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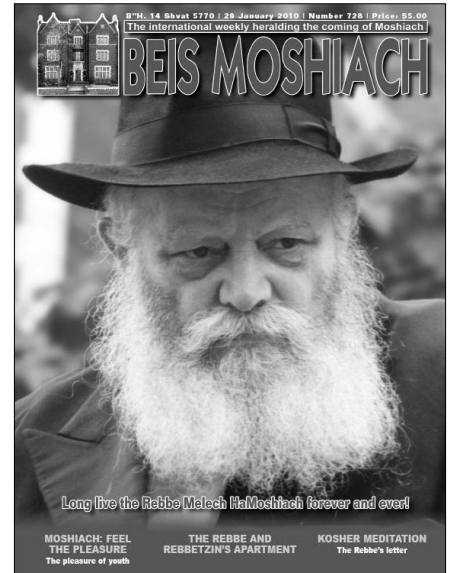
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THE EXPRESSION OF INNER GOOD

Sichos In English

A NAME IS TELLING

The division of the Torah readings is not random, nor are the names chosen for them a chance phenomenon.

The name of every parsha is a thematic statement, encompassing the reading as a whole and expressing its fundamental theme.

This week's Torah reading contains many significant narratives demonstrating G-d's love for the Jewish people, and the Jews' response to Him.

It tells of several of the more striking miracles in our people's history: the splitting of the Yam Suf, the descent of the manna, and the victory over Amalek.

And with regard to the Jews' response, it includes the Shirat HaYam - song of the Red Sea, an acknowledgment of G-d's hand so powerful that it enabled even the most common person to attain peaks of prophecy.[1]

And yet seemingly, these wondrous dimensions are not at all reflected in the name of the Torah reading!

The Shabbos is called Shabbos Shira ("the Shabbos of Song") recalling the song of the Red Sea, but the * name * of the Torah reading, B'Shalach, meaning "When he sent forth," has no obvious reference to these positive qualities.

On the contrary, if anything B'Shalach has negative connotations, implying that the Jews had to be sent forth from Egypt against their will. And the Torah

attributes their being sent forth to Pharaoh; it was * he* who motivated them to leave Egypt.

WHY IT WAS PHARAOH WHO SENT FORTH THE JEWS

Describing Pharaoh as the agent of the Exodus points to one of its purposes, and in a larger sense, alludes to the ultimate purpose of creation as a whole.

To highlight this factor, at the very beginning of the process of Redemption, G-d told Moshe: [2] "With a strong hand, [Pharaoh] will drive them from his land."

For the intent of creation is that this material world and all of its elements be transformed into a dwelling for G-d. [3]

This includes all elements of existence, even those which oppose the forces of holiness.

There is no aspect of being which will not serve a positive purpose.

In certain cases, as in the example of Pharaoh, a transformation is necessary. In their immediate state, they cannot serve a positive purpose, and "their destruction is their purification;" [4] i.e., only when they are broken will their positive nature be revealed.

Nevertheless, ultimately, this transformation will take place, and the positive energies they contain will surface.

This concept is highlighted by the prophecies of the Redemption which state, [5] "And I will rid the

land of dangerous animals."

Our Sages interpret this to mean, [6] "they will be transformed, so that they will no longer cause harm, as it is written, [7] 'The wolf will dwell with the lamb.'"

In this era of ultimate good, the predatory animals will continue to exist, but "they will neither prey, nor destroy." [8] Their negative tendencies will be eliminated, and they will serve a positive purpose.

G-d's intent in creation was not merely to reveal unbounded spiritual light within the context of material existence.

Were this His purpose, He would not have created a material world, for the revelations in the spiritual realms are far greater. [9]

Nor is His purpose merely to nullify the influence of those entities which oppose holiness, for then their creation would not contribute anything.

Instead, G-d's desire is that every aspect of existence become part of His dwelling.

And just as a mortal's dwelling reveals the character of its owner, every element of His dwelling is intended to reveal a different facet of His Being.

As a foretaste [10] of this ultimate state, the name of our Torah reading focuses on the transformation of Pharaoh.

The other miracles it mentions involve the negation of undesirable influences and/or the expression of wondrous spiritual forces. By directing our attention to Pharaoh's

role in sending forth the Jews, however, the name B'Shalach underscores a deeper purpose, that even most perverse elements of existence can generate positive influence. [11]

LOOKING BEYOND EXILE

A question, nevertheless, remains unresolved:

Why was it necessary for Pharaoh to send the Jews out of Egypt? Why weren't they eager to leave?

One might say that they had no reason to hurry.

After the initial plagues, more than six months before the Exodus, the enslavement of the Jewish people had ceased. [12]

The Jews were living in the most select portion of the land of Egypt [13] and the Egyptians were ready to give them anything they wanted. [14]

Moreover, they also had spiritual fulfillment, for our Sages relate [15] that the existence of the yeshivos was never nullified throughout the Egyptian exile.

Why then should they have desired to leave Egypt? What did they have to gain?

This, however, was not the case.

Our Sages state that all the people who did not want to leave Egypt died in the plague of darkness. [16]

All the Jews who remained wanted to leave. They realized that living in exile, even amidst security and prosperity, is not a Jew's purpose.

Why then did Pharaoh have to force them to go?

A HIGHER WILL

To explain within the context of a parallel concept.

G-d had promised Moshe that He would give the Jews the Torah, as it is written: [17] "After you lead the people out of Egypt, you will serve G-d on this mountain."

The Jews rejoiced in this promise

and eagerly counted the days until it would be fulfilled. [18]

When they reached Mount Sinai, they camped in a spirit of oneness, unified by their desire to receive the Torah. [19]

And yet we find, that "G-d held Mt. Sinai over them as a tub," [20] compelling them to receive the Torah.

If the Jews were eager, why was this necessary?

The point is that there are levels in desire.

G-d wanted the Jews to accept the Torah with a total commitment, feelings so powerful that it was as if their lives depended on it.

The Jews were not capable of summoning up this level of commitment on their own, and therefore, G-d compelled them to reach this peak through external means.

Similarly, with regard to the Exodus.

G-d wanted the Jews to seek to leave Egypt with a deeper desire than their ordinary will.

Therefore He brought about circumstances that awakened this more profound and encompassing commitment.

GENTLE FORCE

B'Shalach is also a lesson in our relations with others.

Every Jew possesses an inner desire to follow the Torah and its mitzvos. [21] Nevertheless, for this desire to be manifest in deed, there is often a need for a friend to gently lead his colleague to a deeper level of will.

This concept shares a connection to the Redemption.

For one of the qualities Moshiach will manifest is the ability "to compel all Israel to strengthen their Torah observance." [22]

Why compulsion?

For Moshiach will awaken a level of soul within every individual that motivates him to a commitment that surpasses his individual will.

The manifestation of this

commitment on the part of the Jewish people will, in turn, enable Moshiach to continue in the fulfillment of his mission: [22] "fight[ing] the wars of G-d... and succeed[ing], build[ing] the [Beis Ha]Mikdash on its site, and gather[ing] in the dispersed remnant of Israel."

May this take place in the immediate future.

Adapted from Likkutei Sichos, Vol. VII, p. 188ff; Shabbos Parshas B'Shalach 5752, 5755

Notes:

1. Mechilta, quoted in Rashi, Exodus 15:2.
2. Exodus 6:1.
3. Midrash Tanchuma, Parshas B'Chukosai, sec. 5.
4. Keilim 2:1.
5. Leviticus 26:6.
6. Toras Kohanim on the above verse.
7. Isaiah 11:6.
8. Ibid.:8.
9. For an explanation of this and the concepts to follow, see Likkutei Sichos, Vol. VI, p. 18ff, and the sources mentioned there.
10. This was indeed only a foretaste, for the transformation of Pharaoh was not fully completed at the time of the exodus. On the contrary, shortly afterwards, he experienced a change of heart and pursued the Jewish people.
11. See Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XII, p. 33ff and other sources which offer a similar explanation in interpreting the reason the Alter Rebbe (Shulchan Aruch HaRav, ch. 450) gives for the observance of Shabbos HaGadol ("the great Shabbos," the Shabbos preceding the holiday of Pesach). The Alter Rebbe states that this Shabbos commemorates the miracle of the Egyptians' firstborn rebelling against Pharaoh and demanding that he release the Jews. What was so great about this miracle? The transformation of darkness to light it represents, that the Egyptians themselves demanded the Jews' release.
12. Rosh HaShana 11:1.
13. Genesis 47:6.
14. Exodus 12:35-36. See also Rashi's commentary.
15. Yoma 28b.
16. Mechilta, quoted by Rashi, Exodus 13:18, see Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XI, p. 1 footnote 10 and sources cited there.
17. Exodus 3:12.
18. The commemoration of their counting is one of the reasons given for the mitzvah of Counting the Omer. Rabbeinu Nissim, end of P'sachim.
19. Rashi and Mechilta, commenting on Exodus 19:2.
20. Shabbos 88a. See Torah Or, maamer Chayav Inesh Livsumei, sec. 4, and the maamer V'Kibel HaYehudim, 5687, sec. 2 which explain that our Sages were employing an analogy. The Jews witnessed Divine revelations so powerful that they had no choice whether to receive the Torah; it was as if a tub was held over their head.
21. See Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Gerushin 2:20.
22. Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Melachim 11:4.

MOSHIACH: FEEL THE PLEASURE

By Rabbi Zvi Homnick

My earliest childhood recollections were of experiencing tremendous joy and delight in being Jewish and in almost all aspects of Jewish observance and study. The question that plagued me was, where had my pleasure and enthusiasm gone? When did doing the right thing become a chore rather than a privilege?

CHILDISH PLEASURES?

One of the major impacts that modern psychology has had on society at large is the near obsession with events of the past, particularly those of childhood and adolescence. Since psychology has positioned itself as a scientific and even medically recognized discipline, with the full weight of the law behind it, its focus has always been geared towards understanding mental and psychological development in the context of illness. Thus, in order to find out what is “wrong”

with you and why, it is necessary to explore the key relationships and events of the developing years. In order to uncover the origins of any aberration of the psyche, we must dig up any and all negative and painful experiences of the past, and as an added bonus we might even find someone to blame it on (do I hear, “blame the parents?”).

Growing up as the son of a psychologist, I am probably guilty of having spent too much time analyzing my own past. In doing so, I discovered firsthand that the

prevalent psychological theories, whether floated by the orthodox or more eclectic schools of mental health, were for the most part nonsense, with the odd smattering of valuable insight. I also discovered that a lot of the areas in my life that needed improvement were “learned” in the developing years, rather than “programmed” into me, and although “unlearning” something that has become deeply ingrained can be quite difficult, it is also eminently doable. The teachings of Chassidus, while opening whole new vistas for my mind to explore, confirmed what I had already concluded based on Torah in general.

In my early teens, when I looked back at my early childhood with all its challenges and difficulties, I came to a surprising conclusion. My earliest childhood recollections were of experiencing tremendous joy and delight in being Jewish and in almost all aspects of Jewish observance and study. The question that plagued me was, where had my pleasure and enthusiasm gone? When did doing the right thing become a chore rather than a privilege? Although in my immaturity, I didn’t always appreciate the import and significance of Torah prohibitions, and struggled with some of the restrictions, I had always been excited by the opportunity to learn and do new things. When and where did that get lost? The only answer that I could come up with was – reward and punishment.

The reward and punishment system of child rearing assumes that the child has no interest in doing the right thing or avoiding doing the wrong thing, and so we must introduce an external set of consequences to bribe and/or

intimidate the child. My religious upbringing had taught me that I don't want to learn, daven and do mitzvos, and certainly it is not a source of pleasure and enjoyment. Although part of me had resisted that terribly destructive message, much of it had seeped through and I found myself torn internally. I would go from intense bursts of serious study when I was thrilled to learn new Torah insights to times of struggling against listlessness and lethargy.

At that early time, during my teenage years, I decided that if and when I would be in a position of raising and educating Jewish children, I would build my educational philosophy on the premise that every Jewish child wants to do good and can be readily inspired to want to avoid evil. That is, if the parent or educator relates to the child in that way as opposed to seeing the child as an untamed wild creature that needs to be shown a carrot or a stick. I was well aware of the fact that this was not consistent with what the Rambam writes in his commentary on the Mishna in Sanhedrin or in the laws of Talmud Torah in his Mishneh Torah, so I sort of kept my views to myself until I could find the Torah sources to back up what I was already passionately convinced of in the depths of my soul.

Later, when I began to peruse the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov and his disciples, I was shaken to the core. I couldn't believe that I had distanced myself from the very teachings that seemed to ratify so much of what I had believed before, although I had kept it under wraps. It was true: every Jew wants to serve G-d and can serve G-d without any consideration

for personal reward. There is no greater joy and pleasure in the world than that of being a Jew. Little children are purer and closer to G-d, because they have just arrived from a more G-dly existence and have not yet been corrupted by the pleasures and rationalizations of this world.

All this only confirmed for me that the advent of the Baal Shem Tov and Chassidus to the world heralded a new revelation, as opposed to the days of the Rambam. But what I still couldn't figure out was why Chassidim, who were supposed to be serving G-d with joy and enthusiasm, seemed mired in the old world model of reward and punishment. In fact, they seemed far more ready to whack their kids than parents and teachers who were American born and bred.

WITH PLEASURE

The 15th of Shvat (Chamisha-Asar B'Shvat) 5748/1988, one week before the passing of the Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka on the 22nd of Shvat, marks the last time to date that the Rebbe held a farbrengen on a weekday. In that sicha, the Rebbe says that since a Jew is compared to a tree of the field insofar as his purpose is to produce "fruit," namely Torah and good deeds, as well as influencing others in those areas, the New Year for trees is a time to take on good resolutions to increase in all these areas.

The Rebbe then goes on to draw a more specific lesson from the difference between fruit trees and grain, namely that fruit is only for the purpose of providing pleasure, as opposed to grain that provides basic sustenance. Therefore, we must increase not only in the basic obligations of Torah and Mitzvos, but primarily

in our Divine service in a manner of taanug/pleasure. This is first and foremost expressed in the study of Torah in general, and particularly the study of Chassidus, which is the "pleasure aspect within Torah."

When I first began looking into Chabad Chassidus, one of the aspects that threw me was the emphasis on *kabbalas ol* and total submission to the Divine Will to the exclusion of any and all personal inspiration that may have the slightest modicum of self interest. If you are engaged in holy pursuits because of what you want, or what you enjoy, or what gives you satisfaction, then you are actually distancing yourself from G-d's Oneness. This is cited as one of the major causes for those who toil mightily in the study of Chassidus and soul-wrenching prayer without experiencing any spiritual growth. Since "I" am learning, "I" am davening, "I" want to achieve love and fear G-d, therefore G-d's light is hidden from me. Only one who approaches his Divine service with the attitude that G-d wants learning, G-d wants davening, G-d wants love and fear of Him, and "I" exist only to give Him what He wants, will actually succeed in attaining any true spiritual heights.

So yes, we can and must serve G-d with joy and enthusiasm, as the Baal Shem Tov teaches, but to do so properly it must be an outgrowth of subservience and self-nullification. As far as serving G-d with pleasure, that seemed to be the exclusive domain of those tzaddikim on a very lofty level of Divine service or fleetingly attainable for those who labor intensively in their davening throughout the week, particularly on Shabbos, but for the average Chassid the focus was

It was true: every Jew wants to serve G-d and can serve G-d without any consideration for personal reward. There is no greater joy and pleasure in the world than that of being a Jew.

on working hard and forcing oneself, with pleasure being reserved for the Divine revelation in the times of Moshiach. To serve G-d with joy is essential, and obviously there is great enjoyment and fulfillment in that, but to serve Him “with pleasure” is reserved for those who “see their [future] world in their lifetimes.”

At one of the first Chassidic farbrengens that I attended, the speaker repeated with great gusto and in detail the lengthy description of the Rebbe (R’ei 5710, paragraphs 7,8) about the differences between Chabad Chassidim and other Chassidim. The gist of it was that a Chabad Chassid has it difficult in this world and the next, but ultimately in the long run, it will prove to have been worth it. (That was a really uplifting and reassuring message for someone first getting his toes wet...) So what changed? How is it that now the Rebbe is speaking in terms of serving G-d with pleasure as something that everyone can and must do, and even increase? In fact, later in the same sicha the Rebbe discusses the need for an increase in the service of G-d with pleasure in the context of the “descent of the generations.” How does being “lower” bring out in us a “higher” level of serving G-d?

TIME FOR PLEASURE

In any creative process, there is the anticipation of pleasure that drives the desire to create, and then there is the pleasure that one experiences all the way at the end after successfully completing the project and beholding the finished product. So, when it comes to the Creation of the world, the Midrash tells us that G-d had a “*taava* (desire) for a dwelling in the lower realms,” to describe the Divine anticipation of pleasure prior to Creation. Torah also tells us in many places of the unbelievable spiritual delights of the World to Come as an expression of G-d’s delight in the completion of the project.

Even though the full pleasure is not revealed until the end, it was there all along driving the whole process, but from behind the scenes. Along the way, when certain key stages of the process are completed we might get a glimpse of the pleasure that is behind the total effort. Similarly, in the close to six thousand year project of making this world into a dwelling for G-d, we have weekly breaks in the work when we can get a small taste of “completion,” as well as the celebration of certain holidays that represent landmark breakthroughs in the millennia long struggle to fulfill our mission.

Even in the darkest times, tzaddikim can relate to the infinite Divine pleasure in the smallest detail of the smallest contribution by the simplest Jew; the rest of us only have those small windows of Shabbos and davening and the like. However, when the construction is almost complete, even a hired hand who has no personal interest in the outcome, even passersby walking down the street and seeing a new building going up, begin to catch the excitement which is a foretaste of the pleasure in the finished product. It is because we are the lowest generation that we are so close to the end, and it is because we are so close to the end that we can actually relate to, and begin to experience, the pleasure and delight that Hashem has in His world and Creation, and express this in our study of Torah and performance of mitzvos.

Four years later, in the year 5752, the Rebbe told us that the lesson to be learned from the name of the Rebbetzin is the need to serve G-d with pleasure and beautifying His dwelling as the final preparation for the revelation of G-d Himself in His dwelling with the coming of Moshiach. Eighteen years after that, we need to reject the old way of relating to ourselves (and especially the children) as people who don’t want to serve G-d but force themselves to do so out of a sense of compulsory obligation and realize that we have been given the ability to taste the pleasures of being able to give G-d what he wants. And in honor of the New Year for trees may we witness the going forth of “a shoot shall spring from the stem of Yishai” in the form of Moshiach coming to redeem us immediately, NOW!

SAVING SOULS IN NEW DELHI

By Nosson Avrohom

New Delhi is one of the largest and most polluted cities in the world, but despite the difficult conditions, the great distance and the terrible loneliness, Rabbi and Mrs. Shmuel Scharf illuminating the city with Torah and spreading the wellsprings of Chassidus, often with amazing results.

Your first impression, if you were to land in Delhi, capitol of India, wouldn't be that positive. You would probably notice the pollution, the crowding, the smells, the noise and the nonstop distractions, long before you would notice the charm of the city that attracts millions of tourists per year. Every backpacker who plans a trip to India passes through Delhi, whether he is heading north to the Himalayas or east to the ghettos of Varsani.

The chaotic Main Bazaar is where you will find plenty of Israeli tourists. There is heavy traffic of cars, rickshaws, scooters and trucks, alongside processions of cows, goats, sheep, and colorful birds.

From the alleyways waft the strong odors of cow dung along with the scent of Eastern spices and dense smoke that rises skyward into a heavy, odoriferous cloud.

There are cheap guesthouses and stations for the train and bus, and the airport is nearby, making it altogether an attractive destination.

Delhi is the main hub of India. No wonder, then, that it was here that the first Chabad house on the continent was opened in 5752/1992 by Rabbi Nachman Nachmanson. From here he went to other cities and Jewish communities in order to strengthen them.

"He wanted to reach the Israeli backpackers and he didn't look for

the easy way out," said Rabbi Shmuel Scharf, who has been running the Chabad house for the past six years. "When he realized that they congregate in the most unpleasant and filthiest area in Delhi, he decided that's where he needs to be too.

"He rented a room in a guesthouse on the main street and began giving shiurim and hosting big Shabbos meals. Within a short time he had a group of young people around him who became his talmidim. Many of them have become baalei t'shuva and established Chassidishe homes.

"After he got married he returned to Delhi with his wife for another





Rabbi Shmuel Scharf with Israeli tourists in New Delhi

two years of massive shlichus work. Even afterwards, he didn't drop his project, and he would send two bachurim from 770 each season to work there. He bought s'farim and distributed them to faraway communities. He was the Nachshon ben Aminadav of the tremendous work taking place today in India."

R' Scharf first arrived in Delhi with the help of R' Nachmanson in 5764, after he finished learning on K'vutza.

"I came before Chanuka and manned the Chabad house for seven months, after which I returned to 770 laden with experiences and memories. When R' Nachmanson could no longer run the Chabad

house, he gave the responsibility over to me. A bachur myself, I sent bachurim there to keep up the place. After I got married I set out together with my wife and we've been on shlichus here ever since."

NO SIMPLE TEST OF FAITH

The work in Delhi is extensive, constant and far ranging. Hundreds of people put on t'fillin every day and there are innumerable one-on-one conversations. The place is a spiritual and physical lighthouse for those who want to learn about Judaism, Jews who need medical treatment, backpackers who have

fallen into drug use, and even tourists who are stuck without money to return to Israel.

"We don't wait for tourists to come to the Chabad house; we go out looking for them in the street. I constantly meet people who say that the fact that there is a Chabad house here strengthens them even if they don't walk in."

When I asked R' Scharf about the difficulties inherent in working in a country like India - and all the more so in a city like Delhi, which is probably the filthiest of all the other cities on the continent - he said:

"People think that this shlichus is hard work, but it's not so. It's all a matter of perspective. Is the life of a Lubavitcher young man who is learning in Kollel and supporting a family easier? Is the life of an electrician who works from sunup to sundown to make a living harder?"

"We work for the Rebbe. Either we can sit and cry about how the conditions here hamper our efforts and New Delhi is not Crown Heights or Kfar Chabad, or we can throw ourselves into the work to light up yet another lost and confused soul and direct him to the truth. The difference between the way a Chassid and a Misnaged relate to the 613 mitzvos is that a Misnaged views them as burdens while a Chassid sees them as privileges. We are happy to be in the Rebbe's army of shluchim and if we look at it this way, we don't get tripped up by the difficulties."

"In one of the first years here, I urgently needed tens of thousands of dollars in order to pay off some debts that had accrued. I was embarrassed to show my face to the vegetable guy or the travel agent. I used roundabout routes so I wouldn't meet them. Those were very hard times and we had no money at all for food.

"We did not yet have a source of income but we went on shlichus l'chat'chilla aribber. I had never

ONE IN A BILLION

"After the devastating attack in Bombay," says R' Shneur Kupchik, "many journalists came and wanted to interview us. One Friday, a woman from the *Times of India* came. She asked questions and I said that if she wanted a scoop she should come the following Sunday, the first night of Chanuka, and take pictures. She liked the idea and asked that she be the only journalist present.

"Some people at the Chabad house didn't think this was a good idea and said that reporters always write what they want and not what you want them to say. What do we need, that another million Indians hear about Chanuka, asked the bachur who was on shlichus with me, but I insisted that the Rebbe is in favor of publicity and who knows who will end up reading it?

"The reporter came and wrote her story. As my friend had predicted and to our dismay, she wrote what *she* wanted. A few hours went by and a fine looking Jew of Indian origin, a businessman, walked in and said that he didn't know where to light candles that night and then he saw the article about us in the Times ...

"My frustration dissipated. For one Jew all the effort was worthwhile."

Hundreds of people put on t'fillin every day and there are innumerable one-on-one conversations. The place is a spiritual and physical lighthouse for those who want to learn about Judaism, Jews who need medical treatment, backpackers who have fallen into drug use, and even tourists who are stuck without money to return to Israel.

gone abroad fundraising but now I had no choice; we were over our heads. My wife agreed to the trip, and I wrote to the Rebbe. The Rebbe's answer left no room for doubt about what I needed to do:

Regarding your question about your trip, put it out of your mind and stay where you are and spread the wellsprings, and Hashem will take care of your personal and general matters.

"When I read that answer I canceled my plans of a fundraising

trip. A few days went by with no change in the situation. The test of emuna was a tough one.

"One day, a Jew walked in and was aghast at our living conditions and I explained about the big debts I had. I had no idea who he was or what his financial state was. He left the Chabad house without saying a word. A few days went by and I forgot about him. When I went to check my bank account I was shocked to discover that he had covered my debts."

AN UNUSUAL ONEG SHABBOS

The nature of the outreach in Delhi, and in India in general, often has the shluchim finding themselves playing a part in amazing stories of soul journeys. There's a great openness on the part of the tourists and Jewish businessmen. The search for meaning and the feeling that we are one people is strong. R' Scharf has many examples but we asked him to choose one special one.

"When I first came here after K'vutza, the Chabad house was located in a small guesthouse that consisted of just two rooms. There was another bachur with me. Our resources were meager and it was only when the visitors went on their way at the end of the day that we could go to sleep.

"One Erev Shabbos, a very wealthy person came to visit. He was there on business. About a hundred people were there for the meal. Stories and divrei Torah were told and the atmosphere was magical, like every Shabbos. At the end of the meal he asked us about our living conditions and whether it wasn't hard for us. We told him that we slept right there, and would pull out the two mattresses that were in a corner. He told us that he had paid for two rooms at a hotel nearby and he invited us to come and sleep in one of those rooms, at least for Shabbos. We were happy to accept his invitation.

"I went over to the hotel, while my fellow bachur remained at the Chabad house to learn Rambam and Chitas. I asked him to close all the doors when he left. He came to the hotel when I was already sleeping. I had a great night's sleep after months of sleeping on a mattress on the floor. In the morning I woke up first and went over to the Chabad house, where I was surprised to find the door open, and I suspected someone had broken in.

“Frightened, I quickly checked to see that the Torah scroll was in place, as well as our important documents. After ascertaining that all was in order, I figured that my friend had forgotten to close the door when he left. Later on there was a minyan and a seuda fit for a king.

“On Motzaei Shabbos I went down to check our email when an Israel girl came over to me and said she wanted to apologize. She said she came from a family that was particular about making kiddush every Friday night and having a meal together, but she had rebelled. When Shabbos began she would go to sleep, then wake up at four in the morning and go to the kitchen to eat. That was her oneg Shabbos. She had spend half a year in India and she kept up her custom here too.

“The night before, she woke up towards morning and walked through the deserted streets to the Chabad house. She felt she had to eat something hot or some food that she associated with Shabbos. When she arrived at the entrance to the Chabad house she was surprised to see the door open. She hesitated but finally went in and saw, to her surprise, that no one was around. The refrigerator with the salads and Shabbos food enticed her and she filled a plate with Shabbos food and sat down to eat. That’s why she wanted to apologize. Of course I told her there was nothing to be sorry about and I told her what had happened.

“That businessman thought he came here on business, but really he was here to cause a Jewish woman to have oneg Shabbos.”

FROM DELHI TO 770

Delhi is usually just a way station for the tourists, but despite their short stay, their connection with the Chabad house often continues via



Rabbi Shmuel Scharf with some backpackers at the Chabad house

I was very surprised to see him walk into the Chabad house the next day with a ring he had bought in the local market with a name of an idol etched on it. He had come to ask me whether I thought it was nice.

email or phone and even visits to their homes in Eretz Yisroel.

There was a young man who joined us for a Shabbos meal. His attitude towards Judaism was negative and disparaging. He had preconceived notions about Judaism and religious people, not to mention Moshiach. The rabbi of his neighborhood had filled his head with anti-Chabad sentiments. The first time we met was at a Shabbos meal. We spoke about the Besuras ha’Geula and the identity of the Goel. Even after everybody else left he remained and we got into a good conversation.

I saw that he had a strong pull towards his roots but he was trying to resist it. We spent a lot of time talking about the uniqueness of our people as opposed to all the idol worship in India. So I was very

surprised to see him walk into the Chabad house the next day with a ring he had bought in the local market with a name of an idol etched on it. He had come to ask me whether I thought it was nice.

“I told him sharply to get it off his finger. He played dumb and once again we spoke at length about our special qualities as opposed to other nations. I kept urging him to write to the Rebbe until he finally acceded. At first he didn’t take it too seriously but when he began reading the answer he was shaken up by it. To tell you the truth, so was I. The Rebbe wrote about jewelry and rings that have holy names etched on them, that there is a problem wearing them since during the day a person enters impure places.

“He immediately removed the ring but apparently the ‘other side’

CHASSIDISHE NESHAMOS RETURN

R' Scharf relates:

On one of the Shabbasos before Yud-Tes Kislev, about thirty backpackers sat down to a Shabbos meal. We went from guest to guest, asking each to tell a story or start a song. When it was the turn of a middle-aged woman she told us that until age 14 she was a Lubavitcher and had gone to a Chabad school but then she left it all. That night, her husband, who had joined her on this trip to India, wanted to visit the Chabad house. She went along with him and she said she felt she had returned home. Since we had a real Lubavitcher like her present, we began to sing "Pada V'Shalom."

We continued going around the room until we got up to a man in his eighties who also surprised us by saying, "I am a Lubavitcher." He said that he had learned in Tomchei Tmimim in Pardes in Lud. He went to yeshiva at age 12 but his mother pulled him out at 16, after the massacre in Kfar Chabad. When he insisted on returning to yeshiva, his mother cut the tires on his bicycle so he couldn't get there. Till this day he does not forgive her for that.

He went on to say, proudly, that he has a Lubavitcher son. He told stories about the yeshiva in Lud. I told him that he had made a tikkun for leaving yeshiva for despite the warnings about attacks on Chabad houses and the attractions that enticed people out there, he had come to the Chabad house.

Two former Lubavitchers at one meal! I found this exciting but there was more to come. I went on to tell everybody a story about R' Mendel and then continued going around the table. The next person was also an older man, an Israeli with Russian roots. 'What did you say his name was? Futerfas?' he asked. 'I was one of his talmidim in Samarkand before he left for Israel.'

He went on to tell some of his own stories from the days of mesirus nefesh behind the Iron Curtain.

By the end of the meal I just couldn't get over it. With the Chag HaGeula approaching, Chassidishe neshamos were redeemed and came home.

In that letter the Rebbe wrote that he should go to Tomchei Tmimim. When I told him what that means, he snickered. He said he was very far from taking a step like that. The next time I met him was in 770 a year and a half later.

works overtime and so he said: 'But the Rebbe didn't answer the question I asked. I asked about family matters and the Rebbe answered me about a ring?'

"Of course I explained that the Rebbe answers about what he thinks needs a response. In that letter the Rebbe wrote that he should go to Tomchei Tmimim. When I told him

what that means, he snickered. He said he was very far from taking a step like that. The next time I met him was in 770 a year and a half later.

"I knew that he had left the Far East and was working in Georgia in the US, so the next time I was in America I called him up. He told me he was working for a contractor and was happy with his job. I asked him to come and visit us in 770 and to my delight, he agreed. When he showed up, I gave him a tour of the building and we learned the beginning of kuntres Beis Rabbeinu Sh'B'Bavel. I suggested once again that he should write to the Rebbe.

"He wrote and opened to the same answer he had opened to in India. We were both shaken by this. We considered this open Hashgacha Pratis. The Rebbe told him to learn in Tomchei Tmimim in his city and to have an influence on his surroundings. He asked me what he should do since in the city he was working in, there were only three Jews. I gave him some s'farim and suggested that he put t'fillin on with his friends and learn with them. A few months went by and we met in Israel and I saw he was ripe for a change. I convinced him to go and learn in Tzfas and the rest is history. Today he is learning in 770."

There are numerous stories like this, says R' Scharf. The phenomenon of Jews writing to the Rebbe at Chabad houses in India is very widespread.

We heard another fascinating story from Rabbi Shneur Kupchik, who is also on shlichus in Delhi.

"There is a kibbutznik by the name of Alon who became very involved in Judaism through the shluchim in India. He learns and knows the D'var Malchus, and puts on Chabad t'fillin. B'pnimius he is a Chassid but for various reasons it is hard for him to change his habits and to become a full fledged Torah observant Jew.

“During one of his frequent visits to India, he visited us. It was shortly before 19 Kislev. He was on his way to Goa but there was no Chabad house there at that time and I asked him to spend another week in Delhi so he could farbreng with us. He conceded to remain until after Shabbos.

“Throughout that Shabbos I took every opportunity to call him ‘the director of the Chabad house of Goa.’ I announced that he had decided to open a Chabad house and many people looked surprised to see someone with a shaven head and a transient kippa getting all these honors.

“At the aliyos to the Torah our custom is to make a good hachlata rather than a monetary contribution. When he had his aliya I suggested that his pledge should be to have a farbrengen on 19 Kislev, and he agreed. I didn’t actually believe for a minute that he would have a farbrengen or open a Chabad house, but many things are said and you can’t always know what will “catch” in the end.

“From the day he left, I didn’t stop getting reports from Goa. Tourists who went there and came to us told us about the kibbutznik who rented a wooden hut on the beach, hung up a Moshiach flag and asked passersby to put on t’fillin. He teamed up with another kibbutznik and together they put t’fillin on hundreds of backpackers.

“A few months later the person from HaBayis HaYehudi (a Breslov kiruv organization) in Goa came to us and asked me why we sent someone to ‘his territory’ to make a farbrengen.

“At first I had no idea what he was talking about. He said that on 19 Kislev, a young Israeli named Alon walked into the kiruv center holding a bottle of mashke and he gathered all the Israelis there and announced a Chassidishe farbrengen. All his (the Breslover’s)



With a group of mekuravim



A shiur-farbrengen at the Chabad house

attempts to stop them failed. For hours tourists sat and heard about Chassidus and the Rebbe, about Igros Kodesh and the imminent Geula. That’s when we realized that he really took his hachlata seriously.

A JEW DOESN’T BOW TO A GOY

At the Shabbos meals in Delhi they ask each person in turn to request a particular niggun, tell a story or ask a question that bothers them.

“We often find ourselves speechless when we hear amazing

stories of Hashgacha Pratis or miracles that our guests experienced,” said R’ Kupchik. “The impact this has on the others present is a dozen times more effective than if I would get up and speak about emuna and hashgacha pratis. I have many examples of situations like these, but I’ll tell you one special one.

“On a summer Shabbos last year, I asked one of the guests to speak. He was an Israeli who had left his wife an aguna in Eretz Yisroel and spent years traveling through India and Thailand. He said that he had met a non-Jewish woman in

He remained standing while his girlfriend pulled on his sleeve and pleaded with him to give respect to the monk. After a few moments the monk asked him whether he was Jewish and when he said he was, the monk chastised the woman, 'How are you not embarrassed to ask him to bow to me? You and I need to bow to him!'

Thailand who was related to the Thai royal family. One day, she asked him to accompany her to a monk that even the king visited and consulted. He willingly agreed. As soon as they walked in and saw the monk, she bowed before him, but the Israeli decided that he was a proud Jew and he wouldn't bow.

"He explained to the dozens of wide-eyed guests at the Chabad house that he doesn't know where this resolution came from but he remained standing while his girlfriend pulled on his sleeve and pleaded with him to give respect to the monk. After a few moments the monk asked him whether he was Jewish and when he said he was, the monk looked at the woman and chastised her, 'How are you not embarrassed to ask him to bow to me? You and I need to bow to him!' He certainly didn't anticipate that!

"They were together for some time until one day she got sick and tired of the frequent insults he directed at her and she left him. He began thinking of his future and he decided to return to Israel and reunite with his wife and children. When he finished his story he went back to the point of a Jew not bowing to a goy and how even one of the most revered monks in Thailand gave his approval.

"A story like this, told by someone not religious and heard by dozens of tourists who just started their tour and were going to encounter all sorts of 'religious' people on their travels, is very powerful."

As for miracle stories:

"This past Rosh HaShana someone got up and said how he was saved from the tsunami that struck a few years ago. He said that he and about another hundred Israelis were on an island near Thailand and that morning they noticed bigger waves than usual washing over their chairs on the beach. But they had no idea what devastation this was causing on other islands. Their biggest worry was that coconuts shouldn't fall on their heads because of the force of the wind.

"They continued to spend their time relaxing in hammocks, thinking that this must be a regular phenomenon on that particular island. Even the screams that they heard from other islands didn't distract them. It was only the next day when they heard the news that they realized what a miracle they had experienced. The tsunami had killed hundreds of thousands of people but for some reason it had bypassed their island. He concluded the story

by saying that he was going to take this opportunity to thank G-d for the miracle."

WHAT A BRIEF VISIT CAN ACCOMPLISH

Since tourists rarely spend much time in Delhi, it's very hard to invest a lot into people and most of the outreach is sporadic. We asked R' Kupchik how they manage in those circumstances to touch a Jewish neshama.

"First, our goal is to welcome the tourists. There are many tourists who never walked into Chabad houses back in Israel and have little intention of doing so in India either. We need to give them a taste of what it's like so as they travel onwards they will visit other Chabad houses.

"The typical backpacker, when he first arrives in India, is taken aback by the living conditions here, by the filth and chaos. Feeling out of place, it is highly likely that he will look for something that reminds him of home and will walk into a Chabad house. If he has a positive experience, he will continue to visit Chabad houses in the other stops along his route.

"Second, we always make the effort to sit down with a person and learn something, even if the tourist will be in Delhi for only one day. Sometimes we learn the first chapter of Tanya or some other work and we suggest that as they travel, they stop in at other Chabad houses and continue learning.

"A visit of just an hour can do wonders. I recently met a Chassidishe young man who I didn't recognize. He reminded me that he had met me a few years ago in a friend's apartment. My wife and I had gotten to know this friend in India, and stopped in at his home in Israel before Pesach to give him shmura matza. Our visit and our concern had made a big impression on his guest and spurred him on in

his journey towards Chassidus. Today he is a Lubavitcher and he got married a few months ago.”

When I asked R’ Scharf what his shlichus focuses on, he answered without hesitation: “publicizing the Besuras HaGeula.”

“We don’t spread Moshiach,” he said with a smile. “We try to live Moshiach and people who come into the Chabad house live it together with us. They come with a great willingness to listen; they are looking for meaning and eternal truths. Most of them are disgusted by the lies of the world. They don’t blink when we talk to them about Moshiach. Some of them ask questions and we are happy to learn with them.

“On Simchas Torah I was engaged in a discussion with three girls who belonged to the religious-nationalist movement and they asked me questions about the belief that the Rebbe is chai v’kayam and whether he will be the one to redeem us.

“Another girl, from an irreligious home, listened on the side. She



A tourist lighting the menorah

didn’t understand much but before she left she told my wife, ‘It seems that your husband is telling the truth; I sense that this is authentic Judaism. I see how he’s on fire.’”

The interview with R’ Scharf took place in intervals, since every few minutes someone else walked in and he had to give the tourist his full

attention. I was left to think about life on shlichus and endless giving.

There is no coasting here. In the months to come R’ Shneur Kupchik plans on returning to Delhi after a break of a few months, for the purpose of founding another branch which will focus on working with the local Jewish community that is developing in Delhi.

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MY REBBETZIN

By H. Ben Yishai

Personal stories about women's connection with Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka a"h, presented for her yahrtzait on 22 Shvat.

SHUNNING THE LIMELIGHT

"Twelve years ago," relates Mrs. Daniella Golan, founder and dean of Ohr Chaya for women, "the shock of the Rebbetzin's passing was still strong, as though a full decade hadn't already passed. I thought about how the Rebbe would probably have urged us to mark the occasion. In my mind's eye I could see the Rebbe waving his hand to encourage the Chassidim to take action, and I decided to do something.

"At the time there were two religious radio stations in Israel: Channel 7 (Arutz Sheva) in Beit El and Kol Chai. I contacted Rebbetzin Melamed of Channel 7 and got a peak programming slot for eight p.m., in memory of the Rebbetzin. When we broadcast, I linked up with Rebbetzin Leah Kahn of Crown Heights, who told about her relationship with the Rebbetzin.

"After the broadcast I went back to Yerushalayim. As soon as I walked in the door, the phone rang. To my surprise, the caller informed me that I had a dollar from the Rebbe. I was

thrilled that the Rebbe had so immediately "paid" me a for the program, but what, when, how?

"This is the story:

"A religious woman from Yerushalayim shopping in a grocery store in New York, found a dollar with Hebrew writing on it among her change. From the inscription, 'give it to tz'daka in Eretz Yisroel,' she realized that this was a dollar from the Rebbe and was very precious. She wanted to give it to a Lubavitcher, but the only one she knew was a former teacher at Neve, Rabbi Yehoshua Appel.

"Upon her return to Eretz Yisroel, she contacted him and he made a special trip to Neve Yaakov to get the dollar from her.

"When she asked him to give the dollar to Lubavitchers, R' Appel said, 'Tomorrow is Yud Shvat and there is a big event at Ohr Chaya. Apparently I was meant to give the dollar to Daniella Golan of Ohr Chaya.'

"And the dollar got to me at just the right moment."

What should we learn from the Rebbetzin?

Consideration for another person's dignity was extremely important to her. Her *vatronus* (personal sacrifice for others) was legendary, and it was all done modestly. Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka stayed away from the spotlight even though she wasn't shy by nature. She had a powerful personality and possessed an impressive degree of creativity and initiative, as well as tremendous courage. She was determined about everything she did. Her father, the Rebbe Rayatz, often appointed her for secret missions because she was capable and brave.

She was a very intelligent woman and could have been a public figure, a famous personality in her own right, not to mention the honors she could have accepted as the wife of a great man, but she chose and preferred to shun publicity. That was her greatness – that she chose not to shine at the expense of others, even if someone else being hurt was only a remote possibility.

THE REBBETZIN WHO GAVE US THE REBBE

Rebbetzin Leah Kahn was a close friend of the Rebbetzin. She was asked by one of the teachers at the Chabad high school in Beitar Ilit:

What is the Rebbetzin's main message for us?

"The Rebbetzin was a modest woman. She did the will of Hashem only and that was that, without personal calculations.

"It is natural for us to want to stake a spot for ourselves. Each of us wants to express ourselves, our talents, and our abilities and to be successful. But for the Rebbetzin, everything about her was directed towards doing what needed to be done even if it was at the expense of her personal interests.

"Though the Rebbe and Rebbetzin are on a level we can barely comprehend, much less relate to, there is still much we can learn

from them. We live in a time when if something doesn't work out, we fall apart. It's hard for us to tolerate a situation when it doesn't go our way. The Rebbetzin, on the other hand, completely negated her personal will.

"She gave her husband over to the Chassidim. The Rebbe spent days and nights in 770. She rarely saw him over Shabbos and Yom Tov. Yet the Rebbetzin never let the Rebbe get the feeling that she minded. She did everything she could to ensure that the Rebbe wouldn't worry about her, for she knew that he needed to be available to the public. She once fell and broke her arm and she hid her arm under the table so the Rebbe wouldn't realize that something happened. She didn't want to take his time. What is time? Time is something whose worth depends on how a person views and utilizes it. Every person can do something big with his life. The Rebbetzin did this daily.

"Some people might say, 'That's not surprising because she's the Rebbetzin.' She, too, was a person of this world, and she also definitely had challenges which she withstood. But she knew that in order to achieve her goal, she needed utter bittul. That is her message for us."

THE REBBETZIN'S SHAWL

Mrs. Orit Greenberg of Beit Shemesh relates:

"Since I was little, I always knew what I wanted to be when I grew up: a mother to many children. I waited impatiently for four long years after my wedding until our oldest daughter, Chaya Mushka, was born.

"Shortly after she was born, the Rebbe appeared to me in a dream. He smiled at me and thanked me warmly for calling my daughter after the Rebbetzin. He also gave me some items of the Rebbetzin. I



The Rebbe spent days and nights in 770. She rarely saw him over Shabbos and Yom Tov. Yet the Rebbetzin never let the Rebbe get the feeling that she minded. She did everything she could to ensure that the Rebbe wouldn't worry about her, for she knew that he needed to be available to the public.

The policeman answered apathetically, “Lady, if an Arab took your car, you can forget about it,” and he did nothing to help.

noticed one that was beige-pink in color.

“After Chaya Mushka we had a couple more, but then we had a break which really bothered me. I yearned for more children.

“Four years ago, at an Ohr Chaya event for 22 Shvat, there was an auction. The prize was a shawl that was made out of something belonging to the Rebbetzin. The money would go towards Hachnasas Kalla. When I saw the shawl I immediately recognized it as the one the Rebbe had given me in the dream. I felt it was my opportunity and decided I had to get that shawl. I joined the bidding, ignoring my apprehensions about how we would be able to afford it. The price went up and up until finally, at 9000 shekels, the shawl was mine.

“Daniella blessed me that I should have a son, a tzaddik. I called my husband and told him that I had bought the Rebbetzin’s shawl. I told him how much it cost, and we committed to making ten monthly payments for it.

“We began paying it off and saw the bracha right away. First, my in-laws decided to give us 11,000 shekels without even knowing the story. Then I was accepted to a computer course which soon earned me a job. Third, my husband also had special bracha in his parnasa that year. But the bracha I wanted the most still eluded us.

“We thought maybe we had to finish with all the post-dated checks. When Shvat rolled around once again and the last payment was made, I felt that we had a z’chus. “I put the shawl on my shoulders and davened with tears and great kavana

that I have a son. Then I opened the Igros Kodesh to an amazing answer.

First, the Rebbe wrote about yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim, to make sure that there were good talmidim so they wouldn’t have to leave the yeshiva, and that the children needed to receive a good chinuch so they would be Tmimim. Second, there was a bracha that referred to the Gemara in Erchin that talks about a leap year, whether it is to fill the lack of that year or of the previous years. The letter ended with the words: **this is the inyan of the month of *ibur*** (the significance being that *ibur* means pregnancy).

“It was 22 Shvat when I got the good news. The pregnancy was neither easy nor simple, but we knew it was blessed. Dovber was born on 18 Cheshvan, 5768.

THE DOLLAR FULFILLED ITS DESTINY

I, the author of this article, also have a personal story about the Rebbetzin. It was Lag B’Omer, 15 years ago. We were new to Beitar and one of my girls, four year old Elisheva, went to Gan Chabad.

We had an old Subaru at the time. One night I had a dream that I was traveling with my daughter in the car and I stopped on the side of the road to look at some beautiful flowers in the field. I got out and, while my attention was diverted, an Arab entered the car and drove off. I could see him laughing at us. I went to the nearest police station and asked the policemen to chase after the Arab. The policeman answered apathetically, “Lady, if an Arab took

your car, you can forget about it,” and he did nothing to help.

I woke up relieved that it was just a dream. The next day my husband took the car and stopped to buy oranges, leaving the keys in the car with the motor running. An Arab got in and drove off laughing, just as I had seen in the dream. My husband tried stopping a police car that passed by but the policemen weren’t interested. We didn’t see the car again.

Shortly afterwards, on Lag B’Omer, I had another dream in which I saw a large group of women walking together on the left. I had my daughter Elisheva with me but then she suddenly disappeared into the crowd. I began looking for her, running here and there. My search led me to a building where I saw many women waiting downstairs. I asked them what they were there for and they said that the Rebbetzin was receiving people and they were all waiting to get a bracha.

On one of the floors of the building I saw a door that was half open and I could see my little girl standing there with her knapsack. I rushed in to take her when to my surprise, I was facing the Rebbetzin. Although I had not met her before, I knew right away that it was Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka. She was dressed in white and a tremendous light radiated about her. Her face was pretty and refined and she smiled at me. There was another woman beside her and I realized she was the Rebbetzin’s *shomeret*. I felt uncomfortable about having barged in without permission and I wanted to retreat with my daughter.

The Rebbetzin smilingly reassured me in Yiddish that everything was all right. She said *sheina meidele* (nice girl) and blessed my daughter. I was thrilled about this and the dream ended.

A short while later, my daughter went to school one morning and crossed the street by herself. There

was a car speeding through the intersection, and it only stopped at the last second. It was a miracle that she wasn't hurt. I felt that her life had been saved thanks to the Rebbetzin's bracha.

I want to conclude with a story that happened on 22 Shvat, 5764. In honor of the Rebbetzin's yahrtzait we had a gathering in Nir Etzyon. That Shabbos was especially cold and I did not plan on attending, but a friend from Beitar who had to cancel her plans at the last minute, convinced me to go in her place. I was cold and not feeling well and I must admit that I did not go wholeheartedly.

At first I was sorry I went. It was so cold and my head hurt. I just wanted to get into bed and sleep. But the warm atmosphere soon drew me in. I began to feel better and I

ended up enjoying it very much.

On Motzaei Shabbos, shortly before leaving, I heard my name announced over the loudspeaker. To my surprise, I had won a raffle. Out of hundreds of women, I had won a dollar from the Rebbe in an elegant frame.

A few months later, my mother was sick with heart disease and was hospitalized in Haddasah Ein Kerem. The doctors prepared us for the worst but we witnessed a series of miracles. During her long recovery, she used an oxygen mask nearly the entire time and was extremely weak. Walking was very hard for her.

One day, I remembered the dollar I had won and brought it to my mother and placed it near her. My daughter suddenly noticed that the oxygen mask was disconnected and was empty. From that point on,

my mother had an amazing and speedy recovery. After a short time she back home, and fully independent. It was a miracle and I felt that the dollar saved her life. She was unwilling to part with the framed dollar after that.

When my mother became sick again some time later and was hospitalized, she took the dollar with her. She went in and out of the hospital several times and in between hospitalizations she stayed at my brother's house. One day, I discovered that the dollar was missing. We looked everywhere but could not find it. My mother's condition worsened and she died the morning of Lag B'Omer, 5767. After her passing, the dollar was suddenly found and returned to my house. It had done its duty and had been the z'chus for my mother to live an additional two years.



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THE REBBE BROUGHT ME BACK

By Shneur Elias

R' Moshe Katan is a shliach in Givat Shaul in Yerushalayim. He goes from store to store and encourages Jews from all walks of life in their religious observance. He spreads the wellsprings and the Besuras HaGeula wherever he goes.

In the course of his work, Moshe started a shiur with some people from the business district. The shiur takes place every Thursday and lasts half an hour.

Last week one of the participants approached Moshe after the shiur. The man is religious but not a Lubavitcher, sporting a black yarmulke and a beard. We'll call him Yitzchok. "I have a story for you that I think you'll find very interesting," Yitzchok began. "It is also the reason that I began attending shiurim with Chabad.

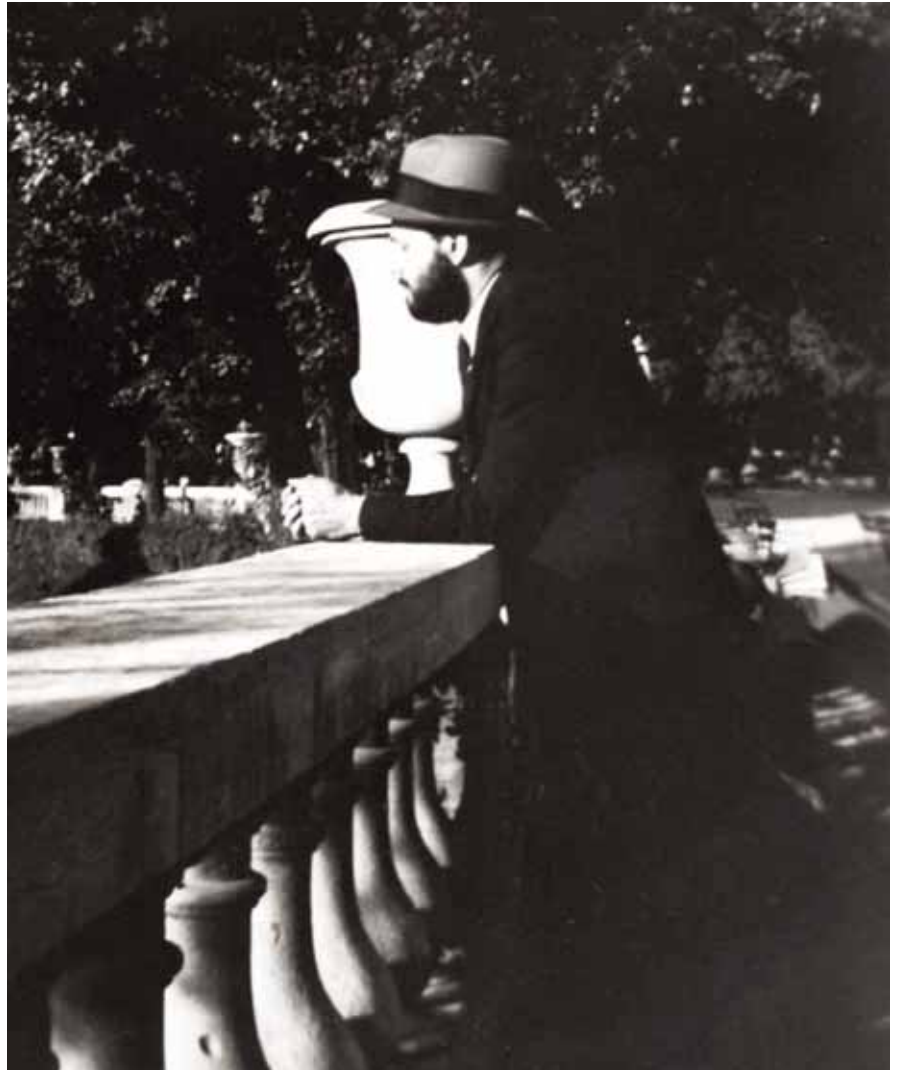
"I was born in a typical French home to parents who were Holocaust survivors. After their world was destroyed, they started life anew in France and blended in well with non-Jewish society, completely dropping their Jewish identity. I grew up like any French kid and didn't give a thought to the fact that I was Jewish.

"I met a local non-Jewish girl and had no qualms about deciding

to share our lives together. We rented an apartment in Paris, moved our furniture and possessions, and settled into our new home together.

"After a very short time, for no apparent reason, something inexplicably changed within me. One day, I was sitting in the apartment when I was suddenly struck with an irrationally strong Jewish feeling. I felt a tremendous urge for Judaism, and knew I had to find a shul nearby where I could give expression to these strong religious sentiments.

"I got to shul at Mincha time and I immediately felt calm. It was at this shul that I took my first step towards Judaism.



The Rebbe while in Paris

“When I got home, something within me urged me not to let things remain as they were. I had to do something about my relationship. I spoke to her a bit and explained that since I was Jewish and she was not, there was no future for a relationship like this.

“After we broke up, I got more and more involved in Judaism, participating in Torah classes and confident that I was on the right track.

“A few months went by and I decided to make aliya in order to progress on my newfound path. I settled in Tzfas, where I worked as a dentist. I was involved with various Chassidic groups and attended many shiurim, but I stayed away from Chabad.

“Over the years I observed something odd; every baal t’shuva had someone to whom they credited their becoming religious, but I had no such person. Twenty years had passed and I was still wondering how an assimilated French Jew like myself had been inspired with such a strong feeling, out of the blue.

“About two years ago I came across a French newspaper. While leafing through it, a fascinating article caught my attention. It was about the Lubavitcher Rebbe getting a degree in Paris. The article mentioned where the Rebbe had resided in Paris – Rue de Beaulard No. 9 in the 14th *arrondissement* – and bells began going off in my head. I tried and tried to figure out why that address was familiar to me.

“The matter dominated my thoughts for an entire day. When it finally came to me, I was stunned by



The Rebbe and Rebbetzin’s apartment

After a very short time, for no apparent reason, something inexplicably changed within me. One day, I was sitting in the apartment when I was suddenly struck with an irrationally strong Jewish feeling. I felt a tremendous urge for Judaism, and knew I had to find a shul nearby where I could give expression to these strong religious sentiments.

my astonishing discovery. The Lubavitcher Rebbe’s first floor apartment was precisely the address that I had rented, where I had experienced that baffling spiritual urge towards Judaism! That was the explanation for the sudden dramatic change in my life!

“That’s when I realized that the Rebbe’s holiness in that place had

aroused my G-dly spark. Now, twenty years later, I know to whom I need to say thank you. I went to Rabbi Abuchatzzeira and told him the story behind my t’shuva.

“Why are you surprised that you became a baal t’shuva when you lived in the Rebbe’s house?” he responded.”

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BELIEVING ALL THE WAY

By Dafna Chaim

Throughout the years, the Rebbe didn't stop talking about Moshiach. As Chassidim of the Rebbe, this must be our all-encompassing goal as well. * At a Melaka Malka L'Kabbalas P'nei Moshiach Tzidkeinu on 28 Teves, 5752, organized by N'shei U'B'nos Chabad, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Gluckowsky, Rav of the Chabad k'hilla in Rechovot, delivered the following rousing address.

On 28 Teves, 5752/1992, a special Melaka Malka took place in the big zal of 770. The women of Crown Heights took the initiative to organize a Melaveh Malka L'Kabbalas P'nei Moshiach Tzidkeinu on the birthday of Rebbetzin Chana. There was tremendous excitement in the air. The Rebbe was rousing the people again and again about Moshiach and galvanizing all of Anash around the world.

I was there, and I remember the electricity in the air that evening. The speeches added to the uplifting atmosphere. The feeling was that any minute now, that moment we have all been waiting for was about

to happen.

One of the speakers who spoke that evening was Rabbi Menachem Mendel Gluckowsky and his speech is presented here with the hope that it will restore, at least somewhat, our fire for Moshiach.

Standing here, I am reminded of a mashpia of mine, R' Zushe Wilmovsky a"h, who would say: "The day will come when the Rebbe will try and try and nothing will help, and then the Rebbe will give it over to the women and children." In other words, when it gets down to it, the women will be the ones to bring the Geula.

There is a story that is told in Yerushalayim. Long ago there was a

drought that lasted a long time. One day, the mufti and other prominent men met to discuss the dire situation. One of the mufti's advisors said, "The only ones who can help us are the Jews. If they pray to their G-d, there will be relief. I suggest that we announce that if within three days there is no rainfall, all the Jews will be expelled from the city. You'll see that rain will fall."

The mufti agreed and quickly implemented the plan. When the Jewish community heard about the new decree, they gathered in shul. They fasted and cried but to no avail. The sun shone and there was no rain. On the evening of the second day, the Chacham, Rabbi Moshe Galanti (lived circa 1660's), announced, "Everybody must gather tomorrow at the shul. Come in coats, scarves and boots. After Mincha we will go the gravesite of Rabbi Shimon HaTzaddik and pray for the end of the decree."

The next day, hundreds of people assembled at the shul. After Mincha, they began walking to the gravesite of Rabbi Shimon HaTzaddik. When they got to the gates of the city, the guard mockingly asked, "What's going on? Are you crazy? The sun is shining and you are wearing coats and boots?!"

The Jews responded confidently, "We are following our rabbi's instructions," and they continued on their way.

When they arrived at the gravesite they poured out their hearts in T'hillim. Before long, a wind began to blow. After another chapter of T'hillim the skies clouded over. A light rain began to fall even before they concluded the next perek, and the drizzle soon turned into a downpour.

Happy and drenched, the Jews made their way back to the city. This time, the guard was conciliatory rather than mocking. He ran after them and begged their pardon for having scoffed at them. The Rabbi

said he forgave him on condition that he promise not to mock Jews again.

In T'hilim it says, "We will never be embarrassed because we trusted in You," and "Our ancestors trusted in You and were not ashamed." Our trust and belief in Hashem will never let us down.

When Nachshon ben Aminadav jumped into the sea, there were probably many who wondered why he did so and mocked his recklessness. Yet he jumped because he had utter trust in Hashem. Even when the water reached his neck, his faith did not waiver.

The women who went out with tambourines after the miracle of the Splitting of the Sea displayed this same quality of faith. Their instruments did not suddenly materialize in the desert. From the time that they heard Moshe saying in the name of Hashem, "Tell the Jewish people to travel," they packed their tambourines, confident they would soon be needed; they had already prepared a meal to greet Moshiach.

On the verse, "blessed is the man who trusts in Hashem and Hashem will be his security," it is explained that in the way that man trusts in Hashem, that is how he is requited. When we show that we are going all the way with our emuna, that we really believe – a complete emuna, not a halfhearted belief, a cautious trust so as to protect us from disappointment – then Hashem is our security.

I visited Toronto and learned with one of the mekuravim the sicha about the Yalkut Shimoni in connection with the Gulf War. He exclaimed, "Then I need to prepare! I have to prepare my house for Moshiach. I need mezuzos." Within two days he had put up 26 mezuzos in his home!

I met him recently and he told me that he learns with a certain



Rabbi Menachem Mendel Gluckowsky

rabbi who is not a Lubavitcher. "When I told the rabbi about the Yalkut Shimoni, he cooled my excitement about Moshiach with the warning, 'Be careful so you won't be disappointed.'"

The Rambam writes, "I believe with *complete* faith in the coming of Moshiach" – not half faith. That is how the Rebbe taught us, to believe all the way. Chassidim aren't afraid of disappointment.

It happens that a person has a tzara and is in need of a yeshua. He is told, "Don't worry, Hashem will help. You will see that it will work out in the end." How can we make such statements? Maybe he will be

disappointed?

The Rebbe asks this question in one of the sichos. On the one hand, we say with complete confidence that everything will work out well; on the other hand, we know that there are things we don't understand, that "this too is for the best," and "everything Hashem does, He does for the good."

One of the answers the Rebbe gives is that a Jew is a part of G-d Above; just as Hashem can contain opposites, so can the soul of a Jew. This potential has been conferred on the Jew, and we have the ability to believe with complete faith that everything will be fine while

LEADER OF THE ENTIRE WORLD

I went with a delegation of Chabad rabbanim to visit Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu. We brought with us two kuntreisim of D'var Malchus that had been published at that time. R' Eliyahu looked through one of the booklets and then asked in wonder, "How does the Rebbe have time for this with all his other involvements?"

One of the rabbanim responded, "You know, the Rebbe is like Moshe Rabbeinu who was occupied with leading the Jewish people but nevertheless found time to learn, to write a Torah and numerous other activities."

R' Mordechai Eliyahu retorted, "How can you compare? Moshe Rabbeinu led a few million people in the desert while the Rebbe leads the entire world!"

Throughout the years, the Rebbe did not stop talking about Moshiach... As Chassidim, every limb in our bodies ought to be fixated on Moshiach and how to bring him. That is what is demanded of us now... When the heart, which is the Rebbe, constantly feels Moshiach, how can we, the limbs, not feel it?

simultaneously knowing that whatever the outcome, it is for the good. The belief is not partial; it's complete faith and utter trust. We are not afraid of disappointment because we know that we have the kochos. It is the complete faith that brings the yeshua, "for Your salvation we hope all day."

In his first maamer, "Basi L'Gani," the Rebbe explains how tzaddikim brought the Sh'china down from one heaven to another but our job is to bring it down to earth. By the Rebbe, everything comes all the way down.

To the Rebbe, the belief in Moshiach is tangible. The same is true for Torah and mitzvos, emuna, neshama, anything to do with

Elokus; it's all very real. The Rebbe brings it all down because this is the job of Moshiach, to reveal G-dliness, "and the glory of Hashem will be revealed and all flesh will see together that the mouth of Hashem spoke," till flesh sees G-dliness.

Some say it's too much for them. "Let me continue leading my life and what will be, will be."

When the situation in Russia was at its worst, the Rebbe Rayatz gathered ten loyal Chassidim and they took an oath that they would be with him till the last drop of blood. The Chassidim left the Rebbe's room shaken. They realized that something fateful had occurred at that meeting but, they confided to the secretary, R' Chatshe Feigin, that

they were afraid and didn't quite understand what it all signified.

R' Chatshe told the Rebbe about their apprehensions and the Rebbe said, "If the heart is not afraid, how can there be fear in the other limbs?"

When the heart, which is the Rebbe, constantly feels Moshiach, how can we, the limbs, not feel it? So when they tell us that we are crazy about Moshiach, that's not an insult, it's really a compliment, because it demonstrates our connection with the Rebbe, the heart.

The Rebbe once said with some satisfaction, "They say that I am crazy about Moshiach." When people on the street say to me, "Rabbi, what's up with you people? You aren't normal!" I thank them for the compliment!

Throughout the years, the Rebbe did not stop talking about Moshiach. Every breath he takes has to do with Moshiach. In every sicha, the Rebbe speaks again and again about this topic. As Chassidim, every limb in our bodies ought to be fixated on Moshiach and how to bring him. That is what is demanded of us now.

How do we do this? By learning inyanei Moshiach and Geula. If we want to start living with Moshiach, we have to sit and learn.

I know of households where, at every meal, a member of the family says a vort on inyanei Moshiach and Geula. Each of us needs to instill the atmosphere of Moshiach in our homes and to prepare the world for his coming. The Rebbe says the world is already ready; far more ready than we think. We have to get out there and do — one small action is all it takes to tip the scales.

In the time of the Rebbe Maharash there was a Chassid who asked how to begin to serve Hashem. The Rebbe told him: Devote yourself; put aside all your desires and devote yourself, and then you'll find the way.

Now, too, we need to set aside our personal desires and devote ourselves to the task of preparing the world for Moshiach. The world is ready for Geula and we just need to get out there and talk about it, make it something tangible and real. The Rebbe told us to “do all that you can” to bring Moshiach.

They tell about a Chassid of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev who had financial problems and for an entire year he was unable to pay his rent to the paritz (landed nobleman). One day, he was summoned to the paritz to discuss the matter. He knew the paritz was going to throw him out of his inn and he rushed to R' Levi Yitzchok to get advice and a bracha.

R' Levi Yitzchok gave him a letter to give to the paritz and promised him that all would be well. The Chassid went on his way and was extremely curious about what was written in the letter. He couldn't restrain himself and he opened the envelope and unfolded the paper. To his amazement, he saw that the page was empty. Now frightened, he wondered how he dare give the paritz a blank sheet of paper.

The Chassid returned to R' Levi Yitzchok in order to consult with him but at the last minute his faith in the tzaddik was restored and he realized that if R' Levi Yitzchok had

R' Mordechai Eliyahu retorted, “How can you compare? Moshe Rabbeinu led a few million people in the desert while the Rebbe leads the entire world!”

given that paper, he surely knew what he was doing.

When he got to the paritz, he gave him the letter and nervously waited for the paritz's reaction. To his surprise, the paritz perused the letter as though he was reading something. When he finished he smiled and said, “Fine, this time I'll forgive the debts. You may go.”

The happy Chassid left the paritz and immediately headed for R' Levi Yitzchok to tell him the good news. When he told him what had happened, R' Levi Yitzchok questioned, “I don't understand; he only absolved you of the debt? Tell me exactly what you did with the letter.”

The Chassid squirmed and tried to get out of responding but finally had to admit that he had opened the letter. R' Levi Yitzchok sighed.

“That's a pity. Had you had emuna and not opened it, the paritz would have given you the inn as a gift.”

The Rebbe is giving us enormous powers. We have the ability to do this and we must be careful not to

ruin things. Hesitating when it comes to what the Rebbe said can have detrimental results and we have to strengthen our emuna and bitachon in the Rebbe's prophecy in order to hasten the complete fulfillment of his words.

The Rebbe says that Moshiach is standing on the roof of the Beis HaMikdash and announcing, “Humble ones, the time for your redemption has arrived.” The Rebbe explains that he is not literally on the roof of the Beis HaMikdash — were that the case, Geula would be readily apparent to all and there would be no need for his proclamation. Moshiach is standing, instead, on the roof of the miniature sanctuary which is Beis Rabbeinu Sh'B'Bavel and from there he is announcing, “Humble ones, the time for your redemption has arrived!”

We plead to Hashem to bring Moshiach down from the roof and bring him to the third Beis HaMikdash, and that the Rebbe redeem us immediately.

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IN THE DARKEST OF TIMES

By Shneur Zalman Levin

As a bachur he spent a few years in 770 and helped out in the office. During the year after 22 Shvat, Mem-Ches, he was almost always by the Rebbe. We spoke to Rabbi Shneur Zalman Halperin, shliach in Mevo'ot HaChermon, to hear about events of that time from his perspective.



The convoy left the house with the pall bearers leading the way carrying the black bedecked aron. The Rebbe walked a few feet back and his demeanor was ominous. He walked with head bent, occasionally turning his head to the side. His manner of walking was not the usual and he constantly murmured something. His general appearance was "zei'er tzubrochen" (very broken). He was pale and looked tired. Behind him were the members of the secretariat and behind them were Admurim and rabbanim ... (from a diary).

For a number of years, R' Shneur Zalman Halperin served as a close

assistant of the secretary, R' Leibel Groner. As the Rebbe's influence spread around the world, the secretaries' workload grew. R' Groner was assisted by several bachurim who were available for any task, knowing that their work was done on behalf of the Rebbe.

R' Halperin was a bachur who learned in 770. He spent eight years in 770 until he got married and he was very familiar with every aspect of life in 770. He was involved in the lives of the bachurim and merited to get very close to the inner sanctum.

This close involvement began in the summer of 1986 and intensified in the middle of 1987. He was asked to carry out various jobs and when he did them well he was given additional opportunities until he became part of the everyday work.

What were your jobs?

"To carry out what I was asked to do," said R' Halperin. He is unwilling to go into detail even today, over twenty years later. "If R' Groner had to do everything himself, it would have held up the Rebbe."

Unlike the other bachurim, he was able to attend the Rebbetzin's funeral and he was close to the Rebbe throughout the Shiva, at the house and at the daily t'fillos.

"5748 was a special year," he recalls. "It was a Hakhel year and the Rebbe spoke a lot about it and promoted Mivtza Hakhel. The year started out with tremendous simcha. Simchas Torah that year was extraordinary. Then we had 2 Kislev when the s'farim were returned and the Rebbe urged great efforts in Mivtza Chanuka every single day. The atmosphere at the time was uplifting. On 15 Shvat the last farbrengen on a weekday took place. It was a short farbrengen that lasted over two hours. The Rebbe distributed fruit."

"There was the feeling that something was happening, that it was a special time." So the passing of the Rebbetzin on 22 Shvat was an

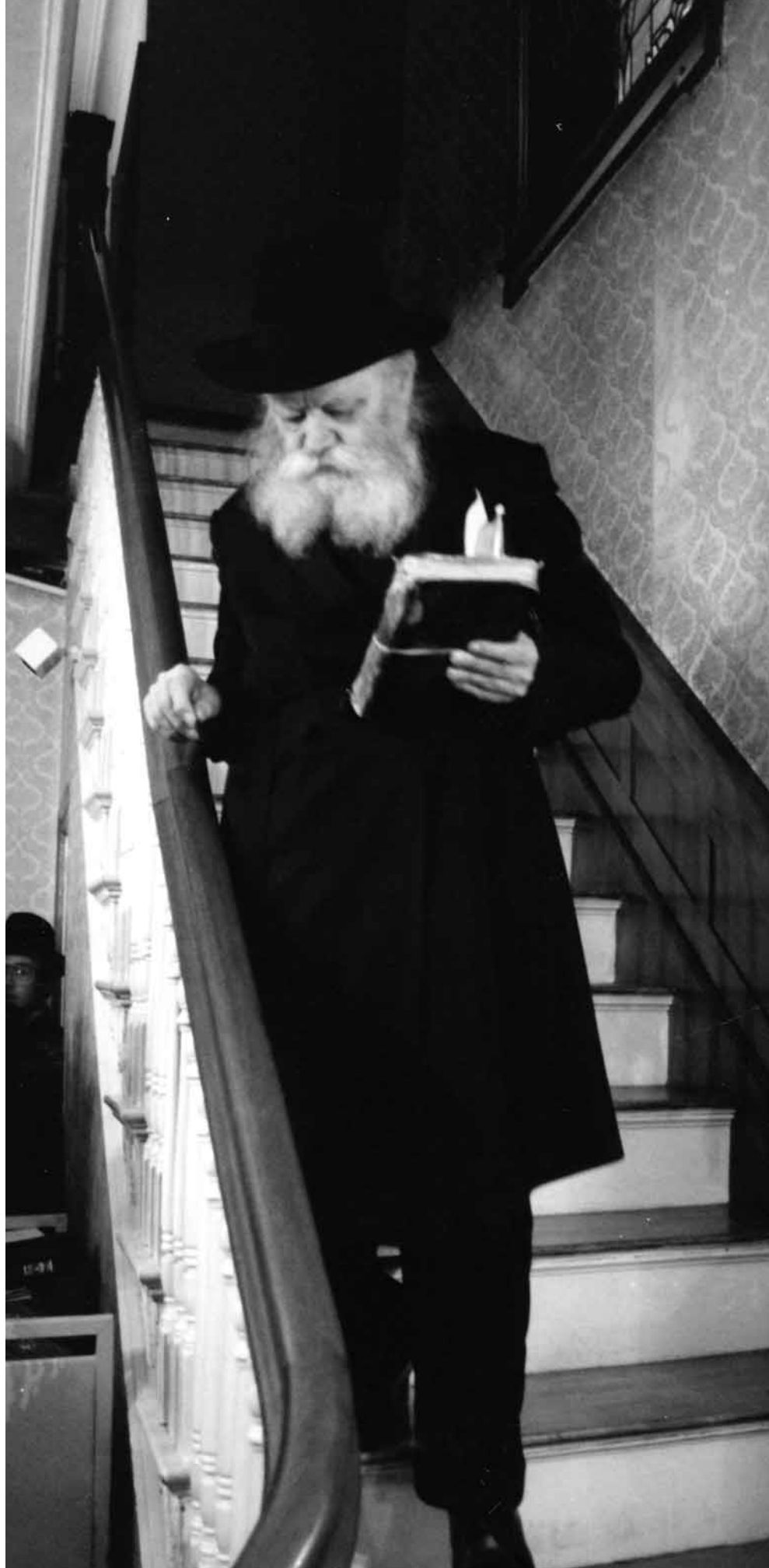
unpleasant shock. "It's not like we could have prepared for it; it was a complete surprise." Nobody knew that the Rebbetzin had been to the hospital twice before.

R' Halperin was in one of the offices on Kingston Avenue. The bachurim were in the dormitory, some of them chatting while others were getting ready for bed. When he finished his work after midnight, he went out and met R' Meir Harlig and R' Nachum Sternberg walking together to 770. Although it was dark, he noticed that something was amiss. When he asked them what was wrong, they told him the sad news. They knew about it from Mrs. Sternberg who had been with the Rebbetzin when she passed away in the hospital.

They quietly walked into 770 which was dark. Two or three bachurim were learning in the small zal. When they went down to the big zal it was dark there too and very few people were sitting there. People heard that something happened. R' Chaim Boruch Halberstam, who was in charge of the broadcasts and was always on top of the news, knew about the Rebbetzin's passing.

"R' Harlig suggested, 'Let's go to the Rebbe's house.' The Rebbe's house was always 'distant' from us; it was a symbol of the Rebbe's privacy, yet I joined him. We got to the house and it was dark. We didn't know what to do and we just stood there and waited. After a few minutes a light went on in the foyer and the front door opened. The Rebbe stood in the doorway. R' Harlig went over to the door as I stood at a distance. The Rebbe spoke to R' Harlig and asked him to speak with the chevra kadisha. It was only afterwards that we learned that Dr. Feldman was the one who informed the Rebbe by phone about his wife's passing.

"The Rebbe asked that his tallis and t'fillin, Siddur and Kitzur Shulchan Aruch be brought to him



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from his room in 770. R' Harlig ran to R' Groner's house to update him and to tell him what the Rebbe wanted. Not long afterwards the door opened again. R' Harlig went over to the Rebbe and told him that they had gone to R' Groner. A few minutes went by and the Rebbe came out a third time and said that if they didn't bring him the items he had asked for, he would go to 770 himself.

"In the meantime, some other people who heard the sad news had gathered there. I ran to 770 and said that soon the Rebbe would be arriving. There was great confusion. We returned to the Rebbe's house where R' Groner and R' Sholom Ber Gansburg were. R' Harlig told the two of them that the Rebbe said that he didn't want anybody in the house. R' Gansburg wondered whether the Rebbe included him but all R' Harlig could do was shrug and say, 'That's what the Rebbe told me.'"

According to other diaries that were written about that night, a short while later R' Gansburg entered the house and then so did R' Groner.

The mikva on Eastern Parkway was opened at 3 a.m. and it was announced that whoever wanted to join in the recitation of T'hilim should immerse first. The funeral was announced for twelve noon and the tahara would take place in the

house.

The aron arrived at about 5:30 and the Rebbe went out to greet it with slow steps. With head bent a little and his eyes opened wide and ablaze, he gazed upon the aron and the members of the chevra kadisha who carried it. The sight was frightening. (Diary)

"I stood there," said R' Halperin, "and when the car came with the aron, they went in to inform the Rebbe. The Rebbe left his house and walked nearly to the sidewalk and he followed behind the aron into the house where it was placed in an inner room near the kitchen. The Rebbe remained alone with the aron for a few minutes and then gave instructions to R' Berel Lipsker of the chevra kadisha."

At 9:30 they davened Shacharis downstairs and the Rebbe went down to say Kaddish. R' Halperin remained in the house the entire time even though the other bachurim only entered in groups for a few minutes to say T'hilim and were immediately replaced by others.

"The funeral which left the house at twelve was an awe inducing sight. The Rebbe walked down President Street till Kingston and from there crossed Eastern Parkway where he got into his car."

Police on motorcycles went ahead of the car. The streets were probably cordoned off beforehand because it

took only ten minutes to get to the cemetery. Only about 100 people were present at the burial near the grave of Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah, the mother of the Rebbe Rayatz.

After the burial, which was already described at length in other diaries, the Rebbe returned to his house. For the following year the house became the Rebbe's headquarters.

"After the funeral the Rebbe went home and up to his room on the second floor. The first t'filla that he davened as the shliach tzibbur was Mincha after which he said a short sicha."

What was the atmosphere like during the Shiva?

"There was a feeling of confusion. Throughout the Shiva the Rebbe spoke in a very low tone, not the way we were used to hearing him. He was very serious and you could see that he was greatly pained. Sometimes it seemed as though the Rebbe sought to receive encouragement from those who came to console him. This was not the way we were used to seeing the Rebbe who always was the one on the giving end.

"The first Admur to come and console him was the Stoliner Rebbe and in the days that followed there were other Admurim who came as well as rabbanim and roshei yeshiva. All this was printed already."

Throughout this time you were in the Rebbe's house during all the t'fillos?

"Yes."

From day one there was a new way of doing things. The Rebbe remained at home and R' Groner manned the office which moved to the Rebbe's house in the room off the kitchen. A phone system was set up in the house and everything was run from this house. All the letters and requests from around the world arrived at 770 and were brought to the Rebbe's house. During the Shiva they only brought the most urgent

questions to the Rebbe like those about surgery, brachos for life and death matters, shidduchim, etc.

“That year R’ Groner sat there from morning till night. Every so often he would go upstairs to bring to the Rebbe those things he needed to attend to.

“The Rebbe did not receive nichumim all day. It was only after davening that people passed by the Rebbe to console him and then he went upstairs and stayed in his room.

“The atmosphere was homelike; it was all about the Rebbe’s privacy. That’s the way it was during t’fillos so that immediately afterwards everybody left. When the Shiva was over, the house reverted to its private state.”

Do you remember a special moment from that time?

“So many people came to console the Rebbe: Hundreds and even thousands. They usually went through quickly and only Admurim and distinguished people sat down to talk. The Rebbe treated each one with appreciation but with some of them you could see that the Rebbe was happy that they came like the Munkatcher Rebbe with whom he spoke for fifteen minutes.

“The only political figure from Israel who came, as far as I can remember, was Binyamin Netanyahu who was Israel’s ambassador at the UN.”

At Maariv there was crying during Kaddish after Aleinu ... After Maariv, the crowds waiting outside to console the Rebbe passed by. They included many rabbanim and distinguished communal figures.

Today the Rebbe’s niece came from Eretz Yisroel and the Rebbe spoke to her for about an hour. (Diary)

As a bachur, what do you remember of the atmosphere in 770 in general?

“Until 22 Shvat, the Rebbe arrived at 770 every day for a full



R’ Halperin (standing on the left) near the Rebbe

The Rebbe said many times that we need to think about it, repent, and as a result – increase in all matters of life with simcha; and since the event about which we say “and the living shall take it to heart” was not ordinary, therefore, the increase also needed to be out of the ordinary.

day’s work and more. After 22 Shvat the Rebbe stayed home and the atmosphere in 770, aside from the mourning, was of a void. All of a sudden the Rebbe was not appearing each morning, the Rebbe wasn’t coming out for Mincha and Maariv, there was no routine anymore. During the Shiva, those in 770 heard the t’fillos at the Rebbe’s house via a live hookup. Throughout that year, bachurim did not see the Rebbe except on Yom Tov and some Shabbasos. Bachurim who persisted could occasionally attend a t’filla at the Rebbe’s house but they left immediately afterwards. There was a sense of painful concealment.”

On Friday, the Rebbe went to

770 to be there for Shabbos which lightened the atmosphere somewhat. On Shabbos there was a farbrengen, for it was Shabbos Mevarchim. Right after Shabbos the Rebbe sat in mourning at his place in 770 while the huge crowd quickly passed by for about twenty minutes and then the Rebbe returned to his house where he stayed for the next three weeks, until after the Shloshim.

“There were many changes the rest of that year. The Rebbe stayed in his house and that is where t’fillos took place as well as ‘dollars’ and sichos. The mail was brought there. You can just imagine what Purim

[Continued on pg. 40]

MOSHIACH: WHAT WE BELIEVE



Rabbi Gershon Avtzon, Rosh Yeshiva in Cincinnati

PART 11 OF 20.

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.

In our previous article, we reconciled the view of Rambam - that the era of Moshiach will be an all-natural era - with the basic belief in the resurrection of the dead - T'chiyas HaMeisim. We were then left with the question:

Will all Jewish people – including sinners – be resurrected?

In truth, this is discussed openly in the Mishnayos. The Mishna states, (Sanhedrin Perek Chelek - Talmud 90a) “Every Jew has a portion in the world to come i.e. the resurrection of the dead.” However, the Mishna then enumerates many people - sinners - who do not have a portion in the resurrection. One of the examples is a person who does not believe in the resurrection. Being the Hashem punishes “measure for measure,” this person does not merit to be a part of it.

From the Mishna it seems clear

that there will be a few people who will not merit to be part of the resurrection. The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains (see Igros Kodesh Vol. 1, pages 141-153) that even these people have ways to “join” the resurrection:

1) If the individual repents - even at the end of his/her life. This is written clearly in Rambam, Hilchos T'shuva, Perek Gimmel.

2) If this individual has a very righteous son. This is based on the Talmud (Sanhedrin 104a) that states, “A son brings merit to his father.” This applies even if the parent does not do T'shuva. This is also if the son does not pray that the father be granted resurrection. The same would be true if the father was a righteous man and the son was the sinner, that the father would bring merit to the son.

3) If other righteous people pray on the behalf of the individual, even if he has no righteous descendants. This is evident from the story in the Talmud (Chagiga 15b) of a sinner who was elevated to Gan Eden - which is harder to obtain than the resurrection - through the prayers of Rav Yochanan. This includes if others have given Tz'daka in his honor.

4) If the sinners were embarrassed after their death, it helps them enter the world of truth. This can be deduced from the statement in the Talmud Yerushalmi (Kilayim Perek 9 halacha 3) regarding the sinner Yeravam. It states that since his body was burned after his death - with the Z'chus HaAretz - he will be resurrected.

5) Even if one does not have any of the above merits, his soul will still be resurrected. Most of us are reincarnations of previous souls. The soul of a body that would not merit resurrection, will join another part of its soul in a different body. (This is a separate subject and may be explained a different time - see Seifer HaGilgulim chapter 5)

From the above it is clear that every soul will be resurrected into a physical body in the time of T'chiyas HaMeisim.

PART 12 OF 20

We must now return to our main topic - the qualifications and characteristics of the human Moshiach. We were left with a question:

Is there a stage between Chezkas

Moshiach and Moshiach Vadai?

The answer is - in a word - YES.

To comprehend this stage, we first must understand the following: For an individual to be Chezkas Moshiach, **HE** must be holy and worthy. For someone to reach the stage of Moshiach Vadai, **WE** - the generation - must be holy and worthy. Someone who is Chezkas Moshiach is a Tzaddik who cares about the Jewish people. But that is not enough to make him Moshiach Vadai. For that - building Beis HaMikdash, ingathering of exiles - to happen, Hashem must decide that the time is right. That decision is based on our work and effort.

In general there are four stages (see Chasam Sofer T'shuvos Choshen Mishpat 98):

- 1) Having an individual that is **fitting** to be the redeemer of Klal Yisroel.
 - 2) Being **appointed** by Hashem to be the redeemer of Klal Yisroel.
 - 3) **Doing** the activities that the redeemer needs to do. These activities can't be done until one is hired. Just as in any job, even if someone has the ability to be a CEO of a company, he can't actually work until the board hires him.
 - 4) **Finishing** the job. At that point - when the Beis HaMikdash is standing and all Jews are in Eretz Yisroel - we can say, "Job well done!" and the Geula is here.
- [To put matters into perspective: The **key** stage is stage number two. Once Moshiach is appointed - or

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"anointed" -, there is no turning back. From the Sicha of VaYeira, 5752, it is clear that we have passed that stage. I must clarify an important point. Rambam writes that certain Torah laws will change with the arrival of Moshiach - such as not fasting on the set fast-days, etc. This does not start until **after** stage four.]

We see these four stages by our first redeemer - from our first exile in Egypt - Moshe Rabbeinu:

- 1) Moshe Rabbeinu, until the age of 80, was a Tzaddik and a mystic - he was born with a Bris Mila already done by Hashem! - but did not take any action as the redeemer.
- 2) Hashem tells Moshe - in middle of the desert through the burning-bush - that he is the redeemer.
- 3) Moshe goes to Egypt and brings the 10 plagues.
- 4) On the 15th of Nissan, 2448, the Jewish people leave Egypt as a

free nation.

One may ask: If this second stage is so crucial, why does the Rambam not mention it?

The answer is simple. The Rambam is a book of Jewish Law, dealing with practical things we can do or that we can identify in others. Being that stage two is a private "meeting" between Hashem and Moshiach - as we see by Moshe, it happened in a barren desert! - Rambam does not discuss it.

There is still one more point that we need to address: If one reaches the stage of Chezkas Moshiach, is there still a possibility of him not actually being the Moshiach? In other words: Can he lose his Chazaka?

This will be addressed IY"H in our next article.

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PUTTING T'FILLIN ON EVERY JEW HE MEETS

By Mendel Tzfasman

About fifty years ago, Chabad Chassidim in Yerushalayim advertised a Chassidishe farbrengen that would take place in the Beis Yisroel neighborhood and both Lubavitchers and friends of Lubavitch were invited. Thirteen year old Yankele Tzirkus, who lived in Katamon, asked his father, a Sanzer Chassid, permission to attend.

About fifty years ago, Chabad Chassidim in Yerushalayim advertised a Chassidishe farbrengen that would take place in the Beis Yisroel neighborhood and both Lubavitchers and friends of Lubavitch were invited. Thirteen year old Yankele Tzirkus, who lived in Katamon, asked his father, a Sanzer Chassid, permission to attend.

"To say that you are a Chabad Chassid, I cannot, but you are certainly an admirer of Chabad," his father responded with a smile, and he gave his permission.

The young boy attended hundreds of farbrengens and with the guidance of his Lubavitcher neighbors, the Rabinowitz brothers, who showered him with love, he switched from Chevron yeshiva to

Tomchei Tmimim in Lud. Later on he was one of the ten Tmimim who constituted the first group to go on K'vutza in 5721, a K'vutza which enjoyed special kiruvim from the Rebbe and the Rebbe's unusual involvement on their behalf in the highest echelons of government and the military.

Rabbi Yaakov Tzirkus, resident of Nachalat Har Chabad, father and grandfather to a family of shluchim, has a Chassidishe hobby: taking care of the Yiddishkait of Israeli soldiers. And it's not only the soldiers. Wherever he goes, whether to the bank or the post office, shopping or personal errands, he always takes along a pair of t'fillin and a pile of brochures.

K'VUTZA

R' Tzirkus' enthusiasm for mivtza t'fillin began even before the campaign was formally introduced. While still a bachur in Tomchei Tmimim in Lud, before the Six Day War, he would take the train on the Yerushalayim-Lud line to and from yeshiva, and he would put t'fillin on with the passengers. On Lag B'Omer in Miron he would be found offering visitors an opportunity to put on t'fillin; mainly policemen and soldiers who were already acquainted with mivtzaim from mivtza Dalet minim and other holiday-related activities.

As his third year of yeshiva g'dola in Lud drew to a close, he and his friends formulated an ambitious dream: they yearned to travel to the Rebbe and learn in 770 for the following year. Although individuals like Zushe Feldman, Reuven Dunin and Avrohom Sossonkin had done so, there had never before been a group of Tmimim who flew together to the Rebbe and remained to learn in 770. They would be the first K'vutza – a term that originated with them.

The hanhala of the yeshiva did

not readily agree to let ten of them go out of the fifty students. Nor was this the only hurdle they had to pass. They also needed visas for the US and even more challenging than that, the entire group had to get permission from the IDF to be away for such a long period of time. And of course they needed money for the flight.

The logistics weren't at all easy and more than once it looked as though it would not work out, but the Rebbe's personal intervention and the efforts on the part of Chabad askanim, as well as their determination to go, made their dream come true.

R' Tzirkus nostalgically recalls that wonderful year:

"We arrived in 770 on Erev Shabbos Slichos and we felt that the Rebbe was very happy that we had come. Throughout the year we had a problem with the army, since they had given us permission to leave for only three months and made it clear from the outset that an extension was out of the question. When we asked, as a group, for an extension since we were already there with the Rebbe, we got approved in a most amazing way. When we wrote a letter to the Rebbe in which we said we also wanted to ask the American consulate for an extension of four months, the Rebbe responded quickly: **It is proper, and perhaps for a period that includes the holiday of Pesach (and you can add that as a reason for the request).**

"At the Yud Shvat farbrengen of that year, the Rebbe encouraged the singing from the start, and throughout the farbrengen the Rebbe was extremely happy. We felt the Rebbe was speaking to us personally. In one of the sichos the Rebbe spoke about the klipos that abound in this world and need to be broken. It needs to be done in a natural manner, but by raising nature itself above nature.

"At the end of the sicha the



Rabbi Tzirkus on mitvza t'fillin at Nisanit before the Expulsion

When he came down with the bottle in hand, the Rebbe asked him to start singing "Hoshia es Amecha" and the Rebbe stood in his place and encouraged the singing. The entire 770 danced like on Simchas Torah.

Rebbe asked who was responsible for the Tmimim from Eretz Yisroel. Rabbi Mentlick said that he thought it was Halperin, and Halperin went over and got a bottle of mashke from the Rebbe to distribute to us. When he came down with the bottle in hand, the Rebbe asked him to start singing "Hoshia es Amecha" and the Rebbe stood in his place and encouraged the singing. The entire 770 danced like on Simchas Torah."

Throughout the half a year (the duration of the first K'vutzos), the bachurim received many kiruvim and fatherly treatment from the Rebbe. The ultimate expression of their special treatment was the yechidus for them and for the bachurim who traveled to Lud in their place on 17 Adar I, before their return home. The Rebbe said a maamer for them which began with the words, "A

person should not part from his friend except with a d'var halacha, for in this way he will remember him." In addition, the Rebbe gave them each a Tanya and a dollar for tz'daka, to strengthen the "in this way he will remember him."

R' Tzirkus told us about his personal yechidus with the Rebbe on his birthday, as was done in those days:

"My yechidus was on Thursday night, the night of 23 Kislev, the eve of my birthday. Back then, private audiences took place on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. The Rebbe asked me whether I had had an aliya to the Torah the previous Shabbos (as is customary) and I said that I had. Then the Rebbe said that since my birthday was on Friday, I should try to review the parsha twice with Targum over the course of the day."

“AND THEY WILL FEAR YOU”

R' Tzirkus relates:

I once went with my “mivtzaim chavrusa,” R' Ritterman, to a pillbox (a small security post) between Dugit (which, sadly, is no more) and the sea. The place is well fortified and high enough that it overlooks the entire Arab area. The soldier opened the heavy iron door for us and asked whether he could put on t'fillin while his friend, a Russian goy, stayed on guard upstairs. Of course, we were happy to oblige.

He asked us why it was important to put on t'fillin and what it accomplishes, and we explained that aside from the importance of the mitzva and how we connect to Hashem through it, t'fillin protect us and save us from attacks and imposes fear upon the enemy. “But they don't see us,” he wondered. We said that this is what our Sages say and something the Rebbe repeated numerous times, and it works, even if we don't see it.

Because of the hermetically sealed doors and the height of the steps within the pillbox, you can't hear upstairs what is said downstairs. While we were putting on t'fillin with the Jewish soldier, the Russian guy upstairs, his binoculars trained on the terrorists' position a few kilometers opposite us, noticed something odd. “I don't know what happened to them,” he remarked. “All day they are walking around outside their post and suddenly they rushed inside in fright.”

EIGHT-YEAR-OLD TANKIST

Ever since the Rebbe announced mitzva t'fillin, R' Tzirkus' friends cannot remember a single Friday that he did not go on mitzva t'fillin. He goes with R' Zev Ritterman every Friday to put on t'fillin with soldiers on the Gaza border and, of course, those they meet on the way.

His neighbor, R' Refael Cheruti, who joins him for mivtzaim on Shabbos to take care of “his base,” related:

“One time, following a good hachlata, we walked to the Kastina Junction, where we knew we would find many soldiers. We barely made it to the first junction on the way out of Nachala since R' Tzirkus didn't miss a single person on the way.

No wonder, then, that he often gets home barely a few minutes before candle lighting.

His family never tried to stand in the way of this demanding schedule. “All the children are grown and nobody is at home except for my

wife, so all the mivtzaim and the merits are hers. This was especially the case while the children were younger – though the work was all on her, she consistently showed the children how happy she was that their father went on mivtzaim.

“Of course, I can't let the sole burden of the Shabbos preparations fall on my wife's shoulders. That's why I go shopping on Thursday. And when the children got older, they helped a lot. Sometimes I would take one of the children along. Till today, when my children and sons-in-law come for Shabbos, they come along with me on Shabbos to complete a minyan at the army base.

“In Elul, 5735/1975, I went with my then eight year old son, Yossi to the Rebbe. At the end of one of the farbrengens, the Rebbe gave out bundles of dollars to the tankists. When I passed by the Rebbe with my son, the Rebbe asked me, “Is he also a tankist?” When I said yes, he joined me on mivtzaim, the Rebbe

gave him a bundle of bills which he distributed to the children.

PREPARING THE ARMY FOR GEULA

When the Tzirkus couple was newly married they lived in Yerushalayim and then in Kfar Chabad. After the Rebbe's instruction that young married couples should move to the newly founded Nachalat Har Chabad became public, they moved there.

R' Tzirkus related:

Years ago, the Rebbe set a limit of two years for Kollel. In general, at one time there were no kollelim in Lubavitcher communities in Eretz Yisroel and Crown Heights. I remember that there were Lubavitcher kollelim in Toras Emes in Yerushalayim where Chassidim sat and learned till an advanced age. When we moved to Nachala, the Rebbe added a “bonus” and said that those who moved could add another two years of learning in kollel.

R' Tzirkus did not suffice with his enthusiastic involvement in mitzva t'fillin and the mitzva of a letter in a Torah scroll for soldiers and children. Throughout the years he also put a lot of work into mitzva Torah, participated in – and even teaching – many shiurim in the main shul of Nachalat Har Chabad.

The Tzirkus family has been living, from 13 Nissan, 5730/1970, and we hope for many more good years to come, in a Chabad community which has expanded to provide its residents with everything a Lubavitcher family needs. But R' Tzirkus never took it easy. He found out that not far from them was the Tovala (Transport) base with 800 soldiers, and he knew there was plenty to do to help them b'ruchnius.

Activities there started in Tishrei, 5731, with a few Lubavitchers. With the onset of the Yom Kippur War,

the base became a hub of activity from where all IDF vehicles left for the front, and the mitzvaim picked up accordingly. Since then, Chassidim young and old walk to the base every Shabbos to participate in the minyan they established. This wonderful outreach work led to the creation of some baalei t'shuva among the soldiers. The bonds were so strong that the command staff of the base decided to send the emblem of the unit to the Rebbe as a sign of appreciation.

In 5735/1975, a request came from the Armored Division base, a little further from Nachala, to have a minyan there on Shabbos. The Lubavitchers decided to split up the minyan, and R' Tzirkus was "drafted" there. In later years, the base changed functions and names. For a long time it was called an Infantry Command base and today it is called the Ground Forces base. But the change in names and function did not change anything as far as R' Tzirkus was concerned. Every Shabbos he persuaded people to go along with him for the minyan, to give shiurim and hold farbrengens at the shul on the base.

Shabbos after Shabbos for thirty years, after a long and busy Friday, R' Tzirkus made the rounds of his neighbors, inviting people to join him in completing a minyan. Some brought along sons and sons-in-law. Who could refuse a Chassid who exhibited daily mesirus nefesh with the excuse that he was tired or didn't have the energy?

The minyan did not always work out smoothly. "Occasionally there were problems from the Left of the political map. For example, there was a commander on base who happily told his commanding officer how glad he was that there was a minyan every Shabbos organized by Chabad. To his dismay, the officer reacted angrily and assured him emphatically that he would put a stop to the minyan. He gave an



order not to allow us in.

"Fortunately, at that time there was a minyan arranged by bachurim from the yeshiva in Lud at the Rear Guard command center in Ramle. One of the commanders there complained and said it undermined the chaplain. When the issue was referred up the chain of command and reached the adjutancy of the High Command, that commander received an official response from the Deputy Chief of Staff that the organizing of minyanim on army bases was allowed and there was nothing wrong with it. When we got a copy of the document, it was a relief for us and the soldiers as the commander's order had to be reversed.

MOSHIACH, MOSHIACH

Of course, the main shlichus and avoda is kabbalas p'nei Moshiach. "Naturally, after every t'filla we proudly proclaim 'Yechi,' and when Rabbi Cheruti reviews the sicha of the D'var Malchus he refers to the Rebbe as Moshiach. He explains the Rebbe's prophecies and how they have been fulfilled one by one, and about the main prophecy – hinei hinei Moshiach ba.

"That doesn't mean they all

accept what we say unquestioningly. They ask questions and we sit there with them and explain it to them at farbrengens, shiurim and in personal conversations.

"I remember that one time, one of the soldiers asked me for my Moshiach pin and attached it to his uniform lapel. A week later I saw that the pin was no longer affixed to his uniform. When I asked him what happened to it, he said, 'The commander said we can't wear anything on our shirt but if the pin is that important to me, I should put it on my beret, which I did.'"

R' Tzirkus concludes with a word of advice. "Often, people decline to put on t'fillin, but when I have offered to help them with it, they are willing. It's likely that many "no's" are because they are afraid that they don't know how to do it. It pays to offer to help."

If you ask R' Tzirkus' friends or the soldiers that he sees regularly, you will hear an entirely different tip. They all know that his success is due to his personality, not his methods. When someone like him approaches you, radiating simcha, love and caring, you can't say no to him. It's not surprising that even the tough nuts to crack open up in his hands.

A LONELY ISLAND OF FAITH

By Nosson Avrohom
Translated By Michael Leib Dobry

It all started with a phone call. Mrs. Tammy Givon, a teacher by profession, was informed that her daughter had disappeared during a dangerous trip somewhere in Chile. While the Foreign Ministry, diplomats, and rescue teams were conducting frantic searches, the Rebbe's marvelous answer served as a lonely island of hope.

Israeli backpackers and tourists are known throughout the world as very bold individuals who don't think twice before setting out on challenging journeys, often fraught with danger to life and limb. Regrettably, many of them, particularly youth, have met with tragic death, getting entangled in thick forests or wild rafting down rapids. Anxiety is rampant among parents whose children go out on such excursions after completing their compulsory military service.

Mrs. Tammy Givon of Beersheva was no exception. Her fear and

concern escalated dramatically when she heard last Kislev that her daughter, Rommy, who had gone out on a trip to a nature reserve in Chile, had not returned that night. "I was in shock," Mrs. Givon said, reliving the terrible tension of that time.

"The call came in while I was in the middle of a class for my master's studies at the Kaye Academic College of Education in Beersheva. I saw an unfamiliar number flashing on my cell phone again and again, and I decided to ignore it until after class was over. However, when I saw that the caller was persistently trying to

reach me, I understood that this must be something urgent. I stepped out of class and took the call.

"I learned that a girl from Rommy's tour group had just called her mother saying that she and her friends had fallen into a pit after a thin layer of snow that obscured it caved in under their feet. No matter how they tried, they couldn't get out. Mid-sentence the call was cut off, apparently because of low battery or poor reception. The concerned mother called the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which contacted the parents of all members of this group.

"For several long minutes after ending the call, I stood motionless in the college hallway, perplexed and confused. Thunderstruck, I tried to collect my thoughts. When I recovered a bit from the paralyzing shock that had gripped me, I felt as if I was in a race against time. Every passing moment was critical towards saving their lives. I knew that they would not have taken enough food with them to spend a long time in the wilderness. On the contrary, it is customary on such trips to bring only the exact amount of food and drink necessary, in order to lighten the load.

"The first thing that I did was to gather all my children together and let them know what had happened. I didn't waste any valuable time. One of the children quickly got on the computer to check the Internet for any media information on the disappearances, putting out a call to any Israeli tourists located in Chile who could offer their assistance in the search and rescue efforts. In the midst of all the pressure created by this aura of uncertainty, I drew much encouragement from the tremendous display of brotherhood of the Jewish People, as we were flooded by e-mail messages from Jews with whom we had no prior connection. Everyone expressed their willingness to help.

"In the impromptu command post we had set up in our home, my

cousin sat on the phone and started calling all the local Chilean hostels to find out where our daughter was registered as a guest. He soon tracked down the hostel, located near the large nature reserve. The hostel staff said that the group members had left their belongings in their rented room, and they had gone out a trip scheduled to last three days.

"After my third day of absence from teaching, my colleagues at work learned what had happened. They also joined the effort by offering whatever help they could. At the school where I work, there is a teacher affiliated with Chabad. She came with an offer of a different type of help: she asked the Chabad yeshiva in Beersheva to daven for the welfare of my daughter. They also wrote a letter to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, placed it in a volume of Igros Kodesh, and requested that we should merit to have a miracle on that day. The date was Yud-Tes Kislev.

"The answer that they received gave me tremendous encouragement during those days of intense anxiety. It was a letter that discussed Redemption and good tidings, written in connection with Tuesday, Yud-Tes Kislev. What a coincidence! That very day was Yud-Tes Kislev and it also came out on a Tuesday that year. But what truly amazed me was how my friend had the courage to stand behind the Rebbe's answer. She gave her word that everything would be fine and our daughter would return safely. As for me, I just had to think positively.

The answer appeared in Volume 27, pg. 297:

I confirm the receipt of the letter...

With the completion of seven days since the day of Yud-Tes Kislev, it should be noted:

The calendar for this year – in relation with the day of the announcement, Yud-Tes Kislev, in commemoration of the Redemption of the Alter Rebbe (5559) – is

...but what truly amazed me was how my friend had the courage to stand behind the Rebbe's answer. She gave her word that everything would be fine and our daughter would return safely. As for me, I just had to think positively.

unique since it falls on the day on which "it was good" was said twice.

...[There are] several concepts in twofold good – beginning with the sayings of our Sages, of blessed memory, "Good to Heaven, good to man"...

...and the deed is the main thing, in that the auspicious day – Yud-Tes Kislev – (also) falls out this year (as it did in the year of the Redemption) on the day on which "it was good" was said twice...

"In all honesty, I was stunned by the letter, since it was dated Yud-Tes Kislev, the Hebrew date of that day. In addition, the Rebbe wrote that this was a day of announcement and redemption, and so we waited for this to be proven true.

"In the meantime, the students of the Chabad yeshiva in Beersheva said T'hillim and davened for my daughter, and we soon saw how things eventually went in the right direction.

"It was on the third day since we were notified of her disappearance. My cousin was in constant contact with the hostel where the group members were staying, to see if perhaps they had returned after all, thus putting an end to all the drama.

"During one phone call, the clerk at the hostel told him that one of the group members had returned. The group consisted of four people, and they had gone out together on a hike. When they reached the intersection, my daughter and her friend decided to follow an easier trail. Her foot had been injured along the other trail, and

walking was hard for her. The other group members took all of their equipment, water, and their backpacks, and then proceeded along the more difficult trail, scheduled to end in another three days. On the other hand, our daughter would finish her trip by the evening of the first day and return to the hostel, since she had taken a shorter route.

"The group that had continued along the more difficult route got lost along the way, arriving in an area where the snows had not yet sufficiently frozen. They fell into a pit, and from there one of the girls placed a call to Eretz Yisroel and said that they were in trouble. They tried to get out of the pit, but when all their efforts failed, they slept the night there. They tried again the following morning by the light of day, and this time they managed to get out. They continued along the trail, and when they finished as originally planned, they went back to the hostel. They were certain that my daughter and her friend had already finished their hike and were waiting for them at the hostel – but they weren't...

"Our concern over my daughter's whereabouts went up a notch once we realized what had happened. I gathered my strength, determined neither to be broken nor to lose hope. My Chabad friend gave me constant support, imbuing me with the belief that I should think good and it will be good, and that I have nothing to worry about after such a clear and encouraging answer from the Rebbe. I tried to believe her.

She and her friends had fallen into a pit after a thin layer of snow that obscured it caved in under their feet. No matter how they tried, they couldn't get out. Mid-sentence the call was cut off.

"A few hours later, I received a phone call from the helicopter that was scanning the region in search of them. The crew informed us that my daughter and her friend had been found safe and sound. I was even able to speak with her, which moved me to the point of tears.

"Later, she told me about everything she had gone through in a lengthy e-mail. It turned out that a local driver had taken them to the point where the easier trail began, but due to difficulties along the way, he dropped them off a considerable distance from the marked route. It was only eight hours later, after

numerous wrong turns, that they arrived at a point which met up with the more difficult path the other group members had taken. However, they soon discovered that they weren't there because, as we already knew, they had spent the night in the pit where they had fallen. My daughter and her friend waited for nothing.

"A series of mistakes continued to guide them over the next two days until on the third day of the trip, the day we received the answer in Igros Kodesh, Tuesday, Yud-Tes Kislev, they were found. They saw the rescue helicopter and waved for it to come

and save them. When it landed and the pilot asked if Rommy Givon was among them, my daughter burst into tears."

"Looking back," says Mrs. Givon, "this tumultuous experience changed many things in my life. Today, I believe much more in the concept of 'Think good and it will be good.' A Jew can achieve great things through his thoughts.

"Let me tell you another fascinating detail: Since the passing of my mother *a"n*, she has come to me in a dream on numerous occasions, but I have never seen her face. The night before my daughter was found, I dreamed that I saw my mother literally as she was in this world. She smiled at me, hugged me, and stroked my cheek to assure me that everything would be alright. When I told this to my cousin the following morning, she reminded me that it was Yud-Tes Kislev – *my mother's birthday...*"

[Continued from pg. 31]

was like in 770 without the Rebbe. Every year there was an especially joyous farbrengen that lasted for hours and that year there was no farbrengen. The reading of the Megilla without the Rebbe did not have that happy spirit. The weekday farbrengens stopped."

"AND THE LIVING SHALL TAKE IT TO HEART"

Throughout the year, the Rebbe constantly repeated what Shlomo HaMelech says in Koheles, "and the living shall take it to heart." This was the theme at every farbrengen and of the sichos said that year.

"It is better to go to the house of the mourner than to the house of feasting, for it is the end of every

man and the living shall take it to heart." The point being that when you enter the house of the mourner, you should think about what happened and be inspired to repent.

The Rebbe said many times that we need to think about it, repent, and as a result – increase in all matters of life with simcha; and since the event about which we say "and the living shall take it to heart" was not ordinary, therefore, the increase also needed to be out of the ordinary. In addition, people needed to contemplate the actions of the woman who departed and learn from her.

Throughout the year, the Rebbe explained this verse from different angles, each time adding an explanation and clarity about the practical meaning of "and the living shall take it to heart" – it is a

constant horaa that speaks to every person who "lives," that he needs to "take it to heart" and add in the study of Torah and the fulfillment of mitzvos.

On one occasion, the Rebbe also spoke about this horaa concerning himself: "If on every date that something special happened in a person's personal life, when that date comes around again he needs to add in the inyan of life ('and the living shall take it to heart'), all the more so that special events in the lives of leaders in Israel ('the nasi is everything') lead to an increase in the inyan of life, whether regarding the N'siim themselves that there be an increase in their own perfection (relative to the earlier perfection) or regarding their work in influencing their flock, especially regarding a Nasi and Melech."

KOSHER MEDITATION

By Dr. Aryeh Gotfryd

5742

Dr. _____
Miami Beach, Fl.

Greeting and Blessing:

After the long interval, I was especially pleased to receive your letter. May G-d, whose benevolent Providence extends to each and everyone, lead you in the way of the fullest utilization of your abilities to help others, and help yourself, in strict accord with the Torah. This is also the way of Hatzlacha in the fulfillment of your heart's desires for good.

I have underscored the words "in strict accord," because in the field of Jewish Meditation one cannot overemphasize the great caution that is required to steer clear from even the slightest admixture of Avoda Zara (idolatry) - or even the suspicion of A.Z. I bring this up here because I have received complaints about some practitioners of Jewish Meditation that some aspects of their practices are not in accord with the Shulchan Aruch. I do not know the writer personally, but since we are dealing with a highly sensitive and serious area, I cannot ignore such reports. Moreover, it appears that the complaints are basically connected with the fact that many of those who practice Jewish Meditation are not experts on Halacha, particularly on the intricacies of Avoda Zara. Of course, however well meaning a Jew is, the fact that one is an M.D.

or Ph.D. clearly indicates that he had devoted considerable time to obtain these degrees and, to that extent, he has not been able to consecrate his time and attention to Torah and Halacha. I use the term "consecrate" advisedly, for this is what proper Torah study demands.

For this reason, it has been my advice to those Ph.D.'s and M.D.'s who wish to enter the field of Jewish Meditation, that even if they also have Rabbinical Ordination (Smicha), they should seek the advice and guidance of a competent and experienced Rav, who is an expert in those sections of the Shulchan Aruch which deal with these questions. To be sure, a Rav Moreh Horaa is expected to be proficient in all of the Shulchan Aruch, but there are Rabbanim who have specialized in this particular field, and they are competent to rule whether this or that practice has any suspicion of A.Z. And there is surely no need to emphasize how strictly one must regard any suspicion of A.Z., even the remotest.

In these days of confusion and misconception, additional precaution must be taken to avoid anything, however innocent in itself - if it can be misconstrued by a patient or by a colleague as a Heter for similar treatment or methods which may not be as innocent of A.Z.

I must emphasize again that the

above is no reflection in any way on the Torah knowledge and commitment of any person. But because no person can be fully objective in a matter in which one is personally involved, especially if it is a dedicated involvement, it is important to seek the opinion of a completely objective and disinterested Rabbinic authority.

With blessing for Hatzlacha in all above,
/the Rebbe's signature/

Announcement: Baruch Hashem, a second edition of *Mind Over Matter: The Rebbe on Science, Technology and Medicine*, is well under way. Among the many improvements is the inclusion of dozens of never-before-published letters, including the following (courtesy of R' Michael Seligson).

Call for letters: The publisher, SHAMIR Books, is offering a complementary pre-release copy of the book for each contributor of material included in the upgrade. Please reply to this email if you are able to share a bona fide letter pertaining to science, technology or medicine.

Call for assistance: The proper has a modest budget for someone to make a proper index of the book according to Chabad standards. Reply by email if and only if you are already familiar with the book's contents, have a good command of written English, and the patience and time to organize an intelligent index. Email info@arniegotfryd.com.