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A PATH OF LIGHT

Sichos In English

THE GOAL OF EDUCATION

In a single verse: [1] "Educate a child according to his way; even when he grows older, he will not depart from it," King Solomon communicates several fundamental concepts regarding the Torah approach to education.

Primarily, the goal of education is not merely to transmit information, but more important to mold the student's character, to prepare him to chart a path which he can follow throughout his life.

Every child will set out on a "way."

For life does not allow us to stand still and as we undergo a series of transitions, a route will be forged.

But a child should be prepared for these transitions; they should not take him by surprise.

That is the purpose of education - to give him a standard of values and principles that teach him to look forward, and to face and to overcome life's challenges.

Moreover, these principles should be more than intellectual truths; they should be integral elements of the child's makeup.

This is the core of the learning experience, to internalize ideas and make them part of oneself, instead of merely comprehending them in the abstract.

When a child is educated in this manner, he will be prepared to proceed on his way. Not only will he possess the focus, direction, and inner strength to confront challenges, he will have the initiative to seek to do

so.

For knowledge empowers and energizes.

When a child has learned principles and values which ring true to him, he will feel energy welling up within him which will naturally seek expression in positive life experience.

ENCOURAGING INDIVIDUALITY

Important in this process is the realization that every child has "his way," a unique tendency and nature of his own.

As the Previous Rebbe would say: [2] "Every individual Jew has a spiritual mission in his life."

Although we all share in the comprehensive motive of transforming our world into a dwelling for G-d, [3] each one of us has individual gifts and tendencies.

Expression of these individual tendencies endows the general mission with a more encompassing scope, allowing the Divine purpose to be manifest in many particular ways.

As such, a teacher should not try to push his students in a single direction.

Instead, he should seek to appreciate the individual gifts each one possesses and cultivate their expression. [4]

Even when teaching the universal truths of the Torah, a teacher's goal should not be conformity.

Instead, he should endeavor to enable every student to internalize these truths in a manner that reflects his own nature. [5]

Shining Lamps

These concepts are alluded to in this week's Torah reading which begins with the command to Aharon to kindle the menorah in the Sanctuary.

The menorah symbolizes the Jewish people, [6] for the purpose of the existence of every Jew is to spread Divine light throughout the world, as it is written: [7] "The soul of man is the lamp of G-d."

For with "the light of the Torah, and the candle of mitzvos," [8] our people illuminate the world, infusing light into all their surroundings.

The menorah extends upward in seven branches, which symbolize seven different paths of Divine service.

And yet it was made of a single piece of gold, [9] indicating that the different qualities of the Jewish people do not detract from their fundamental unity.

Diversity need not lead to division, and the development of true unity comes from a synthesis of different thrusts, every person expressing his own unique talents and personality thrust.

INDEPENDENT EFFORTS

When relaying G-d's command to Aharon to kindle the lamps of the menorah, the Torah uses the phrase, [10] B'Haalos'cha es ha'neiros, literally: "When you raise up the lamps."

Rashi explains that this implies that the priest should continue applying the flame to the wick of the lamp "until the flame rises on its own," and shines independently.

Interpreting this concept allegorically, each of the expressions Rashi uses is not just a term, it reflects a fundamental concept to be applied in our Divine service.

“The flame” - Every person is potentially “a lamp.”

But a flame makes the potential actual, producing radiant light which illuminates one’s surroundings.

“Rises” - A person should not remain content with his immediate level, no matter how refined that might be. Instead, he should seek to proceed further, searching for a higher and more complete level of Divine service.

“On its own” - A person must internalize the influence he receives from his teachers until the light becomes his own. The knowledge he learns should endow him with the power to stand independently, without having to rely on the support of others. [11]

Moreover, he should “rise on his own,” i.e., the desire to proceed should become one’s own nature. Even without the encouragement of others, he should continually seek to advance.

Similarly, when teaching others, our intent should be that they also become “a flame which rises on its own,” independent sources of light who spread the “light of Torah” throughout their environment.

JOURNEYING FORWARD

B’Haalos’cha is not only the beginning of the Torah reading, it is the Torah reading’s name and the lessons it communicates relate to the Torah reading in its entirety.

This is expressed by the bulk of the Torah reading which describes the preparations for - and the initial stages of - the journey of the Jewish people through the desert.

The Baal Shem Tov explains [12] that these journeys are reflected in the journeys of every individual through life.

The Jewish people did not remain at Mount Sinai where they received the Torah and constructed the Sanctuary.

Instead, they took the Torah and the Sanctuary with them as they set out on their journey through the desert.

Similarly, the purpose of kindling the light in a person’s soul - the goal of his education - should be for him to take this light, “the light of Torah,” with him in his journeys throughout the world.

By spreading the light of the Torah through these journeys, every individual contributes his share to the fulfillment of the purpose for all existence, the establishment of a dwelling for G-d in our material world.

In that vein, the journeys of the Jewish people through the desert are also interpreted [13] as an allusion of the journeys of our people through the ages toward the consummation of that purpose, the revelation of the light of Moshiach.

And then we will join in the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash where we will see the priests again kindle the menorah. May this take place in the immediate future.

Adapted from: Seifer HaSichos 5749, p. 522ff; Seifer HaSichos 5751, p. 598ff; Sichos Shabbos Parshas Matos-Massei, 5745

NOTES:

1. Proverbs 22:6.

2. HaYom Yom, entry 14 Cheshvan.

3. See Midrash Tanchuma, Parshas B’Chukosai, sec. 3, Tanya, chs. 33 and 36.

4. This concept is alluded to in the Mishna (Avos 2:9):

“Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai had five [outstanding] students:.... He used to enumerate their praiseworthy qualities.” Instead of trying to teach all his students a single path, Rabbi Yochanan recognized their different qualities and endeavored to make them flourish. See the commentary to this Mishna by In the Paths of Our Fathers.

Significantly, according to the custom - followed in Chabad and other communities - of studying Pirkei Avos throughout the summer, the second chapter of Pirkei Avos is often studied on Shabbos Parshas B’Haalos’cha.

5. We see this principle expressed in the chain of the transmission of our Torah tradition. Both Hillel and Shammai received the Oral tradition from Shmaya and Avtalyon (Avos 1:12). Nevertheless, there were differences of opinion between them regarding Torah law.

This was not the result of a break in the tradition or the fact that various points of law were forgotten. Instead, the differences arose because Shmaya and Avtalyon communicated abstract principles to their students. As Hillel and Shammai sought to apply these principles to the specific instances which arose, Divine inspiration was channeled through their particular personal natures. Therefore, Hillel’s decisions were generally lenient, while Shammai’s were generally stringent. See Hemshech 5672, Vol. I, p. 20ff; Zohar III, 245a, Tanya, Igeres HaKodesh, Epistle 13.

6. Zachariah, ch. 4.

7. Proverbs 20:27.

8. Proverbs 6:23.

9. See Numbers 8:2-4.

10. Ibid.:2.

11. There is a reflection of this concept with regard to the rules of Torah study. There is a thrust within our Torah tradition to cite a teaching in the name of its author (Avos 6:6). Nevertheless, we find that Torah sages frequently relate concepts which they have heard from others without mentioning the name of the author. Based on the above principles, however, we can understand their conduct. Until a student is able to fully comprehend and internalize a teaching he received, he is required to quote it in the name of its author, for the concept still “belongs” to the teacher. Once he has grasped it completely, however, it is his own; it has become a product of his own thought. See the commentary of In the Paths of Our Fathers (p. 20 5) to the above Braisa.

12. Degel Machaneh Efraim, Parshas Massei.

13. Likkutei Torah, Parshas Massei.

'AND A SMALL CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM'

By Rabbi Zvi Homnick

When one recognizes the pure and simple quality of the faith and outlook of the “simple Jew” and the Jewish child that has been raised in a proper Jewish environment with a proper Jewish education, the issue becomes not how can I raise the child/children to grow up to be like me, but how can I become more like him/them and provide an education that does not corrupt that purity while developing the mind and heart.

CHILDHOOD ATTITUDES

One of the attitudes that I absorbed growing up in a world in which Torah scholarship was the ultimate measure by which a Jew is judged, was that those who teach Torah to little children are held in relatively low esteem in terms of their standing in the world of Torah. A truly great scholar is someone who leads a yeshiva for adult students. If

somebody ends up teaching high school age students, obviously he didn't have what it takes to make it to the top. If he ends up teaching elementary school age kids, he is almost to be pitied for having to stoop so low in order to provide for his family, but if a person is involved in teaching Alef-Beis and reading, it is safe to assume that he probably wasn't very bright to begin with and obviously “does not know how to learn.”

Yes, I was well aware of the Talmudic account regarding Rabbi Chiya cited in Bava Metzia (85b, K'subos 103b), “Once when Rabbi Chanina and Rabbi Chiya were arguing [in Torah], Rabbi Chanina said to Rabbi Chiya, ‘You are arguing with me? If *chas v'shalom* the Torah would be forgotten from the Jewish People, I could restore it through my exegetical prowess.’ Rabbi Chiya said to him, ‘You are arguing with me? I am working so that Torah not be forgotten from the Jewish People. I go and I plant flax, and then I weave the flax into snares and trap deer. I feed the flesh [of the deer] to orphans and I turn the skins into parchment. Then I go to a city [where there are no teachers of Torah] and I teach five boys [one each of] the five books of the Torah and I teach six boys [one each of] the six orders of the Mishna, and I tell them to teach other the scripture and the Mishna until I return. Thus, I accomplish that the Torah not be forgotten from the Jewish People. This is what Rabbi (Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi) said, ‘Greater are the deeds of Chiya.’” Additionally, in Bava Metzia, the Gemara recounts various anecdotes indicating that Rabbi Chiya's place in the Next World is far beyond that of his

contemporaries, as well as the fact that he and sons were the equivalent of Avrohom, Yitzchok and Yaakov, in terms of being able to usher in the Messianic Age before its time through their prayers. And all this was because of his efforts in the education of young children.

So, rationally, I knew there was something off about this invidious and pervasive elitist snobbery inherent in that worldview. I also sensed a certain lack of appreciation for the holiness of Torah and its transmission into the “mouths that have not tasted the taste of sin” implicit therein, and yet, I must confess that the attitude in question definitely colored my thinking throughout my formative years. I was also aware even then that the Chassidic world had a very different view of the “melamed” and the importance of his contribution, but that just fed into the stereotype of Chassidim as people who “do not know how to learn.” I eventually discovered how deeply ingrained this worldview had become when I began reading and learning about the Baal Shem Tov.

I’m embarrassed to repeat this now, but back then, the fact that the Baal Shem Tov “wasted his time” with the education of little children raised questions for me as to whether perhaps his greatness was overly exaggerated, because I couldn’t fathom a truly great person personally engaged in such trivial matters, let alone being a “teacher’s aide” to an Alef-Beis teacher. On the other hand, my bleeding heart and mushy emotionalism (Chassidic soul?) couldn’t help but be moved by the love and devotion to every Jewish child expressed in those accounts of the early years of the Baal Shem Tov. That is why, oddly enough, my grappling

with this issue played a disproportionate part in my internal struggle in becoming receptive to, and accepting of, the teachings of Chassidus. As opposed to more esoteric issues such as the debate over “literal versus non-literal *tzimtzum*” (is G-d in the bathroom?), or the finer points of demarcation between Chassidus and pantheism.

SAVE THE CHILDREN

On the fifteenth day of Sivan, in the year 1927, the Rebbe Rayatz was arrested, primarily for his far-reaching network of activities, as well as his public calls, to promote and sustain the proper Torah education of young Jewish children in the face of the atheistic communist juggernaut in Russia. Although the heroism and personal sacrifice displayed by the Rebbe and his followers earned the, sometimes grudging, admiration of all Jews, sadly, there were/are many who saw/see this focus on chinuch as a deviation from the more lofty spiritual agenda of Chabad Chassidus through the earlier generations. In retrospect, I am ashamed to admit that this argument carried significant weight with me, and (although hard to quantify in the face of the many other arguments, objections and points of difference, which I had to confront and contend with) contributed to my inner resistance to the ideas and messages of modern-day Lubavitch.

Imagine my shock, when I discovered that even on “the inside” there are Chassidim who view this shift in emphasis, which continued into Poland, the United States, and ultimately around the world, with a somewhat jaundiced eye. Amongst these, there is a

wide spectrum of views ranging from seeing it purely as a matter of exigency to acknowledging certain benefits and advantages that accrue from devoting one’s energies towards addressing what is essentially an unwelcome situation and diversion. Then again, after having resolved for myself, at least theoretically, how it is specifically through the “deeds of Chiya” that one becomes a suitable vessel to the highest revelations of Divine Consciousness, I was no less shocked to discover that there are those who have built an entire ideological construct around the idea of **not** pursuing the lofty spiritual agenda of Chabad Chassidus for the sake of Jewish education and outreach.

It had long seemed pretty obvious to me that the memoirs and stories published by the Rebbe Rayatz about the early hidden Tzaddikim, followed by the Baal Shem Tov and his disciples, devoting themselves to the chinuch of little children, are meant to convey the idea that this activity is not something undertaken in desperation as a last ditch effort to preserve the future integrity of the Jews as a people, but is a key ingredient in the Torah philosophy of Chassidus. I distinctly recall, as a teenager, listening in on a conversation between a group of very learned married guys, in which they were discussing this very point.

They, as Misnagdim, were discussing how the memoirs and stories in the talks and writings of the Rebbe Rayatz were written to make the Chassidim look good and the Misnagdim look like monstrous caricatures of self-absorption and arrogance. Their contention was, on this specific topic, everybody agreed about the necessity and the importance of

Little children and the simpleminded Jews of yore, who are intellectually underdeveloped and are barely able to read the words and letters of Torah, are actually much closer to G-d Himself...

Jewish education. The question was only about the proper balance between emulating the “deeds of Chiya” and investing in one’s own growth and development in Torah scholarship. We see that even Rebbe Chiya didn’t stay around to teach each child individually, but rather he gave them the tools to teach each other and he went back to the Beis Midrash where he could continue his learning on his level amongst his equals.

Therefore, they understood the debate between the Chassidic view and that of the Lithuanian scholar class as being about which takes precedence and which is of greater importance. Even they managed to “get” that the Rebbe Rayatz was promoting the position that the activities of the Baal Shem Tov were an outgrowth of a worldview that saw this work as far more than a simple “necessity,” which should only require the hands-on involvement of great scholars and Tzaddikim when there is no one else to step up to the job.

EDUCATE THE CHILD

One of the most basic tenets of Chassidus is that although in this finite not-yet-rectified world in which G-d’s presence is concealed He can only be grasped and apprehended in the heart and mind “each according to his measure,” He ultimately wishes

and plans and promised to reveal Himself to the Jewish People in this physical world in all His infinite glory. As such, part of the process of preparation for that revelation is to recognize the limits of the heart and mind and to seek to connect to G-d on a level that transcends those limitations, even if it means being consumed by His Infinite Light.

The means through which a finite being can connect to G-d on any level is only and exclusively through the Torah, because G-d put Himself into and expresses Himself through the Torah. As such, the intellectual component of Torah (“Torah goes forth from Chochma”), especially that part of Torah which deals with issues of the mundane world including falsehoods and fraudulence, is only a means (in this context) to establishing a finite connection with G-d as a step in the journey towards transcendence. And since G-d’s “presence” is not strongly felt in that study, the Talmud issues countless warnings about how it can lead to arrogance or become a “potion of death,” because it is so easy to lose sight of the true goal and purpose of Torah study.

Conversely, the letters of the written Torah are actual “vessels” for the absolute infinity of the Divine Essence, although our “eyes” don’t perceive the fact that “I have written Myself into the Torah and given it.” This is

evident in the law that states that in order to fulfill the mitzva of Torah study when studying the Oral Law, one must understand the subject matter, whereas when reading the Written Law one fulfills the commandment even without understanding. This affects the law of making the Torah blessings before study as well. Therefore, little children and the simpleminded Jews of yore, who are intellectually underdeveloped and are barely able to read the words and letters of Torah, are actually much closer to G-d Himself on an instinctive, soul level. Additionally, as Chassidus explains, little children have the advantage that they are more recently arrived from the “World of Truth,” and as such, were more recently immersed in the reality of G-d and G-dliness.

As part of the spiritual revolution wrought by the Baal Shem Tov, he revealed how every Jew has the capacity to connect to G-d while warning against the pitfalls that are inherent in the finite world of human intellect, even the human intellect steeped in Torah. When one recognizes the pure and simple quality of the faith and outlook of the “simple Jew” and the Jewish child that has been raised in a proper Jewish environment with a proper Jewish education, the issue becomes not how can I raise the child/children to grow up to be like me, but how can I become more like him/them and provide an education that does not corrupt that purity while developing the mind and heart.

“Rebba said, ‘Greater are the deeds of Chiya.’” Through the dissemination of Torah on the most basic level to young Jewish children one merits an increase in “Chiya” (meaning life, energy), and a “greater” ability to relate to and appreciate the transcendent “Greatness” of G-d.

CHILD PROPHECY

So it turns out that what the Chassidic movement has always been about ever since its inception is only being fully realized in our times. The global and geopolitical upheavals that presaged the shift towards focusing huge amounts of time, energy, resources and personnel, to the most basic levels of education and outreach, were simply setting the stage for what are the final preparations for the coming of Moshiach. It is not, nor has it ever been, an either-or proposition; either we focus on elementary educational issues or pursue a lofty spiritual agenda, nor about which takes precedence or is of greater importance. It has always been about integrating these two elements that are two sides of the same coin and which

complement each other fully, so that we are ready and prepared for the time when “eye to eye they shall see” and “all flesh will see” the transcendent revelations of Moshiach and the Era of Resurrection.

That is why so many of the prophecies regarding the Messianic Era speak about the role of the children, such as “And your sons and daughters shall prophesy.” “And a small child shall lead them” (referring to the wild animals that will be tame enough to interact peacefully with domestic animals and be led and handled by a small child). And that is why the Sages say that “my anointed ones” (*meshichoi* – my “moshiachs”) refers to the “children in the house of their teacher,” little children reading and studying the words of Torah, since they are closer to that

revelation than their adult counterparts.

It has been handed over to us to complete that process of preparing ourselves and the world, starting with the little children. Thankfully, the heroism and personal sacrifice of our Rebbeim (as expressed by the arrest of 15 Sivan) and those that came before us have spared us the need to face danger and threat to life and liberty in that endeavor (for the most part). Just as the arrest led to the reprieve (on 3 Tammuz) and the redemption (on 12-13 Tammuz), so too now let us prepare with joy and gladness of heart for the ultimate reprieve and redemption with the revelation of G-d’s “anointed one,” King Moshiach, immediately, NOW!

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ב"ה

AN INEXPLICABLE TRAGEDY



By Shneur Zalman Berger

*It was the night of 8 Sivan, 5734/1974, when four Chassidim were killed in a car accident on their way back from a wedding in Yerushalayim. The Lubavitcher Chassidim in Eretz Yisroel and around the world were plunged into mourning. * This is the full story of the tragedy, the stories of the special people we lost, and how the Rebbe related to the misfortune.*



Motzaei Isru Chag Shavuos, 5734/1974.

In a car traveling from a wedding in Yerushalayim to the center of the country sat six Chassidim. Some sat quietly while others talked quietly amongst themselves. Suddenly, for some unknown reason, the car veered from the lane and turned over several times. Most of the passengers flew from the car and were mortally wounded, and some died on the spot. Only the driver and one of the passengers remained in the car and survived with just mild injuries.

A few minutes later another car drove up, also returning from the wedding. The driver of this car was R' Yosef Presya a"h and with him was the mashpia, R' Berish Rosenberg a"h, both of them residents of Shikun Chabad Lud. They stopped in order to lend a hand. When they got out they were horrified to see Rabbi Elimelech (Meilich) Kaplan a"h, the rav of the Chabad neighborhood in Lud, standing near the overturned car and gushing blood. When they approached the car they witnessed a terrible sight. All were bloody, some of them were moaning in their death throes and some were silent. It wasn't obvious who had already departed this world.

The only passenger who is still alive (as of the writing of this article) is Rabbi Yaakov Offen. For many years he refused to talk about that awful night. After much pleading however, he agreed to tell *Beis Moshiach* about what happened.

It was hashgacha pratis that I was in that car. I don't know how I knew about this ride going from Lud to Yerushalayim and back. On both trips I spent the time with people who were living their

RABBI SHNEUR ZALMAN GARELIK

SEVENTY YEARS OF RABBONUS

Rabbi Shneur Zalman Garelik was one of the first talmidim in Tomchei T'mimim in Lubavitch. He was a rav in a number of cities in Russia and in Kfar Chabad for over seventy years. He was a clever man, firm as well as a big baal chesed.

He was born on 25 Sivan, 5640/1880, in Rogotchov in White Russia. His father was R' Yehoshua, a Chassid of the Rebbe Rashab and his mother was raised by her uncle, R' Hirschel, a shochet in the home of the Tzemach Tzedek.

When he was 17, R' Garelik traveled with his father to the wedding of the Rebbe Rayatz which took place in Lubavitch. During the Sheva Brachos, the Rebbe Rashab announced the new yeshiva which later came to be known as yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim. R' Garelik saw this as hashgacha pratis that the first time in his life that he was coming to Lubavitch was precisely when the Rebbe announced the new yeshiva, and at the end of the meal he asked the Rebbe to accept him as a student.

R' Garelik was one of the first ten T'mimim accepted into the yeshiva. In his youth, his diligence in learning Torah was well-known. When he arrived at Tomchei T'mimim he delved into halacha in addition to the regular shiurim in Gemara and Chassidus. Over three years he finished learning all of Shulchan Aruch and was ordained for horaa by Rabbi Dovid Jacobson, the rav of Lubavitch.

In his humility he held back, at first, from being tested, but the Rebbe Rashab told him, "When you're given, you must take."

After taking the test he was sent by the Rebbe Rashab to get smicha from Rabbi Hersch Ber, who had succeeded Rabbi Yitzchok Isaac of Vitebsk, one of the famous Chassidim of the Alter Rebbe. R' Garelik would say about this smicha, "I am the third in line to be ordained from the Alter Rebbe" since it is known that the Alter Rebbe only ordained one person, Rabbi Yitzchok Isaac of Vitebsk. R' Yitzchok Isaac ordained his successor, R' Hersch Ber who in turn, ordained R' Garelik.

Later he was also given ordination by Rabbi Dovid Tzvi Chein (RaDaTZ), the rav of Chernigov, where he also did shimush.

THE REBBE RASHAB RECOMMENDS R' GARELIK

After receiving smicha from outstanding rabbanim as the Rebbe Rashab had instructed him, he was married and appointed as rav.

Rabbi Avrohom Volchuk, the rav of Brezna which was near Chernigov, died in 5661/1901. In his will he instructed his friend RaDaTZ to find a son-in-law for his daughter who would also be a fitting candidate to succeed him.

RaDaTZ went to Lubavitch for Tishrei and he took the opportunity to ask the Rebbe Rashab to recommend a suitable candidate. The Rebbe immediately recommended R' Garelik. On the day R' Garelik married, he was appointed rav of the town and he

R' Garelik always maintained that his success in his position was not to his credit and if his people listened to him it wasn't because of his talents but because he operated as the stick wielded by the Rebbe. "It's the ko'ach of the meshaleiach that works through me."

held this position for 25 years.

Throughout these years he led his community as a powerful leader. Even after the start of the Communist Revolution, when the communists persecuted rabbanim, he continued in this position. He did his job with tremendous mesirus nefesh. At this time, he was sent by the Rebbe Rashab on various missions such as serving as *shadar* (fundraiser) for yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim.

Under pressure from the authorities, he was forced to leave the town in 1927. He and his family moved to Snovask, where he served as the town's unofficial rav. There, too, he was persecuted to no end and once again he had to leave, this time for Vitebsk.

In the interim, World War II began and R' Garelik and his family fled the threat of Nazi occupation. They arrived in Dobranka, a suburb of Stalingrad. Bloody battles took place around the city and R' Garelik knew he was in danger. He was miraculously saved thanks to a Jewish officer in the Red Army. He bribed the driver of a military vehicle that smuggled the rav and his family far away from the city.

After a period of wandering, they arrived in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, where many Chassidim had fled. R' Garelik was moser nefesh to maintain Judaism in the city. He made sure that children would learn Torah and worked on having a mikva constructed.

At the end of the war he crossed the border in Lvov, as did many other Chassidim, and after many difficulties he and his family arrived in Eretz Yisroel for Shavuot, 1949. They settled in Kfar Chabad.

RAV OF KFAR CHABAD

R' Garelik began to organize shiurim and saw to it that a

final hours in this world.

The drive home was quiet. I remember Rabbi Shneur Zalman Garelik sitting next to the driver, lost in thought. The other passengers sat further back. I passed the time speaking with R' Yeshaya Weiss a"h.

Shortly past Shaar HaGai, the car suddenly veered sharply right to the edge of the road. It turned over several times until it righted itself. We were in shock. I felt myself to see what remained ... Only then did I turn to see what was going on around me. It was horrible. I think Rabbi Garelik was killed on the spot. Paramedics from Magen Dovid Adom who came a few minutes later tried to save R' Weiss but he died soon afterwards. Nechama Rosenberg showed signs of life but she was critically hurt. R' Yechiel (Goldberg) looked like he had moments left to live, if he was even still alive at that point.

They took R' Yechiel and his sister-in-law Nechama into R' Yosef Presya's car that had driven up in the meantime and he raced off to the hospital. R' Berish



Rabbi Garelik heading the delegation to Mr. Shazar. From right to left: Mr. Shazar, Rabbi Garelik, Rabbi Shlomo Maidencheck, Rabbi Moshe Segal, Rabbi Zushe Wilmovsky, Rabbi Yona Eidelkopf

Rosenberg was with him. Because of the darkness and the condition of the injured, R' Berish didn't realize that it was his own daughter and son-in-law he was taking to the hospital.

Tragically, the doctors declared them both dead upon arrival.

DOUBLE TRAGEDY

R' Berish was confronted with the bitter truth. His daughter, a kalla, and his son-in-law, husband to his daughter Shifra, had been killed. He was beside himself with grief. It was a very long night. The first thing he did was to go to his brother-in-law, Rabbi Yaakov Noach Strasbourg from where he called the secretaries to inform the Rebbe of the accident. Someone gently reminded him that it was Motzaei Yom Tov in New York (where there are two days of Shavuot).

R' Berish went back to the hospital with family members and they were taken to where the bodies lay. When he saw the sign barring entrance to Kohanim he asked, "How will we tell Mrs.

building for the mikva was renovated. The Chassidim, who were aware of his brilliance and fine character, wanted to appoint him as rav but in his modesty he was afraid to accept the position. He wrote about his apprehensions to the Rebbe Rayatz who blessed him with "mazel tov" on his appointment. That was 20 Kislev, 5710, and from then on he served as the rav of Kfar Chabad for twenty-five years, until his tragic demise.

R' Garelik was very devoted to his job and was a faithful father to his flock. His door was open at all hours of the day and everyone knew that they could visit his home whenever they liked.

In 1958, construction began for a mikva in Kfar Chabad, but they ran out of funds before the project was completed. R' Garelik, already at the advanced age of 78, went to the United States to raise the money. He ran his hectic schedule like a young man and the Rebbe referred to this when he said to a certain Chassid, "If only more people had that youthful energy that R' Garelik has. Despite his advanced age he traveled here like a young man. There is a lot to learn from him."

When R' Garelik had his first yechidus, the Rebbe stood up for him and asked him to sit down, "For you are one of the g'dolei and ziknei Anash (being decades older than the Rebbe)." But R' Garelik refused and said, "I don't sit by the Rebbe."

"If that's the case, then I won't sit either," said the Rebbe. R' Garelik did not give in. "I did not come to a gaon and gadol. I came to the Rebbe and I have never sat by the Rebbe and this time too, I will not sit."

The Rebbe sat down and R' Garelik stood the entire time, for a yechidus that lasted three and a half hours. The Rebbe inquired about the spiritual and material state of the Kfar. R' Garelik answered all the questions and received detailed instructions and guidance.

Over the years, he received many letters and horaos from the Rebbe. R' Garelik always maintained that his success in his position was not to his credit and if his people listened to him it wasn't because of his talents but because he operated as the stick wielded by the Rebbe. "It's the ko'ach of the meshaleiach that works through me."

R' Garelik started a Gemach from which he lent large sums to the residents of the Kfar. He constantly worked to enlarge the Gemach and he himself donated generously so that he could help people to subsist in a dignified manner.

His diligence in learning was famous. Those in the know said that he went through all of Shas with Rashi and Tosafos a number of times. He reviewed all parts of Shulchan Aruch countless times and



The final picture. From right to left are sitting Rabbi Garelik and Rabbi Kaplan. Second from the left is Rabbi Weiss. (Between R' Kaplan and R' Weiss is sitting the father of the kalla)

at nearly all hours of the day he had set times for Torah study.

His sudden death at the age of almost 94 was an enormous loss, especially for the residents of Kfar Chabad and the Chabad k'hilla in Eretz Yisroel. His son-in-law, Rabbi Nachum Trebnik was appointed to succeed him together with Rabbi Mordechai Ashkenazi.

RABBI SHAYA (YESHAYA) WEISS

MONTHLY REPORT TO THE REBBE

Rabbi Shaya Weiss was born on Chanuka 5701 in B'nei Brak. His parents were quite religious and raised him in the way of Torah and fear of Heaven.

When he was a young bachur he was drawn to Chabad by his friends. He first learned in yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Pardes in Lud and then in Kfar Chabad.

When he learned in Kfar Chabad he once passed near the administrative office and saw a father and son standing there, looking worried. The son was handicapped and needed special care. The yeshiva could not provide him with the extra help he needed and did not want to accept him into the school. When R' Shaya heard this he told the hanhala that he would take care of the boy and for a long time he devoted himself to him so this boy could also have the opportunity to learn in Tomchei T'mimim.

He was good with his hands and wanted to use this talent to support himself so for a short while he studied carpentry in the vocational school. He made dozens of chairs, which he donated to the Chabad shul in Ramat Yitzchok in Ramat Gan where he davened after his yeshiva years..

THE REBBE ASKED: WHERE IS THE REPORT?

After he married Rina nee` Taizi, they lived in Kiryat Gat where he worked as a teacher in the Chabad school. His colleagues and the members of the k'hilla liked him very much, since he was a delightful person with a sense of humor who loved to help others. He was a man of truth, and integrity was a part of who he was.

He wrote a *duch* (report) to the Rebbe every month about everything he did at the school and other mitzvaim. After some time he thought that his frequent letters were taking up too much of the Rebbe's time and he

Weiss?" Even in his anguish over the deaths of his daughter and son-in-law he was concerned for others.

That was one of the most tremendously difficult things to contend with that night; how to inform the Weiss family of the sudden passing of their son.

The hour grew later and the relatives of those who had been in the car began to realize that something was amiss. It was late at night when the families began receiving the shocking news from relatives and friends.

By morning the news of the huge tragedy had spread throughout Chabad centers in Eretz Yisroel and around the world.

UP ABOVE IT WAS DECREED WHO WILL LIVE AND WHO ...

Who were the four people who were killed? An elderly rav, a family man, a young married man, and an engaged girl; all special people.

The fateful question, "Who will live and who will die, who in his time and who not in his time;"



A few hours before the car accident. Rabbi Garelik and Rabbi Weiss on the left, entering the wedding hall.

hit home that bitter night. There were people who had planned to be in that car but ended up elsewhere, while those who were killed were going to be somewhere else but ended up in that car ...

People who were planning to stay home ended up going to the wedding, while others who had intended to go decided not to attend.

The father of the kalla asked R' Weiss to bring R' Garelik to the wedding since he was to be the officiating rabbi at the chuppa. For a long time prior to that night, R' Weiss had not attended any events or simchos. At first he was in the army for several months serving in the Yom Kippur War. When he returned home his wife fell ill and he helped her a lot, serving as father and mother to their children. His schedule did not allow him to go out to events.

This time too, he turned down the father of the kalla but after he was asked repeatedly he finally agreed, telling his wife that by going he would be fulfilling several mitzvos: escorting the rav, participating in the simcha of the chassan and kalla, and helping a friend. The owner of the car, a

The yeshiva could not provide him with the extra help he needed and did not want to accept him into the school. When R' Shaya heard this he told the hanhala that he would take care of the boy.

stopped writing. Some time later he received a letter from the Rebbe in which the Rebbe asked him: "Where is the duch?"

After several years he moved to Shikun Chabad Lud, where he taught in the Chabad Talmud Torah. In the afternoon he worked as a handyman doing electrical work and carpentry. When Jews who emigrated from Georgia began settling in the Shikun, he helped them tremendously. Whenever they needed someone to fix a washing machine, refrigerator etc. he would rush over to their home, even if it was late at night, and performed the repair free of charge.

His job in the army was suited to his talents. He was a combat medic and in this position he saved the lives of many soldiers in the Six Day and Yom Kippur Wars.

During the height of the Yom Kippur War, a few months before he was killed, he suddenly stopped calling home. It was a chaotic time and the military authorities mistakenly informed the family that he was missing. For a month the family received contradictory reports: he was killed, he was missing, they didn't know etc. until they finally found out that he was alive and well and fighting somewhere in the Sinai.

Not long after he returned home, his wife fell ill and he served as father and mother to their four young children, raising them with Torah, Chassidus and Ahavas Yisroel.

In the terrible car accident, all the passengers had external injuries except for Shaya Weiss. His widow relates:

"Everybody's wounds were serious, deep, and there were fractures, except for my husband. His body was whole and he didn't lose a drop of blood but he died from an internal injury. An allusion to this is in chapter 34 of T'hilim which he said that year, "Many are the evils of the tzaddik and Hashem saves him from all of them. He protects all his bones; not one of them is broken."



Good friends – R' Goldberg and R' Fleischman in Pardes in Lud, 5726

RABBI YECHIEL GOLDBERG

A PNIMIYUSDIKE CHASSID

R' Yechiel Meir Yehuda Goldberg was born in Yerushalayim in 5710. The doctors said he had jaundice and could not be circumcised on time. His father, the well-known mashpia, Rabbi Dovid Goldberg, thought they might be exaggerating but back then it was hard to question the doctors. So on the morning of the eighth day, which was Shabbos, he smuggled the infant out of the hospital and brought him to the famous Dr. Wallach. Dr. Wallach examined the baby and said the jaundice was not as bad as the other doctors had said and the bris could be done that day.

R' Goldberg took the baby to an expert mohel and he too said the bris could be done that day. The Goldbergs quickly arranged the bris. Neighbors brought leftovers from their Shabbos meals. The baby was circumcised and was named for his grandfather. The family and friends sat down to a meal late in the day, moments before the sun set.

His father R' Dovid raised him in the ways of Chassidus and he learned in yeshivas Toras Emes in Yerushalayim. His brother Mordechai relates: "My younger brother was an eidel person. He didn't know what it meant to hurt anyone. I never heard him raise his voice."

The well-known mohel, Rabbi Menachem Fleischman still gets emotional when he speaks about his good friend:

"We were very close friends. He was a Tamim who was a real p'nimi. He never displayed his knowledge or showed off his fine middos. He was well liked, very organized and took care to be clean and neat. We learned together in Toras Emes and after that we were on K'vutza together in 5730-1. Over the years I got to see that the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. He was like his father, the mashpia, in his integrity and his avoda p'nimis.

"The accident was a real tragedy. He was a good friend who died young. I named my son, who was born a few years later after him."



resident of Shikun Chabad Lud, was saved from the accident when he decided to give his car to a friend.

R' Weiss joined the driver as he drove from Lud to Kfar Chabad in order to pick up R' Garelik. In Kfar Chabad they were also joined by Yaakov Offen, who was learning in yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim there. For some reason, they suddenly decided to return to Lud to get R' Meilich Kaplan. The three of them went to the Kosel and then to the wedding hall. In pictures taken at the wedding, you can see the three men sitting at the same table.

R' Yechiel Goldberg's father had died in Adar of the year before and he had been in the year of mourning until Adar. Then came S'fira in which there are no events. This was the first wedding he was attending after a long time.

His sister-in-law, Nechama Rosenberg, was a classmate of the kalla. She was working as a madricha in the Beis Rivka dormitory in Kfar Chabad and was extremely busy. She prepared for her own wedding on the few



Talmidim of K'vutza 5730-1. On the extreme right is R' Goldberg. In the center is R' Fleischman

days off that she had. That day she had gone to B'nei Brak to buy a sheitel. After she returned, exhausted, she still wanted to attend the wedding.

At the wedding she was overcome by tiredness and she decided to leave early. She heard from her brother-in-law Yechiel that there was a car leaving for Lud and she joined it.

That is how in Heaven they arranged who would be in that car and who would not.

THE FUNERAL

That night, R' Berish stayed in his brother-in-law's house.

Overcome by grief, he lay on the carpet and rolled from side to side, crying like a baby. He shouted – “how will we tell Mrs. Weiss? She is weak and Shaya was her right hand!”

In fact, after the Shiva, he went to the Weiss house and helped her tremendously for a long time.

R' Berish did not sleep that night. He took s'farim and looked up the laws of onen and avel. He said to the family: “Just as Hashem did miracles and wonders for ... (he mentioned the name of a family member), so too He will do miracles and wonders for Itta Keila bas Alte Perel. Instead of bringing Nechama to the chuppa, I will bring her to her grave.”

That night his infant nephew, cried and cried. The family, immersed in their own sorrow over the tragedy, found it difficult to deal with the fretful child. R' Berish told them, “Let him cry as much as he wants. He is crying now for food; he shouldn't need to cry for other things when he gets older.”

He did not want to go home and see his wife because he didn't want to be the one to tell her the news. He asked his sister-in-law

“My younger brother was an eidel person. He didn't know what it meant to hurt anyone. I never heard him raise his voice.”

At the end of his life, R' Yechiel's father was gravely ill. Since he was the only child not married at the time, he was completely devoted to helping his father.

“He forwent his learning and routine in order to constantly be at his father's side,” said his brother Mordechai.

Before his marriage to Shifra, the daughter of Berish Rosenberg, he was afraid that his father would not be able to attend his wedding because of his poor health, but his father made a supreme effort and attended his youngest son's wedding and all the Sheva brachos saying, “The chassan is given the seven days of rejoicing.” One week later he passed away at the age of 62.

R' Yechiel's son was born in the year of mourning and he named him Dovid for his father.

After he married he lived in Shikun Chabad Lud and taught in the Chabad Cheder. His brother-in-law, R' Nachum Kaplan said that he was a devoted teacher and the children liked him very much.

His wife was pregnant when he was killed and when she gave birth to a son, he was named for his father.

NECHAMA ROSENBERG

DEVOTED TO EVERY STUDENT IN BEIS RIVKA

Nechama Rosenberg was born on 12 Av, 5714, in Lud to R' Berish a”h and Itta Rosenberg. She was born into an aura of celebration, as that day her father, who had previously worked at hard physical labor, had just gotten an easier job at the central post office in Lud. Another “simcha” was the then-amazing achievement that their home was hooked up to electricity. The family said that Nechama brought light to their home.

Her father was a Chassidishe person and was very devoted to all his children. Nechama was a role model of a Chassidishe girl to all her friends. She was particular about every mitzva and minhag. The family related that she was a great help to her grandmother. Her grandmother had a grocery store and she sometimes sent Nechama to buy products in Tel Aviv.

On Purim, she would rush about delivering mishloach manos from her grandmother to old friends of hers and to lonely women who lived near and far.

As the younger sister, she spent a lot of time helping her married

siblings. She went to them often to assist with running the house and taking care of the children, all without being asked.

On Chanuka 5734, a few months before her untimely passing, the Rebbe announced that every Jewish home should light a menorah. Nechama threw herself into this mitvza all Chanuka, going from house to house to carry out the Rebbe's instruction.

A MOTHER TO HER CHARGES

She worked as a dorm counselor at Beis Rifka in Kfar Chabad. She took care of the girls like a mother takes care of her children. She knew that most of the girls did not come from Chassidishe homes and she put a lot into them, even washing negel vasser in the morning with each girl.

Her girls did not forget their special counselor and many years later, they still related with amazement the good feeling that remained with them for the rest of the day when she did negel vasser with them in the morning.

Even after she got engaged, she continued to be devoted to the girls and she only prepared for her wedding on her few days off. Rather than wasting time searching for a dress, she asked her mother to sew one for her. While the accident occurred, her mother was sewing her dress ...

Shulamis to tell her.

The next day a funeral was held for the four victims of the accident. It left from the old Shaarei Tzedek hospital. Thousands of people were present, mourning the terrible loss. The streets were packed with people who were in shock over the tragedy.

When the funeral passed the house of the Gerrer Rebbe, the Beis Yisroel, to everyone's amazement he came out and escorted the dead.

The Gerrer Rebbe knew R' Garelik. When R' Garelik went to the Moetzes G'dolei Ha'Torah, leading a delegation in order to convey the Rebbe's view about a united religious front, the Gerrer Rebbe gave him great honor. When R' Garelik walked in, the Beis Yisroel stood up and offered him his chair. Now too, the Beis Yisroel honored him one final time.

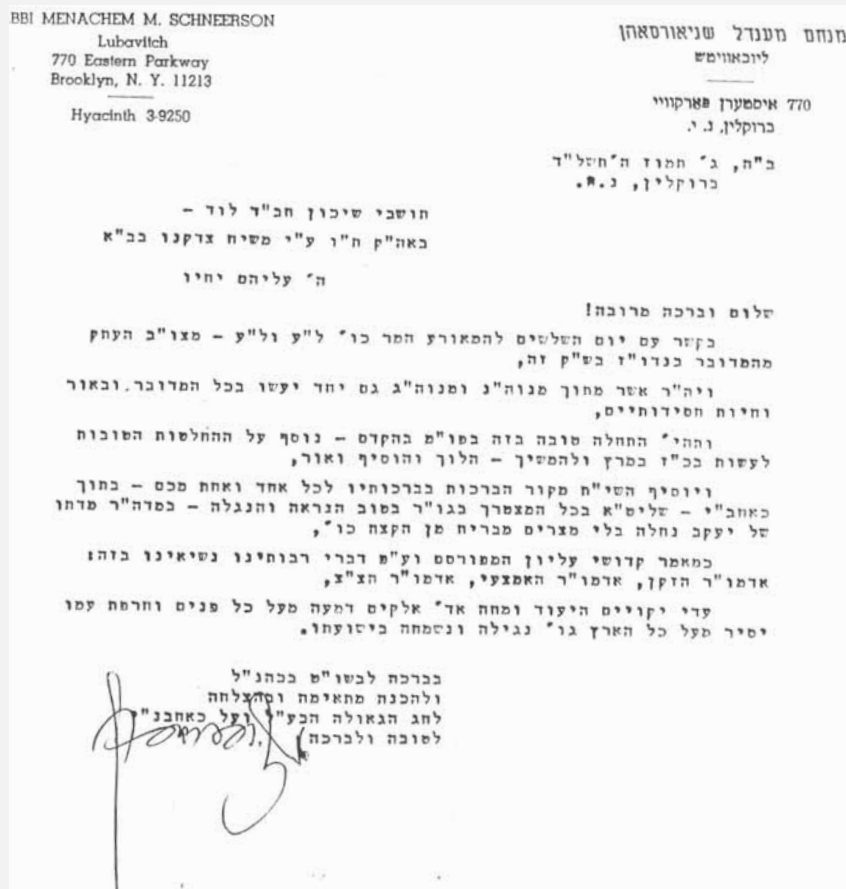
The four were buried on Har HaZeisim near one another.

DON'T JUSTIFY G-D

The following Shabbos, 12 Sivan, the Rebbe devoted an entire sicha to the accident and in a very painful tone he said that it is something not rationally understood and we should not justify G-d...

The Rebbe said that it's because of the strength of our emuna and the knowledge that this came from Him that we have whom to approach with complaints.

For the Shloshim, the Rebbe sent consolation letters to the residents of Kfar Chabad and Shikun Chabad Lud. The letters are (ironically) dated 3 Tammuz. The Rebbe writes: **In connection with the Shloshim since the bitter occurrence lo aleinu lo aleinu** – I enclose a copy of



The Rebbe's letter to the residents of Shikun Chabad Lud to mark the Shloshim

IT IS NOT AT ALL UNDERSTANDABLE; IT'S IN A WAY OF "V'HIFLA HASHEM"

It's known what it says in the Rambam that "when a misfortune happens ... all should know it's because of their deeds etc." Therefore, "he should fear and be worried and search his deeds." But there are times that as much as you search, you cannot find and you cannot understand why it happened ...

As we find in Parshas Savo that after many undesirable things are enumerated, the pasuk adds a new thing, even worse, "*v'hifla Hashem*" "Hashem will make your blows extraordinary" ... something incredible that is not at all rationally understood ...

The Rebbe, my father-in-law, once said to someone who wanted to explain the events of the Holocaust, "We don't need to answer for Hashem." We need to know that this is something which is not at all understandable; it is in the category of "*v'hifla Hashem*," and therefore, Hashem's actions should not be justified.

Obviously, this is not a contradiction, heaven forbid, to the inyan of emuna and it does not cause a weakness, heaven forbid, in emuna; on the contrary, because of strong faith in Hashem, and the certainty that this is exclusively from Him, there is to Whom to turn with complaints.

As to those who wonder how it is possible to talk like this (about not defending Hashem), the source is in the Gemara, "Moshe came and said,

'the G-d who is great and mighty and awesome.' Yirmiyahu came and said, 'gentiles are crowing in His palace so where is His awesomeness' and he did not say the word "awesome." Daniel said, 'gentiles are enslaving His children so where is His might' and he did not say the word "mighty"... How could they do such a thing and uproot that which was instituted by Moshe? Because they knew that Hashem is truthful, they could not lie to Him."

In other words, although Moshe referred to Hashem as "mighty and awesome" and the Men of the Great Assembly ("who returned the crown to its rightful place") came and said "on the contrary, this itself is His mightiness ... this is His awesomeness ..." still, when you see with your own eyes, an event that is the opposite of "mighty and awesome," they could not say "mighty and awesome," since it defied what they saw and they couldn't utter something that was the opposite of the truth "because...He is truthful they could not lie to him."

So too in our situation, when we see an event that is not at all understandable (even after examining deeds) we need to say the truth (and not seek to justify Hashem), that this not at all understandable but is in a way of "*v'hifla Hashem*" and consequently, "he cries out" ... and surely Hashem Himself is saddened by this.

From the sicha of Parshas Naso, 11 Sivan, 5734 (unedited), and the sicha of Parshas Korach, 2 Tammuz, 5734 (edited), free translation

what was said this Shabbos Kodesh.

The Rebbe called upon the Chassidim to strengthen mitzvaim as a reaction to the sorrowful events that occurred, referring to

the terrorist attacks in Kiryat Shmone and Maalot in which 39 Jews, including 29 children, were murdered.

In this letter, the Rebbe said that his remarks on Shabbos

about strengthening mitzvaim and strengthening the mosdos Torah and Ahavas Yisroel in a way of Ahavas chinam also pertained to the terrible accident.

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EDUCATING OUR CHILDREN TO CARE

By Rabbi Levi Goldstein
A teacher in Oholei Menachem

When a teacher demonstrates genuine care and concern to his students, and shows that he understands and appreciates them, the students, in turn, will reciprocate that back to the teacher by trying to live up to their full potential.

This also implants Love into their pure hearts. The children learn to love their fellow classmates, their siblings, their teacher and most importantly – to love Hashem. For, in the eyes of the child, it is Hashem whom the teacher represents.

An elder Chasid once asked me: “What is your occupation?” I proudly answered: “I’m a Melamed in Kita Alef.”

The Chasid said to me as follows: “You must love your students and show it to them. For when the child feels your love towards him, he will then love Hashem. But if the child feels the opposite – he will in turn hate Hashem, Chas v’shalom! For in the

child’s eyes - you are Hashem’s representative.”

HEALTHY SELF ESTEEM (DESPITE OUR MISTAKES)

By training a child to serve Hashem not for honor or prizes but only for Hashem’s sake, the child will also react properly when he makes a mistake. Once a child is trained to serve Hashem l’sheim Shamayim, then if he makes a mistake, **it will not harm his self esteem**. On the contrary, he is able to rise above his own shame and regard the matter in the proper perspective. He will be able to admit that he made a mistake and correct it.

Sounds very lofty? Too abstract? Well, the following episode took place in my class in the beginning of the year:

Baruch was reading from the Siddur. At a certain point, he read a word incorrectly. I gently brought it

to his attention so that he could repeat the word correctly, but, he denied that he made a mistake.

I kept quiet.

A few moments later, it happened again. Again, he denied it, but this time he got emotional and began to cry. Now, what’s going on in his mind? Obviously, he was not ready to handle the fact that he had made a mistake. Apparently, in his mind, a mistake is a “bad” thing and reflects badly on him, so his self confidence was shattered! This is because the focus was only on himself, instead of Hashem, so he needed to defend himself.

Obviously, I had work to do. Now was not the time, but I would wait for the first ripe opportunity. At the first suitable moment, I began:

“No one likes to make mistakes. So why do we make mistakes? It is surely from Hashem. It is b’hashgacha pratit. Why does Hashem allow us to make mistakes? After all, since we really don’t *want* to make that mistake, why doesn’t Hashem prevent us from making it?”

After giving them a moment to think about it I explained. “There is a special reason and purpose in it. It is a “yerida l’tzorech aliya”; it is only in order that we should be more careful next time.

“Do mistakes make us into a person a bad person? Absolutely not! Just the opposite; it turns us into a better person, as long as we learn a lesson from it how to be more careful next time. We must remember that only Hashem is perfect. We are human. We try our best to do things right, but we must understand that we can make mistakes and then correct them. It is alright for us to make a mistake, as long as we admit it and resolve to do better next time.

“So, if a boy recites the Chumash and he makes a mistake,

instead of getting embarrassed and feeling hurt, he should say to himself, ‘Oh well, *nisht geferlich*, I will try to do better next time. We are doing it only for Hashem. And Hashem accepts our mistakes as long as we try harder next time.”

In order to demonstrate this more vividly, I practiced what I had just preached. I began reciting a Pasuk and purposely mispronounced a word. I stopped, the kinderlach looked up at me in surprise, and I said with a smile, “Oops, I made a mistake! Okay! I will be more careful next time.” I then read it correctly.

In the beginning it was hard for Baruch to get used to it, but, after a few instances and reassurance from me that “it’s okay”, he was able to accept his mistakes without falling apart and losing his calm. The next time Baruch read incorrectly, I stopped him and said: “Baruch, do you know why you made this mistake?”

He smiled back and proudly said, “Yes! In order that I should be more careful next time.”

ADMIT TO HASHEM!

In the same vein, children who keep their focus on Hashem will be ready to admit their mistake even without needing their Rebbe to point it out, as we see in the following episode.

A couple of weeks into the year, I received a note from one of the parents, with a complaint. Her son has been bringing snacks to class, but when it came time to eat them, they were missing! In order not to make a fuss about something negative, I didn’t take any action right away. However, I did make a mental note that my next story-time was going to be on this topic.

(I place a tremendous emphasis on middos tovos (character training), and although I have a comprehensive curriculum that I



Rabbi Levi Goldstein

follow, going through midda after midda, I leave my curriculum flexible. This way, if I notice a certain undesirable behavior of a child, I make that my top priority as my next theme to talk and learn about. So that nobody should be embarrassed, I make sure not to point any fingers. Instead, I tell a story about “someone else, far far away” who did such and such, and how it was dealt with.)

When I received a second complaint, the time had come to confront the issue, through stories, parables etc. After recess, as we sat down to learn Chumash I put on a serious face and said in a low voice:

“Before we begin learning Hashem’s heilige Torah, I must talk about honesty. Some snacks have been going missing lately from some briefcases. I don’t know who took them. I am sure that whoever took them did it by mistake, not realizing that stealing is such a big Aveira.

“On the other hand, Hashem wants to see that whoever made the mistake, should admit it, do t’shuva and be more careful next time. Once he does t’shuva, Hashem erases the sin as if it has never

happened. I continued: “It is possible that the snacks were taken by a boy from another class, but, just in case it was a boy from our class, Hashem wants him to admit it and say I’m sorry and replace it tomorrow. We can then learn Torah with a clean heart.”

As soon as I finished speaking, two boys got up simultaneously from their seats, walked over to my desk and with tears in their eyes, admitted to having taken the snacks.

How did I react? I embraced each one and told him how proud I was to have such an honest student, who is ready to admit that he made a mistake and is doing t’shuva. I said to them: “You are such a yerei Shamayim. You know what to do – t’shuva – and you’ve actually done it!”

The goal is not for the Rebbe to tell the child what to do but rather, to set the stage and lay out the necessary information so that the child on his own draws the correct conclusion.

Another similar incident:

One morning, as I walked into class, Mendy ran over to me saying, “Rebbi, Rebbi! Dovid made fun of me and he called me a bad name.” I said: “Thanks for sharing it with me, I will take care of it IY”H.”

As we sat down to daven, I said to the class: “Why do we begin davening with ‘*Hareini mekabel olai mitzvas asay shel v’ahavta lera’yacha kamocho*?’” They naturally didn’t know. I had never told them.

I proceeded to tell them the story of the Frierdike Rebbe which explains that when Hashem, our Father, sees how His children are united together as one, He accepts our t’filla. I concluded: “We have a problem. One boy said something not nice to another boy. We know that this isn’t ahavas Yisroel. So how can we begin davening? We must take care of it before we begin

to daven.”

Immediately, Dovid turned to Mendy and said sincerely, “I’m sorry.”

Again, the point is, to feed the child the information and let him process it on his own. We must trust the children and believe in them. Once they are properly taught, they will draw their own conclusion and make the right decision.

One final episode:

One afternoon, I announced to the class: “Kinderlach, everyone can come to my desk to get a Crembo as a treat.”

They all came at once in a great commotion. I realized that I had to react somehow. I had two choices:

a) To tell them how wrong it was of them to come in that manner and send them back to their seats to come back like a mentch!

b) To ask them to go back to their seats and call them again, WITHOUT pointing out what they did wrong and how they are expected to walk to my desk.

I chose the latter option.

I calmly told them to sit down. Once they were all seated I repeated my announcement: “Kinderlach, everyone can come to my desk to get a Crembo as a treat.” I specifically did not say how I expect them to walk up to my desk. They gently got up from their seats and walked nicely over to my desk to get their Crembo. They had been taught enough times how to walk to my desk. They just needed a *reminder* to stop and think about that which they already knew.

By the same token:

It is beneficial to choose opportunities, as often as possible, to demonstrate to the child our trust and confidence in him that he will do the right thing in the proper time. This, in turn, will encourage him to live up to the behaviors that he knows are expected of him, and

he will strive not to let his parents and teachers down.

For example:

The policy of our class in regard to going to the bathroom (or getting a drink) in the middle of class is as follows: Since the Rambam and the Shulchan-Aruch deem it dangerous and against Halacha for one to refrain from relieving himself when necessary, I therefore, in the beginning of the year, let the children know the following rules:

a) The time to go for a drink or use the bathroom is during recess;

b) If a boy has an “emergency” (who is the teacher to determine what’s really going on in his stomach?!) and must leave the classroom during class, he may leave without asking me for permission. But this must be under the following conditions:

1) Only one boy at a time may go;

2) He should not waste time or talk;

3) When he returns, after washing hands and saying Asher Yatzar, he should sit down quietly;

4) Only one “emergency” allowed each day (or session).

5) If the “emergency” happens too often, he loses this privilege, unless he brings a doctor’s note.

(This policy also avoids the need to interrupt the lesson just to answer a child who needs to go to the bathroom.)

Fact: Most of the children have hardly taken advantage of this privilege. Those who did use the privilege have not abused it. Children feel proud to be trusted and will live up to the expectations.

PRAISE HASHEM

In Derech Mitzvosecha, Mitzvas Hallel, the Tzemach Tzedek asks: Why is it a mitzvah to praise Hashem? Does Hashem really need our praises?

The answer is, that by calling Hashem “Kind” or “Merciful”, we cause a *hashpaa* from Hashem to pass through that particular S’fira, thereby bring down to this world a G-dly flow for Refua, Parnasa, or the like. In the same way, when we praise a Yid for a particular good midda that he possesses, it is strengthened and revealed within him. From this we can learn a tremendous lesson in chinuch: To reveal a positive trait in a child, praise him for that midda.

The Rebbe writes similarly in a letter, that the Friedlike Rebbe would address a Yid as “*ish yerei Elokim*” (G-d fearing man) although it may not have seemed so evident to be so. This was, nevertheless, not an exaggeration, but rather the truth. Every Yid possesses the fear of Hashem naturally; it only has to be revealed.

The Rebbe also wrote to someone: “The proverb of our Rebbeim “*Tracht gut vet zain gut*” (think good and it will be good) applies to chinuch too. When we look at our child with a good eye, then he will conduct himself in the proper manner. How much more so when we speak to him in a positive way..”

EMPHASIZE THE GOOD AND BUILD A GOOD SELF-ESTEEM

Thus, even when a child has done something incorrect, if in some (however far-fetched) way it can be translated as a good act, we must seize the opportunity and emphasize the good. Here are some examples from my own experience:

We were in the middle of davening and Moishe’le raised his hand and asked, “Rebbi, where are we up to?” One might impulsively scold the child, “Now you wake up to ask?! Why haven’t you been davening until now? Find the place yourself!”

Instead, I used the opportunity to praise him: “Wow! Moishe’le is such a tzaddik’l. He cares soooo much about davening. He really wants to know where we’re up to, because he too wants to send diamonds up to Hashem’s crown by saying the heilige words of davening.”

Yanky was eating his snack and stuffed quite a large bite into his mouth. Shimmy commented to his friend Mendy: “Look at Yanky! He’s eating like a ...”

Mendy, in turn, repeated to me what Shimmy had said to him, while most of the class looked on. First I called Shimmy over, put my hand on his shoulder and said to the class: “Look kinderlach, Shimmy is sooo *eidel* that he just can’t stand to see someone eating in anything but an *eidele* manner.” I then quietly said to Shimmy: “Next time, try to notice the good things in others. Also, try to find a more *eidele* way of expressing yourself.”

Then, I called over Mendy and said (with the class listening): “I see that you love clean language, and you couldn’t stand hearing such words from Shimmy. It bothered you so much! Hashem is sooo proud of you. However, in the future, please be more careful not to speak Lashon Hara.”

Yes, in both cases, I pointed out the **positive** aspect of their action.

Then I turned to the entire class and reminded them the rule: “If someone bothers *you*, and you cannot work it out between yourselves, then you *should* tell Rabbi. This is not considered lashon ha’ra. Lashon ha’ra is only when you repeat something which one boy does to another.”

AND...HOW AM I?

In “Klalei HaChinuch V’HaHadracha,” the Rebbe underscores the utmost importance

“The proverb of our Rebbeim “Tracht gut vet zain gut” (think good and it will be good) applies to chinuch too. When we look at our child with a good eye, then he will conduct himself in the proper manner. How much more so when we speak to him in a positive way...”

of the teacher’s own introspection, to examine himself and make sure he is ethical and working on his own betterment. For only he who works on and is constantly educating *himself*, can take upon himself the holy task of being a mechanech to others.

However, says the Rebbe, if one is not fit to be a mechanech (educator) and takes for himself the cloak nonetheless, not only will this be of no benefit, but he may *chas v’shalom* ruin the child!

I heard the following story from my father shlita.

A Yid once came to the Friedlike Rebbe for yechidus and the Rebbe asked what his occupation is. He answered that he had tried to make a living by doing A, B and C, but, nothing worked out. As his last resort, he became a melamed, although he was not really suited for this position at all.

When the Friedlike Rebbe heard this, his holy face suddenly became very serious as he sternly looked at the Yid and said: “*Besser zol zain nor broit un zaltz oif daine tish aider avek-hargenen Yiddishe neshamos!*” (it would far better if you have only bread and salt on your table, rather than “murdering” Yiddishe neshamos).

On the other hand, the Rebbeim have promised us that whoever rightfully takes upon himself the holy task and privilege of educating Yiddishe kinderlach in the ways of

Hashem, will be rewarded from Hashem with lots of Yiddishe and chassidishe nachas from his own children.

Thus, we will prepare the Army of Hashem to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu, as the Rebbe has said, that we are now at the threshold of Geula, and therefore, all the Mitzvos and good deeds must be with the one and only goal, to lead us to Geula, *b’karov mamash*. Amen!

NOTES:

- 1) For some children, you might be THE ONLY ONE showing him love.
- 2) At the Friedlike Rebbe’s Bar Mitzva celebration, his father, the Rebbe Rashab, made a Farbrengen, during which the Bar-Mitzvah boy asked his father: “Why do we say ‘Hareini mekabel olai...’ before davening?” His father answered him: “The greatest pleasure for a father who has many children, is when he sees how they are all united and love each other. So, before we approach Hashem with our prayers and requests, we must first bring about, so to speak, a Nachas-Ruach to our Father in Heaven.” (Seifer HaSichos 5740, page 157).
- 3) This must be approached cautiously, proceeding according to the competence of the child in knowing how to handle the privilege of trust and independence.
- 4) Igros Kodesh vol. 4 page 114.
- 5) Igros Kodesh vol. 16 page 49.

HE BELIEVED IN THE BACHURIM

By Menachem Ziegelboim

*Thousands upon thousands of students benefitted from the hashpaa of the esteemed mashgiach and mashpia, the man who left an indelible impression deep in their hearts and souls during their developmental years, as they graduated from their childhood games to becoming serious T'mimim and dedicated "soldiers of the House of Dovid. * A brief biography of the mashgiach in Lud, who was beloved by all.*

Because Rabbi Chaim Ashkenazi passed away shortly before Pesach, his thousands of talmidim were unable to visit and console the family and tell what a tremendous impression this special educator and mashpia made on them. In the years they spent in the yeshiva in Lud, these talmidim from all over the country matured from boys into young adults, from playful kids into T'mimim, "Soldiers of the House of Dovid."

R' Ashkenazi played a dominant

role amongst the staff of teachers, mashgichim, mashpiim and administrators all hours of the day. He served as a father and mother, mashgiach and mashpia to the talmidim, without taking away from the responsibilities of the rest of the staff.

After he passed away, we touched upon many biographical details of his life, but due to the time constraints, barely touched on the very essence and central point of his career – chinuch. The

following article therefore, is devoted to this aspect of his life.

UNDERSTANDING HIS TALMIDIM

He started his work in chinuch after he was married when he was appointed as mashgiach in the mesivta in Lud. Two years later he was offered a job in what was called "charifta." After the Rebbe told him to find out whether this entailed *hasagas g'vul* he received the Rebbe's bracha.

For the next twenty years he worked as mashgiach and mashpia in the yeshiva and set thousands of talmidim on the path of Torah and Chassidishe conduct.

In his work at the mesivta, a division of the yeshiva for weaker boys, he gave his heart and soul to them. Yet after all his effort, when the first graduating class wanted to move on to the next level, not a single yeshiva g'dola was willing to take them. Instead of fighting, R' Ashkenazi asked Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Wilschansky to please open a yeshiva for them. This was the first class of the yeshiva in Tzfas which has grown into the largest Chabad yeshiva g'dola in the world.

The mesivta program later closed and R' Ashkenazi once again felt the pain of those bachurim who were not endowed with high scholastic abilities but still needed a yeshiva. He fought to have them accepted in the yeshiva in Lud and made sure to keep them involved within the framework of the yeshiva so they would succeed in navigating their student years until they could stand on their own two feet. Some of these bachurim did exceedingly well and became successful shluchim while others have important jobs in many Chabad mosdos.

One of those bachurim had a



Rabbi Chaim Ashkenazi a”h singing a Chassidishe niggun

hard time with Gemara because the learning standards were very high. R’ Ashkenazi put a lot into him so at least he would spend those three years in yeshiva before his inevitable entrance into the workforce. To the surprise of the entire staff, the bachur continued learning in yeshiva g’dola and later married a girl who wanted a “ben Torah” and he learns in Kollel till this day!

Upon the passing of R’ Ashkenazi, the grandmother of a Lubavitcher rosh yeshiva said she was mourning his loss. The rosh yeshiva wondered why, when they had no personal relationship. The grandmother responded emotionally: “Thanks to him, we have our son, your uncle. If not for Rabbi Ashkenazi, who knows where he would be today ...”

She said that this son was

accepted in yeshiva in Lud decades ago but was not successful in his learning despite many years of doing well in elementary school. The *hanhala* of the yeshiva decided to send him home. R’ Chaim worked on pinpointing the source of the problem and discovered that the boy did not know how to read!

Back then, they did not know how to properly diagnose dyslexia and they didn’t realize that a bachur like him could be very intelligent despite his challenges. He had succeeded in elementary school by memorizing things to cover up his disability. R’ Ashkenazi fought for him to stay in yeshiva while simultaneously referring the parents to a place that deals with reading problems. Today he is a Chassidishe man, a father and grandfather to

generations of Chassidim.

R’ Ashkenazi was able to really get to know his talmidim and figure out what their problems were. There was a boy orphaned of his mother who approached him the night before a big test. The boy said he wasn’t ready for the test since he hadn’t begun studying yet and there was no way he would be ready in time. R’ Ashkenazi told him to come home with him that night, despite the late hour.

When they arrived there, R’ Ashkenazi prepared a thermos of hot coffee for him and said he should sit there and learn and he would definitely do well on the test. R’ Ashkenazi realized that the bachur hadn’t come for advice on how to study for the test but had yearned for an atmosphere of warmth and love. When he received it, he had the ability to sit

and learn.

His educational approach was unique. When R' Chaim found out that a talmid had offended someone, he would send the boy to the grocery store to buy wafers with which to appease his friend. One time, the offended talmid said he didn't want wafers but he needed money. R' Ashkenazi bought the wafers from him and gave them out to his children.

His amazing ability to get a child on his feet came from understanding the talmid. A boy once went home for Shabbos without permission. Talmidim of the yeshiva of those years are no doubt surprised because everyone remembers that when R' Ashkenazi was the mashgiach, he was on top of these things and you couldn't get away with anything.

Anyway, when the boy saw that he had been successful he tried it again. The third time, R' Ashkenazi assigned him to learn a long maamer Chassidus. Until he learned it properly and was ready to be tested on it, he was to remain at home. The bachur belligerently informed his parents that he had no plans of learning the maamer. He said he didn't care if he didn't go back to that yeshiva and he was happy to attend Toras Emes in Yerushalayim. When his parents saw that his mind was made up they went to Lud and met with R' Ashkenazi and begged him to take their son back without learning the maamer.

R' Ashkenazi insisted that the boy had broken the rules and he had to be punished, and if he refused to do the assignment, he could learn in Yerushalayim.

The mother pleaded with him, saying that they wanted their son to learn in a yeshiva close to home where they could keep an eye on him. When R' Ashkenazi saw that the parties involved were stalwart in their position, he put his head

down on the desk for a while and then he got up, banged on the table and said, "I will submit my pride." And he told the parents to send their son back to yeshiva. He gave the boy a short, easy maamer to learn and the boy resumed learning in the yeshiva. This talmid was very successful in his learning and today he fills several important Torah positions.

OILEM'ISHE IDEAS

R' Ashkenazi supervised the learning of Nigleh and followed the bachurim's progress in their study of Chassidus. He also knew that beyond the "letters of Torah" there is the extra Chassidishe neshama which the young boys had to acquire. This is something that doesn't have clear rules and can't be quantified.

He himself spent his youth in the yeshiva in Lud and then in Rishon L'Tziyon by the mashpia, R' Shaul Brook from whom he got so much and absorbed this additional Chassidishe neshama. R' Chaim Shaul shaped R' Chaim's Chassidishe identity and it was from him that R' Chaim learned the Chassidishe attitude towards the "assumptions of the world."

In his youth, he related, he planned on having a home one day that would be run modestly and without luxuries as he had seen by his mashpia. His ambition was to have one metal plate and one spoon which he and his wife would use alternately. This dream didn't materialize exactly but his life was one of simplicity.

R' Chaim Shaul disparaged the dictates of "this world" and this is the reason he never wore a shirt because this was "modern" dress. If you knew R' Ashkenazi, you know that this was his approach in life.

A man in Kfar Chabad recently said that his being a Chassid was

something he owed to R' Chaim Ashkenazi. He had learned in a Litvishe yeshiva where the emphasis was on external appearance. The roshei yeshiva were very particular about dignified dress as is fitting for a ben Torah. This bachur once showed up to bring the rosh yeshiva his meal and he opened the door to his office without knocking. All the roshei yeshiva were in the office without their hats and jackets on and when they saw him walk in they shouted that he should leave. He hurriedly exited and it was only once they had put on their hats and jackets that they called to him to enter. That was the spirit of the yeshiva he was in.

One day he arrived at the yeshiva in Lud and at the end of Shabbos he visited R' Ashkenazi at home to discuss the yeshiva with him. When he walked in he found R' Ashkenazi sitting in the living room and learning from a volume on the table and he was wearing woolen tzitzis without a shirt.

R' Ashkenazi invited him in and told him to sit down and then he said, "Just a minute," and left the room. The bachur was sure he went to put on a shirt, sirtuk and hat, but his assumption was mistaken. R' Ashkenazi returned with a tray of refreshments for him. Then he sat down to talk and said, "If this is the truth, then there too – in the yeshiva you came from – it's true; but if it's not true here, then over there it isn't true either."

This, plus R' Ashkenazi's manner and his not caring about externals, pleased the bachur and he transferred to the yeshiva in Lud. Today he is a Lubavitcher Chassid who lives in Kfar Chabad.

In general, he got from R' Chaim Shaul an attitude of disdain towards all sorts of honors. Up until a few years ago he would run

from honors such as being sandek or saying brachos under the chuppa. It was only when he took over the rabbanus in Tel Aviv that he agreed to fulfill these roles, seeing that it made the baalei simcha happy.

As for the Chassidishe hergesh that he gave his talmidim, the following gives us a glimpse:

When he first started working at the yeshiva, there was a bachur, one of many, who didn't stick it out in yeshiva and left and was drafted into the army. Some years later, R' Ashkenazi met him at a bus station and the fellow told him about his life. "I have everything I ever dreamed of," and he enumerated the things he enjoyed, "but the truth is that I don't enjoy any of it and it's all because of your Tanya classes! After learning Tanya with you I can't enjoy all the fun I have."

Some years later, R' Ashkenazi got word that the young man had dropped all his "fun" and had become frum again. He married and has a frum home.

COMPASSIONATE FATHER

Only a few people know about R' Ashkenazi's tremendous scholarship and his broad knowledge of Shas. When he was a meishiv in the preparatory period the bachurim glimpsed his *bekius* in Shas because whenever they asked him something, no matter the sugya, he knew about it. Indeed, as a bachur he learned many tractates that aren't usually learned in yeshivos and he acquired extensive knowledge of Shas.

During the years that he worked as a mashgiach in the yeshiva in Lud he would test the talmidim who learned Gemara by heart. Some of them learned mesechtos that were different than



He had time and a smile for everyone

"I have everything I ever dreamed of," and he enumerated the things he enjoyed, "but the truth is that I don't enjoy any of it and it's all because of your Tanya classes! After learning Tanya with you I can't enjoy all the fun I have."

the ones learned in yeshiva and they discovered that he had a good knowledge of them. When a teacher was absent for the in-depth shiur, he was always able to successfully substitute for him.

He never made a big deal of his role as mashgiach or his prodigious knowledge. He never refrained from doing anything that was needed to keep the learning going smoothly in yeshiva. During intercession he would erect bookcases in the yeshiva and fix whatever was needed so the new z'man would get off to a good start.

He was a compassionate father figure and a strict mashgiach, but one role was never at the expense

of the other. They actually blended well together.

He was alert not only to the spiritual state of the talmidim but also to their material state. He kept tabs on who needed financial help, who needed money for a new suit or for trips to yeshiva and back. He funded suits and hats for bachurim who were unable to buy them or for those who did not come from Lubavitcher homes and whose parents refused to pay for this attire. He subsidized shmura matza and sometimes gave it for free to these talmidim.

Today the yeshiva in Tzfas has a big chesed organization which distributes suits and hats and the Kollel Chabad sells matza at low



Public menorah lighting on Rothschild Boulevard

prices, but few know that the one who started these projects was Rabbi Chaim Ashkenazi. The selling of matzos, which he initiated, became such a big enterprise that it needed numerous people to take care of it and that is when he asked Kollel Chabad to take it over.

DEVELOPING POTENTIAL

He always encouraged talmidim to do more than meet minimum requirements. When he discerned that certain talmidim excelled in a particular area, he would encourage them to use their talents for the yeshiva. For example, he knew that a few talmidim had an interest in bibliography and were good at looking up Torah information and he urged them to publish a compilation of sichos of the Rebbe about matters concerning the T'mimim. Thousands of T'mimim over the years have benefited from this book called *Askila B'Derech Tamim*.

He also put in a lot of effort to encourage the learning of Gemara

by heart. At one point, the yeshiva had a project where they were offering half the cost of a ticket to the Rebbe for each student who was tested on 300 daf Gemara by heart. R' Ashkenazi devoted many hours to encouraging and helping the talmidim with this project. Some bachurim were hard to test for various reasons. One bachur was very bright, a genius who had been accepted to the yeshiva at a young age, before bar mitzva. He had a hard time repeating the Gemara and commentaries word for word and instead he reviewed the content of what was said. R' Ashkenazi spent a lot of time testing him and it required that he be very knowledgeable in the material. Thanks to his patience, the bachur passed the test on 300 dafim and got the prize.

The following Tishrei, the boy went to the Rebbe along with his father. While in America, they also visited relatives in Boston. There they davened in Rabbi J.B. Soloveitchik's shul. One of the people there told Rav Soloveitchik that this bachur learns in a Chabad yeshiva and learned 300 daf

Gemara by heart.

R' Soloveitchik was skeptical (the bachur was very young and still had a round, childish face) and dismissed it as "Lubavitcher bubbe maisos." The person suggested that he test the bachur and see for himself. R' Soloveitchik did so and the bachur answered all the questions skillfully and fluently, citing Gemara, Rashi, Tosafos and mefarshim. This made a great Kiddush Sheim Lubavitch.

When R' Ashkenazi heard about it he pointed out that it was because the bachur hadn't learned the material mechanically, without comprehension, because then he wouldn't have been able to remember what he had learned the following year.

MAN OF ACTION

In the final years of his life, R' Ashkenazi served as rav of the Chabad k'hilla in Tel Aviv. He slowly gathered around him young people who wanted to learn Chassidus. With his years of experience he was able to assess each one of them and reach their hearts.

One Shabbos morning, as he walked from his home on Rothschild Boulevard to the old Chabad shul on Nachalat Binyamin, he saw a young person with a refined face, albeit without a beard, who was wearing a polo shirt along with the dark pants that religious Jews wear. When the man asked where he could find a shul, R' Ashkenazi took him along to the Chabad shul and gave him tea and cake. He saw that the boy was starving and carefully asked him about himself and where he spent the night.

It turned out that he had slept on the beach and had nothing to eat. He remained for davening and the farbrengen that followed. He began to open up and said that he

One of the people there told Rav Soloveitchik that this bachur learns in a Chabad yeshiva [under R' Ashkenazi] and learned 300 daf Gemara by heart. R' Soloveitchik was skeptical (the bachur was very young and still had a round, childish face) and dismissed it as "Lubavitcher bubbe maisos." The person suggested that he test the bachur and see for himself...



**Rabbi Ashkenazi
at a Chassidishe farbrengen**

was married and the father of three children and he had left home. R' Ashkenazi discerned that the reason was rooted in psychological issues and so he took him home with him on Motzaei Shabbos and had him stay for a few days, ignoring the difficulties this entailed and his apprehension. He finally convinced him to contact his father, who picked him up and helped him deal with his problems.

His home was open to young people, each with a story of his own. They would come, mainly on Shabbos, and enjoy the Rebbetzin's hot meal and what the Rabbi had to say. One of the regulars was a young man who came with two bags, one for his clothes and the other held a blanket. He was homeless and so hungry that it was often hard for him to wait until after Kiddush.

He said that his parents had cut all ties with him after he had become interested in Judaism. He would even prepare divrei Torah to say at the table and when he was asked how he knew so much he said that he read a lot.

R' Ashkenazi treated him with patience and much kindness,

despite the fact that his appearance as well as his treatment of other people did him nothing to win friends. He tried to help the man in various ways and helped him get into a yeshiva for baalei t'shuva, but he didn't last anywhere.

A year and a half ago he moved to a different city and was not often in touch anymore. A half year ago, a religious woman called R' Ashkenazi. Her husband holds an important position in the Torah world. In tears she said that this bachur is her son and they were trying to contact him for a long time. A relative had seen him in the company of a Lubavitcher in the city where he lived and when he tried find some way to connect he found out that the bachur told the Lubavitcher that there was one person in the world who cared about him and his name is Rabbi Chaim Ashkenazi of Tel Aviv. She asked him to find a way to help her son.

Rebbetzin Ashkenazi said, "In the area of Rothschild Boulevard there are many kids from religious homes who dropped out and live or work there. We hosted many of them for Shabbos meals and my husband was mekarev them. We

heard good things from some of them, from putting t'fillin on again to becoming frum; some of them married and have religious homes.

"On the Friday night after Pesach one of these boys showed up (a boy whose parents sat Shiva for him) for the Shabbos meal. That is when he discovered that my husband was gone. He burst into tears and said that the rabbi had met him a few days before he died and tried to convince him to go to yeshiva in Neve Tzedek. In a voice choked with tears he said, 'The Rav hugged me.'"

On the way to the Shabbaton for the T'mimim on Shabbos HaGadol, the last Shabbos of his life, he spoke with the passengers of the car he was in and related that when the mashpia R' Alter Simchovitz was asked before he died where he wanted to be buried (i.e. there are more and less expensive places), his answer was, "In the ground!"

When they asked him again he repeated his answer firmly. R' Ashkenazi was impressed by how kavod meant nothing to R' Alter. And clearly, he followed his example.

GETTING BACK TO THE SOURCES

By Nosson Avrohom

Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry

R' Sholom Kroitoro, who returned to his roots through studying the Rebbe's sichos in depth, discovered that many people are simply unaware of the wealth of Torah and halachic sources that serve as the basis for establishing that the Rebbe is the prophet of the generation, Melech HaMoshiach, and chai v'kayam. He has returned to the sources again, this time on a more Talmudic level, and he has published three s'farim overflowing with Torah sources on "the prophecy in our times," "Moshiach among the living," and "positively Moshiach."

R' Sholom Kroitoro was born and raised in the Shchunat Dalet neighborhood of Beersheva and received a traditional education studying in a religious elementary school. He later continued his studies at the Israel Air Force technical school, where his observance of Torah and mitzvos regrettably began to dissolve. While he still put on t'fillin each

day, he no longer kept Shabbos. Afterwards, he assumed a highly classified technical position in the Israel Air Force. He refused to discuss his military service in much detail, stating simply that "we dealt in top secret matters".

"When I concluded my military service, I was accepted for a position as a nuclear researcher in Dimona. It was there, of all places,

that my *pintele Yid* started to spark after many long years of distancing myself from Torah and mitzvah observance. After eight months of study and training, my conscience suddenly began to reawaken within me, tormenting me about the fact that I wasn't keeping Shabbos. Since there wasn't much chance of my observing Shabbos and Yom Tov at my current job, I decided to resign.

"Those closest to me couldn't understand what had happened to me. I had forfeited a high salary with unusually good working conditions in order to begin keeping Shabbos. Today, I know that my *pintele Yid* had begun to illuminate, but at the time I couldn't explain the reason for my stubbornness. I didn't even understand it myself.

"I started new career in photography together with my brother. The business soon began to grow, prosper, and flourish. We invested considerable funds and much effort, and success shined upon us. Within a relatively brief period of time, we had managed to open up two more stores. But we wouldn't settle for that, and when we saw the money flowing in, we also opened a pizza parlor, which proved just as successful. Later we added another venture to our growing list of businesses – a

racetrack for mini-cars.

“Keeping Shabbos was the most difficult trial that faced us. On the one hand, the desire for Shabbos observance burned deep within my bones, although I really didn’t understand where this feeling came from. However, on the other hand, we wanted to pay back all the loans that we had taken out as quickly as possible. Therefore, we tried here and there to operate the businesses on Shabbos through a variety of tricks. But the reality merely gave us a slap in the face: Despite all the logical expectations, we suffered severe and totally inexplicable financial losses. A classic example was our racetrack business, a venture which should have blossomed on Shabbos, yet amazingly every Shabbos afternoon, we had strange mechanical breakdowns.

“It was impossible to avoid seeing the Hand of G-d in all this. Once a brand new engine conked out, and on another occasion, one of the cars stopped moving for no apparent reason. As a result, we naturally decided that we had to stop working on Shabbos. We had tried to arrange things so that a Gentile ran the place for us on Shabbos, as we had heard that this might provide a possible halachic solution to the problem. Nevertheless, this option brought us no success either, and we finally made the decision more adamantly: No Jew, no Gentile – the businesses would not operate on Shabbos.

“Though I still did not wear a kippa, nor did I live my life according to Torah and mitzvos, the whole concept of Shabbos shone within me. One of our stores was located in a shopping center, and the management decided one week to conduct business on Shabbos. While all the other competing storefronts opened their doors, we steadfastly

refused and remained closed. The shopping center management eventually decided to reconsider, and everything was once again closed on Shabbos.”

NOT FRUM, BUT HE DOES MIVTZA'IM

One of his favorite pastimes was taking trips around the world. During every such journey, he would take his camera with him to



The rabbi had begun to give over a class in Rambam. When he came to the laws of prophecy, I suddenly remembered the prophetic stories that my uncle had told me about the Lubavitcher Rebbe, and I asked: ‘If so, then isn’t the Lubavitcher Rebbe a prophet?’

document all the wonders of the Creation. “I don’t know why, but even during those journeys, I always made sure to take my t’fillin with me. I would put them on each morning, and when other Jews would join the trip, I would make the effort to put t’fillin on them as well. You have to understand: I wasn’t religious, but my soul was apparently already connected to the Rebbe and Lubavitch. There is no other rational explanation.

“On one of these trips, I even organized a Kiddush for the entire tour group. Before the onset of Shabbos, I put t’fillin on with all the group members. On Friday night, I gathered everyone together in the hotel’s dining hall, put out challos and a bottle of wine that I had brought from Eretz Yisroel, and we had a communal Kiddush. At the time, I was unaware of the prohibition against eating food cooked by Gentiles, but it was most important to me that Jews should come together and proudly observe their traditions. The hotel management initially wouldn’t allow us to go into the dining hall with the wine and challos, but I raised a fuss and no one went in until we were permitted to bring these items inside. I remember how certain group members, including those with no religious background, told how they recalled memories of their grandparents’ homes, and I was deeply moved.”

Today, R’ Sholom knows he was actually doing the mitzvaim of the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, but then he simply did it without understanding why, despite the fact that he personally went around without a kippa or tzitzis, living a free and unfettered lifestyle.

IF SO, ISN’T THE REBBE A PROPHET?

The process of his return to Yiddishkait began four years ago, and his connection to the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, began a year later, after the passing of his father. “I started coming to the neighborhood synagogue to say Kaddish, and I suddenly found myself also attending Torah classes between Mincha and Maariv. I would listen to the shiurim given by the rabbi of the synagogue, and my curiosity continued to intensify.

“Until then, I had naively thought that keeping Shabbos could be summed up by not watching television and not traveling by car. The rabbi’s classes in halacha were an illumination for me and I got stronger in my commitment to Judaism. The Jewish spark within me had begun to shine with full force. After I started learning the laws of Shabbos, I asked the rabbi a question that had been bothering me: I would go with my wife and

children for meals at the home of my in-laws, who were presently not Shabbos observant. On Shabbos, they would heat up the food in an oven – could I eat in their home? The rabbi replied with a philosophical answer that didn’t satisfy me. I had been educated according to the values of honesty and sincerity, and I looked for something more uplifting and clear-cut, not merely something without any firm commitment.

“I realized that if I wanted to make further progress in my Torah and mitzvah observance, I had to dedicate much more time to learning Torah. I devoted all my free time to basic study, learning everything from the very beginning: Chumash, Mishna, Gemara, and Jewish law. When I didn’t understand something, I asked.

“Though I still wasn’t Torah observant, I had a warm place in my heart for Chabad chassidus and the Lubavitcher Rebbe. My uncle, Shalom Koitel, who has operated the Union Car Service in Crown Heights for many years, had become a big supporter of the Rebbe. During his visits to Eretz Yisroel, he would fascinate us with stories he had heard about the miracles and wonders the Rebbe performed. As a result of these stories, our family had a tremendous sense of appreciation for the Rebbe.

“To my regret, despite the fact that I would visit my uncle in New York, I didn’t see the need to visit ‘Beis Chayeinu’. My business-partner/brother did visit the Rebbe, and he even filmed the Rebbe and his chassidim. I recall that when he returned to Eretz Yisroel and showed us the video, it left a very deep impression upon me, but life’s routines soon made me forget it all.

“Yet, these routines stopped all at once one evening in the

synagogue where I regularly davened. The rabbi had begun to give over a class in Rambam, according to an orderly learning schedule. When he came to the laws of prophecy, I suddenly remembered the prophetic stories that my uncle had told me about the Lubavitcher Rebbe, and I asked: 'If so, then isn't the Lubavitcher Rebbe a prophet?'

"The rabbi was stunned by my reaction. He tried to explain that while the Rebbe has *ruach ha'kodesh*, he is not in the category of a prophet. I didn't relent, and I claimed that the Rambam did not make a distinction between prophecy and *ruach ha'kodesh*, and if the Rebbe fit all the parameters set by the Rambam, then he is a prophet.

"At the time that I said this, I didn't know that Lubavitchers believed that the Rebbe is the prophet of the generation. This conclusion came to me out of pure innocence."

THE MAGICAL WORLD OF THE UNVARNISHED TRUTH

Despite the great appreciation he felt for the synagogue's rabbi, R' Sholom understood that if he wanted to find the truth, he had to continue learning. "One day, a good friend told me that he has a unique seifer with a collection of the Rebbe's sichos according to the weekly Torah portion. I bought the seifer, and when I started to read it, I jumped for joy. It didn't merely contain explanations on what had been in the past, but also a whole world of laws and customs meant to guide us along the path in our times. For me, this was a tremendous innovation and I studied it with great fervor. I thought that this constituted the Rebbe's entire teachings, until another friend invited me to daven



R' Sholom Kroitoro, before becoming a baal t'shuva, on a visit to a synagogue in Romania

in the Chabad minyan.

"I started to daven, and in the middle of the repetition of the Shmoneh Esrei, I heard everyone breaking out in song. I asked what was happening, and they explained to me that they were singing chassidic niggunim of the Chabad Rebbeim designed to create greater enthusiasm in prayer. It restored my soul. I detected that there was something special taking place, and I realized that this was the way to reach the path of the king.

"I soon acquired a kippa and pair of woolen tzitzis, and I began davening out of a Nusach Ari siddur. Not long afterwards, I decided to start wearing a suit and hat. My soul was devotedly connected to the teachings of chassidus.

"I joined the ranks of the chassidim in body and spirit. When I realized that the Likkutei Sichos was merely a small portion of the Rebbe's teachings, I was soon exposed to a vast and magical world of unvarnished truth. Not a week went by when I didn't finish at least ten sichos. The next stage was to learn the Rebbe's maamarim, and I saw this, too, as a vast and magical world,

something simply unparalleled in scope.

DISCOVERY: DVAR MALCHUS

"Throughout this entire period, I still had never heard about the sichos from 5751-5752. I became aware of them through chance conversations with Chabad chassidim who said that the Rebbe is Moshiach and he is *chai v'kayam*. At first, I was shocked. How do these people have the courage to say such things?

"At one farbrengen, I actually became quite resentful over the whole subject. 'What's the matter with you people?' I objected. I was looking for some basis to their claim.

"Then, I somehow came across the sichos of 'D'var Malchus'. The first sicha that I learned was from Gimmel Tammuz 5751, 'the sun stood still in Givon'. I saw some very deep and wondrous things in this sicha, far more than I had ever learned in the sichos from the early years. Suddenly, I began to see the revelations in the sichos as clear as day. Moshiach – his name is Menachem, eternal life, Beis Rabbeinu Sh'B'Bavel. *Ribbono*

Shel Olam, what is all this?

"I understood that this was apparently something that I didn't know about until now. One day, I met two bachurim at an Igros Kodesh stand near my place of work. As I asked them for the weekly 'D'var Malchus', they suggested that I write a letter to the Rebbe. At the time, I knew nothing about this concept whatsoever. Writing to the Rebbe? How does it work? After they explained the whole process to me, I wrote about several matters, and I was privileged to receive an amazingly clear answer. I felt that I was becoming more and more connected to the Rebbe, and I wanted to understand what the Rebbe really wanted from me.

"I acquired all the 'D'var Malchus' sichos and studied them in great depth. At the start of each sicha, I had numerous questions and inquiries, but when I finished the sicha, I often felt that the Rebbe had provided me with all the answers. Furthermore, in those instances when I was still left with questions, the answers came in the following sicha.

"With each subsequent sicha, I realized that we were talking about a continual sequence of sichos with a clear approach to the process of Redemption. Each time I saw that the Rebbe was discussing Moshiach, eternal life, or prophecy, I marked the more 'unique' sections of the sicha with a color highlighter so I could go back and review them later in greater detail. Thus, slowly but surely, I succeeded in coming full circle with my conclusions: If I am a chassid who believes that every word the Rebbe utters is true, then the Rebbe is alive and he is Moshiach.

"I established a connection with the Chabad yeshiva in Be'er Sheva, under the administration of Rabbi Yirmiyahu Kalifa. They gave me

much spiritual strength, not to mention several previously issued kuntreisim, such as 'Shluchei Adoneinu', 'Shlita', 'Emuna L'Lo P'sharot', and translated sichos on the eternal nature of Yaakov Avinu and Moshe Rabbeinu. I felt myself drawn to the yeshiva's special atmosphere and the true sincerity with which they accepted every word of the Rebbe. In the meantime, I continued my work at the photography shop, but I was constantly annoyed by the fact that non-chassidic Jews didn't understand that the Rebbe is Melech HaMoshiach and chai v'kayam, as based in Torah and halacha."

At every opportunity, when he met his friends from the Sephardic synagogue, he instilled them with the faith that the Rebbe is chai v'kayam. He brought proofs from various sources that the faith has a basis in Torah and that we must believe in the words of Torah and its sages, not just what we perceive with our eyes. In the letters that he was privileged to receive from the Rebbe via Igros Kodesh, he persistently saw encouragement for spreading the wellsprings of chassidus and opening Torah classes, and thus he found himself turning into a kind of mashpia in matters of Torah study and avoda among his friends and colleagues.

R' Sholom's mind was constantly churning away for ideas on how to present and publicize the concept, in order that the entire generation will know that there is a prophet in our times. He wanted people to obtain far more easily that which he had acquired only after much toil and effort.

"Two years ago, on Chaf Ches Nissan, a farbrengen took place in Kfar Chabad, organized by 'Matte Moshiach', and one of the speakers there was HaTamim Ben-Tzion Gagola. He captivated those in attendance with the story of his

tortuous path to the teachings of chassidus and the many unanswered questions he posed to rabbanim on the subject of Moshiach. At the conclusion of his speech, he proposed that someone assemble all the Torah sources that discuss the issue of prophecy.

"Since this subject had occupied much of my time, I decided to take on the project. My journey to Chabad was exactly the same as this bachur, spurred by my realization that the Rebbe is a prophet. I saw that no organized seifer had been published dealing primarily with the concept of prophecy in our generation. There are s'farim that explain how the Rebbe is a prophet, such as the excellent seifer written by Rabbi Wolpo. Similarly, there are s'farim that explain how the Rebbe is Moshiach. But there still had not been any seifer that presented the Torah sources on the existence of prophecy in our times.

"A chassid doesn't do anything without consulting the Rebbe, and I put my plans in writing and placed them in a volume of Igros Kodesh. The Rebbe's answer appears in Vol. 2, pg. 283, a letter filling two pages on the great importance of printing and distributing s'farim. I needed nothing more than that, and I initiated a marathon of activities. The bachur who spoke at that farbrengen helped me a great deal. He would receive questions from rabbanim, and I would answer them according to the Torah sources that I had already learned. This served as the basis for the responsa section of the seifer. The project was most intensive, and I worked day and night, until we were finally privileged to turn out the finished product.

Every seifer has its own unique quality, what's unique about yours?

I won't deny the fact that I took

the idea for the structuring this seifer from the excellent work by Rabbi Shlomo Majeski entitled “*Likkutei Mekoros*”. He issued his own seifer with photos of the actual Torah sources. His s’farim deal with the subject of faith in the Rebbe as Melech HaMoshiach and chai v’kayam. I decided to adopt the same approach and put out a similar seifer about prophecy in our times, also containing photos of the relevant Torah sources.

The seifer bring the sources exactly as they are written, without any commentary. This is something tremendous, as it allows the truth to cry out from the seifer itself. It provides a response to all those questions that could possibly be asked, and it proves that we’re not talking about chassidic ‘feelings’, but the unvarnished truth of Torah and halacha. I give over classes among the Sephardic community, and I have found that the easiest way to explain matters is to quote the sources. It’s difficult to argue against what is written.

The s’farim we have published also contain things taken from Rabbi Chaim Sasson’s seifer ‘*Ata Yadati*’ and Rabbi Wolpo’s s’farim. In general, the selections of kuntreisim coming out of 770 and the Chabad yeshivos constitute a marvelous collection, a literal treasure full of knowledge. However, all this wonderful material is only geared for Chabad insiders. But what purpose does that serve?

I took all the sources and assembled them exactly as stated, without adding a thing. I delved into all the s’farim. For example, take the responsa of *Divrei Yatziv* or *Beis Shlomo*, where it is written explicitly that there is prophecy in our generation. The only thing that I did was to emphasize the relevant points. Similarly, I occasionally added a few words about what we



When we succeed in explaining to a Jew that opened a seifer and learned that the Rebbe is halachically a prophet, then he will understand that he has a Torah obligation to listen to his words, believe in them, and implement them.

learn from one subject or another. I usually didn’t interfere and let the truth speak for itself.

While you were working at the photography store, what made you continue investing your time in putting out s’farim?

The Rebbe’s brachos and the endless encouragement. We wanted to publish the first seifer leading up to one of the big Chabad gatherings, but the problem was that the job was quite considerable and we wanted to add some more concepts. We also thought that if we print it for a kinus, we could put out two hundred digital print copies and

the larger quantity could be printed the regular way. However, we were concerned that people who buy the seifer and see it later in a wider format might feel that they were misled. I asked the Rebbe, and I received an answer that simply amazed me. The letter was addressed to Rabbi Matusof, who was then serving on the Rebbe’s shlichus in Morocco.

In effect, the Rebbe wrote that he didn’t know how many s’farim he would need in Morocco, but he should print an amount that would enable him to send two hundred copies to Eretz HaKodesh and another ten here. I didn’t need a

clearer answer than that. In fact, we succeeded in putting in everything we thought, and thanks to the Rebbe's open miracles, the seifer was printed in time for that kinus.

Prior to the printing of two additional s'farim, I merited to receive an answer that was no less amazing. I have family members whose children suffer from Lou Gehrig's disease. I wrote about this to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe gave a bracha with a request that the family members should participate in the printing of the s'farim. The letter continued with a bull's-eye of an answer: 'They should immediately print the two volumes he has concerning Chabad...and how good is a word in time.' I got to work right away.

Several months have passed since these s'farim have come out. Have they achieved their purpose?

Only G-d can answer that. But I'll tell you about something that happened to me not long ago. A young man from a Litvishe yeshiva came into the store where I worked, and we started a conversation that eventually turned to the subject of Moshiach and the Redemption. I customarily do mivtzaim with the Jewish customers while they wait for their pictures. When he realized that I was a Lubavitcher chassid, he started to challenge me. 'Who permitted the wearing of sheitels?' I replied that there's a seifer written by Rabbi Wolpo, "*Leket Shichechat HaPeia*", which explains everything. Furthermore, this was a directive from the Rebbe, and since the Rebbe is classified as a prophet, we must listen to his voice.

At this point, he became very upset and agitated. "What are you talking about? A prophet? There's no prophecy in our generation!"

I've heard such statements

before on countless occasions. I opened the seifer "*Nevua B'Yameinu*", and I showed him his mistake. He called another friend, who had apparently opened a seifer or two in his lifetime. The latter suggested that he ask me a few questions, and I responded to them according to the sources. I learned that this friend davened at a shul near my house, and we agreed that he would review the seifer and we would discuss it on Shabbos. When we met, he admitted that he had read the seifer and recognized the truth, but his rav had forbidden him to speak with me on the subject. We therefore see that when the matter is presented clearly, they have nothing to say...

What was so important about the subject of "prophecy in our times" that you chose to focus on it?

As chassidim, we constantly publicize the concept of Moshiach, while we almost never deal with the issue of prophecy, despite the fact that it is the root of the whole matter. If a prophet says that he's Moshiach, we must believe him. If we publicize that there is prophecy and the Rebbe is a prophet, it becomes much easier and less complicated to publicize that the Rebbe is Moshiach. On the one hand, it's a difficult task to explain the concept of prophecy. However, when we succeed in explaining to a Jew that opened a seifer and learned that the Rebbe is halachically a prophet, then he will understand that he has a Torah obligation to listen to his words, believe in them, and implement them.

You meet people from all walks of life in your work. Is the world ready for the Redemption?

First of all, since that's what the Rebbe said, then this is the true reality. Whether people see this with their physical eyes or not has

no consequence.

In addition, the Rebbe opened our eyes to look for the depth and greater inner meaning, and it is definitely possible to see the world's readiness for the Redemption. I meet people from all sectors of the population. Adults have a much easier time in accepting the fact that the Rebbe is Moshiach. They have read in the papers throughout their lives about the realization of the Rebbe's prophecies, one by one, from the Six Day War to the waves of Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union. The avoda with younger people is much more complex, and you first have to explain to them about the Rebbe's activities throughout the world. When they understand this, they accept the idea".

*

As we mentioned earlier, after the release of his first seifer, R' Sholom published two more s'farim – "*Moshiach Vadai*" (Positively Moshiach) and "*Moshiach M'HaChaim*" (Moshiach Among The Living), in the same format as the first seifer – a collection of various halachic and Talmudic sources. "I have seen that there is tremendous confusion among us. It is clear to everyone that the Rebbe is Moshiach. Yet, our eyes seem to see the opposite of life, and therefore I have heard many claims of 'Moshiach among the dead', and there are chassidim who follow the customs of mourning, *r"l*. In the seifer 'Moshiach M'HaChaim', I bring Torah sources in general and the Rebbe's teachings in particular that we must only rely upon the words and wisdom of Torah, and not upon what we see with our physical eyes."

These three s'farim bring the sources and explain all the crucially important subjects of

these times, including the halachic ruling of the Rambam. "The unique nature of these s'farim is how they bring the sources exactly as they are in the original texts, with just a short referral or explanation. The Rebbe speaks much about the quality of learning directly from the Torah sources, and we see how the ability to influence and explain to Jews who are not Chabad chassidim comes when we show them that this is not something that we manufactured, that everything is based upon halachic texts.

"A new edition of the Tanya was recently printed in Be'er Sheva, and among those in attendance at the ceremony was a young Breslover chassid. I sat near him during the festive meal that followed, and as I have been accustomed to do, I began a conversation with him about a variety of subjects, among them the concept of the Rebbe as Melech HaMoshiach. When he heard that I believe that the Rebbe is chai v'kayam, he became angry

and said that he didn't want to hear such things. Unperturbed by his reaction, I asked him several questions on Gemara in Tractate Taanis, which speaks about how Yaakov Avinu didn't die, and the story of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi in Tractate K'subos, etc., and we discussed the matter at length. It was most important to him to understand if what I said had a basis in Torah sources. We opened the Gemaras and other texts, and he was stunned. I eventually showed him the seifer '*Nevua B'Yameinu*' and proved him to him that the Rebbe is a prophet.

"This young man was actually a Torah scholar, the type that really sits and learns. He asked all the standard questions that a student of Talmud would be expected to ask, and he left in a state of sheer astonishment. Indeed, it was simply impossible to bring anything against such clear sources. An hour and a half later, he said to me, 'Look, due to your enthusiasm and knowledge of the Torah sources, I can accept what

you have said here. But I just don't understand: I have met many Lubavitcher chassidim, yet not a single one of them has ever explained this subject to me.'

"I gave the young man the seifer '*Nevua B'Yameinu*', and today he has become the Rebbe's ambassador in the Breslover yeshiva. It's interesting to note that after Maariv, at the conclusion of the event, I caught a glimpse of him without his noticing that I was looking in his direction, and I saw him proclaiming 'Yechi Adoneinu' with great enthusiasm. Thus, a new chassid was born within the span of two hours.

"Just as the Rebbe has said, the most direct and smoothest path to living with Moshiach is through the study of the subject of Moshiach and the Redemption. Only by explaining the Rebbe's approach and how it is brought in Torah sources can we explain the whole concept to other people and change their way of thinking in order that they too will be ready and will live with the Redemption."

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SENSITIVE SOULS

By Dr. Aryeh Gotfryd, PhD

Don't let babies look at Mickey Mouse? True, the Rebbe made exceptions for visiting the zoo to enjoy the wonders of creation and seeing pictures for educational purposes, but the basic point was - young children have an intrinsic spiritual sensitivity that is affected by what they see.

We must do whatever is possible on behalf of every member of the Jewish people... to arouse the Jewish spark within him... especially children, for they are like clay in the hands of those who educated them.

—The Rebbe, a letter from 8 Iyar, 5703.

About twenty-five years ago, Berel[1] thought his marriage was finished. Sure, they'd had their petty arguments. After all, what couple is completely spat-free? But this *farbible* was different - it was about toys.

You see, Berel wanted to throw away his toddler's beloved Teddy Bear and Fuzzy Froggy and his wife Perel said no. So he put his foot down and said they have to, so she dug in her heels and said no. He told her he had unshakable religious principles backing him up and she said he was a raving lunatic and there was no way she was going to let him rob this poor baby of her dearest companions

for no good reason.

At the core of this conflict was a then-new directive[2] from the Lubavitcher Rebbe - children and even infants should not be given toys or pictures portraying non-kosher animals because it affects their souls and harms their future personality development.

What a shock that was to Berel and Perel's egalitarian, yet Chabad-loving values. Jews fight racism. They fight bigotry. Thousands have found solace in Chabad's principles that vaunt the role of women in society and promote environmental conservation. For example, it was the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe who told his son, who later became the sixth in the chain, not to absent-mindedly tear leaves off trees because they too have a sense of self and a right to exist.[2]

And now this? Don't let babies look at Mickey Mouse? True, the Rebbe made exceptions for visiting the zoo to enjoy the wonders of creation and seeing pictures for

educational purposes, but the basic point was - young children have an intrinsic spiritual sensitivity that is affected by what they see.

Over time, Berel and Perel, along with countless other families in similar situations, made peace with this directive as they had with so many of the Rebbe's other innovations, but they did so mainly on faith.

But as we are discovering more and more often, yesterday's faith is today's science. Researchers at the Yale University Infant Cognition Center in New Haven CT are making news lately with their studies showing how very young children are innately attuned to morality and are attracted to good while shunning evil.

In experiment, infants as young as 5 months showed a definite and immediate preference for puppet characters that had previously acted as helpers while rejecting and even punishing puppet characters that had acted as hinderers.

Many studies such as these confirm the ancient wisdom of the sages that children are born with spiritual values – trust, goodness and kindness - but over time their own urges and life experiences can mask those sensitivities.

According to Judaism generally and Chabad ideology in particular, no matter how deep down our innate moral compass gets buried, it's always there ready to respond once we “blow off the dust,” i.e., uncover the soul, the divine spark within us all.

But we unlearn these things with time. A young child will break up his cookie and hand out morsels to people around. An older child will more likely hoard his cookies or even take more than his or her share. The point of Torah is not to impose external values upon us, but to restore us to our true inner values, the ones that were “bred in the bone” as the Yale researchers put it, so we can live happy, unconflicted lives with body, mind and spirit in harmony.

The pre-eminent astrophysicist, Robert Jastrow, has this to say about the modern convergence of science to faith:

“This is an exceedingly strange development, unexpected by all but

the theologians. They have always accepted the word of the Bible: In the beginning God created heaven and earth... [But] for the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; [and] as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.”[3]

The Lubavitcher Rebbe tells us that the synergy of Torah and science is a sure sign that Moshiach is about to come. When that happens, I expect Perel will turn to Berel and say those three little words that every Jewish

husband so longs to hear: Honey, “you were right.”

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NOTES:

- [1] Names changed to protect the innocent.
- [2] Visual Education in Sichos in English, Vol. 18, late MarCheshvan 5744
- [2] Likkutei Dibburim Vol. 1, p.179. (Kehot Publications)
- [3] In his book, “G-d and the Astronomers”, p.116



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TIFERES MENACHEM OF SEAGATE'S FIRST LAG B'OMER FLOAT

This was a landmark year for Yeshiva Tiferes Menachem. For the first time, the Baal T'shuva Yeshiva run by Rabbi Avraham Lipskier participated in the Chabad event. Director of "Tiferes Float Operations" was Tamim Boruch Borodkin. Assisting him were Gershon Lerner, Nosson Rosenfeld, Yoeli Hasofer, and Aron Gotkin.

The theme was "Moshiach is Already Here on the News" and a week before the parade, the boys jumped into their project with enthusiasm. Work was frenzied and it was only through miracles that the money for materials and the truck rental (about \$1000) was raised by the bachurim.

For most of the bachurim it was the first time that they had

ever done anything like this. Certainly, it was an experience they would never forget.

As Boruch's mother Aviva Borodkin told Beis Moshiach: "Boruch told us that it was day and night work for a week; there was so much to do. I am so proud of him!"

For Aron Gotkin, this was his first Lag B'Omer Parade. "We don't have anything like this in Chicago," said Aron..

Yoel from Rechovot kvelled: "To see the Tiferes float that we made go proudly through the parade was worth all the effort we put into it; and believe me, it was a lot of work."

The float depicted life in a time when "Moshiach is already here" featuring a television with a reporter announcing

Moshiach's doings.

The Yeshiva in Seagate offers scholarships for young and "not-so-young" men looking to find out more about their Jewish Heritage. The students are often sent there by shluchim from all over the world, including the current roster with participants from India, Russia, Israel and America. Under the experienced tutelage of veteran mashpia Rabbi Avraham Lipskier, the yeshiva is blooming.

Rabbi Lipskier is no newcomer to training young men in the age old "craft" of being a Chassid. Many prominent Rabbis and Shluchim around the world are former talmidim of his. For over 40 years, Rabbi Lipskier has been training and guiding young men to go on to build Orthodox families, lead communities and bring the world closer to Moshiach in the traditional old-world spirit of Chabad.

For more information about their exciting summer program contact Rabbi Avraham Lipskier at: (718) 265-1437 or see their website: www.Tiferesmenachem.org

Reporting for Beis Moshiach: Raanan Isseroff. rsisseroff@yahoo.com

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