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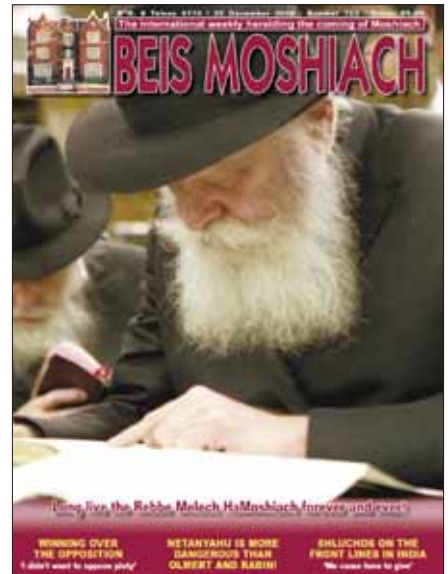
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INSPIRING CHANGE

Sichos In English

KINETIC

In his Siddur, the Alter Rebbe writes: [1]

"It is proper to say before prayer: 'I hereby accept upon myself the fulfillment of the positive commandment, [2] 'Love your fellowman as yourself'."

Showing love for one's fellowman prepares a person to intensify his relationship with G-d, the heart of our service of prayer.

For a genuine and unrestrained commitment to all people requires true selflessness, [3] and this is the approach which should characterize our relationship with G-d.

Why, however, is a verbal declaration required?

Why isn't the emphasis placed on contemplating the concept, rather than making a statement?

In resolution, it can be explained that on an essential level, oneness exists among our entire people.

"They are all complementary, and they share one Father. Because of this common root in the One G-d, all Israel are called 'brothers' in the full sense of the word." [3]

All too often, however, that oneness remains on the level of potential and is not manifest in a person's relations with his fellowmen.

By making a statement, a person activates this potential, and brings it into expression within the context of our material world. [4]

The importance of this statement exceeds by far its few measured words.

For the objective is that one deed

will lead to another in a self-reinforcing pattern that will motivate a person to actually do things in expression of his love for his fellowmen and stir his fellowmen to reciprocate in kind.

By making a statement of purpose, we open up a channel to express our inner feelings of love [5] with the intent that they will continue to flow, becoming manifest in productive activity on behalf of others.

BONDING POWER

The expression of a similar paradigm apply with regard to this week's Torah reading, Vayigash.

Vayigash means: "And he approached;" Yehudah approached Yosef. [6]

But Yehudah's approach was intended to establish more than physical closeness. Rashi explains [7] that Yehudah told Yosef: "May my words enter your ears," i.e., he desired to initiate communication between them.

And Yehudah's deed had tremendous repercussions. [8]

As the narrative continues, "Yosef could no longer restrain himself." [9]

After years of separation, the brothers embraced, kissed each other, and spoke freely. [10]

Yaakov's sons returned to him with the message that Yosef is alive and Yaakov descended to Egypt to join him, establishing oneness and unity between all Jews.

FROM INSIDE OUT

The spiral touched off by Yehudah's approaching Yosef had ramifications on a larger scale. [11]

The Zohar [12] understands their union as symbolic of the physical world drawing close to the spiritual world.

To explain:

A similar motif applies with regard to the world at large.

In essence, the world is at one with G-d.

This is the meaning of the phrase "G-d is one" in the Shema [13] - not merely that there is one G-d, but that all existence is at one with Him. [14]

Nevertheless, the oneness that pervades creation is not openly revealed.

On the contrary, the world appears to exist for itself, a collection of separate, discrete entities.

Expressing the inner oneness that exists between people serves as a catalyst to establish oneness in the world at large, allowing the material world to serve as a medium for the expression of spiritual truth.

This pattern was reflected in the conduct of Yaakov and his sons in Egypt.

Although settling in Egypt involved a descent into exile and Egypt was a morally depraved land, [15] Yaakov and his sons established a model of spiritually oriented existence. [16]

Pharaoh granted them the finest portion of the land of Egypt, [17] not withholding any resources from them, promising "the best of Egypt will be yours." [18]

Yaakov and his sons made maximum use of this opportunity.

Indeed, our Rabbis explain [19] that these were the best years of Yaakov's life.

Throughout his life, he endeavored to express spiritual values within the day-to-day realities of ordinary living.

And in Egypt, he was given the potential to bring this ideal to consummate fruition.

UNCOVERING IDENTITY

The relevance of the above concepts is not confined to periods when G-dliness is openly apparent.

Quite the contrary, the narrative begins in the ultimate of concealment.

Yehudah did not know that he was speaking to Yosef.

He thought he was addressing the Egyptian viceroy, and he had to plead for Binyamin's freedom after he had been discovered in a very compromising situation.

Despite the weakness of his position, Yehudah advanced in the direction of oneness, [20] and his approach led to the revelation that in truth the Egyptian ruler was Yosef.

Similarly, in the present days, although the Jews need the assistance of non-Jewish authorities for their security and well-being, they must realize that there is a subtle, inner dynamic at work.

It is not an Egyptian who charts our destiny.

"The hearts of kings and [their] officers are in the hands of G-d." [21]

G-d - and not the non-Jewish powers - controls the fate of our people as a whole and each individual in particular.

Our conduct and choice of priorities should be structured accordingly.

There is no need to accept the standards of the world at large.

Moreover, by emulating Yehudah's example and striving toward oneness and unity within the context of our present situation, we can initiate a sequence which will lead to the open expression of the G-dly nature of our existence.

EGYPT IS NOT THE END OF THE JOURNEY

In the midst of his journey to Egypt, Yaakov had a vision in which G-d reassured him, [22] "Do not fear to descend to Egypt," and promised "I will descend to Egypt with you and I will surely have you ascend."

Although Yaakov realized the full potential of what he could achieve in Egypt, he was reluctant to descend there.

For prosperity in exile - even prosperity that is used to create a model of spiritually oriented existence - is not the goal for a Jew's life.

A Jew's true life is in Eretz Yisrael, and Eretz Yisrael as it will exist in a perfect state in the Era of the Redemption.

This is the promise Yaakov received from G-d, that his descendants would be redeemed from Egypt and that they would live in Eretz Yisrael together with Mashiach. [23]

Why then did Yaakov descend to Egypt?

Because he appreciated that the Redemption would be brought about by the divine service of man.

The establishment of a spiritually oriented society amidst material prosperity provides man with a foretaste of the Redemption, and experiencing this foretaste prepares the world for the time when the promise of redemption will become fully manifest.

Yaakov's life in Egypt was dedicated to this purpose.

The theme of redemption is underscored by the Haftarah which speaks about the ultimate union [24] of Yosef and Yehudah: [25] "I will take the children of Israel from among the nations... and bring them to their own land. I will make the one nation in the land.... No longer will they be two nations, no longer divided into two kingdoms."

And it promises [26] "And my servant David will be their prince forever," for it is in the Era of the Redemption that Yehudah's selfless thrust towards unity will receive the prominence it justly deserves. May this take place in the immediate future.

*Adapted from Sefer HaSichos 5750, p. 212ff.
Sefer HaSichos 5751, p. 206ff*

Notes:

1. Siddur Tehillas HaShem, p. 12. This practice has its source in the teachings of the AriZal (Shaar

HaKavanos). Nevertheless, attention is drawn to the Alter Rebbe's inclusion of it in his Siddur because this indicates its universal relevance, that it is applicable for everyone who opens a Siddur to pray. 2. Leviticus 19:18.

3. See Tanya, ch. 32.

4. See Sanhedrin 65a which states that speech is considered a deed. As Tanya (op. cit.) explains from the perspective of the soul, oneness prevails among the entire Jewish people. Separation comes as a result of the people's bodies. As such, it is deed - which relates more closely to the material plane than thought - that is necessary to erase it.

5. This is relevant every day, for every day, we should strive to advance to a higher level and open up new vistas in our love and care for our fellowmen.

6. Genesis 44:18.

7. Rashi's commentary to the above verse.

8. This concept explains why Vayigash is the name of this Torah reading. For the establishment of unity - within Yaakov's family and in the world at large - is the fundamental theme which characterizes all the events mentioned in the Torah reading.

9. Genesis 45:1.

10. Ibid.: 15.

11. In this light, we can understand the renowned adage of the Alter Rebbe (Igros Kodesh of the Previous Rebbe, Vol. III, p. 413ff):

A chassidic farbrengen can generate greater blessings than the Angel Michael. For the positive influence triggered by the brotherly gathering of people at a farbrengen has manifold ramifications.

12. Vol. I, p. 205b.

13. Deuteronomy 4:4.

14. See Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 61:6 and commentaries.

15. See Rashi's commentary to Leviticus 18:3.

16. The primacy of spiritual values in Yaakov's conception of life in Egypt is reflected in his "sending Yehudah to show the way" (Genesis 46:28), "to open a yeshivah" (Rashi).

17. Genesis 47:11 and commentaries.

18. Genesis 45:20.

19. Baal HaTurim, commenting on the beginning of Parshas Vayechi. See HaYom Yom, entry for the 18th of Teves.

20. Also significant is the inner meaning of the phrase Vayigash eilav Yehudah, that "Yehudah" - every individual Jew - "approaches him," draws close to G-d through prayer. See Sefer HaMaamarim 5629, p. 13. It is the relationship with G-d established through prayer that brings success to all one's different activities.

21. Midrash Mishlei, commenting on Proverbs 21:1.

22. Genesis 46:3-4.

23. Note Torah Or (beginning of Parshas Shmos) which interprets the repetition in G-d's promise vkg od lkgt as reflecting two states of ascent: a) the redemption from Egypt, and the ultimate Redemption to be led by Mashiach.

24. There is also a direct connection between the theme of Redemption and the concept of unity emphasized by Vayigash.

For the exile came about because of the sin of unwarranted hatred (Yoma 9b, Gittin 55b). Enhancing communication and unity will erase the cause for the exile, and then the exile itself will also cease. See Timeless Patterns In Time (Kehot, N.Y., 5753), Vol. I, p. 137ff.

25. Ezekiel 37:21-22.

26. Ibid.:25.

SHLUCHOS ON THE FRONT LINES IN INDIA

By C. Yankelowitz

A year after the massacre in Bombay, I spoke with the “women of valor,” the shluchos to the Far East, about their shlichus, especially in light of recent threats. I spoke with Zelda Goldstein of Pushkar, Rivka Hila Winderbaum of Kasol and Libby Gromach of Hampi.

Rosh Chodesh Kislev; Beis Chabad; India; Shluchim of the Rebbe: The ideal day in the ideal place and ideal people – the best in world, time, and soul conjoined. Who could have dreamt what would happen on the eve of this holy day, in this holy place, to Chabad Chassidim – shluchim of the Rebbe. We simply cannot understand it.

In the course of my work in the electronic media and as someone who speaks foreign languages, I keep abreast of the news and

extract the items that are relevant to the frum world in general and Chabad Chassidim in particular. So that Wednesday night, when I found out about an attack in Bombay, I told my superiors about it so they could contact the shliach and hear the Lubavitch angle, to ascertain that he and his family were safe, to hear about the miracles, and to chalk it up to yet another miracle that happened thanks to shlichus.

I found the phone number. The



The Chabad House of Pushkar under heavy security

phone at the Chabad house rang but Gabi did not answer. They called his cell phone with no luck. We arrived at a completely erroneous conclusion that all was well and we did not have to worry. We were convinced that it was life as usual at the Chabad house.

The following hours were the hardest and longest I ever experienced. After receiving the awful news we had to light candles and bring in the Shabbos with simcha. We recalled the Rebbe's answer after other tragedies and derived strength from them. What happened changed us all and spurred us on to do even more to bring Moshiach.

We returned to our usual routine. Every so often we heard about a baby that was born that was named Gavriel Noach or Rivka. Occasionally we heard about a new mosad named for them and everybody was happy to hear about the progress of little Moishe Holtzberg, the survivor of the carnage.



Far away, among billions of people, live a handful of Lubavitcher families, shluchim of the Rebbe. They were friends of the Holtzbergs, fellow shluchim in India.

They did not leave the battlefield after the bloodbath. On the contrary, they expanded their activities and are more ready for the hisgalus of the Rebbe than ever before. In that impossible country called India, their challenges are real, especially in light of the warnings about possible attacks on Chabad houses. Once upon a time we may have dismissed the warnings as nonsense but now we know how real the danger is.

With the first yahrtzait of the shluchim and the other four Jews who were in the Chabad house, I spoke with some of the shluchos to India and heard about an extraordinary shlichus that continues to flourish.

India is divided into two parts,

north and south. The tourist season in the north ends with the cold period that sets in after Simchas Torah. The shluchim target Israeli tourists who visit the country, so at this time, the shluchim leave to regroup and to fundraise for the following season, which begins before Pesach. In the center and the south of the country, the tourist season is during the relatively pleasant winter months. Some of the Chabad houses are open all year, and now they are under tight security.

There is a special feeling of achdus among the shluchim and especially the shluchos. The distances between them are immense – 25-40 hours by train between one place and the next. And so, aside from their annual get-together, they meet once every month or two online with Skype. For two to three hours they converse and give chizuk to one another, discussing common interests, challenges and experiences. The transcript is then

sent to each of them afterwards so they can read it and absorb what was said.

After briefly getting to know the shluchos, I put forth my questions. Each responded in her own individual style. One answered questions in detail; another told an amazing personal story; the third sent her responses via the keyboard.

INDIA'S “GEULA’DIK” AID

I began with shlucha Zelda Goldstein, who is in Pushkar.

We know that the Chabad houses in India have become security priorities to the government. What do you make of this?

We are clearly living in a time where we can see signs of the Geula. We have to thank the Indians who are doing Hashem’s will. The first Shabbos that they set up security here was Shabbos B’Reishis, and in that week’s D’var Malchus the Rebbe speaks about the nations of the world helping the Jews. Hashem wants to bestow His kindness on the Jews and He chooses to do so through the nations and therefore, we ought to thank them!

It really makes no sense. The Indians came to us, of their own initiative, and took full responsibility for providing us security. By the same token, they could simply have asked us to leave in order to save themselves the bother and expense. Or worse, they could just ignore and abandon us. That’s what many nations did when the Jews in their midst were in danger of pogroms. So the way the Indians are handling it is an expression of the Geula state already operating in the world.

What has changed?

Shlichus in India is always changing. A lack of stability is something that characterizes life

Hashem wants to bestow His kindness on the Jews and He chooses to do so through the nations and therefore, we ought to thank them!... It really makes no sense. The Indians came to us, of their own initiative, and took full responsibility for providing us security.

here on shlichus, and this is what makes it so hard. Our family underwent many upheavals in the past month and a half since we came here to begin the seasonal activities. On the day we arrived, policemen, commanders, and officials of varying ranks came to see us in order to check out the Chabad house and set up security.

It is said that all beginnings are hard and in India, each year is a new beginning and therefore the hardships this time around are double because we got caught up in the chaos as soon as we came.

A new beginning means getting used to things, acclimating, making connections with new tourists, building up shiurim, and providing a new routine for the children. Even simple everyday life here is never consistent. Today the worker ran away, tomorrow there are hours when the electricity won't work, yesterday the water was shut. In the middle of the night there was a motorcycle accident and we had to run to the hospital. Meanwhile, you have to start living in the house after months of not being there, go and milk cows and make cheese, set new boundaries for the children and mainly do the shlichus for which we came.

What does your shlichus consist of?

The Chabad house is a home. A place where there is kosher food, where you can drink a coffee, relax

on the couch, and feel warm and homey. Sometimes the house is more full and sometimes less. The ongoing work includes shiurim in Chassidus, supper every night, mivtza t'fillin every day, and mivtza Neshek on Fridays. In the upcoming tourist cycle we will offer chavrusos to learn about Judaism and kosher food during the day.

Last year, after the tragedy in Bombay, we wanted to intensify our outreach so we founded a Midrasha for women, which we called "Beis Rivka" for Rivka Holtzberg a"h. I remember how I shuddered that last Friday of the Shiva. A few minutes before Shabbos began I rushed to print a flyer about the new Midrasha because I wanted it to begin during the Shiva. I put the flyer into a volume of Igros Kodesh and in my heart I asked the Rebbe to give us a clear answer that would give us a good feeling.

I opened the volume and the Rebbe's letter was addressed to "the committee to establish a youth village 'Beis Rivka' for girls." The Rebbe gave his blessing and urged the opening of the mosad! Since then, boruch Hashem, the Midrasha has been active. Rivky is surely making noise Up There about it ... Many girls have learned in the Midrasha, some of whom have become Chassidos of the Rebbe.

Now we are re-opening the Midrasha for the second year and hope that this is the last time in

galus.

How are your children handling the situation?

At first, the children were very interested in the sandbags and they carefully checked out all the weapons and ammunition. Even our little one, Moshiach, took some pieces of Lego and used them as a gun. I took the interest in weapons as an opportunity to remind the children about a sicha that we learned on Sukkos where the Rebbe describes the unique weapons of a Jewish child. The lulav is the rifle, the grenade is the esrog, the arava and hadasim are swords. We spoke about Jewish weapons being different than the weapons of everyone else, and how it has the amazing ability to protect us while not entailing any bloodshed.

A few days ago, a girl from Israel came here. She's an assistant teacher. She was afraid to leave here and she wrote to the Rebbe about what to do. The letter she opened to said that in the time of Purim, there was a decree on the Jewish people and what did Mordechai do? He gathered the children and prayed and learned with them. It was this z'chus of the children that saved the Jewish people, not just spiritually but physically. I also asked for a bracha from the Rebbe last Shabbos and the Rebbe wrote the same thing, that it is the Jewish children who have the power to bring salvation to the Jewish people.

What is your relationship like with the people around you?

The big advantage with the Indians over other nationalities is that for many years they were cut off from the West and did not live near a concentration of Jews, so most of them have never heard of Jews or about anti-Semitism. Most of them are patient, decent people who seek quiet.

The senior commander of the area came here to talk to my

husband about security. He came just as my husband was in the middle of Shma. I felt uncomfortable that he would have to wait and I said it would be at least 15-20 minutes until my husband finished praying. The commander went out of his way to make me feel comfortable and to let me know that he was utterly respectful of my husband's prayer and he would wait as long as necessary.

Are you getting the usual number of visitors or are people avoiding the Chabad house?

At first, many tourists were asked by their worried parents in Israel not to visit Chabad houses. Some people were scared off by the heavy security. But as time went on the Chabad house is running as usual.

Who is responsible for your security?

The most senior people in India's security forces are dealing with it. A commando unit came here, the best in the Registan region, in order to check out the area and to establish security guidelines. The Indian landlord who rents us the building said that our Chabad house is getting the same security as the governor of Registan (which is the size of Japan).

Of course we know that Hashem is the one who protects us and like I said, He is helping us through the Indian government. The police wanted to place a security unit in one of our rooms but we refused since we didn't want to have a more stressful feeling than there already is. Instead, the Indian police requisitioned the building opposite the Chabad house which, not coincidentally, is a place of avoda zara. In other words, Hashem is sending His kindness and protection in a way that klipa serves holiness. Is that not Geula?



Indian security men in the Chabad House in Pushkar

Even simple everyday life here is never consistent. Today the worker ran away, tomorrow there are hours when the electricity won't work, yesterday the water was shut.

A SHLUCHA WHO IS A PRODUCT OF INDIA

Rivka Hila Winderbaum of Kasol has an amazing personal story which she shared with us:

I come from an irreligious home. It wasn't even traditional. But I grew up with faith in G-d that I got from my mother. She taught me to speak to G-d and to turn to Him for everything and He protected me wherever I went.

Ten years ago I had finished my army duty and I did what everybody does – travel the world. Among your many destinations, of course you don't miss India. I was there for three months and the amazing thing is that even though I wasn't religious, I felt an aversion to everything I saw. I realized that this is not my place. It was in that low, impure place that I felt inspired, that I began to notice the difference

between Jews and non-Jews. The avoda zara all around, the courses held in the temples, the holidays with their atrocious ceremonies – they turned me off and I continued to search for spiritual meaning.

A guy that I knew visited the Chabad house of Shimi Goldstein and he sent me an email recommending that I visit Pushkar and take the course on Kabbala and Chassidus. I went and enjoyed it, but it did not lead me to make any practical changes. When this fellow returned to Israel he went to learn in the Chabad yeshiva in Ramat Aviv, and he convinced me to register at Machon Alte.

From my very first week at the Machon, I felt at home. I dressed properly straightaway and just drank it all in. I was there for a year and a half and learned very seriously.

One of the goals of the Machon,

On a regular Shabbos we host up to 200 guests and on holidays, 500. All this is for free, with the tourists accepting the meals as a matter of course. After all, that's why we came, to give.

after you've learned sufficiently, is to help you settle down. I reached the stage where I was ready to get married and I wondered whether that bachur, who had become a Chabad Chassid, might be my match. I wrote to the Rebbe and the answer I opened to said:

Regarding the bachur you know for several years face to face and you don't know about whether to make a shidduch with him, stop any connection with him for a period of time and Hashem will let you know whether he is your intended zivug. Blessings for good news.

I dropped the idea, as per the Rebbe's instructions, and after "a period of time" the suggestion came up again by my mashpia, and that is how I came to meet Danny Winderbaum. We spoke about shlichus and thought of a number of ideas, from nearby Sheinken to Laos in the Far East. We decided to get married. We wrote to the Rebbe and the answer was "mazal tov, mazal tov."

During our first year of marriage we went to the festivals together with the Kadelberg family. We lived in Kiryat Malachi and we cooked for 500 people in our homes. It was a shlichus that was something like India and a taste of our future shlichus.

Then my husband found a place in India without a Chabad house, the city Kasol in the Pravati valley. India?! I had felt so out of place and disgusted in India, but the shlichus began taking shape and I knew it was meant to be. Before

leaving for Kasol my husband took care of donations and food and we left for the old airport in Lud with two T'mimim, a Torah scroll, and 400 kilograms of food for us and the mekuravim for the next half a year.

My parents, who helped us, escorted us to the airport, but my father did not have the courage to be with us at the check-in when 400 kilograms went on the scale. The guy standing in front of us on line paid \$200 for overweight luggage. It was our turn and we needed a big miracle, the first in our life on shlichus. My mother was very nervous but the Rebbe helped us and the clerk let us go with all our stuff without saying a thing.

Each city and area of India has unique attractions which draw in the tourists. The tourists can be classified accordingly: intellectuals go to Dramsala, people go to Rishikesh for the ashrams, Pushkar for the shopping and to Kasol in order to sample the produce which grows freely in the Pravati valley. Welcome to Kasol! We found a guest house, rented it, and put up a picture of the Rebbe and a flag.

In our first year I was so busy that I didn't have a chance to feel that it was hard. Tourists in the area needed kosher food, a Shabbos atmosphere, support... There are about 600 Israelis in the area at any given time during the season.

Every year, from Pesach until after Simchas Torah we are in Kasol, and the other half a year we prepare for the next season, getting donations and organizing our food

supply. One half of the year I work, host, teach, supervise the kosher restaurant and mikva and live in a very primitive place. Nevertheless, we are considered a pampered Chabad house because we have another couple there, R' Yoel Caplan and his wife Shternie. He shechts chickens. We also have milk, two liters a day. On a regular Shabbos we host up to 200 guests and on holidays, 500. All this is for free, with the tourists accepting the meals as a matter of course. After all, that's why we came, to give.

This year it was extremely hard. Every year, during the Three Weeks, something happens with a tourist. This year we had a guy named Amichai Steinmetz who brought shoes for us. Then he disappeared and the search team, including his father, stayed with us. It was a terrible feeling. There was also a lot of work to do, taking care of them all and turning our home into an emergency rescue camp. We still have not heard any good news and we pray for a miracle, that he be found alive and well.

Along with the sad stories we experience open miracles. One of them was publicized in the news when Nurit Fuchs fell 180 meters and was miraculously saved. This year she came back to the Chabad house in order to make a Seudas Hodaa.

I am busy with endless work for half a year and the other half a year I live in Nachalat Har Chabad, a wonderful Chassidishe place, surrounded by loving family and friends and everything spiritually and materially good. It's like a *kaf ha'kela* (slingshot) when I am thrown from one reality to its polar opposite. It is always hard for me to return to Kasol. The comforts of Israel beckon. Yet the Rebbe writes to me to return to shlichus and the work is really amazing. When I am in Kasol I throw myself into the work devotedly and boruch

Hashem, we see results. I give classes to women and run a Midrashiya for women and girls. We have some girls learning in Machon Alte.

What changed me completely, as a result of which we as a couple were personally blessed, was – surprisingly – the massacre in Bombay. I felt that it happened to me personally, that Rivky and I were one. I suddenly realized that this world doesn't matter at all. Everything I had learned in Chassidus became clear to me. When gashmius plays no role, my personal desires become trivial. There is one important, significant thing in the world and that is to fulfill the Rebbe's ratzon as a simple soldier. We have an enormous mission to bring the Geula; how can I think about myself?

Another change for the better occurred after the attack and my decision to view my shlichus with a *k'vius b'nefesh*. We are married six years and like every other couple, we waited anxiously for children. We did all the Rebbe's horaos and did our hishtadlus.

After the attack I said to Hashem, "If you want me to have children, there will be children; and if not, not." It was only after I accepted that my job is to be part of the force to bring the Geula and that this is the whole point and I was liberated of anything else, that we got the good news. In addition, we saw outstanding success in our work.

Tishrei concludes the half year of shlichus and most of the tourists leave by Rosh HaShana. This year, 400 people come to the t'fillos and meals, which is a huge number for the end of the season. There were serious warnings but while involved with all the work you don't feel afraid. The security ministry sent a man to provide instructions, along with a security detail. We saw some film clips of what happened in



Children of the shluchim in India

There were serious warnings but while involved with all the work you don't feel afraid. On Rosh HaShana we had twenty-two Indian security men, Israelis from elite units who volunteered, and security from Israel.

Bombay and then I got scared. Parents of tourists exerted pressure, with lots of emails going back and forth. On Rosh HaShana we had twenty-two Indian security men, Israelis from elite units who volunteered, and security from Israel. We put up an enormous Indian tent and were afraid that people wouldn't come because of the warnings, but it was very successful.

On Simchas Torah we were at headquarters in 770 to get renewed kochos from the Rebbe to do the job: to prepare the world to greet Moshiach.

FROM SHLICHUS TO SHLICHUS

Libby Gromach, a new shlucha on the Indian scene, said:

We left on shlichus half a year after we got married, last Adar, with the Bombay tragedy fresh in our minds. There was a lot of pressure from our families and friends (Lubavitchers too) not to go.

We have been in India for the past seven months and we recently attended the Kinus HaShluchim in Crown Heights to get kochos from the meshaleiach. We arrived in Hampi in southern India to open a new Chabad house! In light of the warnings, many people ask us – are you still planning on going? From our perspective there is nothing to discuss. The Rebbe wrote that a Chabad house must open at the earliest opportunity. He is the boss.

WINNING OVER THE OPPOSITION

By Rabbi Zvi Homnick

LEARNING FROM THE OPPOSITION

One of the most difficult issues that I have ever grappled with is how to distinguish the truth when confronting something over which many great men, certainly greater than myself, disagree so passionately. Growing up, I tended to go along with the prevailing attitudes, beliefs and even antipathy that I absorbed from my non/anti-Chassidic elitist environment, as well as developing my own ideas and insights in support of such an attitude. However, even at an early age, I found disquieting the idea that those I saw myself as opposed to were called Chassidim, meaning “pious ones,” and those in opposition were called Misnagdim, meaning “opponents.” I, for one, certainly did not wish to identify as an opponent of piety.

In the second year after I married, I had a conversation with an older fellow whose intellect and incisive insight I admired, on this very topic. This person was someone who enjoyed learning Chassidus, and in his words, “I can’t imagine any greater pleasure

in this world,” and yet was very firm in his beliefs that the approach and philosophy of Chabad Chassidus was “not for us” and should even be vigorously opposed. (Today, he is a Mashgiach in a major Lithuanian style American yeshiva). As to the names Chassidim and Misnagdim, he argued that most of the Chassidic world had stopped using the term Misnagdim and instead referred to non-Chassidim as “Litvaks,” often acknowledging the positive qualities of that world and its leaders. Only Lubavitchers still use the nomenclature of a bygone era because “they have a persecution complex.” They draw personal validation from and feed off of opposition, real or imagined, and some are even willing to do outrageous things to fan the flames of that opposition.

Fortuitously, his seemingly cogent and reasoned arguments actually helped me solidify my then burgeoning conviction that I needed to invest more of my time and energy into the study of Chassidus, not simply as a means of broadening my spiritual horizons, but because that is where I could find the absolute truth.

Although that would seem to lend whole new meaning to the term counter-intuitive, it was just what I needed to hear, at a time when I was at a crossroads in my life. Allow me to explain:

There was a particular teaching of the Baal Shem Tov that I had encountered (in non-Chabad sources) that really resonated with me, and ultimately came to serve as a guiding light in navigating many spiritual quandaries. The Baal Shem Tov addressed the universal question of how to discern what is true from what is false, and particularly when it comes to a Tzaddik, a great spiritual leader whose righteousness is called into question by those who oppose him, how to know if he is actually a righteous person or not. Drawing upon the teachings of the Sages regarding the many criticisms that the people of his generation directed at Moshe Rabbeinu, he concludes that whereas truth is consistent throughout, when falsehood attacks truth it will use arguments that are exaggerated, self-contradictory, or even outright lies.

That is why we find that Moshe was criticized for practicing celibacy following the revelation at Sinai and “they suspected him of adultery (Sanhedrin 110a),” which illustrates both the contradictory nature of the attacks as well as the enormity of the lie used to besmirch his piety. “Moshe is true and his Torah is true, and we are liars.” That is the proclamation that Korach and his cohorts are condemned to repeat throughout time for the crime of opposing Moshe and claiming that his judgment was colored by self interest when in fact, as the most humble man who ever walked upon the earth, that would be antithetical to his very being. Spiritually, explains the Baal Shem

Tov, it is specifically from those who attack and oppose the truth that we can learn to identify the truth.

Although engaging in activities that arouse the ire and fuel the animus of those who oppose Chassidus and Chassidim is highly inappropriate, as the Alter Rebbe writes that “they are to subdue their spirit and heart before every man according to the attribute of ‘truth unto Yaakov,’” the existence of the opposition serves an important purpose in proclaiming that “Moshe is true and his Torah is true.”

After years of hearing (and stupidly parroting) conflicting and often outrageous claims aimed at Chassidim and Chassidus in general, and Chabad and the Lubavitcher Rebbe in particular, I was forced to confront the fact that I had to choose not merely between being a “Litvak” or a “Chassid,” but between being someone who would embrace the truth wherever it is to be found or someone who would just go along with the crowd.

FEEDING OFF THE OPPOSITION

The prophet Yechezkel describes the events that transpired on the tenth day of the month of Teves, at which time Nevuchadnetzar, King of Bavel (ancient Babylon) laid siege to the holy city of Yerushalayim. In describing this he says (24:2), “*Samach melech Bavel al Yerushalayim.*” The Rebbe points out that the word “samach” is an uncommon expression to describe the act of laying siege, and is particularly odd in that it generally is used in a positive sense to mean to fortify or provide support. The use of a word with positive connotations in this context is even more surprising considering that

I found disquieting the idea that those I saw myself as opposed to were called Chassidim, meaning “pious ones,” and those in opposition were called Misnagdim, meaning “opponents.” I, for one, certainly did not wish to identify as an opponent of piety.

the Talmud rules that if 10 Teves were to fall on a Shabbos, unlike all other fast days including Tisha B’Av, we would be required to fast. (According to our prearranged calendar it never falls on a Shabbos, as opposed to when they still sanctified the new month based on visual sightings of the new moon). The Avudraham (Laws of Fast Days, cited in Beis Yosef OC:503) explains that this severity is due to the fact that the events of this day represent the beginning of the process of destruction of the First Temple and all the subsequent exiles and persecutions, as well as the destruction of the Second Temple. What could possibly be positive about that?

The Chassidic movement in general and the Chabad movement in particular were born and forged in the smelting pot of intense opposition. The Alter Rebbe, founder of Chabad, was thrown into jail and faced a possible death sentence for alleged acts of treason. Ultimately, he was vindicated and set free on the 19th of Kislev. In a letter describing these events he writes, “And when I was reading in T’hillim (Psalms) the verse, ‘He redeemed my soul in peace,’ I went out in peace...” In many maamarim on this verse, starting with the Mittlerer Rebbe (Shaarei T’shuva, Shaar HaT’filla), the Rebbeim addressed

the obvious question that arises when reading this verse. How can Dovid HaMelech say that “He redeemed my soul in peace,” and then go on to say that he was redeemed “from those who did battle against me?” If he was forced to go to war, then even if he was victorious and was “redeemed” it could hardly be described as “in peace.”

The explanation that is given is that all forms of opposition to holiness exist only to fortify and strengthen the forces of holiness. When a person is confronted with a challenge, it forces him to dig deeper within himself to draw on deeper reserves of strength to overcome the obstacle or enemy. Spiritually, it provides the stimulus to arouse loftier and more powerful levels of the soul capable of overwhelming and obliterating any and all opposition, whether internal or external. When a person overcomes a spiritual enemy through the inner faculties of the soul (*nefesh, ruach, and neshama*), such as in the normal everyday struggle that a person has with his own animal soul or Evil Inclination during prayer and throughout the day, it is not really a redemption since he will have to fight all over again the next day. It may be a victory of war, but it certainly can’t be described as “redeemed in peace.”

However, when a person

The true purpose of the siege which began on 10 Teves, which foreshadowed all the calamities that followed, was and is to “fortify” and “support” the Jews in fulfilling their divine mission.

encounters a greater test which forces him to dig deeper and he arouses the unlimited power of *ratzon* (will) within his soul (the level of *chaya*), then the “enemy” is completely overwhelmed to the point that he can no longer put up a fight, and is subservient to the will of the soul. This clearly qualifies as “redeemed,” but can’t truly be described as being “in peace,” since the opposition, though completely neutralized, has only been subdued in the face of an overwhelming force. If that force were to be removed the enemy would be back looking for a fight.

The ultimate spiritual redemption “in peace” is when in the face of a life and death challenge, the fifth and highest level of the soul that is “completely one with G-d” (the level of *yechida*) comes to the fore. At that level of holiness, no opposing force can even exist. There is complete redemption and total peace. Although Chassidus explains how each individual can attain these levels through his own efforts in prayer, only the perfect Tzaddik can experience this state on a consistent basis. That is, until the coming of Moshiach, when “I will remove the spirit of impurity from the earth.” Moshiach, who is the general *yechida* of the entire Jewish People, will reveal the *yechida* within each and every Jew, and thereby elevate the entire world to that level of oneness with G-d and evil will cease to exist.

The primary function of the

Holy Temple was to be a source of Divine light with which the Jews could illuminate the entire world. And yet, even while the two temples stood, the Jews continued to engage in sinful or divisive behavior, in opposition to the Divine Oneness. The only purpose for the destruction and the exile of the Jews is so that they would be forced to reveal progressively deeper and higher soul powers to confront ever more difficult challenges, which will ultimately bring them and the world to a state of being “redeemed” and “in peace.” Thus, the true purpose of the siege which began on 10 Teves, which foreshadowed all the calamities that followed, was and is to “fortify” and “support” the Jews in fulfilling their divine mission.

A key step in this process is the revelation of Chassidus, the deepest secrets of the Torah that are described as the *yechida* within Torah, the part of Torah that is one with G-d in a revealed way, through the Nasi of each generation who is the *yechida* of the entirety of the Jewish People. This in turn empowers each individual to reveal his own *yechida*, and ultimately bring the world to a state of true peace, when the knowledge of G-d will cover the earth as water covers the sea.

All of this is fueled by the opposition of “those who did battle against me.” At the very beginning of the process of destruction, the prophet emphasizes that the opposition which manifested as a

siege is meant to fortify and support us in the fulfillment of our mission in exile, and that the destruction is actually the impetus for a greater rebuilding. Similarly, the opposition to Chassidus is meant to enable us to reach deep down inside and reveal the highest levels of the soul.

“And when I was reading in T’hilim the verse, ‘He redeemed my soul in peace,’ I went out in peace...”

KISS THE OPPOSITION GOODBYE

Although opposition to holiness exists only to reveal greater levels of holiness, it manifests externally in a negative way. However, the Rebbe explains (*sicha* VaYechi/10 Teves, 5751) that as we get closer to the Ultimate Redemption, when we will experience true peace without any opposition, that after all the suffering and purification that we have endured, the positive becomes more revealed and the external negativity fades. In fact, over the next year or so (5751/5752) following that talk, the Rebbe went on to say on numerous occasions and in numerous ways, that the nations of the world, as well as the physicality of the world, have already been “refined,” and as such can pose no real opposition. Even if on the surface there appears to be any opposition from those quarters, by standing firm and giving it no weight the opposition will not only dissipate but will turn around to actually assist the forces of holiness. The same holds true for any internal opposition from the body and animal soul (see at length *sicha* VaYigash 5752).

We are now at the point when we are no longer supposed to be struggling with the last superficial remnants of opposition, even for the purpose of deriving the

benefits that come from this struggle, but negating it completely. This is accomplished from the top down by overwhelming it completely, or from the bottom up by actually working with the opposition to win it over, as in the words of Mishlei, "When Hashem favors the ways of a man, even his enemies will make peace with him." The first example of this is alluded to in the verse, "He redeemed my soul in peace," as the Sages say (Yerushalmi Sota 1:8) that those fighting against Dovid on the side of Avshalom prayed that Dovid be victorious.

The ability to do this is not only due to the era we live in and its immediate proximity to the time when evil and suffering will be removed from the world. The Rebbe explains (sicha Tazria-

Metzora 5751) that the power to remove any and all obstacles and to ultimately reveal that everything exists only to serve holiness comes from Moshiach himself in his role as king. As the Sages say regarding a king, that if he proclaims that he will uproot a mountain, he will not back down until he has done so. This symbolizes the power of the king to uproot any and all opposition. The ability to transform the opposition comes from the fact that, as Chassidus explains, the very life and existence of the kingdom and all his subjects are dependent on the king, so there can be no real "opponent" to something or someone that his whole existence depends on.

"And similarly, as pertains to the Geula (Redemption) - the idea of Malchus/kingship (Melech

HaMoshiach) emphasizes the truth of the matter, that the world (Galus/exile) can't be in opposition to the Geula, since the entire existence of the world depends on the matter of Geula. As it says in the Gemara (Talmud, Sanhedrin 98:2), 'the world was not created except for Moshiach.' Therefore, the 'opposition' of the world (Galus) to the Geula is nothing more than an external matter, and its negation is through revealing the true essence of the world - Malchus."

May we all succeed in transforming our own inner opposition and any external opposition, real or imagined, by revealing the true purpose of all existence: the True and Complete Redemption, NOW!



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CHASSIDISHE CHINUCH IN SOVIET RUSSIA

Prepared for publication by Avrohom Rainitz

*The war on Jewish chinuch was waged on two fronts: “turn away from evil” and “do good.” The former was accomplished by avoiding, where possible, registering children in communist schools or, when this was not an option, fighting so that they did not go on Shabbos and Yom Tov. The latter front, of course, meant providing them with a proper chinuch. * The following installment is about the war on both these fronts as related by Rabbi Hillel Zaltzman. * Part 2*

CHINUCH FOR A PROPER T’FILLA

As I mentioned earlier, even before they had to deal with communist schools, my parents put in great efforts, at great personal danger, to give us a traditional, Chassidishe chinuch, to teach us Torah and to train us in

the way of Torah and mitzvos.

My first melamed, whom I learned with in 5704/1944, was R’ Zushe Paz (who was known by all as R’ Zushe der shamash). He was a short man with a long beard and he was tough. He didn’t use a strap to hit us, as melamdim of the previous generation would do, but he would punish students with his

belt and the students were deathly afraid of him.

I heard that R’ Zushe did his work for the sake of Heaven and did not even take remuneration. Furthermore, in those days of famine he would prepare bread and butter for the boys every morning. Of course, there wasn’t much; you could barely see the little bit of butter in the crannies of the bread.

I remember that once, my sister Sarah took me to school and since I had to go to the doctor afterwards she sat next to me on the bench until the time for my appointment. I was five years old and we were learning alef-beis and the nekudos. R’ Zushe asked me how to pronounce the letter lamed with the segol vowel. Although I knew the answer, I was afraid to say it aloud in case I was mistaken. My sister wanted to whisper the answer to me because she heard that he hit the boys if they didn’t know something, but she was afraid lest R’ Zushe notice her whispering and hit her. That’s how afraid we were. I heard that one time a child was sick with a case of nerves and R’ Zushe went to visit him. When the child was told that R’ Zushe had come to visit him, his whole body trembled and they did not allow R’ Zushe to approach him.

Although he was so strict he was a good teacher. He taught his students to daven with a tune, and with every letter getting its particular emphasis. Years later, after I led the davening one day, R’ Chaim Zalman Kozliner came over and said, “From the way you read the words, I can tell that you must have learned to read and daven by R’ Zushe der shamash.”

For a few months I learned by a Litvishe Jew (whose name I forget) who taught us the parsha with Targum Unkelus every Erev Shabbos. I learned by R’ Berel Gurevich for a few months and for



The author of this series near the gate of the Mishulovin house. In the cellar they learned with R' Bentcha Maraz from left to right: R' Berel Zaltzman, R' Yisroel Greenberg, R' Hillel Zaltzman and a local Jew.

nearly a year I learned by R' Avrohom Yosef Enchatin, a talmid and secretary of the Chafetz Chaim. Those were relatively short periods but with my childhood sense of time they seemed like a long while.

WHEN THE ELDER CHASSIDIM PLAYED SOCCER

The years between 1946 and 1949 were the best years that I remember of my childhood. I learned with a group of friends: Michoel Mishulovin, Yaakov Lerner, Mottel Goldschmidt, Binyamin Malachovsky and others, by the melamed R' Benzion Maroz (known as Bentcha Maroz). When we meet today and talk about those old bittersweet days, we acknowledge that the fact that we remained frum Jews is, to a great extent, to his credit.

R' Bentcha, more than being a melamed, was a mechanech. He had learned in Lubavitch and he tried with all his might to instill us with a Chassidishe chayus and he educated us to mesirus nefesh. He considered himself to be a pedagogue and in addition to our

He once heard that a Bucharian boy tried to commit suicide because he wasn't accepted into university. R' Bentcha sighed, "Ah, if my life was so cheap to me I would found chadarim and yeshivos! The only reason why I don't do it is because I fear for my life."

younger group he also taught another group of older boys.

We learned in an apartment that was rented specifically for our classes, in an enclosed courtyard where only the Mishulovin family lived. It was a relatively secure place to have an underground yeshiva. R' Bentcha loved R' Dovid Mishulovin and his younger brother Eli (I will write about their role in Chassidic Samarkand in another chapter). He had pet names for them and he greatly enjoyed talking to them.

When he finished teaching us and he had us reviewing the new material, he would talk to them with obvious enjoyment. He spoke to them at length about various

topics and we children knew that when he was talking to them we would have plenty of time to review our learning.

His chinuch approach was to avoid hitting his students. If someone did something wrong, he put him in the corner. On rare occasions, when a child did something seriously wrong, he would punish him severely and even take our hand and hit it on the table.

R' Bentcha had us review the Gemara and know it well. One time, when he heard how we were reviewing the Gemara, he stopped us and said, "You don't understand p'shat!"

We reviewed it again but he

SKATING IN LINE

As I wrote in the body of the article, R' Bentcha Maroz also taught an older group of boys. My brother Berel was in that class. One time, before his bar mitzva, my brother wanted skates. My mother said it wasn't appropriate for a bachur who learned Torah to skate on the snow like the goyim in the street, but Berel wanted them. Finally, my mother said, "we'll wait for R' Bentcha. When he comes to teach you, we'll ask him. If he agrees, then I'll buy them."

My brother knew that R' Bentcha would oppose the idea and he was embarrassed for my mother to ask him. One day, when R' Bentcha came, my mother asked him his opinion about it. R' Bentcha wrinkled his forehead and in a serious manner, as was his way, he said, "Berele wants skates? Why don't you buy them? It's definitely a good idea to buy them."

My brother looked on in surprise and delight and then R' Bentcha went on, "Of course you should buy skates, but on one condition. If R' Boruch the shochet and R' Eliyahu Paritcher, followed by Yerachmiel der alter, skate in front of him, why shouldn't Berele skate fourth in line?"

insisted, "You don't understand p'shat." When he saw that we didn't understand what he meant, he said, "Gemara has to be learned with a niggun and from the niggun I can tell that you don't understand p'shat."

He once said to me, "I want you to go home and explain the Gemara that you learned to your mother. If she tells you that she understands it, then I will know that you understand it too!"

Mesirus nefesh for Torah and mitzvos was an inseparable part of his personality. He was very acerbic and from his sharp comments you could see what he "lived" with. He once heard that a Bucharian boy tried to commit suicide because he wasn't accepted into university. R' Bentcha sighed, "Ah, if my life was so cheap to me I would found chadarim and yeshivos! The only reason why I don't do it is because I fear for my life."

Occasionally he would talk about R' Lazer Tchitcherski, who led him to the chuppa. In order to be exempted from the Russian

army, R' Lazer cut the tendons in his middle fingers and then bent them and tied them down for some time until they remained bent. When he went to the draft board they exempted him because he wouldn't be able to shoot a rifle. With this story and the tremendous admiration with which he told it, he instilled in us the idea that it was better to be maimed for life than to be in a situation where you could not observe Torah and mitzvos in the Russian army.

He was gifted with a particularly sharp ability to describe things and he used this for educational purposes. One time, when he came into the yard we were in the middle of a lively soccer game. We were children aged eight to ten and we didn't notice that R' Bentcha had arrived. When he saw how we played so enthusiastically he cut the game short. When we had sat down to learn he said that before we learned he wanted to tell us something interesting. Having captured our attention, he told us:

"On my way here I saw a

strange sight. R' Eli Paritcher (R' Eliyahu Levin, the chozer of the Rebbe Rashab), Yerachmiel der alter (R' Yerachmiel Chadash) and Boruch the shochet (R' Boruch Duchman) were playing soccer. Boruch the shochet kicked the ball and Yerachmiel ran to catch it but the ball hit Eli Paritcher in the head."

We couldn't help laughing and he said to us, "Why are you laughing? Just a few minutes ago I saw you playing just like that. What's the difference between elder Chassidim and you? You are also bachurim who sit and learn Torah and if it's not appropriate for them, it's not appropriate for you either!"

CHINUCH ENGRAVED FOREVER

If you lived in the Soviet Union in those days you never thought you would get out of there. Consequently, everybody thought in terms of how to live a normal life in those difficult circumstances. Since, in order to support yourself, you had to be educated in the Soviet system, some people sent their children to school from the outset so they would be prepared.

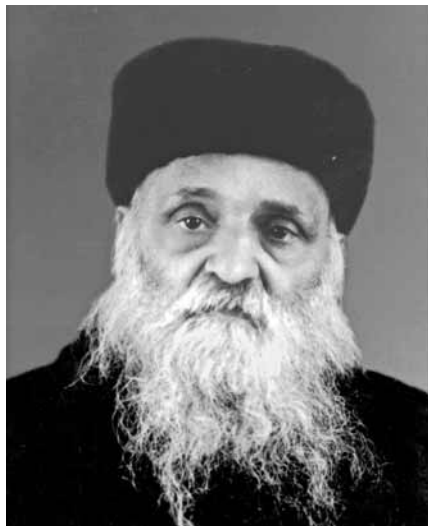
(My father never worried about parnasa. He would always repeat the Chazal, "The one who provides life will provide sustenance.")

One day, one of our friends came to cheder and boasted that his mother had registered him for school and he would grow up to be an educated person. "What will become of you?" he asked us derisively.

R' Bentcha walked in just in time to hear this and was very upset. We were learning Chumash D'varim at the time and were up to the verse, "Go after Hashem your G-d and fear Him and keep His mitzvos and listen to His voice and



R' Yerachmiel Chadash
(Yerachmiel der Alter)



R' Eliyahu Levin
(R' Eli Paritsher)



R' Boruch Duchman
(Boruch der Shochet)

worship Him and cleave to Him.”

R' Bentcha turned to the boy who had boasted about going to public school and told him to explain the verse. The boy explained the simple meaning but R' Bentcha made an angry face and told him to repeat the verse and say the correct meaning. He went back and explained the verse but R' Bentcha wasn't satisfied with his explanation and told him to say it a third time.

This time you could hear a clearly angry tone in his voice and his right hand was extended in front of the boy as he pointed firmly at the Chumash.

We shrank in our places in fear, not understanding what R' Bentcha wanted. After all, the boy was translating the pasuk correctly. We all sat and trembled and R' Bentcha said loudly, “What is the meaning of the verse? I will tell you the meaning.” Then with a niggun and tremendous chayus, as was his way, he said, “Go after Hashem your G-d – only go after Hashem your G-d; ‘and fear Him’ – and don’t go to the communist school; ‘and worship Him’ – and despise the communist school (and he used a slew of deprecatory

expressions about the school). You understand the p’shat, eh? Nu, repeat after me.”

After that kind of chinuch that boy understood that he should not have boasted about being registered in the school.

A similar story happened to me. R' Bentcha also taught us Tanach, how to lain, and writing. He, himself, had a very nice handwriting. One time, during the writing lesson, my friend Mordechai Goldschmidt forgot his ink and I didn't want to give him any of mine. R' Bentcha noticed this but didn't say anything. After a while he asked me, “Hilka, did you say Modeh Ani today?” I said I had.

R' Bentcha asked me to explain the Modeh Ani and I did so to the best of my ability. R' Bentcha stopped me and said disapprovingly, “That’s not what it means,” and he went on to explain it. “Modeh means that when a friend asks for ink that you give it to him. Ani means that when you friend asks you for a pen, that you give him a pen.” And he went on to explain the rest of the words in that way. He concluded, “Now you know the meaning of Modeh Ani?”

That was his method of education and these things remained etched in our souls forever.

AN ESCAPED PRISONER AND A SOLDIER WITH A DRAWN WEAPON

Our yeshiva was opposite the gate in the yard and R' Bentcha would always sit near the window opposite the gate and glance at it periodically. Whenever he saw a stranger enter he motioned to us to flee. It once happened that I didn't make it or was unable to run outside before the stranger entered. R' Bentcha opened the door a little bit and I quickly hid behind the door. Those few minutes that I stood behind the door seemed like days to me until R' Bentcha got rid of him.

A frightening thing once happened, and it was a miracle that no one was hurt. The government built a large building near our yard. The construction workers were convicts who were serving prison terms. So that the prisoners would not escape, they put up a barbed wire fence all around the construction site and

I SAW A REAL TZADDIK IN LUBAVITCH

R' Bentcha Maroz once related that when he learned in Lubavitch, when he was about thirteen, a fourteen year old bachur with long peios showed up in yeshiva. He did not talk to boys his age. The young boys tried to be friendly but when he remained silent, they began teasing him as boys do.

Seeing that he couldn't get rid of them otherwise, he said, "If you promise to stop bothering me, I will tell you a story about your Rebbe that you never heard." Of course they agreed, because they greatly desired to hear what he had to say about the Rebbe Rashab, and the story they had never heard.

"I am a Slonimer Chassid," he began. "Last year, my Rebbe went to visit many tzaddikim in different lands and when he returned he held a tish and said Torah. Suddenly he stopped and said, 'I traveled the world to see tzaddikim, Rebbeim and *gutte Yidden*, but I only saw a real tzaddik in Lubavitch. He sits with two golden chains and a golden watch but he is full of humility and modesty on a level beyond what any human being can possibly reach.'

"He said more Torah and then stopped and said with devotion, 'How fortunate are the eyes that saw the eyes of a real tzaddik.'

"Then he repeated again, 'How fortunate are the eyes that saw the eyes of a real tzaddik.'

"Then the food was served and after the Rebbe tasted all of it the Chassidim began to grab *shirayim*. I, as a close talmid, sat near him and I grabbed too. Then he turned to me and said, 'This is not an avoda for you. Go to Lubavitch.'

"And so I came."

more frightened and ran faster, not realizing that this was endangering me even more.

The soldier fired a number of warning shots into the air while I quickened my pace even further, until I managed to turn a corner and hide until the soldier had passed.

Afterwards, they explained to me what a terrible mistake I had made when I began to run, and that it was by a miracle that the shots hadn't hit me and that I remained alive.

HOW TO KEEP A SECRET

After some unpleasant things happened to us when strangers from various government agencies (one time from the tax department, one time someone appointed over the district, and another time someone in charge of checking the house logs) entered the yard, R' Bentcha thought of a better place for us to learn during the summer - the cellar of the house we learned in.

It was a neglected cellar where horses and donkeys used to be kept and it was full of manure, garbage and dust. But it had many advantages for us. First, nobody would suspect that a person was down in the dark cellar. Second, the cellar had two windows, which served our purposes perfectly. The first was opposite the gate of the yard and enough light came in from there to enable us to read, and through this window we could see any strangers who entered the yard.

The second window faced the parallel street, and this was a great advantage because if it was necessary to flee we could easily go out to the other thoroughfare. It happened more than once that we used the second window to escape. We scratched our hands on the nails and metal in the window

'What's the commotion about? One hundred years ago none of you were here and in another hundred years none of you will be here, so what's the point of this koch and chayus of matters of this world?'

four watchtowers were placed around the yard.

One day, one of the prisoners disappeared. Chaos ensued. The police began combing the area, their guns drawn, and of course the first places they looked were the neighboring yards.

When R' Bentcha saw the commotion he instructed us to go out into the yard immediately, but to walk slowly and not to dare run

lest we arouse the suspicion of the police and put ourselves in danger.

I was nine years old and tall for my age. I went out to the yard slowly, but when I walked out of the gate and saw a soldier with a rifle walking after me, I was terrified and began to run. The soldier, seeing a young person fleeing, must have thought I was the runaway prisoner. He shouted at me to stop but I became even

until we bled, but we children were very satisfied with the new place and the special atmosphere.

Before we began learning in the cellar, R' Bentcha hired someone to clean it up and he warned us not to approach him or ask him any questions while the man was present. In the midst of the cleanup operation I forgot his warning and I went over and asked him in a whisper, "Rebbi, we'll learn here?" R' Bentche was very angry at me and he yelled at me to leave.

I realized immediately that I had made a mistake. Not only had I spoken to him about the purpose of the cellar, I had referred to him as "Rebbi," when a stranger was about. R' Bentche decided to ensure that I would not repeat this mistake. When we began to learn, he slapped me and said, "I warned you not to mention our learning and he shouted: 'Rebbi, we'll learn here? Rebbi, we'll play here? Rebbi, we'll eat here?' ..." That was enough for me and from then on I knew how to keep a secret.

ONE JEW AGAINST EIGHT MILLION SOLDIERS

In addition to the learning we did, we absorbed a Chassidishe chinuch during his farbrengens. Once, during a farbrengen with Anash, someone spoke sharply about another Chassid who had

cooled off a bit when it came to mitzva observance. He referred him to as a *basiak* (a sheigitz).

R' Bentcha, in his sharp and passionate way, immediately responded, "What do you want from him? When eight million soldiers stand facing him with drawn rifles and don't allow him to put on t'fillin, and he puts them on regardless, isn't he a tzaddik?"

When R' Bentcha wanted to describe how great a distance we need to keep from excitement over matters in Olam HaZeh, he would say, "I was in Moscow, in Red Square, and thousands of people were rushing here and there. I asked them, 'What's the commotion about? One hundred years ago none of you were here and in another hundred years none of you will be here, so what's the point of this koch and chayus of matters of this world?'"

After a few glasses of l'chaim he loved to sing a Russian lullaby, how a Jewish mother tells her son to remain a Jew in every circumstance in life and even when great sorrows will come upon him, to remain a loyal Jew. He would sing it with gusto as he knocked on the table with his finger.

(When my brother Berel sang this niggun for the Rebbe, the Rebbe did not encourage the singing. Berel understood this to mean that the Rebbe did not want to encourage a song about tzaros that would come upon a person.)

R' Bentcha was a friend of R' Boruch Duchman and R' Eliyahu Paritcher. To us boys it looked somewhat odd because R' Boruch and R' Eliyahu were older Chassidim while R' Bentcha seemed more elegant, nattily dressed with a tie, boots and walking stick and an erect posture. We didn't know that they were friends and had learned together in Lubavitch.

One time, during a farbrengen, R' Bentcha spoke about R' Eliyahu Paritcher and as was his wont, he spoke with chayus and emphasis, "You see him as a short man but you should know that he was the second chozer of the Rebbe Rashab after R' Shilem! When a maamer was reviewed, R' Shilem would walk around while R' Eliyahu would stand quietly in his place and listen. Can you picture this – **Shabbos morning after mikva**, the Lubavitcher Rebbe would come to shul and R' Eliyahu would jump on the table and review the maamer for the Rebbe! Did you hear what the Rebbe Rashab said about his balding? That his hair fell out as a result of Chassidishe thoughts before davening!"

This is how R' Bentcha constantly instilled in us the Chassidishe chayus that he was graced with, as well as the proper Chassidishe outlook on life.

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YOU NEVER KNOW

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelewitz
Shliach, Beit Shaan

The Rebbe explains in the D'var Malchus for Parshas Truma that the Torah starts the list of donations to the Mishkan with gold to teach us that every Jew is gold inside. Even a Jew who outwardly seems to be estranged from Judaism is really pure gold.

You don't have to convince the shluchim that every Jew is gold. Every shliach sees, usually more than once, how a Jew who looks very far from anything holy reveals the gold within him thanks to a few words of kiruv and love. Sometimes, this very Jew becomes the greatest supporter of the Chabad house and is responsible for spreading light throughout the city.

We lift a little finger and the Rebbe bestows the kochos and brachos so that we see how every Jew is gold.

THANKS TO THE BACHURIM WHO WERE UNSUCCESSFUL

Rabbi Yossi Groner, shliach to North Carolina, related the following story at a farbrengen that took place at yishuv B'nei Ayash as part of a round of farbrengens that were held in honor of Yud Shevat:

"About thirty years ago, shortly after going on shlichus, we

advertised a shiur-farbrengen in honor of 15 Shevat. We printed flyers and distributed them all over town. About half an hour before the start of the shiur, someone called us and introduced himself as a Jewish professor at the local university. He asked whether he could attend the shiur and of course we said he was welcome. He came a little late and he sat at the end of the table and listened throughout the class.

"At the end of the shiur I asked him how he had heard about the class. The professor's answer was amazing and teaches a terrific lesson in life and about mitzvaim. This is what he said:

"A week ago I was traveling in New York. I was in Manhattan on Fifth Avenue and I rushed to the subway in order to go to Brooklyn to visit my in-laws. Two Lubavitcher boys approached me with t'fillin and asked me whether I was Jewish. Since I was in a big rush I figured that if I said I am Jewish, they would try to convince me to put on t'fillin and I could miss my train. So I told them I wasn't Jewish and ran into the station.

"The moment I sat down on the train the doors closed. I began to relax when I suddenly caught myself. How could you do such a

thing? People gave up their lives not to deny their Jewish identity and you said you weren't Jewish just in order to catch a train? I regretted what I had said and resolved that the next time I would encounter something to do with Judaism, I would identify with it and be a part of it.

"I returned home to North Carolina and the first thing I saw in the mailbox was the flyer about the class in honor of the 15th of Shevat. Of course I called you and I came.'

"The professor continued to come to other shiurim. He also came to daven on weekdays and Shabbos and he became very close with us at the Chabad house. It was all thanks to two bachurim who were unsuccessful at getting him to put on t'fillin. Thanks to their being there and asking him if he was Jewish, his entire family became close to Judaism and the Rebbe."

Wait, that's not the end of the story.

THANKS TO THE BACHURIM WHO WERE UNSUCCESSFUL – PART 2

One day the professor showed up with a question for R' Groner. He had been offered a good position at a university in Texas. They wanted him to head the faculty for genetics there. This was a significant promotion for him but there was one problem: in Texas there was no shul, no mikva, and no religious community. How could he leave everything he had in North Carolina?

R' Groner said it was a question for the Rebbe. They sent the question to the Rebbe and the answer was that when a Jew is made an offer which entails advancement and influence, he should take it.

The professor moved to Texas,

though not before asking Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch to send a shliach there. The shliach duly arrived and was supported generously by this professor.

The shliach started a shul near the university, offers shiurim, and today has a growing k'hilla of Jewish students and local people. It's all thanks to the two bachurim who were unsuccessful on mitvzaim.

BECAUSE OF A KIDDUSH AND SOME RUGELACH

I heard another amazing story, this one from Rabbi Yehoshua Adot, shliach in Binyamina:

"We met Alex (a fictitious name), a Russian immigrant, when he was eight. His parents wanted to give him a bris mila. We helped them out and parted ways. We met him again when he became bar mitzva. We helped with the preparations and the aliya and then we once again parted ways.

"A few years ago we wanted to do outreach with kids and so, at the Chabad house, every Friday night after the davening we had kiddush for the young crowd.

"One Friday I went to a park near the Chabad house in order to invite kids who were hanging out there to davening and kiddush. Among the kids I noticed Alex. He was nearly 18 but he still remembered me and was happy to join us. He loved the idea, the davening, the rugelach, the singing and the simcha. He began coming regularly, and not only for t'fillos."

Alex made progress quickly. Even before finishing high school he submitted a research paper on the topic of answers from the Rebbe in the Igros Kodesh. Thanks to him, the entire staff of teachers learned about connecting to the Rebbe and Alex received the highest mark.

Alex learned briefly in the



Rabbi Yossi Groner farbrenging in B'nei Ayash

How could you do such a thing? People gave up their lives not to deny their Jewish identity and you said you weren't Jewish just in order to catch a train?

Chabad yeshiva in Ramat Aviv, continued in the yeshiva in Tzfas, and did very well. He was a very gifted bachur who learned dozens of maamarim and chapters of Tanya by heart and he helped a lot in hafatza in Binyamina. He went on K'vutza and when that year was finished, the hanhala in 770 asked him to stay on as a shliach for the bachurim coming on K'vutza the following year. Alex agreed and continued to pleasantly surprise all the rabbanim, T'mimim, and Anash with his unique and creative ways of increasing Torah study and Ahavas Yisroel within 770.

Alex successfully raised money from people in Crown Heights and was able, with this money, to organize some wonderful projects that had never even been dreamed of in all the previous years of K'vutza.

In a Hakhel year, Chassidim try

to arrange as many Hakhel gatherings as possible. Alex noticed that there was no Hakhel for the beggars in 770 and so he invited them all to a meeting and told them that at a certain time every day there would be a short shiur, at the end of which each of them would receive \$2. This shiur is still ongoing.

Another one of Alex's projects takes place in 770 during the lunch break. Whoever is interested in learning three chapters of Rambam at this time, gets a meal without having to bother going to the dining room. Some say that the meal in 770 is no less tasty than the meal in the dining room.

The final project, which some say is the biggest of all, is a shiur in inyanei Moshiach and Geula which takes place in 770, along with delicious refreshments, which attracts a nice crowd of T'mimim.



A Jew putting on t'fillin in jail

When he woke up in the morning he discovered that the house was locked. His mother had taken his clothes so he could not return to yeshiva.

FROM THE FORESTS OF DIMONA TO THE YESHIVA IN TZFAS

Rabbi Yisroel Gliss, shliach in Dimona, relates two stories out of many that he knows, about Jews

who did not seem to have a "Chassidic future" but, with the help of some miracles from the Rebbe, look altogether different now:

"Nearly everyone in Dimona knows Moshe, as well as his five

children (note their Chassidic names): Yosef Yitzchok, Nechama Dina, Avremi, Menucha Rochel, and Chana. The first time I met Moshe, things were somewhat different.

"Moshe was familiar with Chabad in Russia but when he came to Eretz Yisroel his main interest was to find a place to work and support his family. He was young, so I convinced him to learn in yeshiva and he went to learn in the Chabad yeshiva in Tzfas.

"After a few months, his financial situation deteriorated and he caved in to his mother's pressure and left yeshiva. He began working in the forests of Dimona for the Jewish National Fund but he kept up his connection with Chabad.

"On Simchas Torah we were all farbrenging together. The mashke and brachos of l'chaim elevated the atmosphere and at a certain point I blessed Moshe that he wouldn't have to work in the forest anymore and he could return to yeshiva.

"The day after Simchas Torah, in the middle of work, a large rock rolled on to Moshe's fingers. He needed extended medical treatment and he was told he could not return to work for many months. National insurance paid his full salary and he was able to sit peacefully in yeshiva and learn Torah. The months turned into years and Moshe continued to grow in Torah and Chassidus. He established a Chassidishe home in Dimona."

OUT THE WINDOW IN PAJAMAS

Mordechai, another example from Dimona, went through a harder time. Mordechai came from a family that was opposed to a religious life but the Jewish neshama did its thing. At first he learned in a religious high school

but after one encounter with Rabbi Gliss he switched to the Chabad yeshiva in Tzfas. His mother opposed this significant change and she confronted R' Gliss but he explained that it was really for the good of her son, as it says, "a person should always learn Torah in the place his heart desires."

One day, Mordechai went home for a visit and went to sleep. When he woke up in the morning he discovered that the house was locked. His mother had taken his clothes so he could not return to yeshiva. Mordechai simply went out the window in his pajamas, went to the store and bought some clothes, and returned to Tzfas.

Mordechai continued learning and kept in touch with the Chabad house, and he established a fine Chassidishe home.

T'FILLIN WERE ONLY THE BEGINNING

I have written before about the shliach, Rabbi Shmuel Gurewitz of Lyon, France, who enlisted some donors and bought hundreds of pairs of t'fillin which he distributed to soldiers and people from kibbutzim who committed to using them daily.

One of these pairs of t'fillin got to a member of kibbutz Beit Alfa in

the Beit Shaan valley and made an enormous change in the man and the kibbutz. R' Ro'i Tor, shliach to the kibbutzim in the valley, relates what happened:

"One day, a member of the kibbutz asked me whether I could help him get a pair of t'fillin. I went on the Shluchim Forum and posted his request. Within a day a shliach contacted me and told me about the project in which t'fillin were given to soldiers and people from kibbutzim. The next day I had the t'fillin and the man from the kibbutz began using them every day."

Only later did R' Tor find out what an impact this gift made on the man and the entire kibbutz. For a long time he had wanted to put on t'fillin but he had no idea where to get them. A few times he started saving up money to buy a pair, but each time another urgent need for the money came up and the t'fillin were not bought. One day, he decided this was it - he contacted R' Tor and got the t'fillin.

The t'fillin strengthened the man's connection to Judaism and he began hosting a shiur in his house for his friends on the kibbutz. He invites the people and R' Tor gives the shiur. There are

also minyanim at the kibbutz, sometimes on weekdays and sometimes on Shabbos, and the entire kibbutz is becoming more aware of mitzva observance.

IN JAIL THEY ARE GOLD TOO

The shliach responsible for distributing the t'fillin in Israel goes on to relate:

"I found out that a close friend of mine was going to jail. This is a person with an important job in the security field, but due to family issues where Torah law (and the law of the land) rules that 'you force him until he says I want to,' he was sent to jail.

"There he met another friend who told him that he really wanted to put on t'fillin but didn't have any."

The shliach in Eretz Yisroel contacted R' Gurewitz in Lyons, who asked how many pairs he needed. The shliach said one pair, but fifteen pairs arrived. An impressive ceremony took place in the jail, attended by donors and recipients, rabbanim and shluchim and people in the prison. More and more people committed to putting on t'fillin daily, thus demonstrating that even among the criminals, every Jew is gold.

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MOSHIACH: WHAT WE BELIEVE.



By Rabbi Gershon Avtzon

As the saying goes, “75% of known facts are either not known or not facts.” This is especially true regarding belief in Moshiach and Geula, where there are many preconceived notions and questions that remain unasked – and unanswered.

PART 3 OF 20

In the previous article we discussed the importance of believing in Moshiach. We finished our discussion with a question:

WHY IS THE BELIEF IN MOSHIACH ONE OF THE THIRTEEN PRINCIPLES OF THE JEWISH FAITH?

To clarify the question: There are 613 commandments, yet there are only 13 principles. Clearly, then, not every commandment is a principle. Two of the most basic Mitzvos are putting on T'fillin (for men) and keeping Shabbos. Yet, neither of them are part of the 13 principles. This shows us that the principles are more than just basic

commandments, they are the pillars of Judaism.

For example: Principle number one is the belief in Hashem. This is pretty obvious: One cannot claim to be a believing Jew if he does not believe in Hashem.

[To put things in perspective: According to many of the commentaries, there is no Mitzva to believe in Hashem! How can one ask “what are the commandments?” if he does not believe in a Commander?]

Another of the principles is that the Torah was authored by Hashem and transcribed by Moshe Rabbeinu. This is also understood. Most of the laws of the Torah are extrapolated from extra letters or

words in the Torah. If one believes that the Torah was authored by a human, is it shocking that there are extra letters or words?

With this understanding of the 13 principles, we must wonder: Why is the belief in Moshiach one of them? Can't I be considered an orthodox Jew by Keeping Kosher and Shabbos, and just not believe in Moshiach?!

[The Chasam Sofer (Shalas U'T'shuvos on Yora Deia, letter 356) writes that in believing in Moshiach is not in itself a principle. It is just that since Moshiach is written about in the Torah, if one denies Moshiach, he is denying part of the Torah! However, the accepted opinions are that the belief in Moshiach itself is indeed a principle. For all Mitzvos are written in the Torah, and according to the above, they should all be included.]

The Lubavitcher Rebbe gives a fascinating explanation (Hadran on Rambam, 5746, chapter 10). In order to understand it, we must first explain a basic Chassidic idea: When we cover our eyes and say in Shma that Hashem is ONE, we are

saying not only that there is no other creator, but that there is no other entity but Hashem. The entire world - even though it appears to be independent - is really G-dly. In the time of exile, this truth is hidden. It seems that the world is an independent entity, and that keeping Torah and Mitzvos is a struggle.

When Moshiach comes, the truth of creation will be revealed. The world will be seen as a place created solely to do Hashem's will. Chazal tell us that in the messianic era, if one would want to desecrate the Shabbos by picking a fruit off the tree, the tree will "shout" at him to stop.

If one does not believe in Moshiach, then he does not believe that Hashem's true will and unity will become manifest and believes, instead, that the world will remain "independent" of Hashem's oneness. It is obvious that such a person is lacking in his basic belief in Judaism.

PART 4 OF 20

The Rambam (Hilchos Melachim chapter 11) writes: "One who does not believe in Moshiach or does not anticipate his arrival denies the [whole] Torah.." We will now explain the difference between believing in Moshiach and anticipating his arrival.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BELIEVING AND ANTICIPATING IN PRACTICAL TERMS?

Everything in Judaism is judged by the "bottom line" - practical action. This even includes Mitzvos which are centered on the emotions of the heart.

For example: There is a Mitzvah to love Hashem. The Rambam explains in Seifer HaMitzvos (Mitzvah Ahavas Hashem) that this commandment

Everything in Judaism is judged by the "bottom line" - practical action. This even includes Mitzvos which are centered around the emotions of the heart.

includes spreading the word of Hashem to those that don't know him (i.e. Mivtzoim). For if you really loved something or someone, you would "share the love" with others.

Thus, there is a practical application to every Mitzvah, even to those which are inherently emotional. The Rebbe explains the above concept in Likkutei Sichos (Volume 28, Parshas Chukas, page 135) based on a few seemingly extra words in the Rambam.

The Rambam writes (Hilchos Para Aduma end of Perek Gimmel): "Moshe Rabbeinu was commanded to sacrifice the Para Aduma (Red Heifer). During the course of history, the Jewish people sacrificed nine Paros Adumos. The Tenth will be sacrificed by King Moshiach, **may he be speedily revealed, AMEN!**"

There are two very obvious questions:

- 1) What is a prayer doing in middle of a book of laws?
- 2) If the Rambam wants to pray for Moshiach - for whatever reason - would it not be more fitting to place the prayer in the section where Rambam explains the laws pertaining to the times

of Moshiach - the last two chapters of Hilchos Melachim?

The answer (in short):

The Rambam - who is a codifier of Jewish law - is teaching us a law! The law is, that when one hears about Moshiach - **even as a side topic** - it must evoke in him the feeling to pray for Moshiach.

When must one pray? When he feels that he is missing one of his needs (see Hilchos T'filla of the Rambam). When one feels so strongly about Moshiach that hearing it mentioned invokes a need to pray for Moshiach, then you know that he is truly anticipating Moshiach's arrival.

[One may ask: If the above is the **law**, why doesn't Rambam write a prayer for Moshiach every time he mentions it in his books?

The answer is simple: Rambam is a codifier of Jewish law, so he teaches you the law once and expects YOU to pray for Moshiach.]

Even after the above, we still have to explain: Why do I have to anticipate a human Moshiach and not just a messianic era? We will IY"H explain that in our next article.

THE REBBE'S MAN IN AMERICA

By Rabbi Shneur Zalman Chanan

A bundle of letters that I received from the archives of R' Yisroel Jacobson a"h to help me prepare my father's memoir, opened up to me the fascinating life of this Chassidic askan who did so much on the shlichus of the Rebbe Rayatz and the Rebbe MH"M.

As I wrote the reminiscences of my father I tried to present them as I remembered them, but the final chapters were missing many details about the period during which they fled Russia. Either he chose not to relate them or he himself was simply not aware of them.

In order to maintain the accuracy of the events and to give the reader a clear picture I inquired of relatives and friends, interviewed people, and read memoirs, Igros Kodesh and history books. Despite my research efforts it still seemed to me that much was missing.

Now, as the chapters about my father, R' Chaikel Chanan a"h, concerning the period of the flight from Russia come to a conclusion, I thought it would be proper to devote

a chapter to the work of R' Yisroel Jacobson. He was the shliach of the Rebbe Rayatz and one of the key figures in the history of the escape from Russia, the wandering in Europe and the emigration of Chabad Chassidim from Eastern Europe to the free world, to France, Eretz Yisroel, the United States, Canada, and Australia.

For the purposes of the article I asked the grandson of R' Yisroel Jacobson, my dear friend, R' Yaakov Leibel Altein, whether there were any pages from his grandfather about that period that hadn't been printed but might help me add to what I heard from my father. After a few days, R' Leibel told me that he had found a bundle of letters from his grandfather that had not been



publicized yet and he was willing to give them to me to examine.

The bundle consisted of letters, telegrams and notes, most of which were not directly connected with my father's story but could definitely shed light on that period and the connection between the Chassidim in Russia, the refugee Chassidim in Europe, and the Rebbe in New York. These letters present a picture of the Rebbe's far-ranging smuggling network out of Russia and huge rescue operation to free countries, consisting of only a handful of people, and the conditions under which it operated. I found the material fascinating and couldn't believe I had access to such a treasure.

I spent the following weeks reading the letters and arranging them in chronological order, deciphering the handwriting, figuring out the codes, translating and coming up with possible explanations that would help make sense of things.

I decided to make an exception here and instead of writing about my father, to devote some chapters to the treasure that I found. This first chapter is about R' Yisroel and highlights of his life. It is based on

my father's recollections, on the book *Zikaron Livnei Yisroel* and on the letters that I found in the archive.

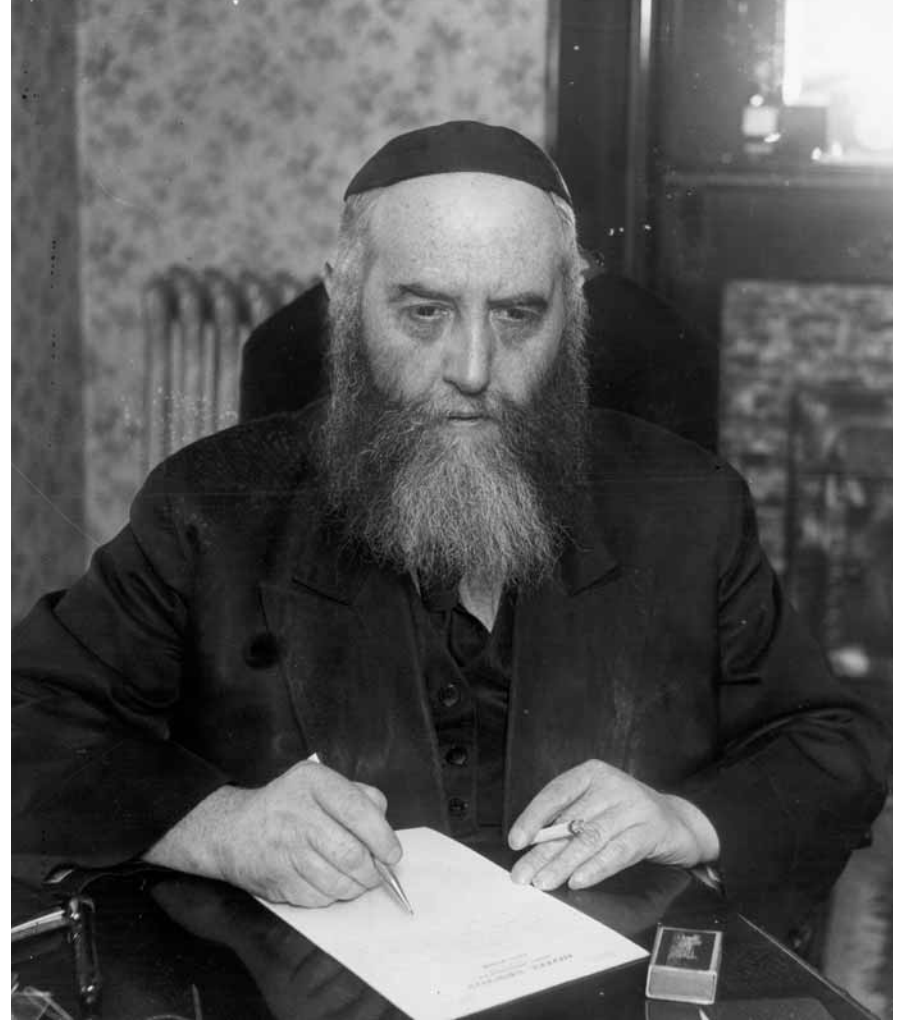
THE REBBE APPOINTS A SPECIAL SHLIACH FOR MATTERS CONCERNING THE REFUGEES

On 18 Tammuz, 1946, the Rebbe Rayatz sent two letters. One was a general letter to the Jewish leadership in Europe and the other letter was to the Chassid, R' Shneur Zalman Schneerson in Paris. In both letters the Rebbe lets them know that R' Jacobson was traveling on shlichus to visit the refugees in the DP camps in Germany and Italy to find out how they were doing materially and spiritually, to see what aid they needed, and to see how the educational and religious mosdos of Western Europe were faring. The letters are printed in the *Igros Kodesh* of the Rebbe Rayatz, vol. 9, p 148-9.

THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN AMERICA

What was R' Jacobson's job? Immediately after the Chassidim received the green light from the Rebbe to attempt to escape from Russia despite the danger, they did what they had to do and fled. Nobody took the time to consider what their next move would be once they got to the other side of the border. None of them were aware of what World War II had wrought in Europe and they had no idea that Jewish refugees were flooding the continent, seeking a place to rest their weary bones.

They took a few belongings and left, relying completely on the Rebbe. The Rebbe, who had taken responsibility, envisioned all the hardships that awaited them on their road to freedom and sent R' Yisroel Jacobson to direct things on the



The Rebbe Rayatz

scene and to be in daily contact with him.

R' Jacobson did not allow any obstacles to stop him and he filled his mission loyally. He met with Anash in the DP camps throughout Europe, obtained visas for Lubavitchers, formed political connections with emigration offices and Jewish organizations, improved conditions in the camps, supplied kosher food, and more.

My father said that when the first group of Chassidim who had fled Russia, including himself, found out that the Rebbe had sent a special shliach to meet with them and guide them, they were thrilled and indescribably anxious to meet him. They were weary from their travels and had had more than their fill of the adventures of the previous weeks. The fact that someone cared about them and was sending them

his emissary encouraged them tremendously.

The anticipation to see the shliach and the inspired atmosphere that preceded his visit so affected the children that they were sure that when he showed up he would take them immediately on "eagle's wings" to America, where they would see the Rebbe within minutes. The adults knew that the shliach would instruct them what to do next.

You may recall that a group of Chassidim did not want to leave the stable where they were staying because they were waiting for R' Jacobson to come. When he came, each of them wanted to shake his hand or at least be in his presence so they could sense a bit of the holiness that he brought with him from the Rebbe.

R' Jacobson did not take them on eagle's wings, but he definitely gave

them hope and clear instructions and he was a big help to the groups of refugees who were at a crossroads. He continued to provide help in the years to come, long after his shlichus officially ended, until they were settled.

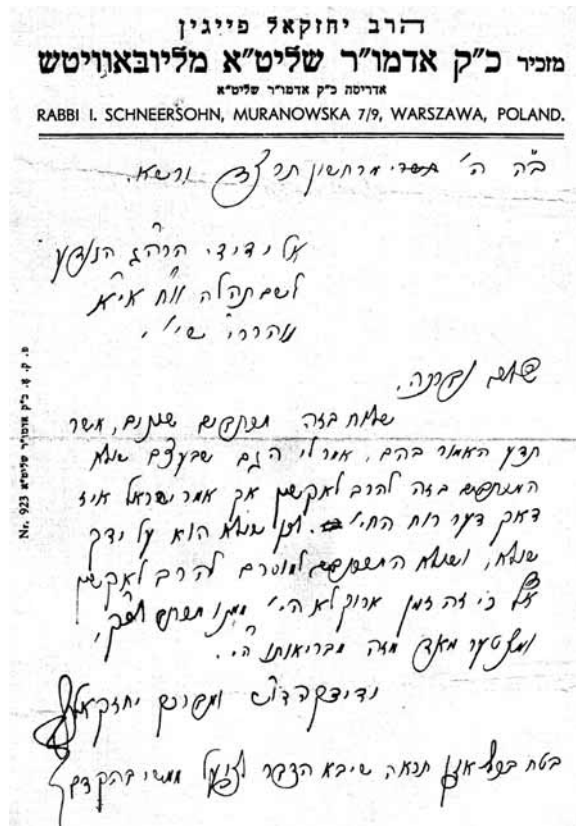
One time, as I spoke with my father, I voiced the following question. Without getting into spiritual inyanim and the fact that the Rebbe sees what we don't see, why did he pick R' Jacobson to travel to Europe on this perilous, difficult and responsible mission? What was so special about him that was different than other askanim or Chassidim?

To my father it was clear. "Do you know who R' Jacobson was? I can tell you one thing. R' Yisroel was absolutely mekushar to the Rebbe. When the Rebbe assigned a job to him, he knew he could rely on him and consider the matter done. It's not just that R' Yisroel was known as a diligent askan; it's that the phrases 'I can't' or 'impossible' were not in his dictionary.

"R' Yisroel," added my father, "was like fire. He never rested on his laurels and didn't lose a minute in doing something for the sake of the Rebbe or his Chassidim. Wherever Lubavitch was, there was R' Jacobson and where R' Jacobson was, that's where Lubavitch was."

R' Jacobson told my father a very interesting miracle story which, by the way, shows how highly the Rebbe Rayatz thought of him. Generally, when the Rebbe sent letters from Poland to Aguch or to the T'mimim in the US, he would send them to Rabbi Mendel Aryeh Leib Lokshin, who was the menahel and director of Aguch in the US.

One time, the Rebbe asked his secretary, R' Chatshe Feigin, to send



R' Chatshe Feigin's letter to R' Yisroel Jacobson

a pile of letters to R' Jacobson's address. When R' Chatshe expressed surprise, wondering why he should be the one to get the letters, the Rebbe answered, "Yisroel? He is the spirit of life in America."

This proved to be ruach ha'kodesh on the Rebbe's part, for by the time that the letters arrived at R' Jacobson's address, R' Lokshin had been killed in a car accident. This was obviously a miracle but what I want to stress with this story is the greatness of R' Jacobson. If the Rebbe said about him that "he is the spirit of life in America," then that summed up what he was about.

Among the letters that I found in the archive was a letter from R' Chatshe to R' Jacobson in which he tells him this story.

Indeed, R' Jacobson was the spirit of life in the founding of Chabad mosdos in America and he

helped change Judaism in the US. He was at the Rebbe's side when the Rebbe Rayatz founded yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim – 770 and Beis Rivka. Then he built yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Newark (which is presently located in Morristown) and yeshivas Hadar Ha'Torah, the first yeshiva in the world for baalei t'shuvah, followed by all the out-of-town yeshivos in the US and yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Montreal.

I don't think there is a mosad that R' Jacobson was not involved with founding or running, at least until a shliach was sent there to continue running the mosad.

YISROEL ZHURAVITZER NEVER GOES TO SLEEP

R' Yisroel Jacobson was born on 3 Kislev, 5656/1895, in the city of Zhuravitz. At the age of ten he went to learn in yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Lubavitch.

When my father, R' Chaikel, went to Lubavitch in 5676/1916, R' Yisroel was among the older bachurim there, but that did not hold them back from developing a close relationship. The custom in Lubavitch was that the talmidim of the *moi'er* (lit. wall, i.e. those who learned in the elementary school within the wall in the courtyard of the yeshiva, as opposed to the talmidim of the *zal* who learned on their own within the yeshiva building) would go to the big *zal* of the yeshiva every Shabbos. Each young talmid sat and watched one of the older talmidim and learned from him how to daven.

My father chose R' Yisroel. He sat for hours and listened to him daven. My father told me, "He

davened very geshmak.” After meditating for some time, he would daven at length and with *d’veikus*, all of which made a tremendous impression on my young father.

R’ Yisroel was like a big brother to my father and was a role model of what was demanded of a real Tamim. A strong bond developed of mashpia and mushpa.

“I remember,” said my father, “that in Lubavitch they would say that R’ Yisroel Zhuravitz (as they called him then for the city he came from) never lay down to sleep. He would put his head down and that’s where he slept. I saw him do this when he was a mashpia in 770 and even in his senior years he would fall asleep while sitting in his office.

A YOUNG MAN OPENING A YESHIVA

R’ Yisroel got married on Chanuka, 5680, at the end of the Civil War in Russia which preceded Lenin’s rise to power. About two years later the political situation became unbearable and the roads were quite dangerous.

“On Simchas Torah 5682/1921,” wrote R’ Yisroel, “as we sat farbrenging in the home of our friend, R’ Shmuel Biala, the watchmaker. We spoke about the difficulty to send talmidim to Lubavitch since we knew that they were wandering from place to place, and discussed the idea of making a division of Tomchei T’mimim in Homil. I sent a letter to the Rebbe Rayatz on behalf of Anash, asking for permission to open a yeshiva in Homil ...”

The Rebbe responded, “I was happy to read the letter of our talmidim, the dear T’mimim, about the yeshiva that they founded in their camp, and with pleasure I hereby crown it with the name, Tomchei T’mimim of Lubavitch in Homil.”

Thus began R’ Yisroel Jacobson’s



Rabbi Yechezkel (Chatshe) Feigin

career of communal service.

On Chanuka, 5682, R’ Yisroel opened the yeshiva in Homil with a single student. Three weeks later there were some more talmidim and the yeshiva ended up growing nicely. He hired R’ Chatshe Feigin, who was much older than him, to be the rosh yeshiva and took responsibility for paying his salary of three *pud* (Russian measurement) of flour a month, according to the monthly flour rate.

Twice a week, R’ Yisroel and Chanan Shagalov went to collect money on the street, in stores, to support the yeshiva.

R’ Jacobson wrote:

I decided to travel to the Rebbe in Leningrad for Rosh HaShana, 5685. My financial state was dire and I had no money for a ticket. I borrowed from the amount that was raised for maamud as a result of the travels of R’ Itche Masmid and bought a ticket for Leningrad.

My wife baked challos for me and roasted two chickens so I had what to eat on my travels.

On the way I passed through Nevel, where my brother-in-law, R’ Meir Simcha Chein (the husband of my wife’s sister, Elka, through a second marriage) lived. I wanted to be in Nevel at least once, for its



Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson

reputation was famous as a uniquely Chassidishe town (as we know from the Rebbe Rayatz’s sichos), so I stopped there for a day.

My cousin, Chaim Dovid Malkov (the son of my mother’s brother, Meir Boruch Malkov), lived not far from the Rebbe’s home and that is where I ate my meals. I slept one time at R’ Shmuel Nimotin and one time at my cousin.

Erev Rosh HaShana, after Slichos and Shacharis, I entered the Rebbe’s apartment (Machavaia 12) and saw that in the large hall of the apartment which was a shul, the benches were not yet ready for Yom Tov.

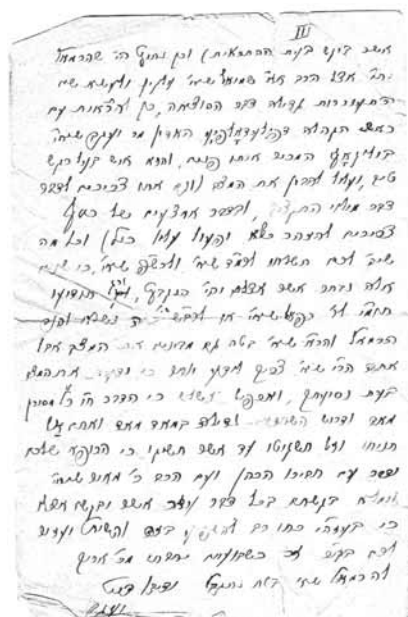
The Chassid, R’ Eliyahu Chaim Altheus Hy”d, was one of the mekuravim and he generously supported all matters pertaining to Lubavitch. He was sitting in the hall and I asked him in surprise, “R’ Eliyahu Chaim, it’s Erev Rosh HaShana and nothing is ready for the shul!”

R’ Eliyahu Chaim answered parroting me, “Yisroel, it’s Erev Rosh HaShana and nothing is ready for the shul.”

His words illuminated my eyes



The encoded letter by R' Yaakov (Moskolik) Zhuravitzer



and added ten years to my maturity. I understood what he meant – who was I to be making demands? I should demand of myself! I assessed R' Eliyahu Chaim as a mature Chassid who was devoted to Beis Rabbeinu and who guided those younger than him to be devoted and to feel responsible for Beis Rabbeinu.

R' Yisroel wanted to follow his parents and he began to consider leaving Russia to settle in the United States. He asked the Rebbe about this in a yechidus before returning home and was told that although he should eventually emigrate, the time wasn't right yet.

... After Rosh HaShana there was a meeting of T'mimim and a majority decided that something had to be done to get Chassidim out of the country. They would try to send one or two of us to countries abroad and each should work to bring more talmidim to his country and to help them move from Russia.

I was the only one at the meeting who planned on traveling to the United States and I was given the aforementioned

responsibility in the US. They decided to give our resolutions to the Rebbe Rayatz.

I spoke with R' Avrohom Pariz (he had also spent Rosh HaShana with the Rebbe) I and asked him whether he was ready to travel to the US. He told me he did not want to go to America, even though his parents lived there. He had been moser nefesh to remain alone in Russia as a talmid in Tomchei T'mimim when his parents went to America; how could he travel there now? I told him that he should ask the Rebbe but he insisted there was nothing to ask - he was not going to go to America.

I asked the opinion of our friend R' Elchonon Dov Morosov, and he said that some people were surprised that I was getting ready to travel to the US, but he encouraged me, "Yisroel, go! This is no place for us!"

I asked him whether, if I sent him papers for the US, he would go. He said that he thought it would be hard for someone his age – he was already 47 – to settle in a new country with unfamiliar

circumstances and a foreign language. However, if I would obtain papers for him to travel to Eretz Yisroel, he would go.

THE REBBE ASKED R' YISROEL: DO YOU KNOW HOW TO SPEAK TO THE TATTE?

The next time he had a yechidus (23 Adar, 5685) R' Yisroel asked the Rebbe again about emigration and emphasized that his intention was, when he would be in America, to try and arrange papers for Anash to get them out of Russia. The Rebbe said it was worthwhile beginning to prepare for this. Apparently, though, the Rebbe wanted to fully utilize the strengths of R' Jacobson and he asked him in the meantime, until he arranged papers for America, to be the mashpia in Homil. The Rebbe would pay him forty rubles a month.

Then the Rebbe asked him to do a very special shlichus that could only be given to extraordinary people. The Rebbe asked him whether he would agree to be his emissary and go to Rostov, to his father's grave, for his yahrtzait on 2 Nissan. R' Yisroel, as a soldier always ready to carry out his commander's orders, was ready to go. The Rebbe told him he would give him money and asked him to buy a train ticket in advance and to come for another yechidus before he left so he could give him specific instructions.

Before the trip R' Jacobson went back to the Rebbe. The Rebbe gave him a package of pidyonos and told him to place them in the Ohel of the Rebbe Rashab. Then the Rebbe gave him a piece of paper on which he had written a pidyon nefesh and asked him to read it at the Ohel.

"But I should read it just one time," wrote R' Jacobson in his memoir, "and only when I was at the Ohel and not before, and I shouldn't

copy it and shouldn't show it to anyone, and shouldn't give it to anyone to copy nor come up with any leniencies in this matter.

"Before I left the yechidus, the Rebbe asked me, 'Yisroel, do you know how to speak to the Tatte?' I was taken aback and he said to me, 'You have to speak to my father like in yechidus. You had yechidus with my father. Say - Rebbe, I am a shliach of your son (the Rebbe) and the Rebbetzin. They made me a shliach.'

"... Then he told me I should go to his mother, Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah a"n. She wanted to give me a pidyon and something for the house in Rostov (Brotsky 44), and he also said I should ask her for her mother's exact name (Chana or Chaya Chana).

"I was overwhelmed by the great kiruv from the Rebbe and the words he said. When the Rebbe said, 'Nu, you have to go,' I replied that there were another forty minutes until the train left. The Rebbe told me that R' Shmuel Abba Dolitzky had to still come in for yechidus and he was also going on that train. I left in a state of indescribable joy that Hashem granted me the merit to be given this holy shlichus and such kiruv.

"On my trip with R' Shmuel Abba I couldn't restrain myself to conceal my feelings about the event and the yechidus, although of course I couldn't tell him everything. R' Shmuel Abba's face expressed his admiration, as though to say, 'Fortunate are you that you merited this!' A Chassidishe friendship bound us that night as we traveled together."

R' Yisroel continues to tell how he went immediately to Rostov in order to carry out his mission and how on 2 Nissan he went to the gravesite and in a state of awe he fulfilled the Rebbe's request. "I read it [the pidyon nefesh] just one time as the Rebbe instructed and read it



Rabbi Yaakov (Moskolik) Zhuravitzer

slowly. I don't remember the details. I just remember that it was the pidyon of a Rebbe, and at the end, the names of specific individuals were mentioned."

R' YISROEL GETS INVOLVED IN ASKANUS IN AMERICA

For the next three months, while arranging his emigration papers, R' Yisroel was the mashpia in Homil. It was Rosh Chodesh Av, 1925, when he and his family arrived in Riga to get a visa for the US and on 19 Kislev they left Latvia for Paris. On the sixth day of Chanuka, they boarded a ship and arrived in the US on Tuesday, 5 Teives, where they were brought to Ellis Island.

R' Yisroel arrived in the US with \$5 and there was definitely no more than that in the bank when he passed away, even though plenty of money passed through his hands in the interim - money he raised for maamud, for the mosdos, and for individual Chassidim.

By Nissan, he had already managed to raise \$1000 for the Rebbe Rayatz, who was still in

Soviet Russia. He relates:

"On Motzaei Shabbos Shmini, 1926, we held a meeting at the home of R' Eliyahu Simpson, who lived at 116 West 137th Street in New York. There we founded the Agudas HaT'mimim for the T'mimim in the US. The impact of the Aguda was twofold - first, in lifting the spirits of all the members, strengthening the connection with their past in Tomchei T'mimim, and second, strengthening the work of Agudas Chabad, especially in support of Lubavitcher mosdos like yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Poland, and maamud

"We also worked on obtaining immigration requests for T'mimim to bring them from Russia to the US."

SECRET LETTERS

In 1927, about a year and a half after R' Yisroel settled in America, the Rebbe Rayatz was arrested in Russia and the Rebbe's secretary, R' Chatshe Feigin turned to R' Yisroel for help. R' Yisroel, despite being a "greener" in America, did his utmost to obtain the release of the Rebbe and to rescue him from the Soviet Union.

R' Chatshe, Hy"d, wrote a letter to R' Yisroel when the Rebbe was in Kostrama. R' Chatshe, who was the menahel of yeshivos Tomchei T'mimim, told R' Yisroel that the Rebbe was in jail and asked him to raise money to work for his release. The letter was written in code because of the censor and looked, to someone who was not in the know, as an explanation about Lavan and Yaakov.

Similarly, R' Yaakov (Moskolik) Zhuravitzer, who served as the secretary of the Rebbe Rayatz when he was in galus in Malachovka after he was released from jail, in 1927, sent a letter to R' Jacobson in the US enlisting his aid in helping the Rebbe leave Russia for Latvia.

NETANYAHU IS MORE DANGEROUS THAN OLMERT AND RABIN!

*Gershon Masika explains the significance of the building freeze in Yehuda-Shomron, exposes Netanyahu's deceit, expresses his hope that the serious mistake over Gush Katif doesn't repeat itself, and advises what to do about the freeze * An interview with the Shomron Regional Council Head, Gershon Masika, by Shai Gefen.*



Gershon Masika tearing up the order about the building freeze

Once again, a prime minister from the Right is selling us out. What is the significance of the building freeze?

No construction is permitted. Until now the State hasn't put up any new land for contract bids and today it is prohibited to build even on private property that has approval from the land office. No construction is being done now. Before, only government land was frozen. The significance of this new freeze is the liquidation of the Jewish settlement in Yehuda-Shomron.

The prime minister says this is in the national interest.

They are deceiving the public. Netanyahu ran for office with a certain platform and he was elected based on this but he is doing the opposite. The fact that there is a freeze before any negotiations with the Arabs indicates that we have no right to Eretz Yisroel. That is the only significance and therefore, Netanyahu's decision is extremely serious. In addition, it is racist. If they did this anywhere else in the world, it would be called anti-Semitism and reminiscent of the British infamous White Paper.

How did you feel when suddenly, Netanyahu went from

being all smiles to becoming our open enemy?

In the history of the state we have never had such draconian orders like these imposed so brutally and quickly. The way the decision was made and carried out is illegal. It was done without the right of a hearing and without the right of self defense. It was all done within a few days of the cabinet's decision.

Have you gone to court?

Yes. I hope that even the Leftist court will understand that red lines were crossed here. It is a blatantly illegal policy and all the council heads have publicly called for ignoring the order.

Many people see this decision of Netanyahu as the beginning of the end of the settlement in Yehuda-Shomron.

They say "lest they multiply" (as Pharaoh said) and ruach ha'kodesh says "kein yirbeh" (they will multiply). We will continue to expand and build. We lived through Pharaoh and we will live through this, too, with Hashem's help.

Since the fight over Gush Katif and what happened as a result of that approach, many people are very afraid that the battle won't be fought as it should be.

It is clear to me that the era of "We will win with love" is over. According to reactions out there, it seems that people have gotten the message that if they don't fight now, their end will be like that of Gush Katif. I really hope that the Yesha council also learned its lesson.

Netanyahu insists this is a temporary freeze, or "temporary suspension," as he puts it. Do you buy it?

Absolutely not. In the Middle East the rule is that there is nothing more permanent than "temporary," and all attempts at

This is one of the worst decrees in recent years and it is perpetrated by a prime minister from the Right, no less, who deceives and lies to the public. We can't take this quietly. The public must take action until the decree is annulled.

trying to sweeten the bitter pill are misplaced. This is one of the worst decrees in recent years and it is perpetrated by a prime minister from the Right, no less, who deceives and lies to the public. We can't take this quietly. The public must take action until the decree is annulled.

But as you know - and many people will tell you this - there is nonstop pressure from the American president Obama, so maybe you should demonstrate outside the White House.

We expect a Jewish leader to stand strong, even against pressure from Obama. In our meeting with Netanyahu this week we told him that this constitutes breaking his promise to those who voted for him, not to mention the cruelty of the order. It's like in the famous case of Shlomo HaMelech, where the one who exhibits callousness towards the child is not the real mother, and in this case, it's Netanyahu. He caved in to Obama's demands and put a freeze on the entire Yehuda-Shomron, something we never had before.

We see the conflicts with mayors being beaten and arrested. Does that tell us something about the future battle?

There will be a major battle here. In order to implement this anti-Semitic decree they would have to enlist all IDF soldiers, and that's impossible. I believe that they will continue building in the settlements despite the order, which means that the council

heads realize that it is no longer possible to fight just with pretty words. The battle is over every part of Eretz Yisroel. We are all in the same boat. Netanyahu under pressure will cave in to Obama, which is why we need to roll up our sleeves and work hard to win.

Netanyahu struck at places that we least expected: yishuv Shaarei Tikva in Gush Etzyon, in places that everybody considers protected by national consensus. What Bibi did was never done before, and the war today is for our homes.

When they came to give you the order about the freeze you tore it up in front of the IDF representatives.

Because it's an anti-Semitic order. We will not turn the other cheek and bow our heads. I repeat: we have a tough battle ahead of us, a battle we have not been used to in recent years. We must save Eretz Yisroel from our leaders who have chosen national suicide.

What do you expect from the public?

I expect people to act like the Chashmonaim, who were few in number and went up against the Hellenist government in Eretz Yisroel, ready to fight and ready to face the consequences. The settlers today are the Chashmonaim of our generation. Mesirus nefesh for Torah and mitzvos and the mitzva to settle the land are required, and we will win, with Hashem's help. The settlers today are in the eye of the storm and the call, "Who is for Hashem – come with me" is apropos.

DISILLUSIONMENT

By Sholom Ber Crombie

People are starting to wake up and realize that something wicked is being prepared for us by people high up in the government.

It's finally happening. The camp on the Right has realized that when you are being hit from all directions, you can't just sit at home. What did not happen after the "Palestinian State" speech at Bar Ilan and after the sharp zigzagging towards the Left, is happening now. The Right is organizing a national protest, to conquer the streets, to get out there and decry the dangerous policies of the Netanyahu government.

It seems that something good has been happening in Yehuda-Shomron since Bibi announced the building freeze. The Yesha council woke up from its apathetic state and announced a mass protest in Yerushalayim, and council heads are united in opposing the government's policies. The pickup in pace of existing construction in Yehuda-Shomron in the last few weeks is a blessing in itself. In every corner they are pouring concrete for another expansion and another house. People are beginning to wake up. They are getting out of their apathy and discovering that something evil is being perpetrated behind our backs by people high up in the government and we have to do something about it.

I was invited to yishuv Alon Shvut in Gush Etzyon and I overheard a conversation between two little schoolgirls. One asked the other what a freeze is and the girl answered confidently, "It means to start doing to us what they did in Gush Katif."

As awful as it was to hear that, it showed that we are heading in the right direction. If a little girl heard this from her elders, that the freeze is no less than the first step towards destruction, this means the message is getting through.

People realize that Netanyahu is breaking all his promises and that we cannot sleep peacefully and rely on him to protect Eretz Yisroel. This situation is the fuel we need to get us to start a war against the new decrees and to stop him from racing forward like his predecessors from the Likud: Begin, Sharon, and Olmert.

We need a public call for the downfall of the prime minister - an almost insurmountable obstacle for the Right, who find it hard to topple one of their own. The "leaders of the settlers" look at who can replace him, Livni and Barak, and then they drop the idea of ousting Netanyahu. They give him another chance and another opportunity to prove himself, to

show that he's serious. He's given another break to advance his dangerous plans and release terrorists with blood on their hands and to start the process of uprooting Yehuda-Shomron.

The call that doesn't come to force him out gives him immunity from the Right and leaves him susceptible only to pressure from the Left. As long as this is the situation it's no wonder that he acts as he does.

The Yesha leadership hesitates to say the words, "Netanyahu, go home." They find it hard to lead the charge calling on the prime minister to resign, but out there, people are saying it.

The public is tired of discovering, time after time, that they can't rely on the leaders of Likud, that "what we see from here you can't see from there," that each time they get into office, everything changes. This is what is causing widespread animosity toward government regardless of whether the prime minister is from Labor or Likud.

Lately, this has been written about in important forums on the Right and heard from influential people who do not hesitate to say that we need to get rid of Bibi right away, without taking into consideration the more questionable alternatives.

THE REBBE WAS NOT AFRAID OF TOPPLING A GOVERNMENT OF THE RIGHT

As always, the first to envision the reality dozens of years ago was the Rebbe MH"m. When the Rebbe called for Begin to resign, many people looked askance. Even those leading the battle against the withdrawal in Sinai from the Right did not dare to call for his resignation. In documents that

were publicized in recent years that record the meetings of the leadership of the resistance movement in Yamit, it was discovered that the possibility of calling upon Begin to resign had been raised there but had been rejected time and again, the reasoning being that they could not ask him to resign when he continued to build settlements in Yesha and he supported the settlement movement.

But the Rebbe was firm about it. He didn't look at the terrifying alternative on the Left but clearly stated the Torah's view. The Rebbe said that whoever could not withstand pressure had to resign and it was forbidden for him to continue to serve as prime minister. With Shamir, too, when he agreed to go to the summit in Madrid, the Rebbe said he would fight to topple his government.

Today, many people look at the history and cry over why the Right did not sober up then and topple those governments that brought terrible tragedies upon us. How did we not understand that when a government in Israel advances plans of destruction that it makes no difference which party or electorate it received its votes from? Those people are *klapping al cheit* today when they see that what the government of the Right managed to destroy, the Leftist governments did not even dare to dream. Still, the call to topple Likud is considered *muktza machmas mi'us* (off limits on account of abhorrence).

It is only the Rebbe's message that remained consistent throughout. It was the Rebbe's voice that always said precisely what the Torah expects of us, without taking politics and coalition concerns under consideration. It is only now that those on the Right are suddenly awakening and beginning to grasp

The Rebbe said that whoever could not withstand pressure had to resign and it was forbidden for him to continue to serve as prime minister... Prime ministers have capitulated to the gentiles like disciplined bureaucrats who have no mind of their own but do just as the boss in Washington tells them.

that since Yamit they have been led astray time after time, wavering in a way that has cost them dearly.

This new sobriety needs to be translated into action. As the Rebbe cried out repeatedly: Stay home! If you can't preserve the principles of security and shleimus am Yisroel, then resign, and if you don't then we have the obligation to oust you for endangering our welfare.

WAKE-UP CALL

Netanyahu's behavior in recent weeks – he said explicitly that the building freeze is solely to satisfy Obama – was not the first of its kind in the history of Israel. Unfortunately, we have had similar incidents in the past in which prime ministers have capitulated to the gentiles like disciplined bureaucrats who have no mind of their own but do just as the boss in Washington tells them. The Rebbe spoke sorrowfully about this many times.

In one sicha, the Rebbe said, "... Their fear of the gentiles is so great that they act in a way that even the goyim didn't think of demanding of them. The real reason for their fear of the goyim is the fear and abasement before the goyishkait within them, which is the animal soul. There is no greater galus than when a person is afraid because of the goyishkait within him. The more his position and personal role is one of honor, the deeper in galus he is.

"This is not the first time that they are making this mistake, to favor the opinion of politicians over the opinion of military men who are expert in matters of security. This mistake has repeated itself a number of times: the signing of the unfortunate Camp David Accords, the Yom Kippur War, the Six Day War, and the Sinai War. Each time, they favored the view of the politicians even though this went counter to the view of the military, which they said explicitly was based on reasons of security (and they also said this with the Peace in Galilee campaign) that it [their approach] would lead to additional korbanos, heaven protect us!

"Because of political considerations we have korbanos from the Jewish people (and each of them is an entire world) for no purpose!" (Sicha 22 Sivan 5742)

Everybody knows that the freeze is a political machination to keep the Labor party and its Defense Minister in the government and to placate the American goy, and this goes counter to the opinion of the security experts. The truth is, this can lead to a good thing, when people will ask for the downfall of this dangerous government and with Hashem's help we will merit the government of Melech HaMoshiach with the immediate hisgalus.

THE BOSTONER REBBE Z"l

The Bostoner Rebbe, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Horowitz, passed away on Shabbos, 18 Kislev, at the age of 88.

In 1944, upon becoming the first American-born Chassidic rebbe, he reached out to the large numbers of Jewish college students in Boston and invited them to his New England Chassidic Center. He was personally responsible for being mekarev many hundreds of students at Harvard University and MIT.

After the Six Day War, the Bostoner Rebbe decided to make aliya. He had inherited land in Shuafat which his father had purchased in 1929 and he wanted to build a Chassidic community there. Permission to build was delayed and the Jerusalem municipality offered him an alternate piece of property in Har Nof. He accepted this offer and in 5744/1984 his new beis midrash was completed.

Even after he made aliya, he divided his time between Boston and Eretz Yisroel. He would spend the winter in Boston in order to work with Jewish students and return to Eretz Yisroel for the summer.

As his following in Eretz Yisroel grew, an additional community was established in Beitar in 1999 for the next generation of Bostoner Chassidim.

In 1989, the Bostoner Rebbe was appointed as a member of the Moetzes G'dolei Ha'Torah of Agudath Israel. Throughout the years he stood strong on



The Bostoner Rebbe (center) at a meeting of the Pikuach Nefesh organization

everything associated with Eretz Yisroel and he believed that all Admurim and Rabbanim should make their voices heard in opposition to any negotiations regarding giving away parts of Eretz Yisroel.

In recent years he was a member of the "Congress HaRabbanim Pikuach Nefesh," an organization that unifies hundreds of rabbanim in Eretz Yisroel to strongly oppose giving away land. He was one of the main spokesmen and he spoke sharply on various occasions. After the Israeli government decided to abandon Gush Katif, the Bostoner Rebbe signed a "Kol Korei" against the expulsion, along with Rabbi Binyamin Yehoshua Zilber z"l, the Sadigora Rebbe, Chief Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu and Rabbi Meir Mazuz.

Even when he had to use a wheelchair, the Bostoner Rebbe

personally attended meetings of rabbanim for shleimus ha'Aretz and protested the terrible decisions made by the Israeli government which endanger all Jewish lives, as he put it. He would mention that the shuls that Jews were forced to abandon in Gush Katif today serve as Hamas' launching pads.

The Bostoner Rebbe was not afraid of publicly expressing his criticism of frum Knesset members who do not do enough to preserve shleimus ha'Aretz and the security of its residents. He addressed this topic on many occasions in his final years and it was obvious that this caused him much personal pain. He greatly encouraged the rabbanim of Pikuach Nefesh who work to explain the halacha that forbids giving away land and he would say that their work is both spiritual and physical *hatzala* for the Jewish people.

RABBI MEIR YECHENZKEL JUNIK A"H

The Chabad community was saddened to hear about the passing of the Chassid, R' Meir Yechenzkel Junik of Crown Heights.

R' Meir was born 80 years ago on Shushan Purim, 1930, in Ferluki in the Ukraine to Naftali and Golda Ita Junik, descendents of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev, Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz, and Rabbi Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl. His father was a shochet.

The family moved to Moscow and when the war broke out they fled to Tashkent, where R' Meir and his brothers became friendly with Chabad Chassidim and attended the underground Chabad yeshiva there.

After the war, when hundreds of Lubavitcher Chassidim left Russia via Lemberg, the Junik family joined them. R' Meir, who was supposed to travel with his family, was asked at the last moment to give his passport to someone else and was promised that he would travel on the next train. Unfortunately, the border was sealed and at the tender age of 17 he found himself alone in Lvov. He was arrested for not having identity papers and sat in jail for a year where he suffered greatly from the gentiles incarcerated with him.

When he left prison, R' Meir Junik, R' Moshe Chaim Dubrawsky, R' Moshe Greenberg, and R' Yaakov Levkivker decided to sneak across the border. They made it across on a Friday and decided that in order not to desecrate the Shabbos, they would rest in one of the houses not far from the border. The man who had smuggled them across was a double agent and he informed the border police about the group. They were soon caught and were put in jail.

After a lengthy trial, over the course of which they were subjected to harsh interrogations, they were sentenced to 25 years in prison. When R' Moshe Chaim Dubrawsky heard this, he began to laugh. The judge was taken aback by this and repeated the sentence, thinking he hadn't realized its severity. R' Moshe Chaim, who was an older man by then, told the judge that if the Russian court sentenced him to 25 years in jail, that meant he would certainly live for another 25 years and so he was very happy about that.

They were sent to labor camps in Siberia. Despite the hard work and harsh conditions, their Chassidishe chinuch and their hiskashrus to the Rebbe Rayatz bolstered their spirits. They were

moser nefesh to observe mitzvos to the greatest extent possible under the circumstances.

They met a Jew who was not a prisoner but would come to the labor camp every day. They asked him to smuggle in a Machzor so they could copy it, and that is how they had a Machzor for the Yomim Nora'im. R' Moshe Greenberg was the one who copied it. They managed to hide this Machzor from the guards and the entire group davened from it. When R' Moshe Greenberg left Russia he took the Machzor with him and he eventually gave it to the Rebbe in a yechidus. The Rebbe kept it in his room for a few years and then in 5752 he gave it to his library.

When R' Meir's parents heard of his arrest, they sent a letter to the Rebbe Rayatz asking for a bracha for him and his friends. The Rebbe sent them a number of letters in which he expressed his wishes for their release.

R' Meir related that one time he saw the Rebbe Rayatz in a dream. The Rebbe blessed him that he and his friends would leave the camp alive and well.

After the passing of the Rebbe Rayatz, his father asked the Rebbe for his bracha and the Rebbe sent him letters of blessing. R' Meir's brother, R' Berel a"H, regularly asked the Rebbe for a bracha for his brother. On one occasion, the Rebbe gave him a piece of matza for his brother Meir and said he should give it to him when he gets out of Russia.

In 5713/1953, when the miracle happened and Stalin suddenly died, millions of political prisoners were released. In 1955, R' Meir and his friends were freed. After his release, he traveled still in his prison garb to the home of Rabbi Aharon Chazan a"H near Moscow. R' Aharon immediately took him and bought him decent clothing, and then suggested a

shidduch for him with Sarah Notik, a Chassidishe girl and the daughter of R' Shmuel.

She, too, had been caught and arrested in an attempt to smuggle across the border together with her parents. Her father died in jail and she and her mother were released after a few years. When she was released she went to Moscow, where she lived under a false identity. R' Aharon Chazan arranged a job for her where she did not have to desecrate the Shabbos.

Three months after he was released from jail, R' Meir married Sarah Notik.

Not long afterwards, R' Aharon Chazan, who had a large family, received a large plot of land so he could build himself a house. R' Aharon was happy to allow R' Meir to build a home for himself in his yard. R' Meir built his home with his own hands and lived there for a few years.

R' Meir managed to find a job that, though difficult, did not cause him to desecrate the Shabbos. He secretly learned sh'chita and served as a shochet for whoever wanted his services. He and his wife raised their children with a Chassidishe chinuch with mesirus nefesh. For a period of time he sent his son Berel to learn in an underground yeshiva in Samarkand.

When the journalist and Chassid, Rabbi Gershon Ber Jacobson traveled to Russia, he met young Berel in the mikva of the big shul in Moscow and was surprised to find that the child was knowledgeable in the entire



tractate of Bava Basra. When he returned to New York, he wrote about his trip in the *Tog Morgan Journal* and even wrote that under difficult conditions in Russia he had met a Lubavitcher child who knew an entire masechta. Of course, he did not write the child's name so he and the family would not get into trouble.

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R' Meir Junik was a modest, unassuming person. He did not complain and he greeted everyone graciously. He was a regular participant in the minyan that was held in R' Aharon Chazan's house. At Chassidishe farbrengens that

took place there on Yomim Tovim, he would drink a lot of mashke together with his friends, R' Moshe Greenberg and R' Mordechai Olidort. They would sing yearningly about seeing the Rebbe and R' Meir would cry about being left alone in Russia out of his entire family and about the suffering he had undergone.

He received permission to leave Russia before Pesach, 1971, and by the Rebbe's instruction he settled in Montreal, near his parents who waited years to see him. He received a letter from the Rebbe which said, "I received word about their successful arrival with great joy." His brother

Berel gave him the matza that the Rebbe had given for him.

In Montreal he was offered a position as shochet but with mesirus nefesh he turned it down, saying that since he was unable to observe all the mitzvos properly while imprisoned, he did not think he was fit to be a shochet in free countries where there were other shochtim. He served as gabbai and shamash in the Chabad shul in Montreal.

In recent years he moved to Crown Heights, to live near his children. He was sick this past year and he passed away on 17 Kislev. He is survived by his wife Sarah, his daughter Chaya Tzirel the wife of R' Shimon Druk, one of the shluchim in Detroit; his sons - Berel, Shmuel and Shimshon Aharon, and many grandchildren. He is also survived by his sisters Ettel Jurkowitz and Chana Morozov.