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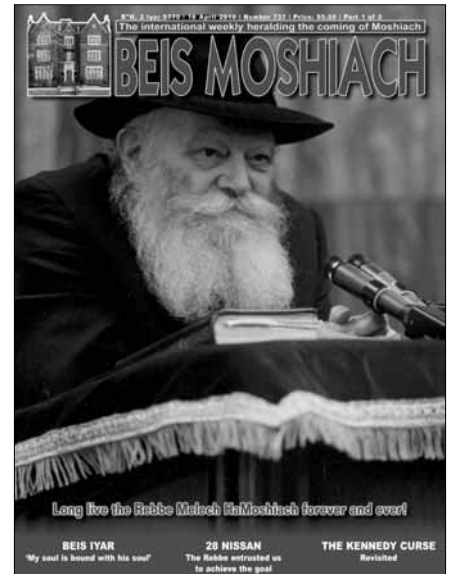
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Shleimus HaAretz | Raanan Isseroff



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# CONCEIVING NEW LIFE

Sichos In English

## THE DEEPEST INTIMACY

One of the analogies used to describe the relationship between G-d and the Jewish people is the bonds of love between a man and a woman. [1]

On the human level, this relationship is multidimensional, including the deepest levels of intimacy.

Similarly, with regard to the spiritual counterpart, the love between the Jews and G-d is not languid in nature, but rather a dynamic union. "The Holy One, Blessed be He, and Israel are one" [2] - joined in an ardent bond, for which the prophet [3] finds appropriate the simile, "Your Maker is your mate."

Moreover, on the mortal plane, physical intimacy is more than a connection between the man and the woman; new life is conceived. [4]

Similarly with regard to the bond between G-d and the Jewish people, the relationship is not self-contained; it propagates vitality.

## PLANTING SEEDS

The opening verse of our Torah reading alludes to this concept, stating: "When a woman conceives and gives birth." The "woman" refers to the Jewish people who bring new life into the world at large.

More particularly, tazria, the

term translated as "conceives" means "gives seed."

This term also is of metaphoric significance.

For a seed is planted in the earth; there its shell must decompose entirely. Only then is it possible for it to become a medium to express the infinite growth potential contained within the earth.

This motif applies for our people as a whole, and for every individual.

Our lives are also earthy; they center around material entities.

Even with regard to our Divine service, it is the actual observance of the mitzvos, not the meditation or feelings they arouse, which is of primary importance.

Yes, "G-d desires the heart." [5] But if one would meditate on the Shma all morning with love and fear and not actually recite the words, or one would be inspired with heartfelt compassion for a poor person, but would fail to actually give him charity, one's Divine service would be tellingly inadequate. For "deed is what is most essential." [6]

And thus mitzvos are referred to as "seeds," as it is written, [7] "Sow for yourselves for charity." [8]

For every mitzvah is an infusion of Divine-energy into our material world, which when cultivated will blossom and bear fruit.

In an ultimate sense, the fruit of the seeds will be the Redemption, the era when the G-dliness invested in the world through the Divine service of the Jewish people for thousands of years will flourish in overt revelation. [9]

This will remake the nature of our existence, allowing us to appreciate the inner Divine core within all being.

Since the world itself will become conscious of its G-dly nature, this redemption will never be followed by exile. For G-dliness will never become concealed again.

## THE WONDER OF CONCEPTION

Our Sages [10] interpret the expression "When a woman conceives" as implying that it is she who initiates the intensification of the love relationship.

Similarly, in the analogue, the implication is that man does not merely respond to G-d. Instead, he penetrates to the core of his being and summons up the inner energy to heighten his connection with G-d.

On this basis, we can understand why the verse highlights the importance of conception.

Although, at birth, new life is brought into the world, the fetus already exists. It is at conception when that life is brought into existence, this being the closest example in our lives to creation something from nothing. [11]

Chassidic thought [12] explains that the potential to create something from nothing lies in G-d's essence alone.

Since He is not, Heaven forbid, dependent on any other cause, He has it within His potential to create something - material existence - out of absolute naught, without this something having any cause preceding it.

G-d has imparted His essence to man, and thus the core of every soul is “an actual part of G-d.” [13]

As such, man also has the power of creation, but in reverse.

He lives in this material world, and makes “nothing from something,” revealing the G-dly potential that exists within Himself and his environment.

This is the power of conception possessed by “the woman,” mankind.

Through the expression of this potential, we become G-d’s “partner in creation,” [14] fashioning the world into a dwelling for Him. [15]

## LIFE AND DEATH

Tazria which underscores the theme of conception is the name of the entire Torah reading and thus is connected not only to the opening passages, but to the reading in its entirety.

This presents a difficulty, for although the beginning passages speak about birth, the main body of the Torah reading concerns itself with tzaraas, a bodily affliction identified with leprosy.

Tzaraas is the very opposite of new life.

Indeed, our Sages state [16] that a person afflicted with tzaraas is considered as if he is dead. What place does such a subject have in a Torah reading associated with new life?

This difficulty can be resolved on the basis of two concepts:

Firstly, tzaraas is not merely a physical malady, it is, to quote the Rambam: [17] “beyond the natural pattern of the world... a Divine sign and a wonder [18] for the Jewish people to warn them against speaking Lashon HaRa (gossip and slander).”

Secondly, all the punishments prescribed by the Torah, are not for

the sake of retribution, but rather to absolve a person’s sin and enable him to correct his inner faults. [19]

Tzaraas clearly expresses this principle.

Because a person created strife and friction between others, he becomes afflicted with tzaraas, and as a result, is required to stay alone, outside his ordinary habitat. [20]

Only when he has cleansed the influence of friction from himself it is possible for his body to be become purified from its malady and for him to rejoin society.

Thus tzaraas is not a negative factor, but rather a Divine instrument intended to prod an individual to personal refinement and to encourage the spread of peace and love within our world.

As such, it is an extension of the theme of Tazria which focuses on our efforts to improve ourselves and our environment.

Tzaraas is employed as an analogy [21] to describe the status of our people in the present age, for we are in exile - “alone, with our dwelling outside of the camp.” [22]

As explained above, our Divine service centers on Tazria, sowing seeds of G-dly influence through our observance of the mitzvos.

And soon, we will reap the harvests of these efforts with the coming of Moshiach. May this be in the immediate future.

*Adapted from Likkutei Sichos: Vol. I, p. 256ff; Vol. VII, p. 78-79; Vol. XII, p. 70ff; Vol. XXII, p. 70ff; Seifer HaSichos 5749, p. 379ff; Seifer HaSichos 5751, p. 490ff*

## NOTES:

1. See the commentaries to the Song of Songs.

2. Zohar III, 73a.

3. Isaiah 54:5. Note the connection between this verse and the opening of our Torah reading in the commentary of the Or HaChayim.

4. See the commentary of the Or HaChayim mentioned previously

which states that all marital relations create new souls.

If a couple are found worthy, the creation of a soul is also associated with the conception of new life in the material realm.

5. Cf. Sanhedrin 106b. Note Rashi’s commentary. See also the association of this verse with the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov.

6. Cf. Avos 1:17.

7. Hoshia 10:12. Note the reference to this verse in the commentary of the Or HaChayim cited previously.

8. Here too, there is a connection with the analogy of birth for our Sages say (Rashi beginning of Parshas Noach): “The progeny of the righteous are good deeds.”

9. See also the commentary of the Or HaChayim mentioned previously.

10. Nidda 31a, cited in the commentary of the Or HaChayim mentioned previously.

11. See the series of maamarim entitled Samach Tisamach, 5657.

12. See Tanya, Igeres HaKodesh, Epistle 20.

13. Tanya, ch. 2.

14. Shabbos 119b.

15. Cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Parshas B’Haalos’cha, sec. 3.

16. Nedarim 64b. See the commentary of the Maharsha in his Chiddushei Agados.

17. Mishneh Torah, the conclusion of Hilchos Tzaraas.

18. Therefore, in the present age, when the spiritual level of the Jewish people has descended, they are not fit for such Divine wonders to be openly revealed in their flesh. Hence, the phenomenon of tzaraas is no longer present (Likkutei Torah, VaYikra 22b).

19. See Brachos 5a. Note also Kuzari, Discourse II, ch. 44.

20. Erchin 16b, Rashi, commenting on Leviticus 13:46.

21. VaYikra Rabba, the conclusion of sec. 17.

22. Leviticus 13:46.

# MOSHIACH: VICTORY AT ALL COSTS

By Rabbi Zvi Homnick

*Why leave doubts and questions that can only be resolved over the long run of history, and even then not to the satisfaction of all? Why should two yeshiva bachurim be talking over a hundred years later about whether the Rebbe Maharash was the proper successor of the Tzemach Tzedek? And what does all of that have to do with my own personal service, beyond knowing that there is only one Rebbe?*

## PERSONAL VICTORY

Memory oftentimes works in strange ways. Oddly enough, I have a very clear memory of a conversation that took place over twenty-five years ago with a friend of mine on the subject of Lubavitch. I can picture exactly where we were standing (in a Beis Midrash that has long since been torn down to build a much larger one), when he informed me of the details of the transition following the passing of the Tzemach Tzedek. That was probably the first time I heard any substantive information regarding the Rebbe Maharash and the other sons of the Tzemach Tzedek.

My friend's mother was one of three sisters, two of whom married prominent Lubavitcher Chassidim. As someone with close relatives in the movement, who had been raised in an environment opposed to Chabad, and as one of the few people that in their high school years did not attend secular studies classes, he had used the extra time available to him to read up on various Jewish topics that were not part of the classroom curricula. One of those topics was the history of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement.

In that discussion, he informed me of the fact that the Maharash

was the youngest son of the Tzemach Tzedek, and that the movement had divided into a number of groups led by the different brothers, the largest being centered in Kopust under the leadership of the eldest of the sons to become a Rebbe at their father's behest (the actual firstborn, Reb Boruch Shalom, the Rebbe's direct ancestor, declined any leadership role). This son passed on shortly after his father, and in turn, was succeeded by his son known as the Magen Avos, who claimed that he had a direct tradition that Chassidus was only meant to last for a hundred and fifty years. In fact, during the early years of the leadership of the Rebbe Maharash in Lubavitch, he had the smallest following with most of his followers being the more simple folk.

The underlying premise of our conversation was that it is possible to be opposed to latter day Lubavitch while professing undying respect for its early leaders, and although I may have on occasion said things that were derogatory of the entire Chassidic movement as a whole, for the most part I saw myself as someone who did respect its progenitors while bemoaning (somewhat insincerely) its unfortunate decline. This of course, was in contrast to the Lithuanian yeshiva movement (along with its greats) that was enjoying an

unprecedented renaissance during the postwar years, in America and abroad.

In retrospect, the memory of that interchange does little for me except perhaps to make me feel a little stupid (and grateful that I overcame that stupidity), but perhaps it was what planted the seed for what would later become a particular fascination and curiosity regarding the Rebbe Maharash. What we know about him and his life comes from the talks and diaries of the Rebbe Rayatz, which the Rebbe himself compiled into a small book in 1947, and that material actually leaves one with more of a sense of puzzlement in the face of an enigmatic personality than any sense of clarity.

## HISTORICAL VICTORY

The entry for the 2<sup>nd</sup> of Iyar in the HaYom Yom says as follows: My grandfather (the Rebbe Maharash) was born on this day in 5593 (1833). When he was seven years old he was once tested on his studies by his father, the Tzemach Tzedek. My grandfather did so well that his teacher became so excited that he couldn't restrain himself and said to the Tzemach Tzedek, "Ha, what do you say, he did well?" The Tzemach Tzedek answered him, "What is all the excitement about when *tiferes* of *tiferes* (corresponding to the seventeenth day of *s'firas ha'omer*) does well?"

I once heard a Chassidic explanation as to what we could possibly learn from this story. Since it is a Chassidic precept that there is only one Rebbe, how does this comport with the conduct of the Tzemach Tzedek who placed all of his sons in leadership roles, specifying in his will that they all be equal in terms of inheritance, and only singled out the Rebbe Maharash in that he had him live

close to him in the town of Lubavitch? (Although the Rebbe in a talk on Rosh HaShana 5752 – Sichos Kodesh 5752 p. 11 – indicates that the Tzemach Tzedek saw to install him during his lifetime, it was not readily apparent back then). Perhaps this story is meant to shed light on that question. The Tzemach Tzedek was saying that despite his youth, he embodied "*tiferes* of *tiferes*," and as such would "do well" in the face of "tests" and challenges to his absolute leadership. This was borne out by history as the other branches of Chabad faded into oblivion.

Although it is a fine insight, it still begs the question, why set it up in such a way to begin with? Why leave that generation and subsequent generations with doubts and questions that can only be resolved over the long run of history, and even then not to the satisfaction of all? Why should two yeshiva bachurim be talking over a hundred years later about whether the Rebbe Maharash was the proper successor of the Tzemach Tzedek? And what does all of that have to do with my own personal service, beyond knowing that there is only one Rebbe, which is certainly not explicit in the story?

## MILITARY VICTORY

In most human endeavors there is a decision making process followed by an implementation process. That is why the emotional makeup of the person includes "decision" emotions and "implementation" emotions. Love, fear and compassion, and the related expressions of *chesed*, *g'vura* and *tiferes*, are the feelings that provide the inclination one way or another as to how we relate and respond to any given matter. Determination, devotion and committed attachment, along with the related expressions of *netzach*,

*hod* and *yesod* are the inner engine that drives the implementation of a given course of action, which is brought to fruition by *malchus*, through thought, speech and action.

In the world of the military, there is a clear divide between the decision making echelons and the fighting men. The study of military strategy and planning, the emotional struggles and turmoil involved in the gut-wrenching decision making process are exclusively the domain of the civilian and military leaders. In fact, military rules generally prohibit the soldiers from discussing their personal opinions or feelings about any combat assignments or campaigns. The soldier is expected to marshal his emotional energies only towards getting the job done, and this is primarily through channeling his *netzach*, the emotion that when fully aroused manifests as absolute determination to achieve victory at all costs, along with his *hod* that allows him to submit and commit to the necessary steps and actions needed to further the cause and attain the ultimate goal.

Wars often end up being long drawn out affairs. For all of the soldier's inner drive for victory, there are times that he finds himself struggling simply to hold the line and survive, in order to live and fight another day. In addition there are losses and setbacks, tragedies and heartbreaks, which all serve to sap the drive and determination needed to pursue a protracted military course. For that we have the attribute of *yesod* to provide the resolve and perseverance to staying the course. It is only when victory is finally in sight and the focus is on achieving the final objective and bringing about the cessation of hostilities that the soldier, whose entire existence is one of submission to his leader, to his

***We must remain focused on our final objective and pursue it at all costs, but in the end it is really only about actually getting there, “tiferes of tiferes.” That is the message and battle cry of l’chat’chilla aribber.***

superiors, to his cause, must actually adopt the mission as his very own and awaken within himself the capacity to take charge and show initiative, his *malchus*.

When King Shaul set out to do battle with Amalek, he led the people to complete victory in the military sense. However, he fell short of the final objective to obliterate every last vestige of Amalek by leaving their king and their livestock alive. Because of this, the continuation of his kingdom was taken from him, and Dovid was anointed king and promised the kingdom for all eternity, culminating with Moshiach who descends from his line. When Shaul asked Shmuel if there was a chance that his loss of the kingdom be given reconsideration, the answer was, “The Eternal One (*Netzach*) of Yisroel will not lie and will not relent, for He is not a man (*lo adam*) to relent.” Chassidus explains this to mean that the *malchus* of the House of Dovid is rooted in the divine attribute of *netzach*, which in turn is rooted in the divine Essence which is infinite and transcends all the anthropomorphic manifestations of divinity (*lo adam*).

Although Dovid was promised the kingdom for all eternity, his anointment was held in secret and his leadership was challenged from the very beginning and came under repeated attack throughout his lifetime. This continued in subsequent generations and many

sources indicate that Moshiach himself must face challenges to his leadership all the way until the final objective is achieved with the recapture and resettlement of Eretz Yisroel, the destruction of Amalek, and the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash. This is because *netzach*, which means both victory and eternity, is only fully realized when victory is complete and everlasting. Only then, will the *malchus* of Dovid that is rooted in *netzach* be fully accepted without challenge for all eternity. “Victory at all costs” makes for a fine and stirring slogan, but ultimately means less than nothing unless victory is finally achieved.

Early Jewish history can be broken down into two general periods, the period from the Avos, the Patriarchs, through the exile and exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Torah, until the Jews entered the Holy Land, which laid the groundwork for the actual job of conquering the world for holiness, and the period following their entry into Eretz Yisroel until today. The second period did not see the Jewish people fully established until Dovid was anointed king and his son Shlomo built the Beis HaMikdash.

Similarly, Chassidic history reflects these two stages, the “planning stage” and the “implementation stage.” The Baal Shem Tov and the Mezritcher Maggid, the Alter Rebbe, the Mitteler Rebbe and the Tzemach

Tzedek, all represented divine revelations that reflect the will and desire, the mindset and decision making that go into the ultimate military campaign of the “Armies of G-d” for world conquest. As such, they are known as the Avos of Chassidus, and are almost universally respected and accepted to some degree, and it was during the reign of the Tzemach Tzedek that most opposition to Chassidus faded.

The Rebbe Maharash who corresponds to the divine attribute of *netzach* (see Sicha Simchas Torah Day Meal 5745, Seifer HaSichos Rayatz), represents the beginning of the final implementation stage. His anointment took place in secret and faced many competitive challenges. Much like Dovid, he attracted a small number of some of the greatest Chassidic minds and characters of the time, but most of his following were the more simple Chassidim. Those very same simple Chassidim who exemplified the very reason that the Alter Rebbe chose Russia as his base of operations when the disciples of the Mezritcher Maggid divided Eastern Europe, which was that they make the best soldiers. And like the kingdom of the House of Dovid, the full validation of his leadership and that of his subsequent heirs to the throne will only take place after the final victory with the coming of Moshiach.

## **FINAL VICTORY**

There is a well-known aphorism of the Rebbe Maharash that the Rebbe repeated on more occasions than one would care to count, “The world says that if you can’t go under, go over. And I say you should initially go over (in Yiddish, *l’chat’chilla aribber*).” The fact that the Rebbe repeated and explicated this saying numerous times is

somewhat mystifying. Yes, it seems like a sound piece of advice (and many secular sources have adopted and adapted this idea), and yes, it is important to know that spiritually this means that we are given the power to transcend most obstacles rather than wrestling endlessly with them, but still, it seems a bit out of proportion.

However, when we look at the role of our generation, the generation of *malchus*, which stands at the verge of complete victory, and as such, requires that each and every one of us take the initiative to capture and rehabilitate ever expanding territorial and population areas, it begins to make a little more sense. We, of all people, cannot afford to get caught up in the process of warfare, the individual struggles and obstacles, which can cause us to lose sight of the final objective. *Netzach* is not

about getting caught up in the local struggles and small victories that happen along the way, or even winning the entire battle and just leaving one little old king and a few heads of cattle. It is about remaining focused on your final objective and pursuing it at all costs, but in the end it is really only about actually getting there, "*tiferes of tiferes*." That is the message and battle cry of *l'chat'chilla aribber*.

In that context, the talk of the 28<sup>th</sup> of Nissan 5751, a few short days before the 2<sup>nd</sup> of Iyar is not a mystery at all. In fact, the Rebbe was pretty much stating the obvious. He just did it a little more forcefully than usual. At this stage of the game, we need the initiative and stubbornness, built on the desire to reach the final objective and the complete rejection of the possibility of having this drag on even one more day. If we don't

have that, then from the perspective of *malchus* as rooted in *netzach* rooted in the divine Essence, everything we did until now is for naught.

"What else can I do so that all sons of Israel will raise a tumult and cry out for real, and they will accomplish bringing Moshiach in actuality...the only thing I can do is give it over to you: **do everything in your power...to actually bring our righteous Moshiach, immediately and literally NOW!**"

*Positive comments and constructive criticism welcome: rabbizvi@aol.com*

[Correction: Issue #735; The Jewish people did not cross the Jordan River on the sixth of Nissan. On the seventh of Nissan, they finished mourning Moshe Rabbeinu and Yehoshua sent the two spies, and on the tenth of Nissan, they miraculously crossed the river.]



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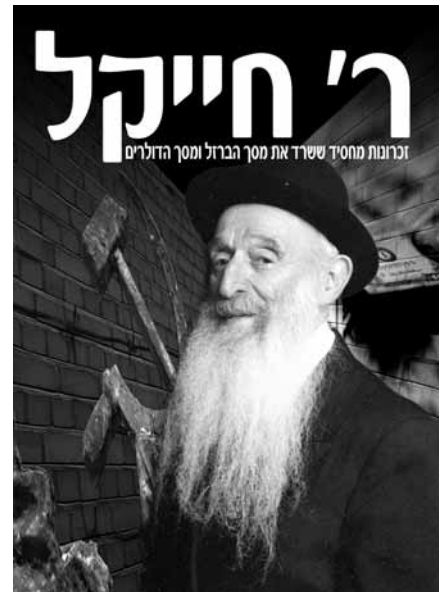
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# FUNDING THE REBBE'S EXODUS

By Rabbi Schneur Zalman Chanan  
Translated by Menachem Har Zvi



**“We decided that it was imperative to send four thousand dollars immediately. However, the Kramer brothers asked in astonishment, ‘How will we come up with such a large sum?’”**

**This chapter relates the details of R. Yisroel’s efforts to help the Rebbe leave Russia, his journeys from the United States to visit the Rebbe in Europe, the great *kiruvim* - affection which he received from the Rebbe, and a great lie, created out of half-truths, which caused a storm.**

It was Tammuz of 1927. The Rebbe Rayatz, although recently freed from jail, remained forbidden to return to his hometown of Leningrad. Consequently he settled in Molochovka, a small village outside of Moscow. The GPU authorities, enraged that their authority was overridden by Soviet officials because of the Rebbe’s release, sought any pretext by which to implicate the Jewish leader.

The situation was grave. After great efforts the *Chassid* and activist R. Mordechai Dubin, obtained for the Rebbe an exit visa from Russia and an entry visa to Latvia. However, due to lack of funds,

emigration was impossible. Letters and telegrams with the call of SOS were sent abroad, in particular to the *chassidim* in the United States.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of Tammuz the son-in-law of the Rebbe, R. Shmaryahu Gurary, sent a telegram to R. Shraga Faivish Zalmanov in Warsaw.

**You will surely write to his sons [the *chassidim*], R. Eliyahu [Simpson] and R. Yisroel [Jacobson], requesting that they extend the appropriate efforts. The aid of his relatives, may they be well [the funds raised in the USA] shall be sent to you and to his cousin R. Mordechai, son of R. Zalman Dov [Dubin] . . . You must quickly notify your brother R.B.S. [R. Boruch Shalom Kahn], father of Folek [Kahn], situation permitting.**

**Your brother Ben Menachem [the Rashag, son of R. Menachem Mendel Gurary].**

The following day the Rashag sent an additional telegram to Rav Zalmanov:

**We must encourage HaRav HaGaon R. Menachem Mendel Leib [Lokshin], R. Eliyah [Simpson], and R. Yisroel [Jacobson], to generate an**

**organized and great awakening for this matter. They shall raise the appropriate funds from their relatives [Chabad *chassidim* and admirers in the U.S.]. The money raised shall be sent either to you or to R. Mordechai [Dubin].**

And in America?

Rabbi Jacobson writes in his memoirs, “The news of the Rebbe’s imprisonment arrived rather late.” Nevertheless both the Jewish and the secular press gave the news ample coverage.

In addition, Rabbis Jacobson and Simpson received the letters of R. Chatche Fagen and R. Yakov Zuravitzer and consequently convened with *anash* to discuss the means to provide aid. Sam Kramer, a prominent attorney, traveled to Washington to apply diplomatic pressure on the Soviet Union with the help of Republican Senator William Borah of Idaho. Yet only a minimal amount of funds was raised.

There was a reason for the lukewarm response. Overall, American Jewry was not overly alarmed by the Rebbe’s arrest. Even those who did lend help failed to grasp the urgency. American Jewry, never having experienced the fear of

the *Cheka* or the dungeons of the GPU, could not fully understand the danger to the Rebbe's life. How was American Jewry to know that the Rebbe could possibly be sent to the gallows without a trial, an advocate, or legal counsel? How could they sense the degree of suffering experienced by the Rebbe if they themselves had never experienced genuine fear? Even Chabad *chassidim* who had arrived in the U.S. from Russia in the preceding decades could not fathom the conditions of the USSR in 1927.

Rabbi Jacobson mentions that R. Avrohom Dov Levin (the "Malach" – angel) preferred to deny the news completely, dismissing anything printed in newspapers as false. Even after Rabbi Jacobson showed members of Agudas Chassidei Chabad the letters urging the Rebbe to leave the USSR at once, and the dire need for funds, few were convinced.

Rabbi Jacobson writes, "I was in the country for only 1½ years. I could do very little." The meaning of what R. Yisroel describes as "very little" can be seen in the following story related in *Seifer Zikaron L'B'nei Yisroel*.<sup>1</sup> The story portrays R. Yisroel as a most resolute, firm, and decisive character, completely focused on the objective.

**We were notified from Riga that the situation is one of grave danger and that a large sum is required to help the Rebbe leave the USSR with his family and all his possessions. As the Rebbe had already received an exit visa, it is crucial that his departure not be delayed due to shortage of funds, for who knows what each new day may bring.**



**The monies were sent from here to Riga, and R. Mordechai Dubin would allocate the funds wherever and whenever necessary. We gathered on Erev Shabbos B'Reishis in the office of Agudas Chassidei Chabad. We decided that it was imperative that four thousand dollars be sent immediately. Who decided? R. Eliyah Simpson and myself. R.M.L. Lokshin agreed with us but he did not forcefully state his opinion.**

**I stated that this *must* be done. The Kramer brothers asked in astonishment, "How can we come up with such a large sum?" Maybe you should first collect and then send the money. Surely the Rebbe won't be withheld because of the money. Or perhaps they can borrow money there [in the USSR] and we will repay later.**

**The Kramer brothers went back to their office to conduct their business. We were left stunned in the office, not knowing what to do. Their attitude was that it was completely out of the question and that they had absolutely no intention of doing so.**

**We began to beg Rav Lokshin to go and explain to them that the severity of the matter requires that this *must* be done. He spoke with**

**them and they returned to the office and began countering to send only one thousand or fifteen hundred dollars. I said forcefully that we cannot send less than four thousand dollars.**

**It was Erev Shabbos in early winter . . . They suggested that we leave the matter until the next Monday, since the day was short and they had to close the factory.**

**My heart was greatly aggrieved. I said, "I will not move from here until four thousand dollars are sent immediately." We pledged to collect and repay the entire sum.**

**At first they did not take me seriously. However, Rav Lokshin told them that they should be aware that I would keep to my word and not leave the factory until they sent the sum of four thousand dollars. With gratitude to Hashem we were successful and they cabled four thousand dollars to R. Mordechai Dubin in Riga. On Monday we received the news that the Rebbe and his family arrived in Riga.**

**Immediately upon receiving news of the Rebbe's arrival in Riga, R. Yisroel and R. Eliyah [Simpson] sent a telegram blessing the Rebbe with "*Boachem L'Shalom* – May your coming be in peace." In response the Rebbe expressed his gratitude for the funds sent on his behalf.**

**The sum of eight thousand dollars which you sent to our esteemed friend Mr. Dubin [over the course of the summer until the present] I have duly received. This is less than half of the expenses accrued during my imprisonment and the period in which efforts were extended for an exit visa. I do not yet have a residence for us. The**

expenses are great; Hashem will surely help.

**I herewith give to you and to all our friends – *anash, T'mimim* – my gratitude and blessings for your support. May Hashem help you materially and spiritually.**

In late 5687 (1927) R. Yisroel was appointed Director and Secretary of Agudas Chassidei Chabad. He worked diligently, but on a strictly volunteer, non-paid basis. Nevertheless, his activities with *anash* in particular and with American Jewry in general broke the ice and helped lay the groundwork for the Rebbe Rayatz's visit to the U.S. in 5690 (1929-30), which lasted nearly a year.

## 23 HOURS IN YECHIDUS WITH THE REBBE RAYATZ

R. Yisroel continued to be active and to accomplish great things for American Jewry. However, his soul yearnings for the Rebbe were very powerful. His friend R. Yitzchak the Masmid encouraged him to travel to Poland to meet with the Rebbe.

In a letter written in 1936, R. Yitzchok the Masmid writes to R. Yisroel:

**The time has come for his honor to visit the Rebbe *Shlita*. You have not been with the Rebbe for over ten years. Although you did see the Rebbe in America, this is not significant. One must travel to the Rebbe.**

**. . . As I estimate your financial state (may G-d broaden your lot) I know that this amounts to *mesiras nefesh*- self-sacrifice. However, traveling to the Rebbe requires *mesiras nefesh*. And then (with hope to G-d) the visit has its desired good effect.**

R. Yisroel resolved to visit the Rebbe despite the many challenges which stood in his way. It is very likely that R. Yisroel was the only *chassid* who traveled to the Rebbe in

Europe during that period. It is not known of any other *chassidim* who traveled to the Rebbe from America during this period.

R. Yisroel traveled from the United States to Poland to visit the Rebbe twice. On the first visit R. Yisroel left the United States on the Queen Mary ocean liner on the 28th of Tammuz, 5697 (1937). He returned to New York on the 10<sup>th</sup> of Elul that same year.

The purpose of R. Yisroel's visit was twofold: first, to bring regards from American Jewry to the Rebbe; second, to serve as representative of American Jewry to renew their bond with the Rebbe. Agudas Chassidei Chabad provided financial assistance for the expenses of the trip. (The cost of a ticket was \$127 each way.) They also put a notice in the Agudas Chassidei Chabad bulletin, which had a wide circulation, that *panim*, letters and requests could be sent to the Rebbe with R. Yisroel.

Upon his arrival in Europe, R. Yisroel traveled to Purkersdorf, Austria, a small city 40 minutes outside Vienna, to visit the Rebbe, who was staying at a sanitarium in that city. R. Yisroel stayed there for eight days. He then traveled to Otvoitzk, where he visited the Rebbe's family. From there he returned to Purkersdorf. R. Yisroel spent many hours in the Rebbe's *yechidus* room, as a *chassid*, as a representative of hundreds of individuals who sent *panim* (requests and letters), as the director of Agudas Chassidei Chabad of America, and as a representative of American Jewry. The Rebbe discussed with R. Yisroel numerous contemporary issues relating both to the community and to individuals.

On each one of those days, R. Yisroel merited to have *yechidus* with the Rebbe at appointed times. The appointed times were at 10:50 a.m., 2:30 p.m., and at seven in the evening. On some days R. Yisroel had *yechidus* at all three appointed

times, on other days twice, and on other days just once. Each day the Rebbe would number the sum total of responses that he had already given.

Among the issues discussed were the Rebbe's financial situation and the financial status of the yeshiva. R. Yisroel stated that he hoped to raise for the Rebbe five thousand dollars annually, through charity boxes, appeals, and women's committees. In addition, he stated his hope that the *Achei T'mimim* [Brothers of the T'mimim] would raise for the yeshiva 350 dollars annually.

The Rebbe requested that R. Yisroel send students from the United States to study in Tomchei T'mimim in Poland, and that R. Yisroel organize frequent *farbrengens* in the "old," traditional *chassidic* spirit.

The Rebbe related to R. Yisroel details regarding his own health. At first the doctors stated that there was no chance for him to be cured. However, Dr. Garzan gave the Rebbe a strict diet and various medications. This regimen caused a marked improvement in the Rebbe's condition.

The Rebbe discussed at length various issues related to Agudas Chassidei Chabad of America. The Rebbe explained that its purpose and function is to bring all *anash* (men and women) closer to "the rock from whence they were hewn"<sup>2</sup> – their roots, and to strengthen their religiosity. The Rebbe requested that the "Agudah" be recognized by the government as a legal body, and that the membership fee should be two dollars annually. In addition, each city should give an additional annual fee to cover the costs of the Agudas Chassidei Chabad office. With regards to the bulletin published by Agudas Chassidei Chabad, the Rebbe suggested that in addition to paid advertisements, the bulletin should also carry *mazal tov* blessings and various notices free of charge.

The Rebbe requested that there be a special section for the young readers, and an additional section devoted to the history of Nusach Ari *shuls* in the United States, and to the history and lineage of various individuals.

The Rebbe added that Agudas Chassidei Chabad should send the bulletin to each one of its members. In addition the Agudah must invite every member to participate in the occasional *farbrengens*. When a member has a personal *simcha*, the Agudah should send a blessing and a gift. This will remind the recipient of his roots.

The Rebbe requested that the *s'farim* and *maamarim* of *chassidus* be disseminated, and that members travel to various cities to establish additional branches and increase membership. Members who devoted two weeks activity for the benefit of Agudas Chassidei Chabad were titled by the Rebbe as "active members." The Rebbe requested that *T'mimim* devote a total of four weeks a year for the "sacred work."

The Rebbe spoke about the establishment of "*Achei T'mimim*," - Brothers of the *T'mimim*, and "*Achos HaT'mimim*," - Sisters of the *T'mimim*. The Rebbe related to R. Yisroel that in Riga there were already 58 girls in "*Achos HaT'mimim*" who study "light" *maamarei chassidus*, and that the effects of the learning were apparent in their character and behavior.

## WONDROUS KIRUVIM - AFFECTION

One evening, when R. Yisroel was in the Rebbe's room, the Rebbe conversed with him in a most personal manner.



"Chatche's wife Rebbetzin Sasha Fagen is here now. She will enter to see me tomorrow around twelve o'clock. That's the way it is . . . aside from everything else, I am a father, a mother, a brother, and a friend."

One morning the Rebbe told R. Yisroel, "Yisroel, today (he then paused briefly, seemingly in thought, then he continued) in *davening* I expressed praise and gratitude to Hashem for giving you the idea to come here. I cannot express in words the pleasure which you have given me."

In the last *yechidus* before R. Yisroel traveled to Otvotzk the

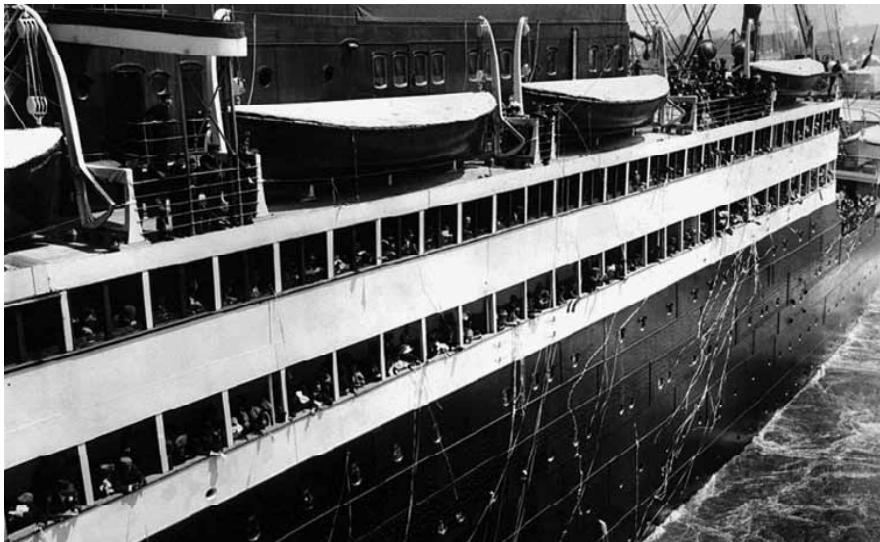
Rebbe said, "This week I devoted 33 hours to you. You spent a total of 23 hours in my room. It took me another ten hours to compose responses and to prepare for my talks with you. You brought 213 *tzetlen* - notes. I counted them. I put aside a match for each note. It took approximately eight hours to hear the regards from America. This refreshed the image in memory of my visit to America which took place eight years ago. During the past eight years the image had become somewhat clouded. However, now the image has been reawakened."

On Sunday, a day prior to R. Yisroel's departure, the Rebbe said that he should come see him with his luggage right before his departure. The next day the Rebbe discussed with R. Yisroel various issues and various directives. Afterwards, the Rebbe gave him the *maamer* "*Acharei*" of 3 Elul 5697 (1937). The Rebbe then said, "I am making you a *shliach mitzvah* - a mitzvah messenger. This *maamer* should be learned during the months of Elul and Tishrei . . .

you shall transcribe all that you have seen and heard."

## AN UPROAR REGARDING A "STORM" AT SEA

R. Yisroel traveled to the Rebbe in Poland a second time in the summer of 5699 (1939). He departed New York on the S.S. Isle de France on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of Menachem Av 5699, together with six students whom he brought to study in Tomchei *T'mimim* in Otvotzk. The students were able to escape from Poland at the outbreak of World War Two and somehow reach Riga, where they would stay



The S.S. George Washington

during the High Holy days. There is a letter from one of the students dated 19 Tishrei, sent from Stockholm, Sweden. From Stockholm the students set sail to New York

After some research I learned that R. Yisroel did not tarry in Otvoztck. Following the Rebbe's directive he immediately returned to the United States. On the 28<sup>th</sup> of Elul he boarded the S.S. George Washington in Le Havre France. The ship arrived in New York on the 5<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei..

Members of Rabbi Jacobson's family relate that R. Yisroel boarded the ship, along with other Jews, just moments prior to the ship's departure. The ship which was full to capacity did not have space for additional passengers. However, the captain of the ship emptied the swimming pool, which was located in the first class and set up seats for R. Yisroel and the other last minute passengers.

About seven years ago, R. Yisroel's trip on the ship became known throughout the world. Author Edward Klein in his best seller *The Kennedy Curse: Why Tragedy has Haunted America's First Family for 150 Years* writes that during that trip, Rabbi Jacobson cursed the

father of the Kennedys very harshly.

According to Klein, the following transpired on the ship.

**When Joe Kennedy returned to the U.S., the transatlantic ship also carried Israel Jacobson, a poor Rabbi who was a Lubavitcher chassid, and six yeshiva students. Kennedy complained to the captain that the Jewish passengers were making too much noise during their New Year's prayers. He demanded that the captain prohibit the passengers to continue their prayers because they disturb the surrounding passengers. Rabbi Jacobson cursed Kennedy and all his male descendants. This is the cause of the tragic fate of the Kennedys.**

This story which was published seven years ago received additional publicity just recently when Senator Ted Kennedy passed away.

Unfortunately, the publication of this story which attributes the Kennedy curse to Rabbi Jacobson has caused much pain to his family. Anyone who knew Rabbi Jacobson knows that despite his firmness and uncompromising stance he was a gentle soul who would not hurt any creature. Rabbi Jacobson had no connection to curses, having never cursed anyone.

## HALF TRUTHS VERSUS FACTS

If the author of *The Kennedy Curse* had conducted the proper research, he would have discovered the following facts. First, Rabbi Jacobson did not return to the United States together with the six students whom he brought to Europe from the United States. Second, Rabbi Jacobson was a person of pure character with pure language, one who would never curse, and third, Joseph Kennedy was not even on that boat!

Based on documents found in archives, Joseph Kennedy sent his wife and family back to the United States at the outbreak of the war. Kennedy himself remained in England until he left his post as U.S. Ambassador to England in October of 1940.

In the Photostat images of the ship documents shown here, one can see that Rabbi Jacobson traveled on the same ship as the Kennedy family. However, the name of Joseph Kennedy does not appear among the passengers.

There is a popular saying that any big lie is based on half-truths. 1. It is true that Rabbi Jacobson traveled by ship at the outbreak of the war. 2. He was a poor Rabbi. 3. He was on the ship on Rosh Hashanah. (It is safe to assume that he organized a *minyan* and *davened* publicly.) However, to the best of the knowledge of Rabbi Jacobson's family, he did not come in contact with any of the Kennedys during the course of the trip.

An additional truth – Joe Kennedy was known as an anti-Semite who related to Jews with disrespect. On more than one occasion, he said publicly that although there are a few individual Jews that are okay, the Jews as a whole are not. He did not hide his disdain for Jews, calling them by the derogatory term of “kikes.” He also

2 Yeshayahu 51:1

[illegible]

# WE CAN DO IT – WITH THE REBBE’S KO’ACH!

By Rabbi Boaz Kali

***In the sicha of Chaf-Ches Nissan the Rebbe did not assign jobs and positions. He empowered us and then entrusted us to successfully achieve our goal.***

## “LIGHTS” OF R’ SHMUEL IN “VESSELS” OF R’ PINCHAS

In the famous sicha of Chaf-Ches Nissan, 5751, in which the Rebbe placed on our shoulders (which are apparently not as narrow as we are used to thinking they are) the task of bringing the Geula, the Rebbe coined the phrase “lights of Tohu in vessels of Tikkun.” In order to understand this concept let’s review the famous story about R’ Shmuel Munkes.

It was a cold and wintry day and the white snow had long since turned into black slush. R’ Shmuel was on his way to visit his friend, the wealthy R’ Pinchas Roizes. R’ Pinchas’ house was as fancy as one

would expect of the town g’vir. It was large and had wall to wall carpets, velvet armchairs and other expensive and ornate furnishings.

R’ Shmuel climbed the stairs, oblivious to the dirt his boots left on the shining marble, and knocked at the door. When R’ Pinchas’ wife told him that her husband was about to come home, he stretched out his weary feet, boots and all, on the couch while he awaited his return. R’ Pinchas’ wife saw the dirt he had tracked in and decided to keep quiet and let her husband deal with his friend.

When R’ Pinchas arrived he greeted R’ Shmuel warmly and then asked him in surprise, “Tell me, did you have to lie on the couch in your filthy boots? Couldn’t you at least

remove them first?”

R’ Shmuel exclaimed, “What?! It really bothers you? Physical beauty is truly important to you? I naively thought that it’s all superficial to you and wealth plays no role in your Chassidic life. Well, you should know, my friend, that I won’t be coming here anymore!” With that, he took his belongings and rushed out.

R’ Pinchas, who dearly loved R’ Shmuel, ran after him and tried to appease him, ask his forgiveness and invite him back, but R’ Shmuel remained unmoved. Finally, R’ Shmuel said, “I am willing to come back on one condition. If you take a broom and ride it through the streets of the city like a meshuganer, all will see that you, R’ Pinchas, the town g’vir, are a Chassid who is truly nullified and naught, and all the wealth and honor mean nothing to you.”

R’ Pinchas complied with this condition. When he finished making a fool of himself in public, he happily went back home with R’ Shmuel to farbreng. Humbly, R’ Pinchas asked his friend what this was all about, and R’ Shmuel explained, “I heard that the Alter Rebbe once passed near your house in a carriage and when he heard that this mansion was yours he wondered: ‘What does R’ Pinchas need such a beautiful home for? Does a Chassid need a house like this?’

“When you were asked about this, you answered, ‘I really didn’t want to have a house like this. With each brick that was laid I cried that I, a Chassid, have to conduct myself with such external trappings of wealth. But I figured that as the g’vir of the town, if I have a big, beautiful house, it will be the place where meetings take place and decisions are made regarding the melamdim, shoachim etc. Since *der vos hut di meia, hut di deia* (the one with the money is the one whose

opinions prevail), I will be able to decide that money should be given to the melamdim and that there are shochtim who are G-d fearing, etc.’ The Alter Rebbe accepted this answer and went on his way.

“Now,” continued R’ Shmuel, “it seems, to my surprise, that what you told the Rebbe wasn’t genuine and you really do care about externals. If you are a faker, I don’t want to be your friend.”

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There is a lot to learn from this story. As for our subject, “lights of Tohu in vessels of Tikkun,” we must remember that there always were and always will be Chassidim who were of the “lights of Tohu” variety. The world meant nothing to them and they *faifed* (lit. whistled, i.e. disdained) on the world and its conventions.

Contrariwise, there are Chassidim who live within the world’s conventions and do so in an orderly, methodical way within the world of Tikkun. Everything is thought through; there are minimal surprises and no radical changes.

Then the Rebbe surprised us by saying we need to act in such a way that within **one** individual there are both aspects: R’ Pinchas (as he appeared initially) as well as R’ Shmuel. Both together!

On the one hand, the highest levels of Tohu which means that the world with its limitations, views and conventions means nothing to us; on the other hand, in the way that Chassidus explains, “the world (Heb. *olam*, from the root *helem*, meaning concealment) was created for me (i.e. to refine the concealment through working within the boundaries of the world).” And it’s not paradoxical to use all the tools and gimmicks of this world in order to change the world in a deep way and to demonstrate to all that the world is ready for Geula as the Rebbe says it is.



**Rabbi Boaz Kali, director of Chabad mosdos in Krayot and chairman of the Matteh Sheva Mitzvos B’nei Noach**

the months Himself until Rosh Chodesh Nissan, the month of Geula in which Hashem said, “this month is for you the head of the months.” That is when Hashem gave us the ability to sanctify the months ourselves.

Nowadays, as the Rebbe often brings in his sichos, the only month which we do not bless is the month of Tishrei. Tishrei is blessed by Hashem Himself and this enables us to sanctify the rest of the months of the year.

The same is true with Chaf-Ches Nissan. When the Rebbe says, “I give this inyan over to you,” this is not merely a transferring of jobs. On the surface it’s puzzling. We

***“What?! It really bothers you? Physical beauty is truly important to you? I naively thought that it’s all superficial to you and wealth plays no role in your Chassidic life. Well, you should know, my friend, that I won’t be coming here anymore!”***

### **“I AM GIVING IT OVER”**

In the Chaf-Ches Nissan sicha, the Rebbe uses the expression, “I give the inyan to you.” A friend pointed out to me that this is an unusual term for the Rebbe to use. The Rebbe could have said, “I did all that I could and from now on, it is up to you to do all that you can.” What message lies in the choice of words “I am giving?”

My friend went on to say that there is a Talmudic parallel for the expression “I am giving over” from which we can understand the deeper message within the Rebbe’s words. Midrash tells us, in connection with Kiddush HaChodesh (sanctifying the month), that Hashem sanctified

were born into exile, raised in it, and deal with galus every day; how can we bring the Geula? How can we suddenly get ourselves out of galus and bring Geula to the world? After all, we know that “a prisoner cannot free himself from jail?”

The Rebbe, being Moshiach, lives Geula and sees things from a Geula perspective. The world doesn’t conceal anything for him (as the Rebbe taught us what a Rebbe is that “he is not subject to the limitations of nature” and the imprisonments of the Rebbeim were “self-limitations,” and so on). It is understandable that such a person has the ability to take us out of galus and turn the gola into Geula.

But how do *we* have the ability to do this?

This is why the Rebbe tells us: it's not that from now on you have to do some task which is impossible from the perspective of your abilities, but rather just as Hashem sanctifies the month of Tishrei and **with this ko'ach** we can sanctify the rest of the months of the year, so too here, the Rebbe gives us *kochos*, **"I give over** the inyan to you" so we can successfully achieve our goal.

## YIUSH SHELO MI'DAAS

The message and strength we need to take from Chaf-Ches Nissan is that we cannot even think about giving up. Such a thought must be put aside in the manner the Alter Rebbe prescribes in regard to having a bad thought about someone, "repeatedly push it away like one dispersing smoke and like an actual thought of idol worship."

It is only natural in an exile-world for despair to spread among many fine people. So many years have passed since the *sicha* was said and it looks as though nothing is changing and that not only are we not making progress, but things seem to be getting worse because since 3 Tammuz we don't see the Rebbe. Nonetheless, we cannot give up!

A vivid example of this is conveyed in the following story.

There was an individual who supported himself and his family by purchasing merchandise at the annual fair in Leipzig and selling it at a nice profit in the city he came from. Every year he would take a sum of money he had saved up, supplemented with loans from friends, and go to the fair.

One year, the man fell ill. He knew that if he didn't go to the fair, he wouldn't be able to support his family for a year, yet he simply wasn't well enough to make the trip. Instead, his wife traveled to

the fair. He provided her with detailed instructions as to what she should do there, what to buy, and how to go about purchasing the merchandise. The woman went to the fair and found the goods her husband had described. She closed a deal and was about to pay and go home when she discovered that the bundle of money, which included loans in addition to all of their savings, was gone!

She was devastated by this tremendous loss, the work of a year down the drain and no prospects for *parnasa* for the coming year. It didn't take long for the man who had found the money to be found. Unfortunately though, he wasn't interested in doing the generous thing, nor was he susceptible to pangs of conscience. He quoted halachic sources that *pasken* that the money belonged to him. The basis of this claim is that the money had no identifying signs. In such a situation the Gemara states that the loser certainly gave up hope and the despair of the owner allows the finder to keep it.

The woman called the man to a *din Torah*, and after the rabbi heard the claims, he ruled that the finder had to return the money to the woman. The man obediently returned the money, though he asked the *rav* on what basis he was required to do so.

The rabbi answered, "This woman was sent by her husband to buy goods. The husband gave her the ability and permission and power of attorney etc. so that she could buy what she found suitable. He relied on her judgment to pay the right price when it came down to an actual deal. But there was one thing he did not give her permission for – **to despair**. True, she despaired, but she had no permission to do so and therefore did not relinquish possession of the money.

The same is true for us. We

were given a mission by the Rebbe to transform this world into a place of Geula, to build a dwelling for the *Ikar Sh'china* and to reveal Moshiach in the world. There have always been people who despaired, like the spies who entered Israel, but we don't have that privilege – **we have no permission to give up on this shlichus!**

There is a Talmudic concept called "*yiush sh'lo mi'daas*." As it relates to our situation, it means that one can despair only when there is no *daas* (common usage: knowledge, but also means bonding), i.e. *hiskashrus* with a very strong bond for a specific purpose.

We need to remember and continuously remind ourselves that the Rebbe said "do all that you can." We often say to ourselves: "I'm trying, I'm doing, I'm making the effort and I'm doing the best I can." We are not being asked to try but **to do "all that we can"** in order to **actually bring** Moshiach.

## OUR STRENGTH IS IN OUR UNITY

Hypnotism is used for purposes of healing as well as entertainment. The Rebbe, so I heard, doesn't hold of it, not even for healing. Israeli law prohibits using hypnotism as entertainment and limits its use to healing by those who are certified practitioners. But since the idea exists, we can learn a lesson in *avodas Hashem* from it.

For entertainment purposes, a hypnotist has someone put his head on a chair and his feet on another chair while his body remains unsupported. The hypnotist then tells him that his body is made of iron and is able to stand on him to demonstrate the power of hypnotism.

In other words, the mind has the power to control and affect the body and go beyond its limitations.

***We were given a mission by the Rebbe to transform this world into a place of Geula, to build a dwelling for the Ikar Sh'china and to reveal Moshiach in the world. There have always been people who despaired, but we don't have that privilege – we have no permission to give up on this shlichus!***

A person has incredible powers; it's just that they are not utilized and remain unexpressed. A person's potential is largely unrealized; it is claimed that we use only a fraction of our brain power.

Back to our subject – the “lights of Tohu” which the Rebbe wants us to put into vessels. Chassidus teaches that there were many lights and too few vessels to contain them, so the vessels broke and it was necessary for the “great light to be removed.” On the face of it, it seems impossible to resolve that conflict. And then the Rebbe tells us: bring the subject of Moshiach down to the world in vessels of Tikkun, in a systematic, rational way! How can this impossibility be accomplished?

First, the Rebbe said that one, two, or three need to **devise a plan** of how to get the “lights” into “vessels.” A demand was made of us and surely, along with the demand, we were given the ability to carry it out. Take for example the feeling on Simchas Torah. We dance and rejoice and disdain the world which seems to us, in those moments, not to exist and certainly not something that can interfere. There are no debts, no exhaustion, no difficulties, no stress; only pure simcha. We are being asked to take that way of thinking and bring that into everyday life, while going

through the daily struggles and challenges in the office, at home and on the street, and this doesn't seem feasible.

But the Rebbe, in that Chaf-Ches Nissan sicha, has an answer for that. The Rebbe goes on to say that we need to find ten stubborn people, i.e. we cannot go it alone. We need to join together with others and it is only by having a mashpia and consulting with others that we will be able to “bring things down” from the level of speech and thought to actual deeds - as the Rebbe put it, “to **actually** bring Moshiach.”

## **TIKKUN=TORAH STUDY**

I can tell you a personal story that will illustrate what I'm talking about. When I was younger and a bit more serious, I wrote to the Rebbe and asked, “How can I reach a state where all my activities, in thought, speech, and action, will be consistent with the Rebbe's opinion?” The Rebbe wrote me as follows, “If you want to make decisions based on my opinion, do so based on advice given by knowledgeable friends, and regarding halachic matters – do as a rav, moreh hora'aa tells you.”

We sometimes look for tall mountains to climb and forget that as Chassidim we were told by the Rebbe what to do. We come up

with big ideas of “lights of Tohu” and then wonder how to actually do it. For this too, we should be consulting a mashpia.

(Parenthetically, coaching and having a personal trainer, which are so popular these days, are very much this same idea. The role of a coach is to guide a person in actualizing his abilities.)

If we sharpen the definition of “vessels of Tikkun,” I think we must focus on Torah study. It may not sound connected to Moshiach – “lights of Tohu in vessels of Tikkun,” but from the Rebbe's sichos we see to what extent Torah affects everything starting with the ironclad rule: that the Torah and its rulings affect the world. The power of the rabbanim, and their p'sak that the Rebbe is Moshiach, greatly affected the world and learning inyanei Moshiach and Geula opens our eyes and hearts and enables us to feel and think with a Geula mindset.

In Haifa, for example, we decided that every activity has to be connected to Torah. Whether it's a meeting of the staff of the mosdos or a meeting with the mayor or another distinguished personage, the meeting begins with a d'var Torah. One time, when we began building our educational campus, Amram Mitzna was the mayor and he said, “Nu, it's time to begin.” I raised my hand and said that we begin with a d'var Torah.

Experience has shown that: 1) principles are accepted with understanding, simcha and admiration, 2) the Torah has greater power than we realize.

Everything – Moshiach, a flag, slogans – must be connected with Torah; otherwise, we didn't accomplish anything. It remains “lights” which, although powerful, dissipate without vessels to contain them.

The yeshiva in Ramat Aviv is a great illustration of a mosad which

***The mind has the power to control and affect the body and go beyond its limitations. A person has incredible powers; it's just that they are not utilized and remain unexpressed.***

clearly conveys that the Rebbe is Moshiach and is chai v'kayam and will imminently redeem us, and is also a place where people sit and learn. The "lights of Tohu" are put into vessels of Torah, and people accept all the messages while learning the Rebbe's sichos on the topic of Moshiach and Geula. The facts on the ground are the greatest proof.

From Ramat Aviv we also learn that when the "lights of Tohu," the most powerful messages, are combined with "vessels of Tikkun,"

with the natural world order – including order and cleanliness, beauty and esthetics, dignity and majesty, expansiveness and abundance – then all the "Who's Who" come to shiurim and the special events hosted by the yeshiva.

### WHAT ABOUT MONEY?

The Rebbe said that each of us is a shliach and each of us has the responsibility to bring Moshiach. Often it seems impossible to undertake big projects when the funds are simply unavailable.

The famed R' Mendel said that money isn't a prerequisite to achieve your goals. The first requirement is to be "crazy" about the idea. If you are single-minded and persistent about something, the obstacles will go away and you will get the money somehow.

A Chassid, on his way to bringing the Geula, needs to have a working plan. Can you make a plan for a million, twenty million, a billion dollars? Do you have ideas about how to get big projects off the ground? When you make "vessels," the lights will come down into them. Money, success and whatever else is needed to bring the hisgalus will fall into place. May Hashem help so that we immediately see the results of all the work, speeches, and projects – the hisgalus of the Rebbe MH"M now!

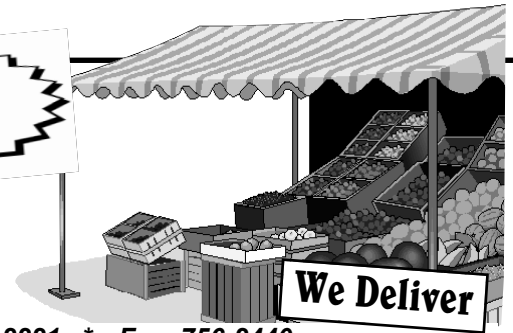
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# THE TZEMACH TZEDEK WROTE REGARDING HIS SON MAHARASH:

# ‘MY SOUL IS BOUND WITH HIS SOUL’

By N. Sofer

*A compilation describing the transition period of the leadership of the Rebbe Maharash, immediately following the passing of the Tzemach Tzedek. \* Presented for Beis Iyar, the birthday of the Rebbe Maharash.*

## PESACH 5626/1866 IN LUBAVITCH

The scribe from Beshenkovitz, the old Chassid R' Zalman Ber, described Pesach 5626/1866 in Lubavitch, the first after the passing of the Tzemach Tzedek:

The first night of Pesach, R' Boruch Sholom, the Tzemach Tzedek's oldest son, reviewed a maamer Chassidus on the verse, "when your son asks," and before he began the maamer he said, "Whoever says something in the name of the person who said it brings Geula to the world; the maamer isn't mine but my father's."

The second night, R' Chaim Shneur Zalman (the Admur of Liadi), the Rebbe's third son said a maamer Chassidus, as did his brother R' Yisroel Noach (the Admur of Niezhen), who prefaced with, "Whoever says something in the name of the person who said it," like his older brother, R' Boruch Sholom, had done.

## THE FIRST MAAMAR

The Rebbe Maharash, who was the youngest of the brothers, also said a maamer Chassidus on the second night of Pesach, on the verse, "I am Hashem your G-d who took you out of Egypt." This was the first maamer he said during his nesius and in one of the manuscripts (#1777, 37a) in the heading of the maamer was written, "The first Torah from K'vod K'dushas HaRav HaKadosh HaRav Shmuel shlita."

## THE MAAMAR MI KAMOCHA

It is interesting to note that the subject of the first maamer is identical to the well-known maamer on the verse "Mi Kamocha" which the Rebbe Maharash would often repeat "in order to purify the air."

The maamer discusses the unity of G-d, that even though the world truly exists and is not an illusion for



it says, “In the beginning G-d created the heavens and the earth,” still we need to know that the world doesn’t exist on its own but is completely nullified to G-dliness so that its entire existence is G-dliness and “there is nothing but Him.”

By repeating this maamer, the Rebbe Maharash instilled in his Chassidim a genuine awareness of G-d’s unity, that the world is nullified to G-dliness and that “there is nothing but Him” and therefore, there is no reason to get excited about matters of this world.

## L’CHATCHILA ARIBER

In a number of sichos (leil 6 of Sukkos 5742; Simchas Torah and Shabbos B’Reishis 5743) the Rebbe spoke about this maamer.

He explains that the maamer “Mi Kamocha” that the Rebbe Maharash would often repeat expresses and emphasizes the special inyan and avoda of the Rebbe Maharash which is ‘l’chat’chilla aribber” as in his well-known aphorism, “The world thinks that when it’s impossible to go underneath then you go from above, and I say that from the outset you need to go from above.”

In other words, we have something and its opposite. The Rebbe Maharash first establishes that the way of the world is to go under, and then he nevertheless demands l’chat’chilla aribber – to go from above straightaway.

In this maamer, too, we have something and its opposite. The Rebbe Maharash emphasizes that we need to know that there is a world and that the world is a genuine reality. At the same time, he says that the world is completely nullified to G-dliness and “there is nothing but Him.”

## THE REBBE MAHARASH’S INNOVATION

At the farbrengen on the second night of Pesach, 1966, which

marked 100 years since this monumental maamer, the Rebbe said a maamer on the verse, “I am Hashem your G-d” which is based on and explains this discourse. The Rebbe emphasized a great chiddush (*a gevaldiker oiftu*). Chassidus explains that the revelation of the 50<sup>th</sup> Gate cannot happen through man’s own avoda; we don’t have the ability to draw it down at all – it comes down from Above as a gift. And yet, in his very first maamer, the Rebbe Maharash declared that in order to complete the 50<sup>th</sup> Gate you don’t need any prior spiritual healing, and not even minor healing. Meditation in avodas Hashem and avoiding that which causes damage is sufficient, and this is what draws down and completes the 50<sup>th</sup> Gate. This chiddush that he innovated at the beginning of his nesius continues afterwards, too, for the words of tzaddikim live and endure forever and have a lasting effect on the world.

## THERE WAS NO REBBE LIKE THIS BEFORE

After Pesach, the other children of the Tzemach Tzedek – the Maharil from Kremenchug and Rayatz from Ovrutch – returned to Lubavitch for the year of mourning.

Maharil said about his father, “There was no Rebbe like this previously. From one line of his Chassidic lectures you can construct an entire maamer.” His brother, the Rebbe Maharash noted, “Not only from one line but even from one word.”

When they said this to the Rebbe (on 13 Nissan, 5711), he said, “The drushei Chassidus of the Tzemach Tzedek are a vast treasure. Every gloss of his is a vast treasure.”

During the year of mourning, the holy brothers led the prayers at the amud and said Chassidus. The davening of each of the brothers was different. One of the Chassidim

wanted to see them daven and he made the rounds of the minyanim to observe them. He said afterwards that in each of the brothers he saw something unique:

## THE DAVENING OF MAHARIL OF KOPUST

Maharil was known as an intensely emotional person and his davening was with an outpouring of the soul and *d’veikus*. In his great excitement he would pace back and forth in the middle of davening, and sometimes break out in joyous dance. In his great enthusiasm, his slippers would fly up to the ceiling.

When he davened chazaras ha’shatz they had to tie him to the lectern so that he wouldn’t move away in his great excitement, but in his great *d’veikus* he would drag the lectern till the western wall of the shul.

The men who were the *yoshevim* (lit. sitters, i.e. young married men devoted to full time learning and divine service) in Lubavitch who davened in Maharil’s minyan often asked him not to spend such a long time on his davening because they couldn’t daven so long. Maharil agreed each time, but as soon as he began to daven, he forgot what he told them.

## THE DAVENING OF R’ YISROEL NOACH OF NIEZHIN

R’ Yisroel Noach cried and sobbed throughout the davening. Every day, as he began to daven he would burst into tears, which would not abate until the conclusion of the t’filla. His sobs moved the congregation to tears as well, and they would cry along with him throughout the davening.

The men once asked one another: “Why are we crying? It’s one thing that R’ Yisroel Noach is crying. He knows why he is crying; but what are we crying about?”

They decided that from that day on they would try with all their might not to cry. The next day, when R' Yisroel Noach began to daven and burst into tears, they restrained themselves with all their might. After a while, one of the men could control himself no longer and burst into tears, and the others soon followed suit. Seeing that self-control was insufficient, they decided they would strengthen each other. The next day, if one of them began to cry the others would pinch him to remind him to restrain himself.

Sure enough, when R' Yisroel Noach began to daven, once again one of the men could not control himself and he burst into tears. The others pinched him but the pain only caused him to cry even more, and soon they were all sobbing once again. The congregation conceded defeat and acknowledged there was nothing they could do about it.

## THE DAVENING OF R' CHAIM SHNEUR ZALMAN

The avoda of R' Chaim Shneur Zalman was *ahava b'taanugim* (lit. love in rapture, i.e. he would be completely absorbed in the higher worlds). His davening was noisy and with intensity to the point that he broke the hearts of those who heard him and even a heart of stone melted from his davening. The other men in his minyan found it difficult to daven.

As soon as he began davening he started to sing and dance, his holy face aflame. He would completely forget the world he was in and it would be some time until his spirit would return to him and he could continue to daven.

## THE DAVENING OF THE REBBE MAHARASH

Having observed the davening of the other children of the Tzemach

Tzedek, the Chassid went to see the minyan of the Maharash. He related:

"I saw something special with each of the holy sons but with the youngest son, the Rebbe Maharash, I did not notice anything. His davening was said slowly and with a quiet tune and he davened word by word. There was no clamor, no commotion, no dancing, no unusual movements.

"I also noticed one thing. After the final Kaddish, the Rebbe Maharash would cover his face with his tallis for a few minutes. I noticed this every day and I was very curious to know what he was doing under there. One time, I gathered the courage to peek underneath and I saw him changing the t'fillin shel rosh of Rashi with the t'fillin shel rosh of Shimusha Raba. Obviously he didn't want anyone to see him.

"When he saw me looking at him he gave me a *shnell* (a finger flick) on the edge of my nose."

The Chassid concluded, "Although I got flicked I still got to see what the Rebbe was doing."

Another Chassid added that although they did not see any special movements with the Rebbe Maharash, when he reached *VaYevorech Dovid* his forehead was beaded with sweat.

## WHO WILL BE THE REBBE'S SUCCESSOR?

In the initial period following the passing of the Tzemach Tzedek it wasn't clear which of his holy sons would succeed him. One of the reasons for this was a letter the Tzemach Tzedek had written about his son, Maharil of Kopust, a few years earlier, from which people understood that he would be the successor. But in the winter of 5626, the Tzemach Tzedek wrote to the Chassidim about his son Maharash, "Listen to him like you listened to me." He also told his other sons to review *maamarei Chassidus*. As a

result it wasn't clear to the Chassidim who should take over.

The oldest of the six sons, R' Boruch Sholom, did not want the position and R' Yosef Yitzchok already led a group of Polish Chassidim in Ovrutch. The issue concerned the remaining four son (Maharil of Kopust, R' Chaim Shneur Zalman of Liadi, R' Yisroel Noach of Niezhin, and the Maharash) and Chassidim had varied opinions on the matter.

## RABBANEI ANASH GO TO LUBAVITCH

Distinguished Chabad rabbanim gathered in Lubavitch to discuss the matter. Among them were: R' Shneur Zalman of Polotzk (and later of Lublin) the author of *Toras Chesed*, R' Peretz Chein of Chernigov, R' Yosef Tumarkin of Kremenchug, R' Shlomo Zalman of Liepli, and R' Avrohom Ashkenazi of Rudnia.

At first, when the rabbanim went to Maharil and suggested a compromise they did not include the Maharash because of his youth. Maharil asked them: What about my younger brother?

One of the rabbanim asked: Is the youngest also a *sidra* (Torah portion, in another version "a *masechta*," a tractate of the Talmud)?

Maharil answered: A big *sidra* (*masechta*), a *sidra* (*masechta*) all its own!

## I AM OLDER WITH OUR FATHER'S YEARS

At this time there was a discussion among the brothers, during which Maharash displayed great proficiency in Nigleh. R' Yisroel Noach (who was known as a big scholar) asked him, "Where do you know that from? Bekius in Nigleh! You are a young man!"

Maharash answered, "You are

older with your own years and I am older with our father's years."

In one of the sichos (Likkutei Sichos vol. 7, p. 124) the Rebbe raises the question: Bekius is acquired through learning a lot over many years, so how did it help that he was older with his father's years?

The Rebbe explained: Since he was born in his father's older years, the Tzemach Tzedek's great wisdom that he had at that time was given to him as an inheritance.

## THE SECRET IS OUT

At one of the internal meetings of the rabbanim with the children of the Tzemach Tzedek the Rebbe Maharash showed them – as per his father's order and despite his humility – a number of handwritten notes from his father in which his father gave him a full smicha/ordination and told him to take over the nesius and Anash should accept his leadership.

He informed the rabbis and his brothers that he was the only one to whom his father had shown the secret of how to receive pidyonos and how to see to the fulfillment of the petitioner's request for good and blessing.

In addition, he showed them that his father told him to mention to each one of them the questions they had asked when in yechidus and what he answered them and they were all amazed by the open and revealed prophecy.

## A LETTER FROM THE TZEMACH TZEDEK

After the conclusion of the Shloshim, some letters from the Tzemach Tzedek that were given to a certain Chassid to be opened after the Shloshim, were read. The Tzemach Tzedek had written that he wanted his sons to be equal in everything and he asked Anash to support the Rebbe Maharash.

"It is so that the truth and justice

needs to be put into writing, regarding what I wrote previously concerning my son RYL ben Moussia, I retract that completely and request from Anash that all my sons should be equal in all things.

"I request that Anash support my son R' Shmuel because my soul is bound with his soul and his parting from me is difficult for me and therefore I make this request of Anash on his behalf."

At the end of these letters was written (the following is from one of the handwritten copies that were sent to Anash): "These letters were copied from the actual handwriting of C"K Admur Z"l... to Anash, which he gave to someone while he was alive so that it would be preserved and hidden and remain unopened until after the Shloshim. Therefore a copy is being sent to Anash so that they know and they should be so good as to show the people of their city and nearby towns and likewise, we will send it to many places. Whoever wants to see the Rebbe's handwritten letter should come to Lubavitch and see it."

## THE DECISION OF THE RABBONIM

Based on these letters and notes, and in agreement with the holy brothers, sons of the Tzemach Tzedek, the rabbanim decided that all of them would undertake the leadership of Chassidim equally and the Maharash would take over their father's place in Lubavitch.

When the rabbanim perused the notes that the Tzemach Tzedek wrote about his son, Maharash, they personally all became his Chassidim.

## ANNOUNCEMENT TO ANASH FROM THE HOLY BROTHERS

After the rabbanim made their decision, the holy brothers wrote an announcement to Anash in which

they said they agreed to be equals. All of the brothers signed and a copy was sent to all Chassidic settlements. This announcement was sent to Anash together with an affidavit signed by the rabbanim who took part in the decision-making process, who affirmed the authenticity of the announcement.

## FINAL RESOLUTION

Maharil moved to Kopust, where he led as Rebbe for half a year until his untimely passing on 3 Cheshvan, 5627. R' Yosef Yitzchok, who had started leading as a Rebbe like Polish Admurim even in the lifetime of his father, returned to Ovrutch.

The four brothers, R' Boruch Sholom, R' Chaim Shneur Zalman of Liadi, R' Yisroel Noach of Niezhen, and the Rebbe Maharash, remained in Lubavitch.

The eldest, R' Boruch Sholom, did not want to lead as a Rebbe and he remained in Lubavitch until his passing on 16 Shevat, 5629/1869. R' Chaim Shneur Zalman stayed in Lubavitch for a few years and in 5629 he went to Liadi, where he began to lead as a Rebbe. R' Yisroel Noach also stayed in Lubavitch for a few years before assuming leadership as a Rebbe in Niezhin.

The Rebbe Maharash succeeded his father in Lubavitch and began his nesius immediately.

## DIVIDING THE MONEY, THE S'FARIM AND THE MANUSCRIPTS

Even after the decision of the rabbanim there still remained the money, s'farim and manuscripts to discuss. In the end, the money and printed s'farim were divided amongst the brothers, but the manuscripts remained in Lubavitch with the Rebbe Maharash, excluding the ones that his brothers had received from their father in his lifetime.

# LOST ORPHANS RETURN TO LUBAVITCH

By Shneur Zalman Berger

*The story of six children, out of hundreds, who returned to Lubavitch: Zelig Altheus, Rivka and Mussia Shapiro, Feigel, Rochel and Zalman Kleiman. \* Part 3 of 3*

[Continued from last issue]

## **"SURELY YOU WILL FORGET EVERYTHING I TAUGHT YOU"**

Let's go back to the evacuation from Leningrad. After the evacuations of the schools were completed, the government began to hurriedly evacuate the rest of the children without investigating why they had not been evacuated along with the schoolchildren. On one of the trains were Rochel's sister and brother, 13 year old Feigel (Fania) and 8 year old Zalman.

R' Zalman described in his memoirs a touching moment that

he had with his father:

"When my parents were informed that they had to send my sister and myself to the children's home, they were extremely worried about what would happen to us. Would we remember that we were Jews? Each day my father taught us the alef-beis, and then reading from a siddur and Chumash too. He did this when he came home from work.

"One day as we sat to learn, I suddenly saw tears in my father's eyes. I asked him, 'Father, why are you crying?'

"I'm not crying,' he said.

"Then he drew me close and patted my head and said, 'No

doubt you'll forget everything I'm teaching you, and you'll eat treif there.'

"'Father, I won't forget. I'll throw away the meat in the soup under the table, and I won't eat treif,' I answered with the innocence of childhood."

Before they left, they asked Feigel to look after her younger brother. For a year she was able to fulfill their request since both of them were in the Chelyabinsk area of Siberia, but then Feigel was sent to study mechanics and she tearfully parted from her brother.

When she finished the course, she was sent to the area of the city of Omsk where she did various jobs on *kolkhozes* and in factories. They once told her to clean huge pipes, another time to scrape horsehides that gave off an intolerable stench and another time they had her do field work or shepherding cattle and sheep.

After a period of suffering and bitterness, she heard that a group was forming to return to Leningrad and she joined it. When she got there the siege had ended but the starvation was unbearable. She was hired to do military industrial work and was given a place to live together with other girls within the factory compound, since her parents' home had been destroyed in the bombing. She tried to find out what had happened to her parents but received no new information.

In the meantime, her brother Zalman was constantly suffering from persecution and degradation. He completely forgot his spiritual background. He was an eight year old child among gentiles, many of whom were bigger and stronger than him. In the diary he wrote afterwards he described the gangs of children who preyed on younger and powerless children. He wrote

about one child, Borinka, who was a sadist and ruled the class. All the children followed his orders. Whoever didn't obey him was beaten and shamed. It was forbidden to report him since tattling was considered especially lowly. So the children suffered in silence. The bully even took the little bit of food they were given.

Zalman forgot his home and the Chumash he learned with his father before they parted. He was educated as a communist and atheist.

## ITTA, THE CHILDREN!

Shortly before the siege, Yaakov Kleinman managed to meet with his sister, Itta Sassonkin on the border of Leningrad. They promised each other that whoever remained alive would make sure to look out for the other's children.

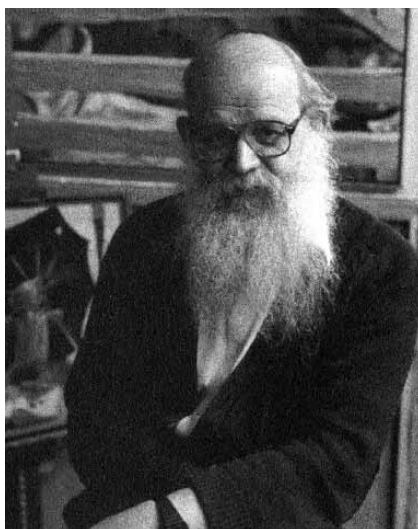
Itta managed to escape Leningrad with her children and after much wandering and hardships she arrived in Samarkand in Uzbekistan. This was after she learned of the whereabouts of her father-in-law, Rabbi Shmaryahu Nachum Sossonkin. She quickly contacted him and he sent her a message telling her he was in Samarkand.

One night she dreamed that her brother was waking her up with a light tap on her shoulder. He said, "The children."

She woke up trembling and immediately realized what he meant. She had promised her brother that whoever remained alive after the war would take care of the other's children. She rejected the impractical idea of saving the children from assimilation by bringing them to her father-in-law, thinking "I'm staying with my in-laws at a time of famine. How can I burden them with my brother's children?"



R' Zalman Kleiman standing first on the left, at the Rebbe's farbrengen in Paris



R' Zalman Kleiman

But her brother didn't let up. As soon as she fell asleep, he appeared again in her dream and said, "Itta, the children!" This went on for three nights. She would fall asleep and her brother would wake her up. The third night, she decided not to go back to sleep, and she began pacing the room at a loss as to what to do.

Her father-in-law sat, as he always did, and learned. He heard his daughter-in-law walking around and he asked her why she wasn't sleeping. She answered evasively. When the vision

repeated itself, she felt she had to tell him what was going on. She began telling him that this was the third night that her brother was coming to her in a dream and demanding that she take care of his children.

"Do you know where they are?" asked Rabbi Sossonkin.

"Yes," she answered. "I have their addresses."

"So why were you quiet until now? You must save them!"

The next day they worked on obtaining a visa and a ticket for the long trip from Samarkand to Siberia. While working on her travel plans, Itta received a telegram from the children's home that Zalman was in. The telegram was sent by Zalman's teacher, one who didn't get along with a teacher who intended on adopting Zalman. The telegram said, "If you want to meet the boy, hurry! He's adopted!"

Now they understood everything, why the father hadn't rested until they began the rescue operation.

At the end of the exhausting trip, Itta Sassonkin arrived at the children's home where her nephew Zalman was already formally adopted by the teacher.

## ***R' Zalman became a full-fledged Chassid and used his natural talent for painting, becoming an artist whose work has inspired countless thousands of Jews.***

He loved the teacher and was happy to return with her and all the other children, to Leningrad. Itta tried to convince the school's administration and the teacher to forego the adoption. She explained to them that she was the boy's aunt, and that her brother, the boy's father, had asked her to raise him if he died in the war.

Itta also worked on convincing 12-year-old Zalman to join her. When they asked him if he wanted to go with his aunt, he said he didn't because he didn't know her. Itta did not have documents attesting to the oral instructions her brother had given her. It was her tears that finally worked, and Zalman was given over to her.

They left for the orphanage in Siberia where Rochel was. Rochel describes what happened:

"I waited impatiently and they finally arrived. The meeting with my brother was very emotional. We hadn't seen each other for four years and Zalman was 12 and a half and I was 13 and a half. We looked at each other and didn't recognize one another. We just quietly looked at each other until my brother salvaged the situation by asking me about certain books, if I had read them, and what I thought of them. My aunt, on the other hand, didn't stop crying and kissing me and looking at us as though she couldn't believe it."

From there they went to

Leningrad where they met their older sister, Feigel, and they all traveled to Samarkand and were welcomed with open arms by R' Shmaryahu and Malka Sossonkin.

### **ALLOW ME TO EDUCATE THEM**

Although the physical trip was over, the spiritual task of reacquainting the children with Yiddishkait was quite a challenge. The sisters Feigel and Rochel remembered their home and returned to the path of Torah and Chassidus but Zalman, whenever their aunt Itta tried to convince him to wear a yarmulke or to say a bracha, he adamantly opposed her. This was thanks to the anti-religious, communist education he had received for four years.

When Rabbi Sossonkin saw them arguing, he told his daughter-in-law, "Itta, you did what you had to do. You rescued the children from the gentiles. Now, allow me to educate them."

He took on the role of mechanech and said that the children had to get used to their new home before anything else. They were not to be pressured about religious matters. The adults needed to wait, and the children would adapt. So when it came Yom Kippur and the entire family went to a makeshift place to daven, Zalman stayed home alone. At night, when the fast was over, Rabbi Sossonkin asked

Zalman if he enjoyed music, and said that there were people who did not daven, but they went to the davening in order to hear the niggunim. That was all he said.

Zalman maintained his opposition to anything associated with religion, and then Rabbi Sossonkin told him, "Whether you want to believe in G-d and Torah or not, you should know what it's about."

Zalman, who loved to read, accepted the challenge. He enrolled in the underground Talmud Torah run by Rabbi Gurevitz who was an excellent teacher and had a rapport with the children. Zalman relearned the alef-beis, how to read, stories from the Torah and writing.

With Rabbi Sossonkin's wise, no-pressure approach, Zalman became involved in Yiddishkait. A few months later, he celebrated his bar mitzva. All of Anash in Samarkand participated. Zalman reviewed a maamer Chassidus, which left his audience amazed by the child who, just a few months before, didn't remember the alef-beis and didn't speak Yiddish.

The three of them left Russia together with relatives and arrived in Paris where Zalman attended a farbrengen with the Rebbe who had come to Paris to arrange his mother's trip to the United States.

R' Zalman became a full-fledged Chassid and used his natural talent for painting, becoming an artist whose work has inspired countless thousands of Jews.

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These six pure souls, Chassidishe neshamos, were nearly lost to their people but were miraculously returned.

*Sources: So'aros B'Dmama, Shlichus Chayai, Geza Chassidim, Kfar Chabad, Mishpacha Chassidis*

# SHLICHUS STORIES

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelewitz  
Shliach, Beit Shaan

*He approached R' Gliss and hugged him like a child returning home after years of being away and told him about the memories that had come back to him. He informed him that he was going to start doing t'shuva...*

## IN THE MERIT OF TANYA PEREK ALEF

Shliach Rabbi Shimon Yardeni relates:

One of the regular visitors to the Chabad house in Azur was Amir HaLevi. Amir grew up in Azur, excelled in school and in the army, visited the Chabad house occasionally for a t'filla or a shiur and then went off to university in Milan, Italy, where he met the shliach, Rabbi Tzemach Mizrachi. In Milan he slowly but surely furthered his connection with the Rebbe and Chassidus, and was an active member of the Chabad community.

Rabbi Gershon Mendel Garelik, shliach in Milan, discovered Amir's special abilities and "adopted" him as a talmid, friend and helper. When I asked Amir what attracted him to Chabad in Italy he said unhesitatingly, "When I was in Azur I once learned the first chapter of Tanya with R' Yardeini. I was so excited by it that as soon as I met the shliach, R' Mizrachi in the 'Beis HaTalmud,' I went over to him and

continued learning where I had left off in Israel."

## MORE ABOUT AMIR

About a year later, Amir returned from Italy, got married and settled in Afula, where he was guided by Rabbi Dovid Kretz, but he kept in touch with R' Yardeini and with the Chabad house in Azur.

One day, about three years after returning to Eretz Yisroel, he suddenly remembered his good friend Dedi Levi. Dedi had worked in Milan when Amir was there, and they had attended shiurim and all the Chabad house activities together, but since he returned to Israel they hardly ever met or spoke on the phone. He decided it was time to reconnect.

Amir called Dedi and asked how he was. Dedi told him that a few weeks earlier he had also gotten married and he lived in Tel Aviv and all was well, but Amir sensed that things were not as fine as his friend was making them sound. Indeed, Dedi eventually confided that his wife was sick with cancer; she had

to have a complicated operation and chemotherapy to eliminate the malignant tumor in her throat. As soon as Amir heard this, he said he would be coming to his house "because we need to find a way to save your wife."

Amir came to their apartment, where he heard the whole story. About a month before the wedding, Dedi's wife discovered a mass in her throat. She went to a doctor, who said it must be removed immediately. The operation was postponed to the week following the wedding.

The fact that her uncle was also sick with cancer added to our dread. The couple tried to spend as much time as they could with him, but sadly, he died a few days after the wedding. Now it was Dedi's wife's turn to deal with this terrible illness. A week after the wedding she underwent an operation to see what kind of tumor it was. Ten days later they were told that it was malignant and required further surgery as well as chemotherapy. The procedure was scheduled for the following Monday.

As it was then before Pesach, Amir brought three matzos along with him and said that the Rebbe wrote that matzos are called 'food of healing.' He also suggested that they write to the Rebbe and ask for a bracha. Dedi and his wife wrote to the Rebbe and did a marathon of davening, segulos and shiurim. Together with Amir they contacted some shluchim, R' Yardeini of Azur and R' Nir of the Florentine

***“What are you talking about? You don’t need any treatments!” the doctor exclaimed. He told them that in all his medical experience he had never seen anything like this. Statistically, such a thing occurs once in several thousand cases. “The test shows that your wife is perfectly fine and there is no need for further treatment. I consider this a miracle.”***

neighborhood in Tel Aviv, a shliach at the Chabad center on Sheinkin Street. The shliach who arranged their wedding, Rabbi Eliezer Brod of Karmeil Yosef, also encouraged them to ask the Rebbe for a bracha through the Igros Kodesh.

### **CLEAR SIGNS THAT THERE WOULD BE A MIRACLE**

“We strongly felt the spiritual encouragement of all the Lubavitchers who didn’t stop praying for us, calling, encouraging and blessing us,” relates Dedi’s wife. “As the date of the operation got closer, we saw clear signs that a miracle was about to happen. The first sign was in the letter we opened to in the Igros Kodesh. There was a line there that spoke about a miracle of rescue on Monday and a bracha for health. The day before the operation, R’ Nir called us again and told us that just that day he found a dollar from the Rebbe for us.

“R’ Nir explained that the owner of a store in Tel Aviv, who used to live in the United States, once went to the Rebbe to ask for a bracha for a shidduch. To her surprise, the Rebbe blessed her with health. By amazing Divine Providence, today, a day before the operation, the

woman opened a new store and while setting up the store she found that dollar. When R’ Nir went to put a mezuzah up in the store, she told him about the dollar she had found.

“It was 4:00 on Sunday when my husband and I went to get the dollar from her. She even showed us the picture of her receiving the dollar from the Rebbe personally. To our amazement, we saw in the photo that the woman received the dollar from the Rebbe at 4:00 (the clock is visible in the picture).

“On our way back home from the woman’s house we were so excited. I remember feeling that all the tzaddikim were accompanying us and enveloping us in a protective hug, and with Hashem’s help we would be done with this awful disease.”

Dedi recalled that when they returned home from the shliach’s house in the south of Tel Aviv with the dollar, his wife was literally crying in great emotion. Of course, they took the Rebbe’s dollar to the operation.

The operation was successful and the doctor instructed Dedi and his wife to come in a week to arrange dates for a series of chemotherapy treatments.

A week later the doctor censured Dedi for not asking what they had seen in the test done after the

operation. Dedi apologized drily, “What is the point in asking when we are anticipating a year’s worth of chemotherapy?”

“What are you talking about? You don’t need any treatments!” the doctor exclaimed. He told them that in all his medical experience he had never seen anything like this. Statistically, such a thing occurs once in several thousand cases. “The test shows that your wife is perfectly fine and there is no need for further treatment. I consider this a miracle.”

### **T’FILLIN WITH THE TRAFFIC COP**

In the past I wrote of a few situations in which shluchim didn’t get a ticket thanks to their shlichus. Before I tell you the next story, I want to make it clear that in no way do I advocate ignoring traffic laws. On the contrary! Be careful with all the rules and you’ll protect your life as well as your pocket.

A shliach told me he often knocks on doors and asks people to put on t’fillin. Most of the time people are happy to oblige but sometimes he gets yelled at and the door slams in his face. One Friday, he went knocking on doors at the yishuv and about ten minutes before Shabbos he arrived at the home of a (volunteer) traffic cop, who was known as a tough guy and a stickler about every detail in the traffic code of law. The shliach was a bit nervous about how the man would react to his suggestion but not only did he willingly agree, a senior official in the traffic department who was visiting was also happy to put on t’fillin.

About two weeks later, the shliach’s wife took the nine-seater family van and was stopped by a policeman. It seems that a month earlier a law had been passed requiring all cars designated as “little buses” to have a special

registration, and she didn't have it. The policeman explained that she had to take the van to a hearing at the police station in Beit Dagan, where it would be impounded for a month. In addition, she would receive a fine plus a summons to appear in court. The fine would be increased by 100 shekels each day the van wasn't brought in, up to a total of 3000 shekels.

The shliach consulted his friend the traffic cop, who in turn spoke to a friend in the prosecution department of the police. He found out that the new law wasn't yet in effect as regards enforcement, and the hearing and the fine should be canceled. His friend the cop called him and told him the ticket was canceled and he could go back to his learning and mitzvaim.

## ONE FARBRENGEN IN DIMONA

On 3 Tammuz there was a farbrengen in Dimona with a few dozen Chassidim and mekuravim. R' Gliss announced that he wanted to say his hachlata. He introduced it by saying that he had just been at a Sheva Brachos in Kiryat Gat where he met a Chassid from the community who visits the local high school once or twice a week to put t'fillin on with interested students. He had decided that he would do the same in Dimona.

Immediately, one of the people present said, "R' Gliss, I will join you. Just tell me what time to be there." A minute went by and someone else said that in the event the first person couldn't make it, he volunteered to take his place.

This latter person was not religious. He had previously voted for a communist party called Rekach in the Knesset elections only because there was no party more Leftist than that. He used to say that for 22 years he had not put on t'fillin and would not be doing so in

the next 22 years, either.

What changed? The man started a local radio station in Dimona and every Friday afternoon for an hour, R' Gliss and R' Nissim Chamu broadcast divrei Torah, Chassidishe stories and updates from the Chabad house. He listened to it and it had an effect on him.

He got an invitation to R' Gliss' daughter's wedding in Kfar Chabad and decided to attend. As he heard the Dalet Bavos before the chuppa began, he suddenly began to cry. He remembered that twenty years earlier, this had been sung at his wedding. Though he'd chosen to get married far away from rabbis, religion and Judaism, having the ceremony on the beach in Eilat, fortunately for him, a young rabbi came to officiate by the name of Rabbi Yosef Hecht. This rabbi had arranged for the band to play the Dalet Bavos, which was also recorded on the video and he watched it occasionally.

Now it all came back to him and he remembered his parents' home and the religious education he had gotten. He recalled all the years he had been estranged from k'dusha and he cried throughout the chuppa. There, at the wedding, he

knew what he had to do; he decided that the next morning he would find t'fillin and start putting them on every day. He approached R' Gliss and hugged him like a child returning home after years of being away and told him about the memories that had come back to him. He informed him that he was going to start doing t'shuva.

This man attended the 3 Tammuz farbrengen and he who had run away from t'fillin and mitzvot for decades was now joining R' Gliss on mitvza t'fillin.

As a follow-up to the farbrengen, someone suggested that they raise money to buy this man a pair of t'fillin. Hearts and pockets opened and enough money was donated to buy t'fillin.

A child who had been sitting there got up. Ten year old Arke Gliss – to the astonishment of his father – said that he was donating 20 shekels towards the t'fillin. Later, he told his father that he had found a 20 shekel bill on his way to the farbrengen. He'd been thinking about what game or book he would buy with it but when the money was being raised he decided to give what he had towards the t'fillin.

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# OF FACTS AND FEELINGS

By Dr. Aryeh Gotfryd

*As we have spent much of Nissan reading Parshas Shmini, here is an anecdote featuring a controversial claim that this Parsha contains a scientific proof that the Torah is Divine.*

The Ramsay Wright Zoological Institute takes up a city block of downtown Toronto, a tall, broad slab of offices, laboratories and classrooms at the heart of the University campus. On my first day of graduate school, after settling into my very own cubicle on the fourth floor, I went on to meet with Roger Hansell, the distinguished professor who was charged with supervising the development my doctoral thesis in applied ecology.

We were deep into discussion when his office door opened and in sauntered a neighboring professor from down the hall. Jacques Berger, a microbiologist, was as big a man as his subject matter was small. He had come in, it seems, to size up his buddy's new graduate student. He looked me up and down,

noting my long pony tail, plaid flannel shirt and threadbare, faded blue jeans, the informal uniform of the non-conformists of the 1970's.

He must have also noticed my ethnically distinct nose for he opened the conversation with words you normally first hear from a Lubavitcher. "Are you Jewish?" he asked me.

No one had ever asked me that before. It was the last thing I expected to hear. "Yes," I replied tentatively, and just to be friendly returned the question, "Are you?"

"No, actually my background is Catholic. But I could prove to you that your Torah is of divine origin."

Why in the world, I wondered to myself, is this non-Jew trying to convince me to believe in the Torah? Back then, I didn't have a

beard, kippa or tzitzis. In fact I was as secular as they get. I remember being distinctly irritated by this odd crusader. Obviously if I'm not religious I don't consider it my Torah. And if it is my Torah what business did he have meddling in it or in my beliefs? But he was twice my age and three times my size so I just said, "Oh really. How's that?"

"The fact is the Torah makes a bona fide falsifiable zoological hypothesis." Noticing that he had caught my attention Dr. Jacques continued, "You probably know that there are two traits that distinguish kosher mammals. They need to have split hooves and chew the cud. The Torah specifies that there are just four types of mammals that have only one of those two signs - the camel, the hyrax, the hare and the pig."

Now Moses lived over 3,000 years ago. All he knew was a part of the Middle East and a little corner of Africa. How many mammal species could he have possibly known? 50? 100? Vast regions of the world were completely uninhabited. He would have no knowledge whatsoever of the Americas or Australia. Even Northern Europe and the far East were quite inaccessible in his day. Yet the Torah went out of its way to claim that there are just these four types. And you know what? By now we have catalogued over 5,000 mammalian species and still no fifth kind.

How could Moses have been privy that arcane zoological fact? Obviously that text could only have been composed by One with knowledge of all the world's fauna. Now Who or What might that be?"

Having concluded his little dissertation, he paused waiting for my response. Prof. Hansell

looked bemused, wondering what I would say. But all I could muster was, "That's interesting." But truth be told it wasn't interesting. The whole subject left me high and dry, basically bored. Since I wasn't really looking for G-d, it didn't really matter to me if I found Him, especially not in the Torah.

But what a gentile microbiology professor could not accomplish, a shliach of the Lubavitcher Rebbe could. A few years later, I found myself listening to Rabbi Manis Friedman address a gathering of college students about love, dating and relationships. He showed how the Torah way of life and love preserves dignity and sustains passion compared to how secular relationships basically

boom and bust.

Suddenly the Torah was relevant. That's when I needed to have all the scientific questions addressed. I wanted to make sure I wasn't getting sucked in to some dumb religion or mindless cult.

Satisfied with the Truth of Torah, I went on to a lifestyle of studying and practicing it. Looking back I see that mastering the science of living beings is indeed impressive, but it's mastering the art of being alive that is truly compelling.

There's a lesson in this about Moshiach and Geula as well. Many times we see that people are apathetic to the facts about the Rebbe being Moshiach and his prophecy of immediate redemption. The best antidote is

learning about the subject as the Rebbe says in the D'var Malchus of Tazria-Metzora, but what about people who aren't interested? The key is to find out what they *are* interested in and talk about the Moshiach dimension of *that*! Once you have their attention, they will be more receptive.

As the Rebbe says (quoted in Mind Over Matter, p.11), "We see clearly that in areas of the soul, the emotions have a far greater effect than the intellect."

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ב"ה

# ‘WHO DOESN’T LOVE THE REBBE?’

By Nosson Avrohom

Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry

***Rabbi Aharon Shiffman is the Rebbe’s shliach in charge of Chabad activities at Moshav Shefer and Kibbutz Farod, located in the heart of the mystical forests and groves of the region of Mt. Meron. Here is the story of his long and circuitous journey from the Lithuanian-brand Itri Yeshiva in Yerushalayim to Chabad to the mountains of the Galilee.***

The sun is shining, and the buds of spring are visible in every corner of Moshav Shefer and nearby Kibbutz Farod, both located at the foothills of Mt. Meron. For the past two decades, the residents of this traditional agricultural settlement and this United Kibbutz Movement cooperative have been privileged to benefit from a dynamic and vigorous shliach who

serves as their address for all matters of Yiddishkait – Rabbi Aharon Shiffman. Even rainy winter nights and oppressively hot summer days do not dim his characteristically kindhearted smile as he visits these two yishuvim to give over classes in chassidus, encourage greater participation in shiurim, and spread the light of Yiddishkait and chassidus in a

variety of ways. The response among local residents has been tremendous, and you can see it in every corner, on every street, and in every home.

He is referred to here among his many admirers as “the wandering shliach.” With youthful spirit he unhesitatingly leaps along the muddy and rocky terrain, courageously facing wild dogs as he makes his way to another Jew, bringing a little light to his soul and trying to instill him with hope and faith.

We recently joined him on one of the two trips that he makes on a weekly basis. We met with people up close, detected the sparkle in their eyes, and saw the great appreciation they have for him. We participated in a class on chassidus in a location cut off from civilization, and we left totally amazed.

En route to Moshav Shefer, our first stop, as the car windows overlooked Meron’s green vineyards, we spoke with Rabbi Shiffman about his younger years in Yerushalayim and his studies in the Litvish Itri Yeshiva. Rabbi Shiffman shared with us the feelings that engulfed him as a youth and his constant search for the flavor that would bring excitement to his Torah learning. It turned out that he wasn’t the only one in his class who felt that way. He and nine of his friends formed an underground group, going out early in the morning for classes in chassidus with Rabbi Berel Shur, of blessed memory, one of the Rebbe’s shluchim in Eretz HaKodesh.

R’ Dovid Kramer was the living spirit in the yeshiva. He was the one who brought many of the students to the chassidus shiurim. Though he was a third year student, his circle of influence encompassed even first-year students just starting their yeshiva

studies. “In my class, there were nine students who were drawn after him, and there were more students who came from other classes. Among these students were Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelewitz, who today serves as the Rebbe’s shliach in Beit She’an, Rabbi Shlomo Berkowitz, shliach in Rosh Pina, Rabbi Yaakov Steinberger from Yerushalayim, and many others. We all felt that there was a degree of enthusiasm missing in our learning, and we were looking for the spice that would arouse us to a greater sense of enjoyment in our Torah study.

“We found all this in the chassidus classes. Learning about the need for preparation before davening, mitvtzaim, and the Rebbe’s sichos gave us tremendous enthusiasm. I remember how we would go out every Motzaei Shabbos Mevarchim to listen to the broadcasts of the Rebbe’s sichos at Yeshivas Toras Emes. We would take the last bus at midnight, when we knew the counselors would no longer be on the yeshiva grounds, and we returned to yeshiva on the first bus at six in the morning. This was in 5738, when the Rebbe’s Motzaei Shabbos farbrengens were broadcast in Eretz Yisroel and throughout the world. We became regular guests at Toras Emes.

“Even though we were a relatively large group of bachurim, we conducted ourselves clandestinely. No bachur outside of our group was allowed to know about our connection to the Rebbe and Chabad chassidus, so that the yeshiva administration wouldn’t find out about it and stop us. Each Shabbos, we would walk a considerable distance to the nearby Baka neighborhood to make Shabbos groups for the local children. I’ll never forget the Shabbos when one of the yeshiva counselors, Rabbi Moshe Shmuel HaKohen, a Gerer chassid, caught



Rabbi Aharon Shiffman (second from right) saying “L’chaim” with local residents at a chassidic farbrengen

***No bachur outside of our group was allowed to know about our connection to the Rebbe and Chabad chassidus, so that the yeshiva administration wouldn’t find out about it and stop us.***

up with us. He called us in on Sunday morning, when we came back from the broadcast at Toras Emes. He asked where we had just come from, and we had to tell him the truth.

“To our great surprise, not only didn’t he make any problems over the matter, he reacted by saying, ‘If only they would all be like you.’ I still remember him asking, ‘What are you ashamed of?’ He was quite impressed by the fact that instead of wasting our time and resting in our room, we trudged all the way to hear broadcasts of the Rebbe’s sichos and give other Jews the opportunity to fulfill mitzvos.

“In fact, we also used to walk every Friday to the Allenby border police station for ‘T’fillin Campaign’ activities. Though we were students in a Litvish yeshiva, we acted as if we were learning in a

Chabad yeshiva: We studied chassidus, went out on mitvtzaim, and spoke amongst ourselves with great appreciation for the Rebbe.

“In 5740, when we completed our studies in yeshiva k’tana and began discussing where we would learn in yeshiva g’dola, we declared that we wanted to continue our studies at Yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim in Kfar Chabad. Tremendous shock reigned in the yeshiva that such a large group of bachurim wanted to go learn in a Chabad yeshiva. It was no easier for our parents, but with the passage of time, they got used to it. We soon started to build our chassidic world in Tomchei T’mimim.

“After two years in Kfar Chabad, I joined the then-fledgling Chabad yeshiva in Tzfas. From there I continued on to a year of

***Though we were students in a Litvish yeshiva, we acted as if we were learning in a Chabad yeshiva: We studied chassidus, went out on mivtzaim, and spoke amongst ourselves with great appreciation for the Rebbe.***

*k'vutza*, just like any other Chabad bachur.

"During my year on *k'vutza*, 5744, I was privileged to merit several expressions of closeness from the Rebbe. Since I didn't come from a Chabad home, it wasn't always easy to cope. I remember one occasion when I was standing outside 770, feeling rather down. Suddenly, the Rebbe came out of his room, and when he noticed me, he turned in my direction, looked at me, and gave me a strong gesture of encouragement. That gesture washed away all the difficulties and brought me back in line.

The most interesting thing that happened during my *k'vutza* year took place at the end of Kislev. I was having serious thoughts about returning to Eretz Yisroel, and I decided to break with the customary student yechidus schedule and go in for a general yechidus in the middle of the year, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of Kislev.

"Years later, I discovered that my wife, Libby *a"h*, had been in the same yechidus. She had come to spend Chanukah in Beis Chayeinu, and it turned out that this was the first and only time each of us had a yechidus with the Rebbe! We looked at this as an indication of how the Rebbe had bound our souls together.

"At the conclusion of the *k'vutza* year, I returned to Tzfas. Several of my friends had also come to town, resulting in a whole stream

of avreichim arriving in the Holy City. Even before my marriage, I was offered a position as a teacher with the Ohr Menachem Chabad boys' school, and I've been working there ever since – over twenty-six years!

"Yet, throughout this period and beyond, I have always felt that in addition to my shlichus in the field of education, I also had an obligation to spread the wellsprings of chassidus."

The conversation continued. Time passed quickly, and we found ourselves in the meantime at the entrance to Moshav Shefer, a pastoral and magical little settlement with a breathtaking view rich in forest green and blooming flowers. The sounds of the gushing streams outside the moshav are testimony to the sizable rainfall that the region has been blessed with during the recent winter season.

Before visiting the homes of several local residents in preparation for the Pesach holiday, we first made a stop at the local synagogue, where I was surprised to see the words "*Chochma, Bina, Daas*" over one of the rooms. "This room was set up by the synagogue's gabbai, Rabbi Shimon Kadosh. He appreciated our activities and decided to build a room especially for us. When he completed the construction, he decided to give it this name.

"All the activities with the local children take place in this room," Rabbi Shiffman explained. "We

organize numerous classes and rallies here throughout the year."

We didn't have much time to delay, as Rabbi Shiffman had scheduled us to meet several families that he visits regularly before each holiday. We proceeded first to the home of Mr. Meir Ben-Ezra, a retired brigadier general who today serves as head of the settlement's local council. It was difficult to miss Ben-Ezra's smile as he noticed the appearance of Rabbi Shiffman. While we were there, Shiffman said of Ben-Ezra, "To his credit, he arranges the police permits for each Lag B'Omer parade, enabling us to pass by the barricades set up all over due to the masses who come to celebrate on Mt. Meron."

The compliments were by no means one-sided. "You should just know that Rabbi Shiffman is a part of the moshav's landscape," Ben Ezra informed me. "I don't know what we would do without him. For the past twenty years, he reminds us prior each holiday about its significance. Before Purim, he comes with mishloach manos, and with a Hagada and shmura matzos before Pesach. He is invited to every event, and participates in every simcha. He's not a guest; he's our brother!" As Mrs. Ben-Ezra offered some kosher l'mehadrin refreshments, Rabbi Shiffman shared with us the story of the moshav's Tanya printing, which took place in 5744 with Rabbi Aharon Eliezer Ceitlin.

The printing was in memory of two soldiers from the moshav, Mr. Ben-Ezra's brother and a member of the Atedgi family. The two were killed in the Tzur tragedy during the First Lebanon War. Mr. Ben-Ezra fondly remembers that many local residents took part in the Tanya printing. "The Tanya was printed before Shavuot," recalled Rabbi Shiffman, "and Rabbi Ceitlin made certain to send several copies

from the printing to the Rebbe's secretariat. Incredibly, the Rebbe came down for the Shavuot farbrengen with this Tanya and placed it on the table where he sat. This brought these two families closer to chassidus, as they saw how the Rebbe is involved not only with the Jewish People as a whole, but with them personally as well."

At this point, we parted from our first host and continued on our journey to the next family, the Vaknins. Rabbi Shiffman knows every nook and cranny of the moshav quite well. "This family lives here, and that family lives there," he points out, as if there are his own children. The father of the Vaknin family is not home, but we met with his wife, who runs a pair of family-sized guest rooms in the courtyard of their home. After exchanging greetings, Mrs. Vaknin shared with us the story of a miracle from the Rebbe that she personally experienced.

"For several years, we hadn't been privileged to have any children," she confided. "We tried everything that the medical world had to offer, but nothing helped. We endured twelve years of grief, sorrow, fear, and concern. Then we met with Rabbi Shiffman, and we wrote a letter to the Rebbe together. Some time afterwards, he returned to us with an answer in the form of a bracha from the Rebbe. We then waited to see how things would develop. I was to be starting a fertility treatment shortly thereafter, but the Rebbe's bracha was realized first, and I discovered that I had become pregnant without any medical intervention! Nine months later, we were blessed with a healthy baby boy, and more children eventually followed, all completely naturally."

When we left Mrs. Vaknin's house, Rabbi Shiffman told me that for several years, he wasn't sure whether the couple recognized that



(top): Rabbi Shiffman (speaking) at a farbrengen at Moshav Shefer in 5753  
(bottom): Rabbi Aharon Shiffman at Lag B'Omer activities on Moshav Shefer

a miracle had been performed for them. The answer came after he organized a large gathering in Moshav Safsufa, where Rabbi Meir Masas serves as the Chabad shliach. Many women came for this gathering, and a raffle was held for an airline ticket to the Rebbe. The winner joined a group that Rabbi Ceitlin organized for the coming winter. When she returned to Eretz Yisroel, there was a tremendous spiritual awakening. "Since we wanted everyone to catch the excitement, we held a 'Kabbalas Panim' assembly, during which she

related her experiences in Beis Chayeinu. Among the women present was Mrs. Vaknin, who told everyone the story of how her son was born with the Rebbe's bracha..."

The clock showed that it was nine o'clock in the evening, and Rabbi Shiffman hurried to the next destination: his regular chassidus class in the special tent erected by Moshe Genish, avowed nature lover and talented musician, located among the wooded forests at the outskirts of Moshav Amirim. During the brief ride, I asked

***Chazal tell us that all beginnings are difficult, but ours was especially so... Threats of banishment were made against anyone who rented us a building.***

Rabbi Shiffman to complete the picture of the shlichus here and tell me how all this essentially materialized, where does it stem from, and when did it all start.

“In 5747, the Rebbe spoke much about the establishment of Chabad Houses. Among the more well-known sichos, the Rebbe said on the pasuk in Parshas VaYeira, ‘And Avraham planted an eshel’. What did he establish? A Chabad House!...”

A tremendous aura of excitement reigned that year in Tzfas among the avreichim. They accepted the task of establishing Chabad Houses on the moshavim and kibbutzim throughout the Upper Galilee region and along the northern border. “The Rebbe’s shturem on the subject was continuous. I spoke with Rabbi Dovid Aharon Notik, then a young avreich in the community, about starting a Chabad House on one of the moshavim in the region. We approached Rabbi Yitzchak Lipsh, director of Chabad House activities in Tzfas, and he suggested the naturist settlement of Moshav Amirim. We accepted the mission, and within a few days, we made our way to the yishuv and publicly announced the foundation of a local branch of Chabad. We immediately started home visits and Torah classes.

“Chazal tell us that all beginnings are difficult, but ours was especially so. While there were many local residents who favored our activities, there were also several who raised their voices in

protest, trying to cause problems for us and put a stop to our activities. These were not easy times. Threats of banishment were made against anyone who rented us a building. Things came to a head at the 5748 Lag B’Omer parade. Many people took part in the event, and the son of the woman who led the efforts against us won first prize in the raffle. Nevertheless, we were unable to complete the parade activities as planned. People organized confrontational demonstrations against us, and the event broke up.

“We left the gates of the yishuv rather embarrassed, but immediately decided that we would not give up. We entered the nearby Moshav Shefer settlement, passed through the streets, and invited the children to a spontaneous Lag B’Omer parade. We had no candies to give out and no organized program. Yet, within a short period of time, many children had gathered in the center of the moshav and we held a special parade. The moshav residents, mainly traditional in their observance, accepted us with open arms and much affection. We decided at that moment to include Moshav Shefer in our activities as well, and the rest is history. Since then, outreach activities on the moshav have merely grown and intensified. All the threats simply led to greater expansion and development.

“However, the activities in Shefer have not been at the expense of those in Amirim, despite

the difficulties that were heaped in our path. We continued to spread the wellsprings of chassidus there through Torah classes and one-on-one activities with those with whom we had already established a connection. Amirim has recently acquired its own shliach – R’ Nocham Einav – who operates and lives on the premises and does tremendous work there.

“About a decade ago, Kibbutz Farod, located near Moshav Shefer, joined the list. During the Purim seuda at the home of Rabbi David Dahan, rav of Shefer, we met a recent baal t’shuva living in Farod named R’ Mordechai Mizrachi. He suggested that we make a Tanya class in his home, and we happily agreed.

“Numerous residents of Farod and the surrounding yishuvim came for the class. Rabbi Yitzchak Kadosh of Tzfas joined me regularly and made his car available for these activities, and he has continued to do so until this day. With the passage of time, the class moved to a shelter that serves as the kibbutz synagogue, and for the ten years since then, the class has taken place on a regular weekly basis. Many of those who participated in the shiur during the early years have since established Torah observant homes, and a number of them have even adopted the ways of Chabad chassidus and the Rebbe. This class has also led to activities on Chanukah, Purim, and Lag B’Omer.”

One of those who got closer to Yiddishkait as a result of the class and made a 180 degree turn in his lifestyle is R’ Ronen Malul, who lives today in Tzfas and is now supplementing what he had been missing in his Torah studies as part of the kollel program in the local Chabad yeshiva. He now tells his own personal story:

“I was born in Kiryat Shmona and, like every young Israeli, went

through school and then the army. At the conclusion of my military service, I worked as a security inspector for the Arkia domestic airline. Afterwards, I studied biotechnology at Tel-Chai Academic College, and upon completing my studies, I was offered a job with the Intel Co. in Kiryat Gat.

“From a material standpoint, I had it all. I was earning a good salary, had rented a house at a nearby kibbutz, and was a regular guest in hotels. Yet I began to experience a tremendous feeling of emptiness – a deep and heavy sense that there was something lacking in my life. I have had such feelings from time to time in the past, but I was always able to calm myself with the belief that with sufficient material wellbeing, the feelings would eventually dissipate. But when this approach didn’t seem to be helping, I decided that in order to quench my thirst, I would have to start working on my spirituality. I commenced a program of study in alternative medicine, including healing, meditation, Bach flower remedy – almost everything available in the field – but the feelings persisted. As a final resort, I bought a one-way ticket to India. I was sure that I would eventually ‘find myself’ there, and would have no reason to return to Eretz Yisroel. I never considered looking into Judaism, as I had always perceived it to be a vast world of meaningless laws with little spiritual value.

“I traveled to numerous places in India, but my spiritual hunger only grew and intensified until it became frustrating and burdensome. I was becoming totally disgusted by Indian mysticism, and I decided to return to Eretz Yisroel. I heard from a close friend that there was a college in Chinese medicine at the Galilee

## AND ALL THOSE WHO ASSIST IN THE HOLY WORK

Among those who participate on a regular basis are R’ Avraham Asayag, R’ Yitzchak Kadosh, R’ Gil Heller, R’ Yosef Yitzchak Bronstein, R’ Shlomo Benisti, R’ Moshe Gueta, Rabbi Malkiel Machputz, and Rabbi Meir Masas.

However, none of these activities could have been made possible without the help and support of his wife, Mrs. Libby Feigele Malka Shiffman, of blessed memory, whose first yahrtzeit was commemorated this year on the 6<sup>th</sup> of Nissan. “I couldn’t have done a thing without her,” Rabbi Shiffman recalled. “She accepted guests cheerfully and invested immeasurable efforts in our outreach activities. Despite the long hours that I spent out of the house, she was a constant source of encouragement and support, as she believed that these activities would hasten the Rebbe’s hisgalus. May it be G-d’s Will that the destined promise of ‘Arise and sing, those who dwell in the dust’ will soon be realized, and she will be among them.”

***Rabbi Shiffman would call me occasionally to ensure that everything was going all right, both materially and spiritually. That’s true devotion.***

settlement of Ohr HaGanuz. I decided to go study there, renting a house in nearby Kibbutz Farod to reduce travel expenses.

“By Divine Providence, a group of young baalei t’shuva was formed on the kibbutz and I started getting close to them. Each of them had been influenced by a different organization – one through Breslov, a second through HaRav Kook, a third by Chabad, and another by all of them together... From my new friends I began hearing about Judaism and even started putting on t’fillin, but I still didn’t become a part of the group. I felt that this was a step in the right direction, but it wasn’t “it”. All this changed when I met Rabbi Shiffman. He gave classes on the kibbutz and in R’ Moshe Genish’s tent on the slopes of Moshav Amirim. His explanations seemed valid and it didn’t take long for me

to establish a connection with him.

“Rabbi Shiffman invited me to his house for Shabbos on numerous occasions, but I would always find an excuse not to come. Finally, I decided one week to accept his invitation, and I was fascinated by the Shabbos table, the well-educated children, and his eishes chayil Libby a”h, who served everything with great devotion and dedication to everyone’s great satisfaction. I was enthralled. I saw things that I had never seen anywhere before. Someone who has been exposed to this since birth can never possibly understand how truly unique it is. The entire experience, together with Rabbi Shiffman’s unwavering display of concern and vigor, how he was always there to break my fall and lift me up again, brought me to Chabad.”

[To be continued be”H]

# NETANYAHU'S GHETTO: YERUSHALAYIM

By Raanan Isseroff

*All the signs point to “Tricky Bibi” at work once again. How can we know? Look at what is going on: Mr. Netanyahu agrees to ANY restrictions on building and then “appears defiant” over a little bit that is not adhered to? The fact that he is able to agree to any building restrictions shows clearly that in fact Israel is in control and is willingly choosing to give away its governing powers over Jerusalem.*

In accordance with the Lubavitcher Rebbe's directive not to give away even one inch of Eretz Yisroel, I would like to discuss one of several confusing issues that are presented to Jewry worldwide. It's important to see through the emotional ultimatum that “we must accept” their compromising terms: Terms that give Israel's land to those who hate us and leave Israelis exposed to more death and more suffering.

The latest “issue” that has been manufactured is that “Jews must give up Jerusalem with compromises” (as quoted a number of times by former PM Olmert).

A number of political shell games have been created to make this seem as if this is a true issue by the creation of false choices that in reality take away the choice of Jews to live in their own land. A land promised to them by G-d as it says in the Torah and l'havdil, the books of various major religions. A land upon which Israel was unfairly attacked in four wars and won, gaining all of her present territory.

Today's shell game in the continued efforts to give-away land and mask it in a cloak of righteousness is that “we must have building restrictions” on any construction in Jerusalem. Not only

that, but Jews the world over are given two choices: The first choice is: “Total Building Restrictions”. The second choice being the backing of a government that defiantly (nay: “Boldly”) “fights” the enemies of Israel who are “twisting her arm” forcing the Jewish withdrawal from her capital city by only allowing “limited construction”.

The Jewish public is supposed to believe that these are the ONLY choices open for Israel today.

This of course, is a preface to the present political powers and individuals who hold sway over Israel's governing bodies to give over total control of Jerusalem to foreign entities. Entities who traditionally, religiously and historically despise Jews.

No matter. The PR machine is working overtime to cleverly create the false impression that removing Jewish control over these areas is a “necessary” option. The question they wish to create in everyone's minds is that “how much” control will the ghetto Jew of Jerusalem allow himself to be left with?

“Israeli Jew” thunders Israel's government: “You have a choice.” Which Ghetto will you create for yourself? The Jerusalem Ghetto of “No Building Allowing” (and No Babies either by the way) or a Ghetto in which you will at least have some “freedom of choice” to build a “little bit”. But please

continue to back us politically (and of course send us your American dollars (we do take credit cards) so that we can further your “choices” of having no-choice...”

We are told that the options are as follows: Total restrictions on building or what the Netanyahu government is offering: “Limited construction”. Without mentioning the embarrassing question of why a sovereign ruling government is making deals to give away it’s constituencies land that will ultimately remove its power and cease its ability to protect its Jewish citizens?

Certainly, anyone who voted for any of the people in power did not do so in order that they should put their voting citizenry in any sort of danger! In fact, one might even view such acts as contrary to their mission of furthering the safety and security of the country. There are a few names for such people and acts, but I want to take a look at the “confusing issues” so that we can properly understand how this goes against what the Rebbe has asked of Jews the world over and us, his Chassidim in the proper spirit of not being a “Tzaddik in Pelts”.

What is a Tzaddik in Pelts? There are two kinds of people. One sees that it is cold outside and puts on a coat (A fur coat is called a “Pelts”). He is nice and warm, while everyone else is cold. The second guy sees it is cold, makes a nice fire, and others benefit from its warmth. This is the Jewish way. As it says that Jews are “Bayshanim, Rachamonim and Gomlei Chassidim” (Shy, Merciful and Doers of Kindness)

I received an email recently in which the writer asked for protesters to please come and rally in Manhattan to support the Israeli Prime Minister in his bid to “defy building restrictions” on Yerushalayim.

Looking at this, I was struck by

the thought that Mr. Netanyahu gave away land before when he was Prime Minister previously in June of 1997 and now he has been resurrected by the political powers that be to engineer an Israeli land give-away again! Not only that, but he wants us Jews to rally to “Show him support”. Support for another land give away that is. So clever.

Mr. Netanyahu is affable, charming, debonair, polite and diplomatic. In short an Israeli “Poster Boy”. Political qualities that are the complete opposite of his brutish predecessor former PM Olmert.

While the qualities are different and his image in the media much more popular, but his mission does not appear to be any different than his predecessor as evidenced by his declaring only weeks after his election that he wishes to resume the stalled Peace Talks last spring. Today is the good result of his trip to Washington last May.

Let’s look back in time to thirteen short years ago. This was on the front page of the Baltimore Sun January 19, 1997:

**Hebron accord breaks course  
Netanyahu becomes the first  
Likud leader to give up biblical  
land**

**January 19, 1997**

**By Ann LoLordo, SUN  
FOREIGN STAFF**

**JERUSALEM — When Israeli  
Prime Minister Benjamin  
Netanyahu signed off on the deal  
to withdraw Israeli forces from  
Hebron last week; he became the  
first leader of the Likud bloc ever  
to give away a piece of Eretz Israel  
— the biblical Land of Israel.**

**He departed from the  
fundamental principle of his wing  
of Zionism: land for peace — up  
to a point; biblical Judea and  
Samaria — not an inch. For this  
he was reviled by some of his own  
staunchest constituents and  
applauded by the other side.**

**Yossi Beilin, a Labor Party  
negotiator in the Israeli-PLO  
accords worked out secretly in  
Norway in 1993, welcomed  
Netanyahu to the “Oslo Club.”**

Mr. Netanyahu is a very experienced politician whose mandated mission as part of the “Oslo Club” is to give away the city of Jerusalem while preserving the Israeli government’s image of “being good for the Jews” at the same time. Only a man of his talents and qualifications might be capable of pulling off such a feat.

All the signs point to “Tricky Bibi” at work once again. How can we know? Look at what is going on: Mr. Netanyahu agrees to ANY restrictions on building and then “appears defiant” over a little bit that is not adhered to? The fact that he is able to agree to any building restrictions shows clearly that in fact Israel is in control and is willingly choosing to give away its governing powers over Jerusalem.

Why pray tell, did Mr. Netanyahu agree to ANY restrictions to begin with? Because my dear reader, this is all just a sham. A theatrical show cleverly choreographed to build public support for a cause no normal person would ever agree to. National suicide.

Previous Israeli governments already secretly gave away everything and agreed to ALL restrictions on building. CIA factbook maps of Israel, West Bank and Golan available on the Internet are ample proof of this. However, Israel cannot do anything publicly until its citizens agree to make these secret agreements legally binding. The powers that be in Israel are not stupid. They know that the Israeli public will never put up with such a move. So they are going through this “show” to sucker Israelis and you and me into believing that this is the “Only Option For Peace”.

Look at Google Earth, which

depicts the borders of Jerusalem according to the 1949 armistice lines!

Then look at the CIA's factbook website: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/we.html>

The borders of Jerusalem are mostly gone. In fact about half the city is gone!

The borders of Israel are mysteriously shrinking too, even though there has been no "official" discussion on the subject. See:

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/is.html>

Not only that but Golan is no longer Israeli, but belongs to Syria.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sy.html> (You can also do a "Google-Earth" fly over of the Golan)

What is described in these maps was done secretly and now the present Israeli government is mandated to bring it all into reality. This is what Netanyahu is about.

Part of the secret agreement is that those in power in Israel cannot "lose face" in the process (leaving them powerless to carry out the "final solution" G-d Forbid) and so they have to end up looking rosy to their Israeli public.

And Today we see that yes, Bibi is the great "Hero" for championing the cause of a few unrestricted building areas. Nobody bothers to ask why Bibi agreed to any restrictions in the first place! The

***Bibi will raise his hands saying: "What can I do? My hands are tied! Scream at the United States..." While the sad truth is that he designed the whole plan in conjunction with America and the Arabs to "peacefully" give away Jerusalem in the first place! This is Mr. Netanyahu's forte for which he will probably get a Nobel Peace Prize.***

press is not even approaching this question.

The reason is that, Bibi will now appear in the media to be "defiantly championing" the cause of breaking the restrictions on building while in reality he is "giving all". This rally feeds right into what Mr. Netanyahu and the Israeli government is all about. The next scene in this show will be that Bibi will appear to "have no other choice" and be "forced" by big-bad-America to then "cave in" and restrict all building and then the restrictions on having babies will have to be enforced as well. Creating a true Ghetto out of Yerushalayim.

Thank you very much Mr. Netanyahu. You will have achieved what Hitler could not achieve. Walking the Jews of Jerusalem willingly into a Ghetto.

Bibi will raise his hands saying: "What can I do? My hands are tied! Scream at the United States..."

While the sad truth is that he designed the whole plan in conjunction with America and the Arabs to "peacefully" give away Jerusalem in the first place! This is Mr. Netanyahu's forte for which he will probably get a Nobel Peace Prize.

The proof is that when he got elected he could not get to Washington fast enough to reopen talks. Remember?

So all of this is only another trick to pull in support for Netanyahu from the Israeli and American Jewish public and this rally only feeds his sickness. More specifically from the religious community which "just happens" to be in all the areas Israel wants to give away.

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