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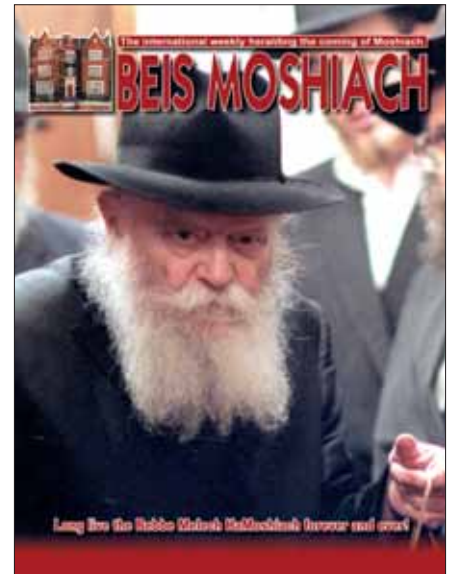
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Moshiach & Geula | Boruch Merkur



USA

744 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409
Tel: (718) 778-8000
Fax: (718) 778-0800
admin@beismoshiach.org
www.beismoshiach.org

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:

M.M. Hendel

ENGLISH EDITOR:

Boruch Merkur

HEBREW EDITOR:

Rabbi Sholom Yaakov Chazan
editorH@beismoshiach.org

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INWARDNESS: THE PATH TO POSTERITY A LASTING LEGACY

Sichos In English

The ultimate consummation of the efforts to reveal Eisav's spiritual potential will be in the Era of the Redemption when "Delivers will go up to Mount Zion to judge the mountain of Eisav, and the sovereignty will be G-d's."

All of us desire posterity. We want our lives to bring something lasting into the world.

This is the message of Parshas Toldos: that a person can leave a legacy that will continue to thrive after his passing.

Our Rabbis offer two definitions of the word Toldos: a) progeny [1] - this includes both a person's biological children and also his "spiritual children," i.e., the individuals whom he has taught. [2] Both of these types of children perpetuate the person's influence. b) the chronicles of one's life and experiences. [3] When a person's life is full of inner meaning, the chronicles of his life continue to provide depth

and inspiration for people in coming generations.

A FOUNTAIN OF INNER STRENGTH

With whom does the Torah choose to associate the message of Toldos?

Yitzchok. [4]

There are two particulars which reflect the nature of Yitzchok's divine service: a) unlike his father Avraham, he never left Eretz Yisroel, [5] b) his efforts were focused on digging wells. [6]

Through his journeys, Avraham spread G-dliness in the lands in which he sojourned.

He "proclaimed... to the entire

world... that there is one G-d and it is befitting to serve Him. He would travel from city to city and from country to country, collecting the people and proclaiming [G-d's existence]." [7]

Yitzchok, by contrast, never traveled outside the Holy Land and even within Eretz Yisroel, we do not find many stories of his efforts to reach out to others. His divine service had, instead, an inward focus.

This is reflected in his efforts to dig wells.

Digging a well involves removing the layers of earth and uncovering the source of life-giving water that is found in one's own place.

In the analogue, this refers to the efforts to penetrate to one's G-dly core and activate it as a source of inner strength.

Each of us has a neshama which is "an actual part of G-d" [8] and every entity in the world is maintained by a G-dly spark.

Yitzchok's thrust involved realizing these inner potentials, bringing them to the surface, and using them to initiate positive change.

In this manner, the awareness of G-d becomes an integral part of one's life. It does not remain merely an external factor, dependent on the teachings of others, but, instead, comes from one's own insight, and is internalized within one's own thinking processes.

This in turn enables one to realize the G-dliness present in every element of existence.

In this context, our Sages interpret [9] the verse, [10] "Dwell in this land," as "Cause the Divine Presence to rest in this land," help the world manifest its G-dly core.

INWARDNESS WHICH LEADS OUTWARD

One might, however, ask: This is surely a worthy path of divine service, but why is it associated with the name Toldos which means "progeny"?

Seemingly, it would be more appropriate to associate the concept of Toldos with the divine service of Avraham, for he actively sought to communicate the awareness of G-d to others.

By naming this Torah reading Toldos, our Rabbis underscore the fact that the inwardness of Yitzchok also produces "progeny".

Yitzchok's divine service and the positive influence it generates attracts the attention of others and motivates them to seek a bond with him and follow his guidance.

In this vein, our Torah reading relates that Avimelech, the king of the Philistines, and Phichol, his general, came to visit Yitzchok and told him, "We have seen that G-d is with you." [11]

Yitzchok's divine service was able to bring them to a recognition of G-d's active presence within the world.

Indeed, in contrast to the awareness generated by

Avrohom's efforts, the awareness Yitzchok inspired was more permanent and lasting, for it came from the people themselves.

Yitzchok's internalized bond with G-d was able to inspire an inner awareness within the people around him. [12]

TO COMMUNICATE TO OUR CHILDREN

In the most complete sense, our desire for posterity is focused on our children.

We want them to continue and further the principles and values of our homes.

And here a difficulty arises:

Yitzchok's children were Eisav and Yaakov.

Yaakov indeed perpetuated and enhanced Yitzchok's divine service.

Eisav, however, rejected Yitzchok's path entirely.

Moreover, this difficulty is compounded by the fact that a major portion of the Torah reading concerns itself with Eisav, and on the phrase "And these are the toldos of Yitzchok," the Midrash states [13] that the word Toldos refers specifically to Eisav.

Although openly Eisav's conduct did not demonstrate that he was Yitzchok's son, the connection between them, nevertheless, existed.

This is reflected by our Sages' statement [14] that Eisav's head was buried "in the bosom of Yitzchok his father."

Similarly, our Sages explain [15] that, in contrast to Yishmoel who is not considered as an heir of Avraham, Eisav is considered as Yitzchok's heir. For the source of Eisav's soul, his head, contained very powerful divine sparks, and these were associated with Yitzchok.

For this reason, Yitzchok desired to give his blessings to

Eisav, rather than to Yaakov.

As a father, Yitzchok was involved in an ongoing endeavor to enable Eisav to fulfill his spiritual potential, and he thought that granting these blessings to Eisav would further this purpose. [16]

He did not realize that in fact it would be Yaakov - and his descendants - whose divine service would tap Eisav's spiritual potential and bring it to the surface.

The ultimate consummation of the efforts to reveal Eisav's spiritual potential [17] will be in the Era of the Redemption when "Delivers will go up to Mount Zion to judge the mountain of Eisav, and the sovereignty will be G-d's." [18]

At that time, the powerful spiritual energies which Eisav possesses will surface and will be given appropriate direction.

A SOURCE OF LIGHT FOR ALL MANKIND

Our Sages relate [19] that in the Era of the Redemption, the Jews will praise Yitzchok, telling him: "You are our Patriarch."

For in that era, the inward thrust of Yitzchok will permeate all existence. "The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-d. The Jews will be great sages and will know the hidden matters, attaining an understanding of their Creator to the [full] extent of mortal potential." [20]

Although all the Jews will all live in Eretz Yisroel, they will - as their ancestor Yitzchok - influence mankind as a whole.

"And it shall come to pass in the end of days that the mountain of G-d's house will be established on the top of the mountains... and all the nations shall flow unto it. Many people shall say, 'Come let

[Continued on pg. 42]

THE MITTELER REBBE: HIS LIFE AND LIBERATION

By Yitzchok Wagshul

Over a hundred years ago, the American poet and philosopher George Santayana famously wrote, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” His point was that studying history is important because it enables us to learn from past mistakes. That may be very true, but another reason to learn about history is undoubtedly that doing so gives us a better sense of who we are today. A little historical knowledge provides a backdrop to the present; it adds flavor to our own lives through appreciation of how we got here and why.

And who, indeed, are we? We are Lubavitcher Chassidim, and some conception of what things were like for past generations of *Rebbeim* and chassidim lends a definite flavor—a *chassidisher geshmak*, if you will—to our lives and our *avoda* even now. In that spirit, let us approach the occasions of Tes Kislev (birthday and *yahrtzeit* of the Mitteler Rebbe) and Yud Kislev (marking

his release from Czarist prison) with some insight into the Mitteler Rebbe’s life and his contributions—to the extent we can even comprehend such things—to the development of Chabad.

A GILGUL OF RAV HAMNUNA THE ELDER

The Alter Rebbe and his wife, Rebbetzin Sterna, had daughters, but for many years they longed for a son. On numerous occasions, the Alter Rebbe would ask his own Rebbe, the Maggid of Mezritch, for a *bracha*, but did not receive a definitive response. Finally, two days before the Maggid passed away, drawing upon the especially lofty spiritual state he was able to reach at that point, the Maggid blessed the Alter Rebbe for a son. He requested that the boy be named after him.

The Mitteler Rebbe was born just under a year later, on the ninth of Kislev, 5534 (1773)—

fourteen years after the Alter Rebbe’s marriage. Sensing that his soul was a *gilgul* of Rav Hamnuna Saba (Rabbi Hamnuna the Elder, a great sage of the Mishna) his father, the Alter Rebbe, originally wished to name him Hamnuna, but in deference to the Maggid’s request, the child was named DovBer. (Years later, when an astonished Rabbi Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev—whose grandson married the Mitteler Rebbe’s daughter—marveled that the discourse he had just heard from the relatively young Rabbi DovBer stemmed from a spiritual level so exalted it was beyond the reach of even the Rashbi (Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, another Mishnaic sage and author of the *Zohar*), the Alter Rebbe explained that since Rav Hamnuna had been on that level, the Mitteler Rebbe was able to perceive it as well.)

MASHPIA TO THE ALTER REBBE’S CHASSIDIM

At the age of fourteen (a customary age for marrying at that time) the future Mitteler Rebbe wed Rebbetzin Sheina, who was the same age. By then, he was an outstanding Torah scholar who displayed such a thirst for *chassidus* that he would become physically ill if deprived of the opportunity to learn it.

A year later, the Alter Rebbe began involving his son in communal responsibilities, especially helping people understand *chassidus*. The Alter Rebbe would also deliver *maamarim* just for him and a few select others. At sixteen, Reb DovBer was appointed *mashpia* to those who sat and learned after marriage, a position which eventually expanded to include older chassidim as well. In that capacity, he would often explain the advice his father, the Alter

Rebbe, had given people in *yeichidus*.

When he was eighteen, the Alter Rebbe already perceived that he stood accused in the heavenly court of publicizing too much *chassidus* too soon. Already then, he hinted that his son should take his place as Rebbe if the Alter Rebbe himself were to pass away.

Baruch Hashem, the Alter Rebbe did not pass away then, and in subsequent years, when he was away from Liozna or, later, Liadi (sometimes for months at a time), Reb DovBer was the one who would *farbrenge* with the chassidim. Sometimes, he even did so when the Alter Rebbe was in town. In addition, Reb DovBer was given the responsibility of writing down his father's *maamarim*, something which he was able to accomplish with remarkable speed. When he was only 23, Reb DovBer was instructed by his father to also begin adding his own explanations to the *maamarim*.

SUCCESSION TO THE NESIUS

It seems obvious to us, today, that a Rebbe is to be succeeded by his son (if he has one). We have almost 200 years of precedent to rely on. But things were not always so obvious. After all, when the Baal Shem Tov passed away, leadership of the Chassidic movement was not assumed by his son, Reb Tzvi; it went instead to the Baal Shem Tov's disciple, the Maggid. Similarly, when the Maggid passed away, leadership was not taken over by his son, Reb Avrohom *HaMalach*, but instead was divided among a number of his disciples, many of whom became Rebbes in their particular regions. Thus, after the Alter Rebbe passed away on the 24th of Teives, 1812, it was not universally taken for granted that leadership of Chabad would

go to his son, Reb DovBer. (As is well known—their names appear at the beginning of the *Tanya*—the Alter Rebbe had two other sons, Reb Chaim Avrohom and Reb Moshe, but they were younger than the Mitteler Rebbe and would not put themselves forward as candidates.)

The Alter Rebbe had made it clear that he considered only Reb DovBer capable of succeeding him as Rebbe. In addition to his remark, mentioned above, made



The holy handwriting
of the Mitteler Rebbe

when the Mitteler Rebbe was eighteen and the Alter Rebbe's life was in danger, two years before his actual *histalkus* (passing) the Alter Rebbe explicitly told his chassid, Reb Pinchas Reizes (also known as Reb Pinchas of Shklov), "Only Rav DovBer can continue to explain the teachings of *Chabad Chassidus* correctly, [and] all aspects of *pidyonos* can be done only through him."

In spite of this, many chassidim were confused and uncertain following the passing of the Alter Rebbe. Some felt that the Mitteler

Rebbe's style of saying *chassidus* was too different from that of his father; the Alter Rebbe's *maamarim* tended to be fairly brief, while the Mitteler Rebbe's *maamarim* were known for their great length. The length of the Mitteler Rebbe's *maamarim* was compounded by their profound depth, requiring the Chassidim to concentrate deeply for a prolonged period of time, which not everyone was able to do. Other chassidim worried that the Mitteler Rebbe was so utterly removed from worldly matters that he would not be able to relate to their needs in matters such as *parnasa*. Many of these people chose to attach themselves instead to Rav Aharon HaLevi of Starishela, one of the Alter Rebbe's greatest *talmidim* and longtime *chavrusa* of the Mitteler Rebbe. Ultimately, however, the *tzaddik* Reb Aharon seemed to lean more toward *chassidus Chagas*—the emotional style of Chassidism—than to *Chabad*, the intellectual style of Chassidism introduced by the Alter Rebbe. It was specifically the Mitteler Rebbe who carried on in the path of *Chabad*.

THE "EXPANSES OF THE RIVER"

Rabbi Sholom DovBer Avtzon, author of the recent biography, *The Mitteler Rebbe: Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch* (volume 2 of his "The Rebbeim Biography Series," available at your local Lubavitch *s'farim* store), says that while the Alter Rebbe *founded* Chabad, the Mitteler Rebbe *defined* Chabad. The Alter Rebbe's teachings revealed many lofty concepts in G-dliness for the first time, and these were rendered comprehensible—up to a point. A person could grasp what the Alter Rebbe had taught and derive inspiration from it, but if he had to explain the concept in all its

The Rebbe Rashab once remarked that he toiled so hard in trying to understand the Mittler Rebbe's seifer Imrei Bina that his hair fell out.

details, would usually be unable to do so. It was the Mittler Rebbe who expanded upon his father's teachings, explaining them at tremendous length and in very great depth, so that a person could clearly understand their meaning and make full use of their practical implications.

For the above reason, the Alter Rebbe is called the *Chochma* of *Chassidus Chabad* and the Mittler Rebbe is referred to as the *Bina* of *Chassidus Chabad*. *Bina* is described as *rechovos ha'nahar*, the expanses of the river, a metaphor elucidated by the Mittler Rebbe himself. A river has three dimensions: length, breadth, and depth. In the context of *Bina*, the length of the river refers to bringing a concept further and further down to earth with numerous details and analogies; the breadth of the river encompasses all the possible different explanations that can be given on a subject; and the depth of the river alludes to the root, the source, of the idea. The Mittler Rebbe goes on to compare *Chochma*, by contrast, to the underground spring that feeds the river in the first place. Significantly, this spring is not visible on the surface. It is only by contemplating the great river, with its great length, breadth, and depth, that one can appreciate the true greatness of its source: the spring.

In the same way, the Mittler Rebbe, in his humility, viewed his *chassidus* as merely an extension of his fathers' *chassidus*. He

dedicated himself to saying as much *chassidus* as possible, not only by saying a great many *maamarim* (sometimes several in one day) but also by explaining the concepts at great length and depth. Some of the Mittler Rebbe's *maamarim* took hours to deliver. As for depth, the Rebbe Rashab once remarked that he toiled so hard in trying to understand the Mittler Rebbe's *seifer Imrei Bina* that his hair fell out.

Nevertheless, the Mittler Rebbe possessed the ability to explain *chassidus* to everyone on that person's own level. In fact, many of his *s'farim* were actually written for specific *chassidim* and tailored to their capacity. *Imrei Bina* was written for the *chassid* Reb Yekusiel Liepler and explains some of the deepest concepts in *chassidus*. On the other hand, the *seifer Pokeach Ivrim*, written in simple Yiddish, was the first *seifer* of *chassidus* ever to be published in that language, and was intended as a guide to assist Reb Shlomo Leib Gamantzki in doing *t'shuva*.

A HISTORY LESSON

The Mittler Rebbe was great in *nigleh*—Talmud and the revealed parts of the Torah—as well as in *chassidus*. And there is no question that he felt a deep personal yearning, an actual *need*, to draw close to Hashem through comprehending and contemplating *chassidus*. Still, it seems we may gain insight into his tremendous emphasis on *chassidus* by considering the context of the times.

In those early days of *Chabad* and of the *chassidic* movement in general, *chassidus* was not yet widely known and understood. As mentioned, the Alter Rebbe had revealed many *Chassidic* teachings for the first time, and these had yet to be fully elucidated. Additionally, *Chassidism* itself remained under attack by opponents—*misnagdim*—who would stop at nothing to stamp it out before it could take root.

A powerful remedy for these conditions was the teaching and spread of as much *chassidus* as possible. The Mittler Rebbe published more *s'farim* of *chassidus* than any of the other Rebbeim except for the Rebbe MH"M. What is more, he published his *maamarim* individually, in separate sheets (as opposed to collecting them into bound volumes), to make it easier for the impoverished *chassidim* of those times to afford them. And he made it a rule that whenever a *chassid* would return home after a stay in Lubavitch, he had to stop in all the Jewish towns along his route and review the *chassidus* he had heard. The Mittler Rebbe said, "My wish is that when two *Chassidim* meet, their everyday discussion be about the levels of *yichuda ilaa* and *yichuda tataa*." And the Tzemach Tzedek—his nephew, son-in-law, and successor—said of the Mittler Rebbe that if one were to cut his finger, *chassidus* would flow out instead of blood.

CONCERN FOR BASIC NEEDS

The Mittler Rebbe himself was known to be utterly removed from all worldly matters, so much so that some had initially feared he would not be able to comprehend their concerns. Yet the very opposite turned out to be the case:

as a Rebbe and leader of the Jewish people, the Mittlerer Rebbe deeply cared about every aspect of a Jew's needs, both spiritual and material.

Another history lesson: recall that the Alter Rebbe passed away and the Mittlerer Rebbe assumed the *nesius* at the close of the Napoleonic War in Russia. The ravages of war left many Jewish communities devastated, and countless families had had to flee the advancing armies and abandon their homes and sources of livelihood. Even before the war, the government had implemented various decrees on a local basis, making things very difficult for the Jews. In all, the period saw widespread poverty and suffering on a catastrophic scale. The Mittlerer Rebbe devoted himself to helping the Jews in a way that would provide true opportunity for rebuilding and recovery.

To this end, he took advantage of the Russian government's gratitude toward his father for his assistance against Napoleon. The Mittlerer Rebbe was able to prevail upon the government to grant his father's ten-year-old request that large tracts of land be granted in Cherson and elsewhere for Jews to settle. As a result, thousands of families settled in 22 colonies there, farming the land and earning a respectable livelihood. These Jewish settlements lasted 150 years, until the outbreak of World War I. It was a tribute both to the *chassidim's* devotion to the Mittlerer Rebbe and to his own devotion to them that many *chassidim* resolved to remain in poverty but close to the Rebbe, rather than move to distant Cherson, from where it would be impossible to travel the vast distance to Lubavitch. The Mittlerer Rebbe's solution was his promise—which he fulfilled—to travel to them: disregarding the

It was a tribute both to the chassidim's devotion to the Mittlerer Rebbe and to his own devotion to them that many chassidim resolved to remain in poverty but close to the Rebbe, rather than move to distant Cherson, from where it would be impossible to travel the vast distance to Lubavitch.

detrimental effect on his frail health, the Mittlerer Rebbe made the arduous journey and spent six months among the Jews of Cherson, from Pesach until Elul, 5577 (1817). Subsequently, he sent Reb Hillel Paritcher every year as his representative.

The same concern for Jewish welfare was displayed toward the Jews of *Eretz Yisroel*. The Mittlerer Rebbe encouraged his *chassidim* in the Holy Land to settle in the city of Chevron, and he supported the community there in numerous ways over the years.

ARREST AND LIBERATION

The Mittlerer Rebbe's communal activities unfortunately set the stage—indirectly—for unscrupulous individuals to falsely accuse him to the government.

Since the Alter Rebbe's home and possessions were destroyed in his flight from Napoleon, the *chassidim* gave the Mittlerer Rebbe funds to rebuild in Lubavitch. The Mittlerer Rebbe wrote to Reb Pinchas Reizes with instructions concerning the distribution of this money, and when Reb Pinchas passed away twelve years later, in 5585 (1825), a relative of his inherited that letter. This person was opposed to Chassidism, and,

together with a cousin of the Mittlerer Rebbe who bore a personal grudge against the Rebbe over a family matter, demanded money from the Mittlerer Rebbe on threat of informing against him. Since the Rebbe had not done anything wrong, he refused to give in to their demands, and the two then wrote to the government claiming that the Mittlerer Rebbe was planning a rebellion. They altered the letter the Rebbe had written to Reb Pinchas Reizes in 1813 to make it look like the sum the Rebbe had received had been over one hundred thousand rubles instead of a much smaller amount. What else could the Rebbe possibly be doing collecting such vast sums of money except preparing for a revolution? The pair also pointed to the letters the Rebbe had been sending over the years to encourage *chassidim* to support the Jews of *Eretz Yisroel*. Since *Eretz Yisroel* was then under Ottoman control, they argued that the funds were really being channeled to the Turkish Sultan, then at war with Russia.

“HONORED CITIZEN FOR ALL GENERATIONS”

An identical accusation had been leveled against the Alter

The great respect accorded to the Rebbe infuriated his accusers, who then alleged that all those people had been bribed in order to impress the officials.

Rebbe years before, and he had been exonerated of all charges. Not only that, but he had turned out to be a patriotic supporter of the Czar who played a significant role in the war against Napoleon. His son, the Mittlerer Rebbe, had been rewarded for this loyalty with the title, “Honored Citizen for all Generations” and granted large areas of land in Cherson and various other favors. Was it likely, then, that he would be plotting to rebel? The Russians had no wish to be embarrassed by another false accusation, which, they strongly suspected, was no more justified than the original ones.

They therefore decided not to arrest the Mittlerer Rebbe, but to have the local governor-general, Governor Chavonsky, conduct an investigation in the regional capital of Vitebsk. The Rebbe was treated with respect and permitted to travel to Vitebsk on his own, stopping along the way to say *chassidus* in the Jewish communities. The great respect accorded to the Rebbe infuriated his accusers, who then alleged that all those people had been bribed in order to impress the officials. As a result, Chavonsky ordered the Rebbe’s privileges revoked, and he was held in house arrest in Vitebsk.

NOT SAYING CHASSIDUS WAS AFFECTING HIS HEALTH

Initially, the Mittlerer Rebbe was held under strict conditions, but after two weeks, his personal physician, the respected professor

Dr. Heibenthal, informed the governor-general that the anguish of not being allowed to say *chassidus* was affecting the Rebbe’s health. The doctor pointed out that if the charges turned out to be unfounded—as was likely—and anything were to happen to such an honored citizen as the Mittlerer Rebbe, the Czar would be very upset. As a result, Chavonsky permitted the Rebbe to daven with a *minyán* every day and say *maamarim* twice a week.

INNOCENT OF ALL CHARGES

Although he knew that Chavonsky himself had been involved in his arrest (the governor-general had made a bet with some local nobles that he could force the Rebbe’s family to plead for his freedom) the Mittlerer Rebbe requested—in a letter subsequently published under the title *Bad Kodesh*—that Chavonsky himself judge the case, explaining that G-d’s wisdom rests on government officials. Chavonsky agreed, and arranged an independent translator to determine the true contents of the Rebbe’s letter to Reb Pinchas Reizes. Upon realizing that the accusers had lied about the letter, the governor-general ordered a debate in which the Mittlerer Rebbe would personally confront his accusers, so Chavonsky could evaluate who was telling the truth. When the Rebbe arrived, dressed in his Shabbos finery, his appearance was so majestic that Chavonsky had a chair brought for

him despite the prevailing practice that the accused would stand. The accuser became nervous and addressed the Mittlerer Rebbe as “Rebbe,” prompting the Mittlerer Rebbe to point out, “He calls me a liar and a rebel against the government, yet he himself calls me ‘Rebbe’! Obviously, he knows the truth.” The accuser had no reply and the Rebbe’s innocence became obvious to all.

A few days afterward, on Yud Kislev, 5586 (1825), the Rebbe was informed that he could go home. Nevertheless, the governor-general persisted in investigating minor charges, hoping he could substantiate something that would justify his having arrested the Mittlerer Rebbe. Because of this ongoing investigation, there was no celebration the following year on Yud Kislev. It was only the year after that—on the 21st of Kislev, 5588 (1827)—that the Russian Senate dropped all charges against the Mittlerer Rebbe. But by then—twelve days earlier, on Tes Kislev—the Rebbe had passed away.

SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LIBERATION

The Rebbeim explained that just as the Alter Rebbe’s imprisonment was an earthly expression of the heavenly debate over whether *chassidus* should be revealed so broadly and clearly, the same was true of his son, the Mittlerer Rebbe. The Mittlerer Rebbe taught so much more *chassidus*, and with so much more explanation, than the Alter Rebbe, that the heavenly accusations were triggered anew. But just as the Alter Rebbe’s vindication showed that permission had been granted in the heavenly court for the spread of *chassidus*, so did the Mittlerer Rebbe’s victory demonstrate that *chassidus* could

indeed be revealed on the unlimited scale characteristic of him.

THE MITTELER REBBE AND THE REBBE

Let us conclude with a fascinating anecdote involving both the Mittler Rebbe and our Rebbe.

There is a well-known story I heard directly from Rabbi Chessed Halberstam, who, years ago, had the merit to serve in the Rebbe's household, particularly as an assistant to the Rebbetzin. The story concerns a time when the elevator in the Rebbe's house malfunctioned, leaving the Rebbetzin trapped inside. Using the elevator's emergency telephone, the Rebbetzin called Rabbi Halberstam, who was not on the premises at the time. He asked whether the Rebbe was in the house, and the Rebbetzin replied that he was, but was not responding to her calls. Rabbi Halberstam, who did not have a key, therefore had to come to the Rebbe's home and try to figure out a way in.

In brief, Rabbi Halberstam relates that he climbed up to a window and was shocked to see the Rebbe's face apparently staring out at him. However, the Rebbe did not move or otherwise give the slightest sign that he saw the young man. In fact, Reb Chessed remembers, the Rebbe's face was flushed and his eyes bulged, staring straight ahead but not seeing. Realizing that nothing was going to change if he did not take action, Reb Chessed stammered out some apology about the Rebbetzin being stuck in the elevator and climbed into the window right in front of the Rebbe—who continued to sit motionless as though in a trance.

Rabbi Halberstam made his way to the elevator and managed to



Ohel of the Mittler Rebbe in Nezlin

The doctor pointed out that if the charges turned out to be unfounded—as was likely—and anything were to happen to such an honored citizen as the Mittler Rebbe, the Czar would be very upset.

free the Rebbetzin. He told the Rebbetzin about the Rebbe's appearance, thinking that perhaps something was amiss, but the Rebbetzin reassured him that this was not unusual. Nevertheless, he felt terrible about having disturbed the Rebbe, and asked the Rebbetzin to please ask him for forgiveness on his behalf. Subsequently, the Rebbetzin told Reb Chessed that she had conveyed his apologies to the Rebbe, but the Rebbe had said he had not seen a thing. Reb Chessed then took the opportunity to ask the Rebbetzin for an explanation of the Rebbe's behavior. Instead of answering directly, the Rebbetzin told him a story about the Mittler Rebbe:

The Mittler Rebbe was accustomed to sit in his room, facing away from the door, and

enter into a state of *hispashtus ha'gashmius*—literally, the casting off of physicality, or, in modern terms, what might be called an out-of-body experience, in which his soul would ascend on high. The *chassidim* wished to see this for themselves, so, on one such occasion, they bribed the Mittler Rebbe's assistant to turn the chair around, allowing them to see the Rebbe's face. The Mittler Rebbe was sitting motionless, his face flushed and his eyes bulging, and he did not see them.

The Rebbetzin meant to imply, understood Reb Chessed, that the Rebbe, too, had been in such a state.

(This article is largely drawn from Rabbi Shalom DovBer Avtzon's recently published biography, The Mittler Rebbe: Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch.)

IF LOBSTERS HAD DOCTORS

Abraham Twerski's Reflections on the tragedy in Mumbai

By Dr. Aryeh Gotfryd

"Why, then, should we avoid emotional pain? Why not say that when a person feels pain about a certain event, it is positive - that the pain is a force pushing him to change? There is tremendous inertia when it comes to changing our personalities, and without such motivation it is questionable whether a person would in fact change.."

*--The Chassidic Approach
to Joy (Ch. 8)*

A thousand people packed the hall, sanctuary actually, at the Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue in Toronto. A giant screen in front of the ark displayed a powerful video presentation documenting the magnificent lives and achievements of Rabbi Gavriel and Rivka Holtzberg of blessed memory.

Above the ark, carved in stone, we could read the divine fiat, "Thou shalt not murder," as we watched the massacre unfold on the screen below. Inside the ark, a Torah scroll was poised to express this week's reading about Jewish continuity, our patriarchs and matriarchs, even as we reflected on the abrupt discontinuity of a young couple, two of the finest, most selfless,

accomplished, loving and dedicated people you could ever hope to meet.

The emcee's words heightened the contrast, juxtaposed the promise and the pain, and framed the question: How can we come to terms with this evil terrorist strike at the heart of goodness and kindness? He introduced the guest speaker, the famed psychiatrist, Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twerski, author of fifty books, to guide us in how to make sense of it all.

All eyes and ears were on Rabbi Twerski as he opened, "Any attempt to make sense of this massacre is doomed to futility." He cited the precedent of Moses, G-d's right hand man, prophet extraordinaire, who begged his Creator for an explanation when he asked, "Let me know Your ways," i.e., Why do bad things happen to good people? If anyone could merit an explanation, it would be Moses. But heaven's answer was: There is no explanation, at least not one that a mortal human being could comprehend.

The juxtaposition of unspeakable evil in the face of incomparable good always raises

for us this question of purpose: Why?

Rabbi Twerski turned the question around, and in so doing, reminded us of our humanity and our spirit. His words paved for us a road of self-improvement, a uniquely human road, an especially Jewish road from personal slavery to personal liberation, from material to spiritual values, from exile to redemption, as the Lubavitcher Rebbe would always emphasize.

Rabbi Twerski believes that the spreading of Chassidus is the only antidote to the massacre of





All these above-mentioned qualities exist on the spiritual plane, quite beyond the biological. In fact, as a psychiatrist Twerski testifies that the exercise of these spiritual values is actually a human need just as much if not more than the biological needs we share with lower forms of life.

Like any other essential lack, if we are deficient in spirit we humans will exhibit symptoms of malaise as certainly as we would if our deficiency was chemical. Biologically, were we to suffer from an iron deficiency, no multivitamin or alternative medication would help, only iron. Analogously, if the deficiency is a lack of purpose, no amount of money or materialistic indulgence is going to provide anything more than a temporary distraction from the true deficiency, which is spiritual in nature.

What are the symptoms of a spiritual deficiency? One feels stuck, discontented, agitated, sometimes hopeless. This is not clinical depression nor an anxiety disorder. All the Prozac and valium in the world won't cure it. But if you supply the meaning, the purpose, the goals, the program of self-improvement, higher values, community service, charitable works, you will see the difference - you will see growth, and with it comes happiness and peace of mind.

But spiritual growth is not always easy. There is usually something holding us back, be it our habits, our desires, our distractions, or our addictions. Dr. Twerski tells of one patient of his who beat his drug addiction and then went home for Passover. Right at the beginning of the seider, when his father said, "We were slaves in the land of Egypt," he said, "Dad, what do you know

Mumbai. Twerski, who is a direct descendent of both the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe, explains how the goal of Chassidus is to create Chassidim, people whose personalities are characterized by selflessness, generosity of spirit, and devotion to G-d.

These are not qualities that fit the model of man we were taught in high school or university. There, man is merely a specimen of Homo sapiens, no more than a clever baboon. But is this view of human nature correct? Perhaps we are much more.

No cow ever got up in the

morning and asked itself, "How can I be a better cow?" Animals don't make ethical judgments, don't study history to learn lessons for the future. It's only humans who can decide their goals in life or question the purpose of their existence. And what animal is likely to defy a bodily drive for the sake of some moral or ethical value?

All these qualities have nothing to do with man, the machine, man the bag of bones whose very existence is a random chemical hiccup. The humans that we really are, are creatures of spirit.

about slavery and liberation? I really have been a slave. The drug told me what to do and I did it - for years. Now I've been liberated and there's no words to describe how grateful I am."

Have you ever wondered, Rabbi Twerski asks, why Jews are so obsessed with the Exodus from Egypt? They mention it in their daily prayers, they commemorate it when they make kiddush on Shabbat and festivals, they mention it in the Shma, they associate it with mitzvos like t'fillin, tzitzis and sukka. Even Passover itself is no simple one day commemoration but weeks of preparation plus a week of celebration.

The answer is it's not about leaving Egypt at all - it's about liberation from slavery, and that's what life is all about. In slavery there are many kinds and degrees. There is slavery to gross addictions like drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes. But we may also become enslaved to things that could be benign if we had the right attitude to them: like food, fashion, fame and fortune.

There's nothing wrong to live

with these things. The problem is when we live for them. When life is defined by our material needs and wants, our spirit become encrusted and we can't break free. Our only way out is to repress the physical a little to make room for other things.

We can learn a lesson about this from the lobster. Have you ever wondered how lobsters grow? Their shells are hard and fixed in size. As the soft creature within grows larger, it starts to feel squeezed inside its shell. This discomfort signals that it's time to cast off the shell to enable growth. The lobster finds a nice rock to hide under, climbs out of its shell, and then grows a new one to match its size.

The lesson for us is recognize that the discontent, agitation and hopelessness we feel may in fact be our souls calling out for a little more space. Every once in a while we need to cast off our materialistic exterior which of course could make us vulnerable for a time, but it also accommodates inner growth.

Imagine what would happen if lobsters had doctors. "Hey doc,

I'm feeling uncomfortable in my shell. What do I do?" The doctor could say, "Take a pain killer." or "You need to lose weight" But that won't solve the problem. The need is growth and that need must be met.

Sometimes pain is a blessing. It's a neshama crying out for meaning. At that point it's time to heed the call.

R' Gavriel and Rivka Holtzberg heard the call of the neshama. They put their own material comfort to the side, dedicating all their inner and outer resources to helping other Jews find their way in the world. If we can deny our material obsessions and gratifications just a little bit, we can rise a step closer to living a life of meaning like theirs.

And then our personal redemption will contribute to the ultimate redemption, may it take place speedily in our days, Amen.

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OUR FIVE- YEAR PLAN

By Hannah Porat, MA, Educational Consultant,
Mandel Institute for Leadership, Jerusalem

*Just as it is the innermost desire of every Jew to fulfill the will of G-d through Torah, likewise it is the innermost will of every human being created in the image of G-d to fulfill His will through the seven universal commandments. The world is ready. The non-Jews, B'nei Noach, are ready and are waiting for us to teach them G-d's authentic will. * A Practical Strategy for Publicizing the Seven Noachide Laws.*

Let's open with an anecdote. An American shoe company sends two sales representatives to a very underdeveloped country in Africa. The first, a pessimist by nature, spends a few days sipping Coca-Cola at the desert pub and assessing his surroundings, then sends home a text message: "The situation is hopeless, nobody here is wearing shoes, book my flight home." The second guy also notices upon arrival that all the natives are going barefoot. That very day he rushes off a fax to

head office: "Send a 747 with all the sizes and all the models immediately; EVERYONE here needs at least two pairs of shoes!"

Chassidim, eternal optimists that we are, have our work cut out for us. As "Chayalei Beis David" and "Tzivos Hashem," each and every one of us has been empowered by the Rebbe, our commander, to take over the world. In our spiritual battle to bring about the redemption, the Rebbe clearly instructs us: "In Exile times, since the Jewish

people reside amongst the nations of the world, every individual – man, woman and child – is able to carry out the dissemination of the seven Noachide laws. [This obligation is included within the general principle to "establish many disciples."] The laws must be explained in a way that the nations can relate to, and, because non-Jews generally have an innate desire to comply with the dictates of ethical monotheism, they may even be more willing to transform their lifestyle more quickly and readily than many Jews would."

Before we begin the work, we look in the Rebbe's Torah

There are close to seven billion B'nei Noach waiting to be educated through pleasant and peaceful means about the commandments which Moshe Rabbeinu was directed to convey to the whole world. Fortunately, there are several thousand Shluchim in place to get the job done. But before we start dealing with the practical side of this task, let us look for a moment into the Rebbe's teachings to understand the connection between the time of Noach and the "days of Moshiach" we are now entering, when "The world will be filled with the knowledge of G-d as waters cover the sea."

The Rebbe learns from the commentary of the Tzemach Tzedek on the Midrash to Malachi 3:4: "And the offering of Yehudah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to G-d like in the days of old and in the previous years", that "days of old" refers to "days of Noach". The purification process through which the world becomes ready for the Geula Shleima began at the time of the flood, since Hashem promised global survival ever after. On the verse, "And I will remove the spirit of the impurity from the

earth,” the Rebbe comments, that “from the earth” means “from the people,” an endeavor which, he teaches, requires an effort on the part of Jews.

The Rebbe has informed every Jew and especially the Shluchim that the dissemination of the Seven Noachide laws is a principal force in bringing the true and complete redemption and no less essential than their work with Jews.

The purpose of this article is to sketch out a practical strategy for the Shluchim, so that our efforts can be coordinated to accomplish the maximum result given our limited time, money and human resources. There is no shortage of examples of individuals or organizations who manage to achieve their goals by mapping out what they wish to accomplish and the means by which they plan to do so.

We are holding the trump card in this game here and that is: The Torah! And what we lack right now in money, we can more than make up for in intelligence, dedication to the Rebbe’s instructions, spiritual integrity, power, and last but not least, in practical unity. The less we allow friction between us to grow out of control (and the more we train ourselves to throw out the various ploys designed to take away our inner power of Torah learning and of our prayer), the more we can fulfill our greatest resolutions. Each Shliach is, as the representative of the Rebbe, in charge of his city and has the power to affect that place for total good.

The world is at our disposal. We can use every communication and finance tool available (like the Internet, e-mail, PayPal etc.) to get the most done with the least sweat and headache. A few



Rav Boaz Kali

printed words (which is what this) can go a long way to win the battle for the “hearts and minds” of men and women on the seven continents.

In the enterprise of education there are a few basic common factors to always consider: 1. **The students.** 2. **The teachers.** 3. **The curriculum.** 4. **The books.** 5. **The schools/facilities** 6. **The goals of the education** (including the **assessment** of whether these goals are being met). And 7. **The educational media** (films, websites, etc.) So as not to reinvent the wheel, when it comes to teaching “everyone in your city” the seven Noachide laws in depth and breadth, I would like to now discuss some of these common factors as they are no doubt relevant in your location as well.

First, teachers. The ideal teacher can be either a non-Jew who keeps the laws himself and also studies them all the time or a Jew who has become an expert in Hilchos B’nei Noach. Obviously, the teacher for this subject needs to care about it and practice what he preaches. The Rebbe makes the point that B’nei Noach will



Rav Uri Lipsch

need their own experts to turn to with questions, since Jews are not always accessible. The logical thing for us to do, then, is to set up a certified training program, in which such experts can receive instruction and ongoing support. There are also many rabbis who have made themselves available by setting up a shiur for non-Jews once a week. Rav Wilhelm’s classes in Antwerp, Belgium, for example, have an attendance of about 300. Such a shiur can also be webcast, thus reaching many more people in their homes.

Regarding teaching materials, we have the ubiquitous Bible, plus many s’farim written about the Noachide covenant.

There are, in essence, two kinds of books on the Seven Noachide laws: those written for Jews to understand the Seven Noachide laws (to learn in order to teach) and those books that are written for the B’nei Noach to learn on their own. The primary source book of the first kind for every Shliach is the compilation of the Rebbe’s insights spanning five decades on all aspects of the Seven Noachide laws and the B’nei Noach. Its title is “**Kol Baei**

Olam.” First published a decade ago by Rabbi Dovid Smith, it can be ordered at directly from him at “rabbi@LGeulah.org.”

Learning this book (the language is Hebrew and Yiddish) is like entering into Gan Eden. He cites about a 100 excerpts of the Rebbe’s talks, in which he defines and teaches anything and everything pertaining to non-Jews, as far as their observance of the seven Noachide laws is concerned. What emerges from all this is that the Rebbe wants nothing but goodness, peace and stability for all of humanity. Along the way, he also answers in detail a great many of the deeper Halacha issues for B’nei Noach. This book is an absolute must for a Beis Chabad. In addition to it being important tool for influencing others, it is also endlessly informative and inspiring in and of itself.

The Divine Code by Rabbi Moshe Weiner is available (in Hebrew and the first of 4 volumes also by now in English) from the Ask Noah International Initiative by Dr. Michael Shulman (Ph.D.) in Pittsburgh, PA.

[<http://www.asknoah.org/>]. This tremendous actual **Shulchan Aruch L’B’nei Noach** (altogether 800 pages) will be most useful for learning actual Halacha with groups of B’nei Noach in study circles and also for your own understanding of the subject. Everything is clarified and explained in detail and this publication has the backing by Israel’s chief rabbis, HaRav Amar and HaRav Yona Metzger.

The book **Olam Metukan** was written explicitly for B’nei Noach by Rav Uri Lipsch and Rav Boaz Kali (www.7for70.com). It was published in 5764 with 2000 copies printed in Hebrew. The original files were lost due to a computer fire and today only a

few copies remain. There are plans in the works to scan it and make it available as an e-book on the Internet, and then have translations of this book made into the different languages. It is intended for non-Jews to learn.

Dr. Michael Shulman has set up a system where interested B’nei Noach can locate qualified rabbis to guide them through **The Divine Code** by Rabbi Moshe Weiner. A readymade curriculum can be obtained at his site www.asknoahinternational.org, where an Introduction Correspondence course [<http://www.asknoah.org/UNA-Course1.html>] is being offered for Beginners, including a quiz, whose successful completion qualifies the learners to move on to the advanced courses offered by his UNA (United Noachide Academies). If you are short on time and want to send someone on to get started learning today, tell them to e-mail Dr. Shulman and request the curriculum for the correspondence course.

What not to do: basic guidelines by the Rebbe avoid repeat past mistakes.

The Torah was given to bring peace and order to the world, so anything that brings about confusion, hatred and animosity has to be avoided. Rav Uri Lipsch, author of the book “Olam Metukan” on the Seven Noachide laws, reminded me of the Rebbe’s directive that a leaflet for B’nei Noach that was published in Australia be shredded, since it was presented in such a way as to weaken the institution of marriage. We always need to remember that anything that we print or quote from printed matter in public forums, as far as the Torah position for the world is concerned, must have first come before a board of rabbis. A Chabad rabbinical board is in the

works to deal explicitly with the Shulchan Aruch for B’nei Noach, ideally with an Internet forum accessible by password where questions and answers will be posted.

Another point Rav Lipsch made is that the Seven Noachide Laws are in no way a mere technical body of rules for the gentiles, but also addresses one’s character and personality. The essence of being a Ben Noach is that he is of the “Chassidei Umot HaOlam” and that he expresses the inherent goodness of man. Man was created to be good and straight, as already Adam HaRishon was called by the title of “Chassid”. To be a Ben Noach, who listens and accepts the will of G-d including accepting the role of the Jewish people to teach and clarify G-d’s will in the world, also includes to be forgiving, to honor one’s parents, to give charity, to be considerate, and to be modest. Therefore it is essential that the Shliach/educator focus on the “whole person,” the entire unique personality, reaching out to each person’s full spiritual potential.

Rabbi Smith of New Jersey is editor for the sourcebook of all of the Rebbe’s teachings on B’nei Noach, **Kol Baei Olam**. He made the crucial point that anyone that we are seeking to influence will be receptive if we think about him deeply as the unique individual he is, and consider his entire situation. Thus the failure to influence (whether it be in Chinuch, in the family, or in outreach) results from the lack of focused thought. The difference between “preaching” and “teaching” is that “teaching” implies a relationship in which a thinking human being is free to ask and to speak his mind, and in which he is being supported by those who guide him to thrive in

There are also many rabbis who have made themselves available by setting up a shiur for non-Jews once a week. Rav Wilhelm's classes in Antwerp, Belgium, for example, have an attendance of about 300. Such a shiur can also be webcast, thus reaching many more people in their homes.

making his own life and develop his own talents. The Rebbe also specifically instructed us not to mention any punishments for transgressing the Noachide Laws, such as telling people that if they take home a paper clip from their office, they are liable for the death penalty. Rather we are to encourage them and support them and to repeat our message to them like expert salespeople - polite, friendly, giving great service (answering their questions, referring them to useful information) and extolling the reward for their righteousness in the World to Come.

Chanuka: Utilizing Public Menorah Lightings to bring the message of the Seven Noachide laws. Last Chanuka I was in Offenbach, Germany, with the Shliach, Rav Menachem Mendel Gurewitch. The event drew about 1000 Jews – and quite a number of non-Jews, as well. Seeing the mayor of Offenbach standing up there together with the Shliach, I couldn't help but think what a perfect opportunity this is, in the middle of the city square in front of the town hall, to give over the message of the seven laws to all the passersby. The public Menorah lightings are very powerful events and they actually draw people (B'nei Noach

included) out from their homes on cold December afternoons. Since the essence of the Menorah lighting is to publicize the miracle to the world, Chanuka is a natural occasion to undertake a public event for the seven Noachide laws in your city. Go for a big hall, and don't be shocked when it is actually full. The world is ready!

The greatest motivation and inspiration for dealing with the nations in all their particular languages, customs and cultures, is to recognize that just as it is the innermost desire of every Jew to fulfill the will of G-d through Torah, likewise it is the innermost will of every human being created in the image of G-d to fulfill His will through the seven universal commandments. The world is ready. The non-Jews, B'nei Noach, are ready and waiting for us to teach them G-d's authentic will.

Everything in this world is by Divine Providence. During this past Sukkos, it came to my attention that the number of people living in Jerusalem is 770,000 people. I first heard it from a fellow Chassid and then I saw it quoted in the Jerusalem Post's Real Estate magazine, in an article by Judah Massias. After absorbing this piece of

information I spent a very amazing afternoon visiting Jerusalem and looking at everyone on the street as a subject of King Moshiach. This number – 770, 000 people – and the fact that it was printed, is obviously no accident, but rather comes to reveal to us that the essence of the city of Jerusalem is that it is the city of Moshiach.

The world itself bears the vitality of the seventh generation. With the world population getting closer and closer to Seven Billion people (google "Population clocks") on seven continents and the country of Israel having seven million residents (5.6 million Jews and 1.4 non-Jews), they are all subjects of Moshiach. As such, all activities to teach and to reach out to non-Jews by the Shluchim will be successful for the simple reason that the king wants us to teach them what they need to know to get themselves ready for the redemption, so they can actually have a real relationship with G-d, based on G-d's Torah.

For each and every Shliach, the success for his work in teaching the seven laws to all the people in his city is assured, since every individual can rectify the entire world. Noach stood up to the entire world, which had gotten to the absolutely lowest point, and through his service and actions in the manner of complete righteousness, he effected a total rectification of the entire world, in such a way that there was a "new world." This, the Rebbe learns, is the instruction for each and every Jew: that even if a Jew thinks that he isn't up to the task of dealing with the world, or that he is the only one in his entire surroundings, this makes no difference whatsoever in his mission of spreading goodness, truth, and righteousness. Already

For each and every Shliach, the success for his work in teaching the seven laws to all the people in his city is assured, since every individual can rectify the entire world.

from the days of Noach, it was the case that one person stood against the whole world and was victorious in all of his matters to the point of actually beginning a whole new phase in creation.

And even more, the Rebbe learns from the double mention of Noach at the beginning of the Parsha that victory is assured from start, just as it was in the time of Noach. And when one knows in advance that he will win, his entire service will be done in a manner of happiness, like an army that goes out to war singing a victory march! This point should give each and every Shliach the boost he needs to head out with a big smile and a song in his heart!

Rabbi Smith summed up the goals of education beautifully. In essence, a non-Jew is created in the Image of G-d (*b'tzelem Elokim*). The Rebbe Rayatz explains the term *b'tzelem* to

mean “the human intellect,” which directs the body of the person on the basis of his soul. The *nefesh ha'maskelet* drives a person to achieve a life of justice and righteousness, success and happiness, and most important, a life of being able to know and serve G-d. So our basic goal is to guide them by our example and to teach them what there is to learn – which is actually a lot. When it comes to the practical observance of the commandments, our role is to support and encourage. Each and every Beit Chabad is the main center in that country, city or neighborhood, for teaching and influencing the B'nei Noach.

Herman Melville, a famous novelist, described in his diary a visit he made to Israel in the late eighteen-hundreds. After commenting on the remarkable desolation of the city of Jerusalem and the desert area around it, he describes an encounter on the

coast of Israel with a man from America, a Christian, whom he describes as a hopeless eccentric. “The man is here with his whole family, including his three daughters, in order to teach the Jews, whom he says will soon be returning in masses to the Land of Israel, the principles of agriculture, so they will be able to cultivate their own land.” If so, the number one “eccentric” is the Rebbe, who told us to prepare ourselves, our families and the whole world for the redemption. Preparations are always practical and I wish every Shliach total success in practically preparing his city and all the people in it for the arrival of Moshiach by teaching the Seven Noachide laws in their breadth and depth, and with all the tools and educational strategies - utilizing all already existing venues and channels to the maximum.

Mrs. Hannah Porat, an educational consultant and researcher, is a graduate of the Mandel Leadership Institute's "Jerusalem Fellows" professional training course (2003), and a mother and homemaker based in Beitar Illit. She is developing video lectures for teaching the Seven Noachide laws on her website www.torahfromsinai.com.

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HAVE I GOT AN ANSWER FOR YOU!

By Yaacov Moshe Moses

The Large Hadron Collider, under the Swiss countryside at Cern, is a 17-mile circular race track for subatomic particles. It's the world's biggest physics experiment and it's finally set to go after 60 countries have contributed 10 billion dollars and 15 years of work by 10,000 scientists. But what is it all about? * Part 1 of 2

Q: Dear Yaacov,

Professor Yirmiyahu Branover noted in an essay he wrote for the weekly publication, *Geula*, on March 6, 2009, that the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) currently being rebuilt and repaired at CERN in Switzerland is intended to explore the structure of so-called 'dark matter,' and that discoveries made through the LHC are "supposed to settle long-standing debates between cosmologists and physicists."

The problem, however, Prof. Branover points out, is that even if at CERN, the huge energies

necessary to produce dark matter are generated, we still will not be able to see dark matter because it does not interact with any known particles in the universe.

Therefore, cosmologists who argue that there is five times more matter in the universe than what physicists are able to "see," still will not be able to prove their point or settle the argument.

Prof. Branover then goes on to argue that "we have a similar problem in a spiritual sense, because it is clear that we can only glimpse a very small fraction of the totality of creation."

Prophets, on the other hand, can "see" what the rest of us cannot, and therefore we should realize that when a prophet, such as the Lubavitcher Rebbe, "sees" that increasing in Torah study and acts of goodness and kindness will merit the Geula, then we should not object just because we cannot "see" the whole picture.

Yaacov, what I am asking is: why do we, as observant Jews, need to turn to science to bolster our confidence in prophecy? You, yourself, I believe, have argued that cloning is the rational explanation for resurrection of the dead, T'chiyas HaMeisim. Are you really saying that Torah needs science to explain Scripture?

A: Dear reader,

Of course not! I am saying that science is finally catching up to Torah, that Torah never needed science, but that the college educated, young Jewish man or woman who has, in the regrettable past, laughed at Torah because they thought, erroneously, that they knew so much science and that science contradicted Torah (G-d forbid, what a joke) – these kids can stop laughing now. Cloning is a rational explanation for resurrection of the dead, not that G-d needs science or a laboratory. But, again, please don't forget – G-d created science and laboratories! Also, I believe you are misreading Prof. Branover in the same way.

To repeat a few points briefly alluded to in some of my previous articles:

The *Zohar* predicted a revolution in scientific thought that would occur around the year 5600 (1840). In the Torah portion of Noach, it states: "In the six hundredth year of Noach's life...all the wellsprings of the great deep burst forth and the

windows of heaven opened.”

The *Zohar*, the fundamental work of Jewish mysticism, explains the esoteric meaning as follows: “In the six hundredth year of the sixth millennium the gates of wisdom above and the wellsprings of wisdom below will be opened; the world will then be prepared to enter the seventh millennium.”

The two phrases – “the wellsprings of the great deep” and “the windows of heaven” – allude to two types of wisdom (knowledge). “The wellsprings of the great deep” refers to wisdom below, meaning science, while “the windows of heaven” refers to the wisdom above, meaning Torah.

Even so, mystical truths were inaccessible because their form was too abstract and esoteric. The task of the Baal Shem Tov, and after him, the Alter Rebbe, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, the Baal HaTanya, was to translate these truths into a form understandable to the common Jewish populace (see Beis Moshiach, October 31, 2008).

For example, the Alter Rebbe writes in *Tanya*: “And as known what the Baal Shem Tov, of blessed memory, said on the verse, ‘Forever, Oh L-rd, your word stands in the heavens’: The combinations of the letters with which the heavens were created, i.e., the fiat ‘Let there be a firmament...,’ stand and remain vested in the Heavens forever, to vivify and sustain them. Thus unlike the theory of the philosophers who deny individual providence, they, in their false imagination, compare the work of G-d, The Maker of Heaven and Earth, to the work of man and his schemes. When the metal-smith has completed a vessel, the vessel no longer needs the hands of the smith. Although his hands are

Mass must come from somewhere and somewhere there is a ‘particle’ that can’t be defined (except in abstractions), a nothing that is somehow something.

removed from it, it remains intact by itself. ‘But their eyes are bedaubed (blinded) so that they cannot see’ (Isaiah 44:18). The great difference between man’s work and schemes [which is (the production of) something out of something (yesh m’yesh), except that he changes the form and the image] – and the making of heaven and earth [which is *creatio ex nihilo* (yesh m’ayin)] is that the latter is a wonder much greater, for example, than the splitting of the Red Sea” (*Tanya*, pages 535-538).

In other words, the Alter Rebbe is telling us that heaven and earth cannot exist without constant creative input (will) from G-d, this being the nature of something created from nothing.

Also, our own Siddur, *T’hillas Hashem* Nusach HaArizal, documents, “and in His Goodness, He renews the work of creation each day, continuously” (page 43). Again, this emphasizes that renewal or, in other words, continuance of reality as we know it, only lasts as long as the Creator continuously wills it to last.

Now, what does this have to do with science, you say? Recently appearing in the journal, *New Scientist* (published in England, September 20, 2008), was the headline, “Something from Nothing,” referring to a new scientific theory (don’t tell the Alter Rebbe!) that postulates the question: “Are space and time

also crystallized from nothingness?”

The article goes on to state that anyone who has been following the goings on in science will have heard that mass, the defining feature of ‘things’ in the world, owes its existence to a particle called the Higgs boson, which has become known as “the G-d particle.” This “G-d particle” is built from a host of ingredients: quantum commotion (the metric field that delineates space), time and gravity, exotic materials like the quark-anti-quark condensate, and the Higgs field. All together, these somehow transform empty space into a multi-layered, multi-colored superconductor. In other words, this is science jargon that points to the realization that mass must come from somewhere and that somewhere there is a ‘particle’ that can’t be defined (except in abstractions), a nothing that is somehow something.

And so science and Torah meet (not collide)! The Alter Rebbe has told us that the world (creation) comes to us *ex nihilo*, something from nothing; and now science tells us that the world comes to us something from nothing. Both agreeing, dear college students! With each other! Diverse orientations not withstanding!

Also, in a recent science publication, *The Lightness of Being: Mass, Ether and the Unification of Forces* by Frank Wilczek, the author explains that the masses of protons and

neutrons we call the world are far heavier than the sum of their elementary parts, so what accounts for their weight?

Wilczek tells us: empty space. Only space is not so empty, it is actually “seething with activity.” Wilczek calls this non-empty emptiness – the Grid (come on, couldn’t he just have said, the one true living G-d!).

Wilczek is not just a nobody with a quack idea, he is in fact a revered physicist who won the 2004 Nobel Prize in physics for his work on quantum chromodynamics, a theory that describes how quarks and gluons interact. He even rewrites Einstein’s famous $E=mc^2$ into $M=E/c^2$, describing, he says, how mass derives from pure energy. Again, something from nothing - after all, ‘energy’ being an abstract term for “nothing that is somehow something,” dear reader!

Also remember, energy could be another word for G-d, except that scientists are reluctant, for the sake of their reputations, to use such theological words. In addition, what Wilczek postulates is that truly empty space is unstable. “From nothingness, quark-anti-quark pairs crystallize and fill space, actually lowering the energy of the vacuum in the process.”

In other words, his main point, according to reviewer Amanda Geffer, editor, Opinion Section of the *New Scientist* (again see *New Scientist*, September 20, 2008) is that “all familiar mass – our desks, chairs, bodies – comes from energy crystallized out of nothing.” And, Wilczek wonders, “is the Grid’s metric field – that is, space and time themselves - a condensate that similarly crystallized from nothingness in the earliest moments of the Big Bang?”

Is Wilczek referring here to Einstein’s space/time matrix or perhaps water droplets (a ‘condensate’)? Is this the mysterious ‘water’ that G-d separated (the lower waters from the upper waters, Genesis 6:7)?

All of which now brings us to the anticipation of the data it is hoped will emerge from CERN’s Large Hadron Collider in Geneva, Switzerland, the much vaunted particle accelerator that might discover, according to its international team of builders, perhaps not only the ‘G-d particle,’ but some of the ‘secrets of nothingness.’ (Reminiscent of the tower of Babel?)

After all, nothing exists but energy, says quantum physics, and according to the physicist David Bohm, this energy is an ‘indivisible wholeness.’ It has no dimension, no time or space as defining characteristics. It is, according to quantum physics, eternal and everywhere, a flowing matrix in which all parts intersect with all other parts, this time science sounding a lot like Eliyahu the Prophet’s description of G-d, which we repeat every Erev Shabbos in Mincha. I quote:

‘Eliyahu opened his speech and said: Master of the worlds, You are One, but not in a numerical sense. You are supreme over all the exalted ones, concealed from all the hidden ones; *no thought can grasp You at all*. ...You, however, have no specific name, for You permeate all the names, and You are the perfection of them all...*You have no specific place*.’ Sounds just like quantum physics to me, dear reader!

But now back to the Hadron Collider. What we have is this: scientists at a vast underground Swiss laboratory have launched an experiment to re-enact the Big Bang on a small scale to explain

the origins of the universe and how it came to harbor life.

So how does it work? The Collider uses giant magnets housed in cathedral-size caverns to fire beams of energy particles (protons), where they will smash together near the speed of light, and computers will analyze particles for clues to what really happened at the Big Bang.

The experiment was projected to restage trillions of times the moment when an unimaginably dense and hot object, the size of a small coin, exploded rapidly to create everything in existence, as we know it. A truly “once-in-a-generation occasion,” as one scientist put it. And on 10 September, 2008, the proton beams were successfully circulated in the main ring of the Large Hadron Collider and on 19 September, 2008, the multi-million dollar experiment broke, due to a serious fault between two super-conducting bending magnets. A Bust! The Big Bang! A Bust!

Now what does all of this have to do with us, Yidden?! Because it is theorized that the collider would produce the elusive Higgs boson, as discussed earlier: something from nothing. This is a challenge to the religious dictum that only G-d can produce ‘something from nothing.’

I must point out, in all fairness, that not all scientists agree that all the fundamental forces of nature diverged from one single force soon after the Big Bang. In fact, Xavier Calmet of the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium and his colleagues argue that it may be impossible to prove that all forces may once have been unified via any conceivable experiment in a particle accelerator. I quote:

“The problem is that high energy levels at which unification

of all the forces is thought to occur is close to the 'Planck scale' at which quantum fluctuations in space-time become strong and these fluctuations may create huge uncertainties in the strengths of the forces at this scale," says Calmet (*New Scientist*, 15 November 2008).

And, Calmet admits, all this is a 'bit depressing,' because it 'dashes hopes of a grand unified theory emerging from relatively low-energy measurements made at the Large Hadron Collider at Cern.'

So, just imagine, dear reader, all the money and tears that could have been saved, if only scientists had listened to the Alter Rebbe's *Tanya* and Eliyahu HaNavi's clear pronouncement: "Master of the world, You are the Primary Cause and the reason of all reasons, who waters the Tree through that spring; and that spring is like the soul to the body, the life of the body. *In You, however, there is no similarity or likeness to anything within or without.* You created heaven and earth and drew forth from them the sun, moon, stars

Just imagine all the money and tears that could have been saved, if only scientists had listened to the Alter Rebbe's Tanya and Eliyahu HaNavi's clear pronouncement.

and planets; and on earth, You drew forth the trees, vegetation, the Garden of Eden, grasses, the beasts, cattle, birds, fish and mankind...However, *there is none who can know You at all.* Without You, there is no unity in the higher or lower realms, and You are known as the Cause of all and the Master of all."

Therefore, good luck, science! The challenge is over!

In a recent update in *New Scientist*, 17 September, 2009, Jessica Griggs writes, "What will happen to fundamental physics when our descendants reach the limit of particle accelerator technology? We'll surely run out of space and money long before the smallest building blocks of the universe can be probed with machines, because of the massive

energies required...Energies at the Large Hadron Collider are likely to peak at 14 teraelectron volts. In contrast, the energies around a black hole would theoretically be limitless." In other words, dear reader, the LHC will not work to prove creation came from nothing!

Frank Wilczek and Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi are both right; the world was created and is continuously being created from nothing, but the Large Hadron Collider will not be able to demonstrate this fact. Only G-d can create something from nothing, not a large mechanical colliding collider. Science has the right idea but misses the main point: Prayer! Not a math problem! G-d not Grid!

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SOULS RETURNING FROM A"Z

By Eli Shneuri

They all returned from A"Z (avoda zara). Four stories about Jewish souls lost in klipa who found their way out thanks to the Rebbe's shluchim in India.

CAPTIVE SOULS

Chanan G., who worked at the Chabad house in Kasol, relates:

We decided we had to go out to the street to put t'fillin on with people who didn't come to the Chabad house. The ideal place to do this was the bus station, which was the point of departure and arrival for all the Israeli tourists.

We set up shop with a t'fillin stand and refreshments. Many people took the opportunity to stop and talk for a few minutes and we invited them to come and visit the Chabad house.

One man was afraid to accept anything to eat for fear that we would talk religion with him. We made an agreement that there would be no talk about Judaism. He was also invited to the Chabad house for a cup of coffee with no

strings attached.

After a few minutes he said, "I have a question that I want to ask, but you religious people – don't mix religion into this." We agreed and he said, "I want to hear some explanations about concepts such as: Rebbe, Chassidus etc. It's a subject that interests me. Just do me a favor and don't mix religion into this ...".

One day we noticed someone standing near the t'fillin stand and watching as we put them on passersby. He had Rastafarian braids down to his thighs but what really made us uncomfortable was the cross he wore.

After a few minutes of observation he asked us some questions. After we explained what we were doing he told us that he too was a Jew. We were shocked.

He said that he was involved in meditation and mysticism for over twenty years. He had built himself a place where he gave lectures and guided people who were interested in a spiritual experience.

"Lately, I accidentally discovered that I'm Jewish. I have Jewish parents, Holocaust survivors."

We suggested that he put on t'fillin. He wasn't opposed, but he wanted to know what they are before he did anything. We told him that after he put them on we would answer all his questions. He was willing to do so and put on t'fillin for the first time in his life.

Before we parted ways we invited him to visit the Chabad house, and he showed up before very long. As soon as he walked in one of the people working at the





“I want to hear some explanations about concepts such as: Rebbe, Chassidus etc. It’s a subject that interests me. Just do me a favor and don’t mix religion into this ...”

Chabad house stood up and began pacing the room uncomfortably. After a few minutes he left. A few minutes later he returned, looked at the strange-looking guest and hurriedly departed, only to then come back in.

This was peculiar behavior and I asked him to sit down, but he looked at the guest again and walked out.

I went outside to find out what was going on. He told me that a

few years earlier, when he was irreligious and touring India, he had taken courses with this man. “He’s a Christian. I don’t understand what he’s doing here.”

It was only after I explained to him what happened that he sat back down and tried to diffuse the tension.

There are still plenty of Jews out there who are waiting to find out that they are Jews and to actualize their Jewish potential

with the help of the Rebbe’s shluchim.

INFLUENCE FROM A DISTANCE

Chanan went on to relate:

During my stay at the Chabad house there was a girl who would often come and help out, mostly with the meals. Then she stopped coming.

After two months we heard that she had rented an apartment on a hilltop together with an Indian boyfriend. I was very upset about her deterioration and decided that something had to be done to help her.

One day an Israeli tourist stopped by with more concrete information about where she was living. It was somewhat presumptuous to appear at their home without an invitation and I considered what to do next. The main problem was the goy she was living with. What could we tell him – that we had come to take his Jewish girlfriend away?

I asked the Israeli to come with me so he could show me their house. He was a little apprehensive and asked me what I intended to do. I reassured him and said he should just show me where they lived and I would take care of the rest. After some more urging he was persuaded to help me and accompanied me to their house, all the while curiously asking me what I intended to do.

Not far from their house I sat down on the roadside. I told my surprised friend that he should do the same. I took out a Tanya and began reading it together with him. When we got up to chapter 12, we got up, turned around and walked back to the Chabad house. The Israeli was astonished. I explained that we made a spiritual effort and surely this would affect her neshama. Amazingly, the next day

Not far from their house I sat down on the roadside. I told my surprised friend that he should do the same. I took out a Tanya and began reading it together with him. When we got up to chapter 12, we got up, turned around and walked back to the Chabad house.

she showed up at the Chabad house!

The next day we went to her house again and, standing not far away, read chapters of Tanya and T'hillim and again, she dropped in the next day. Each time that we did this, she appeared the next day at the Chabad house. It was incredible seeing this connection.

She inquired more about Judaism and helped us prepare the meals, becoming active again at the Chabad house. One day, her Indian boyfriend came to the Chabad house too, asking about her.

Time passed and after I had finished my stint on shlichus I got a message from people active at the Chabad house that the two of them had separated. I have no doubt that it was thanks to the Tanya and T'hillim that we said near her house.

SHOWDOWN OVER A MEZUZA

Menachem Lenchner relates:

When I went to Goa, India, two years ago on shlichus together with my friend, Yossi Farber, we were surprised to discover Israeli families living there on a permanent basis. Among these families was a woman who was half Israeli. By "half" I mean that she had been married to a famous Israeli writer and lived there for

several years.

After despairing of her empty life in Israel, she decided to take her seven year old son to India, far away from everything, where she hoped to find serenity.

After a few months she got involved with a local Indian, a guru who worked in the area and arranged courses on mysticism and meditation. Due to his workload he only visited their house once a month and then immediately returned to the ashram. After a few years they had a child together.

When we came to the village she was very happy to see us and gave us a warm welcome. We asked her about mezuzos and were not surprised to hear that she had none. We found a reason to visit the house and after talking to her about the importance of the mitzva of mezuzah, she was convinced and asked us to take care of it for her.

Some time afterwards we went back with kosher mezuzos. We put them up and then hoped for the best.

After about a month, when the guru returned to the house, he stopped short at the entrance. Something barred him from entering. He looked around and noticed something on the doorpost. He called out for his wife and asked, "What's that?"

"That's a mezuzah," she explained. To her surprise, he didn't let it go at that. This was

the beginning of a fight that ended with the ultimatum, "It's me or the mezuzah!"

Her Jewish spark flared up and she said, "I will never remove that mezuzah."

Without another word he walked inside, packed his few belongings and left. Since then, she and her children are regular guests at the Chabad house. The children began learning the alef-beis and Chumash and other Jewish subjects.

I (the author ES) met the family this year. My friend Menachem Lenchner taught the older son Chumash and Mishnayos and how to put on t'fillin and I taught the younger son the alef-beis, especially the letter yud which emphasizes the difference between being a **Jew** and one of the billion Indians surrounding him.

Every Sunday he would come to the Chabad house jumping in glee, as though he had waited all week for this day so he could get something his neshama had been craving for so long.

A TIME FOR EVERYTHING

The following story happened in Goa during Chanuka of last year.

It was the second night of Chanuka. A few days earlier we had received an invitation from *Bayit Cham* (an irreligious organization that provides various services for Israeli tourists) to attend a Chanuka party they were making in a village a half an hour away, and to say a few words about the holiday.

I tried to come up with a good idea about what to say, something different that would be short and interesting, but nothing came to me. A few minutes after lighting

the menorah at the Chabad house, I went to take the Chabad house's scooter to get to *Bayit Cham*, but just then one of the guys asked me if he could use it... "Something urgent, I'll be back right away." He pressured me and although I had mixed feelings, I let him drive it away.

I stood there outside the Chabad house for a long time, waiting for him to come back. Time was passing and he still hadn't returned.

A European tourist in his fifties drove up on his scooter and noticed the large menorah in the yard. After his curious gaze had lingered longer than expected, I asked him if I could be of assistance.

"I remember how my grandmother lit something like that."

Each time that we did read Tanya and T'hillim near her home, she appeared the next day at the Chabad house.

I asked whether he was Jewish and he said, "I am not Jewish but my maternal grandmother was Jewish."

After he gave another few signs and I was certain that he was Jewish, I let him know that he too was Jewish and suggested that he light the menorah. It was only after much nudging that he finally agreed to do so, for the first time in his life.

He was emotional as he held the candle and recited the brachos. After he lit the candles he watched them for a long time without saying a word.

I thought about how Hashem

had orchestrated things so that I was delayed because of the missing scooter and met this Jew who did not even know that he was Jewish. Now I knew what I was going to talk about at the party.

Two minutes went by and the Israeli reappeared with the scooter. He had run out of gas and had to walk to the nearest gas station to refuel, and that is why he had been delayed.

I quickly drove to the event and I arrived at the end. I told the story and explained how the Rebbe looks out for every Jew, even those who don't know they are Jewish.

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ב"ה

IS AMERICA THE PROBLEM?

By Raanan Isseroff

In the 1940's the Lubavitcher Rebbes both spoke out against "putting our faith in the nations of the world." Putting our faith in the "saving graces of America" is no different. Chassidus teaches that Yisroel is the reason for creation and it is we who have an influence on the world when we go in the ways of Torah and Mitzvos. It is up to the Jewish people to change the world, not up to the rest of the world to undertake changes on our behalf.

Being that there are Jews living in Israel, the Rambam holds that it must be defended. Rambam does not state: "Write to your congressman so that perhaps America will decide to protect Israel."

Chassidus explains that all of creation receives its life force from K'dusha. Everything that takes place in the world around us is only a symptom of what the Jews are doing. When, G-d forbid, we are "off-task," the forces of unholiness derive their life force. So it is incumbent on every Jew to assume responsibility for his existence by operating in a "Torah and Mitzvos" mode!

The approach of telling Jews that it is a "mitzva" to get the United States to defend Israel when Israel is doing nothing about this itself betrays this responsibility.

Jews in America need to know that the Land of Israel is given to them by G-d and the Israeli government needs to be lobbied, bothered and pushed unceasingly to either assume this position or to step aside and defer leadership to those who feel a proper responsibility towards the preciousness of Jewish life in such a special place. It is the obligation of every Jew to take the security of the Land of Israel into his own hands. This is a special mitzva that we have in our hands like at no other time in the last 2000 years!

This idea needs to be continually and unhaltingly addressed because, as the Rebbe has emphasized time and again, this is the real crux of the problem!

For too long, Israel has been handing over crucial elements of its daily survival time after time into the hands of those who hate us or, at best, those who at any moment will turn their backs on our plight. Water resources, military supplies, oil, and buffer lands are continually being given away. Even our security secrets are given away or compromised as America feels the need to barter with this one or that.

As the saying goes: "HaKol Kol Yaakov". When we operate in a Torah and mitzvos mode, we bring upon ourselves all the blessings showered upon Yaakov.

The flip side, though, "Yedayim Yedei Eisav," is unfortunately no secret. We drop down from Mitzvos, and Eisav is allowed to assume control over us... We stop doing our "Torah and Mitzva" thing and are subject to the blessing G-d gave to Eisav. (G-d forbid)

For thousands of years we didn't have the merit of self-governance in Israel, so the mitzva of defending it didn't apply. Since 1948, we DO have this mitzva whether we like it or not. The Mitzva of Ahavas Yisroel does not allow us to turn our back on a fellow Jew!

We all know how to lobby the American government when it comes to civil rights issues. But that isn't what's called for now. The core issue is not how to influence the United States but rather the government of Israel who has for too long relied on a sleeping American Jewish community to blindly advocate and support whatever they claim is needed. Of equal import is to influence the sleeping lion of the potentially powerful Orthodox Jewish communities here in the United States. The third imperative is to bring this message to the not-yet religious Jew as well, in a manner that is both relevant and meaningful.

The religious community is the

biggest provider of money and candidates for Aliya. Studies have shown that most Jews (meaning the pre-observant) are completely ambivalent about what happens to Israel.

The majority of Olim who go and stay - over 75% - are religious. Over 40% of the officer corps of the Army are religious. Services for religious Jews have increased, such as instituting all-religious brigades to accommodate the religious 45% of Israel's population. Within 20 years Israel will be a mostly Orthodox country.

Being that there are Jews living in Israel, the Rambam holds that it must be defended. Rambam does not state: "Write to your congressman so that perhaps America will decide to protect Israel."

Understanding this, we can read into what is being given away and understand what is really going on. While Israel gets most of its money and Olim from the religious communities of the US, the majority of the areas it is giving away are religious communities. Even the status of Jerusalem is up for negotiation.

One is reminded of the Kastener trial in the fifties. Kastener was the head of the Jewish community in Hungary under the Nazis, *yemach shmam*. He made a deal with the Germans that in exchange for giving over most of Hungary's (mainly religious) Jewish community into the death camps, he and his favored few (non-religious) thousand (plus the Satmar Rebbe to make things look kosher) would be saved.

As things turned out, after the war, Kastener and his henchmen ended up in Israel and of course, for their exemplary work of favoring the lives of the irreligious over the religious, thus keeping the religious from "invading" Israel, they were put in important positions in the new government. And not much has changed since. Israel is still following the same failed path Kastener did in 1944.

We must answer the call of the hour and channel all our efforts, skills and talents into influencing the government of Israel and American Jews in particular to withdraw support for peace talks, land giveaways and other concessions dangerous for Israel. This support can be redirected to taking back the land that has been given away and military action against missiles and other acts of terror to stabilize the balance of power which has tipped against us.

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Upon this statement I affix my signature, Sunday 20th Tamuz 5766



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THANKS TO A BOOK ABOUT THE REBBE

Rabbi Chanan Kochonovsky, shliach in Rishon L'Tzion, is known for the brissin and chuppos

he makes and for his huge shul Chabad house that is frequented by hundreds of people every day, and of course, Shabbos and Yom Tov. He relates:

“One day, a young Russian woman asked for my help in her conversion. Due to my years of experience and disappointments with converts, and in accordance with what halacha advises, I pushed her off a few times. However, she was serious and she kept coming back to me. I finally invited her to a Shabbos meal, in the course of which she asked whether we had a book about Judaism in Russian.

“The only book that I had at home in Russian was a thick book about the Lubavitcher Rebbe, his approach to Chassidus, hafatza, etc. I loaned her the book. She came back to me a few days later and said, ‘I read the book and now I am determined to convert according to halacha and I want to be a Chabadnik, a Chassida of the Rebbe who is the subject of this book.’

“The woman went through the process and converted. She got married and established a Chassidishe home in Canada.”

Another story happened with Mrs. Kochonovsky. She had a childhood friend who she had gone to school with but had abandoned Torah and mitzvos. She heard that this friend lived in Zichron Yaakov and when the Kochonovsky family went to Zichron Yaakov, she looked up her friend's number and invited her to visit with her at the hotel.

They talked about this and that and then Mrs. Kochonovsky gave her friend a gift, a booklet with Kiddush for Shabbos and Yom Tov, with a dedication to her friend written in it.

Three years later, the friend called her up, out of the blue, and said that a few months earlier she had been cleaning out a closet and had found the Kiddush booklet. She read and reread the warm dedication, flipped through the pages and decided that she and

her family would do t'shuva!

Said the friend, "From that week on we began to keep Shabbos, to make Kiddush, daven, go to shul, and dress as religious Jews do. Our entire lifestyle changed for the good, all thanks to the booklet you gave me."

THANKS TO A SET OF RAMBAM

I heard the following story from R' Noam Dekel, shliach in Yaknaam:

Twenty years ago we celebrated our first Siyum HaRambam. We invited rabbanim, had it catered, hired a band, and we ordered some sets of Rambam so that anyone interested in learning three chapters a day could immediately buy a set and begin learning.

The Siyum was a great success and at its conclusion, people bought sets of Rambam. I noticed a man from the yishuv looking at the s'farim that were being sold. I asked him whether I could be of help and he said that he wanted to buy a set of Rambam but he didn't have the money on him. I told him to take a set and pay me when he was able to.

It was only later that I found out what an impression this made on him. He went home and told his family, "Now I see where the truth lies. They, the Chabadnikim, don't only think about how to profit. They truly think about people and how to help them."

This man became closer and closer to the Rebbe and to Chabad and all his children learned or presently learn in Chabad. One daughter is married and she went on shlichus. It was all thanks to the graciousness of the shliach and a set of Rambam.

PERSONAL CODE

A Yud Shvat farbrengen took

place in Teveria which was the joint effort of the shliach, R' Reuven Gol and the talmidei ha'yeshiva learning in that city. R' Eliyahu Kaye, a lecturer at Ascent, was invited as the guest speaker. He is an expert at finding your personal code in the Torah according to your date of birth, your name, and the parsha of the week you were born.

At the farbrengen, one of the participants, a talmid of R' Gol, volunteered his birthday so that R' Kaye could find his code. It was, R' Gol relates, an amazing scene. R' Kaye opened his personal computer to the parsha of the week that the volunteer had been born in. The crowd could see it on a large screen. Within a few seconds the computer found his name, Avshalom, at 160 letter skips.

R' Kaye explained, according to Chassidus, Avshalom's character traits, and the participants, who knew him, were amazed by the accuracy of his statements.

BOOK OF HAFTOROS FROM THE BABA SALI

Quite possibly many of our Chassidishe readers are unfamiliar with the book of Haftoros written on parchment that is made like a Sefardic Torah scroll. It is placed in a round and decorated holder and put in the Aron Kodosh next to the other Sifrei Torah. Even if you are not familiar with it, this exists in hundreds (maybe thousands) of shuls in Eretz Yisroel and the world, including some Chabad shuls and Chabad houses.

Every Shabbos, a boy who is almost bar mitzva is given the honor of carrying the book of Haftoros to the bima and they read the Haftora from it.

I heard the following story from R' Tzemach Avrohom,

shliach and rav of yishuv Yinov and the outlying yishuvim of the Tenuvos regional council:

At our yishuv there is a Sefardic shul. I am the rav of the shul and I give shiurim in Chassidus, hold farbrengens, and host children's rallies. We had a seuda for the yahrtzeit of Baba Sali and I told the people about the special connection between the Rebbe and Baba Sali, about their correspondence and relationship.

In the middle of the seuda I noticed that one of the regulars was not present. When I called him I found out that he had gone to the main yahrtzeit celebration for Baba Sali in Netivot. He said he couldn't talk at length but he would return to Yinov with a surprise.

On Shabbos, this man came to shul with a beautiful book of Haftoros, a big smile, and an interesting story.

"Over there at the hilula, there was a public sale of Judaica to raise money for the mosdos of Baba Sali. The amounts of money were in the thousands and tens of thousands of shekels. I bought the 'key to parnasa' for 12,000 shekel. It's a big golden key, a key to parnasa, bracha and hatzlacha. When I went to get the key from the person in charge, I was told that there had been a mistake and the key had already been sold and given to someone else.

I raised a hue and cry and they referred me to the wife of Baba Sali herself. She brought me to the room where the holy items were spread out and she said I could choose what I liked. There were candlesticks, pictures, bottles and one book of Haftoros. I said to myself: That would be just right for our shul.

R' Tzemach Avrohom concluded, "See? We made a seuda in honor of Baba Sali and so he sent us a gift for our shul."

THE LELOVER REBBE ZT”L



Rabbi Shimon Nosson Nota Biederman zt”l, the Lelover Rebbe in B’nei Brak, passed away suddenly shortly after Kol Nidrei this year. The weakness that caused him to arrive forty minutes late for davening increased after he retired to his room at the conclusion of the t’filla. He collapsed and was taken to the hospital, where he passed away.

R’ Shimon Nosson Nota was the second son of R’ Moshe Mordechai of Lelov zt”l, who was known as a miracle worker and a great tzaddik. After the passing of R’ Moshe Mordechai, his three sons served as Rebbees. The oldest, R’ Avrohom Shlomo zt”l, served as Rebbe in Yerushalayim and passed away on 16 Shevat, 5760. R’ Alter Elozor Menachem Mendel zt”l served as

Rebbe in B’nei Brak and passed away in 5761.

The Lelover Rebbe, R’ Shimon Nosson Nota, led his Chassidim in simplicity, modesty, chassidus and prishus. He had excellent ties with the Lubavitcher Rebbe and Chabad Chassidim. For fifteen years he lived in Crown Heights and every Shabbos Mevarchim he would recite T’hillim in the Rebbe’s minyan. He participated in farbrengens and had yechidus, including the famous yechidus with the children of the previous Lelover Rebbe in 5745.

Rabbi Ben-Tzion Grossman, a well-known Lelover Chassid, relates, “The Rebbe treated him with great respect. R’ Leibel Groner told me several times that the Rebbe was especially fond of him. During the

times that his financial state was poor, the Rebbe made sure he wasn’t lacking.”

Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchok Biederman, shliach in Vienna, describes his uncle, the Lelover Rebbe:

“My father would always say about his brother R’ Shimon that from his childhood he was an oved Elokim. He worked on himself with tremendous efforts. He was very diligent, learning entire nights, and his quiet, introverted nature did not hold him back from being outstanding in his caring for others. He also put a lot into his avodas ha’t’filla. For decades he would say the entire T’hillim daily. He was extremely punctilious in everything and it was all done with simplicity and modesty.

“He lived quietly in Crown Heights for fifteen years, absorbed in learning and davening. You can say that the Rebbe adopted him. The Rebbe treated him like his son, making sure that Merkos L’Inyonei Chinuch obtained the proper papers for him to live in the US. R’ Leibel Groner was his neighbor and the Rebbe would ask R’ Groner what R’ Biederman needed.

“Although he was a masmid by nature and every disturbance to his learning wasn’t easy for him, and despite the poverty in which he lived, he still had an open house for meshulachim from Eretz Yisroel. He welcomed them warmly and provided for their needs. He would sometimes prepare their food for them and occasionally even accompanied them as they knocked on doors.

“In his youth he learned for a while in Tomchei T’mimim in Tel Aviv. If my memory serves me well, my father told me that their melamed was R’ Refael (Folye) Kahn a”h and that R’ Shimon appears in the Seifer HaT’mimim.

“He had very special kiruvim from the Rebbe, even in more recent

years when he did not live in Crown Heights.

"In 5745, he and his brother R' Alter had yechidus with the Rebbe on shlichus of their father, my grandfather. Part of the yechidus was with their entourage and the content was already printed; there is an edited record of it. But after that they remained for another 50 minutes or so alone. At the time, my uncle told me that the Rebbe asked them to tell their father, my grandfather R' Moshe Mordechai, whose health was very poor at the time, that since he had influence in Ger and Belz, he should intervene with these two Chassidic groups for there was tension between them.

"Unfortunately, this did not happen since when they returned to Eretz Yisroel, my grandfather was already extremely weak and they couldn't even tell him about the Rebbe's request.

"At that yechidus there was something that was said that is clearer to me now in hindsight. (This is also in print but it is clearer on tape). It seems R' Shimon was trying to get the Rebbe's agreement that Tzfas is a City of Refuge. The Rebbe said it is not mentioned in the Torah as a City of Refuge but R' Shimon maintained his position and can be heard whispering his insistence and then the Rebbe says – "unless Tzfas will be one of the 42 cities of the Levites that will also serve as refuge" ... (Indeed, something like this is written in *Chesed L'Avrohom* from a student of the Ari, that Tzfas will be a City of Refuge in the future).

"Now I understand that this was a personal matter for him. He always preferred to stay in Tzfas for he felt good there, physically and spiritually. He once said he felt that his neshama belonged in Tzfas.

"When my father was hospitalized in 5752 he would listen to tapes of the Rebbe. One time, his brother R' Shimon came to visit him



The Lelover Rebbe visiting the Chabad yeshiva in Tzfas last year

while I was there. On the tape we heard the Rebbe saying that 'Moshiach is already here and you just need to open your eyes and to prepare for his coming.' One of the people present in the room said in a defensive tone, 'The Rebbe is not referring to himself but to the idea in general.' R' Shimon listened to the tape again and again and then he said a brief statement in his low-key but firm way, 'He is referring to himself. If only ... They just shouldn't interfere with him ...'

"He was a talmid Chacham, diligent in his learning and deep. At a certain point he served as Rosh Yeshiva. He authored a halachic work *Har HaBashan* on the Rambam. It became tremendously popular among Torah scholars, and I was surprised that he didn't publish more of his chiddushim. When I asked my father about this, he said that although my grandfather had given him an approbation for the first book, at a later point their father cited to him an aphorism of the first Lelover Rebbe, R' Dovid, on the verse, 'In my heart I hid Your words...' He understood from this not to publish more.

"A few years ago he called me to ask about a certain bachur in Europe regarding a shidduch that a family in New York had spoken to him about.

He took the time to make the inquiries and that's when I realized how his avoda had changed. Instead of being immersed in his spiritual world, he had become completely devoted to others and their needs. Till today I am amazed that an introvert like him agreed to accept a leadership position. This alone is grounds for me to consider him a model of a real oved Elokim who worked to change his nature for the sake of Hashem and His people Israel."

The Lelover Rebbe did chesed all his life. He did things quietly, saying the entire T'hillim without fail every day, for forty years. He gave a lot of tz'daka and excelled in Hachnasas Orchim.

About a decade ago, he was visited by a delegation of Chabad Chassidim, including Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Weiss, Rosh Av Beis Din in Neve Achiezer, and Rabbi Yitzchok Lifsh of Tzfas. After they showed him the Rebbe's sicha of Parshas Mishpatim, 5751, that we already have the appointment of "Dovid My servant," and what is lacking is "kabbalas ha'malchus," he signed on the Kabbalas HaMalchus.

Last 3 Tammuz he attended a farbrengen in honor of the Rebbe that took place in Tzfas.

ETERNAL LIFE

By Rabbi Yosef Karasik
District Rav Bat Chefer – Emek Chefer

Why should a person begin to worry when he's five years away from the age of his parents' passing? Do the parents' lifespans affect those of their children? * A fascinating look at the parsha from the perspective of Chazal, Kabbala and Chabad Chassidus.

Everybody wants to live a long, healthy life, certainly Jews whose lives are full of Torah and mitzvos and serving Hashem. Every moment is precious as he builds a “dira ba’tachtonim” for Hashem and gives Him nachas.

Our most precious resource is life. Nothing else compares, and people are willing to give anything for a good, long life.

Of course, the lives of our holy Avos, whose every moment affected all their descendents for generations to come, were especially important. The Torah tells us how long each one lived. Avrohom lived till 175, Yitzchok to 180 and Yaakov to 147. The Torah also tells us that Sarah lived till 127.

Their longevity was unusual, even for those times. When Avrohom was 100 and Sarah was 90 they are called “z’keininim ba’yamim” (old) and yet, they continued to live even longer – Avrohom for another 75 years and Sarah for another 37 years.

Yitzchok, when he was 123, said “behold I am old,” and then he lived another 57 years.

Although every moment of life is a blessing for which we ought to thank Hashem, when there is long life even after reaching old age this is a special, supernatural bracha.

AGE OF THE PARENTS

People throughout the generations want to know how long they will live. Even Dovid HaMelech, in T’hillim 39:5, asks Hashem, “Make known to me, Hashem, my end, and the measure of my days – what it is.”

Chazal gave some signs by which we can reckon how long we will live, and one of them, mentioned in Rashi in this parsha, is the number of years your parents lived. “Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korcha said, if a person reaches the age of his parents he should worry five years before and five years afterwards.” Chazal learned this from Yitzchok’s statement at

age 123, “I don’t know the day of my death.” The reason – it was five years before the age his mother Sarah had died. “He said, perhaps it will be the age of my mother, and she was 127 when she died. I am five years younger than that.”

What connection is there between a parent’s lifespan and that of their children?

There is the physiological reason, that since we get our genes from our parents, it makes sense to say that the length of the parents’ life is an indication of what their children’s lifespan will be.

But a Jew knows that life and death are not a result of strength or weakness of the body as transmitted by DNA. It is Hashem who decides how long we shall live. He gave each of us a life’s mission and the ability to do it. A person’s lifespan is based on the mission and the abilities given to carry it out.

According to this, the sign that Chazal gave linking the lifespan of children to that of their parents indicates that there is a deep connection between parents and their children and their respective missions and abilities. The Arizal teaches that the souls of children are connected to the souls of the parents like a branch of a tree which grows and gets its nourishment from the root in the earth. Consequently, there is a similarity between their lifespans.

WHAT IS CONSIDERED THE END OF LIFE?

When someone seems about to die because of their advanced age and poor health and they miraculously live additional years, the question is how should their children look at their age – as they would have lived in a natural manner or according to how long they actually lived?

A similar question can be asked

in reverse. If a person who under normal circumstances had the ability to live for many more years was suddenly killed in an accident, does his child need to be worried when he reaches this parent's age even though he did not die a natural death?

The Rebbe answers the question by closely examining what Yitzchok said:

When Yitzchok was 123 years old, he was afraid he would die since this was five years before the age that his mother, Sarah, died. Yitzchok's concern is surprising, for where is his trust in Hashem? Hashem Himself blessed him (25:11), so shouldn't he expect to live a long life?

From this we learn that it's not the actual age that the parents died that matters but the age they would have died under natural circumstances. Since at age 90, Sarah was already considered old, *that* was the age to be concerned about, not the age that she actually died, 37 years later. That extension was supernatural and the result of a blessing from Hashem. Thus Yitzchok's apprehension is not a contradiction to his trust in Hashem's bracha, since this was many years after the age of 90, the first milestone considered close to the death of one of his parents.

This answers the second question, whether to be concerned about the age a parent dies, when they would have, under normal circumstances, lived longer.

Yitzchok's fear of dying at age 123 was, as we said, five years before his mother died. She apparently would have lived even longer but she died because of the news about the Akeida. From this we see that Yitzchok held that since she died at 127 years of age, it was a sign for him to start worrying even though she ordinarily could have lived longer.

From here we see that one

A Jew knows that life and death are not a result of strength or weakness of the body as transmitted by DNA. It is Hashem who decides how long we shall live.

should be concerned when reaching within five years of a parent's actual age at death and not the number they may have lived.

(We see another proof from Yitzchok who died at 180, five years within his father Avrohom's death at 175. Avrohom was supposed to live to 180 and it was only to spare him the anguish of seeing his grandson Eisav becoming a rasha that he died five years early. From this we learn that we count the actual life span and not the life they may have lived. Since Avrohom lived 175 years and not 180, Yitzchok in fact died five years after his father actually died and not when he could have died).

YITZCHOK – THE TRAIT OF G'VURA

The Rebbe adds that the two issues stated about the age at death: 1) calculating it based on what would be the natural age at death even if they lived a longer life, 2) calculating it based on the actual age at death even if it was a result of an accident and otherwise, they would have lived longer – are only from the perspective of Yitzchok, who was called "pachad Yitzchok" (fear of Yitzchok), the midda of g'vura. He looked at everything from the aspect of g'vura.

However, from the aspect of chesed you can say the opposite: 1) the parents' actual age at death should be considered, even if they lived a long life as a result of a miracle, 2) in the event of an early

death as a result of an accident, one should not consider that age because under normal circumstances they would have lived longer.

Furthermore, someone whose parents died at a young age does not have to be concerned and live in dread, but should trust in Hashem that He will grant him a long life. Hashem desires to do good and He is the source of life. Surely He will grant every Jew "length of days and good years."

Fear when approaching the age of a parent is exclusive to someone on the level of Yitzchok. From the aspect of chesed and the love of Hashem with which He leads the Jewish people, one can live far longer than his parents. In addition, the Torah tells us that every mitzva that we do, every good deed, adds to our merits and blessings that Hashem grants us.

ETERNAL LIFE

Thinking about the length of our life only pertains to the time before the Geula. In the future, there will be no illness or death and we will all live eternally. All Jews who lived in previous generations will be resurrected and will live forever.

We have heard from the Rebbe that we are in the final stage and moments of galus and hinei, Moshiach ba, at which time we will merit length of days and good years, lives full of everything good.

Source: Likkutei Sichos vol. 15, p. 217

BEARING FRUIT IN KARMEI TZUR

By Nosson Avrohom
Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry

[Continued from last week]

STORIES OF THE SOUL AT IDF OUTPOSTS

A sizable portion of the outreach work is directed towards IDF soldiers stationed throughout the region. Besides the vast seasonal activities before each holiday, when they make certain not to leave any soldier in the area unaware that it's Chanukah or Purim, there are also the regular year-round T'fillin Campaign activities. This great outreach program takes place in cooperation with other regional Chabad Houses, such as Efrat, Chevron, Bat Ayin, and Beitar Illit.

Rabbi Rosenfeld relates some amazing instances of Divine Providence that he's witnessed through these activities:

"There are a number of army stations that command a view of the entrance to Arab villages. There are also terraces and outposts where a limited number of lone soldiers serve on duty, and we try to reach all of them as well. Last Chanukah, we came to one of these lone outposts. The soldier on duty

there was positively stunned to see us. Overcome with excitement, he apologized that there wasn't room for all of us in the watchtower, which measured less than two and a half feet square. Yet, in the end, there proved to be plenty of room and plenty of simcha for everyone. The soldier couldn't believe his eyes, as the boundless joy and his emotion proved so contagious that we all caught the bug."

One of Rabbi Rosenfeld's biggest helpers in his activities, Rabbi Dovid Kotler, tells about an amazing case of Divine Providence that took place this past Purim:

"We had been invited to read the Megilla at an army base located near the settlement. When we arrived there, we discovered that the base was empty. We heard from soldiers standing at the entrance that the few religious soldiers had just left to hear the Megilla at the yishuv. We didn't waste a moment and moved on to our next stop – another army base, located near Beit Shemesh.

"Upon our arrival at the entrance to the base, we heard voices saying 'Amen' in unison, followed by the sound of blotting

out Haman's name. We realized that we had come late again and someone else was reading the Megilla for the soldiers. We headed back to Beitar Illit feeling rather disappointed that we hadn't succeeded in our mission. We had to return to the base at Karmei Tzur to read for those soldiers who had been on patrol at the time of Megilla reading. When we got there, we were surprised to find about two hundred soldiers sitting and waiting for us."

Those soldiers had come from all over the region, and the feeling of having 'missed out' that enveloped them naturally disappeared at that very moment. "This was a wonderful form of compensation," Rabbi Kotler concluded.

Rabbi Kotler's own process of kiruv to the teachings of chassidus and the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, started through the bachurim at the Chabad yeshiva in Kiryat Gat, who came to do outreach activities at Moshav Nehora, where he lived with his family. "To this day, I maintain a strong connection with these bachurim, who have since gotten married and started families. Despite the fact that I studied in Yeshivat "Ohr Somayach" in Yerushalayim, I eventually moved on to learn chassidus and Chabad customs."

The journey to reach these IDF bases and outposts was not always a bed of roses. There are many hostile Arab villages along the long and winding roads leading to these locations. "Every time I approach one of these dangerous areas, I stop my vehicle for a few moments and say, 'Rebbe, all of this avoda is for you; I ask you to protect me!'

"Two years ago on Purim, I was traveling with several bachurim in my vehicle towards a rendezvous with soldiers waiting to hear the Megilla reading, as the sun was

starting to set. On my right side, I saw a commercial vehicle standing on the side of the road, and I prayed in my heart that he won't make a U-turn, which would lead to a certain collision. Just as I was thinking this very thought, the truck began to turn around.

"I was gripped by panic. I said to myself, 'Never mind me, Hashem – what about the soldiers waiting for us to read the Megilla for them?' I stopped the car, but the other vehicle kept moving. It was only due to a complete miracle, which I don't understand to this day, that we avoided a head-on collision and continued on our way. This was unquestionably one of the most influential experiences I ever had on my shlichus here. We reached the base about a minute before sundown, and the soldiers were privileged to hear about another miracle – in those times and even in our times..."

Rabbi Rosenfeld then told us about a personal miracle that he experienced in the early days of his shlichus activities, during the dark days of the second intifada:

"One of the things that I heartily recommend to every chassid is to give lifts to soldiers and play a disc of a shiur or a farbrengen in the car. In this manner, you can have a powerful influence without saying a word. I customarily do this on a regular basis, and I'm surprised anew every time by the reactions it elicits. Many want to know where they can buy the disc, while many others express their fascination, leading to a discussion about Judaism and chassidus. We can never know the effect upon the person that we pick up.

"The miracle that I experienced took place several years ago, in the days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. I had stopped at the junction leading to Karmei Tzur to offer a lift to some hitchhikers, but



Lag B'Omer parade in Karmei Tzur



Joy breaks all boundaries

none of them needed a ride in my direction, so I continued on my way. About a minute later, I heard the echoes of rapid gunfire. As I was entering the gates to the yishuv, I noticed a number of ambulances roaring in the direction I had just come from. I discovered later that terrorists had stopped their vehicles in front of the junction and opened fire, killing three of the Jews whom I had just offered a ride. When I returned to the junction, I made the bracha of 'Blessed is He Who performed a

miracle for me..."

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REDEMPTION: WHEN YOU EXPLAIN, EVERYTHING IS UNDERSTOOD

Regular weekly activities also take place with local settlement children, when the students of Chabad high schools for girls come to visit the yishuv and run the Tzivos Hashem club activities. "They say the Twelve P'sukim with

Karmeit Tzur itself is one of the yishuvim scheduled for possible expulsion, and the residents here know that there is no one upon whom they can rely. Realizing that they could be thrown out of their homes at any given moment, they have many serious questions about the country's leadership.

the children, tell them chassidic stories, and if there's a holiday, they speak about the relevant themes at length. They also run various extramural activities. The children make certain not to miss a single week, and many of those living on the yishuv have already acquired letters in the Children's Seifer Torah."

On Lag B'Omer and at other children's rallies, you can see most of the settlement's children participating, sometimes with their parents, and this definitely warms the heart. "I had a big surprise for the kids during the last parade. I brought them a magician from Beersheva, and at the height of the parade, he asked me for the microphone. With great emotion, he told the crowd that his name is Menachem Mendel and he was born with the Rebbe's bracha. The doctors had told his mother that the situation from a medical standpoint was hopeless, but the

Rebbe gave his blessing and he was born. The story made a deep and positive impression upon everyone, children and adults alike."

Rabbi Rosenfeld also holds activities on Moshiach and the Redemption. "What we have to do is not to give instructions, but to explain and provide reasons. When you explain, everything is understood. Today, there are vast communities, particularly among the settler population, which have detached themselves from the 'messianic' nature of the modern Zionist state, as a result of the government's 'disengagement' policies. Karmeit Tzur itself is one of the yishuvim scheduled for possible expulsion, and the residents here know that there is no one upon whom they can rely. Realizing that they could be thrown out of their homes at any given moment, they have many serious questions about the country's leadership.

"They find the real answers in the teachings of chassidus and the Rebbe's sichos, where the role of Melech HaMoshiach and the nature of the times we live in are explained with the utmost depth and clarity. Our most vital objective is to place 'the lights of Tohu' into 'the vessels of Tikkun' - to take the highest possible lights of chassidus and make every effort, through proper explanation, to bring them down to the level of 'the vessels of Tikkun', so that average people can understand. During the week of Parshas VaYechi, I taught the sicha from Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 31, which discusses how Yaakov Avinu didn't die. At the end of the shiur, someone got up and said quite simply, 'That means that the Rebbe is alive...'"

When we spoke with Rabbi Rosenfeld about his future plans, he shifted in his chair uncomfortably. I quickly realized that he's not the type of person that designs projects. His activities are done in growing measure on a "one-on-one" basis. "The plan is to widen the circle and reach as many Jews on the settlement as possible. Today, approximately twenty percent of yishuv members participate regularly in our Torah classes. In addition, there's an age group that I have so far failed to penetrate - the teenagers. This is a great challenge that I place before myself, but with G-d's help, we will succeed."

**ADD IN ACTS
OF GOODNESS & KINDNESS
TO BRING MOSHIACH NOW!**

‘MY EMISSARY, THE TORAH’

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

Together with the Tablets in the Ark, however, was a Torah scroll, written by Moshe Rabbeinu, reflecting the union and passage, as it were, of the engraved letters of the Torah to the Written Torah, ink on parchment. * Tracing the Rebbe MH”M’s instructions on how to perfect our Divine service in the Final Era.

[Continued from Issue #714]

On the Shabbos following the Rebbetzin’s Shloshim, the Rebbe spoke, acknowledging the worthy undertaking of his emissaries, the shluchim, of completing the writing of a Torah scroll that Thursday, the day of the Shloshim. It is appropriate that the emissaries were the ones responsible for producing the Torah scroll, for their entire purpose – going out to the furthest extremes, away from the holiness of the Rebbe’s court, and bringing that holiness outwards, to Jews who have even lost their slightest affiliation with Judaism – echoes the accomplishment of writing a Torah scroll.

To explain: At its source, the G-dly source from which the Torah is derived, the Torah’s letters are said to be engraved, a medium of writing that

emphasizes the unity between the letters and the “material” upon which they appear, reflecting the unity of G-d’s wisdom (the letters, form) with G-d’s essence and being (substance).

The Tablets Moshe Rabbeinu was given on Mount Sinai are an embodiment of this lofty level of Torah, engraved letters. The Tablets were placed in the Ark in the Holy of Holies, where they remain covered and unseen. Together with the Tablets in the Ark,²⁰⁴ however, was a Torah scroll, written by Moshe Rabbeinu, reflecting the union and passage, as it were, of the engraved letters of the Torah to the Written Torah, ink on parchment. All future Torah scrolls that are written, exactly replicating Moshe Rabbeinu’s Torah, represent the further passage or descent of the Torah, away from the cloistered sanctity of the Holy of Holies and into the public domain, where the Torah scroll is available to be opened up and studied.

In the philosophical terms of Chabad Chassidus, the Rebbe details the spiritual descent of the Torah, especially as expressed in writing a Torah scroll, and traces its likeness to the mission of *shlichus*, being sent as emissaries of the Rebbe:

“Torah is ‘from Heaven’ – ‘from the heavens I spoke to you.’²⁰⁵ It is the wisdom and will of the Holy One Blessed Be He. Indeed, it is literally one with the very essence and being of G-d, reflected in the saying, ‘Torah and G-d are entirely one.’²⁰⁶ Nevertheless, ‘it descended from its place of holiness...and journeyed and descended within the concealed heights, from level to level in the process of the descent of G-dly energy within the worlds, until it became invested within physical things and the affairs of the material world, which are the vast majority of the Mitzvos of the Torah and their specific laws, and the combination of physical letters appearing as ink upon the scroll, etc.’²⁰⁷

“This descent...embodies the concept of *shlichus*,

being sent as an emissary, insofar as G-d ‘sends’ the Torah downward in order that Jews should be able to study Torah and fulfill Mitzvos...specifically within the context of the material world.²⁰⁸ In this manner, the Supernal intent of the entirety of Creation is fulfilled (including the ‘*shlichus*-mission’ of the Jewish people’s souls descent from above to below, from a towering mountain to a deep abyss). Namely, ‘The Holy One, Blessed Be He, desired to have for Himself a dwelling place in the lower worlds.’²⁰⁹

“In fact, the above explanation also illuminates the significance of writing a Torah scroll. For the descent of Torah specifically into the physical world is not only relevant to the ‘Giver’ [of the Torah, G-d Himself] but also the ‘recipient.’ That is, when a person, here below, writes a Torah scroll, ‘a combination of physical letters, made up of ink on a scroll,’ within these letters and by means of these letters is drawn down and revealed the holiness of the Torah as it is one with G-d’s being and essence. Thus, the sanctity of the letters of a Torah scroll further emphasize the decent (*shlichus*) into the

physical world, to be invested within ‘a combination of physical letters, made up of ink on a scroll (which is not so regarding the Oral Torah).’”

NOTES

204 Within the Ark or beside it (according to the two opinions appearing in Bava Basra 14a ff; commentary of Rashi on Parshas VaYeilech 31:26).

205 Yisro 20:19; see Sanhedrin beginning of Perek Cheilek.

206 Zohar, cited in *Tanya*, Ch. 23, beg. – see Footnote 22 in the original.

207 *Tanya* Ch. 4 (8b)

208 To note that also with regard to Torah study, which is also applicable in Gan Eden (unlike the performance of Mitzvos, which are only possible in the physical world), there is an advantage specifically in the physical world, etc. – see Footnote 25 in the original.

209 See Tanchuma Naso 16, among other places; *Tanya* Ch. 36, and several other places.

[Continued from pg. 5]

us ascend the mountain of G-d... and He will teach us of His ways.” [21]

The divine service of the Jews and the influence it will arouse will radiate to the world at large, motivating them to seek G-dly knowledge. May this take place in the immediate future.

Adapted from Likkutei Sichos: Vol. XV, p. 191ff, Vol. XXV, p. 123ff

NOTES:

1. Rashi, Genesis 25:19.

2. See Sanhedrin 19b, Rashi, Numbers 3:1.

3. Seforno, loc. cit.

4. This is borne out by the fact that both Parshas Noach and Parshas Toldos begin with the words: Eileh toldos, “These are the chronicles of...”

Nevertheless, Parshas Noach is given that name because the lessons it teaches center on the concepts of satisfaction and repose (see the essay

entitled “Genuine Satisfaction: Noah’s Legacy”).

Parshas Toldos which focuses on the chronicles of Yitzchok’s life, by contrast, communicates the importance of creating a posterity.

5. See Genesis, ch. 26.

6. Ibid.

7. Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Avodas Kochavim 1:2, based on Sota 10a, B’Reishis Rabba, the conclusion of sec. 54.

8. *Tanya*, ch. 2.

9. B’Reishis Rabba 64:3.

10. Genesis 26:2.

11. Ibid.:28.

12. In this way, Yitzchok’s “progeny” resembled him as children resemble a father.

13. Shmos Rabba 30:3.

14. Targum Yonason, Genesis 50:13. Toras Chayim 89d cites this statement in the name of the Zohar. See also similar quotes in Sota 13a, Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer, ch. 39.

15. Kiddushin 18a.

16. This provides every parent with a lesson with regard to the way to relate to his children, even if, G-d forbid, their conduct - like Eisav’s - is lacking.

A parent should never give up, and should constantly continue trying to reveal his child’s inner potential. Forever, since “all Jews are responsible one for another” (Shavuos 39a), this lesson applies not only with regard to our own children, but with regard to every member of the Jewish people.

We must, to quote the Mishna (Avos 1:12): “Love the created beings and bring them close to the Torah.”

17. A foretaste of the realization of Eisav’s spiritual potential can be seen in the converts from his descendants: the prophet Ovadia, Unkelus, and Rabbi Meir (Torah Or, Toldos 20c).

18. Ovadia 1:21.

19. Shabbos 89b.

20. Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Melachim 12:5.

21. Isaiah 2:2-3.