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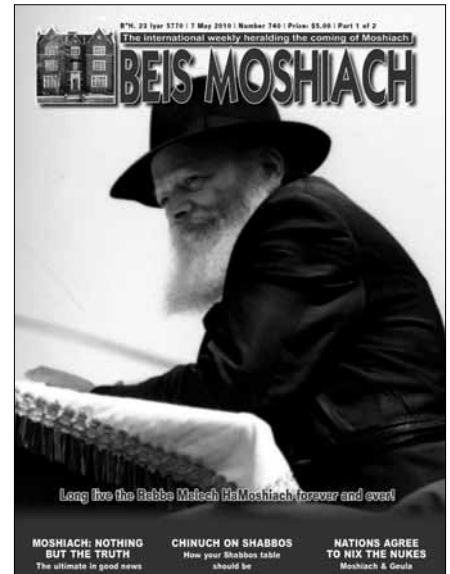
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PRIDE THAT RUNS DEEPER THAN SELF

Sichos In English

THE INNER MESSAGE OF OUR SAGES' DEBATE

We find the following difference of opinion among our Sages: [1]

Rav Chiyya bar Ashi states in the name of Rav:

"A Torah scholar should have one sixty-fourth part [of pride]." [So that the lightheaded will not act arrogantly towards him and so that his words will be accepted by them (Rashi).]

Rav Huna the son of Rav Yehoshua says:

"[This small measure of pride] adorns him as the bristle adorns the ear of grain."

Rava declares:

"Whoever possesses [pride] deserves to be placed under a ban of ostracism. [Conversely,] whoever lacks [this quality] entirely deserves to be placed under ban. [If he does not possess a small degree of pride, his townsmen will not be in awe of him, and he will not have the power to rebuke them. (Rashi).]

Rav Nachman bar Yitzchok states:

"Neither it [pride] or any part of it. Is it a small matter, what is written: [2] 'All those who are proud of heart are an abomination unto G-d' "?

What is the rationale for the proof text cited by Rav Nachman bar Yitzchok?

Pride comes from an appreciation - sometimes realistic and sometimes not - of one's achievements and potentials.

When a person feels proud of his achievements, even when his pride is justified, he denies G-d's providence to a certain degree. For by taking pride, the person is ascribing his success to his own efforts.

If he would realize the truth, that all his success is a gift from G-d, and it is He who grants him the potential to succeed, he would not be proud. [3] Instead, he would thankfully acknowledge the working of G-d's hand.

This is not to minimize the importance of a person's endeavors.

It is written, [4] "And G-d will bless you in all you do," which implies that a person's efforts are necessary.

Without them, he is lacking a medium through which G-d's blessings are to be channeled. But his efforts are no more than a medium, and the source of success is G-d's blessings. And when success comes from G-d's blessings, there is no reason for an individual to feel personal pride.

TAPPING INTO A DEEPER POTENTIAL

Nevertheless, as indicated by the other Sages in the passage mentioned above, there is an advantage to having a small amount of pride, for unless a person asserts himself with confidence, his words will not be heeded by others.

And for the person himself as

well, without a fair measure of self-assurance, he will not be able to persevere in the face of challenge.

Moreover, feelings of satisfaction and pride encourage happiness, which is a fundamental component of Divine service. [5]

One can, however, reap the advantages of pride without its drawbacks.

For there is, however, a deeper source of pride than one's own self, one's abilities, and one's achievements.

G-d has "made us holy through [His] commandments, and... drawn us near to [His] service," [6] endowing us with a bond of closeness with Him, and a mission to elevate and refine the world at large.

Consciousness of this bond and commitment to this mission generates inner pride, satisfaction, and fulfillment.

SYNTHESIS, NOT CONFLICT

This approach enables the qualities of humility and pride to be seen as complementary.

Developing selfless humility encourages a person to heighten his connection to G-d and commitment to His service. This, in turn, provides him with deeper resources of pride and esteem.

Indeed, these feelings of pride are more powerful than the pride generated by the appreciation of

one's positive virtues.

Self-centered pride is limited, and can be dampened by a formidable opponent or challenge.

The personal strength derived from a commitment to fulfill G-d's will, by contrast, reflects the infinity of its objective. There is no obstacle that is able to stand in its way.

Our Sages alluded to this concept in their statement: [7] "The servant of a king is like the king himself."

A servant is not considered a separate entity from his master, rather it is as if he is an extension of his master's person. [8]

Therefore, the self-assurance manifested by the servant is not his own, it is his master's, and conveys all the power of his master's position.

In the analogue, a person who is totally committed to G-d's service uncovers far more powerful resources of inner strength than he possesses by virtue of his own self.

He radiates drive and energy and shows the mature control necessary to channel these energies into productive endeavors.

PRINCIPLES PERSONIFIED

This type of self-assurance was exemplified by Moshe our teacher.

He himself told the Jewish people: [9] "It is I who stand between G-d and you" and he wrote the verse, [10] "And there never arose in Israel a prophet like Moshe." Nevertheless, he was "more humble than all the men on the face of the earth." [11]

Moshe did not see pride and humility as conflicting tendencies.

Although he knew the greatness of the mission he had been given, and he knew that he had been granted unique personal potentials to enable him to fulfill this mission, this did not lead to ego-conscious pride.

On the contrary, he knew that he had been endowed with these potentials by G-d and they were not the fruit of his own efforts.

Moreover, he believed that if these

gifts had been given to another person, that person might have achieved more than he. [12]

And precisely because of this humility, he was able to make full use of the potentials he had been granted to carry out his mission.

THE SYMBOLISM OF SINAI

The above concepts are reflected in the name of this week's Torah reading: Behar.

Behar means "on the mountain."

More particularly, as the verse continues, [13] it refers to Mount Sinai, the mountain on which the Torah was given.

Mount Sinai represents the synthesis of the two potentials mentioned above.

For on one hand, it is "the lowest of all the mountains," a symbol of humility, [14] and yet it is a mountain, exemplifying pride and power.

It is the fusion of these two opposites which made Sinai, "the mountain of G-d," [15] the place which G-d chose to manifest His presence and convey His teachings. [16]

There is, however, a slight difficulty.

The Torah reading is not named Behar Sinai, "On Mount Sinai"; it is called Behar, "on the mountain."

The qualities of pride and fortitude are emphasized, but not the modulating influence of the humility of Sinai.

In resolution, it can be explained that the phrase Behar Sinai, Mount Sinai, refers to a person who reminds himself of the need to subdue his self-importance.

Nevertheless, the fact that these efforts are necessary indicates that his humility does not encompass his being entirely.

When, by contrast, a person has totally sublimated his personal identity to the mission which G-d has charged him, he does not need to

remind himself of the necessity for humility; self-concern is of no importance to him.

This is the intent of the name Behar, "on the mountain" - that the person stands proud, firmly rooted in the power endowed to him by the strength of his purpose.

This strength of purpose will enable our people to overcome all the challenges which confront us during these last moments of exile, and proceed to greet Moshiach. May this take place in the immediate future.

*Adapted from Likkutei Sichos, Vol. I, p. 276ff;
Vol. XXII, p. 159ff*

NOTES:

1. Sota 5a.
2. Proverbs 16:5.
3. See Deuteronomy 8:17-18.
4. Deuteronomy 16:17.
5. See the conclusion of Hilchos Shofar, Sukka, V'Lulav in the Rambam's Mishneh Torah.
6. Festival liturgy, Siddur T'hillas Hashem, p. 252.
7. Shavuos 47b; Sifri and Rashi commenting on Deuteronomy 1:7.
8. See Rashba, Kiddushin 23a.
9. Deuteronomy 5:5.
10. Deuteronomy 34:10.
11. Numbers 12:3. Significantly, Moshe also wrote this verse in the Torah. Just as his appreciation of his other virtues did not lead to pride, so too, he was able to remain humble despite his awareness of his own humility.
12. See also the conclusion of the tractate of Sota which relates that Rav Yosef described himself as the epitome of humility.
13. Seifer HaMaamarim 5689, p. 217ff.
14. Leviticus 25:1.
15. Midrash T'hillim on Psalms 68:17. Indeed, the very name Sinai is symbolic of humility. The name Sinai is derived from the Hebrew word sneh ("bramble", Ramban commentary to Deuteronomy 1:6), which is "more humble than all the trees in the world" (Shmos RRabba2:5).
16. Exodus 3:1, 18:5, et al.
17. See the essay entitled "The Revelation at Mt. Sinai" which develops these concepts [Timeless Patterns in Time, Vol. II, p. 109ff (Kehos, N.Y., 1994)] which focuses on these concepts.

MOSHIACH: NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH

By Rabbi Zvi Homnick

Time after time, and having been on both sides of some of the largest dividing issues in Jewish life, I have seen that projecting feelings, intentions and motives unto others, is the most devastating and divisive practice known to man...

EARLY TRUTH

Oddly enough, I can recall sitting in a yeshiva classroom at age ten or eleven and pondering in amazement the statement of Rabbi Akiva, cited in P'sachim (49b), "When I was an *am ha'aretz* (one who is unschooled in Torah) I would say, who will deliver to me a *talmid chacham* (Torah scholar) and I will bite him like a donkey." The Gemara goes on to say that his students said to him, "Rebbi, say like a dog," to which he

responded, "This one (a dog) bites and doesn't break bone, this one (a donkey) bites and breaks bone." Although I can't reconstruct from memory my entire thought process at that time, I found it puzzling that Rabbi Akiva felt it necessary to share this information with his students, and the compilers of the Talmud felt compelled to pass it along to all future generations.

We were learning the beginning of K'subos at the time, and my then chavrusa (study partner) and

I had gone way ahead of the rest of the class, which left us with little to do but waste time during our study sessions, so we decided to learn a later chapter in our unofficially "spare" time. That day, we had learned the Gemara (62b) that tells how Rabbi Akiva was working as a shepherd for Kalba Savua, and his daughter observed that this simple unlearned field hand was "modest and of elevated character," so she offered to marry him if he would agree to go away to study Torah.

The commentary of *Tosefos* there raises the question how could he be described as being possessed of elevated character in light of his statement regarding his earlier attitude towards those of the scholarly class. *Tosefos* answers that one could say that he did not hate Torah scholars but was convinced that they were arrogant towards the unlettered because of their Torah knowledge and they hated their inferiors, and that was the source of his great antipathy.

Later, during class time, I found myself tuning out the Rebbe (a wonderful man and teacher, by the way) and going off into my own thoughts (bad habits die hard; my wonderful wife says that I do it to her too). It seemed to me that *Tosefos* clearly did not mean to legitimize Rabbi Akiva's earlier worldview as he himself stated that he only felt this way before becoming a Torah scholar. What it must mean is that he was previously laboring under a misconception regarding how the Torah scholars viewed their lesser edified brethren.

If that is the case, Rabbi Akiva was conveying two important messages to his students. Firstly, animus towards others often comes from misapprehension of the others' true feelings, and secondly, and even more

shockingly, a Torah scholar who indeed does look down upon and hate his unlettered counterpart, deserves to be bitten and having his bones broken!

The first point actually became a guiding principle in life for me. Time after time, and having been on both sides of some of the largest dividing issues in Jewish life, I have seen that projecting feelings, intentions and motives unto others, is the most devastating and divisive practice known to man.

Before being exposed to the explanations of Chassidus as to how the 24,000 students of Rabbi Akiva could possibly have been guilty of not behaving with respect towards one another which led to their deaths and the practice of mourning during the days of *s'fira* (the Omer counting period), I always assumed that it was exactly this (on a subtle and lofty level) that caused the breakdown in mutual respect. When I know nothing about you and your world, I can easily make a mistake about your inner thoughts and feelings. Conversely, the problem is more easily rectified, if I make the effort to not only put myself in your shoes figuratively but to actually try them on and see the world from your perspective as Rabbi Akiva did when he went off to learn Torah.

However, when I feel that I know everything about you, since we are both disciples of the same master, and I know what you know; if I become convinced that any difference of opinion is a result of impure motives on your part, it is almost impossible to prove otherwise and correct the situation. Rabbi Akiva was trying to convey this all-important message to his students (and us), using his own less than stellar past as an illustration, but sadly, they were unable to assimilate that

lesson. Although, like the younger Rabbi Akiva according to Tosefos, they had no hate for their fellow students, and surely following the dictum of their master that "And you shall your fellow like yourself" is the great principle of Torah they loved each other, they still viewed each other with suspicion and this manifested as a lack of proper respect.

Interestingly, after learning the various explanations of the Rebbe on this issue from a Chassidic perspective, attributing the loftiest of intentions and the subtlest of flaws to the disciples of Rabbi Akiva, I found that it still all comes back to projecting unto others. And the more subtle the projection, the harder it is to overcome.

LOVE TRUTH

The implications of the second point didn't have much relevance at that point in my life, since although I found the idea of such a Torah scholar revolting, the great people that I looked up to, such as Reb Moshe Feinstein and the like, were known for having limitless love and patience for simple G-d fearing folk. We certainly didn't associate the highly caricatured Misnaged of Baal Shem Tov stories with any of the people we knew as great scholars. It was only in later years that I picked up on more subtle undercurrents manifesting also as anti-Chassidic sentiment, and that forced me to rethink many things.

In fact, at least speaking for those that tended to be part of my more immediate circle of friends, we were more likely to look down on those that were somewhat learned, who despite having substantial gaps in their knowledge insisted on pushing themselves into high profile roles in public life. The idea being that we could love and embrace somebody that

Nobody in the history of the world ever put in as much time and effort screening, editing and critiquing even the smallest detail, of as many Jewish publications and radio broadcasts, as did the Rebbe.

doesn't know and realizes he doesn't know, but we had little to no tolerance for somebody that doesn't know but insists on proclaiming his views and opinions from the rooftops. The worst of course, were those that spoke in the name of Torah and Judaism and said things that were wrong or misleading.

This was also a basis for criticism of the Lubavitch institution of shlichus, since there were clearly no significant standards of scholarship as a prerequisite, so that there is a vast range amongst those who serve as shlichim, from formidable scholars to the minimally versed. Since they are all committed to trying to impact as many Jews as possible, and as such try to exploit forums whereby they can reach larger numbers, oftentimes the ones whose voices are heard the loudest are those most likely to get it wrong. I even knew one guy who collected stories of Lubavitchers making inane or inaccurate public statements on matters of Jewish law and religious outlook. Of

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course, this was colored by a jaundiced view of Chabad Chassidic philosophy in general, and the modern day version of that philosophy in particular.

After I took the opportunity and the plunge to walk in Lubavitch shoes, I not only began to see the world and the Torah from a whole new perspective, I also became privy to a great deal of information that is not readily accessible to “outsiders.” For instance, I became aware of how exacting the Rebbe himself has always been as regards the spoken and written word when offered for public consumption. There are countless letters and notes where the Rebbe critiques and guides various writers and publishers, some of whom were and are brilliant scholars. Time and again, and in his public talks as well, the Rebbe emphasizes the importance of getting even the smallest detail exactly right, not only factually but also perceptually from the reader’s perspective.

The Rebbe often insisted that people consult experts in the field with an emphasis on what will the reader think rather than on what you have to say. This extended not only to accuracy of content and message, but whether it is worth bringing up certain questions or citing certain sources even for the purpose of debunking them. Nobody in the history of the world ever put in as much time and effort screening, editing and critiquing even the smallest detail, of as many Jewish publications and radio broadcasts, as did the Rebbe.

Unfortunately, the phenomenon of spokespersons, “official” or unofficial, getting things wrong due to ignorance, misconception or aversion to controversy, has always been around and has only gotten more severe since the Rebbe is no longer playing a hands-on role. Not to mention, those that knowingly twist and distort the Rebbe’s words for reasons sinister or benign. The most prominent and colorful example of this is the former shliach to a world respected university, whose love for the spotlight and penchant for prolific prose and prolix pontification particularly on private matters has positioned him as an expert on Jewish thought and practice, determining for a vast audience what is “kosher” and what is not.

On a number of occasions, I have been approached by people (including a non-Lubavitcher rabbi) asking if I was willing to debate this person on live radio or in writing. Each time I have refused, as per the Rebbe’s general guideline to avoid debates, especially when dealing with someone whose gift of gab and award winning debating skills may trump one’s stronger grounding in traditional texts. Another reason for my refusal, which surprised even me (as to how radical a metamorphosis I have gone

through in my new shoes), is that I can’t help really liking the guy despite never having met him. I can’t help myself, but I get a really huge kick out of the fact that he has grandiose ambitions to reach ever wider audiences in contrast to the exile induced provincialism of so many religious folks today.

Because of these feelings of kinship, instead of feeling acrimonious when encountering any of his outrageous statements that conflict with the Torah and Chassidic point of view, I simply feel sad. I am well aware that he has taken positions and promoted ideas that fall under the category of “exposing facets of Torah that are inconsistent with Halacha,” and I know full well the legal and moral ramifications of such behavior. And yet, I can’t help but grant him the benefit of the doubt that his is a case of good intentions and idealistic fervor (with some self-professed naked ambition thrown in) gone terribly awry, so I only see the tragedy of a caring, compassionate, talented and gifted fellow Jew and fellow Chassid gone astray. And yet, the “love for peace” that enables me to give him (and all my fellow Jews that have and put forth differing or even unacceptable views) the benefit of the doubt must not supplant the “love for truth.”

SWEET TRUTH

The prophet Zecharia (8:19) says, “So has spoken G-d of Hosts, the fast of the fourth (month), and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth, will be for the House of Judah for joy and happiness and holidays, and truth and peace you should love.” The commentaries explain the conclusion of the verse as being conditional; the prophecy regarding the transformation of

these days of mourning and self-affliction into holidays with the coming of Moshiach and the redemption is contingent upon the Jewish people complying with the divine exhortation to love and embrace the traits and practices of truth and peace.

One of the challenges that Torah loyalists in public life have to contend with is finding the correct balance between the love of truth and the love of peace. The Torah itself condones the practice of “altering for the sake of peace” and attributes such behavior to G-d Himself. That would seem to indicate that peace as an ideal is more important than truth, as truth must give way to promote and preserve peace. On the other hand, we find that when it comes to Torah law, a judge while encouraged to foster compromise between litigants, is warned against even the slightest deviation from truth for any reason, noble or otherwise, even for the sake of peace. The Maharshal even goes so far as to say that if threatened by a gentile angered by some aspect of Torah law that makes him feel slighted, one is obligated to give up his life rather than distort a fact of Torah law.

Throughout the years, the Rebbe always took the position in his directives, talks and letters, that there is no such thing as true peace that is not based on the truth of Torah. Pointing out that countless situations have come up over the past two plus centuries where the Chassidic movement encountered opposition that argued for toning down the message for the sake of “peace,” the Rebbe made it abundantly clear that the policy is and has always been that the truth does not back down. Every effort must be made to preserve and promote peace, but that peace has to be based upon the truth.

Tact, diplomacy, graciousness, as well as considerations of impact and effectiveness, are all elements that go into shaping and honing the delivery of the truth, in terms of the when, where and how. In personal interactions one may “alter” the facts for the sake of peace, and doing so is considered praiseworthy, but the facts and directives of Torah are sacrosanct and immutable. If the Torah tells us that it is part of our job to deliver a certain message, then we do so even if it upsets somebody’s idea of peaceful coexistence. In fact, the Torah’s law of rebuke requires that one must keep rebuking a sinner even a hundred times until the point that he reacts with physical violence.

This is and has always been the approach to promoting the teachings and messages of Chassidus as well. Chassidim never backed down in the face of opposition based on specious arguments of preserving the peace. The Rebbe did direct his Chassidim to avoid potential confrontation in the face of actual serious violence committed by Jew against Jew, but otherwise the issue was always how to get the truth out there, not “if” it should be done at all. Clearly, the same holds true regarding the truth of the Rebbe’s prophetic statements regarding Moshiach, which he explicitly instructed and exhorted us to publicize, in order to help ourselves and others prepare.

I am well aware of how weird it seems and how painful it can be when you are trying to share the ultimate in good news with the world, and the response of some ranges from the derisive to the vitriolic. One can’t help feeling like, “Hey pal, this is like good news, you know. I don’t need the grief if you can’t handle a little sunshine in your life. I wonder how you treat people who give you

Yet, despite that feeling, we must remember that this too is a symptom of exile, holding onto the familiar suffering and affliction rather than enthusiastically looking forward to exchanging them for joy and happiness.

bad news.” Yet, despite that feeling, we must remember that this too is a symptom of exile, holding onto the familiar suffering and affliction rather than enthusiastically looking forward to exchanging them for joy and happiness.

Our job is to love and promote the truth while doing everything in our power to love and promote peace between all Jews, assuming the best about others as the prophet Zecharia says in the previous verse (8:18) cited in Tanya (Igeres HaKodesh #22), “And man should not think in the heart about the iniquity of his fellow.” This in turn, will enable us to finally experience the transformation of these days of mourning during *s’fira* into days of joy in anticipation of the giving of the Torah, including the revelations of the deepest secrets of the Torah with the True and Complete Redemption, immediately, NOW!

LITTLE STORIES, BIG LESSONS

*Stories told by R' Yisroel Noach Blinitzky a"h, from a t'shura published for a bar mitzva in the Majeski family. L'ilui nishmas Mrs. Chaya Majeski bas R' Yisroel Noach. * Part 1*

INNER WORKINGS

Chassidim once took a paper from the house of the Rebbe Rayatz. One of the things it said was that when you see someone, you can discern the manner of functioning of his inner soul power, and when looking deeper you can discern the same of his subconscious soul powers (not through ruach ha'kodesh but simply by means of the intellect).

WHAT'S THE LIMIT?

During the Russian Revolution when there was fighting in the streets (of Rostov), the Rebbe Rashab stood near the window and watched the fighting and said, "I am looking at how far is the limit of self-sacrifice to cast off the yoke."

THE SERVANT'S ADVICE

The Rebbe Maharash once sent his servant to buy horses. The servant told him that soon there would be a fair and it would be better to make the purchase then. The Rebbe said, "I don't need you for your advice" and he fired him.

INTENTIONAL ERROR

The author of *Toras Chesed* was blind at the end of his life and he would learn by reciting things by heart. He had someone there to correct him if he made a mistake. It happened on several occasions that he intentionally made a mistake in order to see whether the person was listening.

OPEN BOOK

The *Toras Chesed* could say Mishnayos backwards too. Someone (the one who related this story) asked him: "How is that possible when I know Ashrei well by heart and yet I cannot say it backwards?"

The *Toras Chesed* said: "If the Siddur was open in front of you, then could you say it backwards?"

The person said he could, to which the *Toras Chesed* replied: "That is how clear the Mishnayos are to me."

THE PROFESSOR'S MISTAKES

When the Rebbe was in Paris and

he traveled by train, a certain professor sat next to him. The Rebbe asked the professor to show him his notebook. The professor said the contents would be too difficult for him but the Rebbe asked that it be shown to him anyway.

The Rebbe looked at several pages and pointed out a number of errors. The professor told Rabbi Rubinstein [a rav in Paris before the war] that if the Rebbe hadn't shown him those mistakes, he would not have received the diploma that he got for this dissertation.

THREE "MEN"

Rebbetzin Rivka was in bed in the presence of her father-in-law, the Tzemach Tzedek, and her husband (later to be the Rebbe Maharash).

The Tzemach Tzedek asked: Rivka, are you sleeping?

She did not respond and he asked again and again and she did not respond.

She said that she then saw that the Tzemach Tzedek took a candle in his hand as did her husband, and between them was space for a third person and that is how they went to the door.

SHE DID NOT WANT TO DISTURB HIM

Rebbetzin Rivka once left her husband's room and the door closed on her dress, preventing her from moving. She stood there all night



R' Yisroel Noach Blinitzky a"h

until the Rebbe Maharash opened the door because she didn't want to disturb him.

The elder Chassidim would go to Rebbetzin Rivka to ask for her bracha.

SHE SAW HER FATHER

The Rebbe Rayatz once said Chassidus and in the middle, he covered his face. Afterwards, R' Shmuel Gurary asked him what happened and he said, "I saw my father."

R' Gurary asked: "Was that the first time?"

The Rebbe answered: "But not in this way."

On another occasion the Rebbe Rayatz said: "I speak with my father faster than with a telephone."

THIS IS THE BAAL SHEM TOV

The Alter Rebbe asked someone who knew the Baal Shem Tov to tell him about his Rebbe. The person told him three stories:

One time, the Baal Shem Tov was sick and they arranged for people to be near his room all night in case he needed anything. When it was the turn of the person who told him this story, the Baal Shem Tov suddenly got out of bed and walked over to the beam, banged on it and said, "I am healthy, I am healthy, I am healthy." He took a candle and an ax and went with the shamash outside, where he proceeded to break ice with the ax so he could immerse himself. The shamash stood there wearing a fur coat and

nevertheless he was cold. The candle went out in the frigid wind. He began to shout and the Baal Shem Tov emerged and asked him what the problem was. He said, "It is dark and cold." The Baal Shem Tov broke off a bit of ice and held it close to the candle and lit it and said, "It is warm."

The Alter Rebbe's comment was, "This is not him [the Baal Shem Tov]."

The man told him another story to which the Alter Rebbe also said, "This is not the Baal Shem Tov." Then he told a third story:

One of the students of the Baal Shem Tov, whose father-in-law did not want him to associate with the Baal Shem Tov, asked for a bracha that the situation change.

The Baal Shem Tov told him to

The Rebbe Maharash once sent his servant to buy horses. The servant told him that soon there would be a fair and it would be better to make the purchase then. The Rebbe said, “I don’t need you for your advice,” and he fired him.

bring his father-in-law but he was unwilling to come. It once happened that the Baal Shem Tov traveled to the inn where his student lived and he told him to call his father-in-law out to him, but even then, the man did not want to go and he said he was in the middle of learning. His wife told him he should go immediately and if he didn’t, she’d give it to him over his head with the Gemara. He finally acceded and the Baal Shem Tov spoke to him for some time.

Then he accompanied the Baal Shem Tov outside. On the way, he wanted to put on his coat but the Baal Shem Tov said he should go as he was dressed. The Baal Shem Tov got into the wagon and told the man to sit outside next to the wagon driver. The Baal Shem Tov began to say, “Do you know what a Rebbe can do? If he wants, he can suddenly make it rain.”

It immediately began raining and the man, who did not have a coat, got drenched. Then the Baal Shem Tov said to him, “Do you know what a Rebbe can do? If he wants, he can stop the rain.” The rain stopped. Then he said, “Do you know what a Rebbe can do? If he wants, he can make it rain on one side and have the sun shine on the other side.” And that’s what happened.

When the Alter Rebbe heard this, he said, “*That’s* the Baal Shem Tov.”

[My grandfather said that he heard that Polish Chassidim had the custom to relate this story at the chuppa.]

MY MIRACLE

The Rebbe Maharash would go for a walk every day to a certain spot. One time, some opponents decided to wait for him there and so they could bother him. That day, he took his walk elsewhere.

Afterwards he said, “See my miracle! I always go over there and today I went a different way.”

THE HOLINESS OF THE MAAMARIM

Someone once asked the Rebbe Rayatz, before he was married, why his father said maamarim in a powerful voice. He answered: “It is explained that when he says the maamer it is like the time that the High Priest enters the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur. Such k’dusha while saying a maamer – should it be done coolly?”

YERUSHALAYIM = LUBAVITCH

The Rebbe Maharash did not travel to his son’s wedding. He said he was at the Ohel of his father, the Tzemach Tzedek who told him not to go and only the Rebbetzin went. The Rebbe Maharash said that since in the *t’naim* it said that the wedding would take place in Yerushalayim and Moshiach had still not come, the wedding should take place in Lubavitch. The *mechutan*, his brother the Admur of Avrutch said that since this was not Yerushalayim, the wedding should take place as

was customary, in the city of the bride. And that is what they did.

HISKASHRUS TO THE “HEAD”

After the passing of the Tzemach Tzedek, the Chassid R’ Dovid Tzvi Chein said: What is the meaning of “May we be the head and not the tail?” A Jew needs to be connected to something and this is why we ask that we should be connected to the head (to the Rebbe) and not the tail.

OY VEY

One of the great Chassidim visited one of the greats of the *oilamishe* (lit. worldly ones, a colloquial reference to non-Chassidim who were not opposed to Chassidus). The host brought his guest some fruit and said: “Although I am not learning now, I am fulfilling the mitzva of hosting guests and your eating is like my learning.”

The Chassid replied: “Woe to me if my eating is like your learning.”

SPEAKING TO HIMSELF

R’ Y. Disner once had yechidus with the Tzemach Tzedek and he saw that after the Tzemach Tzedek answered him, he was still saying something to himself.

When he left the room, he related this to one of the Tzemach Tzedek’s sons, who explained to him: “During the yechidus, when the Rebbe answers you, aside from answering your question the words he uses are also effecting yichudim (unifications) in the spiritual realms. Apparently he was lacking some words for the yichudim and that is why he said some words to himself.”

NO MORE TEARS LEFT

Y. C. recounted that when he had yechidus with the Rebbe Rayatz he complained that he had a promise for a son but still had no child.

The Baal Shem Tov said to him, "Do you know what a Rebbe can do? If he wants, he can stop the rain." The rain stopped. Then he said, "Do you know what a Rebbe can do? If he wants, he can make it rain on one side and have the sun shine on the other side." And that's what happened.

The Rebbe said: "Believe me - I have no tears left with which to cry."

HEAD OF A MASKIL

The Rebbe Rayatz once said about one of the Chassidim (Chaim Ber Vilensky of Kremenchug): "He had a big head. I don't mean physically, though he physically did have a big head; I mean that he was an amazing maskil."

QUESTIONS OF THE YOUNG

One year, the Rebbe Rayatz said that yechidus could be arranged for

young bachurim on condition that before they had yechidus they told the mashpia, R' Chatshe Feigin (Rabbi Yechezkel Feigin Hy"d) what they would write.

One bachur refrained from entering for yechidus because he did not want to confide in the mashpia. In the end, he had yechidus and afterwards the Rebbe said to the mashpia: "Little children with big questions."

IS IT WORTH IT?

When the mashpia R' Chatshe told the Rebbe Rayatz that N. was reviewing the Hemshech 5666 word

for word, the Rebbe said: "It's a good thing but we need to know whether it's worth the time."

WHY DID THE GENTILE WOMAN CRY?

The gentile cleaning lady who cleaned the home of Rabbi Rafelovitch in Kremenchug did her work in tears. Someone asked her: "Why are you crying?"

She answered: "I can't listen to how he prays."

He was known as someone who cried a lot when he davened.

A NUT HOUSE

Rabbi Rafelovitch was known to express himself colorfully... He once went to the house of Rabbi Dovid Tzvi Chein and found him in a corner crying as he davened. In another corner stood Rabbi Meir Simcha Chein who davened with great joy. He said: "Is this some kind of nut house? This is one house; if the situation here is such that crying is appropriate, then why is there simcha and if simcha is appropriate, then why is there crying?"



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CHINUCH ON SHABBOS

A panel discussion in which mashpiim respond to questions about chinuch as it pertains to Shabbos and the Shabbos table.

PARTICIPANTS:

Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Ginsberg

mashpia in yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim Rishon L'Tzion

Rabbi Ofer Maidovnik

mashpia in yeshivas Chabad in Tzfas

Rabbi Dovber Mendelsohn

educational consultant and member of the chinuch committee of Aguch in Eretz Yisroel

Rabbi Zalman Notik

mashpia in yeshivas Toras Emes in Yerushalayim and member of the chinuch committee

Parents spend more time with their children on Shabbos. How can this precious time be used for chinuch?

Rabbi Notik: It is the parents' responsibility to fill their children's time on Shabbos. The children need to be occupied with mesibos

Shabbos etc. and of course, parents should spend time learning and talking with their children. The Rebbe laments in a letter about parents who sleep on Shabbos while their children are idle.

Rabbi Ginsberg: There is a horaa from the Rebbe which is not that well-known regarding Shabbos, that when the family sits down together for a lengthy Shabbos meal, this develops and strengthens the bond among the family members.

Consequently, time should be spent on telling stories, singing niggunim, and saying divrei Torah, all with the children's active participation, because it is a precious time and an opportunity to be together. Likewise, we should encourage Shabbos parties and shiurim for children of different ages.

Rabbi Maidovnik: During the summer months we should forego sleeping sometimes and apply ourselves to the chinuch of our children. The Rebbe writes in a letter – "I was horrified to hear that Anash remain all Shabbos in shul and do not return home."

Apparently, something that was once considered positive is something that the Rebbe recoils

from now because the goal is that we sacrifice for chinuch. If the walk to shul is lengthy, you can also use this time to talk to your children.

Rabbi Mendelsohn: Generally speaking, when a child sees that Shabbos is precious to his father, it will be the same for him. When the father works all week and on Shabbos it's different and it's a time used for k'dusha, for davening and learning (with the child sitting next to him), this gets through to the child. Of course, free time needs to be used to sit with the children.

How can we run a Shabbos table the way the Rebbe wants it to be?

Rabbi Maidovnik: A Shabbos meal can take a long time, even three hours, and like Pesach night, the children have to be the focus of attention. There are many ways to involve the children: conducting a quiz on their level, preparing challenging questions on the parsha, presenting topics for discussion wherein each child can state his opinion. The parents can wisely conduct an interesting discussion and direct the conversation toward the proper Jewish outlook on various issues.

I once asked my family about what it says about Korach and the B'nei Reuven, "woe to the wicked and woe to his neighbor" - how is it possible, then, to go on shlichus? The children's answers were interesting. One of them said that when you go on shlichus it's with the Rebbe's ko'ach; another child said that when you are involved in hafatza you are not influenced by your environment; a third child said that they are not wicked but "captive children" who need to be taught. Each of these answers can be elaborated upon.

We have each person relate a hashgacha pratis story that happened that week. It keeps them focused on this concept throughout the week; sometimes they write

In general, the parents should be supportive of anything the child says. Give them your full attention. It's critical that no child feels he or she has to fight to be heard and that everybody feels that they have a place.

down the incidents as they occur. It's a good idea to have prizes for active participation in quizzes. You can also ask each child to say something good about each of his siblings. You can vary the activities.

In general, the parents should be supportive of anything the child says. Give them your full attention. It's critical that no child feels he or she has to fight to be heard and that everybody feels that they have a place.

Rabbi Notik: From an answer that the Rebbe gave a relative of mine, one of the important things is to have niggunim at the Shabbos table, in addition to divrei Torah of course, and the children should be actively involved in the niggunim and divrei Torah. For example, allow each child to choose a niggun, to say a d'var Torah etc. If there are many children, some should say divrei Torah at night and the others by day.

Shabbos has an educational advantage over all the other days of the week even in situations where the parents spend one-on-one time with their children throughout the week. The Shabbos meal is relaxing. There is no telephone, nothing that intrudes, and parents can devote themselves to the family. Plus, on Shabbos a Jew has extra k'dusha and therefore, the way he absorbs and internalizes Torah and inyanei Chassidus is greater than usual. This is a special time of which we should take full advantage.

It's very important that at every Shabbos meal the divrei Torah

include inyanei Moshiach and Geula.

Rabbi Mendelsohn: The Shabbos table is the perfect time to get close with your children, to hear what's happening in the classroom and with friends. We often hear things we didn't know about. The relationship between siblings who are sitting together at the table is fostered as they each listen patiently to the others. It's important to allow children to tell about things they learned and heard. You can have a quiz on the parsha, review material that was learned, you can have a mesibas Shabbos at home, tell a story, teach a Chassidishe song and give out treats.

Many children don't have the patience and interest to sit at the table and prefer to go off and read.

Rabbi Maidovnik: Generally speaking, you should not allow children to read during the meal. The Shabbos table should be a time of family togetherness. The parents need to see to it that the talk is interesting and get their children involved with various activities. Nowadays, it has to be planned out.

During the week you can prepare the children for the Shabbos table by telling them what the special topic or activity will be. When you have a child who can answer questions on Chumash you can choose interesting topics that the commentaries address and tell him to prepare answers in advance. That will keep him at the Shabbos table.

The Shabbos meals are a good time to clarify matters of emuna.



Rabbi Maidovnik

Someone told me that his children reviewed midrashim on the parsha and one of the children reacted negatively about a certain midrash and said that is not what it says in the pasuk. This was an opportunity to talk about the holiness of Torah and how Chazal learn things out from a pasuk. This teaches children the sanctity of Torah and the precision in every word, every letter, and emphasizes that Torah is from Sinai.

Rabbi Notik: At the Shabbos meals the father should not be the only one to talk. Everybody should participate, with each child having a chance to say a d'var Torah, pick a niggun etc. When the children are active participants, their desire to sit at the table is much greater.

There are various ways to include everyone. For example, the father can promise that at end of the meal they will go for a "story walk" for twenty minutes, that he will go for a walk with them during which he tells them a special story. The privilege of going on a walk with their father who is not generally available for such things during the week is an incentive to them to take an active role at the table and encourages them to stay until the end of the meal.

Sometimes the children are tired and it's hard for them. At such times, make it easier for them, not



Rabbi Ginsberg

harder. Those who are tired should say a d'var Torah and pick a niggun so they can finish earlier, bentch, and go to sleep.

Rabbi Mendelsohn: It's the father's job to get his child to look forward to the Shabbos table. A child doesn't walk away from the table if he enjoys it and wants to be a part of it. If he leaves, it's sometimes a one-time thing where perhaps he doesn't feel well. If it happens more often, find out whether the child once said a d'var Torah and the others laughed at him, or what the reason is that he leaves. No matter what the reason, he certainly shouldn't be yelled at or forced. Sometimes you can excuse him, knowing he is tired or not feeling well but afterwards, try and talk to him and figure out together what will keep him at the table the next time.

What should be done about those who sleep very late?

Rabbi Ginsberg: The davening starts later on Shabbos for the express purpose of learning Chassidus before davening, and even those bachurim who are home for Shabbos have to get up and do so. It sometimes happens that you return very late from a farbrengen and wake up a little later, but when this becomes habitual it's a very negative practice. Here too, you shouldn't get into confrontations about it but try

to be convincing, to say this is the Rebbe's ratzon, or try to get him to talk to a mashpia.

Rabbi Maidovnik: You have to find out the reason. If this is the only problem you can make a point of it and try to correct it. But sometimes it's an indication of other problems. For example, there are bachurim who go home and feel exempt of all rules when there is really no such concept as freedom. You need to come up with a positive solution. For example, the parents can make sure that there is delicious cake or other treats that he likes to eat which will make it easier for him to get up in the morning.

The father can arrange to learn with him in the morning if that is something the boy will enjoy, or any other activity that will be a reason for him to get up. A person needs a reason to get up and a parent can help to think of solutions along this line.

Sometimes it calls for taking a strong stand and there are times when it pays not to get involved. If it creates a tense situation and there doesn't seem to be solutions, it's preferable not to insist because you will only end up losing.

Rabbi Mendelsohn: If it's a bachur who is coming home for an off-Shabbos and in yeshiva he usually gets up on time and keeps the s'darim, it's okay for him to sleep in providing that he says Shma on time. But if it's a prevalent problem throughout the week or you're talking about sleeping way too much in the morning, this should not be ignored, but it shouldn't be done in a confrontational manner which will lead to worse things.

With all the good will in the world and awareness of the educational value of Shabbos, sometimes parents are tired after a week's work.

Rabbi Ginsberg: Indeed, throughout the week the body is



Rabbi Notik

busy but the neshama "waits" for Shabbos to get what it needs. R' Mendel would burst into tears when he spoke about those who go to sleep Shabbos afternoon - and in pajamas too ... He would talk about it like it was avoda zara, G-d forbid.

It happens sometimes that there is no choice but this shouldn't be a habit. Shabbos is not about the physical; it's designated for t'filla, for learning etc. True, the body is tired, but you need to try not to give in to it since this is the opposite of what Shabbos is about, according to Chassidus.

R' Mendel was one of the people who initiated the chadarim where girls, too, learn only limudei kodesh and in Yiddish. He once tested first grade girls and asked them what Hashem created on the first day, the second day etc. When he asked what Hashem created on Shabbos the girls answered: nothing.

R' Mendel asked, "What did Shabbos do wrong that nothing was created on it?"

One little girl said, "On Shabbos Hashem created k'dusha."

R' Mendel said that from this you can see the results of good chinuch.

Rabbi Maidovnik: Parents don't have the privilege of resting on Shabbos. The Rebbe sometimes ended a yechidus by saying, "The inner point is to educate children to be children who are yerei

Chazal say, “He who works on Erev Shabbos will eat on Shabbos” and this applies to the Shabbos table too. If you don’t prepare yourself by being rested or thinking about what you will talk about, “what will you eat on Shabbos?”

Shamayim,” for this is basic and essential and our Job with a capital J. If parents are tired, they should prepare ahead of time so they aren’t tired.

When we rest we sometimes wonder whether we aren’t wasting time. My father-in-law, R’ Shlomo Maidanchek a”h once said that he has one “holy” nap which he takes before going out to drive the train, since he has to be able to concentrate.

On Friday, the parents can arrange things so that each of them can rest for an hour so the Shabbos table will be run properly.

Rabbi Mendelsohn: Parents who need to relax can rest all Shabbos but if they know that the Shabbos table is the best opportunity to be with their children and to achieve many wonderful things, they will make sure not to be tired. The father should forego the late night farbrengen so that the Shabbos table will be run as it should.

Chazal say, “He who works on Erev Shabbos will eat on Shabbos” and this applies to the Shabbos table too. If you don’t prepare yourself by being rested or thinking about what you will talk about, “what will you eat on Shabbos?”

Rabbi Notik: Parents need to remember one thing. Just as you go to sleep late all week whether because of work or shiurim, you’ll go to sleep late Friday night because you have something very important to take care of. Everything depends on what degree of importance you assign it. When parents know that

the most important thing over the course of a week is the Shabbos meal, then they will want to do it right and will prepare accordingly.

How can you give your children the proper attention while also hosting guests?

Rabbi Maidovnik: Children are first and the guests are joining a Jewish family! There are parents who put the guests first while the children get shunted to the side. The parents entertain the guests and of course, the children leave the table. These parents are happy that they are being mekarev their guests but they are simultaneously losing their children. We see it happening. The message the child gets is it’s better to grow a ponytail because then his parents will give him attention.

If the guests are mekuravim, it’s always good to bring children that are the same ages, and if it’s a young couple who are visiting an older family, they need to learn what a normal family routine is like and the table should be run as it always is.

Naturally, you have to give some attention to your guest but constantly bear in mind that your children also need your attention. Each child should say something and get an appropriate response and compliment. Guests enjoy this too because they didn’t come to hear a lecture about Judaism and Chassidus. They came for the experience. You need to ensure that the experience is a pleasant one.

Rabbi Notik: I think it’s a good thing to have guests every week but this should not be at the expense of



Rabbi Mendelsohn

the children; it needs to be the children first and then the guests. For example, between courses each of the children picks a niggun or says a d’var Torah and only then do you focus on the guests. I don’t think the children will feel left out that way. As for the guests, they came to experience an authentic Shabbos meal and this is their opportunity to see how you interact with your children according to Torah and Chassidus.

Rabbi Mendelsohn: Not only don’t guests interfere with the Shabbos table routine, they help the children sit nicely and participate. Sometimes, having guests is best for everyone. One father told me that he tries to find guests for the Shabbos meals because then it’s not a *balagan*. You tell the kids that guests will be coming and who will surely want to hear their divrei Torah and stories. In my experience it’s a positive thing.

Rabbi Ginsberg: Guests are disturbing only on rare occasions. In most cases, the children enjoy it. You need to include the children in the hosting and encourage them to say divrei Torah in front of the guests so that hosting is part of their chinuch. If you have many guests and do so every Shabbos, once in a while you can have a family Shabbos without guests.

SHLOMO CHAIM: ONE OF A KIND

Compiled and edited by Zev Guttman

*Sixty-one years ago, on Lag B'Omer 5709/1949, the mashpia Rabbi Shlomo Chaim Kesselman a"h left France for Eretz Yisroel, as per the instruction of the Rebbe Rayatz. There he continued in his previous role as mashpia in yeshivos Tomchei T'mimim for the next 22 years, until his passing in 5731. * The following is a compilation of thoughts and stories, related by his talmidim and mushpaim. Presented for his yahrtzait on 19 Iyar.*

HE LIVED WITH THE REBBE'S HORA'A

In a private audience that R' Shlomo Chaim had with the Rebbe Rashab, he asked the Rebbe: "How can I demand of someone a certain inyan in Chassidus when I myself am not holding there?"

The Rebbe answered: "If you first demand it of yourself, and

demand it sincerely, you can also demand it of others."

R' Shlomo Chaim's students testify that he lived with this horaa throughout his life.

ISKAFIA

One of the T'mimim asked R' Shlomo Chaim for guidance in avoda. R' Shlomo Chaim said: "The

first thing is to act with *iskafia*, to force yourself to do a good practice. Iskafia doesn't have to be with food - that's easy, relatively speaking. Iskafia needs to be in those things that you feel you want, that you don't do. You need to "fast" not with food, but with "midrash" which is an acronym for *machshava, dibbur, r'ia, shmia* (thought, speech, sight and hearing).

When the talmid said he wasn't able to do such an iskafia, R' Shlomo Chaim retorted: "Then you won't be an oved."

His talmidim said that when he invited a talmid to his house he would serve him food and hurriedly leave the room so the bachur would feel comfortable and could eat without iskafia.

Someone pointed out to him that people wondered about how he could constantly demand iskafia, to which he said: "Fools! The Rebbe gave me this job!"

At a farbrengen he told the bachurim that at one of the farbrengens he attended by the Rebbe Rashab (or perhaps with his son, the Rebbe Rayatz), one of the people present wanted to leave in the middle. The Rebbe asked him why and he explained he was thirsty. The Rebbe said: "You don't need to give in to yourself."

Those participating at R' Shlomo Chaim's farbrengen noticed that he wasn't drinking from the tea he had in front of him because "you don't need to give in to yourself."

COME TOMORROW

At R' Shlomo Chaim's farbrengens, when he spoke about the importance of the avodas ha't'filla at length and with d'veikus, it touched the hearts of his listeners, and it often happened that some of them would ask him: Teach us the derech of avodas ha't'filla.

HIGHLIGHTS OF HIS LIFE



R' Shlomo Chaim was born in Zhitomir, Ukraine, on 20 Elul, 5654/1894. His father was R' Yom Tov. In the winter of 5669, when he was 14, he went to learn in yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Lubavitch and for the first year he learned in the yeshiva's division in the town of Shtzedrin. For six years he learned assiduously and did not even leave to visit his parents. In 5680/1920, he was in Rostov and present when the Rebbe Rashab passed away. The Rebbe

Rayatz appointed him mashpia in the yeshiva in Rostov. In 5681 the Rebbe Rayatz was sick and R' Shlomo Chaim and his friends gave months of their lives to the Rebbe. R' Shlomo Chaim gave half a year.

He married in 5682 with the Rebbe Rayatz as his shadchan. He was sent by the Rebbe to Polotsk where he was a mashpia. In 5687 he was arrested after he was discovered learning with his talmidim and he was sentenced to a year's hard labor. In 5689 he was arrested again and was sentenced to three years in exile in Poltava. When he completed serving his sentence he moved to Moscow. In 5702 he moved to Tashkent and was a mashpia for the refugees there. He left Russia in 5707/1947, and after some wandering he arrived in Paris, where he was mashpia in the yeshiva. Starting in 5708 he raised money for *maamad* to support the Rebbe's household and he was in touch with the Rebbe's son-in-law.

In 5709 he moved to Eretz Yisroel as the Rebbe Rayatz told him to do, "to accept the running of the Chassidus session in yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Tel Aviv and review Chassidus in public ... and to occasionally visit the refugees and their families in the settlement village and arrange for someone to learn with them and their children." In 5711 the yeshiva moved – as the Rebbe advised – from Tel Aviv to a building in the center of an orchard in Lud. In 5716 the yeshiva moved from the orchard to a building near the train station and in 5723 it settled in Kfar Chabad.

During 22 years of spiritual activity he had an impact on numerous talmidim, including many who became distinguished rabbanim, mashpiim and shluchim. He passed away on a Friday, 19 Iyar, 5731/1971 and was buried on Har HaZeisim facing the site of the Mikdash.

R' Shlomo Chaim would tell them to come back the next day for

he wanted to see who would still be inspired then.

HOW DO YOU PRAY?

When the young bachurim would ask him for guidance in davening, he would speak with such a chayus that it seemed he was talking about it for the first time, not repeating something he had said many times before. On Thursday nights the bachurim would consult with R' Shlomo Chaim about matters concerning avoda, especially avodas ha't'filla.

The following are some points that he made:

-To meditate upon Chassidus when already wearing t'fillin (as the Rebbe Rayatz writes).

-At first, the meditation should not take long, just a minute or two and no more. Only afterwards can you spend more time on it. The meditation needs to suit the individual and not be according to the clock.

-Avodas ha't'filla needs to be done in a consistent, orderly manner. It's an avoda which demands exertion of the body and the soul.

-The attitude towards davening needs to be serious, "one doesn't stand in prayer except with [lit. weightiness of the head, meaning in this context] seriousness," and with an internal desire to approach G-d, as it explains in Chassidus that "t'filla" is from the root meaning connection and joining, as in "one who joins an earthenware vessel."

A KISS

A young man arrived in yeshiva and went over to say hello to the mashpia. R' Shlomo Chaim welcomed him in an unusual manner – he got up and kissed him. Those standing nearby heard him say: "I heard that even after you married you still daven at length."

DIN TORAH

Once, one of the T'mimim

I'LL NEVER FORGET WHAT YOU DID

R' Avrohom Chanoch Glitzenstein of Yerushalayim related:

For the “grand” Yud Shevat 5730, which marked twenty years of the Rebbe’s nesius, a large group of us went to the Rebbe from Eretz Yisroel. We arrived on Erev Yud Shevat, on a Thursday, and the Rebbe was at the Ohel. When he returned, the members of the local vaad (including Rabbi Levitin, Rabbi Simpson etc.) went in to write the “Torah of Moshiach,” and we were supposed to follow them as the vaad from Eretz Yisroel.

While the members of the local vaad were with the Rebbe and we were standing in *Gan Eden HaTachton*, I noticed R' Shlomo Chaim standing on the side. Although he wasn't part of the vaad, he had come together with us. While waiting I watched him and I saw how eager he was to see the Rebbe. Today we speak a lot about the desire we all have to see the Rebbe already, but I don't recall ever seeing such yearning as I saw on his face. I thought to myself, here is the celebrated mashpia, the oved and maskil, standing here in utter bittul with the desire to the see the Rebbe.

Right before we entered, I decided to make a move. I gave him some of the forms with signatures that I had with me, which I had brought from Eretz Yisroel. Now he too could enter.

I'll never forget what he told me when we left the Rebbe's room. He said: “I will never forget what you did, in this world and the next.”

I don't recall ever seeing such yearning as I saw on his face. I thought to myself, here is the celebrated mashpia, the oved and maskil, standing here in utter bittul with the desire to the see the Rebbe.

showed up at yeshiva a few days late. When R' Shlomo Chaim asked him for an explanation the talmid said that his family's financial state was poor and his parents had asked him to stay on a bit to help out.

When R' Shlomo Chaim heard this he got up and declared: “No way! Call them to a din Torah!”

That is how he implanted in the heart of his talmid that his natural place is in yeshiva and nothing should keep him away. He also arranged, without the talmid knowing that it came from him, for one of the other bachurim to learn Chassidus with him and strengthen

his Chassidishe outlook on the world.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN “HE'ARA” AND “ETZEM”

During a shiur, R' Shlomo Chaim told a story to illustrate the difference between *he'ara* [lit. luminescence, i.e. external manifestation] and *etzem* [essence]:

My twins, Sholom Dovber and Zev Wolf turned three on Lag B'Omer, 5790/1930. I was in exile in Poltava and my family sent me two curls from the heads of the

children whom I hadn't seen in a year. I had received pictures of them before, which gave me great pleasure, but when I received the cuttings from their *upsheren* I was far more happy.

You would think that in the picture, where I could see the faces of the children and what they look like, that would be greater than just hair, but the reason I was happier with the hair is because hair is from the *etzem* of the children while the picture is merely a *he'ara*.

LEARNING FROM PLANES

R' Shlomo Chaim would say that in our day and age where there are new scientific discoveries, we can learn a lesson in avodas Hashem. from the speed at which planes fly:

Years ago, travel took weeks and even months, but now one boards a plane and arrives halfway across the globe mere hours later. By the same token, behaviors that took years of avoda can now be attained more quickly. So too with t'filla, with some lengthiness – but really taking it to heart – today, you can attain everything they achieved in Lubavitch by davening all day.

TRAVELING TO THE REBBE

R' Shlomo Chaim spoke with his talmidim a lot about the importance of properly preparing before going to the Rebbe. This is because the Rebbe himself had written to him a few letters on this topic. Some thought that R' Shlomo Chaim delayed their trip because he was lacking *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe, heaven forbid, but he continued this practice and did not disclose that it was because the Rebbe had given him instructions.

In the summer of 1951, after the Rebbe officially accepted the

THE FINAL REFUA BEFORE MOSHIACH COMES

An excerpt from the diary of Yisroel Dubraskin Hy"l, who took notes at a Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen with R' Shlomo Chaim in 5711.

B"H

The first night of Chanuka

The night of 19 Kislev, R' Shlomo Chaim, the mashpia from Tel Aviv came to us with two bachurim. The farbrengen lasted till late at night but it wasn't as it should have been because most of the bachurim left in the middle for Safraya [=Kfar Chabad] and ... came in drunk and made a big commotion.

Some points from what he said:

1- Yud-Tes Kislev is Rosh HaShana for Chassidus. On Rosh HaShana, the chayus is drawn down and if so, this is the case for Yud-Tes Kislev as well. We need to understand how was this chayus brought down prior to the year 5559/1798 (the year the Alter Rebbe was freed from prison)? The inyan is that the chayus which is drawn down on Yud-Tes Kislev is - that when a Jew learns G-dly matters with the apprehension of human intellect, a chapter of Tanya, a portion of Likkutei Torah, and the like, he becomes connected thereby with G-dliness and this was not the case before [the arrest and release from jail in Petersburg]. Until that time, he was connected to G-dliness by learning Toras HaNigleh with constant hiskashrus with Hashem. Like the story of R' Shmuel Nikolsberger who instructed the Chozeh to constantly stand next to him and remind him about this hiskashrus [to Hashem]. Or they connected with G-dliness by speaking about matters concerning G-dliness, Kabbala and Chassidus without understanding and grasp,

which is the way things are now with Polish Chassidim. And that is how it was with the Alter Rebbe until 5559, that he would say brief teachings that were not brought into the language of intellectual comprehension. For example: "Shma Yisroel Hashem Elokeinu, Hashem echad" – the word "echad" with a big dalet like a big ax; we need to bang the "echad" into our head. They also relate that once, the Alter Rebbe said that neshamos are sourced in Atzilus. A Chassid didn't hear him well and thought the Alter Rebbe said "potchailles" (a scarf) and was very excited by this thought. But from the year 5559 he began publicizing his teachings with lengthy, understandable explanations and by learning them, one can become connected with G-dliness. It is for this inyan that Yud-Tes Kislev is Rosh HaShana.

2- Chassidus did not innovate any mitzva and did not create any new Torah. It put life into the fulfillment of mitzvos so that a mitzva is done with hiddur and love. R' Velvel Vilenker would say that a Misnaged is like a portrait that does not change - today is like yesterday and tomorrow is like today, but a Chassid is a living person! What is a living body? It's the same body like that of a dead man r"l but he moves. That's the difference between fulfilling mitzvos with Chassidus and without Chassidus.

3- Chassidus is the final cure for the Jewish people to heal the soul and prepare for the Geula through Moshiach. From generation to generation lower souls descend and therefore we need renewed strength in the fulfillment of mitzvos. That is why there was the revelation of Kabbala and then Toras ha'Mussar, but the strongest cure, after which there won't be another cure until Moshiach comes, is Toras Chassidus Chabad.

nesius, R' Shlomo Chaim wanted to go to the Rebbe for Rosh HaShana but the Rebbe answered him: "How can you leave your flock?"

When someone came to the yeshiva who had become distant from Judaism due to the exigencies of the time, after R' Shlomo Chaim spoke to him about the need to do mitzvos and it seemed that the man was convinced, he immediately began to speak to him about going to the Rebbe.

R' Shlomo Chaim would say: "To see the Rebbe is more important than a revelation of

R' Shlomo Chaim would say: "To see the Rebbe is more important than a revelation of Eliyahu, and the proof is that it is brought in s'farim that Eliyahu would stand before the Baal Shem Tov like a servant before his master."

Eliyahu, and the proof is that it is brought in s'farim that Eliyahu would stand before the Baal Shem Tov like a servant before his

master."

In a yechidus that R' Benzion Shemtov a"h had with the Rebbe on the eve of 17 Cheshvan, 5727, the



The Rebbe giving R' Shlomo Chaim a bottle of mashke

Rebbe said: "A military chaplain visited me after being at a farbrengen with R' Shlomo Chaim and he said that it inspired him to come here."

IT CAN'T BE OTHERWISE!

His talmid R' Moshe Orenstein, mashpia in yeshivas Chabad in Tzfas, relates:

The night of Yud-Tes Kislev 5730, R' Shlomo Chaim farbrenged and someone complained about those who speak about the identity of Moshiach even when not among fellow Chassidim. R' Shlomo Chaim responded: "What? What? Can it be someone else? Of course it's him! Is there anybody else?"

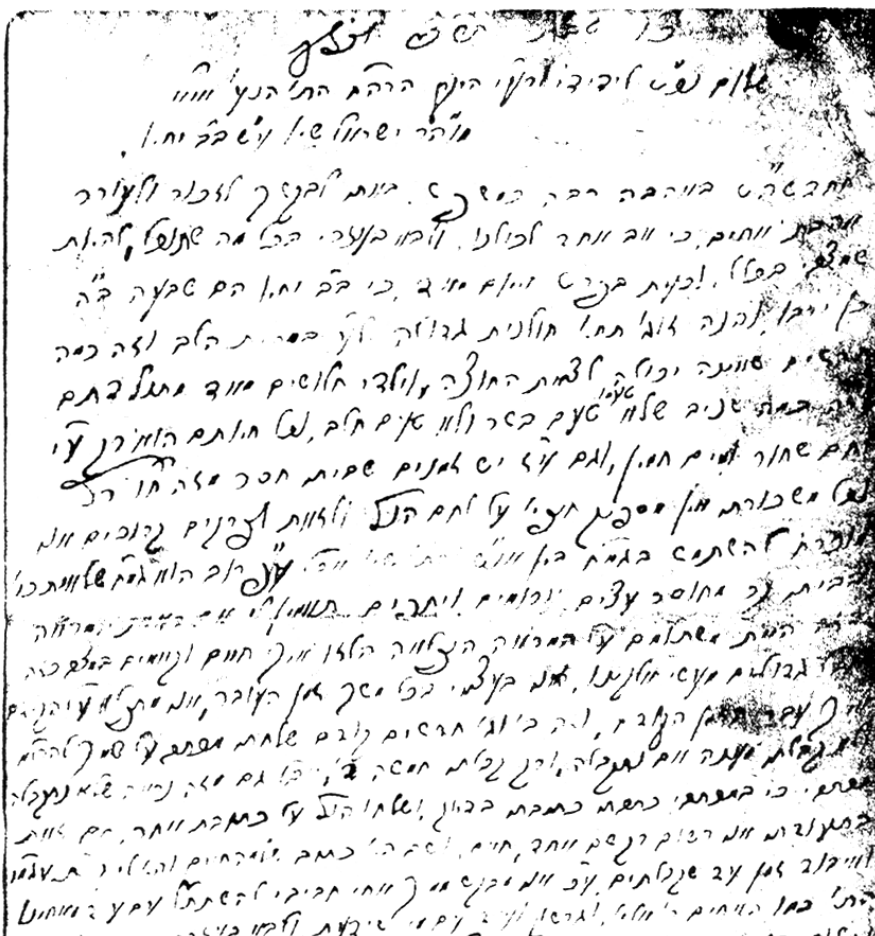
R' Shlomo Chaim was enthusiastically involved in inyanei Moshiach. He lived with the awareness that Moshiach's hisgalus is imminent and we need to prepare to properly greet him. His children related that while still in Russia, when they were little children, their father would talk to them a lot about the need to daily anticipate Moshiach's coming.

CHASSIDUS AND HISKASHRUS

R' Shlomo Chaim would often say that there is "Chassidus" and "hiskashrus." He explained:

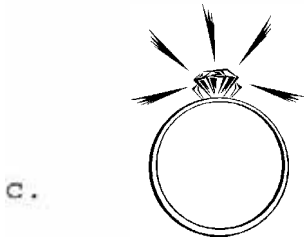
"If you found someone in a forest with a bag full of s'farim on Chassidus - that is still not a Chassid, for Chassidus must go together with hiskashrus. To be a Chassid means you must go to the Rebbe."

"In Lubavitch we would learn the Rebbe [Rashab]'s Chassidus," he would say, emphasizing the need for Chassidim in every generation to learn the maamarim of the current Rebbe.



A letter written by R' Shlomo Chaim Kesselman in 1934 in which he describes his years of suffering in Russia: "My children ... it is several years now that they have not tasted meat and milk and they subsist only on black bread and warm water and there are times when my house lacks even that."

QUIZ



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A MOROCCAN SHIDDUCH

By Menachem Shaked

Even with all the miracle stories involving the Igros Kodesh, there are still some that will amaze even the less excitable ones among us. The story of Dovid Akuka of Marrakesh, Morocco is one such story.

Dovid is a religious man who attended yeshivos in Eretz Yisroel and France. He is happily married and takes every opportunity to publicize his amazing shidduch story and how he came to marry Veronica, a graduate of Beis Rivka in Casablanca.

PROVIDENTIAL ENCOUNTER

Two years ago, when I was 34, there was no shidduch on the horizon despite many efforts and numerous prayers, and I nearly gave up. There were also personal-spiritual hardships because in our small community, our Rav-Shochet-Dayan-Posek is an older man and it's hard for him to look after the young people. Since I am in between, neither young (which is why I felt so stressed about doing a shidduch) nor old, I strongly felt the need for someone to look out for us.

I prayed to Hashem that He send, in addition to a shidduch for me, someone to relate to and inspire us. I couldn't define precisely what we were lacking but we knew something was missing.

One summer day towards the end of 5769, my (second) prayer was answered. A young Chabad family, Rabbi Menachem Mendel and Chani Arad, came to check out the area, to meet people and see what could be done with tourists before they opened a Chabad house in Marrakesh.

During their three week stay, they managed to endear themselves to the community. They gave shiurim and worked with the tourists, organizing a Shabbaton with fifty participants. I personally connected with R' Arad and when I told him that I wanted a bracha for a shidduch, he said, "Nu, we have a Rebbe. Let's write to the Rebbe and everything will be okay."

It was funny to hear this from a Chabadnik who knew good and well what happened to the Rebbe 16 years ago and we all smiled. But R' Arad remained unperturbed and he explained that the Rebbe is the Rosh B'nei Yisroel, the Nasi HaDor and the Navi HaDor and he feels the needs of every Jew in every place. When the Rebbe saw that there is a place called Marrakesh and there are Jews there, he sent them a shliach to help them.

Then he told us about the Igros Kodesh of the Rebbe through which thousands of Jews receive answers and brachos. He said that he had never thought he would ever go to

Morocco and then the Rebbe told him, through the Igros Kodesh, to go on shlichus there.

WAITING FOR GEULA IN MOROCCO

I was very excited because that is precisely what I had davened for, that Hashem send us someone. I asked R' Arad to write a request for a bracha for a shidduch for me and he invited me to his house so I could write it myself.

I'll never forget that meeting. On my way to his house I told him that in Morocco, most of the 3000 or so Jews are older people, which is why all my efforts to find a shidduch had failed. He recommended that I travel to New York, France, or Eretz Yisroel where there are many schools for religious girls who are looking for a shidduch.

The idea sounded tempting, but I knew that if I left my parents it would be very hard for them. The kosher hotel they ran had fallen on hard times and they were relying on me, as the manager there, to help resolve the debts.

At R' Arad's suggestion, I wrote out all the details of my question and when we opened the volume together and read the letter, he got very excited. He said that although he got clear answers to come on shlichus, this answer was very special. It took him some time to calm down.

In the letter the Rebbe wrote:

Your reasoning about looking for a shidduch specifically in Morocco is correct and you should not hurry to go to our Holy Land, may it be built and established by Moshiach Tzidkeinu. One of the 13 Principles of Faith is the belief in the coming of Moshiach that we believe each day that he will come and if thousands and tens of thousands of Jews are waiting and anticipating his arrival outside of Eretz Yisroel, you too can be

included with those G-d fearing people who serve Him outside of Israel by learning Torah and fulfilling mitzvos punctiliously. (Igros Kodesh vol. 11 p. 170)

I decided to remain in Morocco and continue to look for a shidduch, confident that Hashem would help!

IT'S THE REBBE'S MIRACLE

Three weeks went by and the Arad couple returned to Eretz Yisroel. The truth is that I didn't believe they would really come back to Morocco but when they arrived before Yom Kippur and said they had moved to Morocco in order to be the Rebbe's shluchim, I was thrilled. We arranged to learn together and I attended the shiurim that were given to the community at large and of course I attended the gatherings at the new Chabad house of Marrakesh.

R' Arad continues the story:

I continued to encourage Dovid not to worry. If the Rebbe gave his bracha then it would all work out just fine. But when days, weeks, and months passed and he still hadn't found his shidduch, his father asked me to write to the Rebbe again. Since I was busy that day, I called my house and asked my wife to write for me and to tell me the Rebbe's answer over the phone.

Well, when my wife wrote and opened a volume of Igros Kodesh, she opened to the same letter we had opened to months before. I was amazed, and assured Dovid and his father, "It's just a matter of time; soon we will be able to write to the Rebbe to tell him that you get a mazal tov!"

That was on a Monday in the week following Yud-Tes Kislev. Friday night after the davening Dovid came over to me and said he wanted to talk to me.

This was not the most opportune time to sit down to a conversation. I



"I was a witness at Dovid's wedding"

"Nu, we have a Rebbe. Let's write to the Rebbe and everything will be okay." It was funny to hear this from a Chabadnik who knew good and well what happened to the Rebbe 16 years ago and we all smiled. But R' Arad remained unperturbed.

needed to be available to bless each person with a hearty "Shabbat Shalom," and attentive not to lose the tourists and strangers who can grow bored by the lengthy blessing ceremony and leave the shul before they are invited to a Shabbos meal at the Chabad house (keep in mind that in a Moroccan shul people are exceedingly careful not to speak during the davening).

I asked Dovid to wait a few

minutes while I greeted the congregants and invited a couple from England to the Shabbos meal. When I got back to Dovid he said to me, almost conspiratorially, "Come with me. I want to show you something."

"But Dovid," I remonstrated. "I can't go with you. I have guests that I have to take home." But Dovid insisted that I go with him. Having no choice, I told the guests where

my apartment was and asked them to go up, and to say that they were our guests and that I would be coming soon.

I went with Dovid and was very curious about what he wanted to show me. We finally got to his parents' house (which I had never visited before). The table was set for Shabbos and I was brought to the living room where other family and friends were waiting. Dovid got everyone's attention and exclaimed, "It's the Rebbe's miracle!" He had taken a place next to a young woman, whose beaming smile confirmed that she was obviously his fiancée.

"And now, please tell everybody how the miracle happened," he turned to me and requested.

I stood up, feeling as moved as a father marrying off his son, and told about the Rebbe's amazing answer.

The people couldn't get over it and began singing "Yechi Adoneinu."

When I asked Dovid how the miracle occurred, he said: "I went to Casablanca and asked a friend if he knew of a shidduch for me. He said he didn't and I expressed my disappointment that yet another attempt had come to naught. Suddenly, a fellow happened by and said, 'Excuse me, but I heard your conversation and I have a suggestion for you.' That's how I met Veronica, a frum woman who graduated Beis Rivka of Casablanca."

WHOEVER PRAYS FOR HIS FELLOW

The joyous wedding took place, appropriately, in Adar. I was asked to be witness at the chuppa and I also read the Rebbe's letter that he sent on the occasion of a wedding.

At the huge Purim party that we had last year, we also had Sheva Brachos for them.

Interestingly, back when I was going to write to the Rebbe there was another bachelor by the name of Dovid Laotini who lives in Casablanca and is close with Rabbi Sholom Eidelman, the veteran shliach to Morocco who works in Marrakesh. Before opening to the Rebbe's answers I had told both of them that since Chazal say "Whoever prays for his fellow and he needs the same thing, he will be answered first," when they davened for a shidduch, they should daven for each other.

They decided to do so and we waited for another miracle, for Dovid Laotini to get married too. In the days preceding Purim of this year, Dovid Laotini told me that he gets a mazal tov!



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[Continued from pg. 33]

capable of producing seventeen thousand atomic warheads. The agreement stipulates that experts from the two countries will oversee each side of the process. Mr. Medvedev also informed Mr. Obama that his country would close its secret reactor for producing plutonium.

In an official announcement, the Administration stated that Russian President Dmitry A. Medvedev, had informed President Obama that his country would close its secret reactor, which has produced plutonium for nuclear weapons over the past fifty-two years. "This is an important step forward, demonstrating the leadership that Russia is assuming on the issue of nuclear security and adding momentum to our joint worldwide efforts," Obama said in response.

The Rebbe's sicha cited above continues, "One of the promises of the True and Complete Redemption through Moshiach Tzidkeinu is connected to the conduct of the nations of the world: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up swords against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

"Furthermore, this will occur through the activity of Moshiach

Tzidkeinu himself, as stated at the beginning of the verse, "He will judge among the nations and reprove many peoples" ("The judge is Melech HaMoshiach... for he is the master of all the peoples, and he reproves them; he says to whoever in whom is found sin, let the crooked be made straight... and because of this there will not be war between one nation and another because he will make peace between them, and they will not need weapons of war, and they will beat them to make of them utensils for working the ground"). For "At the end of days the mount of the House of G-d will be mended... and all the nations will flow to it... and they will say let us go up to the mount of G-d, to the House of the G-d of Yaakov and learn from his way and go in his paths, because Torah goes forth from Tziyon and the word of G-d from Yerushalayim," and "the one who will teach them is Melech HaMoshiach, about whom it is said, and he will judge."

"The heads of the nations of the world are currently resolving and announcing the reduction and elimination of weapons of destruction and an expansion of programs that provide sustenance for their countries and the world as a whole. This is the content of the promise that "they shall beat

their swords into plowshares", breaking weapons of war to make the vessels for working the ground, "ground from which comes bread". This is a clear sign concerning the beginning of the fulfillment of this promise of the True and Complete Redemption through Moshiach Tzidkeinu.

"A further clarification: Since we find ourselves in the "highest time" of the coming of our Righteous Moshiach, "Behold he (Melech HaMoshiach) comes," we already see (an example) and the beginning of the effect of Melech HaMoshiach on the nations - "and he judges between the nations and reproves many peoples and they shall beat their swords to plowshares..."

Essentially, G-d is inspiring the rulers of the world ("the heart of kings and princes is in the hand of G-d") to resolve and announce together concerning the position and situation of "they shall beat their swords into plowshares."

And when all these countries – the United States, Russia, Canada, the Ukraine, Mexico, South Africa, Chile – officially announce the immediate reduction of the number of nuclear weapons in their possession or giving up their aspirations in the field – can there be a greater example of an immediate sign of Redemption than that?!

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NATIONS AGREE TO NIX THE NUKES

A Sign of the Times

By Menachem Ben-Eliezer

Translated By Michael Leib Dobry

The United States and Russia have recently agreed to dispose of 68 tons of plutonium, enough to produce thousands of nuclear warheads. Meanwhile delegates from 46 countries at the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington have agreed to take action against nuclear proliferation. When all this started in 1992, the Rebbe highlighted it as the work of Moshiach. The same is true now.

At the Washington Convention Center, U.S. President Obama stood on the platform and gave a handshake of greeting to the representatives of forty-six

delegations from the nations of the world, among them twenty-eight (the gematria of “Yechi”) heads of state, who came to discuss the subject of nuclear arms and their

dismantling. At the festive dinner held to open the conference, as with the dozens of meetings during those days, the American Chief Executive stressed the importance of mobilizing the international community in the struggle to prevent terrorist organizations from obtaining nuclear weapons.

Last month, Washington, D.C. hosted forty-six delegations from the four corners of the earth, including major world powers such as Russia, France, Germany, and China, in response to an invitation from the President of the United States of America, Barack Hussein Obama, to participate in a global nuclear security summit with the primary objectives of limiting the overall level of nuclear weapons in the world and compelling Iran to forego its nuclear aspirations.

The world as a whole embraced this conference as a meaningful statement, which brings to mind





the holy words of the Rebbe M"HM from the sicha of Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim, 5752, about a similar event:

The heads of the nations of the world are currently resolving and announcing the reduction and elimination of weapons of destruction and an expansion of programs that provide sustenance for the country and the world as a whole. This is the content of the promise that "they shall beat their swords into plowshares", breaking weapons of war to make the vessels for working the ground, "ground from which comes bread". This is a clear sign concerning the beginning of the fulfillment of this promise of the True and Complete Redemption through Moshiach Tzidkeinu.

Though they didn't achieve all the stated objectives of the conference, the very fact that there was such a worldwide conference

on the subject of limiting weapons of destruction represents a most momentous declaration. And some important objectives were achieved – more on that later.

As Chassidim, we know that when such an historic event takes place, it's impossible to write it off as having nothing to do with us.

It is known that all the events in the world are by Divine Providence, and they provide a lesson and instruction in man's service to his Maker, and this is most definitely true in relation to the overall and main events connected with the large, important, and influential countries and the leadership of the whole world.

The Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, states in the clearest manner possible **"that even the lesson and instruction from these events is a general and primary matter in man's service to his**

Maker."

In that sicha, the Rebbe relates to what were then current events, as follows:

First of all, it occurred that on the eve of this Shabbos, the heads of the great and important countries of the world, and at their head the leaders of the two superpowers, convened together. They resolved and announced a new era in the relationship between the countries of the world. The status of war between the nations of the world was nullified, to be expressed in a reduction and elimination of weapons of destruction until there is peace and unity, a working partnership and strong cooperation between nations for the good of all mankind.

Prior to this event (by Divine Providence) the President of this country declared to all his people... that he would announce and publicize a reduction and elimination of weapons of destruction, utilizing the money that was not spent to procure weapons to expand economic programs that provide for the citizenry. The announcement was confirmed by Congress, wherein the laws of the country are established and which have the force of law according to Torah ("the law of the government is the law").

One has to consider the lesson as well as the details of the event - its place and time, including its connection to the contents of the time in the Torah, the Parsha of the week, as will be explained. The lesson of this event is a general and fundamental aspect of the Divine service of the Jewish people ("our work and Divine service while in exile") - to bring the coming of Moshiach...

It seems that this conference represented the greatest international pressure ever applied by the nations of the world on Iran in response to its efforts to develop nuclear weapons.

WASHINGTON: 28 HEADS OF STATE

One after another, the formal jets of the world's heads of state — kings, presidents, prime ministers, foreign secretaries, and other leading diplomats — landed at the official Washington airport. Whole sections of the American capital were closed off by armed defense forces to ensure the protection of these distinguished personages who came en masse to the center of power in the United States.

When the President of the United States extends an invitation, it's impossible to say no, and the president invited the leaders of the world's most important countries. Even the president of the People's Republic of China, Hu Jintao, made the trip to Washington.

Other leading participants in the summit included French president Nicolas Sarkozy, German chancellor Angela Merkel, Pakistani prime minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani, his Indian counterpart Manmohan Singh, the prime minister of Kazakhstan, the president of South Africa, and the president of Brazil.

In his sicha from 5752, the Rebbe spoke about **“overall and main events connected with the large, important, and influential countries and the leadership of the whole world”**, and added that **“among them are found the great majority of the Jewish People in the time of exile”**. This surely applied last month, when the heads of the world's leading nations

participated in the conference discussions.

The purpose of the Nuclear Security Summit was to outline future milestones regarding international policy in connection with nuclear weaponry, setting as its primary goal to reduce the risk of atomic materials falling into the hands of terrorist organizations. As a result, the Chief Executive of the United States urged the forty-six nations participating in the conference to destroy their unusable stockpiles and convert the material to a level in which it cannot be used for atomic bombs.

It seems that this conference represented the greatest international pressure ever applied by the nations of the world on Iran in response to its efforts to develop nuclear weapons.

At the start of the summit's morning discussion, a senior White House aide stated that criminal organizations are trying to get their hands on a nuclear bomb in order to sell it to terrorists. Then the American president took the stage. Obama stated that “it is increasingly clear that the danger of nuclear terrorism is one of the greatest threats to global security — to our collective security.... So today is an opportunity not simply to talk, but to act. Not simply to make pledges, but to make real progress on the security of our people.”

The delegates listened intently to the president's speech. Particular attention was given when he said that “the risk of a nuclear confrontation between

nations has gone down, but the risk of nuclear attack has gone up.” Mr. Obama lessened the importance of the threat posed by non-compliant nations such as Iran, as opposed to those posed by terrorist organizations. “Just the smallest amount of plutonium — about the size of an apple — could kill and injure hundreds of thousands of innocent people,” the president said. “Terrorist networks such as al Qaeda have tried to acquire the material for a nuclear weapon, and if they ever succeeded, they would surely use it,” he emphasized further. “If there was ever a detonation in New York City, or London, or Johannesburg, the ramifications economically, politically and from a security perspective would be devastating. I believe strongly that the problems of the 21st century cannot be solved by any one nation acting in isolation. They must be solved by all of us coming together.”

The president added that there are dozens of nations throughout the world possessing nuclear material, and each of these countries must take steps to protect these materials to ensure that they do not fall into the hands of terrorist organizations.

The subject of protecting nuclear installations had already been transformed into a front-burner issue with the collapse of the Soviet Union, and it became more and more relevant as the tireless efforts of terrorist organizations to acquire nuclear weapons intensified, and their chances of success grew more realistic. This is the crowning principle of the Obama Administration's policy, as it presented a nuclear strategy stipulating that there would be no nuclear attack in response to conventional means of warfare.

The U.S. President also noted

that the nuclear security summit in Washington is only the beginning of a framework of international efforts that his Administration will lead to reduce the nuclear threat. Obama stated that his South Korean counterpart, Lee Myung-bak, had agreed to host the second summit on nuclear security in his country in two years' time.

PRAGUE: A NEW TREATY FOR THE REDUCTION OF NUCLEAR STOCKPILES

The groundwork for this conference was laid the week before with the signing of a new agreement between Russia and the United States.

Nineteen years after George H.W. Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev, the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union during the era of perestroika, signed an agreement on nuclear arms reduction, a further effort began last month to reduce the world's nuclear weapons supply. The President of the United States, Barack Obama, landed that weekend in Prague, capital of the Czech Republic, where he held an historic meeting with his Russian counterpart, Dmitry A. Medvedev, culminating in the signing of a new treaty on the reduction of the nuclear stockpiles of these two nations. This agreement will decrease by one-third the number of nuclear warheads possessed by Russia and the United States within seven years.

During the signing ceremony for this new nuclear reduction treaty, the Russian president said with some emotion, "The nuclear treaty forges a promise for a more secure world."

In his opening statement, President Obama said, "One year



U.S. President Barack Obama at his meeting with Russian President Dmitry A. Medvedev last month

The governments of the United States and Russia agreed to dispose of sixty-eight tons of plutonium, capable of producing seventeen thousand atomic warheads. The agreement stipulates that experts from the two countries will oversee each side of the process. Mr. Medvedev also informed Mr. Obama that his country would close its secret reactor for producing plutonium.

ago this week, I came here to Prague and gave a speech outlining America's comprehensive commitment to stopping the spread of nuclear weapons and seeking the ultimate goal of a world without them. I said then... that this is a long-term goal, one that may not even be achieved in my lifetime...so it's very gratifying to be back in Prague today." Obama added that the occasion symbolized "an important milestone for nuclear security and non-proliferation, and for U.S.-

Russia relations... It enables both sides the flexibility to protect our security, as well as America's unwavering commitment to the security of our European allies."

Medvedev then said, "I'd like to thank my colleague, the President of the United States of America, for the successful cooperation in this very complex matter, and for the reasonable compromises that have been achieved, thanks to the work of our two teams. We thank them for their excellent work... I believe that this signature will open

a new page for cooperation between our two countries — among our countries — and will create safer conditions for life here and throughout the world.”

As mentioned earlier, the document signed by Messrs. Obama and Medvedev obligates the two sides to reduce their destructive arsenals by one-third. The number of nuclear warheads will be cut to 1550, the amount of available missile launchers from land and sea will be reduced to eight hundred, and nuclear bombers will be cut to just seventy in number. This an agreement will replace the START Treaty signed in 5751 by George H.W. Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev.

THE OBJECTIVE: THE REMOVAL OF DANGEROUS ATOMIC MATERIALS WITHIN FOUR YEARS

While the events surrounding the signing of this nuclear agreement are important on their own merit, they most definitely serve as a backdrop to the summit held last month in Washington, which set for itself an unprecedented goal: the removal of all dangerous nuclear material or guaranteeing their safety within a period of four years.

We’re not talking about an American declaration or an agreement with one nation. This is an endeavor that involves most of the countries of the world. Participating in the summit were also leaders of nations whose nuclear policy is shrouded in controversy, such as Pakistani prime minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani, and his Indian counterpart Manmohan Singh. These two countries are considered close allies of the United States, but they have maintained the balance of

terror in Asia for many long years. Pakistan is not only an Islamic nuclear world power, it’s also an unstable country and one of the most prominent sources of nuclear technology in the world. And there’s a constant threat of its nuclear program falling into hostile hands.

Inviting so many world leaders and foreign representatives presents quite a dramatic picture. This was not a conference of speeches, rather one of practical steps.

This was a rare opportunity for Obama to discuss matters directly with other heads of state and senior diplomats to mobilize them for the main objective. “The United States can’t act alone in dealing with the nuclear threat,” the White House spokesman explained in a special pre-summit briefing, emphasizing the need for overall agreement on the importance of this issue.

While the threat of nuclear terror was the central issue of the summit, government sources in Washington said that the Iranian issue would also be raised at every meeting that President Obama conducted at the conference. Acting National Security Council Chief of Staff Denis McDonough even told the American media that the Administration will not compromise on the wording of the communiqué on the issue of the United Nations in order to reach an agreement. “Our interests are to ensure that Iran will not have nuclear weapons.”

During the Nuclear Security Summit, the President of the United States tried to convince the nations of the world — some friendly, some not — to join him on his journey to fulfill his vision. We’re talking about the biggest and most important conference on this issue in history.

Alongside those countries that

came to participate in the conference primarily on a symbolic basis, expressing their support for Obama’s nuclear policy and his far-reaching efforts to limit the nuclear threat, there were many who came with a list of their own demands. The presence of the president of the People’s Republic of China, Hu Jintao, was considered an important step in the efforts to convince China to support sanctions against Iran. However, he apparently agreed to participate in the summit on the condition that the United States would soften its criticism of China’s economic policy and withhold any condemnation of how it exploits its currency.

The Administration expressed hope that these measures would enable the visiting heads of state to focus on the main subject: providing adequate security at nuclear installations with uranium and plutonium in an attempt to prevent terror organizations from gaining access to atomic weapons and technology. This was a rare opportunity for President Obama to convince world leaders of the serious threat posed by nuclear terror and to pressure them to sign agreements on the reduction and protection of nuclear materials in their possession.

CHILE: GIVING UP ALL ITS PLUTONIUM AND URANIUM

On Monday, the day before the opening of the conference, Obama met privately with several of his honored guests — the prime minister of India, the prime minister of Kazakhstan, the president of South Africa, and the prime minister of Pakistan. The most widely covered event was on Monday night, when an official welcome was prepared for each of the delegations, along with a

festive dinner highlighted by a speech on nuclear terror by the President of the United States. In the formal atmosphere and raising his glass in a toast, Obama tried to convince those present, including some skeptics, regarding the serious threat posed by nuclear terror.

The next day, Tuesday, behind closed doors and far from the lens of the camera, serious discussions were held. That morning, the sides spoke about the steps that the various countries were being asked to take – in both practical and legal terms – in order to safeguard the material that can be used to make nuclear weapons.

Chile and several other countries announced their intention to relinquish the plutonium and uranium in their possession to set an example for other nations to follow.

Afterwards, there was a discussion of the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency in the process, and the way that it will provide practical assistance and guidance to these nations, ensuring that their plutonium and uranium supplies will be used for peaceful purposes. The third round of discussions that day concentrated on international activities to enforce implementations of decisions made by the United Nations Security Council on the issue of atomic energy. At this point, the nuclear threats posed by Iran and North Korea, nations that were not invited to the summit, entered the picture.

SUCCESS: A LIST OF THE WORLD'S NATIONS DECLARE AN END TO THEIR NUCLEAR PROGRAM

Although some felt that the

summit was merely ceremonial, but in practical terms, the historic signing of the new treaty between Russia and the United States on limiting nuclear stockpiles proved that there was more to it than a lot of talk.

Even before the official opening of the summit, Obama achieved an important measure of success with the Ukraine's announcement that it would forego its rich uranium deposits. Then, the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. Stephen Harper, declared that his country would transfer the balance of its nuclear fuel to the United States, as part of the international effort to ensure the safety of the nuclear reserves.

The president also gave positive recognition to South Africa for giving up its nuclear program.

Another achievement was marked down towards the end of the conference, when the United

States, Canada, and Mexico signed a new nuclear accord. According to this agreement, the three countries will cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency for the purpose of removing the rich uranium deposits from Mexico. The White House noted that this will reduce the chance that these dangerous materials will fall into the hands of terrorists.

However, it stands to reason that the climax of the conference could definitely be expressed by the far-reaching agreement signed by the world's two leading superpowers, calling for the destruction of the large plutonium stockpiles by 5778. The governments of the United States and Russia agreed to dispose of sixty-eight tons of plutonium,

[Continued on pg. 27]

THE REAL REASON BEHIND THE SIGNED AGREEMENT

“And they shall beat their swords into plowshares” is an inherent concept that is also essential according to human intellect (“Mishpatim”), which requires the world to exist according to justice and honesty through the rejection of war, which brings ruin and destruction ^{r”l}, leading to the breaking of the weapons of war (“And they shall beat their swords”) and turning them into useful tools for settling the world (“plowshares”).

Nevertheless, throughout all the generations, numerous wars have been conducted among the nations of the world, causing tremendous ruin and destruction – in contrast to what is essential according to human intellect!

We therefore must say that the real reason for this is the recognition in recent times of the aspiration to finish and conclude the era of wars in the world, and the start of a new era of world existence according to justice and honesty, peace and unity, as categorically emphasized in the decision and proclamation of the world's leaders this Erev Shabbos, which is (not only according to the obligation of human intellect (“Mishpatim”), as the obligation of human intellect was also in all the preceding generations, but also and primarily) because we are approaching the time about which the Torah proclaimed, “And they shall beat their swords into plowshares”.

(Sicha, Parshas Mishpatim 5752)

MITZVA MASCOTS

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelewitz
Shliach, Beit Shaan

“Whatever moved you and made you into a Chassid, tell your mekurav so he too will be moved and uplifted and become a Chassid.”

HAVE YOU HEARD OF THE CHASSIDISHE 9TH OF MAY?

In Beit Shaan, as in hundreds of other locations around the world, Russian army veterans celebrate the victory over the Nazis in World War II. Every year, the veterans gather and don their uniforms, with all their medals for heroism and bravery proudly pinned to their chests. I can't tell you what's on the agenda elsewhere, but in Beit Shaan an older Russian Jew performs an inspirational song in Russian, the mayor, a representative from the Absorption Ministry, and other personages say a few words, and then a rabbi is customarily called upon to read a chapter of T'hillim and to deliver a Chassidic idea.

I had the honor last year to be the rabbi at the ceremony and I was invited again this year. I wondered what I could tell them about the 9th of May or the war against the Germans that had not already been said in the past. In particular, I pondered how to connect it to a message with Jewish and Chassidic content. Thank G-d, I came up with an idea.

I took an old T'hillim with me that I have from my year on K'vutza

in 5744, a T'hillim that the Rebbe used on Mondays and Thursdays after the Torah Reading. The bachurim made a raffle each time for who would get to put a Chumash or T'hillim down for the Rebbe. When it came time for me to open the program, I held the precious T'hillim and told the dozens of veterans that I was going to recite a chapter of T'hillim from this old and special volume that I have cherished for decades; one which the Lubavitcher Rebbe used 25 years ago.

I sensed that the crowd was moved and I said, “Why did I choose to bring this T'hillim with me today? It's because the Rebbe himself also fought against the Nazis.”

At this point, I could see indications of curiosity evident even on the faces of the mayor, his deputies and the director of the center. I explained that the Rebbe had settled in the United States in 1941, in the middle of the war, and he worked as an electrical engineer at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, where he made a significant contribution towards the war effort.

I went on to tell them (a story known in Chabad but not to the veterans at the ceremony) that at that time, it was the practice in the

upper echelons of the navy to hold meetings and discussions about the possibility of technological innovations based on science fiction. Every senior member had to come up with an invention or advance that might, one day come to pass. The Rebbe did not take part in these meetings since his time was very precious to him. When his professional obligations were completed, he preferred to return immediately to 770. The other members were curious to hear, at least one time, what kind of invention Rabbi Schneersohn would put forward, so they told him there was a work-related meeting taking place and as soon as it began they asked him what innovation he foresaw.

The Rebbe said he did indeed have a fantasy about the future which was that not far off. One day, he said, throughout the world there would be an open Jewish home so that any Jew visiting that place would find kosher food, a place to pray, and a place to learn Torah.

In those dark days of the Holocaust, this was a wild fantasy. The Jewish nation was persecuted and degraded; they hid in caves and sewers and fought for their lives, and here was a young man who had escaped Russia and Europe who was hallucinating about a Jewish home in every location in the world that would be open to all. Proudly promoting Judaism rather than embracing assimilation as the only hope for not only acceptance, but survival? It sounded preposterous at



The performance at the Lag B'Omer rally in Beit Shaan

“The Jewish nation was persecuted and degraded; they hid in caves and sewers and fought for their lives, and here was a young man who had escaped Russia and Europe who was hallucinating about a Jewish home in every location in the world that would be open to all.”

the time; nobody would have believed that such a thing could become the reality.

And yet we see, I went on, that the Rebbe's dream was fulfilled. His shluchim are everywhere and I am one of them. I stand here before you and am going to read a chapter of T'hillim from a volume this radical thinker whose vision changed the world used 25 years ago.

When I sat down, the mayor, who was seated to my left, asked to see the T'hillim. I saw that he was looking at the title page where I had written that the Rebbe had read chapters 83 and 84. Then I saw the mayor turn to those chapters and silently read them, verse by verse, with tears in his eyes – like a Chassid and mekushar to the Rebbe for decades. Then the deputy mayor

reverently took the T'hillim and did the same.

I once heard a speech from Rabbi Moshe Gruzman, shliach for shiurei Torah in Rishon L'Tziyon. He said that the proper way to draw Jews to the Rebbe and Chassidus is by explaining all the deep messages of Chassidus, to speak to them about Atzmus, about *atik* and *arich*, about the connection and devotion we have to the Rebbe.

“Whatever moved you and made you into a Chassid, tell your mekurav so he too will be moved and uplifted and become a Chassid.”

When I saw the mayor and his deputies so moved by reading from the T'hillim that the Rebbe used, I realized it's possible. The world is ready for the deepest dimensions of Chassidus. The world is ready for

Geula.

MITZVA MASCOTS

Last month a fellow named Kanievsky proposed a creative new idea for the Lag B'Omer parades that is being implemented in Chabad houses throughout Israel. In conjunction with Merkaz Tzeirei Chabad he made four full body mascot costumes: a mezuzah, a pushka, a Shabbos candle, and a Torah. They are colorful and large (see picture) and can be worn while marching in the parade, which publicizes these mitzvos and mivtzaim.

They cost thousands of shekels but what don't we do to enhance the Rebbe's parades! I decided that we wouldn't just have the mascots in the parade but would make a whole show out of them. I wrote a story in which the four characters are four siblings. They dance together on stage and then suddenly, the mezuzah falls and disappears. The three remaining ones worry about what happened to the mezuzah. They talk about how the mezuzah protects the house and worry that perhaps a letter had become erased. Maybe it would be a good idea to put some money into the pushka in order to save the mezuzah ... In short, I wrote up a play with many messages and ideas, halachos and stories which used these mitzvah costumes. I found three people in Beit Shaan who volunteered to join me. We wore the costumes and performed the play. It was so successful that one of the mothers called the Chabad house and asked us where she could buy a CD of the performance.

It also showed me how the world is ready for Geula. At first I hesitated about whether the audience would be willing to watch something so heavy-handed with messages of mitzvos and mivtzaim but I saw that everybody was

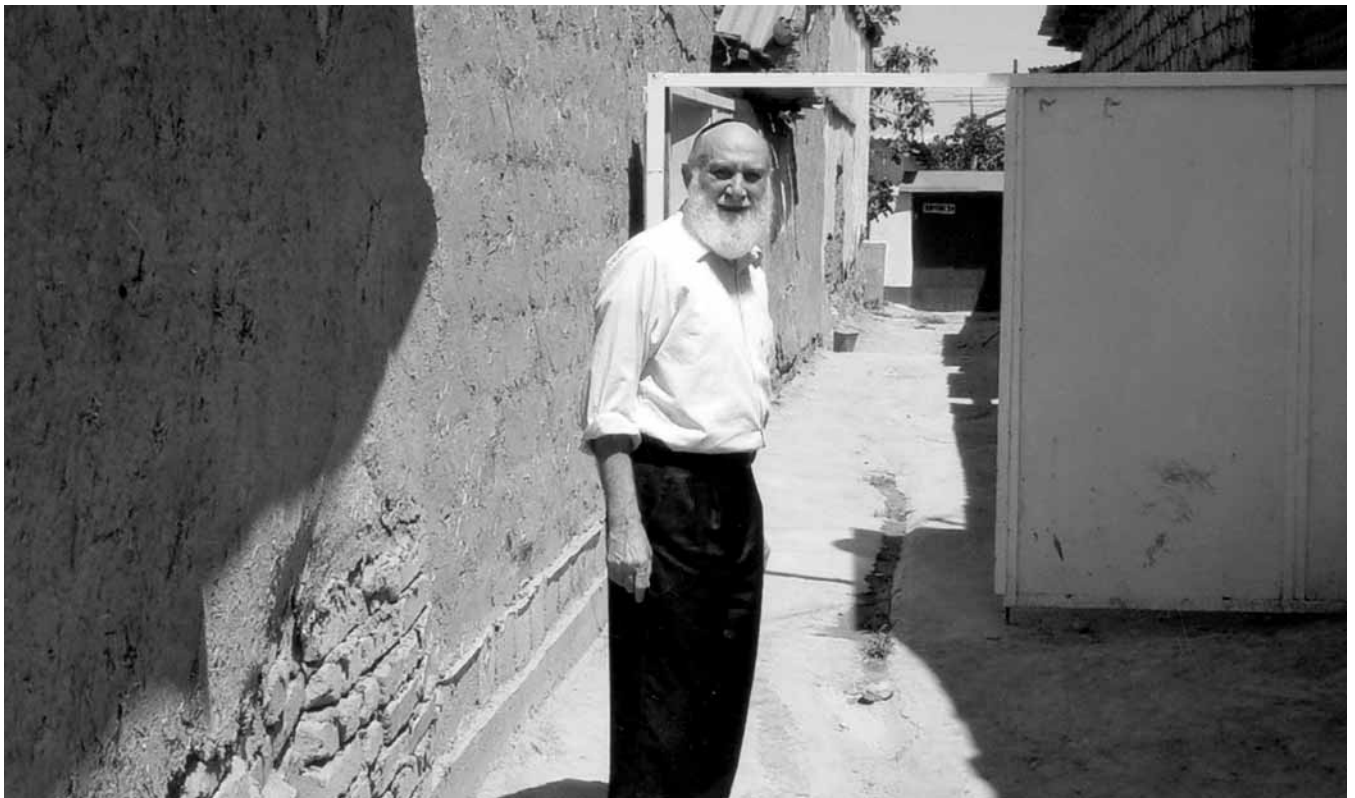
CHASSIDIC PERSONALITIES IN SAMARKAND

Prepared for publication by Avrohom Rainitz

R' Hillel Zaltzman presents the next installment of his memoirs about the elder Chassidim who shaped the Chassidic character of Samarkand.

At the end of the 50's, a man by the name of Yisroel Nachman Zeidman came to Samarkand. He was a quiet and very refined person but we quickly discerned that he was a big *lamdan* (scholar) and *yerei Shamayim* who excelled in the trait of humility and did not take credit for his accomplishments. He respected everyone, young and old, and was the first to extend greetings to everyone.

His eyes and his perpetually frightened expression bore witness to the fear and deep pain in his heart. We were still young and didn't know the reason for it. It was only later on that we found out that before he arrived in Samarkand he lived in the Ukraine, where he had been arrested and thrown into jail for ten years. When his jail sentence was over and he returned home, he discovered to his horror that



R' Hillel Zaltzman standing in front of the alleyway where R' Yaakov Notik lived, behind the iron gate.

his wife had not been faithful and he had to divorce her. In an attempt to forget his painful past, he decided to move far away and that is how he came to Samarkand. After a brief time he married a G-d fearing woman but they did not have children. Because of his nature and refinement he did not want to live at the community's expense and he worked as a bookbinder so he could keep Shabbos.

The first to recognize his special qualities was R' Tzvi Hirsch Lerner, who also came from the Ukraine during the war together with his family. Tzvi Hirsch was a precious soul, a good and kind man who enjoyed doing a favor for a fellow Jew.

In those days, every refugee who came to Samarkand looked for work to support his family. Tzvi Hirsch was relatively young and healthy and he worked as a porter. As a young child I remember his son, my good friend Yaakov, telling me that his father was making a sled for the winter so that instead of dragging a load on his back, he could move it on the sled.

Yaakov told me that his father promised him that after he made the sled he would give us all a ride. We children looked forward to this excitedly. Yaakov Lerner, Mottel Goldschmidt, Michoel Mishulovin and I were overcome with joy as Tzvi Hirsch sat us all in his sled and took us for a ride. But it was Tzvi Hirsch who received the most pleasure from the ride, because he could bring joy to children who learned Torah. As children, we did not have toys because we lived on the brink of starvation, and he delighted in our happiness.

Years passed and we grew up and R' Tzvi Hirsch became a successful businessman. When others were afraid, he enjoyed

hosting the minyan in his house and seating each one of us so that we felt comfortable. I remember the Shabbos when I showed up for the minyan at his house and discovered that he had bought a new bench for us. When I walked in he immediately sat me on the bench and I could see that he enjoyed seeing that I felt comfortable on it.

R' Tzvi Hirsch was very friendly with Yisroel Nachman. He understood the feelings of a refugee who came to a foreign place, and he helped Yisroel Nachman with everything. When Tzvi moved to the new city, he bought a house with an enclosed yard and he arranged for a separate apartment for Yisroel Nachman.

(An enclosed yard was a great advantage since minyanim could be arranged with less fear of prying eyes from the neighbors. After a short while Tzvi Hirsch even built a mikva in his yard.)

In those days, the law in the Soviet Union was that a person who retired got a pension which was a certain percentage of the salary he earned during the last year he worked. When Yisroel Nachman neared retirement age, Tzvi Hirsch took pains to ensure that he earned a nice income and he asked me for my help. Since Yisroel Nachman worked as a bookbinder and earned very little, if he would get a pension based on his current salary he would not be able to support himself with that amount, and would be forced to rely on help from others. He asked me to take Yisroel Nachman into the cloth emblem factory that I ran and to pay him a respectable salary for the year before he retired so he could subsist afterwards on the pension.

It was hard for me to accede to Tzvi Lerner's request. No manager is thrilled with the idea of hiring

someone who spent a decade in jail, whose documents state that he was sentenced to ten years for serious crimes. The situation was much more delicate and complicated for me since my place was closed on Shabbos and Yomim Tovim, only Jews worked for me, some of my employees had submitted requests to emigrate to Israel, and I myself was associated with the underground yeshivos etc.

Every detail on this list was reason enough to avoid another problem, but I couldn't ignore how beneficial this would be to Yisroel Nachman. I knew that if I didn't do him this favor, he would remain with a low income and would suffer for the rest of his days. He would be forced to be dependent on others, which went completely against the grain for him. I also couldn't turn down the kindly Tzvi Lerner and I agreed to hire Yisroel Nachman.

Since I knew Yisroel Nachman to be not only a refined and learned person but much more than that, I tried to make the job easy for him. Sometimes I would arrive at the shop a little late, after all the workers were already working, and as I walked in Yisroel Nachman would come over to me and humbly ask, "What needs to be done today?"

I couldn't take it. I was only 21 while he was much older and a yerei Shamayim and a ben Torah (my friend Yaakov Lerner had told me that he'd heard that when Yisroel Nachman was younger he wrote a book of halachic responsa and in the letters addressed to him there were unbelievable titles bestowed upon him). In order to prevent this awkwardness, I tried not to enter immediately but walked around outside so that he would see me through the window before I entered and not be so flustered when I walked in.

I remember that one time we

Every detail on this list was reason enough to avoid another problem, but I couldn't ignore how beneficial this would be to Yisroel Nachman. I knew that if I didn't do him this favor, he would remain with a low income and would suffer for the rest of his days.

davened at the Schiff home on Shabbos Mevarchim and as is customary in Chabad, we said the entire T'hillim before Shacharis. Although Yisroel Nachman valued Chabad and its customs, he was afraid to take more time than necessary for the minyan lest the neighbors notice our illegal gathering. He suggested that we daven immediately and say T'hillim afterwards. I was young and emotional and his suggestion annoyed me very much. I told him firmly: "Saying T'hillim on Shabbos is an enactment of the Rebbe and it cannot be changed. We will say the entire T'hillim now and then we will daven."

Yisroel Noach kept quiet, as was his wont. Years later, when I recall that scene, I cringe for daring to talk so impudently to a person like him.

STORY ABOUT A P'SHETEL

As in every Jewish community, in Samarkand there were different characters. One of them was AG, a Litvishe Jew who had learned in yeshivas Mir when he was younger, a fact he took great pride in. He would describe the brilliance of the bachurim and how many pages of Gemara he learned by heart and so on. To me he was a perfect example of how impossible it is to survive properly

without learning Chassidus. He was a frum man who davened every day in tallis and t'fillin and ate kosher, but he did it all without any Chassidishe chayus. He was very cold like a genuine misnaged.

He worked as a cashier in a factory and as part of his job he had to go to the bank every day and get money. To our astonishment, he would go to the bank on Shabbos too. When they said to him, "But you are a ben Torah and a frum man, how can you work on Shabbos?" he would say coolly, "*Dina d'malchusa dina* – the law is as the law of the land."

To us youngsters this was a living example of a misnaged whom we could never emulate. We had heard about this type of misnaged but did not imagine that it was a description of a genuine person until we saw with our own eyes how someone who considered himself a ben Torah could quote statements from the Gemara in order to justify himself. He assured his questioners that when he reached retirement age he would stop working. However, after he got used to working like this, even when he reached retirement age he did not stop working and continued to desecrate the Shabbos.

(In order to have an idea of what kind of misnaged this is and

how one uses his Torah knowledge to allow the forbidden, R' Dovid Okunov (Hy"d) told us that one time he had occasion to be in a certain city in Russia and he stayed in the home of a rav who was a misnaged. Milk was served at breakfast. R' Dovid was surprised and he asked in all sincerity where chalav Yisroel had been procured.

The rav told him: It's not chalav Yisroel but I know the halacha. In Shulchan Aruch it says that we don't follow those who say gentile milk is permissible, but since there is an opinion like this, I follow it and you can rely and be lenient on two opinions.)

During the summer, Yisroel Nachman would give shiurim to the youth in Pirkei Avos with commentaries and sayings from various g'dolei Yisroel. AG would attend these shiurim too. One time, Yisroel Nachman explained the Mishna with the explanation of one of the tzaddikim and AG said dismissively, "Ah, that's a p'shetel (i.e. an unsupported idea based loosely on the literal text)."

Although Yisroel Nachman was a quiet man who did not raise his voice, he couldn't tolerate this misnaged's coldness and the cavalier manner in which he dismissed the words of a tzaddik. He turned pale in shock and nearly lost his voice. He recovered and retorted, "What do you mean by 'a p'shetel'?" It's the explanation of a great tzaddik. How can you dismiss what he said and speak so disparagingly?"

AG began justifying himself and said that he didn't mean to dismiss what the tzaddik said. It was just ...

Yisroel Nachman couldn't calm down from that expression "a p'shetel," and we all saw how important the honor of our g'dolim was to him, that despite his refinement he censured AG for

disdaining a tzaddik.

At the beginning of the 70's, when we all received exit visas and emigrated to Eretz Yisroel, I wondered what would be the fate of Yisroel Nachman, but Tzvi Lerner didn't abandon him then either and made sure to arrange exit visas for him and his wife. When they arrived in Eretz Yisroel they lived in Nachalat Har Chabad, close to Tzvi Hirsch Lerner. I heard that the young men in Nachalas Har Chabad greatly appreciated his great Torah knowledge and started shiurim with him. After he weakened and found it hard to walk to shul, people would go to his house and make a minyan there for him.

I DON'T KNOW HOW TO PASKEN BUT...

R' Yaakov Notik came to Samarkand in the summer of 1964. This wasn't his first time there. In 1946 he had tried his luck at crossing the border with the rest of Anash, but was unsuccessful and ended up in Samarkand. At that time he stayed with the Mishulovins.

After he married he moved to the city of Kartli in Georgia, where he served as the shochet and enabled all the Jews of the region to have kosher meat. Religious life in Georgia was relatively free compared to the other Soviet republics because Stalin was Georgian and he gave his birthplace more freedom.

When his children grew older and he had to provide them with a proper chinuch, he decided to move to Samarkand. Michoel Mishulovin had gone to Georgia to raise money for the yeshiva in Samarkand and stayed in his house, and Yaakov was thrilled to hear that there was a Tomchei T'mimim in Samarkand. He himself donated a large sum, more



Rabbi Notik with his children in Samarkand. Above, from right to left: Dovid Aharon, Shmuel Avrohom Zerach. Below: Bas-Sheva, Yosef Yitzchok, Rabbi Yaakov Notik (This picture was taken before their youngest child, the mashpia Zalman Notik, was born.

In every free moment he would sit in a corner or lean against the wall and look into a Shulchan Aruch, Gemara, Tanya or any other holy book. He was elevated above this world and wouldn't even glance at a newspaper. His conversation concerned matters of halacha, Gemara or an inyan in Chassidus.

than he could afford, and went along with him to help him fundraise. R' Yaakov, who saw the Chassidishe middos and yiras Shamayim of R' Michoel yearned to provide his children with that kind of chinuch.

When R' Yaakov Notik arrived in Samarkand I observed him to be a special person, a genuine Chassid, a ben Torah, and a great

anav (humble man). I never saw him sit idle. In every free moment he would sit in a corner or lean against the wall and look into a Shulchan Aruch, Gemara, Tanya or any other holy book. He was elevated above this world and wouldn't even glance at a newspaper. His conversation concerned matters of halacha, Gemara or an inyan in Chassidus.

Nevertheless, he was a modest person and tried to conceal who he really was.

Although my father had shechted chickens for Anash, once R' Yaakov came he refused to continue shechting, saying he was over sixty. He referred people to R' Yaakov.

In Adar, 5728, after the passing of R' Eliyahu Levin (Paritcher), when halachic questions arose they would ask R' Yaakov, out of all the people in Samarkand, since they respected his scholarship and knowledge of halacha. In his great humility he would say he did not know how to pasken halacha but it was worth looking at such and such a paragraph in Shulchan Aruch and the halacha was probably such and such. Needless to say, he never erred.

In the previous installment I told about the shochet Mulle Yosef who took over after my uncle, R' Boruch Duchman. Since R' Yaakov Notik was an expert shochet for many years in Georgia, once he came to Samarkand he would go occasionally to check the knife of Mulle Yosef and sometimes also would sharpen his knife for him.

On a few occasions R' Yaakov did sh'chita at the government slaughterhouse outside the city and he would attach his official seal on the side of the animal that attested to its kashrus. It was the seal he brought with him from Georgia. To us it was exceedingly strange because in Samarkand we did not see a seal like that. Afterwards, they brought the meat to a butcher in the Jewish quarter and many Jews bought kosher meat under Lubavitch sh'chita.

A YESHIVA AND MIKVA IN THE YARD

As I have already written, on

Yud-Tes Kislev, 5720, the underground yeshiva of Samarkand began regular sessions. The first talmidim were Naftali Estulin, Shmuel Chaim Frankel, Yeshaya Gertzman and Yitzchok Mishulovin. The Maggid shiur, mashgiach and mashpia was R' Michael Mishulovin.

When R' Yaakov Notik arrived in Samarkand, the yeshiva grew in the number of talmidim and in the number of places where the learning took place. In those days, the end of the 60's, the terror had died down somewhat. In the 50's we didn't dare write the names of relatives abroad on official forms and we did not try to submit requests to leave the country in fear that for this crime alone we would get into big trouble. By the middle of the 60's people began requesting to leave. Only a few of them received exit visas while the rest were turned down but the fear of submitting a request had dissipated.

We didn't feel utterly free but we allowed ourselves to expand the yeshiva, to accept additional talmidim, and to open new places of learning. One of the new locations was in the yard of R' Yaakov's house. His home was located on a small alley, which was both an advantage and a disadvantage. On the one hand, the yard was not close to the street where passersby could notice unusual activity. On the other hand, when we entered the alley it was obvious to the neighbors that we were going to the Notiks. But the advantages outweighed the disadvantages: 1) since the yard was fenced in and separate from the neighbors, the bachurim could leave in the evening and breathe some fresh air. 2) The age of the boys matched the age of the children in the family so if they were caught they could say they came to visit their friends. 3) In

the yard was a shed that was separate from the house where the bachurim could learn, instead of sitting in the kitchen or bedroom as they did in other houses.

Another advantage of R' Notik's house was that his wife Chana cooked for the bachurim and they did not have to go elsewhere for meals. This saved precious learning time and more importantly, it made it safer for them because the neighbors wouldn't see them constantly coming and going.

One day, the bachurim decided to build a mikva in the yard. They began digging a hole near the small shed where they learned. You can imagine what happens when 15-16 year olds build a mikva. It was fun and good exercise and after a few days they grew tired of the idea and abandoned the hole.

But R' Yaakov took the idea seriously. He found some drunks who were recently released from jail who agreed to work for him for a bit of vodka and a good lunch. This arrangement didn't last long, either, as they worked one day and were drunk for two days. ...

R' Yaakov, who had already visualized the completed mikva, did not give up. He brought professional workers and within a short time he was able to complete the mikva.

These secret mikvaos needed creative solutions for heating the water. The water heater had to be portable so it could be hidden away quickly when necessary. Hashem granted me talents in this department and I was able to construct a portable heater that operated on gas. Over the year I built a number of systems with new improvements each time.

I remember how happy R' Tzvi Hirsch (and I) was when after fifty minutes of heating I informed

him that the water had begun to boil. The new mikva served not only the bachurim but also the families in the area.

As I write this about him, I recall R' Yaakov's true inner character and I feel a pang in my heart as I yearn for that p'nimius'dike Chassid ... ah, woe for that which has been lost...

He found some drunks who were recently released from jail who agreed to work for him for a bit of vodka and a good lunch. This arrangement didn't last long, either, as they would work one day and were drunk for two...

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