structure on Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn. Many people tell me that they had the opportunity to visit 770 in New York, and then they came to our house because they wanted to see an actual model of the original. Others simply wanted to know the meaning behind the building's architectural style, why the roof is built with a unique triangular shape, and we are happy to provide an explanation.

"On the one hand, it is a wondrous feeling to live in such a house. However, on the other hand, it is also a great responsibility to act as someone fit to live in a house identical to 770. From the very first moment, we felt that the Rebbe was with us in this house and escorting us at every step.

"Two months after we moved in,



**Drawing strength from the Rebbe,  
Rabbi Nes Carmon in "Beis Chayeinu"**

we had our first opportunity to experience how much the Rebbe was following the progress of this building project in every detail. Someone passed by and asked me if I was the building's resident, and I replied in the affirmative. The man identified himself as an employee of Zmora, the company in charge of building inspection, and he claimed that to the best of his knowledge, we had violated construction laws. I didn't know where such a charge could have come from, especially since it was totally unfounded. I told him that he should check the building plans carefully and he will see for himself that there were no unlawful deviations from building regulations. The conversation was over, but it was clear that this was not the end of the matter. Three weeks later, we received a letter from Zmora calling upon us to

appear at their company's offices to clarify the apparent building violations. It was clear that the delays and obstacles in connection with the building of our home had not yet come to an end. That night, I wrote a letter to the Rebbe and asked for a bracha. The Rebbe's answer dealt with the importance of making a farbrengen at a chanukas ha'bayis.

"I remembered that in fact, we hadn't yet made a chanukas ha'bayis. I didn't waste a moment, and I immediately informed all of my friends and acquaintances that we would be celebrating a chanukas ha'bayis with a farbrengen in our home that night. Many people came to participate, and it was a truly joyous event. Everyone showered us

with blessings, creating a marvelous and very special atmosphere. On Sunday, the day of our hearing, I came to the company offices filled with absolute faith that the truth would come to light.

"As we began the hearing, the man informed me that everything that he says is recorded and documented. I was not intimidated and I explained to him again that according to the building plans, there were no violations. During the meeting, he sounded calm and thoughtful. I couldn't understand why he had even invited me to the office. Eventually, he asked me why I had chosen to live specifically in this neighborhood. I gave him a reply, and the meeting ended. Before I left, he asked me to fill out the necessary forms to enable us to obtain a permit to enter the house legally. Later, I discovered that one of his close friends is among my circle of supporters, and this friend told him that he would be well



## ***At the end of the dream, he thanked the Rebbe for taking the time to speak with him, stating that this was the greatest bracha he could ever possibly receive...***

advised not to cause me any problems, as this was no private house – this was the Rebbe’s house...”

“Because this friend had been invited to participate in our chanukas ha’bayis, he knew about the problems we were encountering. He heard the whole story, and he issued a warning. In the merit of the Rebbe’s instructions in ‘Igros Kodesh’ to make a chanukas ha’bayis, it was all resolved smoothly.

“Many people really do look upon this house as the Rebbe’s house. This is a house where they can come in and write to the Rebbe, a house where they can participate in Torah classes and take part in Shabbos and Yom Tov meals. The local papers have already printed numerous articles and other references about this house, called by many ‘the red house’, which really has established a name for itself in Gadera. More than once, I have seen people stopping their cars in the street to gaze at the house, realizing that this was not just your run-of-the mill building.”

In this context, Rabbi Nes Carmon began to tell us an amazing story that happened to his father-in-law, who has a room in their house. “This deeply moving story took place last Sukkos...”

“One morning, my father-in-law came to me and asked that I get him a large and elegant picture of the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, to hang on the wall in his room. We didn’t understand why he suddenly came with such a request, and when we asked him for an explanation, we were deeply moved by his reply. My

father-in-law was already in his seventies, and he was a Holocaust survivor who had been rescued from the fires of the Nazi concentration camps. He was a very realistic Jew with an analytical mind. He had only recently begun to put on t’fillin on a daily basis and keep Shabbos, after many years when he refused to even hear of such a thing.

“He said that the previous night, the Rebbe had come to him in a dream and asked for details about his parents. He told the Rebbe that they had been brutally murdered in the Holocaust, along with millions of other Jews. The Rebbe expressed his sympathy, and then he told him that he too had suffered greatly from the Nazis, including the slaughter of several members of his own family. The entire conversation was conducted in Yiddish, and concluded with my father-in-law asking the Rebbe why he never came to Eretz Yisroel.

“My father-in-law was most excited by this dream meeting with the Rebbe. He noted that it seemed so real that when he woke up, he literally had to pinch himself to make certain that it really was a dream and not a reality. The Rebbe’s genuine interest in his past and the difficult experiences that he endured, as one who had suffered from the same lot, made his affection for the Rebbe increase tremendously. At the end of the dream, he thanked the Rebbe for taking the time to speak with him, stating that this was the greatest bracha he could ever possibly receive...

“When he finished giving us the details of this amazing dream, he added that he now wants a picture

of the Rebbe to hang in his room, so that he can derive spiritual strength from the Rebbe in any time of trouble...”

### **OUR “ANI MA’AMIN”: “LIGHTS TO ILLUMINATE”**

Despite the fact that the Carmon family home does not operate as an official Chabad House – as there has been a very successful Chabad House operating in Gadera for many years already under the directorship of Rabbi Benny Karniel – it does host numerous activities in the area of spreading the wellsprings outward. They include many “one-on-one” discussions, a regular Tanya class for women, and an “Igros Kodesh” center, where many people have come to ask for the Rebbe’s bracha and advice, and have had the privilege of experiencing personal salvation.

“Almost every week, we meet with new people. There’s one woman who for many years had not been privileged to experience motherhood, yet in the merit in the Rebbe’s brachos, she gave birth to two children. Ever since then, she has undertaken the responsibility of publicizing the weekly Torah class held in our home. She merited to see with her own eyes the Divine strength of the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, and has ‘infected’ all of her friends with the fire of her hiskashrus.

“One amazing story that has been circulating and made considerable waves in town occurred with one of her close friends, who lives on a nearby moshav. She was never able to complete a pregnancy successfully to full term, experiencing this heartbreak year after year. When she came for a shiur, she decided to ask the Rebbe for a bracha. She opened the volume of ‘Igros Kodesh’ to a letter that the Rebbe wrote to a woman who had to

request forgiveness from someone who had passed away. This woman blushed and recalled that in fact there was a woman who had passed away some years whom she had offended.

"She apparently didn't understand that when you ask the Rebbe something and the Rebbe responds, you must fulfill what is written in the response in order to merit experiencing a miracle. A few months later, she expressed her distress over the fact that she had not yet been privileged to bear children. I asked her if she had fulfilled the Rebbe's request that she ask forgiveness from that departed woman, yet to my great surprise, she said that she hadn't done so. I told her that if she wants the bracha to be fulfilled, she has to do it. She now understood that you can't play games with the Rebbe's brachos, and she proceeded to organize a minyan, went to the departed woman's grave,

and asked for forgiveness. That same year, she gave birth to a boy..."

Rabbi Nes Carmon is the address on all matters pertaining to 770. When he travels to "Beis Chayeinu", he suggests to all his friends and supporters that they write letters to the Rebbe and send them with him. Many, if not most, take him up on his offer.

Rabbi Nes Carmon's principal "Ani Maamin" is "lights to illuminate". It was this that inspired him to build his house as a replica of 770, and this is also how he conducts his life. "I have noticed that the Rebbe's approach in avoda is 'And you will be gathered one by one'. The Rebbe works on each and every Jew in a deep and most inner fashion. Recently, we sent a young man, previously affiliated with the 'knitted kippa' community, to go and learn in the Chabad yeshiva in Rishon L'Tzion. Today, he is a full-

fledged 'Tamim' in every respect. We had first become acquainted with him around our Shabbos table, which led to his participation in our Torah classes until eventually he made the decision to progress further in his religious observance."

Rabbi Carmon's tremendous faith in the Rebbe's instructions and prophecies on the subject of Besuras HaGeula is made with much "glory of Yaakov", and he manages to infect all those around him. "We daven in the nearby Romanian shul, where many other Chabad chassidim also daven, and we make the holy proclamation of 'Yechi' without any problems or complaints. When a chassid clearly expresses his natural heartfelt faith, his words are accepted and have an effect. We must internalize the fact that the Rebbe is here with us and accompanying us every step of the way."

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



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# THE REASON THE VISA WAS GRANTED



Rabbi Nachman Yosef Twersky

By Menachem Ziegelboim

## PART I

How magnificent is the soul of a Jew. Even after many years of estrangement, it can be re-awakened to a spirit of holiness and purity. Sometimes it doesn't take much to revive it, while other times it requires great effort.

The following story, publicized for the first time, is told by Rabbi Nachman Yosef Twersky, a maggid shiur in Oholei Torah mesivta in Crown Heights. He related this story during the weekly Melaveh Malka that takes place at the "Menachem Mendel" shul in Crown Heights.

The Admur, Rabbi Menachem Nachum Twersky z"l of Rachmastrivka, R' Nachman Yosef's great-grandfather, had many Chassidim throughout Russia who visited his court to bask in his glory and receive counsel and a bracha from him. His blessings were famous and many experienced salvation as a result.

Life in Rachmastrivka continued as usual until Tuesday, the eve of 22 Cheshvan, 5678/1917. Hundreds of thousands of workers demonstrated in the streets of Russia against the provisional government of Alexander Kerensky because of the terrible economic situation. Production

dropped due to the strikes, resulting in a drastic shortage in fuel and other basics. Workers rebelled against their supervisors, peasants rebelled against the landowners and army discipline broke down. The increased anarchy caused a drop in the value of money, which led to despair on the part of those who were well-to-do. There was a feeling of enormous tension.

In the middle of the night, as though by pre-arranged signal, the angry masses attacked central buildings belonging to the provisional government and a revolution led by Vladimir Lenin was underway. It was a populist revolt and the goal was to take over the government.

The signal for the start of the revolution was when rebels fired a cannon shot from the ship Aurora and then overran the Czar's Winter Palace in Petersburg. The palace was looted and the royal family arrested. Lenin announced a change in the name of the country from Russia to Soviet Russia.

The Russian Revolution did not end there. For three years there was a bloody civil war between the "Whites" and the "Reds," the communists. In the Ukraine, the

Ukrainian nationalist "Black Army" joined the fray, with the Germans and the Poles taking part. Not surprisingly, the Jews were the first victims, as they were accused of being the enemy of both sides, the "Whites" and the "Reds."

Amidst the chaos, the Ukrainians waged pogroms against the Jews. Jewish lives were available for the taking. Each time one of the warring sides conquered some territory they blamed the Jews for helping the other side.

Hundreds of Jewish communities across Russia, and in the Ukraine in particular, were destroyed. Whoever was able to flee for their lives did so. The Jewish community in Rachmastrivka was destroyed. The Admur, R' Menachem Nachum had to leave the empire he had built up and together with his son, R' Dovid, his 18 year old grandson, R' Yochanan, and the rest of the family, they moved from city to city. It took a long time before they settled in Nikolayev, which was known for its large Lubavitcher community.

It was 1920 when the Twersky family arrived in Nikolayev. The Chabad Chassidim welcomed them and took care of them so they could settle in peace.



R' Yochanan, who later took over the position of Admur, was gifted with courage and wisdom and tremendous sensitivity. Shortly before this period he had been arrested by a band of murderers and was miraculously saved as he was about to be taken out to be hung.

## PART II

It seemed that these tzaddikim would finally be able to settle down but it didn't take long before R' Menachem Nachum was called to the offices of the GPU to fill out a form. He wrote down his name and his father's name and for occupation he wrote *tzadikov*, i.e. tzaddik.

A few days later he was called back to the offices of the GPU. The appointment was for midnight. The family was terrified, since they did not anticipate any good resulting from this nocturnal encounter, but the tzaddik, fortified by his faith, reassured his family. He would go at the appointed time with utter trust in Hashem that He would save him from the wicked ones.

The tzaddik made his way through the dark streets of Nikolayev with sure steps. The emuna and bitachon that filled his heart did not waver, even when the

***Workers rebelled against their supervisors, peasants rebelled against the landowners and army discipline broke down... In the middle of the night, as though by pre-arranged signal, the angry masses attacked central buildings belonging to the provisional government and a revolution was underway.***

armed soldier who opened the iron-gate for him looked at him with daggers in his eyes and uttered a silent curse as he motioned to the Admur where he should go. He was followed by looks of scorn and hatred from every side.

R' Menachem Nachum was escorted to an upper floor and instructed to wait until he was called.

A nearby door was opened and the figure of a tall man appeared in the doorway. The man's hair was carefully combed and he was well-dressed. The door closed behind him and he introduced himself as the

head of the GPU in Nikolayev. He instructed the tzaddik to sit down on the other side of the desk.

"What is your name?" he asked the rabbi opposite him.

The tzaddik said his name.

"What is your family name?"

"Twersky," he said.

The interrogator obviously knew the answers in advance and was leading up to the real reason for calling R' Twersky to his office. There was silence in the room and the GPU chief began pacing the room. Despite his restrained demeanor, he seemed to be perturbed by something.



***After ensuring that nobody was listening in to their conversation, the GPU chief emotionally exclaimed, “When I became bar mitzva, you were the one who put the t’fillin on me for the first time!”***

After ensuring that nobody was listening in to their conversation, the GPU chief emotionally exclaimed, “When I became bar mitzva, you were the one who put the t’fillin on me for the first time!”

Among many Chassidic groups it is customary for the father to bring the bar mitzva boy to the Rebbe for him to put the t’fillin on the boy for the first time. This momentous occasion is thereby engraved in the child’s soul for the rest of his life.

The GPU chief was a Jew from a Chassidic family who had gone off the derech. He had joined the communist party and risen in the ranks. When he heard about the arrival of the tzaddik from Rachmastrivka in Nikolayev, he remembered that scene at his bar mitzva and the Jewish spark within him was ignited. He promised the tzaddik that as long as he retained his position, nothing would happen to him and he could live securely in Nikolayev.

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These were the first years that the communists began enforcing their policies and oppressing all forms of religious observance. They closed all shuls and announced the closing of Talmudei Torah. They forbade the learning of Torah with young boys in an organized fashion. They forbade kosher slaughter and any other Jewish practices.

The shuls of Nikolayev were closed one after the other. Like in other cities and towns, the Lubavitcher Chassidim started a

network of underground yeshivos where boys went in small groups to learn Torah in hiding, with mesirus nefesh.

The young R’ Yochanan Twersky was a loyal participant in this secret work. He was involved in administering the network and raised money that was used primarily to pay the melamdin who endangered themselves each day. He was 20 years old when he met the Rebbe MH”M when the latter came in the summer from Yekaterinaslav to visit his grandfather, Rabbi Meir Shlomo Yanovsky who was rav in Nikolayev.

The Rachmastrivka Rebbe lived in Nikolayev for six years, until 1926, and then he and his family were miraculously able to leave the country for Eretz Yisroel, where he rebuilt his Chassidic court in Yerushalayim

### **PART III**

About thirty years passed since those difficult days in Russia. In 1950, after the passing of his father R’ Dovid, R’ Yochanan became the Rachmastrivka Rebbe. He continued to lead the Chassidim and rebuild the Chassidus almost from scratch after years of suffering and wandering. He founded yeshivas Meor Einayim and his leadership was noted for its simplicity and warmth.

R’ Yochanan went to New York in 1954 for the wedding of his son, R’ Chai Yitzchok Twersky, who is

presently the Admur in New York. He stayed in Williamsburg on this visit and took advantage of his stay in Brooklyn to renew his connection with the Rebbe .

So one night, R’ Yochanan Twersky arrived in 770 for a private audience with the Rebbe which lasted quite some time. Nobody knows all the topics they discussed but this we know:

During the yechidus the Rebbe asked the Admur whether he remembered a particular student in the underground Talmud Torah in Nikolayev. The Admur said he did.

The Rebbe told him that this talmid had left the Soviet Union and immigrated to the United States. Ironically, in a free country, where he was able to be observant without any interference, he had left the path of Torah. The Rebbe said that Lubavitcher Chassidim had met with him and tried to get him back on track but to no avail.

“Perhaps you will have an influence on him,” said the Rebbe, and he asked the Admur whether he could devote some time on this visit to New York to visit with this man and inspire him to t’shuva.

It’s remarkable that the conversation between these two tzaddikim focused on a Jew from decades ago and how to get him back to Jewish ways and traditions. The Rachmastrivka Rebbe was saddened to hear about the poor spiritual state of the former talmid. He told the Rebbe he would devote his time to reaching the man.

The Rebbe did not delay for a moment. Immediately, he picked up the phone and dialed the number of the man and said, “I have Rabbi Yochanan Twersky sitting here. Do you remember him?”

Apparently the man said that he did, for the Rebbe continued, “Rabbi Twersky is interested in meeting with you. When can you meet?”

The man said that Friday afternoon would be convenient for

him. Then and there the Rebbe asked R' Twersky whether he could receive him Friday afternoon and gave the man the address where the Admur was staying.

#### PART IV

Friday afternoon, the former talmid from Nikolayev went to Williamsburg to see the Rachmastrivka Rebbe. The meeting was an emotional one after nearly thirty years apart. They spent some time reminiscing about the unforgettable people of that time.

Then the man asked the Admur why he had come to New York. The Admur told him that he had come for his son's wedding. The former talmid thought he knew the reason for their meeting. He took out a check book and wrote a generous check, which he gave the Admur. He was happy to help him out in gratitude for what the young R' Yochanan had done for him years ago.

The Admur would not accept it. "I won't take the check until I finish our conversation," he declared. "I want to discuss your religious observance."

The man, who by then was entrenched in the American way of life in which Judaism was measured by your standing the Jewish community, told the Admur that he was a respected member of his Jewish community and even went to shul once in a while. He seemed pleased with himself.

"What about Shabbos observance?" questioned the Admur.

The man began to justify his lack of observance, saying that Shabbos is very important but all his competitors were open on Shabbos and he couldn't be closed while they were open on this busiest day of the week.

"What about kashrus?" persisted the Admur.

Again, the man began explaining



The Rachmastrivka Rebbe, R' Yochanan

***“Was it for a ‘Judaism’ like this that we invested so much effort into you in the underground chadarim in Nikolayev? Each of your melamdim put his life in danger, and for what?”***

that he tried and wanted to keep kosher but where he lived it was almost impossible to obtain kosher products and so he had no choice but to eat non-kosher.

“What about t’fillin?”

The man agreed that t’fillin are an important mitzva but he did not

always have the time for it.

The Admur’s eyes filled with tears. He could not restrain himself and he cried bitterly.

“Was it for a ‘Judaism’ like this that we invested so much effort into you in the underground chadarim in Nikolayev? Each of your melamdim



## THE BACHURIM WERE UNINFORMED



**R' Mendel Baumgarten**

Rabbi Nachman Yosef Twersky, grandson of the Admur R' Yochanan, relates:

“My grandfather told me that after the yechidus he had with the Rebbe, the Rebbe visited him at his host’s house in Williamsburg. When I came to 770 in the 70’s and said that the Rebbe had visited my grandfather, I was told that this was impossible. They told me that Chassidim would have known about a visit like this and it would have been noted in the diaries written at the time, and how was it that nobody knew about it? Who was the driver who took the Rebbe?”

“I had no answers to their questions and at some point I thought that maybe the bachurim were right and I was mistaken.

“A few months later, during a conversation with R’ Moshe Groner a”h, he said to me, ‘Do you know that the Rebbe visited your grandfather in Williamsburg?’ I said I had heard about it from my grandfather but the bachurim had nearly convinced me that it hadn’t happened.

“He dismissed what the bachurim said and told me that the visit had actually taken place. When I asked him who the driver was he pointed at R’ Mendel Baumgarten.

“I went to R’ Mendel and he confirmed the story. He said:

“One day, after Mincha, the Rebbe motioned to me to come over to him. The Rebbe said he wanted to travel to a certain address and since I had a car he asked me to come to the front of 770 and he would come out.

“Within a few minutes the Rebbe came out of his room accompanied by R’ Chadakov. He sat in the car and gave me a piece of paper with an address in Williamsburg. As we approached the location the Rebbe asked me to stop a block away. Apparently, he didn’t want to arouse undue attention.

“I stopped the car as the Rebbe asked. The Rebbe and R’ Chadakov left and I waited in the car. A half hour later they returned and we drove back to 770. Since I was curious to know where the Rebbe had gone, I went back to the address that I had been given and stopped near the house. I knocked on the door and asked who the Lubavitcher Rebbe had visited. They told me that this home was where Rabbi Twersky, the Rachmastrivka Rebbe, was being hosted, and the Rebbe had indeed come to visit.”

“You are absolutely right! I promise that I will do t’shuva and from now on I will keep the mitzvos as I learned them.”

The Admur was pleased. He was happy that his words that came from his heart had reached the other man’s heart and he blessed him that he succeed in returning to his roots.

Before they parted the man tried to hand him the check again but this time too, the Admur refused to accept it. After repeated importuning the Admur replied, “I will take the check only after I find out that you kept your word and did t’shuva. How will I know when I don’t live here?”

He then answered his own question, “When the Lubavitcher Rebbe will tell me that you did t’shuva, only then will I accept your donation.”

The Rachmastrivka Rebbe and his guest said goodbye with a hearty handshake.

## PART V

The Admur’s visit in New York lasted a few more weeks, during which he received many people who came to him for advice and bracha.

One day, the phone rang at his host’s house. The Rachmastrivka Rebbetzin answered the phone. The voice on the line asked to speak with Rabbi Twersky. When she asked who was speaking, she was told, “*Duh redt men fun Lubavitch*” (I’m calling from Lubavitch). The Rebbetzin realized it was the Lubavitcher Rebbe and she excitedly gave the phone to her husband.

The Rebbe said he wanted to update him, that the man had done t’shuva and had begun keeping mitzvos. “R’ Yochanan, you think you came here in order to marry off your son? You came here so that a Jew would do t’shuva. Now this man is from!”

R’ Nachman Yosef Twersky adds: “When I spoke with my uncle

put his life in danger, and for what? So you would grow up to be a yerei Shamayim and an observant Jew.

See how far you’ve strayed ...”

The man was touched and he too began to cry. He said to the Admur,

about his wedding I thought about what the Rebbe had said to my grandfather and I put the following information together:

“When my grandfather went for his visa to the US the first time, he was refused. The people at the American embassy saw he was a former Russian citizen, and in light of the tension between the United States and Russia at the time, that was reason enough to be refused a

visa to the US. The Americans were afraid to allow possible Russian spies into the country.

“My grandfather was turned down again and again and he despaired of being able to attend his son’s wedding. The chassan went to America by himself and the family made peace with the fact that the father of the chassan would not be attending the wedding. A few days before the wedding, the American

embassy contacted him and said he could submit another request. He did so and this time the visa was granted.

“When the family reviewed what the Rebbe had said to my grandfather, they realized that Divine Providence had orchestrated matters so he could travel to the United States in order to save that Jew and not necessarily because of the wedding of his son.”



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By Yitzchok Wagshul

## *Advice from Rabbi Yaakov Sputz, behavioral expert.*

Children don't come with an instruction manual. Raising kids is something of a learn-as-you-go endeavor, notwithstanding that it may well be the most important job in the world. And although we are often able to draw guidance from our own parents, from *rabbanim* and *mechanchim*, and from plain old common sense, it's good to know that there are people out there who have particular expertise in this important matter — especially when it comes to raising children in Torah communities and in accordance with Torah ideals.

Rabbi Yaakov Sputz is one such expert. A trained behavioral therapist, Rabbi Sputz is also an experienced yeshiva *rebbe* — a role he will not relinquish, since it keeps him in touch with what's going on in the classroom. He is well-known in the *chinuch* community, and serves as consultant to many local yeshivos. Crown Heights parents had the privilege of hearing Rabbi Sputz on Wednesday night, October 21, when he was the

featured speaker at the annual *chinuch* lecture sponsored by the neighborhood's *Iggud Menahalei HaYeshivos*, a federation of yeshiva principals from all the Crown Heights schools. The event, held in Oholei Menachem's grand ballroom and which drew about 65 men and 70–80 women, was coordinated by the Mintz family in commemoration of the 17th *yahrtzeit* of their father, noted educator Rabbi Isaac Mintz, *a"h*. Rabbi Yosef Simpson, principal of Lubavitcher Yeshivah on Crown Street, introduced Rabbi Sputz.

The educator began by thanking the *Iggud Menahalei HaYeshivos* for inviting him and everyone in the audience for attending. He then shared several anecdotes designed to highlight important introductory points.

### THE RULE IN CHINUCH IS THAT THERE ARE NO RULES

First, the rabbi related that a

fellow named Alexander once composed a list of ten *klalim*, rules or fundamental principles, of *chinuch* and presented it to the Rebbe. The Rebbe responded, "There's one rule missing: the rule in *chinuch* is that there are no rules." The point is, explained Rabbi Sputz, one can't attend a lecture or workshop and come away thinking, "I've learned all the guidelines; from now on, I'll know what to do no matter what comes up." Every child is unique, and there's also no end to the variety of possible situations. The important thing, he stressed, is to learn all you can, but then in each situation you must stop and think, "What should I do with this particular child in these particular circumstances?" There's no "rule" that can be automatically applied without thinking.

### THE POWER OF CHESED

Another story: When the *gaon* Reb Chaim, *rosh yeshiva* in Antwerp, was himself a *bachur*, there weren't enough beds to go around, and many *bachurim* slept on the floor. Reb Chaim himself, however, was fortunate enough to get a bed. One day, a *bachur* came to the yeshiva who was, *lo aleinu*, blind. Reb Chaim took him around in search of a bed, but none was available. Finally, Reb Chaim "remembered" that there was an empty bed right in his own room — which was, of course, his own. He gave it to the blind *bachur* and slept on the floor himself for the next three months. World War II broke out, and the Nazis *ym"sh* arrived in the yeshiva with a list: they would call out a *bachur's* name and take him out to be shot *r"l*. Sure enough, Reb Chaim was at his *shtender* when he heard his name called, and the next thing he knew





he was being led outside.

He realized he had only about a minute to pray to Hashem for his life. What could he possibly say in one minute? What *z'chus* could he invoke, pleading with Hashem to spare him? It couldn't, he thought, be his Torah learning; so many Torah scholars much greater than he had already been murdered. Quickly, he prayed: "I know, Hashem, that I am not worthy on account of my learning, but please, take all those nights that I slept on the floor for another Jew and spare my life in their merit." The next thing he knew, the Nazi was speaking to him: "You are too beautiful to kill," he whispered. "I'll put the gun right next to your head and pull the trigger. When you hear the shot — run."

Rabbi Spitz told his listeners: if such is the merit of *chesed* on behalf of a person's physical needs, imagine how great is the importance of *chesed* for someone's soul, for someone's spiritual needs. When we are

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compassionate toward our children, when we are understanding and patient with them, making allowances for each child's temperament and learning style and building them up instead of criticizing them, we are engaging in spiritual *chesed*. The reward is inconceivable.

### **KIRUV WITH ONE'S OWN CHILDREN**

A parent had not helped his

child with her homework and was trying to justify this to Rabbi Spitz. "You have to understand," said the man, "how much *kiruv* work goes on around my table." He did not have time, he explained, for the child's homework. Rabbi Spitz pointed out that often, we give generously of our time and attention to others while neglecting our own family members. *Kiruv* with one's own children, though, is more important than with strangers.

Parenting Style	Demand	Warmth
Authoritarian	ON	OFF
Permissive	OFF	ON
Detached	OFF	OFF
Authoritative	ON	ON

The Four Parenting Styles

The Steipler Gaon advised a young man who had asked about a certain *shidduch* suggestion, “Make inquiries and verify that she does *chesed* even at home.”

## NINE BARRELS OF SPEECH FOR WOMEN

Before getting to the meat of his talk, the therapist made one further point. Many women, he observed, are offended when they hear of the Talmudic statement, “Ten barrels of speech descended to the world; nine were taken by womankind and the remainder by the rest of the world.” But, he said, “I heard a powerful *vort*” on this idea. Of *course* women talk more than men; mothers spend their days in a near-constant (if often one-sided) conversation with their children, cooing to them, singing to them, reading to them, pointing things out, asking them questions, explaining things, and — of course — giving guidance on everything from how to hold a fork to how to get along with classmates. It’s no wonder women receive from Above extra measures of speech. In a subtle but very real sense, that constant conversation is the basis of a child’s whole life. If a mother — or father, for that matter — speaks and relates well to a child, that child will grow up secure, confident, and happy. But if the parent speaks to their child the wrong way, it could literally ruin the child’s life, *chas v’shalom*.

## FOUR PARENTING STYLES

This brings us to the parenting theory part of the lecture. Just how *should* a parent talk to his or her child? The Rebbe wrote that “It’s not proper to follow one’s children around all day and tell them how to act in every particular, even if the parents are sure they’re 100% right.” There are, Rabbi Spitz explained, four parenting styles, distinguished by when and how often the parent, so to speak, flips two switches: demand and warmth.

The first parenting style, Authoritarian, is characterized by the demand switch being on and the warmth switch being off. The parent, in other words, is always demanding that the child do (or not do) this or that, or act this way or that way, but is never warm and supportive, never compliments the child when he or she does something right. On the other hand, in the Permissive parenting style, the demand switch is off and the warmth switch is on: the parent makes few demands of the child, and conversely, whatever the child does is OK. After all, we wouldn’t want to harm the child’s self-esteem, would we? The Detached parent has both switches off, neither making demands of the child nor displaying warmth. That’s often a symptom of depression, says Rabbi Spitz. The parent is essentially uninvolved. Finally, the Authoritative parent has both switches on. This is the ideal parenting style, explained

the rabbi, because the parent knows how to balance demand and warmth as appropriate — the two switches are not always on, but each is brought into play at the right moment.

## REQUIREMENTS OF THE IDEAL PARENTING STYLE

This ideal, the Authoritative parenting style, elicits a positive, kind, and supportive relationship with one’s child, while at the same time, the child knows when the parent means business. This isn’t necessarily simple to achieve, conceded the expert: it requires energy, flexibility, self-control, and support from both parents if it is to be successful.

## NO MIXED MESSAGES

In fact, the support of both parents is crucial. Rabbi Spitz pointed out that the Torah’s description of a *ben sorer u’moreh*, a child so rebellious he is deemed hopeless and better off dead, is so narrow that, our sages teach, it has never actually occurred. One requirement before a child can be classified as a *ben sorer u’moreh* is that both parents must literally have the same voice. This requirement teaches us that it is not fair to lay all the blame for his bad behavior on a child if that child has been receiving mixed messages from his parents. If one parent says something is forbidden but the other does not support him or her in that position, instead allowing the child to get away with it, the child can hardly be blamed for being confused. It is only if both parents speak “with the same voice” that a child can be expected to know what is truly right or wrong.

## LISTENING SKILLS

Another key to successful communication with one's child is to *listen*. If the child feels the parent is not truly listening to him or her, but merely voicing their own response, the child will be resentful or will just tune out. It is crucial for the parent to keep quiet and listen when the child is talking, not just silent but quiet and *listening*, and also to ask questions and make comments that reveal sympathy for someone who is, after all, the parent's child. This approach will open the child up to the parent's own input.

Parents should not become hysterical each time their child does anything wrong, advised the therapist. He quoted the Talmudic commentary Tosafos to the effect that the *mitzvah* of *chinuch* means teaching one's child to perform a *mitzvah*; it does not include teaching one's child not to disobey. The latter is simply not within the definition of "*chinuch*"; it depends instead on Hashem's help and the application of proper parenting techniques.

## UNDERSTAND A CHILD'S NATURE

What, though, *should* one do with a "challenging" child? How can we relate in a healthy way to a boy or girl who is always, for example, disorganized, forgetting his or her homework, or making a mess?

The *Yalkut Shimoni* says that during the Biblical plague of frogs in Egypt, the frogs jumped all over the Egyptians' homes, including into their ovens. This was *mesiras nefesh* on the part of the frogs — they hopped right into the fire for G-d. What was their reward? The frogs that jumped into the fire were not

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burned.

On the other hand, pointed out Rabbi Sputz, the dogs in Egypt also obeyed Hashem. While usually, if a slave attempted to escape, the dogs at the gates of Egypt would bark, on the night the Jews left, the dogs were silent. What was *their* reward? The Torah tells us that we may not eat the carcasses of animals (*treifa*) found in the field, but instead we should throw them to the dogs.

Why this imbalance in reward, asked the rabbi? The frogs who sacrificed their very lives only received a seemingly token reward, their lives being spared for a week or so (since all the frogs perished after the plague anyway), while the dogs, who merely refrained from barking a little, were granted meat forever after! The difference is that it is the nature of a frog to jump; in this case, they used their nature to serve Hashem, even if it did mean *mesiras nefesh*. On the other hand, the nature of a dog is to bark. The dogs served Hashem by going *against* their nature, which is a much bigger challenge. That is why they deserved a bigger reward.

The lesson for us is that we must recognize our child's nature. When we realize that the disorganized messy child isn't

that way to spite us or to attract attention, but is so by nature, we will look at him or her in a different light. We will recognize just how difficult it must be for him or her to overcome those tendencies, and we will be both more understanding of any lapses and more appreciative of successes.

## DIFFERENCE BETWEEN POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

And here's where it all comes together: training our children not to disobey may not be part of the technical definition of the *mitzvah* of *chinuch*, but we still want to accomplish it. Our hopelessly disorganized child may be struggling with his or her nature, but we still want to help him or her improve. How can we do that?

The answer, explained Rabbi Sputz, lies in what modern science understands about the difference between positive and negative feedback. There's no question that negative feedback — criticism, a punishment, or even a slap — will be effective in stopping the unwanted behavior. That's just the nature of psychology. But what negative feedback cannot do — what



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modern science tells us negative feedback is *incapable* of accomplishing — is to bring about a *change* in behavior. Yes, negative feedback can *stop* a particular behavior, but only positive feedback can *change* it, can reinforce and instill in a child some other, better, behavior instead.

## **EXAMPLES**

Rabbi Sputz concluded with some examples of positive feedback and its effect. He once worked with a 12-year-old learning-disabled boy, he related, who was supposed to be studying the Talmudic tractate *P’sachim*. Rabbi Sputz said he searched his mind to find a question he could ask the boy that he would certainly answer correctly, so the rabbi could praise him. He asked him something he thought the child would surely know: “In which month do we celebrate Pesach?” Incorrectly, the youth answered, “Teives!” Now, most of us probably would have responded something like: “No...think again: In which month is Pesach?” But that wasn’t Rabbi Sputz’s approach. He was determined to say “yes”...somehow. So he said “You’re so close! Very good!” The boy’s eyes lit up and he said, “I’m so close? Do you have a calendar? I want to see what comes after Teives.” When Rabbi

Sputz showed him a Jewish calendar, the boy glanced at the months and shouted the correct answer, “Nissan!” Rabbi Sputz excitedly praised him, and the child revealed, “That’s the first compliment I’ve ever gotten in learning *in my life!*”

The negative response (“No...”) would have turned the child off, would have made him feel hopeless — that is what he was used to. But Rabbi Sputz’s positive encouragement naturally motivated the boy to keep trying (“Let me see a calendar”).

Every parent is familiar with the near-miss scenario. Instead of putting it inside, your child drops his or her laundry on the floor near the laundry basket. Rather than pointing and saying, “You call this putting away the laundry?” try something like, “Good, you almost did it! Let’s see if you can finish the job.”

## **BELIEVE IN YOUR CHILD**

A man once approached someone on the streets of Williamsburg and told him, “Your father saved my life!” The man asked how that had come to be, and the first person explained that when he was a boy, he did not fit in with most yeshivos, and was kicked out of several. But he came to the yeshiva where that man’s father was a *rebbe* and was assigned to his eighth-grade class.

Somehow, he recounted, the *rebbe* sensed he was a restless kid, and at the first break he came over to him and gave him his wristwatch, saying, “I know you may feel it’s hard to sit still through the whole class. If you feel restless, go on outside and take a break for a few minutes. This watch will give you some idea of the time so you can come back after a reasonable period.” The boy was impressed that the *rebbe* was so attuned to his needs.

Two weeks later, the man continued, he wandered past the principal’s office and noticed a \$20 bill unguarded on the desk. Coming from a poor household, the youth felt enthralled by so much money — how much easier things would be if he only had it! He saw that no one was around and he slipped the bill into his pocket.

The principal realized his money was missing, and he knew it had to have been one of the eighth-graders. He entered the eighth-grade classroom and demanded, “Who stole my money?” The *rebbe* told him, “Give me fifteen minutes and I’ll have your money for you.” The principal agreed, and the *rebbe* spent the fifteen minutes teaching as always. When the lesson was over, he asked the boys to line up facing the wall; then he removed his glasses and went down the line of students reaching into each one’s pockets. The man recalled, “When your father got close to me, I began trembling; what would happen when he found the money in my pocket? But he removed the \$20 bill and simply continued down the line, needlessly checking every other boy’s pockets until the end. Then, when the principal entered, your father gave him the money. The principal asked, ‘Well? Who was the thief?’ but your father

shrugged and replied he honestly didn't know. 'How is that boy going to learn a lesson if you don't know who did it?' demanded the principal, but your father said, 'Don't worry. I assure you the boy has already learned

his lesson. He won't do it again.' That night," concluded the man, "I went home and lay in my bed and cried. Not because I had been caught, but because, for the first time, there was one Jew, at least, in this world who believed in me.

And that saved my life. I resolved right then to change, and I grew up to be a *mentch*."

Rabbi Spitz finished by wishing everyone success in raising children who will give us all *nachas* throughout our lives.

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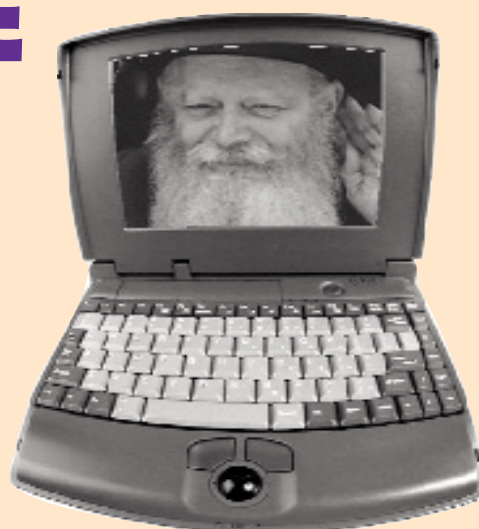
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ב"ה

# SENSELESS MURDER OF A DEVOUT CHASSID



*Thirty years have passed since the shocking murder of Rabbi Dovid Okunov on his way to shul in Crown Heights, on 4 Cheshvan/October 25, 1979. \* The biography of this special Chassid from a t'shura from the Okunov-Scheinberger wedding.*

Rabbi Dovid Okunov, known as Dovid Ramener, was born in the Ukrainian town of Mirgorod in Tamuz 5672/1911, the fourth child of R' Efraim and Mrs. Esther Okunov.

The family moved to Ramen, near Haditch. In Ramen there lived a Chassid named R' Yechezkel (Chatzkel) Greenpress. He was a big mekurav of the Rebbe Rashab and was known as a talmid Chacham who learned seven daf Gemara a day and reviewed 18 chapters of Mishnayos at night after all his shiurim. R' Chatzkel would speak a lot with the young bachurim about the advantage of "be exiled to a

place of Torah."

Although Ramen had a yeshiva, he would say that when you learn far from home the learning is altogether different. Over the years he managed to convince a number of talmidim to learn in yeshivos Tomchei T'mimim throughout the Soviet Union.

Although Dovid was just a child before bar mitzva, he was inspired by the heartfelt words of R' Chatzkel and wanted to leave home to learn in yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim. When he broached the subject with his parents, they adamantly refused. They were afraid that at his young age he would not be able to manage in a yeshiva far from home.

His maternal grandfather, R' Hershel, was a Chassidishe man who had seen the Rebbe Maharash. He thought they should allow Dovid to go away to yeshiva. He would say, "Dovid won't get lost there." But despite his grandfather's opinion and Dovid's strong desire to go, his parents did not give him permission.

With R' Chatzkel's encouragement, Dovid decided to stop eating at home until his parents would agree to send him. R' Chatzkel would bring him food in shul so he wouldn't starve. After a few days of this hunger strike his mother couldn't take it anymore. She tearfully declared that she let him go where he wanted, the important thing was that he should eat.

His father also grudgingly agreed, still wary of the danger of persecution by the communists and the difficult conditions in yeshiva. Little did they know that he would celebrate his bar mitzva in an underground yeshiva, surrounded by his friends but with his parents far away.

Dovid left Ramen for Tomchei T'mimim in Kremenchug which was



run by the mashpia, R' Yisroel Noach Blinitzky. For a while, Dovid learned with Nachum Labkowski. One day in 1926, as he was learning with Nachum, the oldest son of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneersohn, the rav of Dnepropetrovsk (later to become the Rebbe MH"M), came in. Knowing him to be a big scholar, the bachurim asked the future Rebbe about a certain Rashi they were learning on the tractate Bava Metzia, daf 30b. The Rebbe prefaced his explanation with, "At first glance it seems to me ..." and then he went on to explain p'shat in a way that left no room for questions.

## POLICEMEN WITH REVOLVERS

After Pesach 1928, Dovid went to Nevel to continue his studies. There he learned by R' Yehuda Eber Hy"d. "One time," said R' Dovid, "in the middle of a shiur, while everyone was concentrating on what R' Eber was saying, two policemen entered with revolvers in their hands. When R' Eber noticed he immediately stopped the lesson.

"The policemen expressed their surprise over the talmidim who were learning so diligently that they didn't notice that the police had entered. They ordered R' Eber to continue lecturing to the talmidim, but he said he wasn't teaching. They had approached him with a question and he was merely answering them. The policemen didn't buy this explanation and arrested them all."

The bachurim were quickly released but R' Eber was sentenced to clean the streets. He would wear his Shabbos clothing while he cleaned the streets in order to show that when you're penalized for Torah study you should wear bigdei Shabbos. Despite his exhausting work by day, he would give a shiur to the bachurim at night.

One day, a gentile woman was passing by and she was appalled by

***One day, a gentile woman was passing by and she was appalled by the degrading scene. She took the broom away from him, stating that a rabbi should not sweep the streets. This happened a few times until finally the supervising policeman conceded that he did not have to show up anymore.***

the degrading scene. She took the broom away from him, stating that a rabbi should not sweep the streets. This happened a few times until finally the supervising policeman conceded that he did not have to show up anymore.

Dovid continued to wander from place to place. At the beginning of 5789 he arrived in Charkov. The T'mimim learned in the Matchnaski shul where there were also Chabad minyanim. The mashgiach, Rabbi Yehoshua Korf, would test the talmidim.

In Charkov, Dovid learned with other bachurim in the shul and he lived with R' Mendel Deitsch. He shared a room with R' Itche Masmid Hy"d (Rabbi Yitzchok Horowitz) who was known not to lie down to sleep. He would say: "Sleep is one sixtieth of death. It's one thing if you fell asleep against your will; nu, then it's in Hashem's hands that you got a taste of death, but to stretch out in bed to sleep, feh!"

One night, Dovid raised his head momentarily, then immediately began to doze off again. Immediately, R' Itche was at his side with negel vasser (although Dovid had prepared his own), saying: "Since your neshama returned to the world, there is no need to turn over. Get up and learn!"

When Dovid told this story years later he said: "Nu, if R' Itche brings

negel vasser, would you dare tell him anything ..."

R' Itche's vision was poor and he needed someone to accompany him whenever he went out. Dovid would go with him early in the morning when he went to shul to daven.

Dovid was particular about reading Shma on time while wearing t'fillin. One time, R' Itche tarried in their lodgings and Dovid, not wanting to miss the z'man, asked R' Itche to lend him his t'fillin. R' Itche reluctantly agreed, though not before he explained to Dovid the proper kavana to have while wearing t'fillin.

While Dovid wore the t'fillin R' Itche stood next to him and when he finished reciting Shma, R' Itche immediately removed the t'fillin shel rosh.

## SUMMONED TO AN INTERROGATION

The difficult conditions in yeshiva prompted R' Dovid to move on. He arrived in Moscow where he tried to find work. However, when R' Shneur Zalman Schneersohn, a distinguished Chabad Chassid, was preparing to leave the Soviet Union, he called together a group of bachurim, including Dovid, and asked them, "At a time like this, is it fitting that you should work?"

He asked them to make a list of how much each bachur needed and pledged to send them that amount

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through either his brother-in-law, R' Zalman Butman, or R' Bentzion Shemtov. Due to practical considerations, it was decided that Dovid would collect the money for all of them, and the bachurim went back to learn.

After a month, Dovid went to R' Zalman Butman to ask for the money but he said that the money hadn't come yet. R' Shemtov said the same thing. "What should the bachurim do?" worried Dovid. "Tell the bachurim to borrow money," R' Bentzion advised.

One month went by and another month and there was still no sign of the money. Dovid told R' Bentzion that in order to borrow there had to be funds with which to repay the loans. R' Bentzion responded: "The more a bachur learns, the more Chassidish he becomes; the more Chassidish a bachur is, the more Chassidish a married man he will become; the more Chassidish a married man he is, the more Chassidish his children will be. This learning affects generations to come - how can we take responsibility to tell the bachurim to stop learning and go to work?"

The bachurim continued learning despite the difficulties.

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R' Dovid's ability to sing Chassidishe niggunim amazed many Chassidim, even the older ones among them. R' Dovid Chein of Kfar Chabad said, "When he lived in Moscow, he would sing niggunim from time to time and my father, R' Yehuda Chein a"h, would be very impressed by his singing. He said that R' Dovid's coming to Moscow gave him much nachas because of his knowledge of Chassidishe niggunim."

R' Dovid rented a room from R' Shmuel Lubashitzky (Schneider). One day the NKVD came to the house to arrest R' Shmuel. At this terrible time many Chassidim, fearing arrest, would leave their homes during the day. R' Shmuel wasn't home when they came to arrest him, so the NKVD came back that night. Dovid heard one of the policemen saying to the other, "He's probably okay since he didn't run away."

He was relieved that they didn't seem to be after him, but his positive conclusion was soon proven premature when he received a summons to the police station. Frightened, he went to the police station and was taken to the

interrogation room.

The interrogator asked Dovid whether he was religious and he confirmed he was. When he was asked whether he went to shul, he admitted he did. Then he was asked how many other people were in shul and he replied, "I go there to pray to G-d and not to meet with people, so I don't know the other people."

When he received a second summons, he asked his friends what to anticipate. They advised him that the second interrogation was completely different and much more difficult – the NKVD questioned one person in one room and another person in another room and then they had them confront one other. Dovid decided he would avoid this at all costs.

He went to the government office and announced that he was leaving Moscow and his residency permit was taken from him. From there he traveled to Liegorovsk, a town 100 kilometers away from Moscow where there were a few Chassidim. He lived in the home of Rabbi Uziel Chazanov. Every morning he took the train to Moscow and at night he returned to his lodgings in Liegorovsk. No longer officially present in Moscow, Dovid avoided any further interrogations.

### **"CERTAINLY YOU WILL TELL ME GOOD NEWS"**

When he came of draft age he sent a request for a bracha to the Rebbe Rayatz and asked whether to complain about vision problems or to tell them he was generally weak. The Rebbe replied in a letter that he should only complain about his eyes "and surely you will tell me good news."

He was left with another dilemma. All recruits were expected to present themselves to the draft shaven and with a crew cut. If he showed up with a beard, they might shave him with a razor, so perhaps it

was better to take his beard off beforehand. In the end he decided not to shave and he arrived at the draft board with a full beard.

He complained about vision problems as the Rebbe had advised. At the conclusion of the medical exams he was asked why he did not shave. He remembered the story about the Alter Rebbe in jail who answered all questions except for one about the second soul that Jews have, to which he merely smiled in response and they did not ask him anything further. Dovid followed his example.

He smiled but did not reply and they did not ask him anything further. After the exams they decided to give him an intermediate status, i.e. in peacetime he would be exempt from the army and in wartime he could not be sent to the front; he could only help in the kitchen and the like.

In 1941, when the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union, Dovid was called to the draft office in distant Stalinabad. When he showed his medical forms they laughed and said, "When they shoot at you, then you will be able to see just fine." They sent him to Stalingrad (today, Volgograd) where the fighting was fierce and many soldiers fell.

On Rosh HaShana 5703/1942, the fighting was at its peak. Unwilling to desecrate the holiday, Dovid complained he did not feel well and was given permission to go to the military hospital to see the doctor.

On his way there he detoured to the Volga River in order to immerse before Yom Tov. His weakness and hunger made it very hard for him to immerse. He entered and left the river several times and it took him a long time to enter the water completely since it was very cold.

"I felt as though sharp knives were piercing my flesh, but not to immerse before Rosh HaShana was out of the question. I stopped



**R' Dovid Okunov in his youth**

breathing and nearly fainted, but I immersed."

After immersing he continued on to the doctor. He arrived dizzy and with a high fever. The doctor just glanced at him and decided to hospitalize him. Due to the poor conditions at the hospital he caught typhus, a dangerous disease, which actually saved his life because from his entire unit, nobody returned alive.

The Germans deliberately bombed the hospital until the building went up in flames. Dovid fled and wandered in empty fields around the city for a week. He survived by eating raw unripe beans, although he suffered from an illness that affected his intestines. He finally arrived at an army camp where he was apprehended and sent to a different area, but he was released because of his eye problems.

On his way back to his parents he traveled through Tashkent in Uzbekistan. The Chassidim in Tashkent looked at him as though he had risen from the dead since they knew that whoever was sent to the front in Stalingrad did not return alive. Rabbi Shlomo Chaim Kesselman, who taught him previously, trembled when he saw him and exclaimed, "Boruch

Hashem, boruch Hashem!"

The bracha of the Rebbe Rayatz was fulfilled; "and surely you will tell me good news."

## **THE KGB ON HIS TAIL**

After the war, R' Dovid married and then attempted to leave the Soviet Union with a falsified Polish passport, but when he heard that the Chassidim who had organized the smuggling operation had been arrested and the situation had become dangerous, he returned to Tashkent where his son Meir was born.

He decided to open his own business so could avoid working on Shabbos, and made arrangements with R' Zev Sirota. Dovid would buy the merchandise and R' Zev would sell it in a store in one of the markets of Tashkent.

One Erev Shabbos in 1947, they went to arrange the purchase of a store. On the way back R' Zev said that his father, R' Mordechai, had been called in by the KGB. R' Mordechai hosted many refugees during the war and arranged papers for them to remain in the relative safety of Tashkent, and they conjectured that this was the reason for the summons.

As the pair passed Karl Marx Street, where the KGB station was, they noticed R' Mordechai standing opposite the building. R' Zev went over to his father and asked him what happened in the interrogation and why he was waiting there. R' Mordechai said they had asked him questions for two hours and now he was being given a recess of a few minutes. They had asked him what he knew of the Rebbe Rayatz, and about Dovid Ramener and R' Dovid Labkowski.

R' Dovid was unnerved. He was very fearful of arrest and he did not want to return home lest the KGB was waiting for him there. He told R' Zev to inform his wife that on



***“I felt as though sharp knives were piercing my flesh, but not to immerse before Rosh HaShana was out of the question. I stopped breathing and nearly fainted, but I immersed.”***

Motzaei Shabbos they would all travel to his brother Avrohom in Krasnalutch.

Despite the danger, R' Dovid went to R' Dovid Labkowski to warn him of the impending peril. R' Labkowski, however, failed to recognize the seriousness of the situation. Though R' Dovid insisted that he had solid information that they were looking for him and even suggested that R' Labkowski join him in his flight, the latter elected to remain at home. The KGB did indeed look for R' Labkowski and later arrested him. He died of an illness in the cellar of the KGB.

R' Dovid spent Shabbos in hiding. On Motzaei Shabbos he and his family boarded the train and at the end of a long journey they arrived in Krasnalutch. At first he stayed with his brother Avrohom, and afterwards, he was able to arrange a place for his family to live and eventually his parents joined them there.

Parnasa was still a problem. He began working as a bookbinder, which his son R' Meir describes as hard work for little pay:

“The law required the banks and big companies to bind all their important documents once a month and to place them in archives. Since these documents could not be removed from the banks or offices, the bookbinder had to visit those places and remain there for a day or more to do the work. In every city there were a few of these bookbinders and they had plenty of work to do.

“Shabbos was always a challenge,

but when my father was called to come on Shabbos he would say that he was working elsewhere that day. He usually managed to avoid working on Shabbos without difficulty, but one time it happened that he was called on a Wednesday and there was a lot of work to do. He knew that it would take at least three days to get the job done so he worked late into the night on Wednesday and Thursday. He finished on Friday morning. Of course it was always with the excuse that he had another job to do elsewhere.”

R' Dovid raised his children devotedly and taught them to go in the ways of the Torah and Chassidus without compromises. All his children followed in his ways despite the heretical atmosphere in the schools they attended.

One of the happiest events in their life was the bar mitzva of their youngest son Menachem Mendel. His two older brothers had become bar mitzva while they were in galus within a galus in Krasnalutch. Not only was it impossible to celebrate with many people, it was too dangerous to tell even their closest friends that they were teaching their young child to put on t'fillin.

“I remember it well,” said R' Mendel, “how my father farbrenged for hours with individual people in our house at my brother's bar mitzva. But when we moved to Samarkand we entered a new world. Although we learned secretly in an underground yeshiva, it was Tomchei T'mimim! There was a place for davening, there were

Chassidishe farbrengens, and we were able to learn together and have shiurim. My bar mitzva was celebrated at the home of our relatives, R' Eliezer and Basya Mishulovin, who lived at the end of a cul-de-sac, far from neighbors with prying eyes.

“Throughout the week the Lubavitcher women prepared a festive meal. That is how all the simchos of Anash were celebrated, for it wasn't every day or even every month that there was a bar mitzva. “The bar mitzvah was attended by quite a large crowd, even by Samarkand standards. The cold wintry night did not deter even the elder Chassidim, most of whom I was seeing for the first time.

“I reviewed a maamer Chassidus and an extraordinary farbrengen developed. There was much to see and hear. The Chassidishe farbrengen with song and dance lasted until dawn. My bar mitzva celebration gave us all, especially my mother, much pleasure.”

## **“ZEIDE” GAVE A BRACHA AND THE FAMILY LEFT RUSSIA**

R' Dovid was highly motivated to leave the country, but it was no simple matter for him to procure the necessary visa.

In 1932, when he was only twenty years old, the Rebbe Rayatz instructed him to get the papers he needed to leave, but it did not work out at the time. He tried again a few years later, when his children were young

In order to leave the Soviet Union the first thing you needed was an invitation from a relative who lived in Eretz Yisroel. R' Dovid's wife, Bassia Rivkah Zubarovsky, had a sister in Eretz Yisroel who gladly sent the requisite invitation. Tragically, before the documents could be given to the emigration authorities, his wife passed away

from a heart condition. That canceled the invitation..

Nevertheless, R' Dovid did not give up. He knew he must follow the Rebbe's horaa from so many years before. Although communication with the US was difficult, he managed to contact the Rebbe and ask for a bracha. He received a response in Russian, in 1964, a letter in which the Rebbe blessed him that all his requests be fulfilled without difficulty "and in full measure." The letter was written in code and was signed, as was customary for letters to Chassidim in Russia, "M. Zeide." The "M" was for the Rebbe's name.

The letter said:

**To my dear Dovid, hello!**

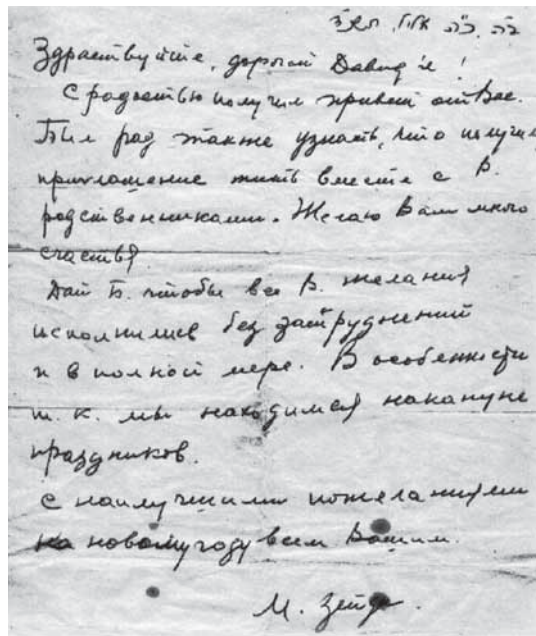
**I was happy to receive regards from you. I was also happy to be informed that you received an invitation to live with your relatives. I wish you much happiness. May G-d grant that all your requests be fulfilled without difficulty and in full measure, especially as we are now before the holidays.**

**With best wishes for a new year for all of you,**

**M. Zeide**

This response boosted his morale and he immediately asked his sister-in-law to send new invitations. Within a short time he received permission to leave for Israel, just as the Rebbe had written, "without difficulty."

After receiving permission to leave they had to get visas for Eretz Yisroel. When R' Dovid was at the Israeli embassy in Moscow he asked for s'farim of the Rebbe since he had heard that it was possible to obtain them there. In response, they wrote him a note, "the walls have ears," and motioned to him to be quiet. They gave him four volumes of the Rebbe's Likkutei Sichos, which he hid in his clothing and brought to



The Rebbe's response, signed "M. Zeide"

Samarkand.

They made copies of the s'farim, and it was from these that the Chassidim learned. So that nobody should know that these copies came from new s'farim, they dated them a hundred years earlier - instead of writing 5712 they wrote 5612.

## LEAVING RUSSIA

One fine day, when all the documents were finally ready, two KGB agents showed up and said that the two sons, Meir and Hershel (who now head the organization FREE in New York), had to appear at the draft office. The KGB did this deliberately in order to delay their departure. R' Dovid told the officer that they had already left for Moscow. The officer instructed him to sign that he had received the order telling them to appear at the draft office.

R' Dovid said he had no way of contacting them and couldn't convey the order and therefore he would not sign. The truth was that Hershel was in the bedroom and had heard his father's discussion with the KGB men.

When the agents left the house, R' Dovid went to the bedroom and told Hershel, "Until we leave the Soviet Union, don't leave this room so they won't know you are here." He issued a similar warning to Meir, who did not leave the yeshiva where he was at the time.

At the first possible opportunity, the family left Samarkand by train for Tashkent and from there went to Rostov by plane and from there by bus to Krasnalutch where they waited with his parents and brothers until after Pesach.

A short while after they arrived in Eretz Yisroel, R' Dovid bought a home in Shikun Chabad in Lud. In Elul, 1967, R' Dovid and his two older sons went to the Rebbe for Tishrei. The Rebbe asked the gabbaim to put the guests who came from Russia next to him.

After Yom Kippur, R' Dovid had yechidus and the Rebbe asked him to tell about Jewish and Chassidic life in the Soviet Union. R' Dovid described how he had procured the first four volumes of Likkutei Sichos and how the Chassidim had eagerly learned and copied it.

The Rebbe said they probably cut out the title page but R' Dovid replied that they hadn't since it "revived their souls." The Rebbe smiled broadly and this gave him much nachas.

The Rebbe instructed him to stay in the US in order to raise money for Ezras Achim, which worked on behalf of those still remaining in the Soviet Union. R' Dovid traveled to cities throughout the USA and enthusiastically told about Jewish life in the Soviet Union under communist oppression. His manner of speech brought in sizable donations. R' Moshe Levertov, the director of Ezras Achim, said that when he had to follow up with

***When R' Dovid was at the Israeli embassy in Moscow he asked for s'farim of the Rebbe since he had heard that it was possible to obtain them there. In response, they wrote him a note, "the walls have ears," and motioned to him to be quiet. They gave him four volumes of the Rebbe's Likkutei Sichos, which he hid in his clothing and brought to Samarkand.***

another emissary after R' Dovid in order to collect more money, he knew that it would be very successful since R' Dovid had made such a good impression.

R' Yisroel Gordon related that R' Dovid came to his city in Massachusetts and they went to some wealthy people together. Thanks to R' Dovid's sincerity they raised a lot of money, far more than the donations that usually came in to the local mosdos.

After Pesach 1968, he returned to Eretz Yisroel with the Rebbe's blessing. In Eretz Yisroel he had several job offers but each time he wrote to the Rebbe he did not receive a reply, until he was offered the job of Mashgiach of Kashrus in the army. Then he received an immediate positive response. In the army, R' Dovid put t'fillin on with hundreds of people, enabled hundreds of soldiers to do the mitzva of lulav on Sukkos, and learned Torah with numerous individuals.

In 1977, he traveled to the US for the wedding of his son Hershel. After the wedding he had yechidus and the Rebbe told him to stay in the US until he found a chassan for his daughter, Itta (Ida).

In the meantime, he taught in

yeshivas Achei T'mimim on Ocean Parkway. His job was to teach the pupils who lacked drive to learn or those who had been left back. He had a knack of reaching these children and as a result, over the years, some of them became rabbanim and shluchim.

## **THE REBBE CRIED DURING THE FARBRENGEN**

R' Dovid found a chassan for his daughter, R' Yosef Yitzchok Altein, but tragically, R' Dovid was murdered before he merited to bring her to the chuppa. Ironically, a man who had faced off against the KGB and had fought the Nazis was gunned down in Crown Heights in a senseless murder at the age of 68. On the morning of Thursday, October 25, 1979 – 4 Cheshvan, 5739 - he was on his way to Shacharis when a local black man, Carroll Miller, shot him once in the head. The motive for the murder remained unclear. Police classified the murder motive as a robbery — Miller was caught with Reb Dovid's tallis — and not as a racist incident. He was tried and sentenced to 22 years on charges of pre-meditated murder.

It was hard to believe that this

man of mesirus nefesh had been killed on his way to shul in Brooklyn. People of all backgrounds came to console the bereaved and letters of consolation were sent by the President of the United States, the governor of New York, rabbanim and public figures. The newspapers reported extensively about the murder. Governor Hugh Carey said, "It is particularly tragic that a man who came here [from the Soviet Union] to practice his religion should be so wantonly and senselessly cut down. We can only hope," said Carey, "that the memory of his life, of his struggle for freedom, justice and mercy, will be cherished by every New Yorker." Over 3,000 Lubavitcher chassidim attended his funeral later that day, and R' Dovid was buried in Old Montefiore Cemetery in Queens not far from the Ohel of the Rebbe Rayatz.

That Motzaei Shabbos there was a farbrengen which the Rebbe began with a maamer on the verse, "And Hashem smelled the fragrant smell." The Rebbe referred to the shocking murder and cried. He spoke about the mesirus nefesh and tests of galus and how despite it all there were still additional nisyonos like this latest happening:

**After this lengthy galus and the decrees and destructions r"l, how is it possible that all this is not enough and we are still in galus and doubled and redoubled darkness so that from time to time there are incidents like these that have no explanation at all, from any angle ... There is still the darkness of galus, the doubled and redoubled darkness so that there are incidents etc. while engaged in a mitzva etc.**

At the end of the farbrengen there was another reference to the murder. The Rebbe said a new mosad should be opened in memory of R' Dovid:

**Regarding the shocking**



incident, it needs to be connected with an inyan of Torah that there should be "they established a yeshiva on his grave," to found a mosad Torah, especially for those who came from that country [Russia].

The Rebbe emphasized that the farbrengen and mosad were connected with the ascent of the neshama in Gan Eden that was there together with the Rebbeim:

Surely this farbrengen, and all the more so the new mosad, is the greatest nachas ruach (not just consent but the greatest nachas ruach) and connected with the aliya for the neshama etc. being already in its place in Gan Eden, and since this is being connected with an addition in Torah study in a plentiful manner - this should be drawn into matters that are apparent and visible good to human eyes, i.e. not only inyanim that are presently concealed chesed but revealed chesed specifically, revealed chesed that is apparent to human eyes.

## THE REBBE CHOSE THE NAME: OHEL DOVID

The day after this farbrengen a group of Anash, relatives, and the hanhala of FREE (of which his sons Meir and Hershel were already directors) met and selected a committee whose job it was to form a new mosad in R' Dovid's memory.

There was an already existing mosad for Russian children under the auspices of FREE and so it wasn't clear to them what mosad they should start. At a special meeting they discussed this extensively and came up with a number of ideas.

The next day, the family wrote a letter to the Rebbe in which they included the proposals. Following the Rebbe's response that they should include the existing Torah institutions and establish a



Newspapers reporting the news of the shocking murder.

*In the meantime, he taught in yeshivas Achei T'mimim on Ocean Parkway. His job was to teach the pupils who lacked drive to learn or those who had been left back. He had a knack of reaching these children and as a result, over the years, some of them became rabbanim and shluchim.*

department in those schools called Ohel Dovid, R' Dovid's children met with the members of the hanhala of Tomchei T'mimim on Ocean Parkway, yeshivas Oholei Torah, and Beis Rivka and suggested that they open special classes for Russian children. The work in locating the

children and teachers, as well as covering the costs, would be done by R' Dovid's children.

New classes were opened immediately and a special staff was hired in these three schools. Registration was carried out among immigrants from the Soviet Union.

# 101 YEARS SINCE THE PASSING OF RAZA Z"L

*A compilation of stories about Rabbi Zalman Aharon, the Rebbe Maharash's oldest son and brother of the Rebbe Rashab.*

## DA RAZA TAMIRA

Rabbi Shneur Zalman Aharon was born on 19 Tammuz 5618/1858. He was the firstborn son to his parents the Rebbe Maharash and Rebbetzin Rivka. He was named for the Alter Rebbe and for his maternal grandfather, the Chassid R' Aharon Alexandrov of Shklov.

Before his birth the Tzemach Tzedek told his daughter-in-law that her baby was an exalted child.

At the brissin of his grandsons, the Tzemach Tzedek would call the babies by acronyms of their names. He called the baby Shneur Zalman Aharon "Raza" and quoted the Zohar which says, "*da raza tamira*" (this is the hidden secret). The name stuck, and he was known by this acronym by the Chassidim too.

When he was three, the Tzemach Tzedek suggested to his son that he take Raza as a son-in-law. R' Yisroel Noach asked his father, "Perhaps the child won't be a talmid chacham?"

His father replied, "He will certainly be a talmid chacham like you; he may even know how to learn more than you!"

## REASON TO SIGH

At a farbrengen on Purim 5720/1960, the Rebbe related the following story in the name of the Rebbe Rayatz:

When the Rebbe Rashab was no more than five or five and a half (for when the Tzemach Tzedek passed away the Rebbe Rashab was five and a half, and this story took place during the lifetime of the Tzemach Tzedek), he was playing with his

older brother, R' Zalman Aharon.

They decided to play "Chassid and Rebbe," quite a central theme in their home. Since Raza was older than the Rebbe Rashab by a year and a half, they decided that Raza would be the Rebbe and the Rebbe Rashab would come to him like a Chasid in yechidus.

Raza sat on a chair and fixed his hat and the Rebbe Rashab came and asked him for a tikkun (spiritual rectification). Raza inquired, "What are you asking for a tikkun for?" The Rebbe Rashab said that on the previous Shabbos or perhaps two Shabbasos ago, he ate nuts and afterwards he found out that the Alter Rebbe writes in his Siddur "it is good to refrain from eating nuts on Shabbos." Raza advised that he should be careful about davening from a Siddur rather than davening by heart.

The child Rashab said, "Your advice won't help and you're not a Rebbe." Raza asked, "Why do you say that?" The Rebbe Rashab explained, "When a Rebbe responds he has to sigh. Your advice may have been helpful but you didn't sigh, and since you didn't sigh you're not a Rebbe and your advice is not advice!"

When a Jew helps someone in accordance with the mitzva of "love your fellow as yourself," and as Chazal say, "what is hateful to you, don't do to your fellow; this is the entire Torah and the rest is commentary," it's not enough to do the act of chesed to help him. There also has to be a sigh.

## A MAN WHO SUFFERED

Raza was tremendously gifted and had elevated middos. His father, the Rebbe Maharash, said about him, "He has a powerful head; he can think two thoughts simultaneously."

At a farbrengen, the Rebbe Rayatz said about his uncle:

“My uncle Raza, who had fine character traits by nature, was a man with a strong heart. Even when he suffered tremendously, and he endured a lot in his lifetime, he always smiled. He never shed a tear over his suffering. But when he heard that someone else was suffering his smile vanished and there were tears in his eyes. He did all he could to help those in distress.”

It is told that once a child of one of the Chassidim, for whom Raza had been sandak, became ill. When the father of the child asked him for a bracha, he turned his face to the window and sang the Alter Rebbe’s niggun. When he finished he said, “Go in peace. The child will live.”

## HIS BROTHER’S RUACH HA’KODESH

Chassidim once came and asked Raza about his younger brother becoming the Rebbe. “You are older ; why aren’t you the Rebbe?”

Raza said, “A Rebbe must have ruach ha’kodesh and I don’t have it.”

“And your brother has ruach ha’kodesh?”

Raza replied, “Neither of us are liars. I don’t have ruach ha’kodesh and so I am not the Rebbe. My brother had ruach ha’kodesh even before his bar mitzva, at the age of 12, and therefore he is the Rebbe.”

*(Oros B’Afeila p. 57)*

## WHO IS DESERVING

On another occasion one of Raza’s acquaintances asked him whether his brother, the Rebbe Rashab, deserved to be Rebbe. Raza said, “In everything in the world there is a *memutza*, something in the middle of the two extremes. For example, between a very wealthy man and a poor man who goes about begging, there is someone in between. Between a man of chesed



and a man who is cruel there is an in between, and so on. But between “Rebbe” and an ordinary person there is no *memutza*. Either he is a Rebbe or he is a charlatan, and my brother is definitely not a charlatan!”

*(Shmuos V’Sippurim vol. 1, p. 78)*

## IT’S A MIRACLE!

In the first year after the passing of the Rebbe Maharash, Chassidim would ask questions of both sons, Raza and Rashab. The amazing thing was that it seemed the brothers had an agreement between them in which each of them would give an opposite answer to the other.

At that time, related the Chassid R’ Peretz Mochkin a”h, the Chassid, R’ Yehoshua Nimotin was called to the draft board and he came to Lubavitch to seek advice. He first went to Rashab and asked whether it paid for him to go to Crimea, since in Crimea (which belonged to Russia) they did not draft people. Rashab’s answer was no and in a play on words he said, “*Krim is nit glaich*” (“krim” – crooked, is not straight).

R’ Yehoshua then went to Raza

and repeated his question. Raza agreed to the trip and told him it was a good idea, and then he said: “No doubt you went to see my brother and he did not agree.”

R’ Yehoshua was very surprised by this. “How did you know that your brother did not agree?”

“It’s a miracle,” he was told.

*(Reshimos D’varim vol. 1 p. 157)*

## A SHARP LOOK

Raza once explained why he declined to be Rebbe. One of the reasons was because he had a sharp look, “and I was afraid for I didn’t want to harm anyone, G-d forbid.”

## HE BURNED HIS WRITINGS

Raza passed away on 11 Cheshvan, 5669/1909, when he was only 51. Before he died he burned the many divrei Torah he had written throughout his life and placed the ashes in a small sack which he requested should be placed in his grave.

The day before he passed away he told one of his mekuravim, “You’ll see what will happen tomorrow. The Chevra Kadisha will have to make a new coffin.”

He is buried in Vitebsk.

## THE NEWS CAME TWO WEEKS LATER

The Rebbe Rayatz wrote:

“This Wednesday my father, the Rebbe and my righteous grandmother found out about the passing of their brother and son, Raza z”l. They sat in mourning over him and tore etc. On Shabbos he said Chassidus for some people and there were thirteen listeners.”

The Rebbe Rashab was busy with a meeting of rabbanim and askanei Anash and did not know about the passing of his brother until two weeks afterwards.



# WHAT GIFT ARE YOU GIVING?

By Rabbi Naftali Estulin, Shliach, Los Angeles

*On 14 Kislev, we will mark the 81st anniversary of the wedding between the Rebbe MH”M and Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka. A Chassid ought to begin thinking thirty days before about what gift he will give the Rebbe for his anniversary, the day that connected us to the Rebbe.*

On Motzaei Shabbos Slichos I was in a Chabad community in Eretz Yisroel. I saw one of the older men, a Chassid and talmid chacham, preparing to say Slichos. As befits an elder Chassid, his preparations were done with p’nimius and engrossed him completely.

I said to him that now we needed to start preparing for 14 Kislev, the Rebbe’s anniversary. He looked at me in bewilderment and said, “What are you talking about? Now is the time to prepare for Rosh HaShana. Why are you bringing up 14 Kislev?”

I reminded him about what it says in the Rebbe’s Rayatz’s sichos

that the Rebbeim would prepare themselves for Yud-Tes Kislev starting from Chai Elul. The question is, Chai Elul is a preparation for Rosh HaShana – what connection does it have to Yud-Tes Kislev?

The Rebbe explains, based on a Chazal on the verse, “and it was evening and it was morning, **the** sixth day,” that the letter Hei (“the”) of “the sixth” alludes to the sixth of Sivan when we received the Torah, at which time the world was made whole and solid.

Since Yud-Tes Kislev is the day of Kabbalas Ha’Torah b’p’nimius, the shleimus of the creation of the world

in a p’nimius’dike way is on Yud-Tes Kislev. And since Chai Elul is the time to prepare for Rosh HaShana, the sixth day – the day Adam was created, we also need to prepare for the day that the world and man achieve shleimus, on Yud-Tes Kislev.

You can say something similar about 14 Kislev. Since the Rebbe’s marriage on this day connected us to the Rebbe, and this day marks a kind of beginning of the seventh generation which will bring the hisgalus of Moshiach and the shleimus of Torah (Torah chadasha) – on this day the world achieves a new shleimus beyond the shleimus achieved on Yud-Tes Kislev for it is the shleimus of Geula.

And so, I concluded my speech to the elder Chassid, starting on Chai Elul we need to prepare for 14 Kislev!

He didn’t buy it. “We are up to Rosh HaShana and you are already up to 14 Kislev?” he said dismissively.

I dropped the argument, but not my position. I remembered what occupied the Rebbe Rayatz on the Rosh HaShana preceding the Rebbe’s wedding. On Rosh HaShana 5689, the year the Rebbe and Rebbetzin married, the Rebbe Rayatz said a maamer Chassidus that begins with the verse (Shmuel I 2:10), “Hashem, may those that contend with Him be shattered ... may He give power to his king and raise the pride of His anointed one,” which alludes to the special connection of the Rebbe MH”M and Geula.

In the maamer, the Rebbe cites the Gemara that in Chana’s prayer the name of Hashem is mentioned nine times and explains that the name of Hashem here, “Hashem, may those that contend with Him be shattered,” which is the eighth time, corresponds to the beginning of Geula. The name of Hashem in “may Hashem judge to the ends of the earth” alludes to the completion

of Geula when “may He give power to His king and raise the pride of His anointed one.”

It is enough to remember that the Rebbe Rayatz was the eighth Nasi from the Baal Shem Tov and that year he married off his daughter to the Rebbe MH”M who became the ninth Nasi, in order to understand the significance of this open hint that was given in the first of a series of maamarim that were said before the wedding.

(Although the Rebbe usually refers to our generation as the seventh, there were a few times that the Rebbe stressed our being the ninth generation. For example, in the maamer, “Basi L’Gani,” 5748, the Rebbe says, “This generation, the seventh from the Alter Rebbe and the ninth from the Baal Shem Tov, and immediately this generation becomes (the last of galus) the generation of Geula, the tenth generation that goes forth to Moshiach Tzidkeinu”).

## PREPARING – WITH LEARNING AND ACTION

Although 14 Kislev is just one day in the year, the spirit and message of it should be carried with us throughout the year, just as we refer to the entire year as a Shnas Hakhel even though the mitzva of Hakhel took place on the first day of Chol HaMoed Sukkos. In the days remaining until 14 Kislev we should prepare properly for this great day and get our gift for the Rebbe ready,



**Rabbi Naftali Estulin**  
(photo by Meir Alfasi)

whether in learning or action:

**In learning** – to learn the *drushei chasuna* that were said by the Rebbe Rayatz at the wedding of the Rebbe (and printed as the Rebbe instructed in a special publication in 5752), as well as the maamarim that the Rebbe himself said and printed in connection with his wedding.

A deeper look shows that the Rebbe Rayatz made some amazing allusions to the nesius of the Rebbe. For example, in the maamer, “Asher Bara Sasson V’Simcha,” he states that the seventh includes everything and all the brachos and *hamshachos* pass through it.

**In action** – first of all, those who are in a position to do so should try to make weddings for couples who did not marry according to halacha. Every Chassid, however, should

participate in farbrengens in which the special quality of 14 Kislev is discussed.

## SIMAN TOV AND MAZAL TOV

In the parsha we read that when Yitzchok was born, Sarah said, “*tzchok asa li Elokim*,” which Rashi explains means people rejoiced for her, that everybody rejoiced on the day Yitzchok was born.

Why would the average person on the street rejoice over the birth of Yitzchok?

Rashi brings the Midrash that says, “Many barren women were remembered along with her, many sick people were healed that day, many prayers were answered along with her, and there was much laughter in the world.”

The Rebbe’s anniversary is also a happy day for mankind. On this day, the Rebbe began the seventh generation which will bring the Geula. And even before bringing the complete Geula, the Rebbe brought a material and spiritual abundance to the world. We know that from the time the Rebbe took over the leadership in 1950, the world economy improved drastically.

So 14 Kislev is not only a Chabad holiday. May we merit, even as we are still preparing for 14 Kislev, the complete Geula – the marriage of Hashem and the Jewish people with the complete hisgalus of the Rebbe MH”M, now!

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# MOSHIACH WILL KNOW HE'S THE ONE

*Moshiach, too, will be a great tzaddik. He will know what he was commanded without any doubts or any room for mistakes. \* In honor of the birthday of the Rebbe Rashab on 20 Cheshvan we present a free translation of a selection of quotes from "Toras Sholom – Seifer HaSichos" on the topic of Moshiach and Geula.*

## THE MAIN THING IS THAT HE IS HERE

When Moshiach will come, the abundant good will be apparent to all. Moshiach is ready to come! He tarries because he has some "business" to take care of with someone from Barbaria. It is the avoda of every person to see whether he is that person in Barbaria.

Moshiach is a revelation of light, and if you don't bring your

Moshiach, if his revelation of light is still not shining forth here, that does not concern me. The main thing is that he [Moshiach] is here; his atzmus is here.

(p. 15)

## TWO MILLENNIA OF YEMOS HA'MOSHIACH

The time has come to sense the light of the time in which we find ourselves, the 2000 years of

Yemos HaMoshiach. This is the chiddush of the 2000 years of Yemos HaMoshiach over the 2000 years of Tohu (Chaos, i.e. the time until the Giving of the Torah) and the 2000 years of Torah.

In the 2000 years of Tohu, they weren't lacking the light at all but they didn't know what it was. They didn't understand or sense the G-dly light.

In the subsequent 2000 years of Torah, they felt the loss of the light but didn't grasp what the Essence of the light is.

In these final 2000 years of Yemos HaMoshiach the chiddush is that the light is felt more than it was previously. This is difficult to understand, for how is it possible that the 2000 years of Yemos HaMoshiach are greater than the preceding years, when in earlier times there were the Tanaim, Amoraim, Geonim, and all the other great tzaddikim and lofty saints, while now the world is – may Hashem have mercy – utterly low and degraded? How can it be that the light is illuminating more now?

There are two answers: 1) This is Hashem's will, for G-dliness to be revealed now, for it is time for the illumination of G-dliness in the world, 2) The advantage now is that we have greater and more powerful mesirus nefesh than in days gone by.

(p. 16-20)

## LIKE YEMOS HA'MOSHIACH

The Alter Rebbe received p'nimius (internal revelation) in Mezritch (and not makifim - encompassing revelations), but the main involvement in spreading Chassidus in a manner of p'nimius began after his arrest in Petersburg. Before Petersburg,



Chassidus was *makif* the world; its impact was not internalized. This changed after Petersburg, when Chassidus began to come specifically from p'nimius.

... Do you know who the grandfather (the Alter Rebbe) was? He wrote Likkutei Torah according to the Divine order of the world, according to the makifim necessary for revelation in this world.

The primary intention, however, is p'nimius, which will be revealed with the coming of Moshiach. The light of p'nimius which was revealed after the imprisonment in Petersburg was **like that of Yemos HaMoshiach and L'Asid Lavo, literally.**

(p. 25-26)

## TO BREAK OURSELVES

We shouldn't delude ourselves – it is only through the avoda of bittul according to Chassidus that we will bring Moshiach! Otherwise, he cannot come.

If we break ourselves, that's good; and if not, he [Moshiach] will break!

The Alter Rebbe said that when Moshiach comes it will be written about in the newspapers. He was intimating that all Jews will be ready for Moshiach's coming immediately as soon as it's written about in the papers that he will come.

(p. 11)

## SEE WHAT I HAVE RAISED

The Rebbe Rashab danced with the T'mimim and then sat and drank l'chaim and said, "May I merit to come before Moshiach together with the T'mimim and say, 'See the offspring that I have raised!'"

The next day, during the Shabbos T'shuva meal, one of the people present declared, "L'chaim, and may we merit the Geula shleima!" to which the Rebbe replied, "Then it will be very good. Moshiach will speak and we will listen."

(p.58)

## LIVING IN YEMOS HA'MOSHIACH

In the future we will openly see that the physical

body is G-dliness, and that its source is the level of Atzmus. In this world our *yeshus* (ego) blinds us from recognizing this – this is me so how can it be Elokus? To achieve this perspective requires a transformation of one's very being, but in the future it will be obvious to all.

Within the yeshus is the power of Atzmus, it's just that it is very hidden and not recognized. Through mitzvos the truth is revealed, at least partially; when the hand distributes tz'daka or shakes a lulav, it becomes a tool for Elokus.

When mitzvos are done properly and with feeling, feeling the level of the Possessor of the Will, then a little of the illumination of the future revelation is revealed.

In this world, this can be accomplished only by great tzaddikim, but in the future, everyone will feel this.

(p.122)

## THE FOOTSTEPS OF MOSHIACH

The Rebbe Rayatz relates:

On Tuesday, 19 Av [5674/1914], while on an outing, I continued to discuss with my father recent events and their spiritual ramifications. He pointed out the well known position of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok of Berdichev, who would constantly send his servant to see whether Moshiach was about to be revealed and if people were talking about it.

He then told me that Rabbi Levi Yitzchok saw in the heavenly realms that Moshiach would soon be revealed. The Alter Rebbe, however, knew for a certainty that though the time was near, it had not yet arrived. He prayed for the success of our country [Russia], for it is a great boon for our brethren spiritually. His efforts bore fruit and he accomplished up Above that our king and country were victorious against Napoleon.

... However, we don't know these things, but generally speaking this is the time of Ikvisa D'Meshicha (the footsteps of Moshiach, i.e. the period immediately preceding Moshiach) so we need to hope for the "light which is good" and that



***We shouldn't delude ourselves – it is only through the avoda of bittul according to Chassidus that we will bring Moshiach! Otherwise, he cannot come. If we break ourselves, that's good; and if not, Moshiach will break!***

the prophecies told to us by the prophets of Hashem will be fulfilled, that there will be no more war and there will be peace among the nations forever.

(p. 205)

### **CHAI V'KAYAM**

“His candle will never be extinguished.” The light of the Baal Shem Tov constantly illuminates. Chassidus will endure until the coming of Moshiach, without a doubt, for “Dovid King of Israel is Chai V'Kayam,” and this is the Baal Shem Tov, the Maggid, and the Alter Rebbe; and so on, for we [the Rebbeim] are from Dovid HaMelech and consequently it will be so until the coming of Moshiach.

(p. 176)

### **MOSHIACH WILL MAKE NO MISTAKES**

From the diary of the Rebbe Rayatz, dated Motzaei Shabbos BaMidbar, 5665/1915:

Since the war [between Russia and Japan] began, not a day passes that they don't talk about

the coming of Moshiach [by the Rebbe Rashab], and so too at the Melaveh Malka that Motzaei Shabbos.

I asked my father: It is prophesied that Eliyahu HaNavi will come and announce the coming of Moshiach and then Moshiach himself will be revealed. Is it possible that they will be revealed in the souls of tzaddikim, i.e. that great and famous tzaddikim will arise and everything will happen through them?

My main question is: Will they make an appearance as people who have arrived or will the revelations take place through tzaddikim who will arouse the people?

He answered: The meaning of the verse about the coming of Eliyahu indicates that he himself will be revealed and not in a state of containment within any tzaddik. However, regarding Moshiach, the Rambam says that a great tzaddik will arise and he will be Moshiach who will gather the exiles and bring them to our holy land.

I asked: If so, how will we know that Hashem sent him? There are so many warnings and guidelines about a prophet, that he himself needs to know that Hashem sent him and he must prove himself through signs or miracles

My father answered: The one who is fitting that Hashem send him, he knows it and he can know that Hashem sent him. He has no doubts and he knows what the word of Hashem is.

I thought many times about the Binding of Yitzchok, for how could it be that Hashem commands people to do something and they encounter obstacles? But the truth is that in fact, there are no obstacles about something like this; it's just that they have thoughts and doubts about the very matter itself, and are uncertain whether this is actually the command of Hashem.

Avrohom, however, had no doubts. He knew it was G-d's command, for on his level he was able to understand and realize that it was Hashem speaking and commanding.

The Rambam thus explains that Moshiach, too, will be a great tzaddik. He will know what he was commanded without any doubts or any room for mistakes. For someone who is fitting to be Moshiach knows and can understand what Hashem is instructing and commanding, for he is on the level of Avrohom Avinu.

(p.163-4)

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