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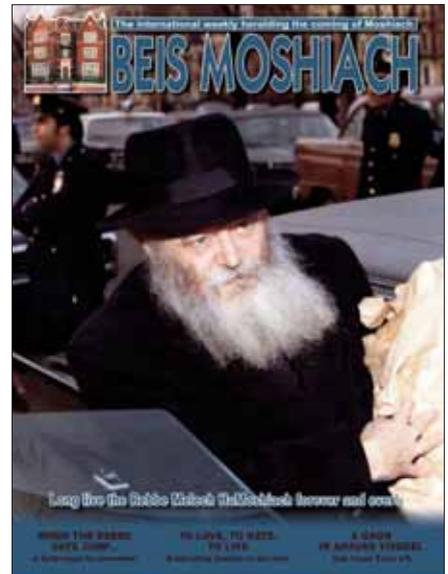
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A DWELLING AMONG MORTALS

Sichos In English

A CONTRADICTION IN TERMS

When dedicating the Beis HaMikdash, King Shlomo exclaimed in wonderment: "Will G-d indeed dwell on this earth? The heavens and the celestial heights cannot contain You, how much less this house!" [1]

For the Beis HaMikdash was not merely a centralized location for man's worship of G-d, it was a place where G-d's Presence was - and is [2] - manifest. [3]

Although "the entire earth is full of His glory," [4] G-d's Presence is not tangibly felt.

He permeates all existence, but in a hidden way. [5]

The Beis HaMikdash, by contrast, was "the place where He chose to cause His name dwell." [6]

There was no concealment; His Presence was openly manifest.

Seemingly, this is an impossibility; there is no apparent way that spirituality can be openly manifest in our material world.

For material existence to come into being, G-d condensed and contracted His light and life-energy so that it could become en clothed in material entities.

This is absolutely necessary.

Were G-dly light to be revealed without restraints, it would nullify all possibility for material existence.

To allow for our world to continue in a stable manner, G-d structured this process of self-containment into a pattern

with laws and principles as binding as those governing nature in our world.

He brought into being an entire framework of spiritual worlds whose purpose is to convey Divine energy from level to level as it undergoes the process of contraction necessary for it to be en clothed in material form.

The open revelation of G-dliness runs contrary to this entire pattern, defying the limits which He Himself established.

Nevertheless, although G-d limited the extent of His revelation when structuring the constitution of our world, He did not limit Himself.

He created a world with set bounds, but He Himself is not confined by them, and can alter them at will. He can invest His Presence in our material realm, and did so in the Sanctuary and in the Beis HaMikdash.

IN G-D'S INNER CHAMBER

The Divine Presence was revealed in the Holy of Holies.

There was manifest an ongoing miracle which reflects the nature of the revelation in the Beis HaMikdash.

The width of the Holy of Holies was twenty cubits, the ark, positioned lengthwise in the chamber, was two and one half cubits long, and there were ten cubits from either edge of the ark to the wall on both sides.

The place of the ark was not included in the measure of the chamber's span! [7]

What is most significant is that this

was not merely a manifestation of infinity.

In the Beis HaMikdash, precise measurement was a fundamental necessity.

Even a slight deviation from the required measure would render an article or a building invalid.

The fact that the place of the ark transcended the limits of space thus represents a fusion of finiteness and infinity.

This communicates the nature of G-d's Being.

He transcends both finiteness and infinity, and yet manifests Himself in both of these dimensions. [8]

This is the Torah's intent when speaking of G-d "choos[ing] a place for His name to dwell": that the physical limits of our world will not be negated and yet the spiritual will be revealed. And this fusion of opposites will enable us to become conscious of His essence which transcends - and encompasses - both the physical and the spiritual.

WHAT MAN'S INPUT CONTRIBUTES

G-d did not want this revelation to be dependent on His influence alone.

As reflected in the verse, [9] "And you shall make Me a Sanctuary and I will dwell within," He chose to make the revelation of His Presence dependent on man's activity.

Since the revelation of G-d's Presence transcends the limits of our existence, the initiative must come from Him.

Nevertheless, "G-d did not have His Presence rest upon Israel until they performed labor," [10] building the Sanctuary where His Presence would dwell.

Why was man's activity necessary?

Because G-d's intent is that the revelation of His Presence be internalized within the world, becoming part of the fabric of its existence.

Were the revelation to come from above alone, it would nullify worldliness.

To cite a parallel: when G-d revealed Himself on Mount Sinai, the world ground to a standstill. "No bird chirped..., nor did an ox bellow, nor the sea roar." [11] Although G-dliness was revealed within the world, the elements of worldly existence did not play a contributory role in that revelation.

When, by contrast, the dwelling for G-d is built by man, himself part of the material environment of our world, he elevates the nature of the worldly entities which he uses to create G-d's dwelling. This enables G-d's Presence to be revealed within these entities as they exist within their own context.

This motif leads to another difference.

When the revelation of G-dliness comes from above, it is dependent on His influence, and is therefore temporary. For example, when G-d descended on Mount Sinai, the mountain became holy and therefore, "all that ascend the mountain must die." [12]

When, however, G-d's Presence was withdrawn from the mountain, the Jews were allowed to ascend it, [13] for the fundamental nature of the mountain did not change; it remained an ordinary mountain.

With regard to the Sanctuary - and to a greater extent the Beis HaMikdash - since the holiness was internalized within the material elements of these structures, it became a permanent part of their being. And thus on the verse: [14] "I will lay waste to your Sanctuaries," our Sages commented: [15] "Even though they have been devastated, their sanctity remains." And therefore, it is forbidden to ascend to the site of the Beis HaMikdash in the present age. [2]

TWO PHASES

The above concepts are highlighted by the name of the Torah reading Truma. [16]

Truma, meaning "lifting up" [17] or "separation," [18] puts the focus on man's efforts in establishing a dwelling for G-d.

The Torah proceeds to state [19] that this truma must include thirteen [20] different entities: gold, silver, brass,..." indicating that man's task is to incorporate the various different dimensions of worldly existence in G-d's dwelling. [21]

More particularly, the two interpretations of the name Truma reflect two thrusts necessary in creating a dwelling for G-d within the world.

First, a person must designate his gift. This separates it from his other worldly property. And through its consecration, its nature becomes elevated, lifted up above the ordinary material plane. [22]

These two phases relate to the two services mentioned in the verse, "turn away from evil and do good." [23]

When a person prepares a dwelling for a king, he must first clean it.

Afterwards, he brings in attractive articles. [24]

Similarly, to make our world a dwelling for G-d, "separation" is necessary to purge the self-orientation that is encouraged by worldly existence. And then it is "elevated," becoming a medium to draw down G-d's light.

NOT AN ISLAND

The Beis HaMikdash was not intended to be an isolated corner of holiness.

Instead, its windows were structured to spread light outward, rather than to allow light to enter. [25]

For the holiness of the Beis HaMikdash was intended to be dispersed throughout the world at large.

The most complete expression of this concept will be in the Era of the Redemption. [26] From "the mountain of G-d's house" [27] will spread forth light and holiness motivating the people to learn to seek G-d's ways and "walk in His paths." [28]

These revelations are dependent on our efforts to encourage the manifestation of the Divine Presence.

Making our homes and our surroundings "sanctuaries in microcosm" [29] will cause G-d to reveal His Presence in the world openly, and not merely in microcosm.

Adapted from Likkutei Sichos, Vol. III, p. 902; Vol. XVI, p. 286ff; Vol. XXI, p. 146ff.

Notes:

1. I Kings 8:27.

2. For even in the present age when the Beis HaMikdash is destroyed, G-d's Presence rests upon its site. See Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Beis HaBechira 6:16.

3. See the essay entitled, G-d's Chosen House in Seek Out the Welfare of Jerusalem, where these concepts are explained.

4. Isaiah 6:3.

5. In human terms, concealment means that an object is obscured by another entity which covers it. With regard to G-d, there is nothing which can conceal Him. Instead, His concealment is a willful act on His part, withholding the revelation of His light. See the maamer Adam Ki Yakriv in the series of discourses entitled, Yom Tov Shel Rosh HaShana, 5666.

6. Deuteronomy 12:11.

7. Yoma 21a.

8. See the essay entitled, A Dwelling Place for G-d in Our World in Seek Out the Welfare of Jerusalem, which elaborates on this concept.

9. Exodus 25:8.

10. Avos d'Rabbi Nosson, ch. 11.

11. Shmos Rabba 29:9.

12. Exodus 19:12.

13. Ibid.:13.

14. Leviticus 26:31.

15. Megilla 28a.

16. In this instance, the choice of the word Truma as the name of the Torah reading is significant, because it is further removed from the beginning of the reading than most of the other names which have been chosen.

17. Zohar, Vol. II, p. 147a.

18. Rashi, Targum Unkelus, and others commenting on the opening verse of the Torah reading.

19. Exodus 25:3-7.

20. This follows the interpretation of Rashi (Exodus 25:2). Rabbeinu Bachaye and others reckon fifteen items donated for the Sanctuary.

21. These concepts indicates a sequence to the readings of Yisro, Mishpatim, and Truma.

Yisro focuses on the Giving of the Torah, when the division between the physical and the spiritual realms was nullified. Mishpatim reflects the extension of the bond between the spiritual and the physical into human reason.

Moreover, it provides us with guidelines for investing spiritual content into our material lives. With the command for the construction of the Sanctuary, Truma represents the consummation of the process, the transformation of material existence into a dwelling for G-d.

22. This concept has halachic ramifications. Once an object is consecrated, it can no longer be used for mundane purposes.

The concept of elevation that results from the transfer of an article to the Sanctuary is reflected in Genesis which states: "And Efron's field in Machpelah ascended to Avraham." Rashi explains that the word "ascended" use to signify a change in title, because through the transfer the field became elevated, departing from the ownership of an ordinary person and entering Avrohom's possession.

23. Psalms 34:15.

24. Likkutei Torah, Balak 70c.

25. Menachos 86b, VaYikra Rabba 31:7. See the essay entitled "Menorah essay" in Seek Out the Welfare of Jerusalem, where this concept is explained.

26. See the maamer entitled Gadol Yiheyeh Kavod HaBayis HaZeh in Anticipating the Redemption.

27. Isaiah 2:2.

28. Ibid.:3.

29. Yechezkel 11:6; see the essay of this title in Sound the Great Shofar (Kehot, N.Y., 1992).

TO LOVE, TO HATE, TO LIVE

By Rabbi Zvi Homnick

As Chassidim of the Rebbe, we must remember that the focus on the positive and love for our fellow Jews is not about compromise with evil, G-d forbid. In fact, absolute hatred of evil in the time of exile is a prerequisite for the eradication of evil in the times of Moshiach.

TO LEARN TO HATE

As I try to think back, I don't recollect exactly at what age I first encountered the story of Reb Zalman Zezmer and Reb Binyamin Kletzker, but I do know it was in my early teens and that the story made a profound impression on me. Reb Binyamin Kletzker was traveling and ended up in the town of Reb Zalman Zezmer for Parshas Zachor (the Torah reading on the Shabbos before Purim recalling the Torah commandment to destroy Amalek). That Shabbos, during the reading of Zachor, Reb Zalman noticed the stranger in town and was taken by the intense abiding hatred for Amalek that his countenance evinced. Afterward, Reb Zalman

approached him and inquired as to where he had acquired such animosity for Amalek, and Reb Binyamin directed him to the Alter Rebbe in Liozna. Reb Zalman did indeed go to Liozna and became the legendary Chassid, known, besides for his own personal qualities, for having brought Reb Hillel of Paritch to Chabad Chassidus.

If you would have asked me to articulate why I found that story to be so powerful at the time, I would have been hard pressed to formulate any sort of coherent rationale, nor did I have the spiritual vocabulary to express myself in terms of a neshama/soul reaction. Even as a self-styled Misnaged, I was never very good at hating, which made my strong inspired response ever the

more mystifying to me. Yes, I could be harsh and extreme when dogmatically inveighing against those whom I perceived to be on the wrong side of the theological or ideological divide, but I could never seem to rise to the occasion when dogma ostensibly sounded the call for animus towards actual persons of Jewish ancestry.

Amalek, on the other hand, represented only a theoretical target for unmitigated hatred without any actual ramifications. Sure, there was the pantheon of Nazi beasts, whose names were branded in the consciousness of those of my generation who grew up on Holocaust literature, but that was a more rational hatred based on actual crimes against my people. The same held true for the Arab leaders calling for, and trying to effectuate, the destruction of the Jewish population of Eretz Yisroel. And yet, on some level, I could relate to Reb Zalman seeking out a spiritual mentor who could guide him in achieving absolute hatred for evil itself.

Ironically, that story was for me a clear indication that modern day Lubavitch was the not the place to find what Reb Zalman went searching for, since it had turned into a feel good movement that no longer stood up against evil. One world famous Rosh Yeshiva that had been considered close to Lubavitch was reputed to have said that when the Rebbe and the Chassidim did not participate in the public protests against compulsory national service for girls in the State of Israel, "they cut themselves off from Klal Yisroel (the collective of the Jewish people)."

After a long and celebrated tradition of waging ideological war against the Enlightenment, government sponsored religious oppression, Zionism and Communism, the new administration in Chabad had

decided to paint a smiley face on traditional Judaism so as to make it more palatable for public consumption. To us, it smacked of granting legitimacy to Modern Orthodoxy. When Rabbi J. B. Soloveitchik made his very well publicized appearance at the Rebbe's Yud Shvat farbrengen in 5740/1980 and was accorded great honors, it only served to bolster the prevailing impression. Throughout the Seventies, as the Zionist leadership began to make more regular appearances in the Rebbe's court, we could only shake our heads in disbelief and marvel at how the Vilna Gaon must have foreseen these tragic developments.

TO LEARN TO LOVE

Although I grew up without any clear definition of what Ahavas Yisroel entails and how it is acquired, beyond the Biblical commandments to love and do acts of kindness for a fellow Jew, I always felt a strong affinity for my coreligionists. Despite having been exposed to certain religious philosophies that encouraged antipathy towards those that were "outside the fold," my natural inclination was towards feelings of kinship and brotherhood even towards those that I might keep a distance from on religious and ideological grounds. Many friends over the years would tease me about the fact that I had "a Chassidic soul" (there were other grounds for this accusation as well). Although I often protested that designation, the implicit underlying premise that love for a fellow Jew based on ancestry rather than a merit based system was a Chassidic trait, planted the seeds for my later identity shift.

Another personal quirk that I learned to keep to myself as I was growing up, was a strong sense of identification with Biblical characters. One of the main players in our history and national identity is, of course, Moshe Rabbeinu. Like every other Jewish child, I learned

about his role in taking us out of slavery in Egypt and bringing us to Mount Sinai to receive the Torah, and ultimately to the border of the Promised Land. Yet, somehow, inexplicably, I felt an almost personal connection as he faced each challenge along the way. I remember being very distraught, as a young boy, when I discovered that the Jewish people mourned Aharon more than they did Moshe, because Moshe had to enforce the law even when it entailed causing pain, whereas Aharon was able to devote himself to resolving disputes and conflicts in a more gentle manner. Didn't they realize how much Moshe loved them and sacrificed himself for them?

As I got older and tried to puzzle out these feelings, I realized how little we actually know about the figures that populate our scripture and recorded oral teachings. Who was Moshe Rabbeinu anyway? What do we know about him? How is he my teacher over three thousand years after his passing? When I would throw these questions out to friends and fellow students, I either got the exasperated eye roll or else some well-meaning babble suitable for a three year old (as well as, on rare occasions, some quasi-mystical blather). When I encountered the Chabad claim that the Rebbe is the incarnation of Moshe Rabbeinu in this generation, I was offended beyond belief, although in later years I found myself becoming intrigued by that very same idea.

One of the parallels that I found particularly noisome (and later fascinating) was the idea of the Rebbe being born a leader just as Moshe Rabbeinu was born a leader. Clearly, our Sages indicate that this was the case, as they taught that his birth was prophesied before he was born and the house filled with light upon his arrival. An even more powerful expression of this idea is the fact that Haman rejoiced over the lots falling out in the month of Adar, the month that Moshe passed

away. The Sages point out that his mistake was that he didn't know that it was also the month of his birth, on the 7th of Adar, and the positive impact of his birth outweighed the negative effect of his passing.

Living in Eretz Yisroel in 1988/89, during the height of the elections controversy centered on the debate over the legitimacy of Chabad as a religious movement, I found myself driven to developing a better understanding of the issues so I could at least claim some degree of objectivity. During that period, a new scandal erupted in the frum world in response to an article that appeared in one of the secular Israeli papers. In that article, a Lubavitch Israeli Baal T'shuva was interviewed and he spoke authoritatively about the difference between Chabad and other ultra-religious groups, in that Chabad supported the State of Israel and even encouraged serving in the IDF.

This created a huge firestorm, and I was really curious to know what the Chassidim in general had to say about his comments. I spoke to a certain Chassid who assured me that this fellow's assertions were absolutely false, and that the Rebbe was the fiercest opponent of any belief system that deviated one iota from Torah-true Judaism. However, since the Rebbe is the leader of the entire Jewish people and has to bring them all closer to G-d and His Torah, it was tactically necessary to focus on drawing people closer with love rather than denouncing evil and falsehood. Hence, it was no surprise that a recent Baal T'shuva, despite sporting a massive beard, might not have quite grasped the subtlety of hating evil while reaching out to the uneducated followers of that evil with unconditional love. For further elaboration on this point, he referred me to an article written in a Chabad publication in response to this issue.

In that article, the author explained the roles of both Moshe and Aharon in mystical (spiritual groomsman and bridesmaid between

G-d and the Jews) and practical (judge and peacemaker) terms. The author then went on to posit that in later generations these two roles were fused into one, and as such the Rebbe is the one who must lead the fight against evil and inspire the Jewish people with love for G-d and for each other. According to his thesis, the modern day approach of Lubavitch did exactly that; there is no more effective way of triumphing over evil than by getting its own adherents to reject that evil.

As a case in point, he cited an article written years earlier in an Israeli intellectual periodical, in which a certain highly regarded member of the Israeli intellectual elite bemoaned the fact that the political leadership of the country were all running to visit the Rebbe, as if he were a friend. This highbrow secularist pointed out that the Rebbe posed a bigger threat than the most virulent anti-government demonstrators, “since they only make noise and embarrass themselves, whereas he is stealing away our children, and ‘if there are no kids there will be no goats.’”

I wasn’t quite convinced but it provided a glimpse of the world from a whole new perspective.

TO LEARN TO LIVE

In Tanya chapter 10, the Alter Rebbe explains that the determinant factor in defining someone as an “absolute Tzaddik” is the fact that he has completely expunged or transformed his Evil Inclination to the point that he is totally repulsed by the pleasures of this world and has an absolute hatred for evil or anything associated with evil. This is a direct outgrowth of his great love for G-d and His Holiness and is therefore the only true measure if his love for G-d is absolute to the exclusion of all else. Furthermore, his Divine service in the sense of doing good is motivated exclusively by the desire to serve G-d, as the Zohar says regarding Moshe Rabbeinu, “like a son who devotes

himself to assisting his father and mother since he loves them more than his own body and soul...and he gives over his body to death for them to save them...”

Moshe Rabbeinu, as the all-inclusive soul of all Jews of all the generations, is the one who brings all of those souls to stand united and receive the Torah from G-d, face to face. Before doing that, he empowers the Jewish people to go out and do battle with Amalek, the worldly manifestation of absolute evil. However, before the giving of the Torah, this battle cannot be fully won, as the war against Amalek is the “war of G-d with Amalek from generation to generation,” as the Targum Yonasan writes, “until the generation of Moshiach.”

The Talmud tells us, “there is no generation whence there isn’t someone like Moshe,” and the Zohar writes, “the extension of Moshe is in each generation.” Thus, the Chabad Rebbes, the Moshe of each of their successive generations were the address to turn to whether one was inspired to search out love of G-d or hatred of Amalek/evil, the two being different sides of the same coin. And that is why they led the way in fighting false ideologies and those who would do harm to the Jews. In our generation, the generation of preparing the world for Moshiach, the Moshe Rabbeinu of our time is finishing the job of bringing the Jews to Torah and Torah to the Jews, as well as fighting the last remnants of evil by giving it no credence and substance and overwhelming it with good.

Through connecting with the Rebbe, one can actually translate these ideas and concepts into experiential reality. What used to be a mystical and spiritual concept, becomes an obvious fact, namely that the birth of Moshe Rabbeinu on the 7th of Adar, his very existence, is the precursor of the downfall of Amalek-Haman and the renewed acceptance of the Torah as a result of the miracle of Purim. Yes,

throughout the year we are focused primarily on spreading light and we are not as conscious of the war against evil, which is why we remind ourselves individually each morning in the “six remembrances” and collectively once a year on Parshas Zachor.

As Chassidim of the Rebbe, we must remember that the focus on the positive and love for our fellow Jews is not about compromise with evil, G-d forbid. In fact, as the Rebbe explains in the Maamer “Bila HaMavess...” edited for the Shloshim of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka (21 Adar 5748), absolute hatred of evil in the time of exile is a prerequisite for the eradication of evil in the times of Moshiach. The Rebbe explains there how it is possible for all Jews to achieve this if they are far from being an absolute Tzaddik. “Since each and every Jew has certain times – during prayer, or the time engaged in Torah study, or when doing the mitzva that he is exceedingly particular about, or even when engaged in permitted matters for the sake of Heaven, and even more so if in a manner of ‘in all your ways, know Him’ – which at that time, he gives over his entire being to G-dliness. And through this, he has no connection to ‘soiled garments,’ like the absolute Tzaddik. Since this unification up Above is eternal, therefore, through this is drawn the revelation that does not allow for the nourishment of the outside forces, ‘and death will be consumed forever.’”

The Rebbe, in his role as Moshe Rabbeinu of the generation of Moshiach, empowers us to unite with all Jews, devote ourselves entirely to G-dliness, and consequently reject evil entirely (even if only at certain times) so that we may do our part in assuring the destruction of Amalek/evil and gather to receive the “new Torah,” “the Torah of Moshiach,” and “we shall live before Him” in eternal life, immediately, NOW!

PLANNING FOR JOY

By Dina Reichman

Warning for educators: This article may negate apathy, cause spontaneous dancing, and induce planning behavior – to create joy.

ADAR – WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

He opens the HaYom Yom and looks at the date. 29 Shvat. The next day is Rosh Chodesh Adar. What does that mean to him?

And who is he? Is he a yeshiva bachur waiting for a change in the routine? Perhaps he is imagining the action that will begin tomorrow. He has already prepared a mask and called his friends to organize dancing during the break.

Maybe he runs a Chabad house and he's beginning the countdown: arranging Mivtza Purim, mishloach manos, the reading of the Megilla.

Maybe it's a teacher and the calendar shows him that the winter semester is ending. He sadly plans his leave-taking of the wonderful educational achievements of the previous month and wonders whether he will be able to teach properly in the coming one. He can picture his students, see the sparkle in the eyes of some of the mischievous ones, and remember the pranks they did the previous Adar. Who knows what they are planning

for tomorrow? How should he respond?

He toyed with the thought of trying to minimize, as much as possible, the influence and mood of Adar and to prevent it from disturbing his classroom routine, but then he opened the weekly D'var Malchus. He reads the Rebbe's words:

“To increase in those things which bring simcha” “and according to the principle... whoever acts earlier is praiseworthy, and whoever adds is praiseworthy...for that is how it should be regarding matters of simcha, that in and of themselves are in a way of poretz geder (break out of limitations) and all the more so ‘marbin b’simcha’ (increasing in joy) in the month of Adar...in a way that every day more simcha is added as compared to the days before.”

Now he is convinced that he cannot ignore the reality of Adar, but what precisely is required of him? On the one hand, can he miss all the wonderful opportunities of the month? On the other hand, is

the vildkait of the talmidim rightfully called simcha? What is genuine simcha and when is it not simcha but unruliness?

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SIMCHA AND HOLELUS

R' Mendel Futerfas would say that there are three pairs with which people can err. These things can look similar but are actually vastly different. They are bitachon (reliance on Hashem) and recklessness; bitterness and sadness; and simcha and holelus (wildness).

Why do simcha and holelus appear so similar? This is because both of them manifest as expansiveness and contain an element of freedom and getting out of the usual framework. Although the external expression may appear similar, at their core, they are vastly different. **Simcha comes from k'dusha**, with a person rejoicing about closeness to Hashem. He believes that everything Hashem does is good and when he senses this closeness then nothing bothers him and he is happy. The source of genuine simcha is contemplation and unification with Hashem, and when you are bound up Above then everything is good. Simcha is connected with bittul, as the navi Yeshaya says, “The meek will increase their joy in Hashem.”

This is where the liberating aspect of “simcha poretz geder” comes in. When a person has bittul, he connects to soul powers that are beyond his limits and discovers new kochos within himself. If, on a daily basis, a person has limitations, then when he is b'simcha he can go beyond them. Thus we can see a shy person addressing a crowd or someone who, out of great simcha, gives to tz'daka way more than he usually gives.

When the lady of the house operates with simcha, she realizes

that she is more productive and her ability to deal with the usual difficulties in raising children expands. She is more loving and stronger at the same time. A happy person radiates strength, life. He or she feels strong; they accomplish more and are more successful.

Holelus-wildness is from the side of klipa. The element of wind, which is how holelus is represented, doesn't really have anything to it. It's just "as if." Acting as if happy for no reason. The expansiveness that comes from holelus magnifies a person's ego but is empty of content. The person seems to expand, filling his ego much like a balloon filled with air that has no substance. Under this hollow klipa there is no joy or meaning. Holelus is a loosening of the reins and a removal of the yoke.

In contrast, the expansiveness of simcha is regulated. Since it is associated with closeness to Hashem, it includes the awareness that there is a power above me that guides and directs. This awareness leads a person to regulate himself and not to impinge on his surroundings. He won't just develop himself but will allow room for others.

Simcha is associated with achdus. When a person is happy, his sense of oneness expands. He

R' Mendel Futerfas would say that there are three pairs with which people can err. These things can look similar but are actually vastly different. They are bitachon (reliance on Hashem) and recklessness; bitterness and sadness; and simcha and holelus (wildness).

feels more generous, he wants to participate, and he includes others in his joy. Inviting people to participate in his simcha is not just a formality but an expression of his feeling of oneness with others. Holelus, on the other hand, is associated with separation. When a person is wild he seeks to make himself stand out, to make jokes and have fun at the expense of others.

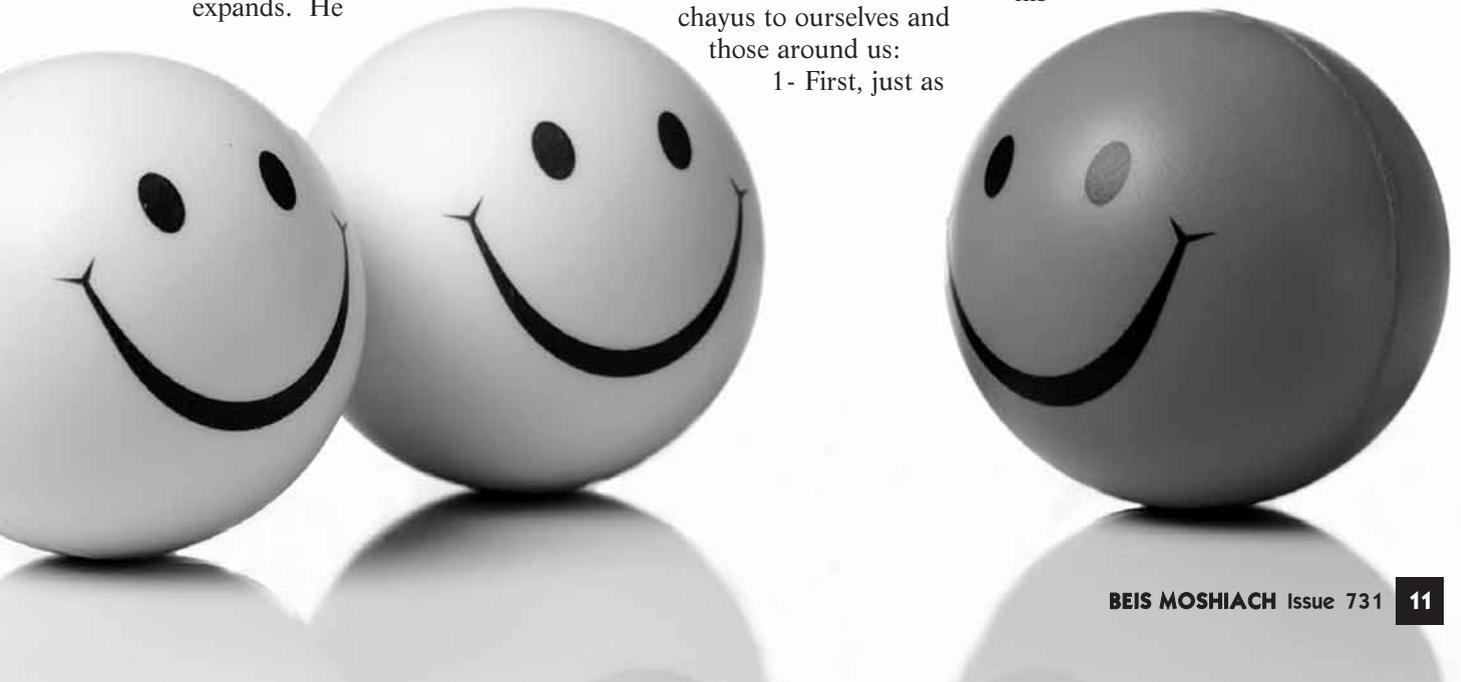
EDUCATING WITH SIMCHA

Understanding the difference between simcha and holelus will guide us when we want to make ourselves, our children, or our students happy. With this as the basis, we can derive the following principles and add in those things that bring simcha, thereby increasing genuine joy and adding chayus to ourselves and those around us:

1- First, just as

in other areas of chinuch, we need to know that our job is to be there for them in order to **direct** and guide. That is the idea of the **protective presence** of the parent or teacher. The adult makes themselves available to direct the child in the proper expression of simcha. The presence of the mechanech prevents red lines from being crossed and from situations deteriorating into "anything goes" mode.

2- This enables **taking the initiative and anticipation** as opposed to taking action after the fact. The teacher described at the beginning of this article, looking at the calendar and seeing that Adar is approaching, doesn't sit passively and wait to see what the kids have up their sleeves. He prepares and plans and fills his



When a person has bittul, he connects to soul powers that are beyond his limits and discovers new kochos within himself. If, on a daily basis, a person has limitations, then when he is b'simcha he can go beyond them.

schedule with happy activities. It is likely that the students will still make their plans, but when the teacher is prepared to have a good time with his students, he does not feel threatened by or anxious because of their ideas. He is willing to hear them out, accept the good ideas, and even appreciate the good intentions behind the not-so-good ideas.

He directs this need (for action and a change) in the right direction and utilizes the children's energy for constructive ends. He takes responsibility for what goes on. Maybe he will choose to organize things himself or maybe, as an educational goal, he will get the students involved in the planning. In any case, he is the one in charge and he supervises to ensure that they are choosing the right activities.

3-In addition, as the very nature of simcha dictates, there is the need to introduce **content and meaning** and to direct them towards **meaningful goals**. This is the essential difference between simcha, which is connected with k'dusha, and "wind" and the "devil may care" attitude which is holelus. The excess energy and the desire to be free are directed towards positive ends and are not left open, without purpose.

4-A genuine simcha activity will lead to **achdus**, cooperation, and giving. The job of the mechanech is to convey the need to think of others, to make others happy, to give. The Rebbe, in his sicha of Truma, 5752, emphasizes "the shleimus of simcha is specifically

when together with others." That is how Mordechai said the holiday of Purim should be celebrated – by making others rejoice and giving gifts to the poor, because "there is no greater or beautiful simcha than rejoicing the hearts of the poor and orphans, widows and converts." (Rambam Hilchos Megilla)

5-Simcha is associated with the sense of **actualizing the gifts** that Hashem gave us. Activities that will give expression to talents will provide feelings of satisfaction and simcha.

Similar to any other topic in chinuch, it's not enough that the teacher think how to direct the simcha and prevent holelus. The teacher needs to **work on himself to be happy** and then he can affect his talmidim. He becomes the role model for them. The same is true for giving, which is an inseparable part of simcha. In the sicha of Truma 5752, the Rebbe notes that as part of the increase in simcha, **"parents ought to add in making their children happy with those things that (naturally) make them happy."** It's very important that the teacher or parent **think about what will make others happy**. Not just to educate, to convey and teach, but simply to benefit his students. There's no doubt that a mechanech who is happy and seeks to make others happy will be more successful in having a significant impact on his students in every way, not just in the inyan of simcha.

THINK ABOUT IT

You can see how the same activity looks different if these principles are implemented. Take for example, teachers who decide to devote a lesson to simcha and dancing. If the teachers translate this into, "great, a free period; the students will do as they please and we can relax in the teachers' room and drink coffee," then they are going to miss an opportunity. If this is used as a teaching moment, the teachers will participate, take an active part in the dancing or at least supervise and rejoice along with the students (there's no question that the teachers' participation in the dancing provides a personal example and is a means to create a bond with the students, in addition to enabling them to influence the type of dancing that is done and the positive atmosphere).

The same is true if a Purim carnival is organized. An event like this offers many opportunities for organization and expression of talents. The teacher is needed in order to infuse meaning and decide how to handle the activity (example: will the "buying" be done with money, which is likely to cause discomfort for some students or, in order to preserve the good feelings for all, will they use play money that will be distributed ahead of time equally, with special rewards or prizes for good deeds).

A lot of thought should go into the social structure, paying attention that not only should the event be nice, but that each of the children will be able to enjoy it. It's important to think about to what extent each child has the ability to participate? How will they take turns so that children who are more passive or less confident won't spend the day in futile attempts to push their way in without really participating? It pays to check whether there is a sufficient variety

of booths so that each child will have an opportunity to do well with at least one thing. Plan the prize system so that each child can win, even if it's something small, even if he's not that talented (If all the booths are variations on aiming at a target, a child who isn't good at that will go home sad and disappointed. Her answer to "how was the carnival" will be "boring and disappointing.")

IDEAS FOR SIMCHA ACTIVITIES

What kind of simcha activities can we promote, whether at home or in school? The following ideas are written for students but most of them can be done at home or in other group situations:

First, the simplest form of expression when happy is song and dance. You can sing a niggun before davening or perhaps start lessons by singing together. Dancing expresses simcha and encompasses all of a person - i.e., all his limbs express simcha, from head to toe. In addition, dancing in a circle expresses achdus. The distance from all the dancers to the center is equal, there is no first or last, and this underscores partnership and unity.

Another activity which gives the students the change of pace they're looking for is 'v'na'hapoch hu' – allowing the students to prepare a lesson and be "teacher for a day," with the teacher playing the role of a student. The right choice of children will enable them to express their talents and gain experience in meaningful learning and the other children will practice respect and encouragement for each other. This will happen only if the teacher is present during the lesson.

It's important to combine activities that direct the action towards thinking of others, and to look for ways to make them happy.

It's very important that the teacher or parent think about what will make others happy. Not just to educate, to convey and teach, but simply to benefit his students. There's no doubt that a mechanech who is happy and seeks to make others happy will be more successful in having a significant impact on his students in every way, not just in the inyan of simcha.

An activity like that is "dwarf and giant," where each child draws a ticket with the name of a friend who will be his giant. The dwarf has to come up with ways to make the giant happy, ex. hide a surprise in his briefcase, make a nice card for him, etc.

Other activities serve to encourage them to say something nice to others and to strengthen their friendship. Each child can be told to prepare a "business card" (a positive one, of course) for his friend, with pictures and newspaper clippings. For example, if the magazine has an article about a farbrengen with a mashpia, the child cuts out the word "Chassidish" for a Chassidishe friend, and "mashpia" for a generous child or someone who is a good role model.

Another possibility that includes more children and gets them to move around: Each child puts a paper on his back. The children move around the room to the beat of the music and every so often they stop to write something nice on each other's papers. In the end, each child gets a full page of nice things about himself. It's a good idea for the teacher to add his own comments with his more mature

perspective. Many children will treasure these papers and rereading them will bolster their spirits for a long time to come.

Mishloach manos among classmates can also be done together with a compliment by including something symbolic that represents a good quality of the person on the receiving end (with an explanatory note): a candy in the shape of a rooster for a child who is early to rise, a chocolate coin for a generous child or for a child who saves up his money (in the positive sense, like a child who saves money for a ticket to the Rebbe). This teaches the children to encourage others and to make them happy, and enables everyone to feel good and loved.

Simcha should also be expressed by giving to the larger community: bringing joy to a senior center, preparing mishloach manos for the needy (like hospitalized children), and volunteering to help the Chabad house by packing mishloach manos or with mitzvaim.

May we merit to rejoice and bring joy to others and to be "poretz geder" and "go out [of our tzaros] by being happy." May we be poretz the gedarim of galus and go out to Geula with singing and dancing.

A GAON IN AHAVAS YISROEL

By Avrohom Rainitz

Crown Heights recently lost a dearly cherished Chassid, R' Yosef Tevel a"h, on the 4th of Shvat, the evening after he celebrated his 55th birthday. The numerous stories told about him at Shiva depicted a man who had a tremendous amount of Ahavas Yisroel. He extended himself to help all kinds of people, and he brought a smile with him wherever he went.

When I arrived at the Tevel's home to console the family over the sudden passing of their father, the house was bustling with an amazing variety of people. Yossel had touched so many as he went about his day juggling between *chesed* and work. There were Lubavitchers alongside Chasidim and Jews from all factions, distinguished professors, prison chaplains, dignitaries and relatives.

They all came to console the family in this dire time of

confusion, yet they themselves were the ones strengthened and consoled by the spirit and courage of the family. Yossel's children inherited his ability to uplift and encourage others even when it seems difficult to be happy themselves. They used the opportunity to talk to the visitors about the coming of Moshiach and to fortify them with the belief in Moshiach's imminent arrival, when Yossel will return with "*Techias Hamaisim*" (the resurrection of the deceased).

Yossel's personal life was filled with trials and tribulations, yet he never let his hardships bring him down. He had a tremendous heart in which he contained not only his own *tzaros* but in addition, the *tzaros* of the people he encountered. His genuine smile filled with a caring love to all, brought all that saw him to a level of true Chassidishe happiness.

As one of the visitors who came to support the family mentioned, "He was one of the few





extraordinary people on this earth, and it was our great honor to have known him.”

Rabbi Leibel Groner, the Rebbe’s secretary, who came to console the family, said that not a week went by without a call from Yossel with a request for assistance. But he was never asking for himself, it was always about helping others.

Sitting next to us, a well-respected lawyer Mr. Leo Kimmel found it hard to digest the enormity

of the loss. “He dedicated his life to helping others and did all he could to make people smile...“I can’t understand how he did it all by himself. I mean no one was paying him to do it...”

On the other side of the room sat a doctor who was regularly in touch with Yossel. “He was the only one in the world who could drag me out at a moment’s notice to provide medical consultation or treatment to whomever he happened to be helping at that

moment.”

Sentiments like this were shared by many doctors who came to the Shiva house. These are the kind of doctors for whom you have to wait three months for an appointment, and who are paid hundreds of dollars an hour. But for Yossel, there was no such thing as waiting on line. “When he came to us with all his energy, we just couldn’t say no.” they said.



R' Yossel Tewel a"h receiving a dollar from the Rebbe for tz'daka

HE DIDN'T WAIT FOR A THANK YOU

The lawyer Mr. Kimmel said that on a few occasions he was witness to how Yossel put in great efforts in order to free a person from jail, and upon succeeding he would not wait for any Thank You's and continue to the next matter at hand. When he asked him why, Yossel said simply, "It is enough for me that Hashem says thank you."

Yossel did chesed for the sake of chesed. Sometimes, not only wasn't he thanked, he even got yelled at for his help, but he never regretted helping and continued doing his mitzvos.

As his brother Pinnye relates:

"In the 70's I went with my brother to visit the prisons. After a full day of work we returned to 770 and my brother began to park the car. The Bochorim who saw us exclaimed, "Here are the guys from the jail." One of them called, "Hey Yossel, we needed you today! They arrested someone and now he's sitting in jail," and the bochor started to walk away. "Hey, come here!" my brother yelled after him. "Who got arrested? When did they arrest him? How can we get him out?"

The bochor, who didn't have any more information, tried to shrug him off, but my brother would not let him. "What you mean you don't know? You started to say something, where did you hear that information?"

The bachur called over a friend who knew more details and together they managed to give him the entire story. 'A Lubavitcher had been arrested and he could be released with \$1000 bail but he didn't have the money.'

"Yossel was shaken by this information. A thousand dollars and nobody has released him yet!?"

"In the meantime the rest of the bochorim left and it was my brother and I who were left. My brother didn't waste any time and within a short period he gathered \$1000 and drove quickly to the courthouse, which would be closing in ten minutes, in order to post the bail and get a release ticket for the jail. From there we rushed to the detention center. I stayed in the car because there was no parking and he went inside to get the Lubavitcher released. A few minutes later they both came out, my brothers face was beaming with joy. When they got into the car, the man turned to him angrily and said

'aren't you ashamed? I spent an entire day in prison and you just remembered to get me out now?'

"I was stunned by his lack of appreciation, but my brother without blinking an eye turned to him and said 'you are absolutely right. I am very sorry that I didn't come sooner.'"

THE REBBE AS SHADCHAN

More people walked into the Shiva house and nearly all of them had a story to tell about Yossel's chesed. His brother Pinnye told the wonderful story about how the family came to Lubavitch:

"It started in the 1950's, when my father was of marriageable age. My grandmother, who came to New York after the Holocaust and had a beautiful family, requested a Yechidus with the Rebbe, in which she asked for help with a shidduch for her son. The Rebbe answered it would be a good idea to look into the daughter of R' Shmuel Itche Reitzes.

When the shidduch was suggested to R' Reitzes' daughter, she refused. The bachur wasn't a Lubavitcher and he hadn't grown a beard yet. She entered Yechidus by the Rebbe and explained, "how could the daughter of a Tamim who was a Shochet and Bodek, marry a bochor without a beard?"

The Rebbe smiled and said, "And perhaps the shidduch has long ago been predestined in heaven? The month of Kislev is a happy month and I want to receive a positive answer regarding Tevell!"

After such a clear answer, there was no doubt that this was a shidduch from heaven, and they were set to be married. They asked the Rebbe to be the mesader kiddushin at their wedding. The Rebbe replied, "You deserve that I should be mesader kiddushin, but since there is another wedding that

same week where I cannot be mesader kiddushin, you can't build your simcha on the jealousy of others."

So it happened on the 3rd of Shvat 5716 (1956), they were blessed with a firstborn son. They called him Yosef.

SHALOM ZACHOR IN A SNOWSTORM

In 5724 when Yossel was nine, R' Fulye Kahn came for a few months to visit 770. While he was in town he taught Yossel in Oholei Torah, where he went to school. Yossel would always recall with nostalgia those few months he spent with R' Fulye. He would tell of the *Chassidische hergesh* that he had instilled in them through stories of the old time Chassidim.

At that time R' Fulye had said an interesting vort. The word "va'yigash" can be read as an acronym forward and backwards: **vav yihiyeh gimmel shvat- sheleg gadol yihiyeh v'kor**, i.e. if the third of Shvat is on a Friday, there will be a snowstorm and bitter cold. Indeed, Yossel was born on Friday, 3rd of Shvat and it was freezing and there was a snowstorm.

Friday night his father prepared the table for the Shalom Zachor, but the terrible weather kept people ensconced in their warm homes and nobody showed up. Finally, two hours later, there was a knock at the door and a man by the name of R' Simcha Rubin came in. Yossel's father was very happy to see him and they sat down together to have a l'chaim. Then he remembered that Simcha had been married for a number of years and did not have any children. He lifted his cup of l'chaim and said from the depths of his heart, "Just as you brought me simcha by coming to the Shalom Zachor, I bless you that next year I should be able to attend the Shalom Zachor that you make!"



R' Yossel Tewel receiving kos shel bracha



R' Yossel Tewel

The bracha was fulfilled and by the next year R' Simcha and his wife were holding their very own baby boy.

This story epitomizes R' Yossel's life. Even when people were not paying attention, he would find the people who needed help and give them strength, courage and help in anyway he could.

THE REBBE ASKED: SAY SHEMA YISROEL

When R' Yossel was two years old, he joined his family for a Yechidus with the Rebbe. The

Rebbe asked him, "Do you know how to read the Shema?"

The Yossel who was accustomed to saying Shema before going to sleep said "Yes, when I wash my hands and go to sleep, we read the Shema."

The Rebbe asked him to read the Shema. But Yossel didn't understand why he should read it in the middle of the day and he repeated "The Shema you say before going to sleep."

The Rebbe took out two silver dollars and gave it to him and said, "Vest du kein mul nit fargesen Shema Yisroel? (You will never forget Shema Yisroel?)"

Excited, Yossel replied "Nein, Ich vel kein mul nit fargesen Shema Yisroel" (I will never forget Shema Yisroel.)

ASKANUS FROM A YOUNG AGE

R' Pinnye related that Yossel's communal involvement began when he was about eight years old.

In those days, the family lived on S. John's Place and on the way to 770 they would pass a little store that belonged to an older Polish Jew, who was a Holocaust survivor. One day, the storeowner asked

DEDICATION TO SHALOM BAYIS

After he got married, R' Yossel was on shlichus for several years in Berkeley, California. A man from Williamsburg got involved in gambling and he sold whatever he owned in order to finance his habit. At a certain point, his wife and family found out about this and his shocked wife asked for a divorce. She did not want to be married to a compulsive gambler.

The husband decided to run away, as far as possible. He was afraid to fly because he figured that after all the sins he did, G-d would surely crash the plane, so he got on a bus and went all the way to S. Francisco.

He felt utterly lost and decided to leave religious observance completely. The first thing he set out to do was to get his beard and peios removed so he wouldn't look Jewish. He walked into a barber shop and asked the barber to shave it all off. When the barber approached him with the razor, he suddenly saw an image of his grandfathers who were killed in Auschwitz looking pleadingly at him. He began to tremble. The barber said he couldn't shave him in that state and he had to calm down. He tried to relax but could not. He realized that he could not remove his beard.

He wandered the streets of S. Francisco and decided that if he couldn't look like a goy, he would

make aliya and be a Zionist. According to the chinuch he had been given to hate Zionism, he felt that by doing this he would be leaving Judaism.

He walked into the Israeli consulate and told his story. Unfortunately for him, some of the "minor" details of his story, like the gambling addiction and how he had left his wife without a divorce and her family were after him, made the man at the consulate refuse to help him make aliya. The clerk told him that the consulate could not do anything for him but at the Chabad house they surely could.

At first, he didn't believe that Chabad would help him but the clerk encouraged him, "Chabad never threw anyone out. You can go to them with confidence."

He had no other option and so he showed up at the Chabad house in Berkeley on Friday afternoon. R' Yossel welcomed him warmly and offered him a guest room.

Friday night, the man went downstairs for Kabbalas Shabbos and when they began singing Lecha Dodi, his heart broke and he began sobbing. At some point, he couldn't stand there any longer and he went up to his room. R' Yossel, who noticed this, followed him upstairs after the davening and asked what the problem was and how he could help.

At first he refused to tell him and insisted that R' Yossel couldn't help him. But R' Yossel promised he

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Yossel "Young man, can you please go to the store across the street and purchase some milk for me, since I cannot leave my store unattended". Yossel replied, "I'd be happy to, but instead of buying the milk across the street where the milk is not kosher, I will buy it in the store opposite 770 where they sell kosher milk."

The old man wasn't particular about buying kosher milk and he said it didn't make a difference to him, but Yossel insisted that the milk across the street was not kosher and therefore he shouldn't use it.

The old man then asked, "What could be non-kosher about milk already?" Little Yossel began to explain that there is Chalav Yisroel and there is non-Jewish milk, and a Jew needs to drink Chalav Yisroel.

The old man was very touched by the little boy's explanation and asked him to buy him the kosher milk. From then on, Yossel bought him kosher milk every day. It became his very own personal mivtza kashrus.

Yossel would use his encounters with the storeowner to talk to him about Judaism. Once while visiting, he told him to stop watching television and said that according to the Torah, it was forbidden to even turn on the television. The old man asked with sincerity "I don't understand how a smart child like you can say that the Torah forbids a television, when in the time of Moshe Rabbeinu television didn't exist yet!"

Yossel wasn't fazed by the comment and he explained that the Torah that we received from Moshe

includes everything in it, even future technological developments. It's all referred to somewhere within the Torah, he informed the surprised old man.

When Yossel was ten years old, he would daven with the seven o'clock minyan in 770. He once went over to one of the men and asked him to teach him how to put on Tefillin. The man wondered why he wanted to learn now, when his bar mitzvah was three years off! Yossel explained that he wanted to put Tefillin on with Mr. Maury Cohen, the branch manager at the bank opposite 770.

The branch manager Mr. Maury Cohen was a well-respected individual, but when Yossel would walk in with confidence and a broad smile on his face, Mr. Cohen would melt. In those days,

>> would do all he could for him and the man finally told him his story. R' Yossel assured him that after Shabbos, he would see what he could do for him.

During Shabbos, R' Yossel spoke to him and found out that the person was a good neshama who had lost himself in gambling. Even in his confused state, his desire was to do teshuva and return to his family.

R' Yossel went out to a public phone, so the man's family wouldn't be able to find out his whereabouts, and spoke with the wife. He told her that her husband was in good hands and that he would call back with additional information.

Then he called back from another public phone so they couldn't trace him and identified himself as a shliach of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. He told her that her husband is in a safe place, and said, "I want to come and see you and talk to you because your husband wants to return to his family."

At first, his wife refused to hear of it. All she wanted was a divorce. After a long talk with R' Yossel, she finally conceded that he could come and talk to her.

R' Yossel went home and told his wife that he was going to New York for a few days. When R' Yossel arrived in New York, he first went to 770, where he asked a friend to accompany him. He was afraid that

the woman's family might attack him because they were furious with the husband.

As soon as they arrived, they disconnected the phone in the house so the woman could not call her relatives. Then they knocked on the door and when the woman opened it, he introduced himself as a shliach. He told her that her phone was not working so she should not consider calling her family and she should hear him out.

At first, she didn't want to hear about reuniting with her husband but R' Yosef spoke to her for hours, telling her his impressions of her husband and assuring her that he wasn't a bad person, but the gambling had simply gotten out of control and now he wanted to do t'shuva and return to his family. He told her about how moved her husband had been when they sang Lecha Dodi and how much he missed his family. After eight hours of this, she agreed to give her husband another chance to rebuild their lives.

R' Yossel quickly called home and told the man, "Take the first plane you can get to New York and return to your family!"

The man returned and was received by his family. Within a short time he rehabilitated himself and today he has a beautiful family of twelve children. When he married off his children, he invited R' Yossel and told them: This is your grandfather!

even simple clerks at the bank were respectable people, but when Yossel entered the bank, Mr. Cohen would stop what he was doing and go to the side with Yossel to put on Tefillin. One day the elder Chassidim were in the bank waiting to have a meeting with the bank manager. Just then Yossel walked into the bank and Mr. Cohen says, "Hey, my little rabbi is here ..." he then walked together with Yossel into his office on the second floor and put on Tefillin.

The Elder Chassidim who saw this went over to Yossel's grandfather, R' Shmuel Itche Reitzes, and described with envy, the Chassidishe exploits of his grandson Yossel.

MESIRUS NEFESH FOR OTHERS

"From a young age my brother was Moser Nefesh for others," said his brother Pinnye.

One time, as he walked on Kingston, he saw a big goy pounce on another Lubavitcher to rob him. Without thinking twice, Yossel fell upon the goy in order to save his fellow Jew. The goy was much bigger than him and as he turned around, the two fell to the ground. As a result, Yossel broke his arm and had to wear a cast for a long time.

A short time after that occurrence, Yossel and I were passing by 770 and saw Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka a"h emerge from her car and head for her mother's apartment on the second floor of

770, her arms laden with heavy bags. Yossel went over to the Rebbetzin and said, "Rebbetzin, let me help you." But before she could respond, he had taken the bags from her with a smile. I, being the younger brother, followed slowly behind him. When they got to the second floor, the Rebbetzin noticed for the first time the cast on Yossel's arm and was horrified. Yossel calmed her and said it was nothing and the cast was coming off in a few days anyway.

When we exited the elevator, the Rebbetzin asked us to wait. She returned immediately with a big bar of chocolate, saying, "This is for you two." Yossel refused to take it, and said in Yiddish "Rebbetzin, you know that I come from a Chassidishe family, where I was taught, when you help another Jew

FATHER, FORGIVE ME

Among the dozens of jails in the state of New York where R' Yossel worked, there was one that he could not get into. Unfortunately, the obstacles came from the so-called rabbi of the prison by the name of Metzger. He belonged to the Reform movement and fought Chabad's work tooth and nail. He told R' Yossel directly, "I won't let you into my prison."

R' Yossel did not despair but asked him time and again. After extensive efforts, the rabbi softened up a bit and before Pesach he agreed to give matzos out to the inmates on condition that R' Yossel not come to the prison but send the matzos with UPS. Instead, R' Yossel himself knocked on the rabbi's door. When the rabbi asked who was at the door, he answered, "UPS."

The rabbi opened the door and was shocked to see R' Yossel standing there. At first he was angry but R' Yossel said with a smile, "I wanted to show you that the boogeyman isn't so scary after all." They got into a conversation and the rabbi's hostility dissipated.

A few weeks later, R' Yossel called Rabbi Metzger to ask whether he could come and cheer up the prisoners on Lag B'Omer. To his surprise, the rabbi agreed, for the first time, to have Lubavitchers visit the prison, as long as not too many of them would come. R' Yossel was in seventh heaven that he was finally able to break the barrier.

On Lag B'Omer, R' Yossel went with a group of bachurim to the prison. With a big tape recorder and lots of simcha, they got the inmates involved in the dancing. Rabbi Metzger stood off to the side and watched.

R' Yossel went over to him and said, "I would like to suggest that you put on t'fillin."

"Your chutzpa has no limit!" the stunned rabbi retorted.

R' Yossel noticed that this was said with a hint of a smile and decided the time was ripe. He pushed up the rabbi's sleeve and began putting the t'fillin on him.

The rabbi was taken aback and said: "You want to teach me how to put on t'fillin but I know better than you!" He took the t'fillin from him and wound the

straps like a veteran. He said Shma Yisroel and suddenly began to cry uncontrollably. Twenty minutes went by before he finished saying Shma. When he took off the t'fillin, he looked upwards and cried: "Tatte, zayt mir moichel (Father, forgive me)."

He asked R' Yossel to sit down and told him his story:

His grandfather, the dearest thing to him in life, had been a big rabbi in Germany. When the Nazis came to power, he watched as they degraded his grandfather in the most humiliating and brutal fashion. The cursed Nazis laughed as the rabbi with the long white beard was mocked in the streets.

At that time, he swore vengeance against G-d. After the war he immigrated to the US, where he joined the Reform movement, became a rabbi, and did all he could for spite. He married Jews and gentiles, arranged parties on Yom Kippur, etc. all to take revenge on G-d.

"When I suddenly heard that Chabad Chassidim wanted to visit the prison, I began to tremble with an inner fear. I knew that where Chabad is going to come, anything opposing G-dliness will simply melt. Therefore, I had no choice but to fight you. But your charm and persistence managed to win me over," he concluded. "I decided to return to G-d and I beg of Him to forgive me."

Two weeks later, R' Yossel got a phone call. "Rabbi Tewel, this is Rabbi Metzger's son. I am sorry to inform you that my father died. I'd like to tell you that during his final two weeks he spoke about nothing but you and the t'fillin you put on him. We realize that you were very important to him and we would like you to attend his funeral and to say a few words."

R' Yossel went to the funeral with some bachurim from 770 and in front of all the Reform friends of the rabbi, he told how Rabbi Metzger's pintele yid had been awoken after so many years of fighting Judaism.

A few years ago, Rabbi Chaim Fogelman called R' Yossel and asked whether he had a story for him to tell on Yom Kippur. R' Yossel told him the story of Rabbi Metzger. After Yom Kippur, R' Fogelman called him and said that when he told the story in shul, there wasn't a dry eye in the house.

you don't expect any rewards." The Rebbetzin looked at him with a smile and said, "If I remember correctly, I also come from a Chassidische family, and me they

taught, when someone offers - you take... especially when it's good chocolate!"

Then, in order to makes us happy, the Rebbetzin took some

oranges and showed us how you can juggle them. "In recent days," Pinnye adds, "as I have been thinking about my brother's life, which was so full of chesed, I have

thought about that encounter with the Rebbetzin and how it is a metaphor for how he ran his life. He juggled from various acts of chesed, work on behalf of inmates, helping the sick, and involvement with at risk teenagers. Yet, everything he did was done with the sweetness of chocolate.”

A WHOLE FAMILY IN CROWN HEIGHTS

After the Rebbe urged people to reach out to Jews incarcerated in jail, Yossel took this on as his personal project. Rabbi Kasriel Kastel, who is responsible for the work with prisoners under Tzeirei Agudas Chabad, shared with the mourners at the Shiva house that in his first meetings with Yossel about reaching out to prisoners, he considered him a person that works outside of the laws of nature.

When Yossel heard that a Jew had gone to jail, his first focus was on how to get him out on bail until the trial. In the offices of Tzeirei Agudas Chabad, they weren't thinking along those lines at all – their efforts were concentrated on providing for the religious needs of inmates.

Yossel didn't limit himself to the limitations of Tzeirei Agudas Chabad. When they couldn't help him, he managed on his own. R' Kastel said that after decades of working together, he was still amazed by the incredible results Yossel had achieved.

He mentioned that there is a family in Crown Heights with grandchildren who all have Lubavitcher names like Menachem Mendel and Chaya Mushka, thanks to Yossel who worked to get the father out of jail when he was a young man. He kept in touch with him and brought him closer to Judaism and Chassidus and today the results are a beautiful family in Crown Heights.



R' Yossel Tewel with a group of bachurim and men from Crown Heights near Rikers Island prison

HE DIDN'T FORSAKE ANY JEW

In the early 80's, Yossel would send bochurim to perform outreach in the jails for the Jewish inmates. Before every Yom Tov he would arrange thirty to forty groups and send them to all the prisons in the state of New York and even a few outside of NY. He made professional connections, which enabled him to get special prices for dozens of car rentals. He arranged plenty of food for the bochurim and the inmates and even prepared maps so the bochurim could find their way to their specific prisons.

In one of the Sichos of those years, the Rebbe gave advice on how to deal with the administrators of the prisons who refused to allow them to do outreach. The Rebbe said "Tell the administrator: How can it be that such-and-such a prison allows this work and you don't allow it!?"

Whenever Yossel dealt with an administrator who gave the bochurim problems, he used the Rebbe's words exactly and all the doors opened to them.

His brother Pinnye related that while still a bochur, Yossel received

hundreds of requests from Jewish inmates around the US. "I was once in his room and saw three piles of mail. I didn't understand when he had the time to read and deal with all the requests. So, I took one letter out of a pile in order to understand what kind of request he was dealing with.

I read a letter from an inmate who described how his shoes are torn and asked if my brother could arrange a pair of sneakers for him. The next letter was also from the same inmate, thanking my brother for sending him the best sneakers on the market, and for sending them express! 'I thought a few weeks would go by until you would respond to my request, and I was surprised to see that within a few days your fulfilled my request.'

In addition, Pinnye says another story "One year, it was late by the time we completed a round of Chanuka parties at two prisons, dancing and putting on Tefillin with the inmates, and all the bochurim wanted to go back to 770. But Yossel said to me, 'We're not going yet.'

"He asked the bochurim to relax on the couches in the lobby and asked me to go with him. He told

A JEW'S REST IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANYTHING

This is what someone wrote about R' Yossel Tewel's Ahavas Yisroel:

The Friday night meal at R' Yossel's house began late at night so the many bachurim who, for various reasons, did not get to make kiddush at the usual time, would be able to join him.

One Shabbos, I was one of the bachurim who joined him at that late hour. However, after a few minutes I felt drowsy and before drifting off I asked my friends to wake me up for bentching.

When I woke up, I looked around and didn't know where I was. The sun was shining into the room and it took some time for me to realize what had happened. I felt bad about missing bentching and about the daily Tanya I hadn't said. I couldn't help but feel annoyed at my friends for leaving me there.

It was six in the morning and I got up and left the house for 770. I anticipated meeting my friends and telling them off for abandoning me. After a while I met one of them and angrily asked him why he hadn't woken me up.

"R' Yossel did not let," he apologized. "As much as we tried to tell him how important it was, he refused to allow it."

I decided to ask R' Yossel himself. When I met him a few days later, I gently asked him why he did not allow me to be woken up. The answer he gave me reverberates in my mind ten years later and they are a legacy I won't forget. He said, "The rest of a Jew is more important than anything." The sincerity and firmness with which he said it did away with any ideas I had of arguing with him, and I had to make peace with what he said.

After a few days I learned a sicha in Volume 5 of Likkutei Sichos about Yaakov marrying two sisters. The Rebbe's conclusion is that when a person wants to be stringent about something, it's proper only for himself but not to impose on others. R' Yossel's words came to mind, "The rest of a Jew is more important than anything."

me he had noticed that one of the Jewish inmates, who had been a regular participant, had not showed up this time. He had asked the other prisoners whether he had been released or did not feel well and was informed that he had been put into solitary confinement for a few days.

'Whatever the outcome will be, we can't leave before meeting with this inmate, Yossel decided. "He spoke with the administrator and managed to get permission to make a special visit. One of the wardens led us through dark halls underground and at some point I lost my sense of direction. When we

got to the solitary section, the warden opened a door and we could see the inmate in a cell as dark as Egypt by the plagues.

"When he saw us standing there, he was flabbergasted. Yossel went over to him, hugged him and said, 'It's Chanuka Today!' "The prisoner broke out in tears and Yossel said encouragingly, 'I know this is the darkest point in your life, but from here-on-in, your mazal will shine. We brought you a menorah and when you kindle it, the light will shine up your life.'

"We lit the menorah with him, brought him latkes, and he cried the entire time. We sat with him for

forty minutes and revived his spirits. When we had walked in, he was the living dead and when we left, he was a completely different person. This is just one story out of hundreds of thousands. Yossel would not forsake any Jew."

RASING THE SPIRITS OF THOSE WHO ARE DOWN

His son Zalman related that on one occasion when he went with his father to visit a prison, the administrator told him, "When your father comes, we can't resist the enormous energy he radiates. His happiness, his warmth, just sweeps us all away."

After successfully getting people caught up in the simcha atmosphere, Yossel would take note of which inmates were sitting off to the side and not taking part. He would then sit near them and talk to their hearts until he was able to raise even their spirits. He put all his energy into "Making lively the souls of the depressed, and the hearts of the crushed."

His brother Pinny related: "A few years ago, we went to visit a prison together and while all the inmates were dancing and rejoicing, I saw a religious Jew with a beard sitting on the side looking downtrodden. I tried all I could to cheer him, but to no avail. "I knew that my brother's special touch was needed in this case. He was involved in a conversation with the chaplains and other senior officials, but when he heard what I was dealing with, he left them all standing there and turned his attention to this Jew.

"He sat down next to him and asked, 'Tell me, how can I help you?' The man replied "I need a pair of Tefillin." "No problem, it's done." Yossel assured him. Tomorrow I will send you a pair of Tefillin by express mail. What else do you need? Do you need a good

lawyer?'

The prisoner thanked him and said he had a lawyer and would be released soon, but was tremendously bothered by the fact that he had been unable to obtain a pair of Tefillin. My brother reassured him and promised that he'd quickly send the Tefillin.

"When we left, my brother asked me to buy Tefillin at his expense the very next day and to send them by the quickest possible method. Within two days, the man had Tefillin."

AHAVAS YISROEL IN EVERY AREA

In recent years, Yossel was involved in helping people with medical needs. He quickly became acquainted with top doctors in New York and helped many Jews who needed help from specialists. He was a founder of Ahavas Chesed and developed ties with all the hospitals and doctors in the area.

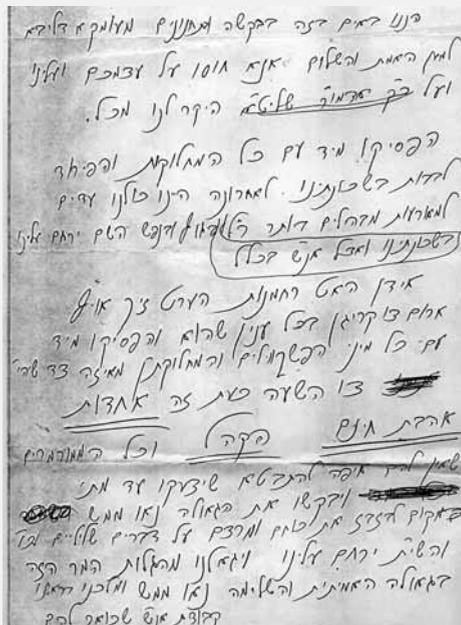
The directors of Kupat Bochorim, an organization which takes care of the needs of the students in 770, described Yossel's willingness to help. "He assisted dozens of bochorim who needed medical attention and obtained many medications at low prices or as donations for them."

Another area in which he invested his time and efforts was working with at risk teenagers from religious homes who swayed from the normal school system. He bought a building in upstate New York in the mountains and a yeshiva operated there for many years. The Yeshiva reached out to dozens of teens to keep them in a Yeshiva environment.

Yossel even used the place he worked, a pizza shop in Boro Park, for acts of chesed. One person who came to console the family said that when Yossel found out that he was in financial difficulty, he told him to come to the pizza shop every week

JEW - HAVE MERCY

This is a free translation of a letter that R' Yossel Tewel wrote, it seems in 5748, with an eerie relevance to the tragedies that have taken place recently:



We plead from the depths of our hearts for the sake of truth and peace. Please have mercy on yourselves and us and on the Rebbe shlita who is more dear to us than anything.

Immediately cease all machlokes and divisiveness in our community. Lately we have all been witness to the most shocking incidents in our community and by Anash in particular, body and soul, may Hashem have mercy on us.

Yidden, have rachmanus! Stop fighting and immediately stop all sorts of anonymous nasty letters and machlokes. The call of the

hour is: Achdus, Ahavas Chinam, Hakhel.

All the embittered people who don't have where to express themselves should cry out "ad masai!" and ask for the Geula now, mamash, instead of wasting their energy on trivial things.

May Hashem have mercy on us and redeem us from this bitter galus with the true and complete Geula now, mamash, with our king in the lead.

- A Group of Anash Who Care

and take two pies. Someone else said that when he was in difficult financial straits, Yossel told him to come to the store and take whatever he wanted. "Take even more than you need and store it in the freezer," he said.

The number of pages for this article are limited and the stories of Yossel keep pouring in. Stories of true Chesed from all facets tell of a truly extraordinary man.

His sudden passing, caused by a stroke, left behind his wife and six children to deal with the new reality with Emuna and Bitachon as Yossel had taught them.

The tragic and sudden passing of R' Yosef Tewel, left *anash* around the world in an enormous shock, especially at the thought of the tough financial situation this mourning family finds themselves in. We all knew of the broadness of Yossel's giving heart emotionally, spiritually and financially. Therefore, friends of the family who feel a deep obligation to them, are calling upon the community to please help R' Yosef's family like he helped us so many times before. You can donate online at tevelfamily.com or you can send a check or money order to M. Tewel 644 Lefferts Ave. Brooklyn, NY, 11203.

WHEN THE REBBE SAYS JUMP...

A FARBRENGEN NEEDS TO ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING INSIDE

Bachurim! I will start by saying that attending this farbrenge is not compulsory. The sidrei ha'yeshiva ended and you don't have to sit here, though it pays to stay because you might hear something [worthwhile].

In a generation in which what are called "ziknei ha'Chassidim" are so few so that even Yitzchok Groner is considered one of them, it is worthwhile taking the opportunity to listen. Especially when I myself had the privilege of listening to some who were real ziknei ha'Chassidim, those who were bachurim in Lubavitch. I remember Rabbi Shmuel Dovid Raitchik, who would daven for four or five hours every day and work on himself with iskafia. He is an example of an "eltere Chassid."

In Lubavitch there was a Chassidishe bachur called Shimshon Vitebsker. All the mashpiim know the name Shimshon Vitebsker. He is mentioned in a sicha of the Rebbe Rayatz where he describes the water drawing for Pesach in the presence of the Rebbe Rashab. The Rebbe Rayatz relates there that his father told him that on Shimshon Vitebsker's face, you could see the revelation of the yechida of the nefesh. We don't know what the revelation of the yechida is about, but we do know that it's a high level.

Every Friday night, the Rebbe Rashab would say a maamer at the time for Kabbalas Shabbos. Since Shimshon Vitebsker had a weak constitution, the doctor told him to make Kiddush before he went to hear the maamer, so he would always show up a bit late. Once, by the time he arrived, all the doors were locked. He yearned to hear the maamer so he stood outside near the window and tried to listen



to the best of his ability.

It was winter, a Russian winter, and Shimshon Vitebsker became very sick as a result. The local doctor in Lubavitch said that in their little town, they could not treat him, so Shimshon had to return to Vitebsk. He died soon after and a telegram was sent immediately to the Rebbe Rashab. R' Yochanan Gordon was there when the telegram arrived and he related that when the Rebbe Rashab saw it, he cried a lot and said, "Apparently Up There they also want the good ones."

I heard from R' Yochanan that when the mashpia in Lubavitch, R' Shilem Kuratin (Have you heard the name R' Shilem? Kinderlach! You need to know the names of the ziknei ha'Chassidim. Just a little example so you understand what kind of Chassid he was: the Rebbe Rashab passed near him while he was davening and he didn't budge. He was so immersed in his davening that he didn't even notice the Rebbe. In any case, R' Shilem) would constantly tell the bachurim that a bachur needs to learn and daven. One time, one of the bachurim dared to ask him, "What do you want from us? Do you want us to die young like Shimshon Vitebsker?"

R' Shilem replied, "Better to die as a Chassid than to live like a goy."

We didn't come here to talk about the dead; we came to talk about life. We say we are attached to the "tree of life," mekusharim to the Rebbe. At a Chassidische farbrengen it's not enough to listen to interesting stories; we need to take them to heart.

On 12 Tammuz, 1948, the Rebbe Rayatz spoke at the farbrengen about the difference between *heren* (hearing) and *derheren* (internalizing). *Heren* means it goes in one ear and out the other. *Derheren* stays in and accomplishes something. A

We have a job to do, to be mekabel p'nei Moshiach Tzidkeinu. We have a message from the Rebbe to convey – "The time for your redemption has arrived" and "ot ot, kumt Moshiach." One thing is clear – when the Rebbe says to do something, we do it! * A farbrengen with Rabbi Yitzchok Dovid Groner a"h, shliach to Australia, in Shvat, 5758, in Lubavitcher Yeshiva.

Chassidische farbrengen needs to be internalized.

PICTURING THE REBBE

I will tell you about a yechidus that I had with the Rebbe. Yechidus. You know what yechidus is? Yechidus requires preparation on the part of the mashpia and on the part of the mekabel. In Likkutei Dibburim you can read what a yechidus is.

R' Pinchas Reizes tried to influence R' Aharon Strasheler regarding his differences with the Mittlerer Rebbe. He was unsuccessful until he said, "I will tell you what yechidus is; yechidus is the time when two yechidos of the soul meet, the yechida of the Rebbe and the yechida of the Chassid."

The Rebbe says that davening mincha with him is a yechidus. Did you know that? And to be at the farbrengen is also a yechidus, and to get a dollar even more so...

Before I was sent to Australia, I was in Buffalo. That year, 1953, three years after the passing of the Rebbe Rayatz, I had yechidus and the Rebbe told me to do something that was very hard. The Rebbe told me, "Every person who saw the Rebbe, the *shver* [Rebbe Rayatz],

should go each morning, before or after the morning brachos to a corner where he should picture the Rebbe's face."

When you go over to the wall and picture the Rebbe, the world looks altogether different that day.

HOW DID THE REBBE LOOK? WHAT DID THE REBBE SAY?

There was a Chassid by the name of R' Mendel Futerfas. R' Mendel's name was Menachem Mendel ben Menachem Mendel because he was named for his father who died before he was born. His grandmother, Bracha Leah, was a special lady. She wore tzitzis.

R' Mendel told me on one of his visits to Australia that his grandmother brought him to Lubavitch when he was six or seven. She was a close friend of Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah, the wife of the Rebbe Rashab. After the Rebbe Rashab finished yechidus, she took him by the hand and entered the Rebbe's room. R' Mendel told me that he remembered the Rebbe's appearance – sitting with a yarmulke, without a hat. When they entered, the Rebbetzin said, "This is

Any success that Lubavitch has, when people go on shlichus – and sometimes the people who go are simple, nothing special – is because they have devoted themselves to the Rebbe’s inyanim and to things that are completely shtus d’k’dusha.

Bracha Leah’s grandson. He is named for his father and she wants you to bless him.” The Rebbe blessed him.

Later on, his grandmother asked him, “Nu, how did the Rebbe look?” The child answered.

“What was the bracha?” she asked. He answered. A half hour later she asked him again, “How did the Rebbe look? What did the Rebbe say?” For a month, every half an hour his grandmother reviewed the incident with him, “Mendel, how did the Rebbe look? What did he say?”

There is a famous story about the Rebbe Rashab that he would ask his son, later to be the Rebbe Rayatz, “What do you remember?” But this was an ordinary Jewish lady! R’ Mendel said that dozens of years later he still remembered how the Rebbe Rashab looked.

Whoever saw the Rebbe, whoever attended a farbrengen with the Rebbe, must picture the Rebbe’s face.

I was at the harbor when the Rebbe Rayatz’s ship came in. I was also at the dock on 28 Sivan, 1941, when the Rebbe arrived. The Rebbe arrived on a Monday and his first Shabbos in America was 3 Tammuz. The night before 28 Sivan, I was supposed to be in yeshiva, in Tomchei Tmimim. Before that, I had learned in yeshivas R’ Chaim Berlin, a Litvishe yeshiva, but then I switched to Tomchei Tmimim.

I waited with my father upstairs, on the second floor of 770, for yechidus with the Rebbe, as R’ Yisroel Jacobson came out. He ran straight to my father and said, “The Rebbe said that the entire yeshiva (which consisted of thirty-forty bachurim) should go and welcome my son-in-law. (Now take note of the following, because this story has been repeated in many versions:) My son-in-law is proficient in Shas, Tosafos, Rosh and RaN, and all the printed works of Chassidus.” I heard it myself from R’ Jacobson before I had yechidus. The next day we all went to the harbor.

You know that we saw the Rebbe Rayatz only on rare occasions. We didn’t see the Rebbe much either. The Rebbe Rayatz said about him, “He is such a *hatzneia leches* (modest person) that he is even *hatzneia leches* with me.” I don’t want to get into that today. That’s not today’s topic. The topic today is that we need to know what our mission is, what is the call of the hour.

THE CALL OF THE HOUR

The call of the hour today is to be strong. This is a hard task, and very bitter, but we need to know that when the Rebbe gave us jobs to do he didn’t abandon us. He is with us as we do them and there cannot be any weakness. Hiskashrus to the Rebbe needs to be

stronger than ever.

Avrohom Avinu, a G-d fearing Jew, heard from Hashem, “please take your son, your only one, the one you love.” Avrohom made no calculations but immediately took Yitzchok to the Akeida. This is how a Jew behaves.

Years later a similar test. The Jewish people had the sea in front of them and Egyptians behind them. Everybody knows the sicha about the four groups. Hashem said to Moshe, “Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Jewish people to travel!” (There are many Poilishe vertlach on this verse, “why are you crying out to me?” which state that you don’t bring the Geula with cries but with action, but by us we know that we *should* cry out for the Geula and this does not contradict taking action). The Rebbe explains that Hashem was saying to Moshe that since the Jewish people had a mission, to receive the Torah on Har Sinai, a sea could not stop them from realizing their goal. They simply had to press forward.

What happened at the sea? Nachshon ben Aminadav jumped in. And to commemorate that, it says in the sichos of the Rebbe Rayatz – Shvii shel Pesach 5703 – that the Tzemach Tzedek said that the seventh day of Pesach is the Rosh HaShana of mesirus nefesh. But what did Nachshon do already? He jumped into the water for Hashem? He wasn’t the first – Avrohom Avinu did that already, so what’s so great about Nachshon?

Nachshon’s greatness is that he obeyed the Rebbe, i.e. Moshe! He didn’t hear it from Hashem (like Avrohom); he heard it from the Rebbe.

The same is true for us. We have a mission, to be mekabel p’nei Moshiach Tzidkeinu. We have the message from the Rebbe and “tzaddikim are likened to their Creator” that “the time for your redemption has arrived.” What

exactly does that mean? I don't know. But one thing is clear; tell the Jewish people to move on. The Rebbe says it? We do it! Oh, but there's a sea in the way ... So? Jump in! That is the avoda of the shlichim and this is the secret of the success of Lubavitch. We have to be completely devoted to the Rebbe.

When we were children in America, what was on our minds? Baseball. We knew every player in every league. We knew better than the coaches. We sat next to the radio and yelled, "Put him in, take him out," and of course they listened to us.

Then the incredible happened. This generation of American chocolate eaters (the only *taava* we had available to us as kids that wasn't common in other countries) grew up and went on shlichus. How did R' Moshe Hecht put it? "Just tell us where." Not "whether" but "where." Going on shlichus ought to be a given for everyone.

There was a time when those same American boys would hear the Rebbe say to go and chazer Chassidus and they went. Then came Yud Shvat and the Rebbe Rayatz gave us the maamer, Basi L'Gani. So every year the Rebbe reviewed it and explained another section because it's the foundation for the generations to come.

FOLLY OF HOLINESS

One of the points in the maamer is the inyan of *shtus d'k'dusha* (folly of holiness). You can laugh at us and we don't care. What is *shtus d'k'dusha*? I'll tell you something, kinderlach. I had missions to carry out from the Rebbe nearly all over the world, in South Africa, middle America, Japan, Singapore, India etc. Any success that Lubavitch has, when people go on shlichus – and sometimes the people who go are simple, nothing special – is because



Rabbi Yitzchok Dovid Groner a"h

What did Nachson do? He jumped into the water for Hashem? He wasn't the first – Avrohom Avinu did that already, so what's so great about Nachshon? Nachshon's greatness is that he obeyed the Rebbe, i.e. Moshe! He didn't hear it from Hashem (like Avrohom); he heard it from the Rebbe. The same is true for us.

they have devoted themselves to the Rebbe's inyanim and to things that are completely *shtus d'k'dusha*.

People laughed at us, but after years of work, we see the "pillar of light" between Lubavitch and those who aren't Lubavitch. Even now, after Gimmel Tamuz, Lubavitch is growing. It's growing in Eretz Yisroel and Australia and all over. The yeshivos are growing, new ones are opening, and there are more Chabad houses than ever before.

How is this happening? With the *ko'ach* of the Rebbe. And it's the *z'chus* of the shlichim, who are going and doing what needs to be done in a way that goes beyond

reason, working on the Rebbe's inyanim in a way of *shtus d'k'dusha*.

"AND PROVIDE THE SAME AMOUNT OF BRICKS"

What is your job, as bachurim? Pay attention.

When the Rebbe came to 770 on 21 Elul, 5700/1940, I was there when the Rebbe said the maamer, "on three things the world stands." At that time, all the buildings on Eastern Parkway in the section of Crown Heights, from Ralph Avenue until the park, were full of Jews. On Sundays, the benches on

Eastern Parkway were full of Jews. Not to mention Brownsville, where I grew up, where most Lubavitcher Chassidim lived at that time.

What was Yom Tov like for us? My father, together with R' Berel Baumgarten and other Chassidim from Brownsville, would gather their children and walk all the way to 770, in order to daven with the Rebbe Rayatz. After the davening we rushed home to make Kiddush, and then rushed back to see the Rebbe at the Yom Tov meal. Then we would go home and the next day, we would do it all again.

(One year, when we went to the Rebbe for Pesach, the Rebbe said to my father, "On Pesach one doesn't offer [food], you take on your own.") When we walked on these Yomim Tovim, the streets were full with thousands of Jews.

The Rebbe demanded, through Rabbi Chadakov, that we make house calls to bring people to Torah and mitzvos. During lunch, we would grab a bite in the dining room (which was located in the basement, where the library is today) and go visit homes and find out where the children went to school. Did they go to public school? (When we would knock on doors, the lady of the house would often give us a dime or a quarter, sure we had come to shnorr).

Because of this holy work, we would come somewhat late to yeshiva and Rabbi Mentlick and the hanhala were unhappy with us. At the division of Mishnayos B'al Peh (which you know about if you read the sichos of that time), the Rebbe spoke to us, to the bachurim, and said, "You have to do all the inyanim 'and provide the same amount of bricks,'" i.e. follow the yeshiva schedule in addition.

In other words, the sidrei ha'yeshiva, Chassidim and Nigleh, which are your shlichus, are more important than the mitzvaim which you are doing now.

This may surprise you, but it is the fact. You have do mitzvaim but if you ask what's the definition of a bachur in Tomchei Tmimim whose inyan is neros l'ha'ir? What is a bachur who is devoted to the Rebbe? The answer is a bachur who keeps the s'darim!

THE REBBE WANTS LAMDANIM!

On Sukkos, 5703/1942, we came to 770. The Rebbe Rayatz's sukka was upstairs and the Rebbe came down from there on his way home to President and New York. We stood there, about a dozen bachurim in the small zal. The Rebbe told us, "The Rebbe der shver wants that you, and you, and you should be lamdanim." As he said this, he pointed at each one of us. The Rebbe wants lamdanim, scholars in Nigleh.

Just as I need to make sure that the school runs properly and the teachers are getting paid on time, the talmidim need to know that their job is to keep to the yeshiva schedule and to learn diligently and through this, to be mekadesh sheim Shamayim.

The point is that Chassidim know how to learn. There was a Chassid by the name of R' Note'le Manastrichner, a Chassid of the Tzemach Tzedek. He was a genius and had tremendous bittul. At that time in the Litvishe world there was a scholar known as Ridbaz of Slutsk (he was later in Chicago and Tzfas). He was a genius. I knew his son-in-law.

I heard from R' Betzalel Wilschansky that these two men once met on a train. Ridbaz did not know the man and he asked whether he was a Chassid. When he said he was, Ridbaz said that Chassidim don't know how to learn. R' Nota responded that indeed, he did know how to learn. They began to talk in learning and Ridbaz

discovered that this Chassid was a baki in Bavli, Yerushalmi, Mechilta, Tosefta, Safra, Sifri etc. Ridbaz, who now had to retreat from his earlier assertion, concluded their conversation with, "May there be more like you in Israel, but not among the Chassidim."

R' Peretz Mochkin told a similar story. There was a Chassidishe town where there were also non-Chassidim. The shochet died and a debate ensued. The Misnagdim wanted a shochet from their group and the Chassidim wanted one of their own. They decided to hold a debate. They would select a Chassid talmid chacham and a Misnaged talmid chacham and they would talk in learning and the winner would pick the shochet he wanted.

Yankel melamed was a simple Jew who lived in the town. So you can understand how surprised they were when he showed up to represent the Chassidim. In fact, it turned out that he was a tremendous scholar, proficient in all sections of Torah. After the standoff, the Chassidim asked him, "Yankel, if you wanted to hide yourself, why did you suddenly show off now?"

He said, "One time, when I had yechidus with the Tzemach Tzedek, the Rebbe said to me, in order for there to be a Chassidishe shochet in town, you have to have mesirus nefesh."

For him, mesirus nefesh meant to show everyone what he knew.

Kinderlach, you will go on shlichus one day, who knows where. Aside from the fact that you will need to know the din and have to know how to use folly of holiness so that some people will call you a fool, you still need to know how to learn. The Misnagdim should see that in Lubavitch they know how to learn.

In Lubavitch there was a maggid shiur by the name of Shmuel Barisover. When the yeshiva moved

to Kremenchug, he was the rosh yeshiva. At that time in Kremenchug there were some Litvishe yeshivos and the bachurim there decided they would go "show up" the Chassidic rosh yeshiva. Some of the bachurim knew him, though, and they warned the others not to try it because they would be sorry.

THE SPIRIT THAT BROUGHT US TO LUBAVITCH

We can't forget our mission. Let us not be like the "lost souls," as the Rebbe Rayatz refers to them when he tells the story of the wagon driver and the wealthy man. Each of us has a mission; I have mine, your mashpia has his, and you have yours.

There was a Chassid in Baltimore, R' Avrohom Eliyahu Akselrod, who learned in Lubavitch for many years. He once came to 770 when we were bachurim. R' Shmuel Levitin called me over and said, "R' Avrohom Eliyahu is here; make sure he farbrengs."

"Where should he farbreng?"

We stood there, about a dozen bachurim in the small zal. The Rebbe told us, "The Rebbe der shver wants that you, and you, and you should be lamdanim." As he said this, he pointed at each one of us. The Rebbe wants lamdanim, scholars in Nigleh.

"In my room."

We crowded into R' Shmuel's little room, ten bachurim in addition to R' Shmuel and R' Avrohom Eliyahu. R' Avrohom Eliyahu related that Rashbatz once farbrenged and asked the bachurim, "What spirit brought you to Lubavitch? What spirit gave you the privilege of learning in the Rebbe's yeshiva?"

He said that there is an animal which is exceedingly lazy. It doesn't even want to make the effort to move in order to eat and drink. But Hashem's mercy is on all His creatures and he brings a wind which pushes the animal into the air and causes it to fly and tosses it into

water. It's like Hashem says to it: I brought you to the water, but you have to do the drinking on your own. What wind brought you to Lubavitch?

Your mission is learning and davening and mitzvaim and Ahavas Yisroel and hiskashrus to the Rebbe and mainly bitachon. Chas v'shalom that there be any weakness.

The inyan of our time is "speak to the Jewish people and they should travel." Move forward with our mission that the Rebbe has charged us, and bring Moshiach now!

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AND YOU SHALL BUILD AN ARK

By Shneur Zalman Berger

Mr. Pinchas Lechiani crafts aronei kodesh and other furnishings for shuls, a career path paved for him by the Rebbe at a special yechidus while he was a student of carpentry at the Vocational School in Kfar Chabad. In the weeks when we read about the building of the Mishkan, we present the story of a man who shares a part in the building of many a Mikdash M'at.

About three years ago, the phone rang in Pinchas Lechiani's office. He is the owner and manager of "Finish – Artistic Furnishings for Shuls." On the line were leaders of the Chabad community in France, including Rabbi Yosef Amar, who were building a new shul in Potocombo, near Paris. They had come to Eretz Yisroel to pick a professional who would design and build the furnishings of the new shul. None of these Chassidim knew that this contractor had received a bracha from the Rebbe

himself to build holy arks for shuls.

Lechiani invited the shluchim to visit his factory and they were impressed by what they saw. Several months later he was on a plane to Potocombo, to see the shul in the initial stages of construction.

"This was an especially exciting job for me, since it was Chabad Chassidim who had taught me carpentry and the Rebbe had given me his blessing to practice it. A few months later, I was invited by the Merkaz Rabbanei Europe in Brussels, led by Rabbi Menachem

Margolin and Rabbi Moshe Garelik, to plan and construct the furnishings for the new beis midrash that was built near the Merkaz. That invitation demonstrated to me yet again how powerful and important that bracha was that I got from the Rebbe."

AN UNFORGETTABLE MAAMER CHASSIDUS

From his childhood, Pinchas Lechiani, originally of Kiryat Gat





and now of Rechovot, loved carving and designing things out of wood. His father, Avrohom, who observed his son's talent, sent him at the age of fourteen to study carpentry at the vocational high school in Kfar Chabad.

"It was important to my father that I study in a place that combined Torah study and the study of a profession, so this school was perfect for me."

Staying in the dormitory and his closeness with the rabbis who taught

there, including the principal, Rabbi Shlomo Giladi and his teacher of carpentry, Rabbi Moshe Edery, are remembered by him as one of the most important periods in his life.

What did you study in the school of carpentry?

"We learned everything about carpentry, including how a tree grows, how you get planks of wood and how you work with it and create with it. We learned how to draw up plans, to design and produce the maximum out of the wood. The

staff provided us with various other skills such as interior design.

"Even when on vacation I constantly worked with wood. The first serious job I did, before I went professional, was when I made the lintel for the main entranceway and the library for my father's shul in Kiryat Gat. Both of them are still there."

Lechiani excelled in his studies, and in twelfth grade he was chosen to be a *madrish* for younger boys. He was even sent in 5738 to stay for

a month in Crown Heights as part of a delegation led by the principal, Rabbi Giladi. During their stay, Lechiani and his fellow delegates met the Rebbe, an encounter that he calls “very significant in my personal and professional life.”

“When I went over to receive a bracha from the Rebbe, R’ Giladi told him that I studied carpentry. The Rebbe looked at me and blessed me that I merit to build holy arks for shuls. Today, thirty years later, I know that this bracha has been with me all along and thanks to it I support my family and those of the thirty people who work in my factory.”

What else do you remember of your visit to the Rebbe?

“I can tell you that I was present at an event which has been spoken a lot about since then. During our visit in 5738, the Rebbe said a maamer Chassidus. This was shortly after the Rebbe’s heart attack and he was attached to an EKG which monitored his heart, letting the doctors know how he was doing. The madrichim had prepared us, telling us that during the maamer the Rebbe connects to the higher spheres. I remember that during the maamer we sensed an unusual unrest among the Chassidim, which we couldn’t understand. Later on, they explained that although the machine showed an arrhythmia while the Rebbe said a sicha, during the maamer it was 100% normal.

“Another experience happened the day we returned to Israel. Shortly before the flight we stood before the Rebbe to receive his bracha and a dollar that would make us shluhei mitzvah. The Rebbe asked R’ Giladi several times when we were flying and each time R’ Giladi said two o’clock. We saw that the Rebbe was dissatisfied with the answer for some reason.

“It was only when we got to the airport that we found out that El-Al was having the biggest strike in its

history and they had to charter an old plane from another airline in order to fly us home. Though it was two o’clock when we boarded the plane, it turned out that one of the engines was no good and we had to wait seven hours on the runway and several more when we stopped in Munich to refuel so the mechanics could fix all the problems.

“That is when I realized two important things. One, the Rebbe knew ahead of time that something would happen with our flight and two, while the other passengers on the plane were very nervous lest something else happen to the plane, we were able to reassure them with confidence. We told them that this flight was the safest in the world because we were shluhei mitzvah. We said that if *we* were guaranteed to return home safely, then obviously the rest of the passengers would too.

“Dozens of ambulances and mobile units were waiting for us at the airport. Though they anticipated that the plane would disintegrate upon landing, in the end, we landed safely.”

MEMORIES

What special events do you remember from your years as a student in Kfar Chabad?

“Every Erev Rosh Chodesh we would send, as a group, a *pidyon nefesh* to the Rebbe and we would ask for brachos for ourselves and our families. We first went to the mikva. Then we returned to the assembly hall of the school to write our *panim*. At those moments, I truly felt a special *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe.

“My teacher was R’ Tzvi Greenwald, a very special man who always gave us the feeling that we were like his children. His Gemara classes were unforgettable. He would analyze each topic deeply but in a way that every student could understand. In those years, he was

one of the few rabbanim who was allowed to enter IDF bases and talk to the soldiers. It sometimes happened that at the end of a shiur, soldiers in a military vehicle would come to take him to a talk or lecture at some army base. We boys were very curious about what he did there. When he returned, he would tell us about the soldiers and officers’ interest in religion, Torah and the Chabad way of life. He often hosted soldiers for Shabbos, enabling them to enjoy a proper Shabbos for the first time.

“I remember that every year, before Pesach, groups of students of all affiliations from all over the country would come to Kfar Chabad to watch the matza baking. The Kfar would be decorated and festive and the street signs would have p’sukim and phrases associated with Pesach on them. The students would gather in the school’s assembly hall, where they were told about Pesach and matzos.

“The most memorable person from that program was R’ Zushe, whom everybody knew as the ‘Partisan.’ He would get up on the stage and dance and sing so enthusiastically that not one student could refrain from joining in the singing and clapping.”

When Lechiani traveled to New York last year to build an aron kodesh in a new shul, he made sure to schedule the trip so that he could return to Eretz Yisroel in time for the annual reunion at the Vocational School in Kfar Chabad.

“R’ Moshe Edery, who devotedly maintains the school, personally asked me to attend, and that is how I planned my trip.”

THE CHASSIDIM LIKE CARVINGS ON DARK WOOD

A few years after he made the lintel and the library for his father’s shul, Lechiani prepared to build a new aron kodesh for that same shul

in Kiryat Gat, with the Rebbe's bracha reverberating in his mind.

"At that point I knew that this is what I wanted to do in life, design and build furnishings for shuls, battei midrash, etc."

Did someone show you how to build an aron kodesh?

"No. I had to learn it all on my own. But as a child who grew up in a religious home and spent every Shabbos and holiday in shul, I knew what they looked like, though building one on my own was another thing entirely. I had to learn what decorations are used on an aron kodesh, look for professional books on the subject, and visit shuls. I also had to study the little details, like which image represented each of the twelve tribes."

In 5742, shortly after finishing his army duty, Lechiani opened his business. Since then, the small carpentry shop grew into the biggest and most advanced factory of its kind in Eretz Yisroel. It is 1000 square meters and is located in the industrial area of Rechovot. They make handcrafted interiors for shuls, bimos, lecterns for chazanim, libraries, chairs for Eliyahu HaNavi and cases for Sifrei Torah, as well as Judaica items and wall ornaments made especially for shuls out of brass and copper. Lechiani's employees are top-notch wood and metal craftsmen. In recent years, Lechiani expanded the business to encompass interior designs of new shuls and renovations.

How do you approach the



At the Chanukas HaBayis of the shul near Merkaz Rabbanei Europe. From right to left: Rabbi Moshe Garelik, Rabbi Gershon Mendel Garelik, Rabbi Yona Metzger, Mr. Pinchas Lechiani

"The most memorable person from that program was R' Zushe, whom everybody knew as the 'Partisan.' He would get up on the stage and dance and sing so enthusiastically that not one student could refrain from joining in the singing and clapping."

construction of an aron kodesh?

"First, I approach it with awe and with lots of soul, emotion and heart. Working on something so holy is elevating and it goes way beyond working to make a living. Then you have to know the differences between the various groups. The

yeshivish and the religious-nationalists prefer straight lines while Chassidim like more carvings and darker wood, and the Sefardim prefer a lot of handcrafted carvings. Ultimately, though, these are individual orders which can differ widely."

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MOSHIACH: WHAT WE BELIEVE



Rabbi Gershon Avtzon, Rosh Yeshiva in Cincinnati

PART 15 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 discussed the concept of an individual that has Chezkas Moshiach and disappears for a while. We were left with a question:

IF AN INDIVIDUAL DIES A NATURAL DEATH, DOES THAT DISQUALIFY HIM AS MOSHIACH?

The answer in short is: No.

I want to clarify: I am not saying that Moshiach *needs* to pass away before the Geula. I am just explaining, that if you see an individual that has the Chezkas Moshiach, and is successful in his activities (see previous article) and then he passes away, it is not against Judaism to believe that this individual can still be the eventual Moshiach.

I know that many people reading this may be getting alarmed. Does

this not sound like Xianity? The “second coming”?

Let us set the facts straight:

1) Just because something sounds like Xianity, does not mean that it is not a Jewish concept. Xianity was started **by Jewish people, to recruit Jewish people**, so it only makes sense that many ideas sound similar.

2) The reason that we do not believe in “The Xian Messiah”, is not because he died – it is because he attacked and abused Torah and Mitzvos. In the words of the Rambam (Hilchos Melachim 11:4) “The Chachamim have prophesied that Moshiach will strengthen Torah and Mitzvos and bring all Jewish people back to Eretz Yisroel. He - “The Xian Messiah “ - has caused the destruction of Torah and the dispersion of Klal Yisroel”. It has nothing to do with the fact that he did or did not die.

Where do we see this idea in Torah sources?

I will give you a few:

1) The Talmud in Sanhedrin (98b) states that Moshiach can either be from the living or the dead. The Gemara says “If Moshiach is from the living, it is an individual

like Rabbeinu HaKadosh. If he is from the dead, he will be like Daniel.” (see Rashi there)

2) The Abarbanel writes (Yeshuos Meshicho 2:1): “It should not be hard for you to think that the Moshiach can be from the dead. This idea has already been discussed in Gemara Sanhedrin, and clarified. See S’dei Chemed Ois Ayin.”

3) The Lubavitcher Rebbe writes (Likkutei Sichos 2, page 518): “I have been asked to explain my statements that I mentioned that my Father-in-law can still be Moshiach. Does it not say the resurrection of the dead, will be after the coming of Moshiach?”

The answer is: The general resurrection will be after the arrival of Moshiach. There can be - and has been (see Avoda Zara 10:2) - the resurrection of individuals throughout the ages.”

4) The Rambam disqualifies only an individual who has been killed (see previous article), not an individual who has been successful but passes away before building the Beis HaMikdash and Kibbutz Galiyos.

We are still left with a question:

PART 16 OF 20

IS IDENTIFYING MOSHIACH A JEWISH CONCEPT?

The question is really two-fold: 1) Are we, as individuals, supposed to be looking for a Moshiach? 2) If we find him - or think we do - should we make it public?

The S'dei Chemed (Peias HaSadeh, Maareches Aleph, Klal Ayin) writes: "In every generation it was clearly assessed by the Jewish people of that time who is fitting to be Moshiach. The Midrash (Eicha 1:57) writes that immediately after the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash, the Jewish people already found a worthy candidate.

In later generations, the Jewish people identified Rabbeinu HaKadosh as being worthy. After that, they found Rav Yehoshua Ben Levi and after that Rav Nachman. In

every generation there must be someone worthy of being Moshiach. This is why the students of the Arizal said in his time that he is worthy of being Moshiach. This is a basic concept!"

This is also understood from the Rambam. As we explained in our previous articles, the Rambam divides the characteristics of Moshiach into two categories: 1) Chezkas Moshiach 2) Moshiach Vadai.

Why is the Rambam telling us of these categories? Obviously, the Rambam expects us to be looking for a candidate for Moshiach. As such, he gives us the signs of what we are supposed to be looking for.

Why? Why is it so important to try to identify the Moshiach of the generation?

The answer is quite simple: It strengthens the belief and commitment to Moshiach. Every Jew

believes that Moshiach can come any day. If he can come today, there must be someone who can fill that role, and our eager anticipation prompts us to look for that person. By identifying him, we become more committed to bringing Moshiach.

[To put things into perspective: Many people are asked to invest money in different stocks and companies. Would you invest money in a corporation that refuses to disclose the identity of its CEO? Obviously not. Only after seeing a "face" can you decide if you want to invest.]

This explains the necessity to personally identify Moshiach. What about publicizing Moshiach's identity?

This we explain IY"H in our next article.

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ZEROS AND ONES

By Dr. Aryeh Gotfryd

Since *ratzon* - will - is a superior faculty that “issues decrees,” rules over all the other faculties, and compels them to act according to its orders - it follows that the essential *avoda* is to arouse one’s will to exercise its effect - both upon the person himself and upon others.

--The Rebbe, HaYom Yom, for 2 Elul.

3:00 pm, Wednesday afternoon. Instead of getting ready to flee school like the vast majority of other Grade 7 classes, this particular group of 12-year-olds was just gearing up for their daily dose of reading, writing, and ‘rithmetic.

This was a “cheider,” an old-fashioned Jewish day school where kids from Chassidic families spend pretty much all day on Torah studies of various kinds, and only then, at the end of a very long day, are expected to eagerly soak up in less than two hours what takes public school students, more than six.

Now if that sounds overly challenging for the children, imagine how daunting it is for the teachers! I, for one, have no problem imagining what it’s like because teaching this kind of class is something I have done a lot of.

That particular Wednesday at 3:00 pm, I was teaching math. “Alright class, today we are going to learn a little about computer language. You know how Hebrew has 22 basic letters and English, l’havdil, has 26? Well, computer language is called binary and it has

just two letters - zero and one... Yes, I know zeros and ones are numbers, not letters, but you know what I mean. Now, regular math works on a Base Ten system, but the computer works on what’s called Base Two... No, no, not second base - Base Two.”

“Regular math uses 10 digits - 0, 1, 2, etc. up to 9. Then you move over to the tens column and you go all over again until you get to the hundreds, thousands and so on - Zalman - stop yawning. Mendel, put that ball away. As I was saying...”

“Dr. G, could you say that over?”

“Yeah, I have no clue what you’re talking about.”

“Can I get a drink of water?”

I ramped up my energy level, hoping to magnetize them to the material a little, and tried again.

“Okay, let’s look up at the board. You see we’ve got ones, tens, hundreds, thousands...? So in Base Two you’ve got ones, two’s, fours, eights, and so on. Zero is the same, one is the same, but there is no such numeral as “2” so what you do is, put a 0 in the ones column and a 1 in the two’s column, you see? ‘1 0’ is ten in base ten, but it’s two in Base Two. Get it?”

But they didn’t get it. I took another run at it but no dice. Moishie’s now napping on his desk and the other eyes I do see are wavering between glazed and confused.

These kids are smart but they have so much listening to do all day

long, how am I going to get through? I thought, okay, if listening is the problem, let’s see if I can simply assign them to read the text and do the exercises. Still nothing.

“Alright guys. Who likes pizza?” Hands shoot up. “Okay, I’m not that generous, but Bissli and Coke I could find.”

“What do we have to do?” one enterprising young man called out.

“You see those 25 exercises on page 273?”

“No! Impossible! We can’t! Are you kidding? We don’t even know what’s flying!?”

“Take it easy. How about if I give you just one question to solve? If each and every one of you can get that one answer right and show exactly how you got it, I’ll bring in the snacks tomorrow - deal?”

“Deal!” The chorus was resounding.

“Fine. Berel, you go to the board and write down any big, long number.”

“What number?”

“I don’t know. Yisroel, you tell him what to write.”

“3 8 7 2 4 0 9 5 6 3 3 2 1...”

“Good enough. Now that’s a normal number in Base Ten - three trillion and change. What I want you to do is to write it in Base Two. Show your work and be ready to explain it.”

“Explain what?”

“I don’t get it”

“Huh?”

“Uhh”

“You’ve got to be kidding.”

“You can do it. Divide up into groups. You can use calculators. Work it out together. Use the book for reference. It’s not rocket science.”

“I wish it was!”

“Don’t worry. Rocket science is next.” The rest of the class was a sight to behold. It’s amazing what the promise of salty crispies and sweet bubblied can do for the motivational state of a bored preteen. Calculators were clacking as they figured out the column values - 1, 2, 4, 8, 16... 4196, 8392, 16784...

“Wait, how do I do this? Hmm. Oh I see. Oy vei! Could this answer be 42 digits long? Are you sure this is how computers work?”

“Kind of,” I replied. “Actually they work with logic gates. If the electrons flow through, that’s a ‘1’ - if they don’t, it’s a ‘0’. It’s kind of like an ‘on-off’ switch.”

“Yeah, like the class. We were ‘off’ until you mentioned the Bissli and Coke”, said Zalman. “You know, I wasn’t kidding about the 42 digits. Can you check my work?”

I love these kids. They really think I know how to instantly translate some random multi-trillion number into binary. “I’ll check it soon. First, let’s see if the numbers each group gets match. If not, you’ve got to figure out who made the mistake and where.”

Our Sages say, “*ein davar omed bifnei ha’ratzon*”, i.e., If there’s a will, there’s a way. Within a half hour every kid there not only had the same answer and knew how to get it, they knew the subject well enough to teach it. You just have to know how to push their buttons.

When I got home I had another button to push - the ‘on-off’ button on my laptop. I needed a binary /

“Take it easy. How about if I give you just one question to solve? If each and every one of you can get that one answer right and show exactly how you got it, I’ll bring in the snacks tomorrow - deal?” * “Deal!” The chorus was resounding.

decimal converter to check their answer. But before I even got to that, I focused on that button and its icon.

Wow.

I suddenly had a kabbalistic ‘aha’ moment. On/off duality is represented by a binary symbol - a ‘1’ and a ‘0’ combined. That binary switch, when turned on, releases a cascade of further binary operations that result in an amazing diversity of processing and display such as any computer can muster.

For the student of the inner dimensions of Torah, there is another level of meaning here. The ‘on-off’ button of creation, as it were, is the *s’fira* of *chochma*, a simple point represented by the smallest of letters, *yud*. The button-*yud* of *chochma* is the beginning of creation, a concentrated point (*tzimtzum*) from which a line extends (*kav*), and the entire spiritual and material creation unzips. Hence the verse in Psalm 104, “You have made all of them in Wisdom (*chochma*).”

Yud-Chochma is emblematic of duality because it is the point that mediates between *yesh* and *ayin*, or being and nothingness, or more precisely no-thing-ness. But for all its inherent duality, the numerical equivalent of *yud* is not two but rather ten, symbolic of the world in all its fullness. Our sages allude to this in Ethics of the Fathers with

the statement, “With ten sayings was the world created.”

The ‘on-off’ button’s icon symbolizes this diversity too, for when the ‘1’ and ‘0’ are separated they form the number ‘10.’

Still there is something greater than *chochma*, greater than the ten sayings by which the world was created and even greater than the duality of being and nothingness - and that is *ratzon* - will. Without will, nothing goes. It’s the impetus that transcends everything and motivates it.

Will is the force that initiates, whether we speak of the will of the student to learn, or the will of the computer operator to push the ‘on-off’ button, starting the whole cascade of events, which in my case led to an online decimal / binary conversion calculator, that proved in a jiffy that yes, I really did owe those kids their snacks because 3,872,409,563,321 really does equal
1110000101100111011001100010
11000010111001.

Will can be aroused in a variety of ways - a Bissli, a Coke, or even a good thought, such as Yes! I am in this world for a purpose, and all it takes is to push that button, to activate a little more goodness and kindness, and all the processing and display will show the ultimate result - Moshiach Now!

AFTER DECADES OF WAITING, A MIRACLE OR TWO!

By Nosson Avrohom

Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry

The Bleichs and Maimons both received clear brachos from the Rebbe for “zara chaya v’kayama,” and had been waiting for the realization of that bracha with hope, anticipation and firm belief... for nearly twenty-five years. Last month, on the auspicious day of Yud Shvat, to the great joy of these two couples and their friends in the Chabad community of Tzfas, they were both finally blessed with a child children.

The Chabad community of Tzfas is in a state of sheer elation, and emotional cries of “Mazel Tov” are heard from every corner in an aura of true chassidic brotherhood and friendship. Two families, longstanding members of the community – the Bleichs and the Maimons – who were each blessed with the birth of their first child after

well over two decades of anticipation, prayer, and hope, and their tremendous simcha is shared by all. The excitement was compounded by the fact that the children were both born on the holy and auspicious day of Yud Shvat, commemorating sixty years of the Rebbe’s leadership.

The two families were privileged,

many years ago, to receive the holy blessings of the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, and despite the hard and difficult trials, they continued to believe and wait, and refused to despair. Throughout all these years, their friends davened for them at every opportunity, and mentioned their names at every chassidic farbrengen. The Rebbe MH”M’s brachos via Igros Kodesh continued to accompany them every step of the way, before every treatment and diagnosis. Now, at last, they have joined the countless thousands who have seen miraculous fulfillment of the Rebbe’s brachos, and two new children joined the Chabad community.

After many long years living in the Chabad community of Tzfas, R’ Aharon Maimon and his wife, Rina, recently went out on the Rebbe’s shlichus to Minnesota. “There’s going to be a big farbrengen this Shabbos,” R’ Aharon told me with much excitement. “Rabbi Moshe Ehrenstein, the mashpia of the Tzfas yeshiva, is already airborne. G-d willing, he’ll arrive on Sunday to be the sandek at the bris. The entire community here and many other guests are scheduled to participate.”

As far as R' Aharon is concerned, the great miracle that he and his wife experienced with the birth of their first-born son – **after twenty-three years of marriage** – actually began even before his wedding, back in Tishrei 5748. “During that year, I was among several bachurim, including Meir Chamo and Shalom Goldenberg, who were asked to help Rabbi Moshe Yeruslavski, of blessed memory, with the extensive Hachnasas Orchim hospitality services that he organized for guests coming from all over the world to spend the High Holiday season in the Rebbe’s court. We had come from the yeshiva in Tzfas, and we worked each day from five in the morning until midnight, sometimes longer. Rabbi Yeruslavski’s devotion infected us as well, encouraging us to perform at maximum output.

“Towards the end of the month of Tishrei, Rabbi Yeruslavski gathered all those who had helped him and brought us before the Rebbe to receive dollars. The excitement I felt at that moment was beyond measure. My legs were actually shaking. Who was I to stand so close to the nasi and leader of the generation? The Rebbe’s holy countenance filled me with great awe and fear. When our turn came, and we were all standing in the presence of the Rebbe, I looked for and found a corner where the Rebbe would not look at me. My teeth were literally chattering and my flesh felt like pins and needles.

“I was startled when the Rebbe turned around to where I was standing, looked at me with his penetrating eyes and said, ‘Yasher Ko’ach for representing me at Hachnasas Orchim, since I was unable to greet the guests personally. *A groiser Yasher Ko’ach!*’ The Rebbe gave me a dollar for a blessing and success, and somehow I got outside. When I regained my composure, I realized that it wasn’t by accident that the Rebbe chose to address me

“I was startled when the Rebbe turned around to where I was standing, looked at me with his penetrating eyes and said, ‘Yasher Ko’ach for your replacing me at Hachnasas Orchim, since I was unable to greet the guests personally. A groiser Yasher Ko’ach!’”

personally. The Rebbe wanted to bless me with something. Yet, as much as I racked my brains, I simply didn’t know what the Rebbe had meant. Perhaps my shlichus in life was through the mitzvah of Hachnasas Orchim? Would this be the source of the blessing for me? How was I to know?

“The month of Tishrei came to an end, and I stayed on to learn in Beis Chayeinu. In the meantime, there were many fine Jews who were looking for a shidduch for me. This was the difficult year when the Rebbe was mourning the histalkus of his Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, of blessed memory. Nevertheless, all the bachurim, myself included, continued to strengthen themselves from the illumination of the Rebbe, his instructions, and his brachos. My love for the Rebbe was endless, and I was prepared to do anything to bring a smile to his lips.

In general, I have always felt that I have a special connection with the Rebbe. At one particular farbrengen, the Rebbe coughed a great deal, and this anguished me very much. I promised then and there that I would devote half of all my strength to the Rebbe. A few minutes later, I heard the Rebbe say, ‘When a Jew gives another Jew a gift, he must inform him.’ I felt that this was connected to the decision that I had made in my heart. The following Sunday, I wrote the Rebbe a letter about this resolution.

“Before people suggested a match between me and my wife Rina, I wrote a letter to the Rebbe. The Rebbe responded to fewer correspondences that year, limiting answers primarily to urgent matters, such as shidduchim. I brought the letter to the secretary, Rabbi Binyomin Klein, and he placed it on a huge pile of letters. It was only after leaving the office that I remembered that I hadn’t written specifically that I was asking for a bracha for a shidduch. I felt deep regret in my heart, as I resigned myself to a lengthy wait for a response.

“Yet, just a few hours later, Rabbi Klein called to tell me to say that I had received a positive answer from the Rebbe.

“The first time that my wife and I met was on Rosh Chodesh Adar. She was staying as a guest of Rabbi Heller, one of the head rabbanim of Crown Heights. Leading up to the wedding, I received another answer from the Rebbe, also in a relatively short amount of time. I felt that this shidduch had come with the Rebbe’s ‘stamp of approval’. Therefore, it was quite difficult when months and years passed without our meriting ‘zara chaya v’kayama’. What didn’t we do? There was no segula that we didn’t utilize! We visited the most expert doctors in the field, but none of them had any good news for us. They all said that there was no medical reason preventing us from

The Rebbe smiled broadly and said, 'Ben zachar? B'nei z'charim!' (A son? Sons!) After such a clear bracha from the Rebbe, we didn't understand how so many more years passed without children...

having children, but... My wife constantly pressured me to go and ask for a bracha from the Rebbe, but I was embarrassed. I would pass by the Rebbe at dollars distribution, promising myself that this time I would get up the courage to ask for a bracha. But every time when my turn came, I wasn't able to say a thing.

"One Sunday, I tried without success to mumble something to the Rebbe, but soon found myself being led on my way out, frustrated and anguished by the fact that I failed once again to ask for the bracha we so desperately needed. But the Rebbe knows and sees whatever is going on with a chassid, and he felt my pain. I suddenly heard Rabbi Groner calling me back. The Rebbe gave me another dollar, and then said, '*Livnei mazal*' (literally, for children of fortune). I was elated, and I made the connection with my desire to ask for a bracha for children. I redeemed the dollar outside by giving a different one to charity, and I wrote the Rebbe's bracha on the one he actually gave me, including the time and date, keeping it for a segula.

"The followed days passed in an aura of hope and faith, visiting fertility experts, trying additional segulos, but nothing was happening. After some time, my wife again became deeply distressed, and it was hard for her to endure the anguish.

"Then one Sunday during the early *Nun'im*, she passed by the Rebbe and asked in very

unambiguous terms that she wanted to be blessed with a son. The Rebbe smiled broadly and said, '*Ben zachar? B'nei z'charim!*' (A son? Sons!) After such a clear bracha from the Rebbe, we didn't understand how so many more years passed without children...

"Once I was honored to be sandek at a bris mila, and one of those asking me to bless him after the bris was a soldier in the Golani Brigade, who told me that he was going out on a mission over the Israeli border. Though he was a courageous and fearless combatant, this time he feared that he wouldn't be coming back. I understood what he felt in his heart, and I told him, 'Look, I have in my bag a dollar received from the holy hand of the Rebbe. This dollar is very important to me, but I'll give it to you on the condition that you promise that you'll return it.' He promised to give it back, and I handed him the dollar with which the Rebbe blessed me, '*Livnei mazal.*' In the end, the soldier returned from his mission, safe and sound, but he became attached to that dollar, and has refused to give it back up until today.

"Eight years ago, we moved to the United States. I shared with my wife my concern that perhaps we no longer had the Rebbe's bracha, since I didn't have the dollar. My wife continuously urged me, 'Aharon, there must be something that we have to do in order to become proper 'vessels' for receiving the

Rebbe's bracha. It's simply inconceivable that the Rebbe would bless us in such clear terms, and the bracha would remain unfulfilled!' Once during a vacation from my work, we were sitting down together and I told my wife about what I had experienced during Tishrei 5748, including the bracha the Rebbe gave me as I stood on the side out of fear and shame.

"Listen, go now to the grocery store to buy eggs and cheese. Get rolls from the bakery and the freshest vegetables from the produce store. From now on, we're going to be involved in the mitzvah of *hachnasas orchim*. The Rebbe didn't just bless you then regarding *hachnasas orchim* for nothing. This is the 'vessel' through which the bracha will come...'

"Who else could find such a 'woman of valor'? I returned from the stores, and she prepared fifteen nourishing sandwiches. We then went out to the shopping centers in search of young Israelis looking for some good kosher food. I also used the opportunity to put on t'fillin with them. We soon began to invite them to our home for Shabbos meals fit for a king – meat, fish, and a variety of delicacies.

"If the Rebbe would host them, what would he give them? The very best that there is! This is exactly what we did. Without even planning to do so, we opened a Chabad House in every respect. They would come to us seeking advice for all their problems, and we would write to the Rebbe on any question, while giving them full and nourishing meals. Every time that we wrote a report to the Rebbe, we added a request for a bracha for children.

"Then, one fine day, in the midst of all this activity, I received the good news. Words simply cannot describe the feeling of sheer joy that enveloped me and my wife at that moment. My legs literally lifted me off the ground, and I could jump

three steps in a single bound. People would speak to me but my mind wasn't there; I felt as if I was flying. I went that day to the shoe store to buy a larger sized pair, because my feet had literally become bigger, as our Sages, of blessed memory, have said on the pasuk: 'Good news fattens the bone'. I saw it physically!

"I never lost faith," said R' Aharon. "There were difficulties, there were obstacles, and there were concerns, but the Rebbe's bracha never goes for naught – even after twenty-three years. When our son was born on Yud Shvat, our home shone with a special light."

* * *

As we mentioned earlier, the Maimons lived for many years in Tzfas, and they only recently moved to Minnesota. "I always davened for R' Aharon Bleich," he told us in a voice filled with emotion. "It's no coincidence that we both merited to have children at the same time. We're both called 'Aharon', and I am very fond of him. He is a pleasant and easy-going Jew, and every time people gave me a bracha, I asked them to add his name for a blessing as well. I was concerned for him even more than I was concerned for myself..."

We grabbed R' Aharon Bleich, age forty-eight, for a conversation as he was returning home from visiting his wife at the hospital.

His thrilled and excited parents immediately made the trip to Tzfas upon learning of the birth of their new granddaughter, in order to see her and to offer their assistance to their son and daughter-in-law.

"I was born in Paris, and grew up completely free of Torah observance," he began his story. "A visit with one of my relatives, Rabbi Eliyahu Turgeman (who today lives in Netanya), changed my life completely. I learned Tanya and chassidus with him, and I felt that I had found the answers to all my



R' Aharon Bleich joyfully holding his new daughter, Rivka

Listen, go now to the grocery store to buy eggs and cheese. Get rolls from the bakery and the freshest vegetables from the produce store. From now on, we're going to be involved in the mitzvah of hachnasas orchim. The Rebbe didn't just bless you then regarding hachnasas orchim for nothing. This is the 'vessel' through which the bracha will come...

questions. He told me about the Rebbe and his miraculous abilities, and at the first opportunity, I traveled to 770. In 5748, I met my wife, Chaya Ora, and we were married soon afterwards.

"We established our residence in Tzfas, and I started learning in kollel. In Tishrei 5749 and 5750, we passed by the Rebbe for dollars distribution and asked for a bracha, and were privileged to receive the standard blessing given to those who come before him. We still weren't stressed over the fact that we hadn't become parents yet. We were certain that everything would work out fine with the passage of time. However,

as the months and years passed, we realized that we had not merited to have things go smoothly on this matter. We spent much time going around to all the doctors and we went through numerous treatments. We didn't give up, although we were often disappointed. Every failed treatment brought with it a deep sense of frustration.

"One year during the *Nun'im*, we took advantage of our presence in the Rebbe's Daled Amos to ask the Rebbe for his bracha that we should have children. It wasn't easy for my wife to get up her nerve to ask, but she did, and the Rebbe blessed her. The Rebbe's words were a source of

tremendous encouragement and strength for us during the years that followed. Later, we even sent a letter to the Rebbe asking for a bracha on a variety of issues, including a blessing for children, and the Rebbe replied, 'Bracha v'hatzlacha. I'll mention it at the Tzion.' These clear brachos were what gave us hope.

"What also helped us a great deal were the farbrengens in Kiryat Chabad, Tzfas. Anyone who is familiar with our marvelous community of chassidim knows how much Ahavas Yisroel flows through their veins. At every farbrengen, people would give us their heartfelt blessings that we should merit to have children. I felt that my friends and neighbors in the Chabad community were partners in my efforts, and they helped me to remain buoyant in my faith. In all the years that passed, we were privileged to receive much spiritual strength and clear brachos from the Rebbe via Igros Kodesh. The Rebbe also gave us encouragement and instilled us with hope. It is interesting to note that in many of these letters, the Rebbe expressed his support for conventional medicine,

preferring it to naturalistic healing approaches.

"The chassidic outlook on faith despite everything, the understanding that G-d runs the world regardless of the hiding and concealment, is what brought me to the teachings of chassidus, strengthening me and getting me back on my feet time after time. Before this year began, we knew that this was a special year – the Year of 770, Beis Moshiach, U'faratzta. This was a year that required no acronyms, as the number itself was sufficient to establish it for a bracha. We were filled with hope that this would be the year when we would merit the long-awaited miracle, and

when it came, our joy and happiness knew no bounds. This is the year of Redemption. We experienced our own personal redemption, and with G-d's help, it will be a year of overall redemption for the Jewish People."

*

As a result of their private miracle, the two families have asked to convey via the Beis Moshiach Magazine their message of faith. "We learn from our story that it is forbidden to despair," said R' Aharon Bleich with an adamant tone of resolve. "Never give up hope! The salvation of G-d can come in the blink of an eye, and when the salvation comes, it wipes out all the distress that existed before."

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