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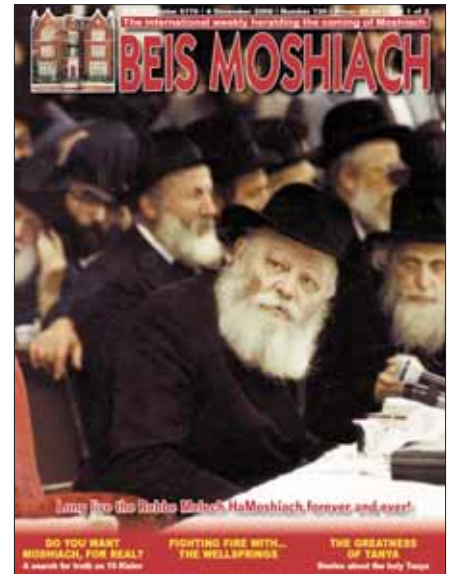
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EMPOWERMENT AND ITS PURPOSE

Sichos In English

THREE CONCEPTIONS OF AN AGENT'S FUNCTION

Delegation of responsibility is one of the primary challenges in every successful enterprise. For there is no way one individual can deal successfully with all the details of a complex undertaking.

Simultaneously, however, a person in a leadership capacity often desires to have things “done his way.”

In seeking for a definition of one of the dimensions of the delegation of responsibility, our Rabbis have offered [1] three different conceptions of the relationship between a principal (meshaleiach) and an agent (shliach):

A) The agent is considered as an independent entity and he must take responsibility for the deed which he performs. Nevertheless, the consequences of the deed - both positive and negative - are borne by the principal.

B) Although the agent is considered an independent entity, since he is acting under the agency of the principal, the deed is considered as if performed by the principal.

C) As implied by the simple meaning of the expression, [2] “A person’s agent is considered as the person himself,” the agent is considered as if he was an

extension of the principal, a “long hand,” as it were. [3] Every dimension of the agent’s being is associated with the principal.

THE AGENCY ENTRUSTED TO EVERY ONE OF US

Two principles are common to all three perspectives:

A) the agent’s capacity to act on behalf of the principal is dependent on the principal’s empowering him to do so.

Therefore, even the approach which entrusts the highest degree of responsibility to the agent appreciates that if the agent deviates from the instructions the principal gave him, his agency is revoked. [4]

B) to be successful, the agent must use his own potentials, summoning up his intellect and his energy and devoting them to the task at hand. For even the approach which conceives of the agent as an extension of the principal appreciates that, in fact, the agent is a separate entity who must execute the task on his own initiative. [5]

These concepts have parallels in our divine service.

For every person is considered as an agent of G-d’s, [6] charged with the responsibility of bringing the world to its desired purpose:

that it be manifest that it is G-d’s dwelling. [7]

In this endeavor, he must realize that he is only an agent; the world is G-d’s dwelling and in the Torah, G-d has outlined His plans for the functioning of that dwelling.

Any other conception, however beneficial it may appear to a particular individual is a deviation from the mission with which we have been entrusted. [8]

Simultaneously, G-d charges us with using our own initiative to accomplish this task.

For life is not a textbook, and the practical application of the Torah and its mitzvos in the particular environments and situations which we confront requires that a person use his own mind and heart to appreciate the desired Torah response at any given time.

CHANGING OURSELVES AS WE CHANGE THE WORLD

As a person applies himself with dedication to the accomplishment of this mission, he also internalizes it.

Not only does the person affect change within the world, he himself changes.

Just as the agent must be identified with the principal, a person must give himself over to G-d’s will

and identify himself with it.

The extent of that identification differs from person to person.

In this respect, the three different conceptions of shlichus mentioned above can be seen as three varying approaches to our commitment to divine service.

There are tzaddikim, righteous men, whose commitment to G-dliness dominates their personality to the extent that every aspect of their being is permeated with G-dliness.

Their thoughts - and even their will and their pleasure - reflects G-d's. This, however, is an elevated rung which most people cannot attain.

On the whole, the second level - that the person remains an independent entity and yet, his deeds are not his own - is within the reach of more individuals.

For the mitzvos we perform are not human acts; they are G-dly, and a person who performs them selflessly can express this inner G-dly power. [9]

There are individuals on an even lower level; they are not concerned with the G-dly nature of the mitzvos they perform.

Nevertheless, they perform mitzvos - for even "the sinners of Israel are filled with mitzvos as a pomegranate is filled with seeds" [10] - and the consequence of the deeds they perform is the expression of G-d's will.

Thus they also contribute toward the transformation of the world into a dwelling for G-d.

Regardless of the differences between all these individuals, they - and indeed all mankind - share a fundamental commonality: we are all G-d's agents charged with various dimensions of a shared mission.

The setting in which each individual functions, the task he is given, and the intent with which he performs it may differ, but the goal

of the mission is the same.

THE SCOPE OF OUR MISSION

This is the message of Parshas VaYishlach: that every one of us is sent as a shliach, an agent of G-d.

We are sent "to Eisav" - to refine and reveal the G-dliness present within the material dimensions of existence which are identified with Eisav.

Significantly, VaYishlach is not just the beginning of the Torah reading; it is the name of the Torah reading.

The name of an entity communicates its essential life-force. [11]

Thus every element of the Torah reading shares a connection with this concept, pointing to the many facets of the mission with which we are charged.

For the mission to make the world G-d's dwelling does not confine our scope; on the contrary, it challenges us to expand it to encompass every aspect of existence.

The word VaYishlach means "And he sent," implying that our mission also includes making other shluchim.

A person cannot remain content his personal acceptance of the task of making the world G-d's dwelling. He must also inspire others to shoulder a portion of this endeavor; to borrow an expression from our Sages: Shilach Oseh Shliach - "One shliach makes another." [12]

KEEPING THE PURPOSE IN FOCUS

The Hebrew word Shliach also alludes to the consummation of the mission, for its numerical equivalent together with the number 10 equals the numerical equivalent of the word Moshiach.

This implies that Moshiach's coming is dependent on every person dedicating the ten powers of his soul to the mission of making the world a dwelling for G-d and internalizing that mission within those ten powers.

Our efforts to spread the awareness of G-d throughout the world and have that awareness permeate our individual beings will precipitate coming of the age when "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the ocean bed." [13]

Adapted from Likkutei Sichos, Vol. IX, ps. 323-324, Seifer HaSichos 5748, p. 138 ff., Sichos Simchas Torah, 5748.

Notes:

1. See Lekach Tov (by Rav Yosef Engel), sec. 1.
2. Kiddushin 41b.
3. See the Kuntres Acharon to Shulchan Aruch HaRav 263:25.
4. Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Shluchim 1:2, Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat 182:2.
5. As a reflection of this concept, Gittin 23a states that an agent must be an intellectual mature individual, able to take and discharge responsibility.
6. See Likkutei Torah, VaYikra 1c.
7. Midrash Tanchuma, Parshas B'Chukosai, sec. 3.
8. Moreover, our power to effect change within the world is not our own; the soul, "an actual part of G-d" (Tanya, ch. 2), was granted to each of us. It is through activating this potential which we can bring about change.
9. In this sense, the mitzvos are also referred to as shluchim (agents), for their observance is a G-dly act (Midrash Tanchuma, VaYigash, sec. 6).
10. Chagiga 27a.
11. Tanya, Shaar HaYichud V'HaEmuna, ch. 1.
12. Kiddushin 41a.
13. Isaiah 11:9.

FOUR TIMES WHATEVER YOU GIVE!

On only one occasion did the Rebbe ask for a list of names and the amount of their donations. This story starts in 770, continues to Antwerp and culminates in Tel Aviv.

A NEW NEIGHBORHOOD

Eight years had passed since the Rebbe Rayatz founded Kfar Chabad in 1949. The abandoned Arab village had been transformed into a Lubavitcher stronghold, but there was a problem. There were no apartments available. More and more Chassidim wished to make their Kfar Chabad their home, but they had to be turned away. Chassidim wrote to the Rebbe and reported about the dearth of living quarters.

Starting from the end of 1955, the Rebbe began speaking to Zalman Shazar (later President of Israel) about helping found a new neighborhood in Kfar Chabad that would provide numerous Chassidim with a place to live. The Rebbe guaranteed to find sources of funding and to send money. The Rebbe also wrote about this to Chabad askanim in Eretz Yisroel and demanded that they take action.

On 10 Kislev, 5718/1957, the Rebbe wrote Shazar the following letter:

I have received the good news that you met with the representatives of Kfar Chabad and the representatives of the appropriate agencies and a conference was held under your direction regarding founding a neighborhood in Kfar Chabad. I hope that this conference will bring to immediate action, as per the importance of the matter.

... Since I am very optimistic regarding what I wrote to you in my previous letter that you should participate in the farbrengen in Kfar Chabad on the Yom HaGeula, Chag HaChagim, Yud-Tes Kislev, the day of the Geula and victory of the Alter Rebbe and with him, Toras HaChassidus and its matters, it's an auspicious time to announce about the neighborhood at the farbrengen. Great is a

Chassidishe farbrengen to break down walls and remove barriers, including the barrier between the good and desirable – and the possible, that there be full possibility, and that it come to fruition in the total fulfillment of the good and desirable.

Put simply, the Rebbe was asking Shazar to officially announce the new neighborhood in Kfar Chabad and the Rebbe set the date: 19 Kislev, 5718, nine days after the letter was written.

Shazar followed orders and at the main 19 Kislev event in Kfar Chabad he announced a new Chabad neighborhood. In his next letter, the Rebbe thanked Shazar for this declaration.

The new neighborhood had become a fact. The only question was, where was the money going to come from? Nobody knew what would take place a few hours later at the Rebbe's farbrengen in Crown Heights.

SPECIAL FARBRENGEN

Much has been written about the farbrengen of 19 Kislev, 5718, and this is not the place to describe it in detail. However, we will focus on a famous event that took place at that farbrengen as an introduction to an amazing story that began at that farbrengen, continued in Belgium and concluded some months later in Eretz Yisroel.

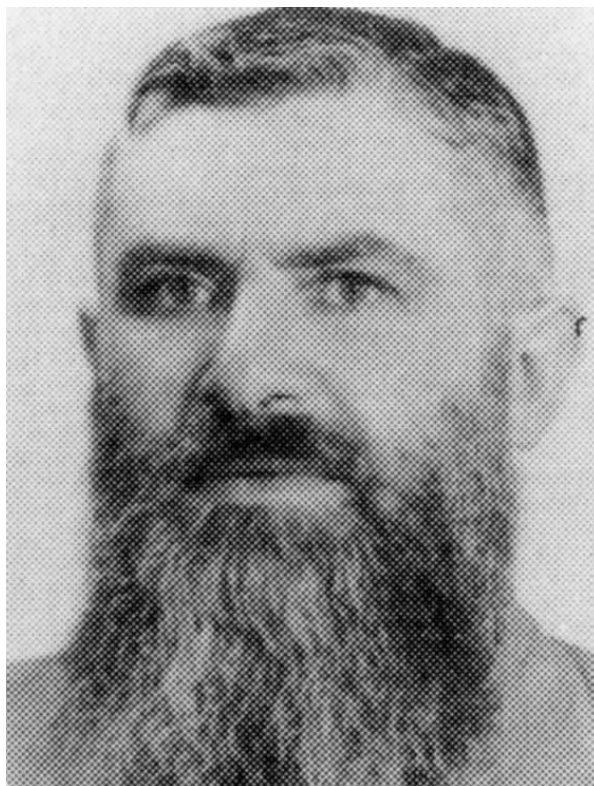
A few days before the farbrengen, R' Pinye Altheus had yechidus with the Rebbe and the Rebbe asked him what the finances of Kfar Chabad were like as far as building the new neighborhood. R' Pinye replied sadly that the situation was dire and the wealthy people were not being as generous as they had anticipated. Perhaps this answer had something to do with the farbrengen that took place a few days later.

The farbrengen took place in a large hall on Eastern Parkway at the

corner of Nostrand. None of the attendees could have predicted what would take place.

At the end of the third sicha, the Rebbe spoke at length about completing the book of Tanya and the topic of “new heavens and a new earth.” Then, after the maamer and some more sichos on the subject, the Rebbe began speaking about the intermediary between the physical world, its spiritual counterpart and their ultimate purpose. The Rebbe explained that the intermediary is Eretz Yisroel and its ultimate purpose is to bring to the day when “I will remove the spirit of impurity from the earth,” when the physical earth will be completely purified.

The Rebbe began the next sicha with a question about why gashmius will be necessary in the future when everything will be utterly refined. He explained that it is through the gashmius that dira ba’tachtonim is accomplished. The Rebbe connected this to the topic of tz’daka for Eretz Yisroel, which the Alter Rebbe writes about, emphasizing its special qualities. The Rebbe concluded the sicha by saying that two subjects were added on this Yud-Tes Kislev – one connected with the spiritual heavens and earth and one connected with the physical heavens and earth. The first – on this Yud-Tes Kislev they began printing manuscripts of maamarim of the Alter Rebbe that had never been printed before, and second – **If they filled my request that I wrote to the Holy Land, then today marks the founding (at least the verbal announcement that will lead to action) of a new neighborhood in Kfar Chabad which was founded by the Rebbe, my father-in-law,**



R' Naftali Dulitzky

successor of the Chabad N'siim back to the Alter Rebbe, the baal ha'simcha.

Then the Rebbe announced that although on Yud-Tes Kislev appeals are generally not made, the building of a new neighborhood presented a unique situation and therefore there was going to be a special appeal. Everybody was asked to participate with nice donations that were to be given within the next day or two.

The crowd had not yet recovered from the shock when the Rebbe said:

In general, I don't mix in and express my opinion regarding how much each person gives. I take what is given and one of two things happens: either I am satisfied or I'm not satisfied and I keep my dissatisfaction to myself. But since this is altogether an exception, I will also act differently than usual and if it seems to me that someone is giving too little, I will overcome embarrassment and tell him – by power of the matters for which the

money is needed (i.e. the neighborhood) - to increase the amount as I see it. If I do this not during the farbrengen, I don't know if you will listen but when everyone is sitting together no doubt you will be embarrassed to say otherwise ...

In short: On this one occasion, the Rebbe decided how much each person should give. The Rebbe blessed whoever would give to receive Hashem's blessings.

The Rebbe concluded:

If it seems to someone that he was told to give an amount that he is unable to give, the intention is so that Hashem will give him at least four times that amount and therefore, when you add another \$1000, Hashem will give you \$4000!

NAFTALI DULITZKY – FIVE TIMES MORE

Among the people sitting in the crowd was R' Naftali Dulitzky, a Chassid from Tel Aviv who worked in diamonds. When he visited the Rebbe he brought a large sum of money with which he would buy diamonds at lower prices on the New York diamond exchange. He sold these diamonds for a nice profit in Eretz Yisroel and Europe.

Like everybody else, Naftali wrote his name on a slip of paper that would be given to the Rebbe, and the amount of money he would be giving. The tremendous inspiration from the farbrengen motivated him to write a large amount, 20% of the money he had brought with him to New York to do business.

The Rebbe said they should sing the niggun “HaBeinoni” and then spoke in praise of the neighborhood

Great is a Chassidishe farbrengen to break down walls and remove barriers, including the barrier between the good and desirable – and the possible.

in Kfar Chabad which would be a tool to spread the wellsprings. They sang the niggun “L’chat’chilla Aribber” and then the Rebbe began reading the notes, telling each person how much to add, from double to two hundred times the amount they had originally pledged.

In general, throughout the announcements, the Rebbe was extremely joyous. He started a happy niggun in the middle of the appeal and he spoke to individuals, blessing them with children, parnasa etc.

What pertains to our story is what the Rebbe said before the start of the announcements. He repeated the bracha that he had said earlier:

There are people who are afraid to give their donation now since I will publicly announce how much they need to add, and they prefer to give their donation some other time so it will be quiet. But the time now is the Yom Tov of the Alter Rebbe, an auspicious time, the simcha of the Alter Rebbe, and therefore, if you give your donation now, in addition to Hashem repaying you four times as much or ten times as much, you can accomplish spiritual and material things according to what the Alter Rebbe is capable of accomplishing.

Accordingly, it pays to put yourself in “danger” for me to tell you to increase your amount in order to merit the brachos of the Alter Rebbe in those things you need.

When the Rebbe began reading the notes and asking for more, R’ Dulitzky realized that he would have to at least double the amount he wrote, but he did not imagine how much more would be asked of him.

When his note was read by the Rebbe, the Rebbe announced: Tula Dulitzky – five times more.

Dulitzky looked stunned. The Rebbe had left him without a penny for his business transactions. However, as a loyal Chassid he did not ask questions and as soon as the farbrengen was over he gave the full amount. He did not know what he would do the next day but a Chassid is not put off by such concerns.

MEETING AT A FUNERAL

Naftali Dulitzky’s daughter heard the next part of the story from Rabbi Chatzkel Besser of Agudath Israel. R’ Besser knew Naftali for years and Naftali often “schlepped” his friend to the Rebbe’s farbrengens.

“I was supposed to go to that farbrengen with R’ Dulitzky but the snow and freezing cold that night froze the engine of the car I was supposed to drive, so I missed the farbrengen.

“The next day, when I met Dulitzky, I apologized and asked him how the farbrengen was. He said, with a smile, that it was fortunate I had not attended because they had to give huge amounts of money to the Rebbe. He confided that he had been instructed to give all his money for the new neighborhood in Kfar Chabad.

“I was a bit surprised. I knew him as a Chassid who would give everything to the Rebbe but I did not understand why the Rebbe needed to take everything from him. We spoke for a few minutes and then parted. As far as I was concerned, the story was over.

“A little more than a year later, I

was in Eretz Yisroel for some communal matter. At that time, the first armed robbery in Israel took place and a diamond merchant by the name of Zerach Pollack was murdered. Everyone was shaken by the crime, especially those in the diamond business. Every single diamond merchant attended his funeral, from his best friends to his bitter competitors.

“I also attended the funeral and I met Naftali Dulitzky there. We greeted one another and as we spoke I mentioned our previous conversation that took place in Manhattan. Dulitzky said, ‘You won’t believe this. I’ll tell you what happened after that incident.’”

PUSHY DIAMOND MERCHANT

“A few days after the farbrengen, I boarded a ship back to Eretz Yisroel. My original plan was to stop for a few days in Europe to sell the diamonds I would have bought in the US. Although now I had no reason to waste time there, my ticket was already purchased.

“On Friday, the ship set anchor in the port of London. Since I did not want to stay for Shabbos in a place where I didn’t know anyone, I decided to travel to Antwerp where I had many friends from the diamond trade.

“I arrived in the morning and went to the diamond exchange, where I was immediately greeted by an acquaintance, ‘Dulitzky, you don’t know how happy I am to see you!’ Understanding my surprise, he explained that he wanted to do a deal on large diamonds, which he knew to be my area of expertise.

“I explained to him that I did not have any money or diamonds for sale, but he insisted that I accompany him nonetheless. ‘At least come with me to see the diamonds,’ he requested.

“I tried to get out of it but he

was determined. I finally gave in on condition that I would be there only to advise him.

"I looked at the diamonds that he had been offered and recommended that he buy them. They were very nice diamonds and the price, relative to the quality of the diamonds, was extremely reasonable. I figured that my job was done, but he thought otherwise.

"He wanted to make a partnership with me. As much as I tried to explain to him that I didn't have money to invest, he refused to hear it. He wanted a partnership,

and honestly, I don't know why I agreed, But I signed a contract and promised to send him my share when I returned to Israel.

"When I returned to Israel, I sent him a letter asking for the details regarding the payment I owed him. He sent me back a telegram which asserted I didn't owe him anything.

"A few days later I received a letter from him in which he explained that he had been able to sell all the diamonds quickly and made a nice profit. He promised to send me my share of the money. When I read the next line I was

flabbergasted. The sum was **four times** the amount I had donated on Yud-Tes Kislev!"

"If it seems to someone that he was told to give an amount that he is unable to give, the intention is so that Hashem will give him at least four times that amount and therefore, when you add another \$1000, Hashem will give you \$4000!"

The story is dedicated l'ilui nishmas the Chassid R' Naftali ben Shmuel Abba Dulitzky a"h who passed away on Yud-Tes Kislev 5722.



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THE GREATNESS OF TANYA

By Rabbi Avrohom Shmuel Bukiet

*The following is a compilation of stories about Tanya taken from the book “Neizer HaTanya” * Presented for Yud-Tes Kislev when we renew our commitment to the daily shiur of Tanya.*

THE BOOK OF TANYA

THE MEETING OF TWO TZADDIKIM

I heard from the famous Chassid, Rabbi Itche Masmid: When the shluchim of the Alter Rebbe brought the Tanya to Anipoli to get the approbation of Rabbi Yehuda Leib HaKohen and Rabbi Zushe, they left a copy of the manuscript with each of them for the night so that these tzaddikim could examine it.

As he looked through the Tanya in the middle of the night, Rabbi Yehuda Leib HaKohen was tremendously excited and, being unable to restrain his feelings, he decided to go to Rabbi Zushe to share his enthusiasm with him. The same thing happened with Rabbi

Zushe. He, too, was tremendously excited and could not contain himself and he decided to go to Rabbi Yehuda Leib HaKohen.

The two tzaddikim met on the bridge that connected the two sections of Anipoli and they danced there in great joy until “all of Anipoli was on fire.”

A GOOD BOOK

In 5663/1903-4, the Rebbe Rashab stayed in Vienna throughout the winter. One of the elders there, who did not recognize him, once asked him, “Young man, what will be? Everything is in the mind? You need some heart too!”

The Rebbe asked him, “Nu, what should I learn?”

He replied, “Boruch Hashem, we have a precious little book which is called *Likkutei Amarim*”, and he

showed it to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe took the Tanya and said, “Yes, it’s a good book.”

THE TANYA AND THE SPUTNIK

The Rebbe was given the first copy of Tanya in English while the world was talking excitedly about the Soviet Union’s Sputnik which had been sent into space. The Rebbe took the English Tanya, thought a bit and then said (with a look of satisfaction on his face):

“The world is excited about the Sputnik. The truth is that the world needs to be even more excited about the translation of Tanya into English!”

THE STUDY OF TANYA

LEARNING TANYA AS A REWARD

A Chassid carried out a certain mission for the Tzemach Tzedek which gave the Rebbe much pleasure. The Rebbe said to him, “As a reward for this, I will learn Tanya with you.”

The first time, the Rebbe read the first chapter but did not explain anything. The second time, he read the second chapter in the same way, and so too with the third chapter. After these three sessions, the Chassid decided not to bother the Rebbe anymore and did not go to learn with him.

Some time later, his brother had yechidus and the Rebbe asked him why the Chassid had stopped coming for the shiur. The brother said that since he just read the words he did not think it was worth taking the Rebbe’s time.

“Fool!” exclaimed the Rebbe in disappointment. “I wanted to learn with him the way my grandfather (the Alter Rebbe) learned with me.

First, he read the whole Tanya to me. The second time around he explained the meaning of the words. The third time, he taught in greater depth.”

“Okay,” said the Chassid, “so my brother will resume the shiur.”

The Rebbe responded, “It is no longer possible.”

A STRONG BRIDGE

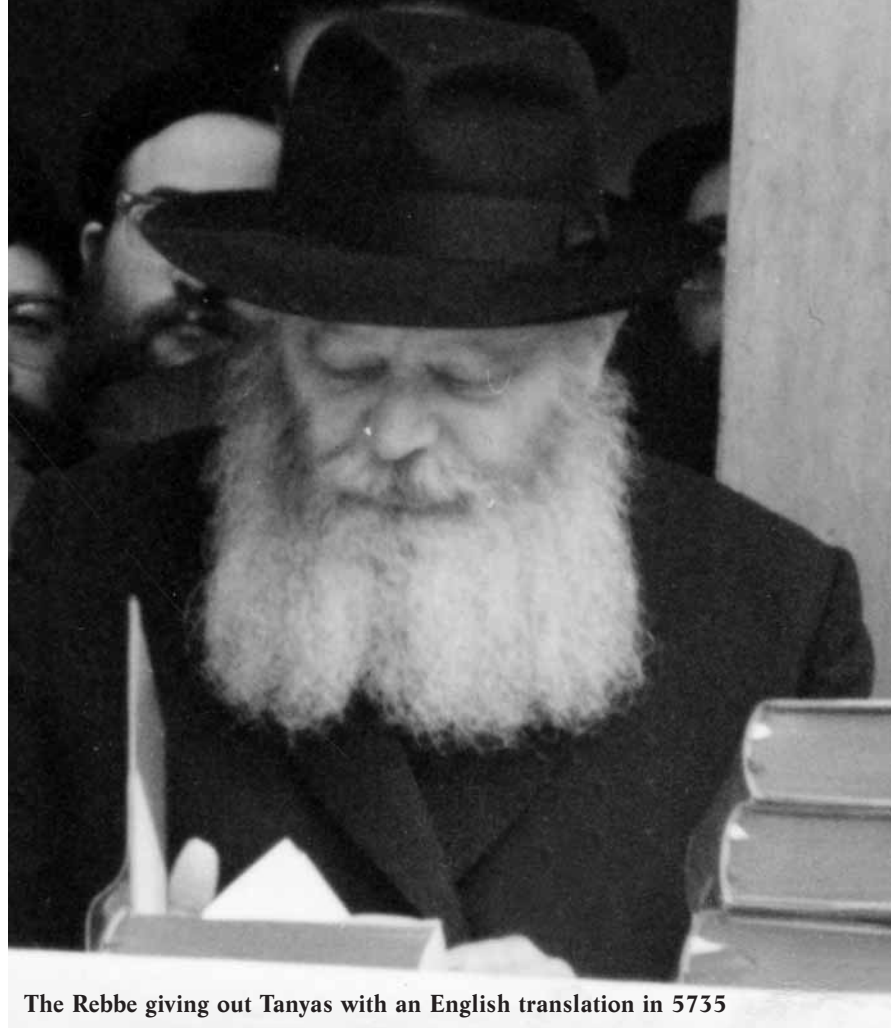
The following story was told by R’ Dovber Yaffe, who witnessed it:

R’ Itche the Masmid walked into shul together with another Chassid. Everybody sitting in shul stood up in respect for R’ Itche and he motioned to them to sit down.

After the davening that Chassid asked R’ Itche, “What made you think that the people stood up for *you*, so that you motioned to them that it wasn’t necessary for them to give you honor? How do you know they didn’t stand up for *me*? It’s because you have a feeling of *yeshus* (arrogance), and you know what it says in Chassidus, that the feeling of *yeshus* is derived from *klipas noga*!” (Obviously, when Chassidim said words of rebuke it was out of love).

Hearing this, R’ Itche thanked the Chassid for his rebuke and took it to heart. He thought about it and then said, “You are right. I see that I haven’t worked enough to instill in myself what it says in chapter 30 of Tanya, ‘and be lowly of spirit before every person, and be – really and truly, literally, before every person.’ Indeed, you are more distinguished than me in a number of ways and are a greater baal middos than me. Why didn’t I assume that they had gotten up to honor you and not me? It must have come from the ‘hidden evil’ in my soul which is very hard to recognize, and this requires much work and toil.”

R’ Itche farbrenged all night with the Chassidim and spoke at great length about how it’s only by learning Tanya that you can recognize the



The Rebbe giving out Tanyas with an English translation in 5735

truth in every move that you make and find the “hidden evil” in the soul and uproot it. Tanya describes in detail all parts of the G-dly and animal soul and explains all the different, necessary forms of avoda. R’ Itche said, “We must be constantly immersed in Tanya and only then can we be sure that we are walking on a sound, firm bridge.”

THE PHILOSOPHER AND THE TANYA

In the summer of 5756/1996, two T’mimim went on Merkos shlichus to Scandinavia. In Stockholm someone asked to meet with them. When they went to his house they saw that the man had degrees in philosophy and was a lecturer at an exclusive university in Sweden.

The man took out a Tanya with English translation. It looked well-

worn and had many notes in the margins.

“I came across this book twenty years ago,” he told them. “As a philosopher, I was drawn to read it. I started reading and haven’t been able to stop. I have never encountered a philosophical work that measures up to it! I invited you here in order to discuss this book and the ideas I found in it.”

He presented his questions. Some of them came from a lack of knowledge of Chassidus, while others were deep and fundamental questions gleaned from philosophy. During their conversation the shluchim also discussed the practical side of Tanya and explained the practical conclusions that the book leads to. This was news to their host, for he hadn’t realized it was something more than just a philosophic work, but after he heard them out he promised that he would

The two tzaddikim met on the bridge that connected the two sections of Anipoli and they danced there in great joy until “all of Anipoli was on fire.”

treat the practical end of things seriously.

JUST THE FIRST SIX CHAPTERS OF TANYA

One Erev Yom Kippur, when Rabbi Meir Blizinsky – a famous Chassid and a *baal mochin* – left the mikva before Mincha, he suddenly remembered that in some of the Rebbe’s letters the Rebbe inquired again and again about Mr. Avigdor HaMeiri (1890-1970), a well-known Hebrew poet, writer and translator of that era.

R’ Blizinsky was friends with HaMeiri, and they both lived in Ramat Gan. Although Yom Kippur was imminent, he decided to go to HaMeiri’s house.

HaMeiri welcomed him and R’ Blizinsky told him some inyan in Chassidus. HaMeiri enjoyed it very much.

“Where did you hear this?” he exclaimed. R’ Blizinsky told him that it’s written in Tanya. “Then I want to learn it!” said HaMeiri, to the great surprise of R’ Blizinsky. This writer is identified with the Left in Israel and was known for his heretical ideas. In his books he mocked religion and yet now he wanted to learn Tanya!

R’ Blizinsky told him that after Yom Kippur he would visit him again and they could study together. On Motzaei Yom Kippur, R’ Blizinsky began learning Tanya with HaMeiri. R’ Blizinsky had taught Chassidus to all kinds of public figures and he understood them, even those who were considered tough nuts to crack.

In their first lesson they studied

the first chapter of Tanya and the next day they continued with the second chapter, with R’ Blizinsky explaining everything clearly. They learned every night until they reached the sixth chapter.

When it came time for the seventh chapter, HaMeiri was reluctant to continue. “Don’t ask someone over the age of 65 to change his views,” he said.

“I’m not asking you to change completely,” said R’ Blizinsky, surprised at how shaken HaMeiri was. R’ Blizinsky later said that the first six chapters of Tanya had indeed had an effect. Thanks to them, HaMeiri changed his heretical ideas to the point that he was able to defer his will to the Rebbe.

THE POWER OF TANYA

SAVED FROM CONVERTING

The Tzemach Tzedek was sitting at his Shabbos table when he suddenly laughed a few times. Afterwards, he told his mekuravim the following story:

A few months ago, when Czar Nicholas reviewed his troops, he got into a conversation with a Jewish soldier. The czar took a liking to him and told him, “If you convert, you will be like a son to me and my wife.” The soldier did not reply.

The czar immediately had him take an advanced course as was befitting the son of the czar and all his needs were taken care of by high-ranking ministers.

The night before the conversion ceremony the soldier could not sleep. Restless, he rifled through his briefcase and noticed a Tanya. Opening it at random, he turned to chapter 19 where it says that every Jew can be *moser nefesh* to sanctify G-d’s name because the *pintele Yid* is aroused (“It is aroused from its sleep and has an effect ... to overcome the klipos and lusts of this world ... and to choose Hashem as his portion and his lot, to give up his life to sanctify His name”). He was moved by this and he decided to remain loyal to Hashem.

In the morning, two distinguished ministers came to escort him to the czar. The czar took him by one arm and the czarina by the other and they walked to where the ceremony would be held. Lining there, on either side, stood rows of senior officials. On the way they passed over a bridge, and the soldier broke away from his escorts and jumped into the water and drowned.

In Heaven there was a commotion over the soldier’s actions and the Heavenly Court ruled that he should be escorted to Gan Eden. They also ruled that angels should stand by as he passed and Grandfather (the Alter Rebbe) would dance before him while holding the Tanya.

And that’s what happened. Angels stood in two rows and Grandfather danced before him, lifting the hem of his garments.

When I saw this sight I laughed.

SAVED FROM INTERMARRIAGE

A graduate of Oxford University related:

“When I studied at Oxford I had no connection at all to Judaism. I met a non-Jewish girl and was about to marry her.

“One day I was flying to London when I heard an unusual

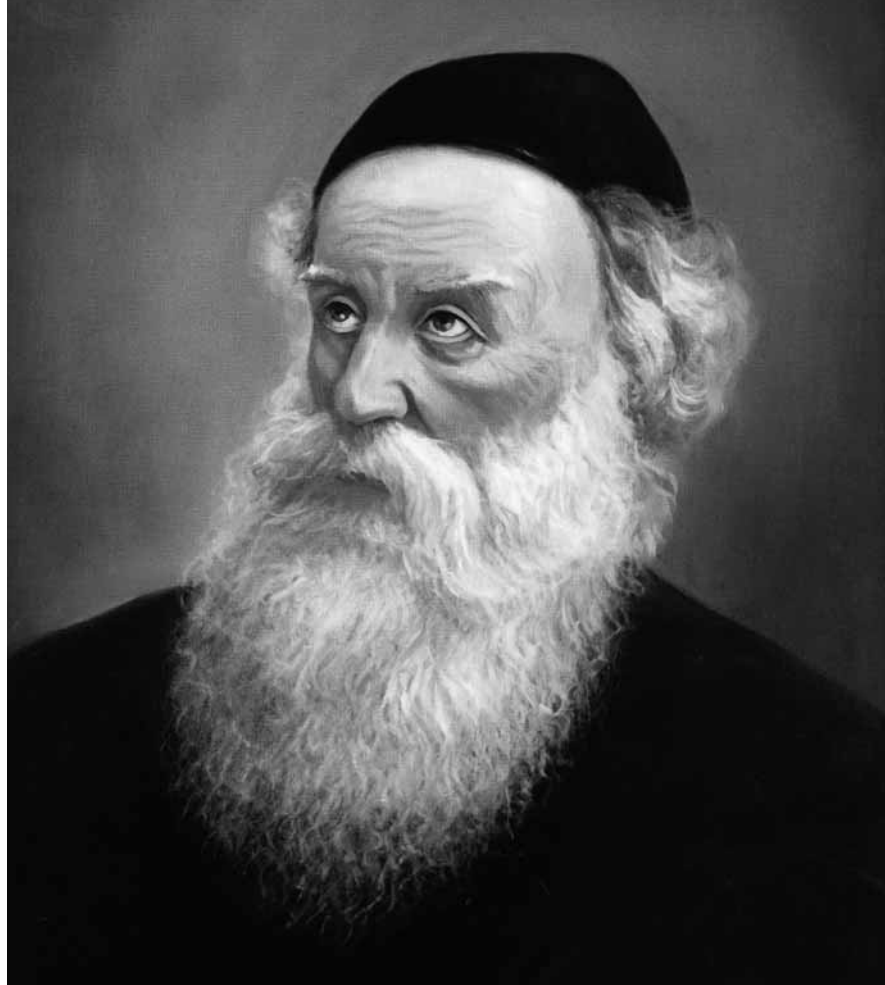
announcement: 'If there is a Jew on board please report to the stewards.' I got up and introduced myself to one of the stewardesses, who led me to the head steward. The head steward apologized about the strange announcement and explained that he had been begged to make it by a man who insisted that there was a Jew on board whom he had to meet. He said that if I was willing to speak to the man, there he was.

"The man told me he was a businessman who traveled a lot and was close to the Lubavitcher Rebbe. He said that when he told the Rebbe that he was going to be traveling to Hong Kong and London, the Rebbe gave him a Tanya and said, 'Sometimes on flights you meet Jews, so you should have a Tanya with you in order to give it to a Jew when you meet him.' The man took out a Tanya from his bag and gave it to me, saying, 'This is from the Lubavitcher Rebbe.'

"I opened the book to where the bookmark was and asked the man to tell me what it said on the page. He read it and translated it into English. I did not understand most of it. I only understood the part where it said, 'Even the worst Jew is moser nefesh for kiddush Hashem.'

"Hearing that made me wonder whether I was doing the right thing by marrying a gentile girl. This thought stayed with me; it bothered me a lot and gave me no rest. Two days later I told her that I felt very uncomfortable with the whole thing and that I had to spend some time on my own and decide what to do.

"Needless to say, the wedding never happened and I married a Jewish girl. I still have the Tanya that the Rebbe sent me and when I meet students whom the Rebbe's shlichim are trying to be mekarev and save from assimilation, I tell them my story, take out the Tanya, and read to them the lines that saved me from intermarrying."



He could not say the Shma and 'Hashem Hu HaElokim' like the rest of the congregation, but he was very moved and he shouted along with them, with the same ardor, the words in his French Tanya.

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Pinson, shliach in Nice, France relates:

"A French Jew married a gentile woman and had three children. One Yom Kippur, his wife said, 'Today is your holy day. Jews fast and go to synagogue. You should do it too! When the children see that you respect your religion, they will respect their religion.'

"The man went to shul for the first time in his life that night and asked someone to explain to him what to do. He was given a Siddur and shown where they were up to, but he did not know Hebrew and

could not daven.

"He went over to the bookcase and found a book in French, a Tanya, and he began to read it, saying the words. By the next day at N'ila he had completed the entire book twice and was up to his third recitation.

"He could not say the Shma and 'Hashem Hu HaElokim' like the rest of the congregation, but he was very moved and he shouted along with them, with the same ardor, the words in his French Tanya.

"When he returned home, full of feelings of repentance and inspiration, he decided he had to

HEALING THANKS TO PRINTING THE TANYA

“At the end of the summer of 1988, when our father (R’ Avrohom Shlomo Gelbstein) was not in good health, we come up with an idea, together with Kehot, to print the Tanya in the merit of our father at the gravesite of Rabbi Meir Baal HaNes in Teveria. The printing was done the night of Erev Rosh HaShana, 5749. The Rebbe was informed about this by the secretaries.”

The son (R’ Moshe) went to New York to give the Tanya to the Rebbe while it was still 5748, Shnas Hakhel.

Upon his arrival he went to the Vaad Hafotzas Sichos in order to be assigned a number for the Tanya and to bind it before presenting it to the Rebbe.

After the Rebbe returned from the Ohel, he davened Mincha and said a short sicha about having tz’daka pushkas in the house permanently attached and he distributed dollars for tz’daka.

“I stood not far from the elevator, near the stairs that lead to Gan Eden HaTachton. In the meantime, R’ Leibel Groner came. When the Rebbe came I gave him the Tanya and he said ‘yasher ko’ach.’ I mentioned my father, Avrohom Shlomo ben Fruma for a refua shleima, and the Rebbe responded with a bracha (which I don’t remember precisely). Either he said ‘**amarti ki erpa**’ (I have said that I will heal) or he said ‘**machatzi v’ani erpa**’ (I have smitten and I will heal). The Rebbe said (two times) out loud, ‘**sh’ha’z’man grama oif alle gutte zachen** (it is an auspicious time for all good things).’

“The day after Rosh HaShana, R’ Groner told me that the Rebbe had asked whether the Tanya had been assigned a number and I said that it had been arranged Erev Rosh HaShana.

“Contrary to the doctors’ opinion, my father lived another five years.”

(From a t’shura given at the wedding of Tzvi Menachem Abramowitz p. 83)

meet the person who wrote this book. He opened the phone book and looked for the chief rabbi of the city. The rabbi explained to him that the author of the book died many years ago, but if he wanted to talk about the book he could give him the address of someone he could contact. He put the man in touch with the Chabad house in his city, where he began to study Tanya.

“He eventually left his wife and children and later married a Jewish woman, a Chassidic baalas t’shuva.”

LEAVING THE SOVIET UNION

Rabbi Pinchas Teitz, a distinguished Lithuanian rav in Elizabeth, New Jersey, made 22 trips

to the former Soviet Union.

One time, when he was preparing for another trip, a representative of the Rebbe showed up at his house, bringing him – in addition to the usual s’farim and pairs of t’fillin – a small volume of Tanya.

“On the third day of my stay in Moscow, when I left the Great Synagogue after the Maariv, two young men suddenly approached me in a dark street and forced me to enter a car. Of course, I was terrified, but as soon as the door was closed they introduced themselves as Chabad Chassidim who wanted to discuss urgent matters with me. The only way they could bring me, without suspicion,

to their secret location was by kidnapping me.

“They said they had investigated and discovered that I could be trusted, and what they wanted was for me to convey two questions to the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

“The older one had recently found out that the KGB was actively pursuing him. He wanted to know if the Rebbe thought he should flee Moscow and move to another city or remain, despite the obvious danger, in order to maintain and further his important educational activities in the Jewish underground, of which the Rebbe was already aware.

“The second wanted the Rebbe’s advice whether he should apply for an emigration visa to Israel. Recently, a number of such requests had been approved. On the other hand, he currently held an excellent position as a top engineer, and as soon as he would submit his application, he would be fired from his job; if the request was refused, he would be left without any means of support.

“After talking and singing niggunim, I told them about the Tanya which the Rebbe had given me before the trip with the request that I take it with me. They asked me, ‘Do you mean to say that you have this Tanya from the Rebbe in your possession?’

“I told them that not only was it in my possession, I had it with me, and I took the Tanya out of my coat pocket. They were ecstatic to be holding a Tanya that the Rebbe had touched that week.

“While handling the book, one of them shouted out in amazement and pointed at a page that had been folded. The first words on that page were (in Kuntres Acharon p. 162)

‘...He is extremely pressed for time and finds it utterly impossible to delay...’

“The older Chassid understood this to mean that he should immediately flee from Moscow.

“They began looking for another folded page and found that page 38 in Likkutei Amarim was folded and the first words were ‘...to enter the Land....’

“The younger Chassid understood this to mean he should apply to leave the country.

“To this day,” related Rabbi Teitz to R’ Aharon Dov Halperin, the editor of *Kfar Chabad* magazine, “whenever I study something from this volume, or even happen to glance upon it, I recall this extraordinary episode and get excited all over again.”

The story was submitted to the Rebbe on 17 Av, 1984, and that same day the Rebbe replied, “**I am pleased to receive this, but absolutely do not publicize it in any form at this time.**”

LEARNING ON THE FLIGHT

R’ Gershon Mendel Garelik said that in his first shlichus he got a Tanya from the Rebbe and the Rebbe asked him to give it to a Jew on the airplane. As soon as he boarded the plane he looked around for a Jew but even after thorough searching he did not find anyone. He was very disappointed for this was his first assignment and he wanted to carry it out.

He sat down and after takeoff, to his surprise, a bearded Jew approached him. Apparently, he had boarded after him. The man asked him for a Tanya and R’ Garelik handed it over, asking, “Why do you need it?”

The man said, “Before I left I visited the Lubavitcher Rebbe and he told me that since I would be flying, it would be a good idea for me to study Jewish books and preferably, a Tanya. Surely I would find someone who would have one for me.”

AMAZING RESCUE

As part of the campaign to print the Tanya in every possible location,

the Tanya was printed in Iran by the Vaad HaK’hilla. During the printing process, the Shah was overthrown and the Vaad’s activities ceased.

When the Vaad resumed operation, R’ Ezechiel, the rav of the K’hilla, took all the Tanyas that had been printed already and brought them to the Vaad’s library, where they were stored temporarily in piles.

Khomeini’s government announced a “purification law” in which many books were banned. Within a month, all public institutions had to burn every document or book on which the Shah’s emblem or any royal emblem appeared.

After a month, whoever had anything with that emblem on it would be severely punished. If it was discovered that they had deliberately not destroyed the emblems, they would be executed.

Most of the documents in the Vaad’s possession, as well as the books in their library, were stamped with the royal seal. There was no way they could get rid of all the material in such a short period of time.

The month passed quickly and one day, two inspectors came to see whether the law had been followed. R’ Ezechiel was terrified, for he knew what danger he and the entire community were in.

For some reason, he brought them to the library first. When they walked in, they saw the piles of Tanyas. One of the inspectors took a volume and asked him, “What book is this?”

He said that it was a book that taught the fundamentals of Chabad Chassidus.

The inspector opened the book and asked him to explain what it said on the page he had opened to, the first page of *Shaar Ha’Yichud V’Ha’Emuna*.

R’ Ezechiel explained the entire page and when he finished, the

inspector kissed the book and said, “In a place that has books like these, there is no need for anything else!”

The following Shabbos at shul, the entire K’hilla celebrated the miraculous rescue thanks to the holy Tanya.

THE HEALING POWER OF TANYA

HEALING FOR TYPHUS

Rabbi Meir Shlomo Yanovsky (the Rebbe’s grandfather) was once sick with typhus. At that time, they did not have a cure for it and in order to prevent it from spreading they would quarantine the patients outside the city, where they stayed until they died or, on rare occasion, recovered.

Nobody was allowed to go there. Just once a day, a doctor would go to administer medication. The suffering ill people lay there alone and died in droves. R’ Meir Shlomo was also taken to this distant area, where he lay helpless.

When R’ Asher Grossman, his good friend, heard about this, he took a Tanya and went to visit him. When he got there, he stood near the entrance to the sick man’s room (being afraid to enter) and began reading aloud from Igeres HaKodesh chapter 11, which begins with, “no evil descends from Above and all is good.” When he finished reading the chapter, he left.

He did this every day for thirty days, and this daily “injection” had an effect. R’ Meir Shlomo’s health improved until he was completely recovered. He later said that every day, immediately after the reading from Tanya, he felt himself becoming better.

HEALTHY PREGNANCY

The house looked like a disaster area. The sink was full of dirty

The month passed quickly and one day, two inspectors came to see whether the law had been followed. R' Ezechian was terrified, for he knew what danger he and the entire community were in.

dishes, it had been far too long since the floor had been swept, let alone mopped, and clothing was strewn all over the house. In the midst of the mess sat Mrs. M in the living room, crying.

She had been sitting there for several hours. She was in her seventh month of pregnancy and since the start of this pregnancy she had suffered from such nausea and vomiting that she felt constantly dizzy. If that wasn't enough, by evening she was exhausted and feeling so weak that she would faint. This went on evening after evening for seven months. The house was neglected and she simply couldn't take care of it.

The doctor did tests and said neither she nor the baby were in danger, and other than some pills there was nothing else she could do. "The nausea and discomfort will go away after a while," he assured her knowingly. Unfortunately though, his optimistic prediction proved false.

Her husband, Yaakov couldn't help her, since he was busy at work most of the day and the few hours that he was home were consumed with other household matters. The situation was intolerable. They eagerly looked forward to the day she would give birth and life would return to normal.

M's father, a Lubavitcher Chassid who went from Israel to the Rebbe for Tishrei, stayed in their home. Seeing how his daughter was suffering he tried to help her, but there wasn't much he could do

about her condition. The top doctor they consulted with couldn't do anything. Her father decided to speak to the Rebbe about his daughter in yechidus but didn't tell her his plan.

Before returning to Eretz Yisroel he met with the Rebbe and told him about his daughter's suffering. The Rebbe said, "There is no reason to worry. Your daughter will make it through the pregnancy and birth properly, and will give birth to a healthy child. Remove all worries from your heart."

The man said the problem was that his daughter was suffering greatly and he wanted a bracha so she could complete the pregnancy easily. The Rebbe smiled and said, "You want me to give your daughter something to do so she will be calm. Tell her to recite a chapter of T'hilim, a chapter of Mishnayos, and a chapter of Tanya, and this will help her feel better and she will be able to complete the pregnancy with joy.

"I am sure that she knows the chapter of T'hilim – Ashrei-T'hilla L'Dovid – by heart and so that leaves her with a chapter of Mishnayos and a chapter of Tanya to memorize. This learning will bring bracha and success in all that is needed."

The happy father told his daughter what the Rebbe had said. The daughter was thrilled and thanked her father for mentioning her to the Rebbe. Her husband promised to help her memorize the material. That same night M began learning Mishnayos by heart. She

found it difficult and so only managed to learn a few words.

That night, M noticed something strange. She waited for her usual symptoms but they never came! Not only that, but she slept well, something she wasn't used to at all lately.

The next morning she got up feeling like a new woman. "I knew that the Lubavitcher Rebbe could help with his brachos, but I didn't anticipate that it would be so quick," she said to her husband and father. From that day on, she learned Mishnayos and Tanya by heart and felt better and better. Her husband encouraged her learning and would test her every night.

Two and a half months went by and she was almost letter perfect in the chapter of Mishnayos and Tanya. One morning she decided to finish everything the Rebbe had told her to learn by the end of the day. When her husband came home from work she announced, "Today I finished learning by heart what the Rebbe told me to learn!"

After an especially festive supper, the woman told her husband it was time to call a taxi. Their baby was on the way.

A TANYA IN THE OPERATING ROOM

MK's father needed a complicated operation and he asked the Rebbe for a bracha. The answer was to put a Tanya under the operating table. He used his connections to get permission to bring the book into the sterile operating room and the operation was a success.

R' Zalman Duchman was once hospitalized for an operation. Before he went, the Rebbe gave him a Siddur and a Tanya and told him to make sure they were on the operating table during the operation. The operation was a success.

DO YOU WANT MOSHIACH, FOR REAL?

By Rabbi Zvi Homnick

If the Alter Rebbe wrote this, and the Rebbe Maharash commented on the implications, and the Previous Rebbe made his observation public, and the Rebbe recorded it for the people of our generation in the HaYom Yom, then it is obvious that this standard of emes applies today to all those who identify as Chabad Chassidim as it did back then.

SEARCHING FOR THE TRUTH

A little over twenty-two years ago, a few weeks before my wedding, I had an eye-opening conversation with my then roommate in Lakewood Yeshiva. This fellow, who is today a much beloved Torah educator, was a brilliant non-conformist,

considered by many to be a troublemaker, but I knew him to be a person of depth and integrity, whose acting out was mostly a rejection of the superficiality and hypocrisy that he saw all around him. Since I was about to undertake the responsibilities of a family, I expressed concern that perhaps the mundane exigencies

of everyday life would have a corrosive effect vis-a-vis the search for spiritual authenticity in a world where most religious life is an exercise in rote and repetition.

The brutal honesty, as well as the perspicacity of his response to me, was a real shocker at the time, and has always stayed with me since. He indicated that he could easily see himself embracing religious conformity in the interest of providing a normal stable home for his children, but that no matter what life had in store for me, I would remain undeterred since, "You will never be satisfied until you find the *emes* (truth)."

Less than two years later, I spent a few months learning in a local kollel in Boro Park, where all the other members of the kollel were from Polish/Hungarian Chassidic backgrounds who had gone on to learn in Lithuanian style yeshivos. These included some family members of well known Chassidic and rabbinic dynasties as well as an eclectic polyglot of others. One of the young men was a brilliant fellow from a Gerrer family in Eretz Yisroel, who had left the Gerrer educational system to explore other modalities of learning and approaches to service of Hashem, something which made him a bit of a pariah in that world, although he told me that the Lev Simcha of Ger had been very supportive on a personal level.

During our time together, we got into many discussions regarding the different religious approaches that exist in the frum world today and in generations past. After many hours of discussion, he summed up the differences in our world views in that he believed that there are many true paths and that a person would be best served by extracting the best elements of each, while I

was hopelessly naïve in believing that there was one true path that incorporated and transcended all the others. He also expressed his sympathy for my quixotic delusion since I was sure to be disappointed when I would ultimately be forced to confront the futility of my search, for in his words, “anyone who claims to have the absolute emes is either lying or deluding himself.”

About three years after that, I ran into this Gerrer Chassid on the streets of Boro Park and we got to talking. I told him that I had started to get involved in Chabad, and he responded that he had thought that Chabad Chassidus would be the only thing that would satisfy my search for “emes” but he hadn’t mentioned it to me then because he thought I was too much of a Misnaged to give it serious consideration. However, he cautioned me, as per his philosophy, to only study the earlier teachings and not to get caught up in the modern day Chabad movement since, “Chabad of today is only about activism.” When I tried to explain that, in fact, the Rebbe and his program for the world were the fruition and culmination of seven generations of Chassidic teaching, he reacted with disgust over the fact that I had “fallen in” and he walked off.

Although, I was hardly fazed by his reaction, I felt that Divine Providence was giving me a gentle tap on the shoulder to remind me that searching for and even finding the truth was not the end of the journey. I had been around 770 enough by that time to know that many who were my betters had fallen into the trap of getting caught up in all kinds of wonderful activities buoyed by the belief that “I have the emes,” and losing sight of what it means to incorporate that emes into every aspect of one’s inner being and

into every facet of life. They even had wonderfully Chassidic explanations about how this was the ultimate sacrifice for Ahavas Yisroel and the goal of Dira B’Tachtonim, to give up one’s own spiritual ambitions to do for others, as well as colorful depredations for those who actually tried to work on themselves. However, every single word of the Rebbe’s teachings that I had encountered to that point (and since), made it clear that this was contrary to everything that the Rebbe stood for.

In fact, it has always been a foundational principle of Chabad Chassidus, from its very inception, that simply knowing the emes and practicing its precepts are only first steps towards the ultimate goal, which is and has always been about living the emes.

ACCEPTING THE TRUTH

Following his release from Russian prison on 19 Kislev 5559/1798, the Alter Rebbe penned a letter to his followers, later published as Epistle 2 in *Igeres HaKodesh* in *Tanya*, entitled “Katonti.” In this missive the Alter Rebbe explains why the patriarch, Yaakov Avinu, felt diminished and less deserving of Divine protection as a result of having received such bountiful beneficence from Above. The basic premise outlined there is that any act of kindness from Hashem is an act of drawing that person closer to Him. “And as is known, ‘All that are before Him are esteemed as nothing.’ Hence, whoever is more ‘before Him’ is that much more like nothing, naught, and non-existent.”

After explaining the difference between the forces of evil, such as Yishmoel, that become more arrogant when fortune smiles upon them, and those of holiness,

such as Avrohom and Yaakov, whose response is to see themselves as insignificant and unworthy, he continues;

“Accordingly, I am now making a weighty announcement to all the men of our [Chassidic] brotherhood, regarding the multitude of favors, ‘the great things that Hashem has done with us’: Hold on to the attributes of Yaakov [for Jews are known as] ‘the remnant of His people’ and ‘the remainder of Yisroel’; regarding himself truly as mere remnants, as something truly superfluous and dispensable; that they not become haughty before their brethren... [i.e. their opponents, who caused the arrest of the Alter Rebbe]. Let them not jeer or whistle derisively at them, Heaven forefend...with a strict warning.”

He then concludes, “Rather, they are to subdue their spirit and heart before every man according to the attribute of ‘emes unto Yaakov,’ with humility and with ‘a soft response turns away anger,’ and with a restrained spirit, etc. And through all that, perhaps Hashem will put [similar feelings] into the heart of their brethren, as ‘water reflects a face,’ etc.”

In the *HaYom Yom* of 10 Menachem Av it brings a quote from the Rebbe Maharash that “had the Rebbe not inserted the three words ‘*b’midas emes l’Yaakov* (according to the attribute of truth unto Yaakov),’ he would have had fifty thousand more Chassidim. But the Rebbe demands the trait of truth.”

If we stop for moment to think about this statement of the Rebbe Maharash, it seems quite puzzling. These potential Chassidim surely knew that Chabad Chassidus makes many rigorous demands of its adherents whether it comes to the study of Chassidus or prayer, or even working tirelessly for the

spiritual growth and advancement of others. Additionally, if they were inspired to join as a result of the miraculous salvation of the Alter Rebbe from prison and a potential death sentence, they must have seen it as a vindication of Chassidus and a Divine indicant that it was the emes. So why did they find the fact that “the Rebbe demands the trait of truth” so daunting that despite everything they knew and believed, they declined to join?

Clearly, these people understood that there is a big difference between knowing and even accepting the emes, the truth, and actually living up to “the trait of truth” so that one feels truly humble before the discredited opponents of the truth. It is those three Hebrew words “*b’midas emes l’Yaakov*” that seemed so difficult and insurmountable, so that despite the knowledge of the truth and the readiness to toil and labor in practicing that truth, they felt that this trait and attribute was beyond their ability to undertake.

LIVING THE TRUTH

What is the difference between knowing, accepting and acting upon the truth, and the attribute of truth unto Yaakov?

A trait or attribute is by definition an internal characteristic that either comes naturally or else is acquired through great personal effort and struggle. The trait of emes in this context means to be completely genuine or in the modern day vernacular to be “for real.” The Chassidic definition of this trait is alluded to in the words “emes” and “l’Yaakov.” The word “emes” in the Hebrew language is comprised of the letters Alef, Mem, and Tav. Alef is the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, Mem is the middle letter, and Tav

The “trait of truth” that the Alter Rebbe demanded by inserting those three words was that his followers really and truly feel genuinely humble before their opponents, even as Chassidus itself was completely vindicated.

is the final letter. This indicates that something is only emes if it is consistent at all levels.

The name Yaakov is made up of the letter Yud and the word Eikev, the Yud alludes to Chochma-wisdom, the highest of all the faculties and the word Eikev, meaning heel of the foot, represents the lowest level of physical existence. This denotes that the primary characteristic of Yaakov Avinu is expressing the absolute truth of Divine wisdom in all levels of existence. Hence, the “trait of truth” that the Alter Rebbe demanded by inserting those three words was that his followers really and truly feel genuinely humble before their opponents, even as Chassidus itself was completely vindicated.

If the Alter Rebbe wrote this, and the Rebbe Maharash commented on the implications, and the Previous Rebbe made his observation public, and the Rebbe recorded it for the people of our generation in the *HaYom Yom*, then it is obvious that this standard of emes applies today to all those who identify as Chabad Chassidim as it did back then.

For most of us, this trait does not come naturally. As the Previous Rebbe states, recorded in *HaYom Yom* of 2 Adar I, the Alter Rebbe “set up a system for Anash of avoda with the mind, and to seek out the emes, to critically examine one’s every move that it be in accordance with the emes,

and this comes through avoda.”

(Knowing that over two centuries back, fifty thousand potential new Chassidim found this task too intimidating would seem to be grounds for discouragement rather than a source of inspiration. It is to this end that the Rebbe informs us that we were given the necessary tools and he also clarifies what is expected of us, as he continues there:)

“This avoda is not like those who make the absolute mistake of thinking that one must pulverize mountains and shatter boulders, turning the world upside down. The absolute truth is that any avoda, any act, whatever it may be, is perfectly satisfactory when performed with true *kavana* – intent: A blessing pronounced with *kavana*; a word of prayer as it should be, with a prepared heart and an awareness of ‘before Whom you stand’; a passage in Chumash said with an awareness that it is the “word of Hashem”; a verse of Tehillim; a positive character trait expressed in drawing a friend close with love and affection.”

LIVING THE TRUTH OF MOSHIACH

Although the demand for the trait of emes has been present throughout as we have seen, it is actually more pressing in our present situation. Over eighteen

years ago, in the famous sicha of 28 Nisan 5751, the Rebbe stated emphatically that if the Chassidim would want Moshiach “with an emes,” the Geula would have come a long time ago. As much as the Rebbe encouraged the singing of “we want Moshiach now,” and emphasized the importance of demanding “*ad masai?!?*” something was still missing.

“The Rebbe demands the trait of truth.”

It is not necessary to “pulverize mountains and shatter boulders, turning the world upside down,” to really truly want Moshiach. One does not have to be on the highest spiritual levels to truly want Moshiach, as the Rebbe clarifies in that very sicha that the desire is actually motivated by finding oneself in spiritual exile in the service of Hashem. The only yardstick that the Rebbe gives for measuring if your want is truly genuine is if the thought that it will be delayed another day is

inconceivable to you. However, one does have to be committed to doing the necessary inner work as the Previous Rebbe concludes that *HaYom Yom*:

“It is true that to achieve this calls for great and intense effort, meaning simply to study a great deal of Torah, and to comprehend it – each according to his ability – and then Hashem will help him that he will be in accordance with the emes.”

Perhaps that is why the first specific instruction that the Rebbe gave on the subject of doing everything in our power to bring Moshiach was to study the topics of Moshiach and Geula as they appear in Torah. However, since the emes that we are trying to achieve is a true genuine desire, and desire is fueled by pleasure and delight, the Rebbe also emphasized the importance of learning in public, preferably in groups of ten or more, as this brings greater pleasure even if the

level of comprehension is somewhat diminished.

In light of the above, on this Yud-Tes Kislev, which is described in the *HaYom Yom* of that day as “a day of farbrengen and good resolutions towards establishing times to study the revealed Torah and Chassidus publicly, and in bolstering the ways of Chassidim in true friendship,” we should make a renewed commitment to making a “great and intense effort,” “to study a great deal of Torah,” especially on the topics of Moshiach and Geula, “and to comprehend it” as well as to experience the pleasure in it:

“And then Hashem will help him that he will be in accordance with the emes,” wanting Moshiach and the complete revelation of Melech HaMoshiach “with an emes,” and “the emes will sprout forth from the earth” with the True and Complete Redemption, NOW!

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ב"ה

IT'S GONNA BE THE LITTLE KINDERLACH

By Nosson Avrohom

When the Rebbe spoke about ways of hastening the Geula, the mashpia Rabbi Moshe Nisselevitz came up with an action plan. A revolutionary project was started to enable children to learn Tanya, for this is the book with which we will greet Moshiach.

A unique collaboration between an old-time Chassid and founder of CHAMAH, Rabbi Moshe Nisselevitz and R' Shmarya Harel of kibbutz Na'an, an outstanding organizer, launched one of the most unique educational programs of recent years. R' Nisselevitz, to whom Tanya is so dear and something he taught secretly to children behind the Iron Curtain, looked for a way to impart the values and concepts of Tanya. This was inspired by the famous sicha of Chaf-Ches Nissan, 5751, when the Rebbe exhorted us, "do all that you can to bring Moshiach." "The Rebbeim promised that we would march to the Geula with the holy Tanya," he says.

The organization, which was

founded in 5764 under the name, "Achdus Yisroel B'Hafotzas HaMaayonos" (Jewish Unity in Spreading the Wellsprings) began operating under the leadership of R' Yosef Yitzchok Nisselevitz and R' Shmarya Harel, who enlisted a number of talented men with chinuch experience. They began working on a translation and breakdown of the chapters of "Shaar Ha'Yichud V'Ha'Emuna" in Tanya in which every concept is explained with analogies, examples, crossword puzzles and other written activities.

Rabbi Shaul Akselrod leads the team. Within a short time, the staff produced six eye-catching workbooks, which are currently being translated into English,

Russian, and French.

We spoke to R' Harel to hear how this ambitious project got off the ground. It turns out that it's very simple. A strong desire, a little mesirus nefesh, the understanding that they had to work quickly – and no budget. And that's how they began.

"At the end of 5764, the mashpia, R' Moshe Nisselevitz said that since I am involved in educational projects throughout the year, I should prepare a curriculum for how to teach Tanya to children on a broad scale. If you know R' Nisselevitz you know that he 'lives' with Tanya day and night and he loves getting more people involved in learning it."





A meeting took place between R' Harel, R' Nisselevitz, and his son Yosef Yitzchok.

"I quickly picked up on their vision, which was to upgrade the chinuch of children and thereby hasten the Geula. We decided to construct a three-stage program. First, to establish the program in Chabad schools; second, to get the program into religious schools of other groups; third – the stage we are in now – to get the program accepted by the Ministry of Education so that all schools will use it to instill positive values in the children."

The idea of producing workbooks was raised at the start. They realized that the way to get the

children to enjoy the subject was to break down the ideas in their language with analogies and examples.

"I looked into it and found that though there are books that help you learn and understand Tanya, there is no real curriculum for it. We decided to start with *Shaar Ha'Yichud V'Ha'Emuna* based on many answers from the Rebbe to people to start learning Tanya from there. We put together a staff of four talented people and they did a great job."

The twelve chapters were broken down and explained clearly and divided into six workbooks so the students can easily learn the material. A lot of effort was put into

making the workbooks attractive.

"The workbooks and the project have been very successful. Forty schools are using it. Chabad schools around the world are interested in the project and it has been adopted in places such as Brazil, Argentina, Australia, the US and Canada. We have had to translate the workbooks into other languages.

"At the end of the first year we held a worldwide quiz which was very successful. Aside from the enjoyment in seeing young children showing proficiency in *yichuda ilaa* and *yichuda tataa*, the fact that it took place in Binyanei HaUma in Yerushalayim raised public awareness and increased the children's motivation to work at it, which is our goal.

"We were asked over and over by mechanchim why we don't make another quiz and unfortunately, the answer has to do with money, or the lack thereof."

"We realized that it was necessary to provide the teachers with the tools so they could teach Tanya in a way that would interest the children. We made Yemei Iyun to teach new methods of how to do it."

R' Nisselevitz adds:

"You can't just cover ground; you have to delve into the material. Going deeper enables the students to understand what the Tanya wants from us. If we look at Tanya superficially, we can err and think that it's all simple – there's a Creator and His creations.

"In order to clarify lofty concepts to children, we have to be creative in ways that help them understand the material."

How do you do that?

I'll give you an example from the video R' Ronen Amit produced for the Tanach quiz we held. He wanted to convey the idea of "from nothing to something" and he showed a picture of a ship with the word "ship" on the side and he programmed the video so that the

ILLUSTRATING THE CONCEPT OF TZIMTZUM

We asked for a number of examples of breaking down concepts in Tanya so that the children can understand them. The examples kept coming and we couldn't help but be impressed. The following is just one of many:

The concept of "tzimtzum" (contracting the light), is explained at length by the Alter Rebbe as the idea that the letters of the "ten utterances" contain too much light to energize a specific created being. Thus, he explains, there is a system of interchanging letters and numerical values of letter until ultimately each creation receives its life force through the letters of its name.

We searched for an example to illustrate this idea until we came up with the analogy of a power station, which steps down the energy in stages using many transformers and switches through which the wattage is reduced, because the individual appliance in the home can't handle such a powerful charge of electricity.

As another example, we showed pictures of the national water delivery system and explained that there have to be progressively narrower pipes until the water actually arrives in our home so that we can take a drink.

letters began to fade. When the letters faded from the screen, the ship also disappeared. In other words, the gashmius could not work without the ruchnius, without the power that brings it from nothing to something every moment."

The organization gets a lot of encouragement from the Rebbe through the Igros Kodesh. R' Yosef Yitzchok Nisselevitz tells us about the first answer his father opened to when they were just starting out and had taken on many debts in order to make the project a success.

The letter he opened to was in volume 16, page 251:

I pray for your outstanding success in your efforts, in large measure, and in your toil in the past and future for the Tanya project and other projects whose inner point is spreading the wellsprings, and may the merit of the many and the blessings of the n'siim of the wellsprings throughout the generations help and accompany you.

When R' Yosef Yitzchok talks about the Tanya project you can see his excitement for it. As someone who gives over ten Tanya classes a week, his enthusiasm is understandable. We asked him to tell us about the project and its goals.

"My father conceived this project because of the Rebbe's sicha. He thought a lot about what could be done to hasten the Rebbe's hisgalus and came up with this. He sees Tanya as the purpose of it all. When he had to make a fateful decision in the Soviet Union, he would open a Tanya and get answers to his questions like people do today with the Rebbe's Igros Kodesh."

Why did you decide to focus on children?

"Today's children are tomorrow's Chassidim. People today are contending with problems with parnasa, security, and chinuch. When Mordechai needed to take



Tanya in a religious-nationalist school



Rabbi Moshe Nisselevitz



Rabbi Shmarya Harel



Children giving their full attention in a Tanya class

action to save the Jewish people, he gathered the 22,000 children and taught them Torah. We know that it says that Tanya will take us out of galus. Having children learn Tanya is a winning combination. Only children can understand the Shaar Ha'Yichud in such a simple, pure way. This is the best cure for our educational problems, so why not use it?"

R' Nisselevitz says they picked Shaar Ha'Yichud V'Ha'Emuna after consulting with mashpiim and rabbanim.

"It's a project which the talmidim can start and finish in the same year, unlike "Likkutei Amarim" which is much longer and contains chapters

which are too hard to explain to children."

Despite their successes so far, R' Nisselevitz says that they are just starting out. Not all principals of Chabad schools have understood the need for including this in their curriculum and this bothers him tremendously.

"Educational and spiritual problems abound and rather than look for advice from psychologists and educational advisors, we can use the best advice for the darkness of galus – the Tanya. Some people contend that the children are too young for Tanya, and my response is always, 'What are you waiting for – for them to reach their teens when

they are full of confusion and doubts? Why not immunize them?'

"There are some kibbutzim that have inquired about the program. Countless boards and committees are springing up to discuss methods of improving education. There is an openness to hearing ideas that have garnered success even among those who in the past wouldn't hear about Torah and mitzvos. We intend to invest more effort in this direction. We are planning to offer training for teachers to teach this subject as well as CDs and other tools to help them. We hope that the Tanya and its G-dly power will also affect the teachers who are not yet religious. When the Baal Shem Tov asked Moshiach

when he is coming he didn't say it would be when there is more Ahavas Yisroel or when they give more tz'daka. He said when your wellsprings spread forth, and so I wonder – have we done everything we can?"

If you look through the workbooks you can't help but be impressed by the level, the quality and the design. I also heard from Chassidim who give classes in Tanya to their mekuravim that they are helped by the examples in these workbooks.

"What's special about these workbooks," said R' Shaul Akselrod, who oversaw all aspects of the publication, "is that we brought the material down to the level of the children. Each paragraph is explained in simple language. We also enable them to handle the material on their own with simple exercises.

"It says about Tanya that the greatest genius can learn from it as well as the simplest person. The Rebbe explains that it's like Chumash. A five year old will learn Chumash without commentaries and as he grows older he will be taught additional explanations. So too with Tanya, a person can read it on a simple level and then delve deeper."

At first, R' Akselrod concedes, he gave a lot of thought about what order to build the structure of the workbook, whether to stick to the order of the prakim or to follow the flow of the concepts. In the end they decided to go according to the order of the prakim, which worked out well.

"I meet young children who are proficient in Chassidic concepts and it's very heartwarming. A child can learn the entire Shaar Ha'Yichud V'Ha'Emuna, chapter by chapter, and understand it. These children have been given a wonderful way of learning Chassidus. We also see and hear from teachers and principals that the children who approached

this subject seriously changed dramatically. It strengthens the child's emuna and we know that Chassidus changes one's metzius and reveals his inner essence.

"When we got up to chapter six, we got stuck on the concept of *hiskalelus ha'middos* as it's explained there at length. I wanted to find additional explanations on the concept and searched through the index of the Igros Kodesh in order to find explanations from the Rebbe. When I found the first letter I nearly stopped breathing. The letter was written to the Chassid, R' Avrohom Eliyahu Akselrod. I felt that the Rebbe was giving me a *yasher ko'ach*.

"One of the Chassidim of the Alter Rebbe asked him why he didn't see miracles and he answered him that the greatest miracle is that the cold brain understands G-dliness. This is the most amazing thing to me. We see children in fourth and fifth grade who have no experience in analytical thinking yet they can nicely explain what "ahavas Hashem" and "yiras Hashem" are, and are able to extrapolate ideas from what they are taught."

The feedback from teachers is highly laudatory.

"The workbooks are an opportunity for discussion of crucial life questions," says Mrs. Nechama Tzvi, a teacher in the Chabad school in Kiryat Gat, "as well as an opening to broach the subject of our role in the world, creation, and other fundamental questions that sometimes students hesitate to ask because they don't want to be accused of heresy. In these workbooks there are answers to all questions and in a language that teens and preteens, who are beginning to critique the world around them and form their worldviews, can easily understand. We don't always have the opportunity to discuss these questions in the usual classes, and

give them the attention they deserve, and that's what makes this project so important."

Mrs. Tzvi has seen many examples of the positive effects the project is having on her students and she shared one of them with us:

"Beyond understanding the concepts of 'hashgacha pratis' and how the world came into being, we see how the material has an enormous effect on the students. I see it particularly in davening. Every morning we say, 'who renews in His goodness, every day, constantly.' When you learn the explanation in Tanya about the G-dly energy renewing the creation every instant, it takes on a whole new meaning. The Alter Rebbe adds new life to this verse. It's not just another sentence within the Siddur. Girls have come over to me and said that since they've learned Tanya on this pasuk, they have begun davening more seriously. If we look at the HaYom Yom where the Rebbe writes that deterioration begins with coldness in davening, we can appreciate the drastic change in the girls."

In light of this success, Mrs. Tzvi, an experienced teacher, wonders why there are still Chabad schools that have yet to adopt this project.

"I was expecting every Chabad school to join in. I want to take this opportunity to thank the individuals who initiated the project and those who implemented it. It's a powerful idea which gives us and the students the tools and the opportunity to be empowered in a pure and holy way through learning the holy Tanya.

"I've wondered before, what is the difference between us and other schools? What singles us out? What sense of special pride should I convey to the girls and get them to connect to Chabad? The answer is Chassidus, which gives the girls a deep and powerful faith."

THE POWER OF PREPARATION

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelewitz
Shliach, Beit Shaan

In the D'var Malchus for Parshas Pinchas, the Rebbe talks about the *goral* that served as a preparation to inherit the land. The Rebbe explains that although it was merely a preparation, it had enormous importance and miracles took place in order to emphasize the power of the *goral*. The Rebbe relates that once, when the Rebbe Rashab realized that the T'mimim were rushing the singing of the "Hachana" (Preparation) niggun in order to be able to hear Chassidus, the Rebbe said an entire sicha on the importance of preparing.

The Rebbe also mentions that the Rebbe Rashab would learn Tanya together with his son, the Rebbe Rayatz, and before each lesson he would tell his son a Chassidishe story. Years later, the Rebbe Rayatz said that those stories, which were preparations for the shiur, stood him on his feet.

In Beit Shaan I also start each shiur with a Chassidishe story. If you come late, you miss it – that's your punishment. And it works.

An integral part of every shiur is the preparation of the lesson. I once heard a shliach who gave many shiurim say that if you put three hours into preparing a shiur, you can condense it afterwards into ten minutes. If you only prepare for ten minutes, the shiur may go on for three hours but the listeners will still

not even understand what your topic is.

Something good happened recently in Beit Shaan which enabled me to recall some years' worth of Tanya shiurim, in which I used various teaching approaches:

THE TANYA TREATMENT

Shlucha, Mrs. Sharon Tor, organized a group workshop for mothers on the topic of parenting in light of Tanya. The workshop is given by shlucha, Mrs. Chani Abraham of moshav Yinov. Mrs. Abraham has treated many women through the treasures to be found in Tanya. Women who previously had to swallow all kinds of pills, were weaned off of them thanks to the Tanya treatment.

Women were relieved of hospital stays, gave birth to children, and one suicidal woman was restored to normal life through the power of Chassidus.

Mrs. Abraham says that all negative feelings come from the animal soul and they lie to us. We need to focus on the feelings of the G-dly soul and feelings of happiness, love, hope and trust will replace anger and sadness.

One woman said that her son would stay up till all hours of the night and then could not wake up on time, was late for school, missed class, got into trouble with the

teachers and got low marks. Mrs. Abraham asked her to describe her feelings and the woman said anger, frustration, disappointment, despair, and hatred.

"All those are feelings of the animal soul. It's what you feel when you think about yourself. Start thinking what you feel when you focus on the benefit of the child."

The woman began enumerating positive feelings such as compassion, love, concern for his future.

"That comes from the G-dly soul. All the previous feelings were just a test. Don't believe them. Strengthen the good feelings."

The satisfied woman left feeling encouraged.

Dozens of women responded to our advertisements for the workshop, including a nucleus of young mothers who were well versed in Torah but had never learned Tanya. They were fascinated by Mrs. Abraham's explanations and said they would attend future sessions of the workshop.

ANSWERS TO ALL QUESTIONS

Rabbi Meir Bastomsky of Kfar Chabad has been giving Tanya classes for decades at yeshiva high schools, including Nachalim and Pardes Chana. Many of his talmidim are Chabad Chassidim today,

We need to focus on the feelings of the G-dly soul and feelings of happiness, love, hope and trust will replace anger and sadness... If we went carefully through every page of Tanya we would find an answer to every (spiritual-emotional) question.

shluchim and rabbanim. One of his students quoted him as saying that the Tanya is so rich with messages and guidance for Chassidic life that if we went carefully through every page of it we would find an answer to every (spiritual-emotional) question.

That's not R' Bastomsky's innovative idea, for the Alter Rebbe says so explicitly in the introduction, "and they are all the answers to the many questions that are asked by Anash of our country constantly." R' Bastomsky's chiddush is that he demonstrated this by putting it to the test in real life. He suggested that his talmidim ask any question they have and he will show them the answer in Tanya.

His talmidim tried to stump him, but each time they were amazed to see him leaf through quickly and find a precise answer.

Don't try this at home; only someone who has prepared for years can do this.

I heard of another teacher in yeshiva high schools who has drawn many talmidim to the path of Tanya and Chassidus. What impressed these talmidim most about the Tanya classes was what they observed even before the teacher began reading. The seriousness, joy and love with which he approached Tanya had a powerful effect on them. They sensed it was worth learning a way of life from this book.

TO EACH HIS OR HER OWN

Modesty and humility aside, I have given hundreds (maybe thousands) of classes in Tanya – a claim that no doubt, most shluchim can join me in making.

I'd like to tell you about two weekly Tanya classes that have been going on for over ten years. One is for men, given in the office of an accountant in Beit Shaan, and attended each week by ten to twenty people. The other shiur is for women, once a week, at our house.

I recently discovered a new approach to teaching Tanya. It's a project of the Chabad house in Beer Sheva in conjunction with Merkaz Tzeirei Chabad. The project, called "B'Sod Ha'Torah," was started by R' Chaim Heber of Beer Sheva, R' Mendel Elishevitz of Karmiel and other shluchim.

They prepare shiurim on the parsha ("B'Sod HaParsha"), on Tanya ("B'Sod HaNeshama"), on Pirkei Avos ("B'Darkei Avos"), on the holidays, etc. It comes with a page for the teacher, a page for the participant, a visual aid and sometimes even a recorded shiur as a sample. The lessons are available to all the shluchim on Shluchim.net and a shliach can download the pages from the website and give the shiur.

On the page for the teacher are notes on how to start the lesson, when to move on, when to elaborate,

when to tell a story and which one, when to stop the lecture and allow the participants to speak up, words of summation, etc. I tried this approach for three weeks at both my Tanya classes and then I asked the participants for feedback. Did they prefer this approach, where we finished a chapter at each shiur and discussed it, or the old method where I read line by line and explained it.

At the men's shiur, the majority preferred the old method. One person said to me, "With all due respect to audience participation, we want a Tanya shiur, not a youth activity." They wanted to hold a Tanya and learn like people had always done. At the women's shiur, the majority preferred the new method. It's good to know that there are different approaches one can take and to each his or her own.

TANYA TO THE STRAINS OF AN ELECTRIC GUITAR

Rabbi Yair Kalev of Kfar Chabad has his own approach. R' Kalev goes to a shiur with an electric guitar and amplifier. He reviews one chapter at a time, each session a different chapter. The participants don't have s'farim or papers; they just sit and listen. He tells them about the souls within us, about the good middos and bad ones, about the powers of the soul and about the garments of thought, speech, and action, about the power of connecting to Hashem through learning Torah and about the tragedy of connecting to klipa by doing sins, and so on.

Every session begins with a review of the previous shiur and then they move on to new discoveries. He spices up the explanations with stories the participants can relate to. It's amazing to see how R' Kalev knows how to tailor the examples to the daily life of both the housewives and the kibbutznikim who sit crowded around him.

Every half an hour he stops talking, picks up his guitar, and tells them about the name and content of the next niggun. Many people close their eyes and sway as if in prayer. They have what to think about, as he has just described the bitter war between the souls or the sweet taste that you get when you do a mitzva. Now, everybody feels it.

I went to some of these gatherings that were organized by the Chabad house in Menachemya, directed by Rabbi Dovid Veknin and Rabbi Benny Bitton. It was moving and fascinating each time and we always left wanting more and looking forward to the next session. R' Kalev quotes Rabbi Meir Blizinsky a"h, who taught how to integrate the deepest lessons of Tanya with aspects of daily life. He implements the same method, speaking freely and openly, and in a way that everyone can understand. He can take an explanation on the verse in Tanya chapter 27, "and sanctify yourselves and be holy," and explain for two hours (if you're lucky!) how to apply this to your relationship with your wife, children, colleagues and neighbors.

THE LECTURE THAT AVERTED A TRAGEDY

R' Kalev says, "Tanya is a tool box, a first aid kit for all illnesses of the soul and for all challenges in avodas Hashem."

He proves his point with a story:

About a year ago, I was invited to give a series of lectures for Chabad in Thailand. Most of the lectures took place at the Chabad house in Bangkok but there was also one lecture in the north of the country, in Chiang Mai. The shluchim advertised in all the tourist spots about the lecturer from Israel with a guitar and unique style. About 150 people came, most of them tourists but also a number local Jewish businessmen, some of them living



R' Yair Kalev

there for years, married to non-Jews and immersed in all the impurity and avoda zara that are so plentiful there.

I began the lecture, including songs, and everything went as usual until I noticed a young couple sitting there and chatting the entire time. I tried to ignore them but they didn't stop talking and laughing. It was quite a chutzpa to look at me and carry on their own conversation. The lecture was excellent and the songs were successful but this one couple didn't stop talking and laughing.

At a certain point I spoke from my heart about some of the most vital issues affecting the soul and everybody was riveted - except for the two of them, who continued their nonstop chatter. I tried dropping a not so subtle hint: "There are people who are so obtuse and are so busy spouting all their foolishness they are unable to absorb anything serious." The hint didn't help and the two continued talking with the utmost nerve.

At the end of the lecture we all went outside and the talkative woman came over to me and said, "You won me over with your talk."

"What do you mean?" I asked warily.

She explained that the man she was talking to all evening was English, a doctor who lived in Thailand and did not know a word of Hebrew. She was translating the entire talk for him, word by word. She said that lately they had both been regularly attending the programs of the missionary in the city and that morning, too, they had planned to go to another lecture at the mission. They had happened upon the ad for the rabbi with a guitar and she convinced him to go to something Jewish for a change.

"Your lecture was so moving and persuasive," she said, "that we decided we would not go to the mission anymore and we would continue our path of searching only in light of the Torah and Judaism."

I suddenly realized how mistaken I was, how I had misread them. I wanted to throw them out and in the end it turned out that they had gotten more out of the talk than everyone else in the audience. It's just like it says in Tanya (chapter 27) about how a person imagines that he is a tzaddik and therefore he is sad when he has foreign thoughts. It's actually arrogance on his part. If we knew how to use the "tool box" of Tanya properly, things would look different.

HODU LA'HASHEM: CHABAD IN HODU (INDIA)

Interview by Avrohom Rainitz

*Rabbi Betzalel Kupchik, “father of the Shluchim in India,” speaks about how he came to shlichus in India, the people they are reaching, and publicizing the B’suras HaGeula. * Part 2 of 2*

How did you end up in India?

In Shevat, 5756, one of the regular participants at the shiur I gave in Rosh Pina gave me a video and said, “You have to watch this.”

It was a fifteen minute television report about Israelis going to an ashram in Poona. For a few seconds, attention is drawn to one individual among a group of Israelis wearing robes, who has tzitzis peeking out from beneath the garment. When the reporter asked him, “What are *you* doing here?” he said, “I came to tell them that we have the Torah, G-d, and the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach.” Just like that, with those words. The reporter concluded by saying, “In Poona they are waiting for the Rebbe.” When I heard that, I felt it was a personal message from the Rebbe.

I inquired about the bachur in the video and found out that his

name is Shai Avnon. He was in the process of becoming a baal t’shuva when he suddenly decided to go to India because of an old promise he made to a friend from the army, to join him on a tour of India. He wrote to the Rebbe about it and opened to an answer that said: **Since you are going close to 24 Teives, make a Chassidishe farbrengen in the place you are going.**

He was there for three weeks and spread Judaism. He returned to Eretz Yisroel but the television program and the concluding words, “In Poona they are waiting for the Rebbe,” stayed in my mind. I felt that the Rebbe had sent this to me so that I would finally go on shlichus.

I went to India for the first time that Purim, together with Yahel Dahan, a mekurav of Chabad who had been in India before. We wrote

to the Rebbe and I opened to a letter with a bracha for a happy Purim and this instruction: **Success in fulfilling your role – “go and gather all the Jews” – and explain to them that they belong to the nation of Mordechai who did not bend nor bow to any foreign worship including worship that is foreign to the spirit of Yisroel Saba.**

On that trip to Poona I saw what precious neshamos are wandering around in India. People who wouldn’t consider entering a Chabad house anywhere else were receptive to doing so in India. I was excited about this and began traveling there for every Yom Tov. I traveled back and forth for the next three years until one day my wife suggested, “Maybe we should go together on shlichus to Poona?”

I told her that the main burden of running the home and educating the





children would fall on her because I would be busy reaching out with programs etc. and she said, "Let's try it for half a year."

That's how we ended up going on shlichus a little late in life.

THE REBBE'S PLAN

From Mrs. Rochel Kupchik's diary:

... Three quarters of an hour later the Lag B'Omer parade got underway. The streets of Poona, that are used to wedding processions and processions having to do with their avoda zara, stopped to watch the unusual sight. People from the Chabad house (actually, it was the children because they are the majority in quality and quantity) were marching with other children from the Jewish community. In front of them marched an Indian orchestra

and behind them were our "floats" decorated with signs and pictures of the Rebbe - the car of the musicians and the baby carriage of our Yigali; every time I abandoned it in order to straighten out the line of children, some Indian made sure to push it along.

The music sounded amazingly similar to the music of Miron which, as is known, has Arab strains mixed into it. There were two short and happy movements that kept repeating ... Our destination was the German Bakery - the Israeli hangout. We stood still to recite the p'sukim and to proclaim Yechi, followed by a brief Chassidic dance.

The cameras of many tourists, Israelis and l'havdil goyim, captured this unique sight of a holy parade on these impure streets.

India is a huge country in southern Asia. It is the seventh biggest country in the world and the second largest in population following China, with over a billion people who speak more than a hundred languages. As a result, India is also the largest democracy in the world. Their coastline is over 7000 kilometers long and it has borders with Pakistan, China, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Myanmar.

India is officially not a religious country but most of the people incline towards some religion. The most popular religion is Hinduism, which is followed, in its different forms, by most of the population. In India there is a large Moslem minority.

India used to have a large Jewish community, mainly in the Maharashtra region where the B'nei Israel lived in Cochin and Bombay. After 1948, most of the Jewish community moved to Israel. Today, only a few thousand Jews remain in India.

It's interesting that while the Rebbe sent shluchim to all corners of the globe, he never sent shluchim to India, even though there were

Jews and even k'hillos there. This point came up in conversation with R' Kupchik.

No, he does not claim to know why the Rebbe does what he does, but he offers this simple explanation:

Fifteen years ago there were hardly any Jews in India. The local Jews moved to Israel many years earlier and very few were left. The Rebbe once told the group of shluchim to Australia to stop off in India, but that was a one-time thing.

The thousands of Israeli tourists who are all over India today weren't there fifteen years ago. In Eretz Yisroel there was no Indian embassy and if you wanted to go to India you had to travel to Europe in order to get a visa. There were no direct flights from Israel to India and you had to travel via Egypt.

Shortly before I went to India for the first time, an Israeli embassy opened in India and direct flights began from Israel to India. Since then, thousands of Israelis go to India every week. The situation in India is completely different now.

I'd like to point out that a few years after I went on shlichus, Rabbi Yekusiel Rapp brought me a Tanya that had been printed in Poona. I have no idea who printed it there but I consider it the starting point of Chabad in Poona, which means that the Chabad house in Poona opened ten years before we got there.

The pioneer in Chabad outreach in India was Rabbi Nachman Nachmanson. He started working there following a sicha of the Rebbe that was broadcast on the Chanuka Live satellite on Chanuka 5752. The Rebbe said that even in Calcutta, India, they were watching the broadcast. R' Nachmanson went to India and worked in Delhi for years.

Those, perhaps, may be the technical reasons why the Rebbe didn't send shluchim to India. There are spiritual reasons too. There is a Gerrer Chassid who is a mashgiach for a kashrus agency and comes to

us often. He stayed with me for a Shabbos and asked me to accompany him on one of his stops. I agreed to go with him on condition that in the middle I would go to Delhi to be at the 19 Kislev farbrengen that would be taking place there. He agreed.

In Heaven they wanted otherwise. That evening, people from the factory that he was supposed to supervise came to our room at the hotel and the meeting took longer than anticipated, lasting until one in the morning. At that hour it was no longer possible to make the flight and get to the Chabad house for the 19 Kislev farbrengen. The mashgiach felt bad and said apologetically, “I should have told them to leave so you wouldn’t miss the 19 Kislev farbrengen.”

Friday night he came to us excitedly with an open volume of Igros Kodesh. The letter he showed me read, **“It’s surprising that I did not receive a report about the 19 Kislev farbrengen. I hope it was merely an oversight in writing. Otherwise, make it tomorrow.”**

That Shabbos was 20 Kislev and he exclaimed, “I couldn’t stop thinking that it was because of me that you didn’t attend the farbrengen, but the Rebbe writes that it’s not too late! You can make a farbrengen now in honor of 19 Kislev.” We sat and farbrenged until one in the morning.

The next day we sat down to learn Chassidus, a shiur that takes place every Shabbos morning. Sometimes it’s Likkutei Torah and sometimes the D’var Malchus. Present was someone who had been living in India for thirteen years, a Leftist who never voted because there was never a party “left” enough for him. He comes every Shabbos to hear “what the Alter Rebbe says on the parsha.”

That week we learned the D’var Malchus on Parshas VaYeishev. In

the sicha, the Rebbe says that one of the signs that the world is ready to welcome Moshiach more than in previous generations is the “tz’daka” Hashem did with the Jewish people by scattering them among the nations. The goal is to “sift” the sparks of holiness. The Rebbe says that there are countries where it is only lately that Jews have settled there permanently and use the customs and language of the country. It’s all because of refining these places so that even these countries will be ready to welcome Moshiach.

When we finished the shiur, the mashgiach exclaimed, “What’s the matter with you?! How come nobody knows about this sicha of the Rebbe? The Rebbe is explaining here the idea of Chabad houses in general and in India in particular, that it’s in order to prepare the world for Moshiach. The final birurim are here. I am always traveling back and forth to India and I’m not a Lubavitcher, but I know that there is something heavenly going on here. When I see right now how, in Chabad houses in India, on a regular basis, they use the language and customs of the country, I feel that these are the final birurim.”

On Motzaei Shabbos he requested to photocopy the sicha, saying, “This is the Rebbe’s plan of action.”

The Rebbe often says to check something out by its results. When you look today, you see that most of the baalei t’shuva in Eretz Yisroel are “graduates of India.” Why are they coming here now? The answer is because it’s the final moments before Moshiach.

IT DEPENDS ON HOW YOU LOOK AT IT

From the diary of Mrs. Rochel Kupchik:

Sometimes, it seems, you need to

live without a sink in the kitchen in order to appreciate a normal kitchen!

In the middle of working we ran out of water. Afterwards I learned where the pump is and how to use it.. Then the sink stopped working. The eggs don’t come from the grocery store and there are other mishaps. I try very hard to remain calm but don’t know how I will ever finish on time.

One day I went to the new house. The kitchen was flooded a few inches deep. Apparently there is a faucet for water from the government (as opposed to the water from the pump) that provides water only at night. What happened was, since no water came out during the day we left it open last night ...

Living conditions in Poona are really difficult. It’s far from civilization and everything comes with difficulty – even the most basic necessities are not viewed as basic. Every single thing requires real effort. There are difficulties with the bureaucracy and the massive corruption and the weather is grueling and intensely humid.

If you read Mrs. Kupchik’s diary years ago, you know about the nearly impassable hurdles that make it so hard for a non-Indian to live there. Each day is a new miracle which requires much heavenly mercy.

How do you manage in a place with sub-standard living conditions?

It’s all in the head. The Chassid, R’ Simcha Gorodetzky was in prison for fifty days under harsh interrogation. He went in healthy and strong to the point that they said he could uproot a tree with his hands and he left a shadow of himself. They shone powerful lights into his face so he was unable to sleep and thousands of mosquitoes made him miserable.

When asked how he made it through the ordeal he responded simply, “The chapter of ‘L’haskilcha

bina' in Tanya which explains that no evil descends from Above." By that he meant – the way someone takes things has an impact on him. If a person feels that tzaros have descended on him, they are tzaros. If you think "no evil descends from Above," then there are no tzaros.

As to your question, the main difficulty is for my wife, who is in the Chabad house all day and bears the burden of feeding all the guests, educating the children etc. She does this quite well. Aside from that, after so many years, you get used to it.

The part you can't get used to is the lack of a structured chinuch for the children. The thing that keeps us going is the Rebbe's promise that the children of shluchim are "on his shoulders" (i.e. his responsibility). We feel that their chinuch here is stable and more secure than in any organized Chabad community.

It's hard to explain but you feel that the Rebbe is protecting the children.

Mendy, who is after K'vutza now, was the first to go to yeshiva k'tana (i.e. high school) after living in Poona for two years. Before he went to yeshiva he had to take a test. I called Rabbi Moshe Orenstein of the Chabad yeshiva in Netanya and asked that he test him over the phone. He said it wasn't just a test of knowledge. "He spent two years without a Chassidishe chevra."

I suggested that he check him out for himself on a trial basis. Now our fourth son who grew up in Poona is learning there. R' Orenstein is amazed. R' Naftali Mintzberg from the yeshiva told me, "I don't have words to express how amazed I am. Your children are from the best, in learning, yiras Shamayim, and socially."

Nor do I understand how children who spent most of their childhood growing up far away from a Chabad center were able to achieve this if not for the Rebbe's protection.



CHINUCH WITH THE REBBE'S KOCHOS

From the diary of Mrs. Rochel Kupchik:

When people heard about our upcoming trip to India with the whole family they were stunned: With all of them? How will you manage?

Remember how you said everything else aside, how will you manage without childcare? And yet here we are, all of us.

Okay, the oldest is no problem since she is my right hand, or actually, two right hands which constantly hold little Yigal(who prefers her to me these days...). Mendy and Shlomi also help out by shopping for vegetables, taking clothes to the cleaners or the

neighborhood tailor to fix a tear in the pants, cutting up a salad – the children learned how to do it themselves, and I'm talking about large quantities.

As for the little ones and what they can do on shlichus, they have a role too! When we asked Devorah, one of the tourists, what she finds special at the Chabad house, she immediately answered, "the children." A house is a "normal" house with children and that's reason enough to bring them.

Yigal, a computer engineer, a nice guy who isn't religious, comes here every night. He also said he comes because of the children!

At the beginning of each meal, the children announce: "Everybody

wash!”

If I or another one of the adults would stand near the faucet and make sure to show each person how to wash that would be “religious coercion,” or in the best case scenario, we would be viewed as nudniks. But when seven year old Moshiach does it (and he makes sure each one says a bracha), they smile because who would refuse a cute child?

What is the daily routine of the children?

After Shacharis, they learn from the Seifer HaShlichus and from sichos of the Rebbe. From their questions we sense that they are learning the sicha as though the Rebbe is talking to them, not just as abstract knowledge.

We once learned a sicha where the Rebbe says that it’s no big deal to go on shlichus to someplace close. One of the children asked, “How come the Rebbe is telling us this – we went somewhere far!” He didn’t think about the Rebbe saying this to other people; the Rebbe was speaking to him – who else?

Our youngest son who was born in India has been reading since he’s three. The biggest punishment you can give them in our improvised classrooms is to take them out of class.

I remember that one time, when we went to Eretz Yisroel, we arrived in Tzfas at seven in the morning and the children were in class by eight o’clock, even before we had told the principal that they were coming. They simply wanted to be in school.

They spend much less time learning than they do in Israeli schools or in Crown Heights. Every day they learn sichos of the Rebbe and Chitas. They prepare a play about a sicha. They understand the structure of a sicha. They know the question and the answer and how the question fades away because of the answer. No wonder, then, that when they go to high school they get



Newspaper headlines in India about the arrest of the professor

100 on their in-depth Gemara tests.

They learn from a young age that they don’t have a private life. They don’t sit down to the Shabbos table without making sure that other people have a fork, wine etc. All this makes them into mentschen.

When I’m giving shiurim and someone walks into the Chabad house and only our ten year old is there, he offers the person t’fillin. There was a doctor who had never put on t’fillin. His grandfather was a big rav but he never put on t’fillin. Every year he would come to India and we got to know one another but he still refused to put on t’fillin.

One time, I went to him on Sukkos and suggested he say a bracha on the four minim. He turned to me in surprise, “Betzalel, you know that I say no.”

I said, “I thought that maybe you’re a vegetarian and you have a problem with t’fillin, but I hoped that at least the four minim would be okay ...” But he refused. Two days later, my son Moshiach, who was nine or ten, said that the man had said the bracha on the minim with him. When I asked him about it

afterwards, the man explained, “How could I refuse a child?”

The Chabad house of Poona is an inseparable part of our home. Our life is outreach and outreach is our life. This is the situation and the children are growing up with it.

What is special about India that people are more open there than they are in Israel, where they are so “anti” everything religious?

From a G-dly perspective we can say that Hashem sent them to India in order to enter a Chabad house and get some Judaism, G-dliness, Chassidus and Moshiach. They think it’s their choice but really it’s Hashem who guides us.

They travel to India for a spiritual experience - this person went for yoga and that one went for meditation and so on. Avoda zara is what brings them and they go from that, *l’havdil*, to Judaism.

If you look at the people who go to India, who are they? People don’t go under normal circumstances. If you go, you go for a month. If you go for half a year, you have problems.

Take, for example, Daniel Efrati, a professor of philosophy and an army major. He served as a strategic advisor for Ehud Barak in the army and a lecturer at the Open University. He is an ardent Leftist. When he was at the airport in India they found a single bullet in his luggage. He was arrested and stayed in jail for a few days until his trial.

When we heard about this we put a lot of effort and energy into getting him released. He was sentenced to house arrest at the Chabad house with us taking responsibility for him. He stayed with us for four months.

Before his arrest he dropped into the Chabad house once, since he was passing through the area. He walked in and met my wife and said he had come to India since he wanted a job as a lecturer at the university in Poona. He planned on continuing to the airport by train but

my wife suggested that he fly and even gave him the number of a travel agent.

When they arrested him at the airport he called the travel agent and asked that we be informed about his arrest. His situation, being arrested for illegal weapons, is considered serious in India. It was 45 degrees Celsius (113 degrees Fahrenheit) in his cell. There were another two people there, one from Dubai and a dying Indian. The cell was full of rats and mosquitoes. He was weak from thirst but was afraid to drink the foul water. What kept him alive was that he knew the Chabadnikim wouldn't let him die. He was afraid that if we went on the Internet and saw what he wrote against the settlers, we wouldn't lift a finger to help him.

At his trial, the prosecutor argued that the judge had no right to consider any mitigating factors and he must be sentenced to at least a year in jail. In the meantime, he was staying under house arrest at the Chabad house. At first, I told him that he needed Hashem's bracha and he should put on t'fillin. He agreed to put on t'fillin as long as he was at the Chabad house.

A few weeks later, I suggested that he write to the Rebbe for a bracha and having seen how people received clear answers, he agreed. The letter he opened to in the Igros Kodesh was addressed to Benzion Dinor, a Minister of Education in Israel who had learned in Lubavitch in his childhood. The Rebbe thanked him for the book he sent him and for the chapter about Tomchei T'mimim. Then the Rebbe said, "If you are still writing about this after such a long time, this indicates that it's something strong within you but you are trying to resist. I hope you will influence others."

The professor was very moved by this and told me for the first time that he had learned in yeshiva in the past.



In the meantime, things were postponed again and again and he wanted to return to Israel. I advised him to write again, and this time to commit to doing something. He committed to love everyone and help people. (After he was released, he told his story on television and said, "We talk about universal love but usually it's just talk. I saw people who actually do it. It changed my entire perspective. It will take some more months to rebuild my perspective. Which of my Tel Avivian friends would say to me: 'Come on in, drink, eat, sleep and make yourself comfortable?'")

He wrote again and came to me afterwards, in turmoil. As a military strategist and expert in theoretical math, he decided to take a different volume of Igros Kodesh. He took another volume at random and it opened to precisely the same letter.

He said excitedly, "Statistically speaking, out of this number of volumes, with three hundred or so pages in each, the likelihood that I would open to a clear answer is such-and-such, but that I should open to the same answer again? That's one in several millions!"

For a while he had to present

himself at the police station twice a week, on Mondays and Shabbos. Throughout his stay at the Chabad house, he kept Shabbos. My wife encouraged him, "Tell the judge that you're Jewish and you can't travel on Shabbos." His lawyer agreed to give it a try.

They discussed it for half an hour in Indian and then the judge told him to stand up and asked, "What religion are you?"

"Jewish," he answered. It dawned on him that this was the first time in his life that he was identifying as a Jew - he had always said he was Israeli. In the end, the judge absolved him completely of having to show up twice a week.

One of the last letters that he wrote to the Rebbe was after 15 Av. The letter he opened to said that since it was after 15 Av, we were approaching the month in which the King is in the field and the 13 Attributes of Mercy begin to illuminate and things will work out. But you have to remember that it happens slowly.

I told him, "It says here that it's over - you are going free - but it will take time. He was released at the beginning of Elul. He was officially



released for only one month due to heart problems and because his mother was old. He left a deposit of \$2000 and said, "The judge and I both know I won't be coming back."

He left behind all his belongings except for t'fillin, which he puts on every day. He spoke at R' Zimroni Tzik's gathering for outreach activists and said, "I can't understand why I even made this journey. It was a delusional trip."

When we met again in Israel he told me that he often relates this story to his friends. People in his circles listen to him tell them about the Rebbe and answers in the Igros Kodesh.

He himself openly says that he doesn't understand why he went to India, but things happen differently than what we expect. "It's a shame this didn't happen to me thirty years ago," he concludes.

PRESENTING THE TOPIC OF MOSHIACH AND GEULA

From the diary of Mrs. Rochel Kupchik:

They once said in jest, a shliach of the Rebbe has an advantage over

Moshe Rabbeinu because about Moshe it says that nobody knows where he is buried while a shliach's place is known—he's buried (his place of shlichus).

It's not easy for me to think that way because India is a "real graveyard." So I hold on to the fact that the Rebbe promised prophetically that "hinei zeh Moshiach ba, u'kvar ba." So the "burial" is only temporary. Moshiach is already here and we are all in Tzfas, for it says that Moshiach will be revealed in the Galil.

I have the feeling that this year everybody went to the Rebbe for Tishrei except for us, who are far away.

Although India is so far from anything Jewish, anybody who knows you knows that Moshiach takes center stage in your outreach. How do you go about it?

On the roof of our Chabad house there's a big sign with Yechi. Inside is a big sign with the p'sak din of the rabbanim that the Rebbe is Moshiach. R' Zimroni says, "If you can't talk about it, put up signs. The wall doesn't blush. The paper isn't embarrassed."

Do people accept it?

Usually, there is only a problem with those from a national religious background. As my wife once put it, "is the *yehi ratzon* that the Beis HaMikdash be rebuilt more reasonable to accept than the Rebbe being Moshiach? What normal person is ready to accept the idea that the mosque will be removed from the Temple Mt. and replaced with a Beis HaMikdash? How realistic is that?"

Shabbos is usually a good time to talk about Geula (though each Shabbos is another story. You have to use common sense to know when you can talk and when you can't. Sometimes there are families with small children, which makes discussion harder. Sometimes there are lighthearted tourists that just want to sing the whole time). I start by saying l'chaim – Yechi. We put the words of Yechi to some of the songs that we sing.

Religious boys come with questions about the Rebbe being Moshiach and I show them the p'sak din. I say, "Look, I'm no big maven but there are 200 rabbis here who signed. You can talk to them and ask them. Here, is the son of Rabbi Ovadia Yosef good enough for you? Here's his telephone number ..."

Some people really want to know so we sit down and learn together. I remember that one year, a guy with a knitted yarmulke came with his wife on Erev Yom Kippur. Yom Kippur night he started a *taanis dibbur*. His wife said that on Rosh HaShana they had been at the Chabad house in Dramsala and they had heard that the Rebbe Rayatz said to minimize speech, so her husband decided to do that on Yom Kippur.

On Motzaei Yom Kippur he had complaints about Chabad. His main issue was about the time for davening. I responded, "The Rebbe knows the Shulchan Aruch better than both of us and he davens at ten, so that's good enough for me."

I had to go away for two days, and when I returned, my eight year old son said to me in horror, "Do you know what happened? That guest took pictures of the avoda zara parade! I told him it's not allowed but he continued taking pictures and said, 'shtuyot'."

At supertime I said to the guest, "For two days now I've been uncomfortable about our not davening on time, but now I'm calm because I see that if I would daven

on time, I could possibly end up at avoda zara ..."

He was a serious fellow and he got the message and deleted the pictures from his camera. I said to him half jokingly, "You should know that our Rebbe is a real Oheiv Yisroel. He foregoes all of Olam Haba of the Chassidim for Klal Yisroel. Go to any Chabad shul in religious areas and you will see that half of the people davening there aren't Lubavitchers. Why are they

davening there? Because they got up late and if not for Chabad they would be embarrassed to walk into a shtibel and would daven at home. They feel comfortable in Chabad."

What I'm saying is that the topic of Geula and the identity of Moshiach has to be presented matter-of-factly and that is how it will be accepted. If people ask questions because they really want to know, you can sit and learn with them.



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FIGHTING FIRE WITH... WELLSPRINGS

By Rabbi Yosef Karasik
Rav Beit Chefer-Emek Chefer

*The Mittler Rebbe's frightening dream about the meeting between the three Fathers of Chassidus. * Presented for the Chag HaChagim – Yud-Tes Kislev – and to mark one year since the massacre at the Chabad house in Bombay.*

FRIGHTENING DREAM

Early one morning, the Mittler Rebbe hurried to his saintly father, the Alter Rebbe, in great distress. Worriedly, he recounted his frightening dream:

He saw a broad river whose waters were clear and flowed rapidly. The river divided into many tributaries and in each of the streams the water flowed swiftly yet smoothly, without waves.

Two men approached the river, one tall and one a bit shorter, both dressed in long garments. The tall man had one leg that was thicker than the other. At some distance to these two men stood a group of people. He observed his father, the

Alter Rebbe, approaching the two men.

A small piece of wood was in the river and the short man instructed the tall man to get on the raft and travel on it. When he stepped on to the raft, it began to sink and the waters of the river began to rise until part of his body was submerged in the water. Then the situation changed and the water descended and the raft rose up, only to reverse again a few moments later. The situation changed again and again, with the water and raft rising and falling. Finally, the short man told the tall man to get off the raft and return to the land. The three men, the Alter Rebbe and the other two,

stood together.

Two of the men who stood at a distance from them and the river walked towards the river but immediately went back. This happened a few times until they finally went off into the distance and disappeared from the horizon.

Then the Alter Rebbe linked arms with the two men with him, with the short man in the center, the tall man to his left and the Alter Rebbe to his right. The three of them began walking towards another, wider river. The water was made up of different colors and flowed very rapidly and the waves were high and powerful and continued to grow in strength until they burst forth from the banks and flooded the surrounding fields. In those places there developed small streams of water that slowly penetrated into the ground and the earth began to sprout and bring forth fruit trees.

The short man told the Alter Rebbe to board a raft and the Alter Rebbe did so and began to walk on it. When he reached the edge of the raft he wanted to push it further but the short man instructed him to return to dry land, adding, "With the power of these waves you can also go through waves of fire."

That was the Mittler Rebbe's dream. When he woke up he ran in dread to his father, the Alter Rebbe, and told him the frightening vision he had seen.

SEVEN DETAILS IN THE FRIGHTENING DREAM

There were many images and ideas in this dream.

1- A river flowing rapidly, dividing into tributaries. The water remains within the banks and there are no waves.

2- The Alter Rebbe meets two majestic figures and one of the two men endured many tribulations, ups

and downs, in the river.

3- Two other majestic figures, not clearly seen, approach and then move away from the river. They disappear.

4- When those two figures disappear, the Alter Rebbe and the two other central figures join hands in embrace with the Alter Rebbe on the right, and they walk together to a mighty river with variegated water.

5- When they reach this river there are mighty waves which rush by and break forth over the banks and water the ground, creating small pools and streams.

6- The earth watered by the river brings forth fruit trees.

7- The Alter Rebbe enters the river and rides on a raft and is blessed that his raft, with the power of the waves, will withstand and vanquish waves of fire.

THE MEANING OF THE DREAM

After a heartfelt Shacharis accompanied by bitter tears, the Mittlerer Rebbe was ready to hear the Alter Rebbe's interpretation of the dream.

1- The waters of the river that divide into many tributaries while remaining within the banks symbolize the holy Torah before the revelation of the Baal Shem Tov. The Torah, which is compared to water, spread among the g'dolei ha'Torah but it did not break forth to the masses, to those situated outside the walls of the beis midrash. The waters are clear but they lack the waves, the energy and enthusiasm of Chassidim and baalei t'shuva.

2- The two majestic figures are the founders of Chassidus. The shorter man is the Baal Shem Tov and the other is his disciple, the Maggid of Mezritch (whose leg was swollen). The tribulations undergone by the Maggid by order of his master represent his delving into the study of Chassidus, and the river breaking off into streams represents

the spreading of Chassidus to all the disciples of the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid, all the teachers of Chassidus and the tzaddikim of the forthcoming generations.

3- The Alter Rebbe did not identify the two figures who approached the river and then vanished from sight. They were likely g'dolei ha'Torah, possibly the teachers of the Baal Shem Tov, one of them being Achiya HaShiloni.

4- The embrace of the three majestic figures, the three Fathers of Chassidus, represents the transmission of the teachings and the crown of Chassidus from the Baal Shem Tov to his disciple, the Maggid, and from him to the Alter Rebbe. The second enormous river towards which they walk is a manmade river, a river created by the tears of the baalei t'shuva who regret their sins, and were moved to return to their Father in Heaven with

Inclination which tries to burn and destroy a Jew's avodas Hashem. With the power of the wellsprings of Chassidus, the fire of the Evil Inclination is cooled, and with the force of the waves of Toras HaChassidus, the Jew is elevated to higher and higher levels.

Perhaps the significance of the Alter Rebbe's raft remaining in place and not moving forward by order of the Baal Shem Tov, represents the fact that much later, especially in the Rebbe's generation, there has been an even greater breakthrough in the teachings of Chassidus whether in revealing much greater secrets or in revelations in very distant, lowly places.

TERRIBLE FIRE

One year ago, in the terrorist attack on Bombay, the fire took on additional significance. This fire is

That was the Mittlerer Rebbe's dream. When he woke up he ran in dread to his father, the Alter Rebbe, and told him the frightening vision he had seen.

the power of Chassidus. This river has many colors, representing the many paths of t'shuva.

5- The waves breaking forth onto the dry land symbolizes the spreading of the wellsprings of Chassidus, and the pools of water which they create are the Chabad houses and centers of Torah and Chassidus around the world which make the dry land bloom.

6- The blossoming trees represent returning in t'shuva in distant places where the wellsprings of Torah and Chassidus were not to be found previously.

7- The Alter Rebbe's raft triumphs over the waves of fire, representing the power of Chassidus to vanquish the fire of the Evil

the enemy of humanity, of Judaism, and of Chassidus, and it seeks to eradicate, heaven forbid, the holy work of the river of G-d. But the fire will not be successful. They cannot eliminate holiness, thanks to the three Fathers of Chassidus, together with the other Rebbeim until our Rebbe. With their strength we go out and conquer the world and fill it with the waters of the roaring river of Toras HaChassidus.

We see that since the massacre at the Chabad house, not only hasn't Chassidus been weakened; on the contrary, it has flourished. May we see the completion of "when your wellsprings spread forth" with the true and complete Geula.

Source: Likkutei Dibburim

THE MASHPIA OF BRUNOY

*The subject of his farbrengens revolved around the demand to be involved in avoda and iskafia just as they were demanded of the T'mimim in Russia. He did not recognize changes in time and generations. He demanded of the T'mimim no less than what was demanded by the mashpiim in Lubavitch in days gone by. * We present excerpts from the book "Oveid Elokim," a biography of the mashpia, R' Nissan Nemenov a"h.*

For nearly sixty years R' Nissan Nemenov was the mashpia in yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim. For thirty-five of those years he was mashpia and menahel of yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Brunoy, a town near Paris. Throughout that time he educated generations of T'mimim, ovdei Hashem, and true mekusharim to the Rebbeim.

He highly esteemed all those who had learned in yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim, even for a short time. He would say to the talmidim in Brunoy, "Do you see R' Yisroel Noach [Blinitzky]? He learned in Lubavitch for only a year and a half and that was enough for him to grow into such

a great Chassid. And you, who have the z'chus to learn so many years in Tomchei T'mimim, what will you get out of it? You have to utilize all the kocho's and hashpaos, the brachos and hamshachos that you are given through the founders of the yeshiva, our Rebbeim, in order to be T'mimim deserving of the name."

At the Seudas bris mila of his grandson, R' Dovid Abba Pewzner, R' Nissan declared:

"The Gemara says, 'If the early ones [i.e. the great men of earlier generations] are like angels, we are like men. If the early ones are like men, we are like donkeys, etc.' We

are witnesses to the descent of the generations and we see how the world is in a spiritual decline, generation after generation. That was true until the Rebbe Rashab established yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim, for since then there is something new, 'one generation to the next praises your work.' Each subsequent generation of talmidim of Tomchei T'mimim is finer than its predecessor. In other words, a Tamim son of a Tamim is greater than a Tamim whose father was not a Tamim, and certainly the son of a Tamim who is the son of a Tamim who is the grandson of a Tamim ..."

Rabbi YY Wilschansky, rosh yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim Lubavitch in Tzfas, relates:

"At my bar mitzva, R' Nissan farbrenged and strongly emphasized this point, 'You are a Tamim, son of a Tamim, grandson of a Tamim.' At that time there weren't many who could boast such lineage, but I had the good fortune that both my grandfathers learned in Tomchei T'mimim."

CHASSIDUS IS A WAY OF LIFE, NOT HASKALA

His approach to learning Chassidus was that you have to thoroughly learn the simple meaning of the maamer and review it again and again until the content of the maamer is etched on your brain. He would expound on the inyanim of avoda in a maamer, but was not inclined to explain the deep haskala topics that appear therein.

One of his talmidim recalls that when they learned the maamer, "Adam Ki Yakriv" from Likkutei Torah with him, there was one shiur where R' Nissan read only two lines and explained their significance in terms of avodas Hashem for over half an hour. After the shiur this talmid pointed



out how little they covered and R' Nissan replied, "That is how I was taught in my youth and that is how I teach. Chassidus isn't *haskala* but a way of life."

Since Chassidus was, to him, primarily instructions in how to serve Hashem, he urged even young boys to learn a tremendous amount of Chassidus. R' Mordechai [Mottel] Kozliner a"h said, "When we were young bachurim, R' Nissan taught us maamarim in a relatively deep way, in his style, for four hours in a row! Some distinguished Chassidim were annoyed by this, thinking it beyond the boys' capabilities, but R' Nissan

maintained, 'As long as it's possible to learn Chassidus, they should learn ... Who knows what the future may bring? The learning they do now will fortify them with *yiras Shamayim*.'"

This became his standard both in Russia and in France. From the day the boys began studying Chassidus he demanded that the maamarim that they learned be engraved in their minds and hearts. He emphasized memorization. R' Sholom Dovber Labkovsky, Rosh Kollel in Kfar Chabad, relates:

"At his farbrengens he would demand that when we walked in the street we should review the

chapters of Tanya that we knew by heart or the maamer that we were currently learning. In the period before our bar mitzva we began learning the maamer, "Adam Ki Yakriv," in Likkutei Torah and I remember that when I walked in the street with my friend, R' Avrohom Boruch Pewzner, we took turns with each other reviewing by heart a piece of that maamer."

R' YY Kalmanson, rosh yeshiva of Tomchei T'mimim in New Haven, relates:

"R' Nissan strongly emphasized learning maamarim by heart. He would call over a bachur at the end of the week or even on Shabbos morning and instruct him to review a maamer on Shabbos after Mincha. If the bachur protested that it was too late and he did not have time to prepare a maamer, R' Nissan would ask in surprise, 'Don't you have even one maamer memorized? What do you daven with?' He would say this in an unaffected manner and it was part of the chinuch he gave us. Every bachur knew that he had to have a maamer engraved in his mind - if only in case next Shabbos R' Nissan would call him over and ask him to *chazer* a maamer."

As with all his expectations of the talmidim, this demand was accepted by the bachurim primarily because they knew that R' Nissan himself knew by heart the maamarim that he learned. R' YY Wilschansky relates:

"When he was present in the *zal* as the *mashgiach* while we learned Chassidus, he would often sit and learn "Hemshech 5666" (at that time it was still on plain, typewritten pages). If you watched him you saw that he was reviewing the maamer by heart. Sometimes he would glance around at the bachurim, noticing who was learning and who needed a comment, and in the meantime he continued to murmur the words of



R' Nissan Nemenov (left) with R' Yisroel Noach Blinitzky

the maamer. We observed that he had mastered the entire maamer by heart.”

He also knew the “Shoresch Mitzvas HaT’filla” in *Derech Mitvosecha* by heart, as he himself admitted on a rare occasion. The mashpia, R’ YY Gurevitz, relates:

“R’ Nissan once told us that when he was mashgiach in Tomchei T’mimim in Russia, they would learn Chassidus Friday evening for about four hours. Between the extra tiredness that often assails a person on Friday night, the lateness of the hour and the difficulty of learning for four consecutive hours, it happened that a bachur fell asleep.

“As a consequence, R’ Nissan told him to chazer the entire “Shoresch Mitzvas HaT’filla” by heart. He told him to work on this only during the Friday night s’darim so that he would be constantly involved with reviewing the maamer and wouldn’t fall asleep. ‘Then I thought to myself,’ said R’ Nissan, ‘How can you give such a penalty to a bachur when you yourself haven’t mastered it? And so I learned the “Shoresch

Mitzvas HaT’filla” by heart.’”

The way it worked in Brunoy was that before the age of 12 the bachurim did not begin to learn Chassidus, not even Tanya. R’ YY Pewzner (son of R’ Hillel) recalled:

“I turned twelve in Kislev, but my class was not due to start learning Tanya until after Pesach. Together with two other classmates who had already turned twelve, we asked R’ Nissan to start teaching us Tanya so we could get a taste of it. R’ Nissan agreed under a few conditions, mainly that it be a secret. We accepted his conditions and one day he called us to his house for a Tanya shiur. We sat on one of the beds in the bedroom (they were army folding cots) and he sat on the other and we began to learn Tanya.

“I’ll never forget how he taught us chapter one of Tanya. He brought alive the topics spoken about in Tanya to such an extent that we left the shiur with the feeling that we had discovered a new world. With that shiur he definitely succeeded in causing us to completely lose a taste for gashmius. When he got to the part

at the beginning of the second page where it talks about bittul Torah, he cried so much that the three of us also burst into tears.”

He was a stickler for young bachurim knowing the first twelve chapters of Tanya by heart. R’ Yitzchok Goldberg, rosh yeshiva of Tomchei T’mimim in Migdal HaEmek, relates:

“The demand to study Tanya by heart was immutable for him. By your bar mitzva you had to have the first twelve chapters memorized. I remember that about two months before my bar mitzva I was still up to chapter ten or eleven and R’ Nissan told me, ‘As long as you haven’t mastered the twelve chapters, do not begin learning the bar mitzva maamer!’”

ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE A SERVANT OF G-D

He demanded of the talmidim absolute kabbalas ol in everything. One of the aphorisms he would repeat is an expression that appears in the sichos of the Rebbe Rayatz, “A Yid is a kabbalas ol’nik; a kabbalas ol’nik is a Yid.” He would repeat this line again and again at farbrengens until it penetrated his listeners’ hearts.

R’ YY Kalmanson related:

“R’ Dovid Deitsch a”h told me that he learned in Tomchei T’mimim in Nevel when R’ Nissan was the mashgiach there. R’ Nissan once noticed him sitting with one foot over the other and he remarked, ‘What prikas ol that is! How does a bachur sit with such breitzkait with one foot over the other?’ To R’ Nissan, if you constantly remember that you are a servant of Hashem, you can’t possibly sit in that relaxed manner. This stayed with R’ Dovid throughout the years.”

[To be continued be”H]