

4

REMEMBERING WHAT SHOULD BE FORGOTTEN

D'var Malchus | Sichos In English

6

THANKS (BUT NO THANKS) FOR THE PAIN

Thought | Rabbi Zvi Homnick

10

R' YITZCHOK GRONER'S MEMOIRS

Memoirs

16

CRAZY FOR MOSHIACH... WITH SEICHEL

Moshiach & Geula | Rabbi Chaim Ahkenazi a"r

20

MAKING A MOVE FOR CHILDREN

Story | Nosson Avrohom

24

PLEASANT WARFARE

Shlichus | Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelevitz

28

TOO MANY CHICK PEAS

Moshiach & Science | Dr. Aryeh Gotfryd, PhD

30

A RESTAURANT WITH A SHLICHUS

Profile | S. Malachi

38

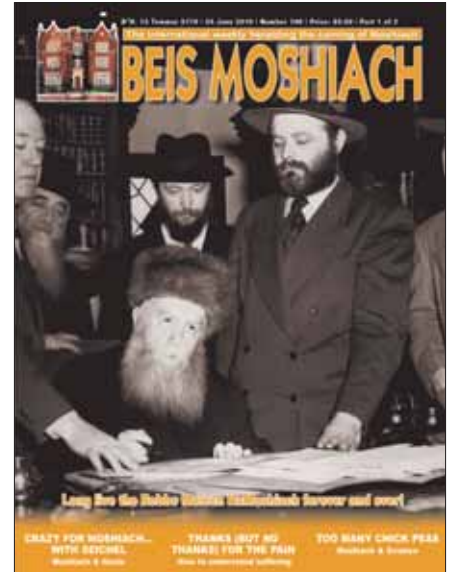
R' SHNEUR ZALMAN YEHOSHUA LIGHT A"R

Obituary

39

REUNITING PRECIOUS SOULS

Feature | Hillel Zaltzman



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Beis Moshiach (USPS 012-542) ISSN 1082-0272 is published weekly, except Jewish holidays (only once in April and October) for \$160.00 in Crown Heights, Brooklyn and in all other places for \$180.00 per year (45 issues), by Beis Moshiach, 744 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY and additional offices. Postmaster: send address changes to Beis Moshiach 744 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409. Copyright 2010 by Beis Moshiach, Inc.

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REMEMBERING WHAT SHOULD BE FORGOTTEN

Sichos In English

A SAGE AND HIS CONDUCT

The Talmud relates: [1]

When Ulla came [to Babylon from Eretz Yisroel],... Rava asked him: "Where did you spend the night?" [Ulla] told him: "In Kalnebo."

[Rava] responded: "Is it not written: [2] 'And you may not mention the name of other deities?'"

[Ulla] answered: "Rabbi Yochanan taught as follows: [The name of] any false deity which is recorded in the Torah may be mentioned."

On the surface, the question arises: Although it is permitted to mention the name of a false deity which is recorded in the Torah, seemingly, it is not desirable to do so. What purpose could this serve?

Moreover, our Sages emphasize [3] the importance of refined speech, noting how in several instances, the Torah adds extra words [4] rather than mention the word *tameh* ("impure").

Surely, Ulla could have found a way to answer Rava's question without mentioning the name of a false deity.

THE POWER OF THE TORAH

The above difficulty can be resolved based on the explanation of Rabbi Yochanan's teaching offered by the Yereim: [5] "Since the Torah mentions [the name of a false deity], it has already been negated. For the same reason that the Torah mentions it, we are entitled to mention it."

The statement of the Yereim cannot be understood in a simple, literal interpretation.

For there are false deities to which the Torah refers, e.g., Baal Peor as mentioned in the conclusion of this week's Torah reading, [6] whose worship was perpetuated long afterwards. [7]

Instead, the intent appears to be that the Torah's mention of the false deity negates the deity's importance in the eyes of a person who would study that portion of the Torah.

The Torah's words will impress him with the futility of the worship of all other deities - that these deities are of no benefit to those who revere them, and that when the Jews have erred and worshipped them, they were punished severely.

Going further, every Jew desires to observe the Torah and its mitzvos [8] and therefore to shun the worship

of false deities.

And when he studies the Torah, this awakens this inner desire, inspiring him to dedicate himself to the Torah and negate all other forms of worship.

And "For the same reason that the Torah mentions [a false deity], we are entitled to mention it."

When a Jew studies the Torah and identifies with it, he taps the G-dly potential it contains.

This empowers him, and enables his mention of a false deity to bring about the negation of its influence. [9]

A SPIRITUAL TRANSITION

Based on the above, we can understand the conduct of Ulla.

Our Sages state: [10] "A Jew living in the Diaspora serves false divinities in purity."

For in Eretz Yisroel, G-d's providence is more overtly revealed, while in the Diaspora, Divine influence is hidden with the natural order.

As such, just as in a literal sense, the worship of false divinities involves bowing one's head to them, so too, figuratively, when living in the Diaspora, one is required to

subjugate one's thinking process to the forces controlling the natural order. [11]

Upon leaving the holiness of Eretz Yisroel and entering Babylonia, Ulla sensed the transition in spiritual sensitivity, and felt it necessary to emphasize the negation of false deities.

Therefore summoning up the power of the Torah acquired through his study in Eretz Yisroel, he mentioned the name of a false deity with the intent of nullifying its influence.

NULLIFYING AND TRANSFORMING

The above discussion sheds light on an obvious question raised by the name of this week's Torah reading: Balak.

Balak was a wicked man, an immoral [12] king, who hated the Jewish people and wanted to destroy them.

Why then is his name immortalized as one of the weekly Torah readings?

Our Sages state [13] that a person should not be named after a wicked man. Surely, this applies with regard to the name of a portion of the Torah!

Based on the above, however, the intent is clear.

Naming the Torah reading Balak is a means of negating the forces associated with him.

As the Torah reading relates, Balak's intent was thwarted entirely.

In a similar manner, the name Parshas Balak is an eternal source of positive influence frustrating any and all powers that seek to harm the Jewish people.

The narrative in our Torah reading relates, moreover, not only that Balak's intent was foiled, but that Bilam whom Balak brought to curse the Jewish people showered powerful blessings upon them, including the ultimate blessings which will become

manifest with the coming of Moshiach. [14]

Thus the name Balak refers, not only to the negation of evil, but also its transformation into positive influence.

THE FRUITS OF UNBOUNDED COMMITMENT

During several years, Parshas Balak is read together with Parshas Chukas. For it is the selfless commitment implied by the name Chukas [15] which makes possible the transformation of evil into good alluded to in the name Balak.

When a person taps the spark of G-dliness within his soul and expresses it through unbounded devotion to the Torah, he influences his surrounding environment, negating undesirable influences and transforming them into good. [16]

As this pattern spreads throughout existence, we draw closer to the fulfillment of the prophecies mentioned in this week's Torah reading: [17] "A star shall emerge from Yaakov, and a staff shall arise in Israel, crushing all of Moab's princes, and dominating all of Seth's descendants."

May they be fully manifest in the immediate future.

NOTES:

1. Sanhedrin 63b.
2. Exodus 23:13.
3. P'sachim 3a.
4. Although generally, the Torah employs the minimal amount of letters necessary, that thrust is waived in favor of refined speech.
5. Sec. 75.
6. Numbers, ch. 25.
7. See Sanhedrin 64a which relates that this deity was still worshipped in the Talmudic Era.
8. Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Gerushin, conc. of ch. 2.
9. On this basis, we can understand why

the Talmud (Sanhedrin, loc. cit.) and the Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Dei'a 147:4-5) mention the above law in direct conjunction with the law permitting the belittling of false deities through jest. The activities permitted by both laws serve the same function; they degrade the false deities and nullify their influence in the eyes of others.

10. Avoda Zara 8a.

11. See the maamer, V'Yadaata, 5657 (English trans. To Know G-d, p. 42ff).

12. As reflected by his willingness to accept Bilam's suggestion which involved to have the Moabite maidens seduce the Jewish men, and his sending his own daughter to participate in this endeavor.

13. Yoma 38b.

14. Significantly, there are very few allusions to the coming of Moshiach in the Chumash, and none are as explicit as Bilam's prophecies.

The transformation of good into evil and the manifestation of this concept in the assistance and support the gentile nations will offer the Jewish people is one of the fundamental themes of the Era of the Redemption, as it is written (Yeshayahu 49:23): "And kings will be your butlers...." To highlight this concept, the prophecies which describe this era are themselves a reflection of this principle, transforming the wicked designs of Balak and Bilam into good.

15. See the previous essay in this series entitled "Beyond the Reach of Knowledge."

16. The parshiyos Chukas and Balak are often read during the weeks before and after the celebration of the Previous Rebbe's redemption on Yud-Beis-Yud-Gimmel Tammuz. The saga of the Previous Rebbe's imprisonment and liberation is a reflection of this dynamic. Arrested because of his selfless commitment to spreading Jewish practice (Chukas), he was ultimately released from prison. The news of his release inspired the continuation of Jewish practice in Russia, and throughout the world, reflecting how the entire sequence served as a source of positive influence (Balak).

17. Numbers 24:17.

Adapted from: Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XVIII, p. 300ff, Vol. XXIII, p. 166ff

THANKS (BUT NO THANKS) FOR THE PAIN

By Rabbi Zvi Homnick

When it comes to “Why me?” especially regarding pain and suffering incurred before the “age of punishment,” you’re not going to get anything remotely resembling a satisfactory answer, so don’t ask.

PAIN MANAGEMENT

Growing up in a religious home and environment where Torah study represented “the” supreme value, and matters of faith were sort of taken for granted but not often addressed explicitly, dealing with the theological implications of the pain and suffering of this world tended to be a lonely business for those wrestling with that particular issue. As someone that providence decreed should live through the loss of a mother at the tender age of four-and-a-half, as well as many other painful challenges, familial and individual, the issue tended to be more personal than puzzling out the overworked “Where was G-d during the Holocaust?” question. Although, as mentioned previously,

my belief and faith were never shaken by any real doubt, one still can’t stop the mind throwing out the question, “What do You want from my life?”

Yes, I was well aware of the fact that Moshe Rabbeinu and Dovid HaMelech, as well as countless greats throughout our long and painful history, had wrestled with the question of the suffering of the righteous and the prosperity of the wicked. And yes, by the time I was well through my teens, I could rattle off any number of biblical exhortations along with statements of the early and latter Sages that offer insight into the suffering of this world in general and exile in particular, but those only provided not quite satisfactory answers as to “Why them?” without really

offering any clarity on the issue of “Why me?”

“The Rock, His works are perfect” was understood to mean that G-d is the ultimate in fairness, but we don’t see the whole picture until we pass from this world, whether to the “world of truth” following expiration or the “world to come” following redemption and resurrection. In fact, the prevalence of pain and suffering as well as the apparent inequities of this world in confluence with the absolute belief that G-d is good and fair, are often cited in ethical and philosophical works as proof that this world is only a temporary corridor that we need to pass through on the way to entering the “palace” where G-d’s fairness and goodness will become truly apparent.

I could go on endlessly citing various nuanced and often seemingly conflicting offerings on the topic of “Why all the pain and suffering?” but they all basically lead to the same conclusion. When it comes to “Why me?” especially regarding pain and suffering incurred before the “age of punishment,” you’re not going to get anything remotely resembling a

satisfactory answer, so don't ask. Life in this world is meant only to be a test, therefore you just need to accept the fact that G-d decided that this is what your soul needed/needs for its own personalized test, and the better you "grin and bear it" the greater your reward will be when payday comes.

To wit, pain and suffering are lousy, but they serve a good purpose in the long run, so grit your teeth and hang in there. And of course, there are the stories; stories of great people who bore their suffering stoically, stories of simple people who accepted their miserable lots with utter faith, and so on and so forth. I am sure there are many people for whom those stories are really inspirational and transformational. As for me, as inspiring as I found those stories to be, there were still times that I couldn't help but feel that G-d was "picking on me," as well as feel guilty for those feelings, which resulted in wallowing in self-pity and being paralyzed by guilt. As much fun as all that was, there was still a part of me that believed that there had to be some way of divining "Why me?" or at the very least, "What do You want from my life?"

"GOOD PAIN" VERSUS "BAD PAIN"

Pain and suffering, everybody's favorite topic, like every other topic in Judaism, takes on a whole new light in the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov and Chassidus Chabad. To begin with, the fundamental premise is radically different. The Baal Shem Tov taught that G-d is the essence of absolute goodness, and "nothing bad comes from Above." If a person experiences any pain and suffering it comes entirely from himself, as a result of his perceptions.

From a faith based perspective, this resolves a lot of the questions and issues that people struggle with on a personal basis. It's all good, whether I see it now or not, and the more I accept the fact that it is good, I will actually get to see how it's all good even in this world, and even more so in the "world of truth" and the "world to come." However, this raises more questions than it answers, as it seems to conflict with so much of scripture and tradition, including the Kabbalistic tradition which devotes a great deal of its teachings to explaining the existence of evil and its manifestations in this world, in the context of the cosmic struggle between good and evil.

How to reconcile the many seeming contradictions to this teaching is addressed in Chabad Chassidus extensively, on the individual level, on the national level, and on the macro level. This article is not intended to provide an overview of the massive amount of material on this topic, but to explore the basic principle of different levels of perception based on whether one sees and experiences the world from the "outside in" or from the "inside out," and how even from the "inside out" there are as many layers of "inside" as there are spiritual worlds and levels. (Yikes, that came out sounding all philosophical and complicated, so let's keep it simple).

When a person starts with the assumption that pain is bad, it is obviously an inverse corollary of the assumption that pleasure is good. So it would follow that the greater the premium that a person puts on pleasure, the more he would be averse to pain. And yet, when we look at the world around us we discover a fascinating phenomenon. Those who devote their lives to the pursuit of some

larger goal/s with which they associate great pleasure actually look forward to and welcome the often painful hardships and challenges related to those pursuits. Whereas those who lead lives of "quiet desperation" just trying to fulfill their responsibilities and make it through the day, even if they devote their leisure time to grabbing some of life's more easily obtained pleasures, tend to shy away from the slightest of troubles and inconveniences, let alone real pain.

That is because those who see pain and pleasure as things that exist outside of themselves and come from the outside, also see them as things that they have little or no control over. So, if a little pleasure comes your way, enjoy it, and try to avoid pain as much as possible, although inevitably you will end up experiencing more pain than pleasure in life because that is just the way the world works. Conversely, those that recognize that all pain and pleasure originate from within, albeit stimulated by things outside oneself, understand that pain is actually the currency of pleasure. More pain actually equals more pleasure, if you channel that pain properly.

The harder you work, the more you deny yourself, the more challenges and upsets that you encounter in the pursuit of your pleasure, the greater the pleasure. So much so that successful wealthy people who can afford any and all of the pleasures of this world and who understand this principle, find themselves looking back nostalgically at the early days when they were still struggling and feel compelled to find new vistas of ambition and challenge or else lose any enjoyment in life and wither up.

That is why in the future time, the fast days, starting with the 17th of Tammuz, when "the

The Rebbe cries over the pain and suffering of each Jew and all of the Jews as a people, but we need to know that the only reason he even exists on our level where he recognizes and acknowledges the existence of pain and suffering is in order to lead us to the point where we will see for ourselves that “G-d is good” and that the pain we experience now is only pleasure not yet realized.

Tablets were broken and the city (Yerushalayim) was breached,” will be transformed into days of celebration. Obviously, there will no longer be any reason for mourning, once those negative situations have been fully rectified and things are even better than before, but what reason is there to celebrate on these very days? The answer is that due to our superficial exile-clouded perceptions we see and experience the pain and suffering associated with those events as “bad.” Conversely, in the time of “Then shall you delight Upon G-d,” when the Divine Pleasure in creation is revealed and experienced by us, we will actually experience the “pleasure in the pain.” At the same time, we will look back wistfully at the time of exile when we could have actually accomplished something in the production of that very pleasure through our sacrifice and efforts.

PAIN? WHAT PAIN?

The Rebbe explains in a number of places that Moshe Rabbeinu, and similarly the Rebbe

of each generation, experiences reality from the perspective of the Divine Essence, and from that perspective there is nothing bad in the world and there is nothing lacking in the world. Everything is G-d and G-d is everything, so nobody is lacking anything, everything is perfect and is exactly the way it should be. Just as G-d lowers himself to the level of the people and since they are experiencing pain and difficulty, He “hears their cries” and feels their pain, and ultimately saves and redeems them from their suffering, so too Moshe Rabbeinu as their leader, feels their pain and sees the causes of their pain and hardship as negatives.

That is why he insists that “Send in the hands of the one You will send in the future time,” and that is why he cries out “Why have You done bad to this nation, and why have You sent me?” If I am to lower myself to their reality and feel their pain, then I insist that You send the Final Redeemer to relieve them of their suffering forever, or at the very least don’t make things worse. He is even willing to break the Tablets carved

out and given by G-d Himself, if their contents can be used to reflect negatively upon the Jewish people.

Similarly, in our generation, the Rebbe cries over the pain and suffering of each Jew and all of the Jews as a people, but we need to know that the only reason he even exists on our level where he recognizes and acknowledges the existence of pain and suffering is in order to lead us to the point where we will see for ourselves that “G-d is good” and that the pain we experience now is only pleasure not yet realized. The Rebbe has indicated repeatedly that we have in fact been given (had revealed within us) the necessary abilities and strengths to achieve that final goal, including the ability to relate to the experience of the Rebbe to some degree, and actually see the world as perfect and be concerned only that everybody else see and experience the true reality of “There is naught else but He.”

There are some who focus on the fact that the Rebbe is with us more than ever during this period, as we see the many ways that people can still turn to the Rebbe when they are going through something difficult or painful, or experiencing some painful lack. Almost sixty years ago, when he officially accepted the leadership of the Chabad movement, the Rebbe made it clear that although he would do all those things that a Rebbe does to care for and tend to the needs of his flock; that was not his ultimate mission. From day one, and even more so after nearly sixty years, it has always been about doing whatever it takes to finally transcend and say goodbye to the pain and suffering of exile and to experience the infinite delight of Hashem in His “dwelling in the lower realms” immediately, NOW!

R' YITZCHOK GRONER'S MEMOIRS

*We present a compilation of stories that were told by Rabbi Yitzchok Groner a"h about his observations and experiences with the Rebbe Rayatz and the Rebbe MH"M. * Presented in connection with his yahrtzait on 4 Tammuz and the Chag HaGeula of Yud-Beis Yud-Gimmel Tammuz*

MEMORIES OF 9 ADAR, 5700/1940

I remember the day my father told me that we were going to welcome the Rebbe (Rayatz). It was on 9 Adar II, 5700/1940. At the dock were thousands of Jews and it was so crowded you couldn't get up close. I saw a Jewish journalist from *The New York Times* go over to a sergeant (in America in those days a police sergeant had gold bars) and ask to be allowed through. Suddenly the Chassidim began singing the Rebbe Rayatz's hakafos niggun and I knew that the ship was approaching. I remember how they brought the Rebbe off the ship in a wheelchair.

Then we went to the Greystone Hotel where we davened. They said the Rebbe came down at 1:00 but it was actually 3:00. The Rebbe said the well-known sicha about the three bonds that are interconnected. I remember Rabbi Mentlick standing there and Rabbi Shneur Zalman Gurary with a Polish cap.

THE REBBE LOOKED FOR YOU!

The next time I saw the Rebbe was on Purim. The Rebbe was the first Chassidische Rebbe to leave Poland after the bombing and the capitulation to the Nazis and consequently many Polish Jews came to see the Rebbe. We waited

there at the hotel and the Rebbe came down in a wheelchair wearing a shtraimel. When we went in, the place was packed and not only with Lubavitcher Chassidim. I remember that the Rebbe began with "gut Yom Tov." The sicha is printed in *Seifer HaSichos* 5700.

At that Purim farbrengen the Rebbe made a collection for his talmidim and people said how much they were giving. When they said that my father gave \$25 the Rebbe looked all around to see where my father was. Rabbi Jacobson went over to my father after the farbrengen and said, "R' Mordechai, did you see? The Rebbe looked for you!"

THE REBBE RAYATZ SPOKE ABOUT HIS SON- IN-LAW'S GREATNESS

The first time I saw the Rebbe Rayatz in yechidus was the night of 28 Sivan, 1941, the night before his son-in-law, the Rebbe arrived in America. As I waited with my father in *Gan Eden HaTachton*, R' Yisroel Jacobson came out of the Rebbe's room and went directly over to my father and said in amazement, "R' Mordechai, the Rebbe said, 'The yeshiva should go out to welcome my son-in-law. My son-in-law is proficient in Shas, Tosafos, Rosh and RaN and all printed Chassidische s'farim.'"

Then we went in for yechidus. The Rebbe Rayatz blessed my father and then said to him, "You should learn *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*." My father didn't understand and asked whether he meant the *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*. The Rebbe said, "The *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* with *Misgeres (HaShulchan)* and then *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*." The Rebbe blessed him again and we left.

Of course I was quiet throughout the yechidus. Even when I had yechidus by the Rebbe

and I had to say something I would ask permission. That was my first yechidus with the Rebbe Rayatz, but afterwards I merited to have my own yechidus with him.

SHABBOS WITH THE REBBE

One of the years, the Rebbe Rayatz came downstairs for the Yud-Beis Tamuz farbrengen in his wheelchair. That year, they placed a platform and the Rebbe had to walk up the step. I remember seeing Rabbi Volosov a”h crying.

My mother saw Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah coming down the stairs. When she saw my mother she said, “Oh *Zamke’s Chevroner?*” (My grandfather was called *Zamke Chevroner*. He was a Lubavitcher Chassid throughout the years). Then she began to talk about “*main kroin*” (my crown). At first, my mother thought she was talking about her son (the Rebbe Rayatz) but then realized she was speaking about her husband (the Rebbe Rashab).

I remember when the Rebbe Rayatz had a heart attack in 1945. We were learning by R’ Shmuel Levitin and I remember R’ Yisroel Jacobson running in the hall, all shaken up. R’ Jacobson, R’ Shmuel and my father met for an urgent meeting. The situation was serious and the Rebbe did not come out for farbrengens or maamarim for a month.

One Friday night there was a rumor that the Rebbe Rayatz wanted to farbreng with the bachurim who came from Otvozk. Of course a large crowd immediately formed and waited. After some time his son-in-law, the Rebbe, came down and said in the name of the Rebbe Rayatz that there was a maamer from the Tzemach Tzedek on the verse, “*ein omer v’ein d’varim b’li nishma kolam*” and the Rebbe wants to



farbreng only with the bachurim from Otvozk. Nevertheless, there were a few others who went in and I was one of them. I saw the Rebbe eating the Shabbos meal. First they served fish, then the Rebbe ate a piece of chicken, potato and kugel.

The Rebbe and R’ Shmuel Levitin would eat with the Rebbe Rayatz on Shabbos. R’ Shmuel would eat there because he had no family. The Rebbe did not usually have festive meals with the Chassidim, like his father. The big *koch* in Lubavitch on Shabbos was the maamer. Bachurim would make Kiddush at one-two in the morning after hearing the maamer and chazara.

THE TIME HAS COME TO DO SOMETHING!

In 5703, I went to R’ Shmuel Levitin’s class. He usually taught the hemshech of the Rebbe Rashab from the year 5666, but he taught us the maamarim of the Rebbe Rayatz from 5703. One day, in the middle of the shiur, the secretary R’ Chaim Lieberman knocked at the door and said that the Rebbe wanted R’ Shmuel.

R’ Shmuel immediately put on his sirtuk and went up to the Rebbe’s room. I was a close talmid of R’ Shmuel and I can still see the following image in my mind. When he came down he looked *ois mentch* (completely beside

The big koch in Lubavitch on Shabbos was the maamer. Bachurim would make Kiddush at one-two in the morning after hearing the maamer and chazara.

himself). We asked him what happened and he said that in the middle of the yechidus the Rebbe grasped his beard and said, "It is time to do something." This broke me completely; because what we can we say after that?

FIVE CANDIDATES TO WRITE A SHULCHAN ARUCH

I heard from the Rebbe Rayatz that the Maggid wanted a new Shulchan Aruch to be written and there were five candidates for the job: The Alter Rebbe, R' Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev, the brothers R' Shmelke and R' Pinchas Horowitz, and the Noam Elimelech. Of the five, the Maggid picked the Alter Rebbe.

THE STORY OF THE ARREST TOLD LIKE THE MEGILLA

On 12 Tammuz, 5702/1942, the Rebbe called us to his room and began telling the entire story of the arrest and the Geula of his father-in-law, the Rebbe Rayatz, mamash like the reading of the Megilla.

ARE YOU INVOLVED IN AVODAS HA'TEFILLA?

I had a yechidus before I went to Rochester – a *moiridike* (awesome) yechidus. The Rebbe Rayatz asked me, "Yitzchok, are you involved in avodas ha't'filla?"

When I told R' Shmuel, he discussed this at a farbrengen for two hours. "A bachur (me) went in

for yechidus and told the Rebbe he is going to devote himself to the issues of the day and what does the Rebbe ask? Are you involved in avodas ha't'filla!" For two straight hours he went over this vort.

When I returned from Buffalo I worked for Rashag (the Rebbe's brother-in-law) in fundraising for the yeshiva. Rashag wanted me to go to Australia. In those days it was a 55 hour trip. Before going, the Rebbe Rayatz blessed me mamash like a father blesses a son. "Travel in good health and return in good health and be successful etc." The Rebbe told me to go "if the weather is good."

SHLICHUS IN AUSTRALIA AND IN CHICAGO

I was in Australia for four months and then I went to New Zealand for six or eight weeks. When I wrote to the Rebbe and asked for permission to go, the Rebbe wrote me on 9 Adar, 5708 (printed in the Igros Kodesh vol. 9): "Even in Australia you rushed your work." Upon my return I went to Buffalo.

I went back to Australia in 5714. By that time there were already Anash there, unlike the first trip, and the Lubavitcher Chassidim even had a building on Hotham Street. This was a much harder trip for my wife. The first trip, when I was away for six months, was a month after our wedding. It wasn't easy for a newly married couple to separate for six months but by this second trip it was even more difficult. We had three little children already and my

wife was expecting. When I returned to Buffalo my daughter Shterna Sara was born already.

Then we moved to New York, where I worked for yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim. I was responsible for the yeshivos out of town and I also fundraised. I made a trip to Chicago and at that time there were thousands of Jews living there who davened Nusach Ari. There were some big Nusach Ari shuls: B'nei Reuven, Tzemach Tzedek, and others. There were two shluchim there, R' Shlomo Zalman Hecht and R' Tzvi Shusterman. Rashag would go there to raise money and R' Shmuel Levitin and R' Elyahu Simpson would go there, too. The night of Yud-Tes Kislev there would be a big seuda following which they would go to the Rebbe's farbrengen.

The period of time when I went to Chicago things were quite bad. The big shuls had been sold except for B'nei Reuven. A Jew named Shlomo Palmer davened there. He built Kfar Chabad and he would attend the Rebbe's hakafos upstairs. He was one of the yoshvim (full time post marriage students) in Lubavitch and a famous chazan who already in the 30's and the beginning of the 40's would get \$5000 for an appearance. One of the attendees was Moshe Shayewitz. These Jews donated a lot of money and I davened with them at the shul during this period.

After some years, on Motzaei Simchas Torah, 5717/1956, I left after kos shel bracha for my home on Crown Street and I saw two people from Chicago near the subway station.

The next day my brother Leibel told me that the Rebbe wanted me to come to him. I went to the Rebbe's room after Maariv. This wasn't a yechidus on a regular yechidus night and the desk was

full of papers. The Rebbe told me that the time had come to do something for the Jews of Chicago. They wanted Groner to go there and this would help prevent them from selling the shul and it was with the consent of Rashag.

I dared to ask the Rebbe (after asking permission) whether the channels came from above or below (i.e. where did this idea for shlichus come from, from the Rebbe or from these Jews) and the Rebbe said it came from below.

The shlichus in Chicago was for a few months and I reviewed Chassidus in the shuls.

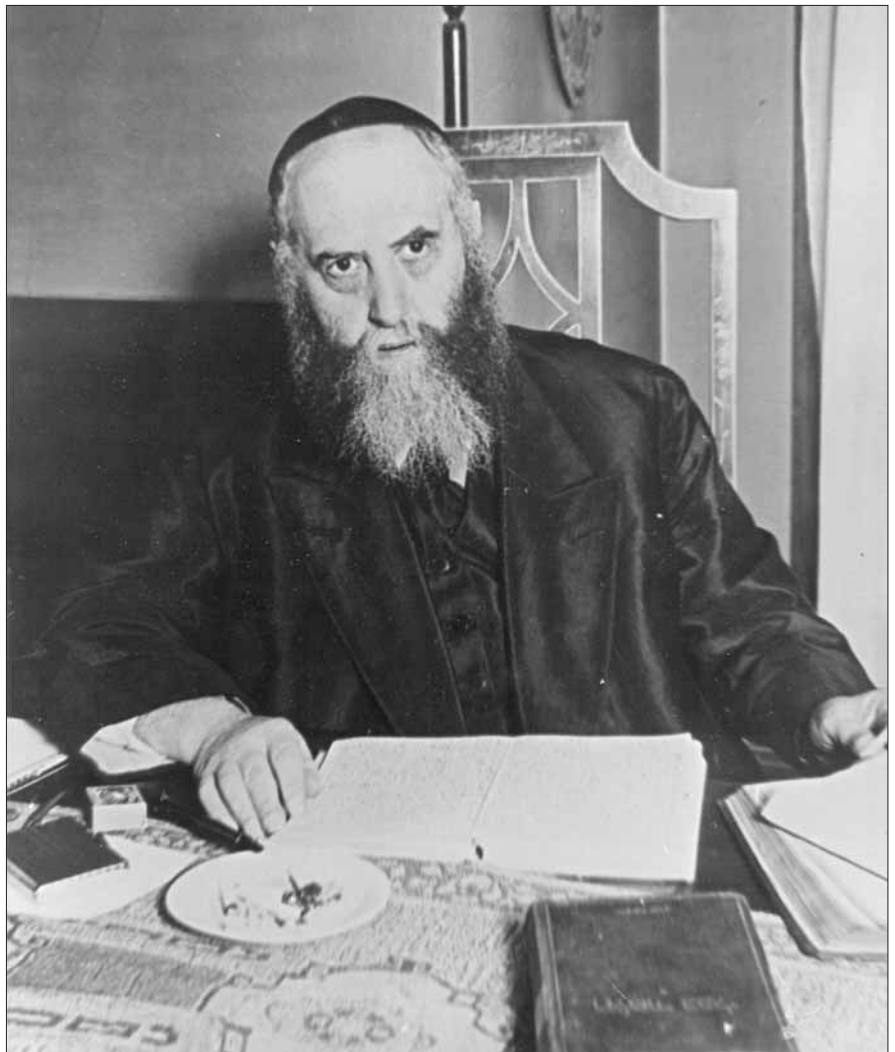
THE REBBE SAID TO SPEAK

R' Yitzchok Dovid Groner was known as a powerful speaker. The Rebbe referred to this on a number of occasions, as R' Groner relates:

-At the end of the first Lag B'Omer parade, they took the children to the Botanic Gardens. The Rebbe traveled there by car together with R' Chadakov, R' Kazarnovsky and my brother Leibel. The Rebbe listened to the speech I made to the children. When I had yechidus for my birthday the Rebbe told me to attend the meeting about the parade and to give a report.

-When I had to go to Toronto the Rebbe told me to speak about Mihu Yehudi. The Rebbe lifted his hand and said, "*k'yad Hashem ha'tova alav*" (using your generous G-d given gifts).

-At the first dinner R' Sholom Duchman made for Kollel Chabad at the Brooklyn Museum, rabbanim such as Rabbi Menashe Klein and Rabbi Gavriel Tzinner attended. They asked me to speak in English and I spoke for a few minutes. The dinner was on Motzaei Shabbos and the next morning, before dollars, I wrote a report for the Rebbe. When I



passed by the Rebbe for dollars the Rebbe gave me an additional dollar and said, "For the speech."

-In 5744 or 5745, I got a phone call from R' Chaim Farro of Manchester. He had bought a big building and wanted to have a festive event. He brought Yehuda Avner, who was Israel's ambassador in London, Chief Rabbi Jacobowitz, and other public figures and rabbanim. He called to invite me to be the guest speaker. They had presented a list of names of speakers to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe chose me. People were amazed by my speech and I saw that I wasn't speaking alone; the Rebbe helps in a way that is above the natural order.

THIRTY DOLLARS FROM THE REBBE FOR THE WEDDING

Before my wedding I went with my parents to invite Rebbetzin Nechama Dina. Rebbetzin Nechama Dina was unable to hear ever since her daughter Chana was born. The problem was so acute that when Nazi planes bombed Warsaw she only heard buzzing. She would read lips and always had a pen and paper next to her so people could write to her. When we arrived, the Rebbetzin opened the door and said, "Oh, chassan kalla." We sat down and she served lekach. We sat there and she told stories until R' Moshe Leib

My father once wrote a pidyon nefesh to the Rebbe and afterwards, when he had yechidus, the Rebbe asked: “You are well? Why didn’t you tell me?” Then the Rebbe said to himself: “They only write the no-good things to me...”

Rodstein came out and interrupted us.

Among other things, she told us that the Tzemach Tzedek had a nickname for each of his sons. R' Boruch Sholom was a “balabus.” Maharil was a “Chassid” and Maharin, her grandfather – the father of her father, R' Avrohom Schneersohn – was “gaon.” Maharin was in the Tzemach Tzedek’s beis din with R' Yosef Tumarkin, the rav of Kremenchug and the author of *Toras Chesed*. Most of the Tzemach Tzedek’s t’shuvos were to them. She said that when her grandfather would daven Shacharis he had to change his shirt four times.

During the lifetime of the Rebbe Rayatz, Rashag was usually the *mesader kiddushin* (officiating rabbi) at weddings. There were some exceptions, like the wedding of the daughter of R' Eliyahu Simpson with Mendel Feldman, when he himself was *mesader kiddushin*.

Before my wedding Rashag told me he had an important meeting and he asked me to wait for him. He did not show up and I had the z’chus of the Rebbe being my *mesader kiddushin*. There are some pictures of my wedding in which the Rebbe is standing in the entrance of 770 and speaking to Kazarnovsky. I asked the Rebbe to stay for the seuda and he asked, “Why? Karov (i.e. relative; the Rebbe called my brother Yankel relative, and I once got a letter

with the title “my mechutan”)?

I said yes. The Rebbe did not end up staying for the meal but he gave me \$30 *drasha geshank* (lit. speech honorarium, i.e. wedding gift) and not the ten or twelve that he usually gave.

When I was on my way to the *badeken* R' Shmuel Levitin saw me and said that the Rebbe Maharash once said, “The way a Jew will be under the chuppa is how his whole life will be.” This vort gave me a *zetz* so that when I went downstairs, my brother Yankel saw me and asked me whether I was going to my chuppa or to my funeral, I was so shaken up. That is the *avoda* of a *mashpia*, to prepare you to stand under the chuppa the way it is supposed to be.

THE WRITER CHARLES RADDOCK AND HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE REBBE

There was an American writer by the name of Charles Raddock. He was a big Chassid of the Rebbe and before him, of the Rebbe Rayatz. My brother Leibel was in touch with him and brought him in for *yechidus* whenever he came. He would write in respected magazines and newspapers and he did some interviews with the Rebbe.

The first time I met him was in 5710/1950, when I worked on the East Side near Leibel Bistritzky’s

store. When I met him he said about the Rebbe that what he [the Rebbe] did – the Alter Rebbe and the Baal Shem Tov did not do.

Fifteen years later he wrote a book called *Portrait of a People – the story of the Jews from ancient to modern times*. When he came out of *yechidus* he told my brother Leibel that he asked the Rebbe how to write about Yoshke, as that would have to be included in a historical overview. The Rebbe gave him advice on how to avoid the topic in a sensitive manner so as to avert any problems as a result of that issue.

WE HAVE TO BE HOLY OURSELVES

I heard from Rabbi Yaroslavsky that R' Shaul Bick (the son of a family of rabbanim in Mezhibuzh, the son-in-law of the *Mishmeres Sholom* of Kaidinov, and the author of a work on *hilchos nidda*) once waited on line for *yechidus* with the Rebbe Rayatz. The Rebbe unexpectedly walked by and when he noticed this, he stood up. The Rebbe asked him why he stood up and he said: “You are the son of holy people.”

The Rebbe responded: “We have to be holy ourselves.”

WE MUST COVER THE COSTS

I grew up in Brownsville, a half hour walk from 770. On Pesach we would go back and forth several times for davening, for the second seder (which finished a little before Shacharis) and for Shvii and Acharon shel Pesach.

One time, the Rebbetzin told my father in the name of the Rebbe Rayatz that he would not be coming out and he shouldn’t bother to come for the meal on Acharon shel Pesach. My father didn’t listen and he went. The

Rebbe came down and said they had to cover the costs (i.e. make it worth the while of those who walked from far away) and he sat and told stories. It was a very small crowd – my father, R' Yochanon Gordon, and R' Dovid Shifrin (who came to Lubavitch in 5659/1899 and then became president of Aguch in America).

I WILL GO TOGETHER WITH ALL THE JEWS

One year, my brother Leibel arranged for the Rebbe to have a special place at hakafos. The Rebbe told him: "Don't mix in to my business; I want to go together with all Jews."

LISTEN TO HOW A JEW MAKES A BRACHA!

The Skulener Rebbe once walked in the middle of a farbrengen and the Rebbe raised himself up a little in his honor.

The Skulener Rebbe once made a Melaveh Malka and asked me to come and speak. I asked the Rebbe and the Rebbe told me go. When I got there, he spoke about the

Jewish people being one body and how when you hurt another Jew you are actually hurting yourself. After the dinner he went over to daven Maariv and he counted the Omer after Aleinu as is their custom. He said the bracha on S'firas HaOmer at such length and so sweetly that R' Chaikel Chanin, who was standing next to me, couldn't restrain himself and said: Listen to how a Jew makes a bracha!

YOU WERE BY THE SHVER?

R' Meir Rabkin was a Chassidische Yid. After the histalkus, whoever wanted to go to the Ohel of the Rebbe Rayatz had to go by train and bus, a difficult trip. He went one time and the Rebbe arrived while he was there. Afterwards, when the Rebbe saw him in 770, he asked: "You were by the shver (father-in-law, the Rebbe Rayatz) today?"

On Simchas Torah, 5719, there was a farbrengen in the sukka since the shul was too small and the crowd was very large. The rain came in and it was terrible. During the farbrengen the Rebbe called for

R' Gershon Mendel Garelik and gave him a cup of wine, and he called me and gave me a cup of wine as well and said, "this is for Australia."

People asked me afterwards why the Rebbe called me and were amazed by what the Rebbe said. That year we both went on shlichus; R' Gershon Mendel left before Yud-Tes Kislev and I left afterwards. When R' Gershon Mendel left on shlichus the Rebbe went outside and watched the car until it disappeared.

WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME?

My father once wrote a *pidyon nefesh* to the Rebbe and afterwards, when he had yechidus, the Rebbe asked: "You are well? Why didn't you tell me?"

Then the Rebbe said to himself: "They only write the no-good things to me ..."

That's the reason that my brother Leibel tells everyone to write good things to the Rebbe, to make the Rebbe happy.

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CRAZY FOR MOSHIACH... WITH SEICHEL

By Rabbi Chaim Ahkenazi a”h

*We ask Hashem for “daas” in the Shmoneh Esrei and then we are supposed to be “crazy about Moshiach.” How does that work? * Part 1 of an article prepared by Rabbi Chaim Ashkenazi a”h for Beis Moshiach prior to his tragic and untimely passing and given to us by his family.*

There are a number of stories about people who were given the opportunity to ask Hashem for something and who used that auspicious time for trivial things. I remember that when I learned by R’ Chaim Shaul Brook a”h, we planned a trip to the gravesite of Rashbi in Miron in the month of Elul (it was customary to visit the graves of tzaddikim before Rosh HaShana).

Before we left there was a farbrengen in yeshiva and R’ Shaul asked the talmidim: What will you ask for when you are by Rashbi? Each one said what he would request. R’ Shaul told us, “I think you should ask for just one thing, seichel! Then you’ll know what to

ask for. When you have seichel you know, and when you don’t have seichel and daas then you lose the opportunity when you could have asked for something significant.”

The t’filla of *ata chonantanu*, which is recited on Motzaei Shabbos, is about the **havdala** (**separation**) between the holy and the mundane. Our early sages instituted it in the bracha where we ask for **daas**. The explanation given by Chazal is, “Without *daas*, how can there be *havdala*?” In other words, it is only after requesting and receiving daas that we can differentiate between that which is kodesh/holy and that which is chol/mundane.

What is this daas that we ask for every day? The usual answer is that we are literally requesting seichel, maturity in our thinking to know what is important and what is trivial in life. This is true, but that’s not all. It’s not enough to know what is important and what is trivial - daas is a higher level than that. A person can know that the main thing is fulfilling Torah and mitzvos and can put a lot of effort into that and yet he can still stumble and even bring others down as well when it comes down to actual practice.

DAAS DIRECTS US TO ASCEND IN HOLINESS

We can see an example of this from a doctor who is good at diagnosing illnesses and prescribing medication but does not know how to properly dispense it – how much and how often. If you don’t have the proper medication it can cause a tragedy ch”v.

This is the case with daas too. Daas is not only about going in the way of Torah but doing so with the precise balance and measure.

The Rebbe Rashab once heard a maamer from his father, the Rebbe Maharash, and the maamer so “grabbed” him that he was deep in thought about ideas in the maamer for quite some time and couldn’t think about any other topic in Torah and avoda. When he had yechidus with his father, he learned (see HaYom Yom for 23 Sivan) that the Evil Inclination is called the animal soul not necessarily because it’s unintelligent. Sometimes it can be a fox, the most cunning of animals.

The Evil Inclination has seichel and daas so how can we know whether our thoughts are coming from the animal soul or the G-dly soul?

The Rebbe Maharash answered, “If it pertains to actual avoda, then any opposition to it comes from the animal soul.”

The Rebbe Rashab concluded: “Until then I didn’t know that there could be a pious animal soul, never mind a Chassidic animal soul!”

A person can be involved in spiritual pursuits and the learning of Chassidus yet still be following the counsel of the “old and foolish king,” the Evil Inclination. The Evil Inclination can be a cunning fox and come in the guise of a Chassid and trip us up, ch”v.

So it’s not enough to be granted seichel. We need more than that in order to be able to discern whether something is coming from the side of evil or the side of good.

The question then arises: How can we know whether our activities are the counsel of the Evil Inclination or the Good Inclination?

The answer the Rebbe Maharash gave is, to see whether actual avoda is the result. Does it aid or interfere with avoda? If it increases avodas Hashem, then this is the desire of the G-dly soul. But if this activity - which might be a spiritual activity that seems holy – causes a spiritual descent in the person or in those around him, this is the desire of the Evil Inclination.

DAAS – THE LONGTERM VIEW

The concept of daas, as explained in Chassidus, refers to hiskashrus, bonding. When you bond with something, you see it as it is within the larger context, but when you are not connected, you only see one aspect or a few details. A person looking in this latter manner considers only whether it’s good in the short run, and if he’s excited by it he continues further. But he doesn’t understand that although he is involved with something positive, he is still losing out on some important things. It’s like a person who covers himself with a short blanket – however much he pulls it up and pulls it



down, some part of him always remains uncovered.

The doctor from the previous analogy is giving the right medicine, but in the wrong dosage. If he makes it too strong, then in the short run he will be successful because the pain will stop and the temperature will drop. But there will be negative repercussions, sometimes irreversible ones, in the long run. If he makes it too weak because the medication is bitter or painful and he wants to minimize the side effects, the patient will be happy and in the short run the doctor will be pleased that he satisfied his patient. But in the long run he did not target the source of the illness and it is likely to spread to the rest of the body.

Being shortsighted and not looking at the long term effects means that daas was lacking. It’s like a man who visited a doctor and got a prescription. He bought the medication at a pharmacy but when he went home he threw it away, reasoning: I went to the doctor because the doctor needs to earn a living. I bought the medicine because the pharmacist needs to make a living. And I threw the medicine in the garbage because I also need to live!

Merely dispensing medicine is not the solution. There needs to be daas, bonding – the doctor must ensure that the medicine suits his patient’s age and medical history, and he has to be convinced to take it. So too in avodas Hashem. It’s not enough to understand that the main thing is to follow the Torah; we need to know the correct dosage as it relates to ourselves and to others.

For example, a Lubavitcher once entered a mikva and heard a child screaming. He ran to investigate and saw a man trying to drag his hysterical son into the water. When he asked the father what he was doing, the man explained that he wanted to get his son used to immersing. “Don’t you see,” the Chassid chastised him, “that if you force the terrified child to immerse, you will have a pure son in the short run but you will lose out on a pure son for the rest of his life. After such an experience, the boy would never agree to go to the mikva again.”

This is an example of a good thing that is done in the wrong dosage and time. True, immersing in a mikva is very important. Not only does it purify from a state of tuma, but it also increases tahara, as in the time of the Mikdash when they immersed even when there was no known impurity in order to eat truma and kodshim. However, the “dosage” of immersing a child who is afraid of the water or the depth can result in the opposite of what one intended.

Another example of chinuch that is done with good intentions but without daas, without thinking about the long term, is when a parent has his children sit down on Shabbos Mevarchim to say the entire T’hillim. That would seem to be Chassidische chinuch but if the parent demands that they say the entire thing without a break, they probably will grow up not wanting to look at a T’hillim. There are many other similar examples.

The tyrant sees only himself. He decides how he wants things and compels others to do his will. He doesn't listen to others, whether at work or at home, because he doesn't have the daas and connection to those around him.

With long term thinking you can also know what a person is like, is he a baal chesed or a squanderer? A squanderer doesn't think afterwards about what he did and why he did it and he doesn't even think beforehand – what is the purpose in this expenditure? What will result? What will I profit? Or, what will I lose if I hold back. Since he has no daas he did not think before or after. Daas connects; it requires a person to check things out before and after.

DAAS – CONCERN FOR OTHERS, NOT FOR SELF

A person with daas doesn't worry about himself but thinks about the welfare of others. The question would be: does he see others or does he see the world only through the prism of seeing himself? In other words, who is he connected to?

A story is told about a descendent of Rothschild who, when a poor man dressed in tatters came to him, would tell his servants: "Do me a favor and take him out of here immediately. I can't bear seeing him like this."

That's an example of someone who is only concerned about himself. He isn't looking at the other person, but only at how that person affects him. If the concern is for others, however, he connects to the situation of the other and feels his pain or rejoices in his joy.

Herein lies the distinction between a person who runs his house as someone in charge and

someone who is a tyrant. What is the difference between them?

Both have intelligence and want order and some degree of structure in the home and to avoid chaos. Both put thought into how to reach their goals. But the tyrant sees only himself. He decides how he wants things and compels others to do his will. He doesn't listen to others, whether at work or at home, because he doesn't have the daas and connection to those around him.

The results of his behavior won't be positive because he is trying to twist his surroundings to suit himself. If something is pliable it bends and if it's hard then it breaks, but neither of them will remain straight.

However, if he acts as a balabus he has to see everyone around him because he is in charge of them and that includes everything that goes on in the house. He takes into consideration their abilities and desires and doesn't force anyone into anything, but sits and talks to them in order to get them to carry out what they need to do.

A person with daas listens to others and adjusts his demands to their abilities. When you see a banana, you know you cannot straighten it since it was created this way, with its unique characteristics. Similarly, a person can't make unreasonable demands of his household. He has to tailor his demands to the abilities of each family member.

He shouldn't worry that by doing so he is compromising the Torah

because he is not changing anything in Torah, ch"v, but is seeing what the people he is dealing with can handle. As in the example brought before of having children say the entire T'hillim, the father has to know how long each of his children can concentrate and plan accordingly.

Before all the other requests in the Shmoneh Esrei we ask Hashem to grant us **chochma, bina, daas**. After praising Hashem in the first three brachos, the first thing we ask for is daas so we can see others with their abilities and limitations and find ways of dealing with them.

THE TZADDIK IN FURS AND THE CHASSID WITH A STOVE

The discerning between good and evil, between the long and short term, and between others and oneself entails a deep bond with the performance of mitzvos, with daas. Maybe this is something like the line "Don't be right, be smart" when on the highway because acting with wisdom is higher than being right.

The highest level in avodas Hashem is not the level of a tzaddik but the level of a Chassid. As the Gemara says, a tzaddik buries his nails and a Chassid burns them (so nobody steps on them and is endangered). The tzaddik did what he was supposed to do in burying them so they cannot be stepped on, but the Chassid goes a step further and considered what would happen if there was a strong wind and the nails were uncovered, and he burns them.

Why doesn't the tzaddik burn them too? Chazal say that the tzaddik is afraid to burn them because there is danger in burning something that comes from his body, but the Chassid doesn't take this into consideration. This is not egotistical self-prioritizing on the part of the tzaddik, but in truth this

is not his cheshbon at all. He looks to do the right thing and he does the right thing, although he doesn't take "what ifs" into account.

The saying goes "a tzaddik in peltz" (in furs). This compares the tzaddik to someone who is cold in the winter who puts on a warm fur coat and warms himself up. When the Chassid feels cold he lights the stove and then it's warm for everyone.

I remember that one time there was a strike by oil suppliers in New York in the winter and as a result there was no heat in 770. The Rebbe told one of the secretaries to check whether a heater needed to be turned on for Rebbetzin Nechama Dina a"h. Those who went to check did not think to find out whether the Rebbe's room was cold too.

MAKING THE MEANS FIT THE ENDS

The halacha is that a minor is

exempt from mitzvos since he has no daas. That doesn't mean he is stupid; many children are in fact quite smart. It means that they only see one side of the coin. This one-sided view is a lack of daas. If he can't envision the long term repercussions then he doesn't progress in his avodas Hashem and he hurts others. The connection to Hashem is lacking, and even if it seems as though he is making spiritual gains in the short term, he is likely to lose out in the long run.

The story is told of a person who opened a business and when a long time had passed they asked him how the business was going. He said: They told me that at first you need to invest and I'm still investing.

Then there's the one about someone who sent his son to apprentice with a tailor and after a while the father asked the tailor how his son was doing. The tailor said: "They say a tailor needs to know

two things, how to sew and how to steal the remnants. Your son knows 50% of the work already..." The father was happy with his son's progress.

If the ultimate goal of growth and progress in the way of Torah and Mitzvos is not being met, then strictly short term gains will end up doing more harm than good.

This confusion between actions done with daas and actions done without it can be seen in all areas of life – whether in man's actions between him and G-d or in actions between man and his fellow, like going on mitzvaim. The goal of mitzvaim is to publicize Hashem and what he wants every Jew (and l'havdil, every non-Jew) to do, and especially the main mitvza, as the Rebbe put it: preparing oneself and one's household and all around him to welcome Moshiach.

More about daas and the B'suras HaGeula in Part 2, G-d willing.

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ב"ה

MAKING A MOVE FOR CHILDREN

By Nosson Avrohom
Translated By Michael Leib Dobry

I stood out in the beating sun to get in line again, and when I came before the Rebbe a second time, I requested dollars for my parents in Eretz HaKodesh. Hundreds of people had passed by the Rebbe in the meantime, each one managing to stand before him for a brief moment. Yet, when I made my request to the Rebbe, he asked, “Weren’t you already here?” and he immediately gave me another two dollars. I was gripped by a feeling of tremendous awe and was left totally speechless.

If you want, you can meet the bachur Gavriel Rothschild Daniel any day at the Orange Company store in the Ayalon shopping mall in Ramat Gan. Gaby, as he’s known to his friends and family, is a delightful young man in his

twenties, filled with the vigor of youth. He has spent most of his life with his parents in Kiryat Seifer, a town with a very Litvishe nature. Nevertheless, both he and his parents have always kept a warm place in their hearts for the



Rebbe and the teachings of chassidus. “I was born in the merit of the Rebbe’s bracha,” he states with the utmost simplicity.

His mother, Mrs. Chana Daniel, was glad to share the story of one of the tens of thousands of children to be born in the merit of the Rebbe’s bracha.

Mrs. Daniel’s voice fills with excitement as she tells the story for the umpteenth time, albeit the first time for a wide public audience. Her son, who sat near his mother the entire time, emotionally noted at the end of the interview that there were several details that he personally had not known before and had discovered now for the very first time.

When she was a young girl, about a year before the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War, Chana emigrated from Tashkent to Eretz Yisroel with her parents, and the family went to live in Ashdod. Inexplicably, the Communist regime began to give numerous exit visas to Jews who wanted to emigrate to Eretz Yisroel, and many of them took advantage of the opportunity and left the country. “At the start of 5733, we



landed in Eretz Yisroel. Our joy was immeasurable. Long years of dreams and aspirations had finally been realized. Many members of our family came to greet us, along with our friends and acquaintances, including the Ladiovs, who knew our family when we were living back in Tashkent.

“One of the Ladiov children had convinced my parents to send us to learn in Kfar Chabad, where they promised we would enjoy good material and spiritual conditions. It was by no means easy to be separated from our parents. We had only recently come out of the darkness and into the light, and there was nothing we wanted more than to spend our first few days and months together, especially since the Hebrew language was still hard for us. But the enthusiastic chassid’s convincing – and the fact that they were still unemployed and were having difficulty working things out financially – pushed our parents into making this decision. I remember well our first day in the Beis Rivkah dormitory, where the Talmud Torah is located today.

“My younger brother went to study at Ohr Simcha, which had just then opened its gates. We remained in these institutions for several long months without seeing our parents, as the options for contacting one another were not as they are today. The counselors and teaching faculty did everything to make us feel at home. Their devotion to us was great. There were others in the dormitories in the same situation, and this made it much easier to endure our longing to go home.

“We were in Kfar Chabad for eight months, during which we learned Hebrew, a lot of Judaism, Shulchan Aruch, and Mishnayos. We also heard and learned about the Rebbe and the teachings of chassidus.

“Then, the Yom Kippur War began. This military conflict caught us all by surprise and instilled much fear and dread in the residents of Eretz Yisroel, particularly the new immigrants who were not used to wars. My parents contacted our schools and asked that my brother and I return home to Ashdod.

“At the end of the war, we

didn’t go back to Kfar Chabad, and we continued our studies closer to home. Our parents even began to get used to life in Eretz Yisroel. Several years later, I married my husband and we established our home in one of the neighborhoods of Tel Aviv, and we joined the community of R’ Avraham Chafuta.

“The first years of our marriage were quite rosy. We were blessed with two children born easily and in good health. Our joy was great indeed, and we felt that all of our hopes and dreams were being realized.

“Then, the problems started. We wanted another child, but every time shortly after a pregnancy began, it came to a sudden and premature end. This repeated itself again and again without any warning or way to prevent it, and our anxiety grew. We didn’t know where to turn. The doctors with whom we consulted couldn’t give us a proper diagnosis for our problem.

“This fact intensified the level of our worry and concern. They couldn’t tell me what to do in order to keep this from happening again – which it continually did. Our anguish merely grew with every passing day. Only a woman who went through all this can understand the emotional difficulty that accompanies such an experience. My desire for another child was great, and there were those who suggested that maybe I should give up this dream, but I wouldn’t hear of it. Despite all the disappointments, I continued to believe.

“During 5746, we flew to New York for a family visit. We enjoyed some marvelous experiences while we were there, but they all seemed small after our relatives suggested that we accompany them on a visit to 770, where the Lubavitcher Rebbe gave out dollars for charity

each Sunday as a bracha to Jews who came to meet with him personally and receive his blessing. I happily agreed to join them. I had been well aware of the Rebbe's great reputation as a miracle worker from the time when I was still a young girl living in Tashkent. Thus, we found ourselves waiting in a long line preparing to enter 770.

"People from all sectors and backgrounds stood in line – religious Jews, secular Jews, even Gentiles. All of them came for the privilege of standing before the Rebbe.

"After waiting for hours, my moment with the Rebbe came, and the emotion that engulfed me then has accompanied me to this very day. I couldn't remember anything except to request dollars for my son and my daughter. The Rebbe gave me another dollar and blessed me with much success. In the heat of all the excitement, I decided to pass by the Rebbe again to ask for dollars also for my parents, as this would surely be the greatest gift I could possibly give them when I returned to Eretz Yisroel.

"So I stood out in the beating sun to get in line again, and when I came before the Rebbe a second time, I requested dollars for my parents in Eretz HaKodesh. Hundreds of people had passed by the Rebbe in the meantime, each one managing to stand before him for but a brief moment. Yet, when I made my request to the Rebbe,

he asked, 'Weren't you already here?' and he immediately gave me another two dollars. I was gripped by a feeling of tremendous awe and was left totally speechless. I took the two dollars that the Rebbe gave me and departed.

"The Rebbe's voice stayed with me for the next several days. I was very worried about how the Rebbe had been strict with me, and when I returned to Eretz Yisroel, I decided to do something about it.

"I composed a long letter in which I wrote to the Rebbe that I wanted to give back the two dollars that I took for my parents, and that he was right – I had already passed by once.

"After seeing the Rebbe's righteousness with my own physical eyes, I decided that I would ask the Rebbe for a bracha to have another child. I wrote to the Rebbe in great detail about what I'd gone through in recent years – the miscarriages, the hopes, the disappointments, and the unending pain. At the end of the letter, I wrote that I wanted to move to Kfar Chabad. The memories from those months when I learned in Kfar Chabad were most pleasant, and I hoped that the saying of our Sages, 'Change the place you are at, and you will change your luck/destiny,' might be what will bring the bracha.

"After a few weeks passed, we were privileged to receive a letter of response from the Rebbe. The Rebbe gave us a bracha for a

healthy and normal pregnancy, and gave his consent to our request regarding our move to Kfar Chabad.

"We were very excited to read the letter. We immediately looked for a house to rent and we found a place owned by the Nachimovsky family, near the home of the *mara d'asra*, Rabbi Mordechai Shmuel Ashkenazi. We lived in Kfar Chabad for about a year. Shortly after we moved there, I became pregnant again. There were concerns about the baby's irregular heartbeat, but in the end, the pregnancy went to full term without any difficulties and we were privileged at year's end to welcome the birth of another son."

*

Chana is filled with pride when she speaks about this son. He received two names: *Gavriel*, after his maternal great-grandfather, and *Rothschild*, after his paternal grandfather.

In any event, the Daniel family today lives in Kiryat Seifer, an ultra-Orthodox town that has not given much of a favorable reaction to Chabad activities. "The only Chabad minyan is on Shabbos," says Gaby, "and it takes place in the women's section of the synagogue where my father serves as gabbai. It can safely be said that this represents a small expression of gratitude to the Rebbe, in whose merit I was born."

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PLEASANT WARFARE

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelewitz
Shliach, Beit Shaan

Sometimes wars need to be waged, against the Yetzer Hara or other foes. Shluchim often have to contend with opposition and the Rebbe tells us how to go about it – with simcha.

WAR WITH A SMILE

The Fash family, has been living at Kibbutz Ein HaNetziv in the Beit Shaan Valley for nearly forty years. At first they were regular kibbutznikim with no connection to Chabad, but thanks to the Rebbe's shluchim in the area, notably the Dunins and Sossonkins of Taanach and the Rosenbergs from Afula, R' Issi and Ziva Fash became close to the Rebbe and Chassidus. They are actually the first shluchim in the Beit Shaan Valley.

I know the situation well and I can tell you that it isn't easy to be shluchim on a kibbutz. This difficulty came up in a yechidus that the Fash family had with the Rebbe in 5737/1977. "Remain at the kibbutz," the Rebbe told them. "You will have many battles but I ask you to wage all these wars with joy and gladness of heart and a smile on your lips."

And battles there were. For those who don't know, the rules of

a kibbutz establish equal rights for all members. If, for example, the kibbutz votes that every boy who becomes thirteen gets a certain kind of t'fillin from the kibbutz office and there is a Lubavitcher family who wants Chabad t'fillin which cost more, there is no way that this will be approved. Remember, members of a kibbutz (at least back then) did not go around with money in their pockets. All their earnings were pooled and the kibbutz took care of all their needs.

So they had to fight and explain and cajole and raise money from other sources at the expense of other needs. It wasn't easy, but the Rebbe had told them "with a smile on your lips."

Then there was the issue of where the children would go to school. The Fash family wanted to send to a Chabad school, but the kibbutz rules required sending children to the communal school. So there were wars. Sometimes



they were successful; other times they weren't. The Rebbe was involved in all these situations. They have dozens of letters of encouragement and guidance arranged in an album. The wars didn't end but, as the Rebbe said, they were fought with joy and gladness of heart. At least they tried.

There was also a war over chickens with Lubavitch sh'chita. Then they needed a freezer in which to store the chickens and other products with a better hechsher. Hours at the pool for separate swimming. Each issue was discussed by the members of the kibbutz and then voted on.

I won't get into the details of all the wars but I can give you a partial summary. At this point, there are several shiurim that take place weekly at the Fash home, for men and for women. Big farbrengens take place on Yomim Tovim and special days. Two of their children are on shlichus in Efrat and Kiryat Malachi, and their



A bridge over a river (illustration)

children and grandchildren attend Chabad schools. A mikva was built at the kibbutz according to Chabad specifications and dozens of Chassidim from the area use the mikva every morning before davening.

YOU NEED A STRATEGY

Rabbi Shneur Halperin, shliach to thirteen yishuvim in mountainous Hermon region in the north, also knows about battles, and he told us about one of them:

A few years ago, when we were still young and inexperienced, a family living on one of the yishuvim where we work became involved in Jewish practice and they needed a mikva on their yishuv. We announced our plans to build one. The yishuv wasn't quite religious and there was massive opposition. Each one tried to convince the others in a certain direction, which caused even some

of our friends to oppose the mikva. Finally, an urgent meeting was held where the majority voted against building a mikva.

We assessed the situation and decided that we had to take another approach. We began communicating with the people we needed. We spoke personally with many residents and turned to the right ministers and Knesset members. We found out the law and followed it. In the end, the administration of the yishuv was convinced and the mikva was built.

Today, many families thank us. They use the mikva and are getting more involved in Jewish life. Three families on the yishuv have already taken on the practices of Chassidus as their way of life and many other families regularly participate in shiurim, t'fillos, and Chabad house activities.

A STRANGE BATTLE

A shliach in Eretz Yisroel (out of respect for the rav of his city we cannot say what city it is nor the name of the shliach) began his shlichus some years ago and was quickly accepted with great love. The members of the community all enjoyed his speeches and invited him to simchos as well as funerals and memorials. Children prepared for their bar mitzva with him, people consulted with him on halachic matters and came en masse to events he organized.

Just one person at the yishuv was unhappy with his success and that was the rav. The rav felt that the shliach was taking over and soon the residents would forget that they had an official rabbi. So at every opportunity he badmouthed the shliach. Surprisingly (and maybe not) people realized that this wasn't right and that his comments were mean-spirited. Instead of keeping them away, this only made even

more people attend the shliach's shiurim and programs. That caused the rav to step up his campaign against him. The shliach, on the other hand, gave the rav much honor and respect, inviting him to every event, speaking nicely of him, but it didn't help.

At a certain point, the rav decided the shliach had to leave. When he approached him with this demand, the shliach responded, "The Lubavitcher Rebbe sent me here and thank G-d the shlichus is successful. I have no reason to leave."

The rabbi found out who is in charge of shlichus and asked to meet with askanei Chabad in Kfar Chabad. The rav explained to them that this shliach was taking over all his work and he had to be terminated.

The askanei Chabad were skeptical and the shliach remained where he was. He continues to recommend to all who are willing to listen to him – "Run away from machlokes, don't get involved in politics, and give the proper respect to every rav or representative of the community. It usually works, although in my situation ..."

BATTLE OVER THE BRIDGE

The following story was told at a farbrengen in 770 by R' Avremke Kozliner (son of R' Mottel) about his father-in-law, R' Nossan Gurary, shliach in Buffalo.

R' Gurary opened his Chabad house near the university campus with only a river channel separating the university from the Chabad house. Among the tens of thousands of students, lecturers and university staff were thousands of Jews. Many of them walked a long way on Shabbos and Yom Tov to reach the bridge that spanned the river in order to visit the

Chabad house.

For Rosh HaShana (thirty years ago), R' Gurary came up with an idea to make a small footbridge directly opposite the Chabad house so many more people would easily be able to attend services on Rosh HaShana and hear the shofar. He got a number of rafts and, with the help of some ropes, fashioned a bridge.

The two days of Yom Tov went by peacefully but towards the end of Yom Tov there was a huge traffic jam of boats and ships that couldn't move down the river; the bridge was in their way. In case things weren't lively enough at that point, police cars and fire trucks showed up and they all discussed what to do. They finally concluded that the rabbi of the Chabad house was responsible and he had to immediately dismantle the bridge

and pay a fine.

For Yom Kippur, he hired a contractor to build a high bridge that would not block the boats. The contractor came with his workers and by Erev Yom Kippur the bridge was ready. Hundreds of people attended services and returned to the university when the fast was over.

When the bill from the contractor for over a million dollars came, R' Gurary said the payment should be made by the university since the bridge was for the students. The administration of the university deliberated over which department had to deal with this, and they finally decided to give it to the department for religious services. The problem was that the head of the department was a priest who wasn't a big Jew lover. He

absolutely opposed the idea of his department paying for a bridge for Jews. He even threatened, "It's either me or them!" – i.e. if they decided that he had to pay, he would resign. Indeed, within a short time, the priest passed on from this world while the legal dispute over the payment went to court.

There were some compromises offered but the shliach had gotten instructions and a bracha from the Rebbe not to compromise but to insist that the university pay for all the expenses.

The court concluded that the university had to pay and we got a story about how a shliach operates in a way of l'chat'chilla aribber, and fights a battle for his principles.



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TOO MANY CHICK PEAS

By Aryeh (Arnie) Gotfryd, PhD

As we are currently learning the laws of maaser in the chapter-a-day of Rambam, here's a thought that relates to the importance of letting go.

Asian trappers have a neat trick for catching monkeys. They hollow out a coconut through a small hole, fill it with chick peas, and wedge it firmly between rocks or fasten it to a tree. Smelling the chick peas, the monkey gingerly sidles over to the treasure trove, surreptitiously slips his hand into the hole, grasps a fistful of goodies, and... oops... he's stuck - stuck between two options - drop the peas and slip his hand out, or hang onto them and get caught himself. The monkeys are smart but the peas win out.

We've all got our chick pea traps - obsessions big or small that cost us our freedom. Businesses that devour our families, inboxes that gobble up our days, diversions that distract us from our greater goals. The lesson is obvious. Sometimes you just have to let go.

The art of letting go is much more than a self-help tool. It's also integral to a pervasive megatrend sweeping world culture and world markets. Analysts call it

the Good Enough Revolution and it stands on a tripod of three factors - simplicity, convenience and low cost. Until recently technology has been driving product offerings to greater and greater heights of quality, with more and more features. But all that is changing now.

Take for example the MP3. These highly compressed audio files have quickly become the industry standard even though sound-wise they are of low quality. The explanation is that they are also simple to use, convenient to store and share, and very inexpensive.

The same thing happened in the video recording market. Pure Digital owners Jonathan Kaplan and Ariel Braunstein launched the \$150 Flip video camera in a world where a mid-priced Sony was running \$800. Like the MP3, they slipped in at the bottom of the market and two years later are the best-selling video cameras in the US. True, the images are grainier, the viewing screen is tiny, there's

no color adjustment and no optical zoom. But it takes 10 seconds to figure out how to use it, fits in your shirt pocket, and costs very little.

The list of good-enoughers goes on: we get facts from Wikipedia, breaking news from blogs, telecommunications from Skype, and ads from Google. The US military today relies on the new unmanned MQ-1 Predator that cannot fly as fast, as high or as heavily armed as most craft. But it's simple, portable and relatively cheap - the MP3 Effect.

What about the perfectionists of this world? A perfectionist will certainly care that Wikipedia isn't quite as reliable as the Encyclopedia Britannica, that bloggers don't use fact checkers, that Skype drops calls, and that Google ads don't grab attention. But when it comes to most things, do we really need perfection? Are you investing your life savings based on wikinformation? Are you treating a lethal condition based on a health blog you found? Are you calling a once-in-a-lifetime business contact on a VOIP line? Surely these are the times to raise the bar - to pay more for quality - but those times are rare. Most of the time, good enough is just great.

A good-enough guy works to live, he doesn't live to work. Good enough means sometimes letting a loved one be right even when wrong. Good enough earnings let you take more meaningful jobs. Depending on the day, good-enough parents might drop the dishes to play ball or drop the ball to do the dishes. A good enough attitude lets you know when to drop the chick peas for things that matter more.

But how do we know how much is good enough? Is there a way to quantify our priorities? Analysts and managers have a tool

to do just that. It's called the Pareto Principle or the 80/20 Rule and it's named after a turn-of-the-century, Italian economist who noticed that 20% of his countrymen owned 80% of the nation's wealth. Since then, a flood of observations of all kinds have supported the general idea.

Business analyst John Reh says that "Project managers know that 20 percent of the work (the first 10 percent and the last 10 percent) consume 80 percent of your time and resources. You can apply the 80/20 Rule to almost anything, from the science of management to the physical world. You know 20 percent of your stock takes up 80 percent of your warehouse space and that 80 percent of your stock comes from 20 percent of your suppliers. Also 80 percent of your sales will come from 20 percent of your sales staff. Twenty percent of your staff will cause 80 percent of your problems, but another 20 percent of your staff will provide 80 percent of your production. It works both ways.

"The value of the Pareto Principle for a manager is that it reminds you to focus on the 20 percent that matters. Of the things you do during your day, only 20 percent really matter. Those 20 percent produce 80 percent of your results. Identify and focus on those things. When the fire drills of the day begin to sap your time, remind yourself of

the 20 percent you need to focus on. If something in the schedule has to slip, if something isn't going to get done, make sure it's not part of that 20 percent."

In the 80/20 Rule, good-enough marketers of good-enough products see a way to turn good-enough profits. Practicing Jews see a way to spend those profits - on *tz'daka*, or charity.

Ever since Sinai, Jews have been tithing their produce and their income and giving it away. In temple times, ten percent went to the Levite (hence the term to levy a tax), and another ten percent went to holiday celebrations and gifts to the poor - about 20% altogether. Today, Jews are obliged to give at least a tenth of their earnings to charity and Chassidim, Chabad included, still give a fifth. According to the Tanya, the fifth we give brings purpose and elevated significance to the rest.

Perhaps the two 80/20 rules are related intrinsically, embedded in nature and society like the divine proportions of the golden rectangle. Be that as it may, there is something more to the charity rule. While clever businessmen trade off their 20's against their 80's to maximizing their gains, the simple Jew has it all - the 20% he gives away is a mitzvah and that's his forever, while the 80% he keeps becomes exalted along the way.

That way you get to have your

Depending on the day, good-enough parents might drop the dishes to play ball or drop the ball to do the dishes. A good enough attitude lets you know when to drop the chick peas for things that matter more...

chick peas and eat them, too.

And since *tz'daka* brings Moshiach, there will be enough chick peas to go around for everybody, monkeys and trappers included. And on that day the whole world will know that letting go of 20% really was the way to make a good enough world truly great.

Dr. Aryeh (Arnie) Gotfryd, PhD is a chassid, environmental scientist, author and educator living near Toronto, Canada. To contact, read more or to book him for a talk, visit www.arniegotfryd.com or call 416-858-9868.

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A RESTAURANT WITH A SHLICHUS

By S. Malachi

At an exclusive dairy restaurant in the heart of Petach Tikva's business district, a popular venue for the religious crowd, the phone is answered with a cheery, "Tova'le, shalom, Yechi HaMelech!" We came to learn the secret to their successful combination of work and shlichus; between spreading the Besuras Ha'Geula and the Goel and dealing with customers. The secret is soon revealed: the world is ready for Geula!

A LOST SOUL

Lia is a spiritual sort, the kind who is constantly searching for truth and meaning. The secular society in which she was raised could not provide her with answers and could not deal with her questions. During the course of her tumultuous life she became a Reiki master and a palm reader, learned to read tarot cards and other unholy ideas, but nothing satisfied her hungry soul. She was left feeling isolated and lacking.

One day her husband, Shlomo, was surprised to see Lia reading the bedtime Shma from a laminated sheet. He asked her why

she was reading it but Lia did not have an answer. Her attitude towards Judaism was distant and reserved, but the eternal words of the prayer found a way to her heart. It began a few years earlier with a line she heard from a friend, "There are sentences in the Siddur that are said every morning and they make the day go better." It was a friend she admired and Lia decided she wanted to familiarize herself with those sayings.

A short while later, on Pesach, she noticed some laminated sheets of t'filla among the Hagados that were on a table in her parents' home. Nobody could explain how

they got there. They were the pages of the morning brachos and the Shma in nusach Arizal and from then on, Lia began reading them every morning. Her attitude towards Judaism remained alienated and she did not sense the contradiction.

When Itai, their oldest son was born, Lia heard about the traditional hair cutting in Miron and loved the idea. Although this wasn't accepted practice in their circles, she decided not to cut Itai's hair until he was three. She had no idea that three years later she would be wearing a skirt and wig.

A HECHSHER FOR THE LUBAVITCHERS

The turning point for the Perr family began when they bought a restaurant in a mall in the center of Petach Tikva. The restaurant was named for Shlomo's mother, Tova'le, the youngest child pictured in the restaurant's famous logo.

In its previous incarnation, the restaurant was kosher. When it was reopened by the Perrrs, many of the old customers showed up and asked whether it was still kosher. The reaction they got was antagonistic because Lia's sentiments were - who needs a hechsher? Half a year later, the couple realized that a hechsher was worth their while from a financial

standpoint.

From the day they received the hechsher of the local rav, Rabbi Solomon, the business flourished. And at the same time, a nearby kosher restaurant closed its doors and Lior, the chef, went to work for Shlomo and Lia. At some point he asked: Why don't you get the Lubavitchers to the restaurant?

He explained that Rabbi Solomon approved three hechsherim: 1) Rabbi Laudau's 2) the Badatz Eidah HaChareidis 3) Sh'eiris Yisroel. If they did not use Sh'eiris, the Lubavitchers would patronize the restaurant. This he had learned at the previous restaurant. Little did Lior realize that what he set in motion would transform his employers into Lubavitcher Chassidim.

Previously, Lia had never met religious Jews.

"I read about them in the newspapers, I saw them on television, and I heard about them in jokes but when I met them at the restaurant I saw something different, something special, and I really liked it. I saw a young couple that came by bus at eleven o'clock at night with a month old baby in a carriage. There was a peacefulness about them that was unfamiliar to me."

One night, a young Chassid came to the restaurant holding a brochure with the Rebbe's picture on it. Lia, who wanted to get to know her Lubavitcher clientele, got into a conversation with the bachur. He was a baal t'shuva from the yeshiva in Ramat Aviv and he came to the restaurant to meet a girl for a shidduch. At the end of the evening, the girl suggested to Lia that she have a regular Tanya learning session. The shidduch did not work out but the shiur did. Every week the girl would visit the restaurant and open a window to a world that Lia never knew, a world of Judaism. The internal spiritual



BIO

Shlomo Perr grew up in Petach Tikva in a family with a deep feeling for Judaism but he went along with friends who lived lives devoid of Jewish content.

He lived for eight years in the United States and for a period of time he even lived in Crown Heights, near 770, but the time hadn't yet come. "My hosts told me to get a dollar from the Rebbe but I stayed away. I felt no connection."

Years passed and Shlomo returned to Petach Tikva, met Lia and they married twelve years ago. They bought a restaurant and when customers asked for a hechsher they were initially annoyed but ultimately gave in for financial reasons. When the chef told them to get a hechsher that would appeal to Lubavitchers too, it was the start of a spiritual journey.

Today, at Tova'le they serve dairy delights spiced with Chassidishe emuna and with an aroma of Geula.

upheavals in Lia's soul began to occur quickly and actions soon followed...

From the moment the first connection was made with Chabad, Lia felt that she was not in control of the process, that the Rebbe took things into his own hands. What Lia knew up until then about the Rebbe was "he is a good man and in school we got his picture and twenty agurot for Chanuka gelt."

FAMILY OR WIG

Shlomo saw the changes taking place with his wife but he did not want to consider that this was a serious matter. A few weeks after the beginning of the Tanya shiur, Lia wanted to keep Shabbos. Shlomo happily agreed, as he thought: No more nerve wracking trips to the beach; no more sand, crowds and chaos.

A month went by and Lia told Shlomo she wanted to buy a wig. Shlomo was stunned. "Are you normal? Why a wig? Why be extreme? What will people say?"

But Lia insisted because she knew that a wig would make her part of the religious community and would obligate her to change her behavior. Shlomo, however, was adamantly opposed.

Lia turned to the Rebbe for help. She wrote a letter and summed up the dilemma as: shalom bayis or a wig? She put her letter into a volume of Igros Kodesh and read the pages she opened to. The answer was so direct that she was taken aback. She closed the volume and sat on the couch in shock. Without prior introduction, Shlomo turned to her and said, "You know what? You want a wig so badly and I don't want to stand in your way. Go buy one." Just like that - a complete one hundred and eighty degree turnabout!

The next morning Lia showed

Shlomo the letter she had opened to. It was a letter that the Rebbe wrote to someone on the topic of business (volume 10, p. 265) which said: Although all the treasures of the world are not enough to pay a Jew for the steps he makes to come close to Hashem, he still has to make the proper vessels or garments. The Rebbe then goes on to cite the Chassidic interpretation of the verse about the beautiful captive, "And she should shave her head and grow her nails," as it relates to business matters, continuing the analogy of a garment by saying that the clothing can't be too short...

Since then, whenever Lia writes to the Rebbe, whether for herself or with other people (Chassidim, Litvish, Ashkenazim, Sefardim), she gets amazing answers.

"GO TO THE DOCTOR LESS AND LESS"

Time passed and Lia's world changed while Shlomo watched and did not comment. Lia called Rabbi Dov Tevardovitz of Kfar Chabad so he could kasher their kitchen at home and Shlomo continued to observe the goings-on without mixing in and without saying anything ("just paying the bills ..."). He did not like the changes but gradually began understanding that his life was also changing. Lia was wearing a wig and he wore a kippa and did not watch soccer games on Shabbos "for the sake of the home" – but his inner world had not yet changed.

When Itai was two and a half, Lia learned about the importance of chinuch al taharas ha'kodesh from a young age. Her son was attending a private playgroup in Kfar Sirkin, an exclusive state of the art place. When she told Shlomo that she wanted to switch him to a Chabad school, Shlomo

thought she had gone overboard. "No way!" he declared.

Lia persisted, trying again and again, and Shlomo finally conceded, "Maybe we'll talk about it at the end of the year. I don't want to transfer him in the middle."

Lia couldn't wait and she turned to the Rebbe with a request for a bracha. The Rebbe's answer was to make sure the child received a Chassidic education. Lia was excited but Shlomo was not. He had not changed his mind.

"Please reconsider," she begged him. But he insisted that he would not transfer their son mid-year.

Itai suffered from fluid in the ears and the doctors recommended surgery. As if that wasn't enough, he became sick and all the tests they conducted didn't show what was wrong. The doctors could not explain what was ailing the toddler.

For over a week the child stayed home with a high temperature. Lia suggested that they write to the Rebbe. She wrote and Itai drew a picture. The Rebbe's answer was that the child be given a Chassidic education and go to doctors less and less until he did not need them anymore. Lia knew this was about her child's spiritual and physical health and she called Shlomo and said, "At least give me enough credit that I won't do anything that will adversely affect him." Shlomo agreed.

When Itai went to the Chabad school for the first time, the class was saying the p'sukim. To her surprise, Itai went to the front and declared, "I also want to say a pasuk." To Lia it was a clear indication that this was the best place for her child. From then on, Itai no longer needed treatment for his ears.

Rabbi Zvi Katzavi, shliach in Ramat HaSharon, began visiting their house to give shiurim in Chassidus.

“In addition to taking care of our children, the demanding nature of the work at the restaurant centers around the evening hours and does not enable me to go to shiurim and lectures, and so I bring the rabbis to me,” explained Lia with a smile. When the shiur was over, she would go back to the restaurant for the night shift and Shlomo would come home. Shlomo took no interest in Chassidus but enjoyed talking to Rav Katzavi and the two of them spent hours farbrenging together. Without realizing it, Shlomo was getting more involved in the world of Torah and Chassidus.



Lubavitchers celebrating a Sheva Brachos at Tova'le

A JEW CANNOT BE APART

Lia continued to learn and progress while Shlomo continued to observe without getting involved. Lia did not try to convince him; she was preoccupied with the changes she was undergoing. In hindsight, it is possible that the space she gave him is what preserved the family structure and led Shlomo to his own decision to get involved in Jewish life.

Her progress continued rapidly. “From the moment I discovered the truth, nothing else interested me. I knew that I belong to the Rebbe.”

Customers who knew the couple previously were flabbergasted. Even the shliach Rabbi Asher Deitsch, who constantly supported them, tried to slow Lia down. “Better to do things slowly and in a grounded way,” he said, but Lia couldn’t wait.

It was Pesach and Lia knew that she wouldn’t be able to be particular about hiddurim in kashrus. She could imagine Shlomo’s reaction to food without spices, food without gebrochts...and then she came up with an idea, to go away for Pesach. When she suggested that they go to a

“I read about them in the newspapers, I saw them on television, and I heard about them in jokes but when I met them at the restaurant I saw something different, something special, and I really liked it.”

seminar, he agreed without knowing where he was going. When he arrived at the hotel he was shocked to see it overrun with religious Jews in black! They looked bizarre to him. He was further taken aback to see them spitting during the davening (when they said Aleinu).

But along with the strangeness he began to recall sweet scenes from his childhood. Seeing Lia say T’hillim reminded him of seeing his grandmother sitting and reciting T’hillim with simple faith.

S’fira began, and Shlomo felt uncomfortable shaving as usual when nobody around him was doing so. “I’ll grow a beard for a week until the end of the seminar,” he said. On the last night of the seminar he had a dream of a string descending from above and sticking to him. He tried to

extricate himself from it but was not able to, as the string stuck to him. It was a strong, palpable feeling and he would later see that it was spelled out clearly in the HaYom Yom (21 Sivan): “A Jew neither wants nor is able to separate, heaven forbid, from G-dliness.”

When the seminar was over, Lia – for the first time since she began taking an interest in Judaism – tried convincing her husband, “The beard looks so good on you. Try growing it for a while longer.” And Shlomo agreed.

With Shavuot approaching, Lia had a radical idea. She suggested that she take the morning and evening shift at the restaurant so he could learn Torah. Shlomo liked the idea but thought he’d rather use the time to study law ...

THE MERIT OF WOMEN

One day, in one of those unforgettable conversations with R' Katzavi, the shliach said to him: "Shlomo, your son is growing older. He'll soon start attending the Chabad elementary school. How do you think he will feel about you?"

The question shook him up. He woke up to the changes taking place in his family and realized he had to invest more effort.

After much thought he told Lia that he was ready to go to yeshiva. Lia immediately called R' Katzavi and asked him to arrange a meeting with R' Yossi Ginsburgh, rosh yeshiva of the Chabad yeshiva in Ramat Aviv.

"My husband will go learn there," she explained. R' Katzavi, who knew Shlomo, could not believe the news.

R' Ginsburgh warmly welcomed the couple. He was used to interesting life stories but meeting a 58 year old student surprised even him. Shlomo was accepted and the Perr family became an inseparable part of the Ramat Aviv k'hilla. They celebrated Yomim Tovim with the k'hilla and many a Shabbos with the Ginsburghs.

When Shlomo went to yeshiva the first thought he had was: "What am I going to do all day with these blacks [derogatory Israeli slang for religious Jews]?" But he quickly discovered that yeshiva life was wonderful.

His day began with mikva in the morning, learning Chassidus, davening and then more learning. When a person is in yeshiva he lives differently, thinks differently and obviously, learns differently. For an entire year Shlomo sat in this extraordinary yeshiva in the center of a secular, exclusive neighborhood. He was guided and supported by Rabbi Omer HaLevi. He considers the year he spent in

yeshiva, in which he became a Tamim, the nicest year of his life.

Lia continued to run the house and the restaurant, carrying the burden herself but thrilled that her husband was studying Torah. She felt she was following in the footsteps of Rochel, the wife of Rabbi Akiva.

A year passed and Shlomo returned to work but now he felt himself to be a Chassid, mekushar heart and soul to the Rebbe MH" M.

CULINARY SHLICHUS

Shlomo and Lia wanted to sell the restaurant. They wanted a more spiritual vocation. They got a nice offer and had started thinking about moving to the north of the country. When they wrote to the Rebbe the answer was: Stay in your place of shlichus.

They understood that they couldn't leave the restaurant, which had become a center of hafatza for Judaism and hiskashrus to the Rebbe. The work there included having an influence on the staff, which numbers dozens of employees, as well as a broader influence – spreading the light of Chassidus and Geula to their customers, most of whom were religious, Chassidic and Litvish and who came from all over the country: Yerushalayim, B'nei Brak, Netanya and even from the south and north of the country.

Lia met a special woman who was from the Gerrer Chassidic group. The woman adopts children who are sick with terminal illnesses. She has incredible inner strength to support these children physically and emotionally. She often heard stories about the Rebbe from Lia and one day she called and said: "I'm coming with my sister. She wants to write to the Rebbe."

The two came to the restaurant

and the sister wrote: "Rebbe, I have been in shidduchim for three years already. What's going to be? How long can I wait? Should I wait for a Gerrer Chassid or should I listen to suggestions for shidduchim about people from other groups?"

The Rebbe's answer in the Igros Kodesh was direct: "Mazal tov, mazal tov. I was happy to hear about the engagement of your daughter."

Lia said goodbye to the sisters with wishes of mazal tov and a week later the woman called with the news that her sister was engaged. A month later, the first woman alos had a simcha, she gave birth to a son and she named him Menachem Mendel.

One day, Lia left her car with her husband and went to the restaurant by taxi. The driver seemed upset. Even when he spoke via walkie-talkie with the other drivers he sounded irritated. "What a sad day this is," he said. Lia tried to inquire but the driver didn't answer. Throughout the trip she told him about the Rebbe, the Nasi HaDor and said he could write to the Rebbe at any time. Before she left the taxi she suggested he come into the restaurant and write a letter.

"I'll come when I can," he said and left. Fifteen minutes later he was back with a kippa on his head. After making a good hachlata to put on t'fillin every weekday he wrote to the Rebbe. When he left he looked like a different person, a much happier man.

WORKING IN THE ERA OF GEULA

The staff is comprised of dozens of employees. There are shifts of waiters, waitresses, cooks, a barman, and maintenance staff and they all have become acquainted with the Rebbe and

Chassidic ideas. All the men put on t'fillin and the women receive Shabbos candles. Even the mashgiach, a Poilishe Chassid and a mekurav to Chabad, does mitvza t'fillin with owners of neighboring stores.

When you combine business with mitvzaim, everybody benefits. For Shlomo and Lia, every Yom Tov is a reason to give their employees a Judaica gift, whether it's a book of stories of the Rebbe, a pushka, etc. On special dates the employees have outings. They visit Ascent and the gravesite of the Arizal, the Kosel or Kever Rochel. A barbeque for the waitresses in a scenic area, combined with a shiur in Tanya from a mashpia, is most enjoyable.

The teenage waitresses appear to be as distant from Jewish tradition as one could possibly be, but when Lia engages them, she reveals another world:

"They come from homes where they heard nothing about mitzvot but when I see their tremendous thirst I ask myself: Why don't I dare to do more?"

Two days before Holocaust Remembrance day, she told the waitresses, "Come, let's take advantage of this day for k'dusha. Bring your friends, your mothers and your friends' mothers and we'll spend time together." That evening, Lia herself was surprised by the turnout. Dozens of women and girls showed up, an eclectic group of various ages and backgrounds. A picture of the Rebbe and a Siddur was placed at every place setting and they farbrenged, learned, and davened Maariv with tremendous inspiration.

There is constant turnover amongst the waitresses (they are girls who are looking for temporary jobs) but the deep connection they make at the restaurant is ongoing.

THAT'S HOW OUR MARRIAGE WAS SAVED

One day, a religious young man walked into the restaurant with an older woman who did not look religious. Lia immediately realized this was a baal t'shuva and his mother and she noticed that the mood was very tense between them. The young man went out somewhere and the woman seemed to want to unburden herself.

She told Lia about how hard it was for her that her son had become a baal t'shuva. When she learned that Lia is Lubavitch she said that it seemed to her that those who became baalei t'shuva through Chabad treated their families differently. The discussion went on to Chabad's approach and then her son appeared and said: "I greatly admire the Lubavitcher Rebbe but I cannot understand your belief that the Rebbe is Moshiach and about writing to him with the Igros Kodesh."

Lia suggested that he write to the Rebbe himself. The letter he opened to in the Igros Kodesh was in Yiddish and Lia called Rabbi Mordechai Garelik to ask him to translate it. R' Garelik said he'd be available in a few minutes but the young man said, "I came here for a hearing at the Rabbinate before I divorce my wife. In another week and a half I will be back for a second hearing and you'll tell me the answer then," and he left for the parking lot.

Just then R' Garelik called back to translate the answer. Lia quickly followed the young man and his mother and handed him the cell phone so he could hear the answer directly from the shliach. From one second to the next his tense face changed and a smile lit up his sad eyes. He didn't say much, just hung up and told Lia: "Yechi HaMelech HaMoshiach."

He did not return for the second hearing and Lia had nearly forgotten about him. One evening a religious couple walked into the restaurant and went over to Lia. The husband said to his wife, "This is the Rebbe's restaurant where our marriage was saved."

The answer we opened to said: 'Why share the profit with other partners when you can earn it yourself.' We hadn't written about this subject and we had no offer of a partnership, but we soon saw that the Rebbe's advice preceded the offer.

MIRACLES AND WAITERS

The brother of one of the waitresses (from an irreligious family) got involved in delinquent

behaviors and had joined up with members of the underworld. With Lia's guidance the girl wrote to the Rebbe. When she was finished, she gave a coin to tz'daka and went to

If a shift goes by in which I haven't spoken about Judaism and Chassidus, I feel the evening was a waste.

get the volume of Igros Kodesh. She returned with a *Derech Mitzvosecha* of the Tzemach Tzedek and Lia exchanged it for the letters of the Rebbe.

The letter they opened to dealt with bris mila and included a reference to a maamer about the mitzva of mila in the *Derech Mitzvosecha*, the volume the girl had just brought. It also happened to be a maamer that Lia was learning at the time. "I asked her, 'what happened with your brother's bris?' but she didn't remember anything in particular." She called her mother and asked and her mother said that the bris took place on Shabbos and the father insisted on having a certain mohel who was an older man. The day of the bris was especially hot and the mohel was perspiring heavily and injured the child. The bris was called off and afterwards they had to have it fixed.

Lia said, "I knew that if I referred the young man to Bris Yosef Yitzchok, nothing would happen, so I made sure to take him there myself. Rabbi Aryeh Amit checked him and when he left the room he said with a smile: 'As usual, the Rebbe is not mistaken. The boy's bris mila was not done properly.'"

He was taken to the operating room and was given a halachic bris. The seudas mitzva that followed took place at Tova'le with the members of the happy family.

On another occasion, one of the waitresses told Lia a sad story. After her parents divorced in her childhood, she was raised by her grandparents, who cared for her as parents would. Now they had

discovered a malignant tumor in her grandfather, over the kidneys, and the doctors said he needed surgery. The girl sat down to write to the Rebbe after making a hachlata to learn Chassidus. The Rebbe's answer was: "I was happy to hear about the start of your new path... As far as what you write about the treatment of your father...there is fear that the treatment will harm the kidney and you should consult with another doctor."

ANSWER IN ADVANCE

Even in running the restaurant, Shlomo and Lia receive loving guidance from the Rebbe. Says Lia, "I often wrote to the Rebbe and said I was disgusted by this work with gashmuis and I wanted to go on real shlichus. Each time the Rebbe's answer was to stay, that this is my place, my shlichus.

"Here's an open miracle that the Rebbe showed us. Around Sukkos time we wrote to the Rebbe about something and the answer we opened to said: 'Why share the profit with other partners when you can earn it yourself.' We hadn't written about this subject and we had no offer of a partnership, but we soon saw that the Rebbe's advice preceded the offer. That same night a very wealthy looking couple came into the restaurant. One of the waiters came over to us and said that they wanted to talk to the owners because they were very impressed by our restaurant and they wanted to become partners. Even before we went over to them to tell them we were not interested, we showed the waiter the Rebbe's amazing answer."

One day, a waiter went to take a plate from the dryer and to the surprise of all, he found a baggie with a picture of the Rebbe and a 100 shekel coin, Chanuka gelt from 5745. The plate and the baggie were still wet and nobody could explain how it ended up on the plate.

THE REBBE OF ALL

I visited the restaurant to see it for myself. The waiters greeted me with "Yechi HaMelech". The boy with me jumped around and sang Yechi and little Menachem Mendel gave me a Moshiach card with a picture of the Rebbe.

"What do people think of this?" I wondered. "After all, your customers are from the religious sector which is considered the toughest group to deal with when it comes to the Besuras Ha'Geula."

It didn't look as though Shlomo and Lia understood my question. They said, "When you are sincere and natural, people accept what you say."

Lia finds it very important to convey the message, "It's the time of Geula and there is no need to hide this fact. When people come to the restaurant I welcome them with 'Good evening, Yechi HaMelech.' They all smile. If people ask me who the king is, that's great. We get into a serious discussion about Geula and Chassidus. If a shift goes by in which I haven't spoken about Judaism and Chassidus, I feel the evening was a waste.

"When people realize this is real, that the Rebbe is running the world and we don't just say it, they accept it readily. When you truly feel that the Rebbe's being is a global phenomenon and not just a personal one, there is no problem in saying Yechi HaMelech and being mekasher people to the Rebbe. Rabbi Moshe Yeret, a shliach here

who was with us during big and small events in our lives, told me several times: you must have a connection to the Rebbe.

“One day, an old memory popped into my mind. When I was a girl I had a certain health problem and I vaguely remembered that they had asked for a bracha for me. I asked my mother and she referred me to my aunt, whose husband, Shlomo was a sailor. I discovered that he had visited the Rebbe and on that occasion he had asked for a bracha for me. I also found out that he had even gotten a dollar for me, a dollar that I received years later in the month of Sivan, the same month in which it was given to my uncle originally.”

EPILOGUE

“When I learned the Chaf-

THINGS THAT I’VE LEARNED

-When you convince someone to write to the Rebbe, he becomes mekushar
-Simplicity and truth are a sure recipe to reach people
-“Yechi HaMelech” as an opener changes the conversation.

Ches Nissan sicha in which the Rebbe says, ‘I did my part. You do all that you can ... May there be one, two, three who can devise a plan of what to do ...’ that really got to me. At the shiur given by Rabbi Rottenstein on inyanei Moshiach and Geula, he said the following: ‘In order to understand what the Rebbe said,

you don’t have to be smart; you need courage.’

“I related to this and I’ll add the following: You need courage in order to forego the exile way of thinking which accompanies us wherever we go, even as we go to reach out and be mashpia. We need courage to discern the ‘lights of Tohu’ in what the Rebbe said and bring them into our daily lives while accepting that we and the world are ‘keilim of Tikkun.’

“The avoda that remains to be done needs to take place within each one of us. Total devotion to the Rebbe, following what the Rebbe said, arousing that spark which is part of the ‘general soul.’ If even one of us would get it absolutely right, we would all be redeemed. Keep it simple and ‘Yechi HaMelech!’”

[Continued from page 38]

AS RELATED BY MEMBERS OF THE KOLLEL:

The following was written about him by members of the kollel:

“We are shocked at his passing and don’t have the words to describe our friend R’ Zalman a”h. He was outstanding, an old-time Chassid, a quiet person who did not fight for his honor and did not consider himself special, but really he was.

Whenever we remember him we are amazed by how this person lived modestly and simply without considering himself a *yesh* and a *metzius* to the point that he reached the level of gadlus (greatness). The phrase “pashtus v’gadlus (simplicity and greatness)” suits him.

Chazal say about people like him, “Who is a ben Olam Haba – a humble and lowly person”

(Gemara Sanhedrin 88b). He never pushed himself to the front and was satisfied with what he was given – something we should learn from. We know the Rebbe MH”M urged constantly that we live with the verse, “and the living take it to heart” (Koheles 7:2), that we need to learn from a departed person’s good deeds.

It says in the Mishna (Avos 3:10), “Anyone with whom his fellowmen are pleased, Hashem is pleased with him.” In *Yeina shel Torah* it explains this to mean that someone whose behavior and actions are pleasing to others, Hashem is pleased with him – he causes nachas ruach to Hashem by his behavior and good deeds.

When you think about this Chassid, R’ Zalman, who was a beloved person “below” and consequently beloved “Above,” you see how this Mishna applies to him. He was always happy with his lot and pleasant with others, and when he walked in to the kollel in

the morning you felt that here was a genuine Chassid who loved Torah and those who study it, who loved to come to shiurim, Gemara, Tanya etc. He especially enjoyed when they learned the Rebbe’s sichos and he had a special chayus from the shiur of stories which we have in the kollel every day during the last few minutes. He would talk about this at home, that he greatly enjoyed the shiurim and the stories.

Every morning he would call his son Shmuel to make sure he was coming to take him to the kollel and he would show up no matter what the weather - even in the heat, cold, and snow - because of his great love for Torah.

He was mekushar to the Rebbe MH”M with all his heart and soul, with true faith. We can only say, “It is a shame over those who are lost and none can be found like them.” May his memory be for a blessing.

R' SHNEUR ZALMAN YEHOShUA LIGHT A"H



Crown Heights is bereft of one of its elder Chassidim with the passing of R' Shneur Zalman Light last month at the age of 98. R' Zalman was born on the fifth day of Chanuka, 5672/1912, in Polotzk. His father, R' Dovid Liachov was a melamed and he was his son's first teacher.

When he turned 12, his father was killed in a pogrom in Polotzk. It was at this time that the mashpia R' Avrohom Maiyor and the mashpia R' Shlomo Chaim Kesselman arrived on shlichus from the Rebbe Rayatz. R' Shlomo Chaim took the young Shneur Zalman under his wing and began preparing him for his bar mitzva and even bought t'fillin for him. Later, he sent the boy to learn in underground Chabad yeshivos in Nevel, Vitebsk, Snovask and Yekaterinoslav, where he met Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneersohn,

the Rebbe's father.

For some years he wandered and learned together with his fellow T'mimim by the great Chassidim R' Yehuda Eber, R' Yechezkel Himmelstein, R' Chatshe Feigin and others.

During that period of his life he was imprisoned for two weeks for the "crime" of spreading Torah. When he got older he studied accounting and worked in this profession in Moscow.

When the war began he fled to Tashkent, and in 1944 he married Yenta Minkowitz.

He was among the Chassidim who left the country in the daring border-running operation of 1946-7, and in 1948 he arrived in Toronto where he joined his brother Chaim Tzvi, who had enabled him to get a visa to Canada.

In Canada he studied sh'chita

and worked as a shochet for thirty years. At this time there were hardly any Chabad Chassidim in Toronto and R' Shneur Zalman spread the light of Chassidus there.

He was appointed gabbai of the shul he davened in and welcomed everyone who came to the shul. He saw to it that Chassidishe farbrengens were held on special days in the calendar. He was also treasurer of Lubavitch mosdos in Toronto. During the Shiva, people from Toronto described R' Shneur Zalman as a baal middos tovos and modest person. He was beloved by all who knew him and was a model of a genuine Chassid.

When the Rebbe asked that Kollelim – Tiferes Z'keinim Levi Yitzchok be founded everywhere, he started a kollel in the shul where he davened and gave shiurim to the participants, some of whom were new immigrants from Russia whom he was mekarev.

Five years ago, when he was already well past 90 and he couldn't find a suitable place to learn in Toronto, he and his wife decided to move to Crown Heights where there is an active kollel Tiferes Z'keinim organized by the gabbaim of 770. This move meant he lost a large part of his Canadian pension and gave up life in his own home.

When he moved to Crown Heights he was one of the regulars at the kollel and hardly ever missed a day.

R' Shneur Zalman Yehoshua is survived by his wife, his sons Shmuel and Berel (Fairlawn, NJ), and his daughters Brenda Eber (Crown Heights), Minna Rivka Rappaport (Toronto), Gitty Weingarten (Crown Heights), grandchildren and great-grandchildren, some of whom are shluchim of the Rebbe.

[Continued on page 37]

REUNITING PRECIOUS SOULS

By Hillel Zaltzman

The father was Jewish, his wife was Ukrainian, and his son-in-law was Jewish but his daughter was with her parents in New York and the husband absconded.

One summer day in the mid 70's I was davening as I usually do in 770 when a Lubavitcher approached me with a Jew who wasn't religious and said, "This man came from Russia. Be mekarev him." And he walked off.

I shook his hand and began talking to him in Russian. In those days, the only way to get out of Russia was if one had received an invitation extended by a relative abroad who requested that the person be allowed to leave Russia to unite with the family. Thousands of Jews left Russia with the "unification of families" excuse. These invitations generally came from Eretz Yisroel and the recipient had to travel from Russia to Israel.

If they wanted to settle elsewhere they would travel to Italy and wait there for an invitation from a Jewish community somewhere in the world and then go there. Since this process took months, the Joint rented a hotel for these Jews in Ladispoli, Italy. When Lubavitchers heard about this new

Jewish center, they opened a Chabad house and many Russian Jews were niskarev to Torah and mitzvos there.

The man I met in 770 followed this route. After leaving Russia he chose to go to Italy and wait there for an invitation from a Jewish community in the United States. In Italy he met R' Betzalel Schiff at the Chabad house, who was greatly mekarev him. When R' Betzalel heard that he received an invitation from the community in Baltimore and was planning on going there, he suggested that he travel to New York to 770, "where they will surely help you," he promised.

KOSHER FOOD ON THE FLIGHT

On the flight from Italy to New York a stewardess told him that kosher food had been ordered for him. After decades of religious persecution, he found it hard to believe that he was being served kosher food on an international

flight. He was so amazed by this that he resolved that from that day onward he would try to eat only kosher food.

The Jewish organizations who took care of his flight arranged a hotel room for him in Manhattan. He didn't realize how far Manhattan is from Brooklyn and since R' Betzalel told him to go to 770 Eastern Parkway, he decided to go immediately. It was a longer walk than he had expected but he kept going, and two hours later he arrived at 770, where he met me.

Having experience dealing with Russian immigrants, in the very first meeting I try to ascertain whether they are Jewish. Since this man did not speak nor understand Yiddish, I began talking to him about his family. He said he came to NY with his mother, his wife, and two daughters, 19 and 17. His family name wasn't particularly Jewish but he insisted that both his parents were Jewish. He said his father was killed in the war but his mother was alive and had accompanied him.

I had occasion to meet with his mother and saw that she was indeed Jewish. She spoke Yiddish and knew basic things that Jewish women of that time knew.

As for him, he impressed me as a simple Jew who yearned to learn and do things Jewish. He became quite attached to me and every day

between mincha and maariv he would come to the shul near my home and ask me to teach him Judaism. I taught him the alef-beis but he wanted to know more and more. He wasn't ashamed to ask my then seven year old son Efraim to sit on his lap and teach him what he learned in school. Efraim became his teacher and taught him alef-beis and then Chumash, which he translated into Russian. He slowly began to read on his own, and his at first frequent mistakes didn't stop him from continuing to learn.

One day I spoke to him about the importance of a bris mila. To my surprise he told me that although he was born in the period after the Revolution when it was dangerous to make a bris, his parents had had him circumcised.

A TROUBLING DISCOVERY ON THE WAY TO TASHLICH

I invited him to daven with me in 770 on Rosh HaShana. Since reading was still difficult for him, I suggested that he start with Shma and be up to the Shmoneh Esrei with everyone else, but he insisted on starting from Hodu. It was only when the chazan was almost up to Barchu that he agreed to start saying Shma. I don't remember how much he managed to say but I cannot forget the moving sight of this Jew standing and davening Shmoneh Esrei for two hours. He put his feet together and stood there, his face buried in his siddur, oblivious to the passage of time. I was truly envious of him.

Then he asked me what else he should say. I had pity on him and said he should rest a bit but he said that he felt he wanted to make up for everything he had missed in life.

In the evening, when I went to Tashlich, I met him on Kingston Avenue with his wife. This was the

first time I was seeing her and she looked like a typical Ukrainian gentile to me!

After Rosh HaShana I gently inquired about his wife and whether she was Jewish. He said that she was a Ukrainian gentile "but you don't have to worry because when we were in Italy they gave her a Magen Dovid necklace and she became a real Jew!"

I explained to him that a Magen Dovid doesn't transform you into a Jew. Being Jewish is something spiritual and is much more complicated than that and only after a period of preparation could she go through a proper conversion. He was taken aback to hear that his wife was not Jewish and since he had already gotten a taste of authentic Judaism and was determined that he and his family had to live a full Jewish life, he greatly desired that his wife convert. He asked me to guide him in this.

I went to Rabbi Yehuda Kalman Marlow a"h and told him the story. R' Marlow said he had to meet with the couple to see if they were sincere. We arranged a meeting and I went with them to R' Marlow.

R' Marlow asked the woman why she wanted to convert and explained that in converting she would have to commit to keeping 613 mitzvos as well as Jewish customs. He made it clear that there was no going back and after she converted she would not be able to revert to being a non-Jew. She listened carefully and said that she wanted to be a part of the Jewish people.

R' Marlow asked him his age and when he said he was 45, R' Marlow said that if she wanted to convert they could not live together as a married couple and had to separate for three months. They immediately agreed to this condition and said that starting that night he would sleep at his mother's place and she would sleep in their

apartment with their daughters, who were also interested in converting.

THE MISSING HUSBAND

I was very involved in the conversion process and I spent a lot of time with the family. At some point, I found out that the older daughter was expecting. I was shocked to hear this because I had thought she was single. But where was her husband? When I asked her father he said that the fellow she had married back in Russia could not be included when they got their exit visas but he was trying to leave Russia and would soon reunite with them. When I asked whether he was Jewish, he said, "Of course!"

It seemed somewhat strange to me but since we were in the midst of preparing for their conversion, I couldn't delve into the matter more. In the meantime, his wife and daughters learned about Judaism, the laws of Shabbos, kashrus, family purity etc. Mrs. Mariasha Garelik a"h guided them in the practice of daily Jewish life.

After a few months they underwent conversion with R' Marlow and they ran a Jewish home. Whoever knew the woman could testify about her yiras Shamayim and her sincerity. A few years later she died suddenly, and was buried in Montefiore cemetery in the Lubavitch section.

After the conversion process was concluded, I began thinking about the husband of the older daughter. When I inquired about him, the father told me that they heard he had gotten a visa and hoped to arrive in New York shortly. Two weeks later he told me that his son-in-law had left Russia but had not yet arrived in New York.

As I mentioned, if you wanted to come to the US you had to spend a period of time in Italy until you

received a formal invitation but from the little bit of information I had received in speaking to the father and daughter, I had a feeling that her husband had decided to leave her and wasn't necessarily planning on coming to New York.

I contacted my colleagues in Chamah in Eretz Yisroel and told them about the young man and the estimated time that he left Russia. I asked them to find out through the Jewish Agency whether he had arrived in Israel and where he was. A few days later I was told that my assumption was correct. He had arrived in Israel and was in an absorption center in Beer Sheva. The daughter's plight touched me and I decided to go to Israel and convince her husband to return to her.

A TRIP TO ISRAEL

You are surely wondering why I got so involved. The truth is that I asked myself the same question but I felt that I just couldn't ignore the daughter's plight. I figured that if I was successful then it was a great z'chus to build a Jewish home. In the meantime, the daughter gave birth to a girl and was raising her by herself without a husband by her side.

A short time later I had occasion to travel to Israel in connection with my work with Chamah. Upon arriving there I wasted no time and went to Beer Sheva the very next day. I easily located the absorption center which was comprised of ten caravans. I walked into the main hall and called out his name and a young man, about twenty years of age, got up and said: "That's me, what do you want?"

I shook his hand and said I had arrived the day before from New York and I had regards for him from his wife and baby daughter. As I had anticipated, he was stunned. When he recovered from the shock



R' Hillel Zaltzman at work in the offices of Chamah back then

he said: "What are you talking about? She's not my wife and that's not my daughter. We were married briefly but then she decided to leave for New York and I came here. We parted ways."

I began talking to him and learned that his parents had emigrated to Canada. I also learned that when he found out that his wife was going to give birth he became scared of the family responsibilities at his young age and decided to go as far away as possible. This is why he had not left with his parents to Canada and preferred to remain in Israel. Now, here I was, giving him regards from his wife and daughter – oy vey!

Although he wasn't pleased to see me, he was happy that someone was taking an interest in him and he continued talking to me. I observed him and thought he looked more Ukrainian than Jewish, which was an unpleasant surprise. I thought: "Oy, I was hoping to reunite a Jewish family but here's another goy ..."

I asked him about his Jewish background and whether his parents had made him a bris. He didn't understand the question and

offhandedly said that he wasn't Jewish but Ukrainian.

I had come from the US to get a Jewish husband back together with his converted Jewish wife but he said he was Ukrainian! From my experience I knew that sometimes the mother is Jewish but the children think their religion is established by their father and are sure they are goyim. I decided to inquire about his mother and he said, "Actually, my biological parents were both Jews, but after my father died, my mother married a Ukrainian gentile and since he adopted and raised me like a son, he registered me as a Ukrainian."

After carefully inquiring about his family I concluded that he was speaking the truth and he was a Jewish man, the son of Jewish parents. I felt relieved and decided to do whatever I could to get him back to his wife.

I explained to him that according to Jewish law he was a Jew. He told me that he hadn't wanted to be registered as a Ukrainian but he hadn't been given a choice. Now that I was telling him that he was Jewish he was very happy and said he was proud to be

a Jew.

When I suggested that he be circumcised he agreed immediately and said that he wanted to have a Jewish name. He explained that the origin of his present name was Italian and it meant “life” and so he wanted the name Chaim. I was surprised by this because in Russia, “Chaim” was a derogatory nickname for a Jew – when they wanted to deride a Jew they would call him “Chaim.”

Within a short time the people at Chamah had arranged a bris for him and he was named Chaim. After the bris I asked him how he felt and he said he was in great pain but he was very happy and proud to be a complete Jew.

After the bris I invited him to spend Shabbos with me in Nachalas Har Chabad, with the intention of convincing him to return to his wife and daughter. On Friday night I spoke to him until two in the morning. Aside from the time spent on davening and the Shabbos meals, most of Shabbos was devoted to long conversations with him. He maintained that he was too young to have a family and if he went to the US it would take years until he found a job. How would he support them?

I mustered all my powers of persuasion in order to describe to him what a good life he would have in America. I elaborated on the connections we had there which we would use to help him. I also praised his special talents and said that in America they looked for people with abilities such as he had and he could go far there. I explained the importance of family life and highly praised his young wife so as to arouse his feelings for her once again.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

By Motzaei Shabbos it looked

After Rosh HaShana I gently inquired about his wife and whether she was Jewish. He said that she was a Ukrainian gentile “but you don’t have to worry because when we were in Italy they gave her a Magen Dovid necklace and she became a real Jew!”

as though I had succeeded. He said it was easier for him to first go to Canada and then to New York from there. I would have been more pleased if he went directly to New York but that was impossible since he didn’t have all the necessary papers.

My friends at Chamah in Eretz Yisroel helped him fly to Canada and I waited impatiently in New York. Each day that he tarried in Canada seemed like an eternity to me. I was afraid that his parents would try to keep him there, saying he was too young and had a future ahead of him and why should he take on the burden of a family just because Hilke Zaltzman told him to ...

Boruch Hashem, Chaim showed up two weeks later and met with his wife and daughter. Since they hadn’t been married according to halacha, we held a proper Jewish wedding for them.

Chaim was really very bright and by the time he came to the US he knew fluent English but he had difficulty finding work. Since I felt responsible for him, we hired him at Chamah so he could start earning something. At the same time he started studying accounting and was very successful in this. He also studied alef-beis and Hebrew. Within a short time he was able to daven and understand some of the t’fillos. He bought Rashi t’fillin

and since this was after the Rebbe announced (on Purim 5736/1976) that people should also put on Rabbeinu Tam t’fillin, he bought those too.

He eventually bought a sirtuk but did not want a hat and only wore a yarmulke. He once asked me in some annoyance: “Why do the guys in 770 care if I only wear a yarmulke and no hat?” He didn’t understand what difference it made.

Naturally, I was thrilled with his progress. You can imagine how I felt when Chaim told me that his wife had bought a big Shas for his birthday!

They eventually had another three children and have two sons and two daughters. Chaim greatly appreciated what I did for them, saving a Jewish family and setting them on the right path. He would always say: “Hilke, I’ll never forget what you did for me.”

After he finished his accounting course he got a good job with a bank and the fantasy I had conjured up for him that Shabbos in Nachalas Har Chabad came true. He was promoted and became vice president of the bank! Today he lives in an upper class neighborhood in New York, close to the local Chabad house, and he and his children daven there and lead full Jewish lives.