

4

TOUCHING THE CORE

D'var Malchus | Sichos In English

6

MOSHIACH: IT'S GOTTA BE PERSONAL

Thought | Rabbi Zvi Homnick

10

MESHUGE, MESHUGE BUT YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE SECHEL!

Moshiach & Geula | Rabbi Chaim Ahkenazi a"h

14

'DUBRAWSKI CAN BE RELIED UPON'

Obituary | Avrohom Rainitz

24

WAS THAT AN EARTHQUAKE OR A TRAIN?

Moshiach & Science | Dr. Aryeh Gotfryd, PhD

28

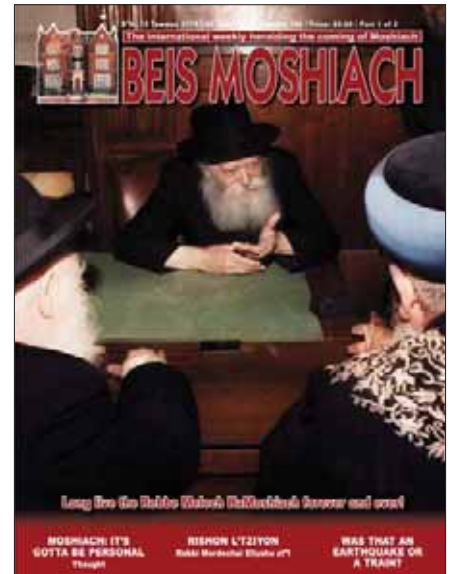
I FEEL THE REBBE'S HANDS

Feature | Nossan Avrohom

36

RISHON L'TZIYON: RABBI MORDECHAI ELIYAHU ZT"L

Feature | Shneur Zalman Levin



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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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TOUCHING THE CORE

Sichos In English

This is zealotry: putting one's own welfare - both spiritual and material - on the side, and making an unbounded commitment to carry out G-d's will.

CAN PRIESTHOOD BE A REWARD?

This week's Torah reading begins: [1] "Pinchas, the son of Elazar... turned My wrath away from the children of Israel by zealously taking up My cause among them.... Therefore,... I have granted him a covenant of peace. He and his descendants will possess an eternal covenant of priesthood, because he zealously acted on behalf of his G-d."

The question arises: Pinchas' deed, the execution of Zimri as described in the conclusion of last week's Torah reading, [2] involved self-sacrifice and courage.

Certainly, it is worthy of praise and reward. Nevertheless, it is problematic that Pinchas was granted "a covenant of eternal priesthood," as a reward.

For priesthood cannot be attained through man's endeavors; it is not at all dependent on our spiritual accomplishments.

As Rashi comments, [3] just as one cannot change morning into evening, one cannot alter the

definition of priesthood.

Since Pinchas was not a priest beforehand, how could his conduct, however virtuous, earn him that distinction?

UNBOUNDED SERVICE EVOKES AN UNBOUNDED RESPONSE

The resolution of this question revolves on the understanding of the trait for which the Torah praises Pinchas: zealotry.

Why does the Torah describe Pinchas with this term?

Firstly, Pinchas risked his life.

Although Zimri was supported by his entire tribe, and they could have easily killed Pinchas, [4] Pinchas did not consider the danger he faced at all.

What concerned him was the spiritual danger facing the Jewish people and he was willing to sacrifice his life to eliminate the hazard confronting them.

There was, moreover, a deeper dimension to Pinchas' commitment.

Our Sages relate [5] that when a Jewish man is cohabitating with a non-Jewish woman, "the zealous have [the right [6] to] strike him." Nevertheless, "although this is the law, a ruling is not delivered."

If a person were to ask a Jewish court if he should kill a person who commits such an act, the court should not instruct him to do so.

Thus not only did Pinchas risk his life, he did so even when there was no obligation.

If he had let the situation pass, nobody would have criticized him. On the contrary, he had to take the initiative himself, and he aroused criticism by taking the step he did.

Our Sages state [7] that he acted against the sages' desires, and that had not G-d praised him as quoted above, they would have placed him under a ban of ostracism. [8]

What motivated Pinchas?

He wanted to "turn [G-d's] wrath away from the children of Israel."

He understood what had to be done to accomplish this goal, and was willing to undertake any risks involved.

This is zealotry: putting one's own welfare - both spiritual [9] and material - on the side, and making an unbounded commitment to carry out G-d's will.

And when a person makes a genuine commitment of this nature, the inner G-dly spark which every one of us possesses is given expression.

Similarly, such an approach evokes an unbounded response from G-d.

For when man goes beyond his natural limits in his Divine service, G-d grants him rewards that are not confined within the limits of nature. For this reason,

Pinchas could be granted the status of a priest.

TEMPERING ZEALOUSNESS WITH LOVE

Our Sages identified Pinchas with Eliyahu. [10]

Eliyahu's Divine service was also characterized by zealotry, as it is written: [11] "I have been very zealous for the sake of G-d, the L-rd of Hosts."

When making this statement, however, Eliyahu contrasted his own conduct with that of the Jewish people at large whom he criticized for "forsaking [G-d's] covenant."

G-d refused to accept these words of criticism.

He appointed Eliyahu as "the angel of the covenant" [12] and charged him with attending the circumcisions of the Jewish people for all time to come, so that he would attest to their faithful adherence to G-d's covenant. [13]

G-d taught Eliyahu that his zealotry must be tempered with ahavas Yisroel, love for every member of our people, and that he must endeavor to seek out our people's virtues.

These traits became such an integral part of Eliyahu's personal mission that when the prophet Malachi describes Eliyahu's return to announce the coming of the Redemption, he states [14] that Eliyahu will "turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers."

And when the Rambam describes [15] Eliyahu's mission, he states that "he will come solely to establish peace."

To emphasize this direction from the outset, G-d tells Pinchas that in reward for his zealotry, he is being given "a covenant of peace."

TAKING INITIATIVE

These two thrusts - zealotry and peace - are of fundamental relevance at present.

Many of our people live estranged from their Jewish roots, and our national future depends on zealous commitment to maintaining our heritage.

For it is the inner conviction that stems from the spark of G-dliness we all possess which will make an impression on others.

Intellectual arguments cannot penetrate to the core of another person's heart.

The heart opens to the heart, and it is zealous commitment, as tempered by warmth and loving outreach, which will spur others to discover the Jewish spark within their own being. [16]

There is a further dimension to Pinchas' zealotry.

Pinchas was not the leader of the Jewish people.

Moshe, Elazar, and the elders occupied higher positions of authority.

When, however, the need arose, Pinchas did not wait for the leaders' guidance, he took the initiative himself.

The same applies with regard to every individual today, for every one of us has a unique contribution which he himself can make.

With the confidence that comes from the truth of one's inner conviction, we must all take the initiative and spread good and peace.

These efforts will hasten the coming of the time when Eliyahu - identified with Pinchas - will come. And then, "the voice of the herald will announce good tidings," [17] the coming of Moshiach, and the redemption of our people and all mankind.

Adapted from Likkutei Sichos, Vol. II, p. 344ff, 609ff; Vol. IV, p. 1070ff; Vol. XVIII, p.

NOTES:

1. Numbers 25:11-13.
2. Numbers 25:1-9.
3. In his commentary to Numbers 16:5.
4. Indeed, our Sages (Sanhedrin 82b) relate that it was only because six miracles occurred that they did not kill him.
5. Sanhedrin 82a.
6. I.e., he is not obligated to do so, he is merely given license to do so. Therefore, the Shulchan Aruch does not mention an obligation for a zealous person to strike a man who engages in intimate relations with a gentile woman, it merely mentions (Even HaEzer 16:2) that one has such a right.
7. Jerusalem Talmud, Sanhedrin 9:7.
8. Sanhedrin 82a.
9. In this light, we find numerous stories of tzaddikim who were willing to sacrifice their portion in the World to Come for the benefit of another Jew.
10. Targum Yonason, Exodus 6:18; Yalkut Shimoni, vol. I, sec. 671; Zohar II, 190b.
11. I Kings 19:10.
12. Malachi 3:1; Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer end of ch. 29.
13. Yalkut Shimoni, vol. I, sec. 71.
14. Malachi 3:24.
15. Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Melachim 12:2.
16. Figuratively speaking, a parallel can be drawn to the story of Pinchas. The widespread assimilation of the present age can be compared to the plague which killed thousands of the Jewish people. Pinchas' zealotry which stopped the plague can, as above, be considered an analogy to the heartfelt dedication to our Jewish heritage which will turn this tide.
17. Cf. Siddur T'hillas Hashem, p. 334.

MOSHIACH: IT'S GOTTA BE PERSONAL

By Rabbi Zvi Homnick

As much as the exile and all its negative implications have to be felt and experienced as a truly personal matter, part of the dynamic of a personal relationship with G-d is realizing that as bad as it can possibly get, it is all an expression of His Infinite Love for me.

PERSONAL AWAKENING

The fact that my personal journey on the path of Chassidus has been a long and convoluted one, unmarked by a single earth shattering epiphany (although dotted with many eye opening realizations), means that it comes along with certain advantages and disadvantages. One of the disadvantages is that if pressed by curious folks to recount how I found my way, I don't have anything particularly exciting to share. On the other hand, a key advantage is the fact that I had to process and work through a great many ideas along with massive amounts of information, as well as trying to resolve and/or rethink many issues, which the born and bred and those struck by spiritual lightning might never have the need or opportunity to address.

One of the important realizations that I experienced along the way was the idea that those who view Judaism and the world exclusively through the lens of the revealed Torah tend to reach conclusions that are in direct opposition to the ideas expressed in the mystical dimension of Torah, especially as explicated in the teachings of Chassidus. This applies not only to individual issues within the vast range of Jewish beliefs and practices, but to foundational all-encompassing issues as well. Even more fascinating to me was the discovery that those in the non-Chassidic world that progress to the study of the esoteric, delving into the mystical teachings of Kabbala, also tend to interpret those teachings in the context of their preexisting superficial outlooks.

A prime example of this, which helped to open my eyes in a

profound way, is a conversation that I had with a certain learned individual during a period when I was unsure as to which way I would go. We were discussing the divergence of views between the Alter Rebbe and the Gaon of Vilna as to whether the Lurianic concept of *tzimtzum* (the divine contraction that created the "void" within which the worlds could be created) applies to the Divine Essence or the Infinite Light, as well as whether it is a literal removal or simply a conceptual one. One of the issues that came up was that there are those who attempt to argue that there is no real disagreement between the two, as well as those that claim that the view of the Vilna Gaon is misrepresented by Chassidim as it doesn't jibe with what is written by Reb Chaim of Volozhin in *Nefesh HaChaim*, and they refuse to consider the possibility that the student disagreed with his venerated teacher on such a seminal matter.

This fellow felt very strongly that these attempts to paper over the view of the Vilna Gaon, namely that G-d Himself literally withdrew his Essence to allow for the existence of the worlds, and as such He is not present within the existence of those worlds and it is only His Providence that is present, is nothing more than craven defensiveness in the face of the Chassidic onslaught. He didn't

even have a problem with the idea that Reb Chaim Volozhin seemed to differ on this point and took the position that G-d's Essence is in fact present in all of existence, since he comes to the same conclusion as the Vilna Gaon in direct opposition of the Chassidic view as far as the main issue.

That conclusion being that we as created beings are incapable of having a direct relationship with G-d Himself as He is not accessible to us on any level, and any attempt to do so is not only folly but can lead to apostasy. We can only relate to Him through His wisdom and His commandments as revealed to us in the Torah, which address us as entirely separate beings because that is the way He wants it to be. We cannot apprehend Him or His reality and we can never become "one with Him," and any suggestion otherwise is dangerous to the individual and ultimately undermines the core principles of Torah.

I remember standing and listening to him expound on how Chassidus promotes the idea that the ultimate goal is to connect to and be one with G-d Himself and to experience the reality that nothing else exists except for Him. He even cited the saying of the Alter Rebbe quoted by the Tzemach Tzedek in *Derech Mitzvosecha*, "I don't want your Gan Eden; I don't want your Olam HaBa; I want nothing more than You Yourself," as being the antithesis of the Gaon's worldview. I was very impressed by his clarity on the issues, but what really shocked me was my own reaction. I remember thinking how to me it was obvious that the Chassidic approach was the truth, which left me with the shocking realization, "Uh oh, I guess that means I have to accept Chassidus as the truth and I have been living a lie."

This realization was not based on rational or textual proofs, nor was it the result of much study and

meditation, and I could not hope to formulate even for myself how I knew it to be so, but it was as clear as day to me that "I want nothing more than You Yourself" is the ultimate expression of the innermost yearnings of mine and every other Jewish soul. Beyond that, I couldn't fathom how he could get so passionate and excited in defending a worldview that banishes G-d from the world and from the personal consciousness of any Jew that makes the effort to seek closeness with Him.

I am aware that the Rebbe once expressed the idea that for us the way that we know that the Alter Rebbe's view is correct is because we know that he received these teachings from the Mezritcher Maggid in the name of the Baal Shem Tov, who in turn received them from Achiya HaShiloni the prophet, who was also present at the Exodus from Egypt and the Giving of the Torah. However, for me, it was almost the reverse. Once I realized that these teachings are the truth, it was an easy jump to accept the fact that they came to us by way of a biblical era prophet who showed up in a cave in Europe in the eighteenth century to impart those teachings to the holy Baal Shem Tov.

PERSONAL EXILE

One of the areas of difference that can be seen in light of the divergent approaches to relating to G-d is how to relate to exile and redemption, particularly at this time of the year, during the three weeks beginning with the 17th of Tammuz and ending on the 9th day of Av. The traditional understanding, based on the revealed Torah, is that these are purely collective and impersonal phenomena aimed at and affecting the entire Jewish people as a whole. Additionally, the tragedies that transpired in the past at this time of the year reflect a "concealment of

(G-d's) face" and His generally negative disposition towards the world, and that being the case one should keep a low profile and avoid danger at all costs, because you may just get zapped, G-d forbid. The extent to which mourning over the destruction of the Temple(s) and the exile of the Sh'china is a personal matter is only insofar as it is a measure of one's individual level of piety. Only someone who is on an exalted spiritual level (such as the late great Chofetz Chaim) can truly claim to be so pained over these tragic events that he feels compelled to pray incessantly for and even demand the coming of Moshiach.

From its very inception, the Chassidic movement challenged those attitudes as resulting from a frighteningly superficial understanding of the dynamic between G-d and His firstborn son – i.e. each and every Jew throughout history. The Baal Shem Tov explains the verse in T'hilim (69:19 – also incorporated into the Lecha Dodi liturgy) "my soul's redemption draws close" to mean that one cannot begin to pray for the general salvation of redemption from exile until he feels the weight of and prays for salvation from his own personal exile. Although G-d interacts with the Jews as a nation, it is ultimately a personal matter between Himself and each and every Jew.

Viewing our current situation only in terms of a national or global issue means that it has nothing to do with me personally. The fact that I can't fulfill two thirds of the Torah's commandments under the current world conditions is just one of those things that fall under the category of "what can you do?" One can even conclude that accepting the status quo is itself an act of great piety, acceding unquestioningly to the divine decree as painful as it may be. However, as soon as you examine all of the above in terms of a personal relationship with G-d Himself, that

approach begins to emerge as a grotesque pietistic parody. If G-d decided that I can't do the mitzvos; that I can't see Him; that I can't bring the sacrifices; that I can't experience true revelation; that I can't devote myself completely to His service; all that plus any and all manifestations of exile reflect an intensely personal issue between my soul which is a literal part of Him (the real me) and G-d Himself.

As much as the exile and all its negative implications have to be felt and experienced as a truly personal matter, part of the dynamic of a personal relationship with G-d is realizing that as bad as it can possibly get, it is all an expression of His Infinite Love for me. It is all just a way to get me to wake up my innermost soul spark, which as the Baal Shem Tov explains is the Moshiach that exists within each individual. And even in the deepest darkness and suffering, He is closer than ever, as the Maggid of Mezritch explains the verse in Eicha (1:5) "All her pursuers caught up to her between the (narrow) boundaries" to refer to the Sh'china, namely that every Jew who pursues a closer connection with G-d during the "three weeks" will be successful as G-d makes Himself much more accessible at this time.

PERSONAL REDEMPTION

So much can be written to develop this uniquely Chassidic idea further, demonstrating without question how all the traditional sources actually express these ideas even though they did not become known until more recently, but that remains beyond the scope of a brief article. However, what must be made clear is that these teachings are not simply meant as inspirational homiletic exercises, but reflect the correct and proper understanding and approach to foundational ideas and principles in Judaism. Exile is by definition a very personal event and the same holds true for Redemption. So much so that the Rebbe cites repeatedly the Alter Rebbe in the name of Chazal that "if even one Tzaddik were to do a complete repentance, then the (ultimate) Redemption would come."

Yes, it takes work and effort to make it personal and to really feel every aspect of exile in a personal way so that one truly cries out "ad mosai," and completely rejects even the most comfortably appointed exile because "I want nothing more than You Yourself," and especially to feel that it is up to me to make a difference. However, as Chassidim, the one thing that make it that much more personal is the tremendous desire to see the Rebbe "the king in his glory" when "these days will be transformed to joy and happiness" with the coming of Moshiach, immediately, NOW!

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Rabbi Menachem M. Scharf



MESHUGE, MESHUGE BUT YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE SEICHEL!

By Rabbi Chaim Ashkenazi a”h

*The first of all our requests in the Shmone Esrei is for chochma, bina and daas. But then we're told to be “crazy” about Moshiach. Being “crazy about Moshiach” does not contradict behaving with daas because even the irrational devotion to publicizing Moshiach, needs to be done with seichel! * Part 2 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.*

As I wrote in the previous article, the difference between good and bad, between the long range view and the short range view, between focusing on others and self-absorption – all have to do with bonding and connecting to the fulfillment of mitzvot, with daas.

A minor is exempt from mitzvot because he sees only one side of the coin. This one-dimensional view

lacks the component of daas. If a person lacks the ‘big picture’ he does not progress in his avodas Hashem and he ends up hurting others. We must be careful to avoid this because it’s the Evil Inclination in disguise. It shows a lack of connection to Hashem and even if it seems that he has attained spiritual goals in the short run, he is liable to lose out in the long run.

This confusion between actions done with daas and actions done without daas can be seen in all areas of life, whether in man’s behavior with other people or in his conduct between himself and Hashem. This would include going on mitvtzaim and publicizing the Besuras HaGeula.

Some people have seichel but lack daas. They can have marvelous ideas about how to publicize things but they don’t check to see how the people on the receiving end will react. They are disconnected and they forget that the main thing about publicizing is for the message to be well-received. If the information doesn’t get through and just passes them by, or if it makes people think that the ones who did the advertising are beyond the pale, they missed the point.

The meaning of the words “**b’ofen ha’miskabel tzu yederen l’fi sichlo v’havanaso**” is that the one explaining about Moshiach has the responsibility of reaching his audience according to their intellect and understanding. He needs to think about the most suitable way of presenting it and if his audience (or the majority thereof) is not receptive, then he did not achieve

his goal. In order to do this it's necessary to "get down" and find the words and style to suit those on the receiving end, because otherwise whatever he has to say about the Rebbe and Moshiach will be rejected.

The story is told about a large crowd in a Russian town that was waiting with their chickens for the shochet on the night of Kaparos. The shochet had fallen asleep, and when he woke up and saw how late it was, he hastened to the slaughterhouse.

In order to get there more quickly he jumped over a fence. A policeman who saw him thought he was a thief and took him to jail. In the meantime, the people were waiting and waiting and when it got very late they began to look for the shochet and discovered that he had been arrested.

The heads of the community tried to explain to the police commander that this was a very holy night and this man was very holy and the knife he carried was for holy purposes as well.

The police commander asked: "A holy man on a holy night with a holy knife? So why did he act like a thief?"

This story illustrates the point that we can have lofty intentions and desires, but if the way we try to attain them isn't holy, it's not acceptable.

So the publicizing of the coming of Moshiach and his identity needs to be done with daas. Publicity in B'nei Brak and Yerushalayim is unlike publicity in Tel Aviv or publicity in Boro Park, or publicity in India or the Ukraine.

It's not, heaven forbid, that publicity is something negative; the point is simply that the way in which you publicize the information needs to suit the audience in order for it to be accepted. At least attempt to make it palatable to most of the people in that place.



There will always be an exception, someone who doesn't like what you do, but spreading the message regardless should be the last case scenario – first seek a more appropriate way to convey the information.

The same is true, for example, regarding the appearance and dress of a Chassid. We have our way of dressing but it's important to take note of where you will be seen. If you are going to do mitzvaim in a place where a distinguished appearance matters, make sure you are clean and presentable. If you are doing mitzvaim in the Shuk or train station, then it's possible that if you look too dressed up it will give a haughty impression.

When R' Kaplan a"h went to Eretz Yisroel on shlichus, the Rebbe told him that he should make an effort to wear a tie and to speak in English when he went to government offices because this impresses them. Then again, the Rebbe once addressed the hanhala in 770 at a farbrengen and said that instead of being involved in the needs of the talmidim they were busy with ties. I remember that after this sicha, R' Mentlick a"h removed his tie. (R' Mentlick certainly wasn't one to be preoccupied with his tie

but when he heard that from the Rebbe, he took it off).

A story was publicized a number of years ago about an Israeli bachur named Yossi Ehrentrau who was on K'vutza in 5749 and he would go on mitzvaim. At a certain elegant office building in Manhattan the Jewish boss would refuse to see him. Weeks and months went by and he still hadn't managed to put t'fillin on with him even once.

Then one night, Yossi had a dream of the Rebbe. The Rebbe said to him in Yiddish, "Wear a tie and it will help you in hafatzas ha'maayanos."

The next time he went on mitzvaim he was accosted by a peddler who urged him to buy a tie. Yossi wasn't interested and didn't have much money on him so he refused. The peddler pursued him and then Yossi recalled his dream so with the two dollars he had on him he bought a tie.

Yossi asked the man why he had bothered to chase him to buy a tie and was taken aback to hear that he had dreamt of a great rabbi who told him, "Always try to help Jews. When you see a good Jew who doesn't have a tie, try to convince him to buy a tie from you."

Yossi went to the office building and was pleasantly surprised when the man agreed to put on t'fillin. When the man saw the Rebbe's picture on a card that had the Shma and brachos on it, he exclaimed that it was this rabbi who had come to him in a dream. He had complained to the Rebbe that the young man who came to his office was shabbily dressed, and the Rebbe asked him whether, if the bachur came wearing a tie, he would agree to put on t'fillin. To this, the man agreed, and the wheels were set into motion...

"CRAZY ABOUT MOSHIACH"

One might be wondering about

The meaning of the words “b’ofen ha’miskabel tzu yederen l’fi sichlo v’havanaso” is that the one explaining about Moshiach has the responsibility of reaching his audience according to their intellect and understanding.

everything that was said thus far – after all, avodas Hashem according to Chassidus is “above reason” so how does that fit with the requirement that we use daas?

The Rebbe said about himself, “I am crazy about Moshiach.” In other words, the Rebbe expects of himself and his chassidim that we be crazy about Moshiach and do things that are beyond reason and logic. And yet, it says in the Rebuke, “and you will be crazy,” that taking action without using your daas is one of the curses. Is being meshuga positive or negative then?

The answer is, if a person generally rational but is crazy about one particular thing, he is completely normal. If he is crazy in everything or in many areas then this is a curse. So we have to ask Hashem for daas and conduct ourselves with daas **and even the one thing we are crazy about has to be done with daas.**

They tell about someone who lived in Lubavitch who was crazy. This meshugene wanted to move to another town but since he was a Chassid he decided to ask the Rebbe first. Apparently, due to his reputation as a crackpot they did not let him in for a yechidus, so he found an original way of meeting with the Rebbe. The Rebbe Maharash would go for a daily ride in his carriage and one day the meshugene jumped into the Rebbe’s carriage to speak to him.

Afterwards, the Chassidim questioned him: “What did you ask

the Rebbe?”

He said that it was suggested that he move to a bigger town so he asked the Rebbe whether he should do so. The Rebbe told him that in the bigger town there would be many meshugaim and he won’t have any standing there, while in Lubavitch, true there were fewer residents but there were no other meshugaim and so it would be a pity to leave.

The Chassidim asked: “How did you know to ask the Rebbe before making a move?”

He responded: “Meshuga, meshuga but you’ve got to have seichel!”

Being crazy about Moshiach does not contradict the behavior of “chonen daas” because even in the utter devotion to publicizing about Moshiach you need seichel. The “craziness” can be applied to this one area and in all other areas you have to be normal.

The Gemara relates that when Shlomo HaMelech returned to Yerushalayim after he was chased away from his kingdom by Ashmedai, king of the demons, nobody recognized him and nobody helped him return to his kingdom. He maintained that he was King Shlomo but they all just laughed at him. When this went on for a while, the wise men said that a meshugene doesn’t stick to just one thing and if he seems to be crazy only in this one area there must be something to it, and they went to the palace and discovered the truth.

This tells us that a person who is normal in all respects can be “crazy” when it comes to Moshiach. First things first – he must be normal, i.e. he davens, learns, does mitzvos, and his appearance is that of a Chabad Chassid with a beard, peios, hat over a Chassidishe haircut, and appropriate clothes. Once he ensures that his inside and outside are appropriate for a Chassid, then he can be a “Chassid shoteh” and go out and publicize that “hinei, hinei Moshiach ba.” When people see a serious person like this say strange things, they will listen because they will assume he has something worthwhile to say.

This is what the Rebbe said on Shabbos Parshas Tzav, 5745:

“An absolutely normal person, dressed as a normal person and speaking like a normal person etc. suddenly begins to cry out ‘Moshiach Now!’ ... It is specifically this behavior which will arouse the other person’s p’nimius because the truth of the matter is that his soul also cries out ‘Moshiach Now!’ ...”

But if he isn’t a Chassid inside and out and only does foolish things, then he will remain with the title “shoteh” because even if he has seichel he does not have daas. He is not connected to the meshaleiach and to the spirit of the mission, but does what he feels like doing. Although he is involved in things that need to be publicized he can, G-d forbid, cause a chilul sheim Lubavitch.

We can gain some insight into craziness about Moshiach from the Rebbe, who said about himself that he is crazy about Moshiach. The Rebbe was obsessed with this one thing, i.e. he had no respite but was completely focused on the subject of Moshiach. Every subject and every person the Rebbe met, he connected to the topic of Moshiach. Whenever anybody turned to the Rebbe he went down into that person’s world and connected the Geula to it.

There are many examples of this. When a newspaper reporter passed by the Rebbe for “dollars,” the Rebbe told her to leave space in the upcoming paper to announce that Moshiach arrived. When rabbanim met with him, he spoke to them about the topic of Geula in various s’farim or he told them to pasken that Moshiach must come. When doctors met with the Rebbe, he told them that they need not worry that they won’t have parnasa when

Moshiach comes, because at that time they would be able to work in the field of preventive medicine as opposed to healing. There are numerous other instances in which the Rebbe spoke with people about Moshiach and connected it to the world in which those people lived.

In other words, the Rebbe took the topic he was preoccupied with – his obsession with Moshiach – and brought it down to each person in a personal way. That is our mandate,

publicizing the coming of Moshiach to oneself – by learning inyanei Moshiach and Geula, to one’s household – in a warm family environment, and to the outside – to each according to his level and his interests.

May we soon see the fulfillment of the promise, “for they will all know me” “so that all the nations of the earth will know.”



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'DUBRAWSKI CAN BE RELIED UPON'

By Avrohom Rainitz

Thursday, Erev Rosh Chodesh Sivan, the 29th of Iyar, the Chassidic writer Rabbi Yehoshua Dubrawski a"h passed away at the age of 82. * In recent years he wrote articles for Beis Moshiach magazine in which he extolled the virtues of the T'mimim in our generation and powerfully expressed the belief of Chassidim in the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach.

R' Dubrawski had a tremendous gift for writing, which placed him in the forefront of Jewish writers of the past generation with a place of honor in Jewish newspapers in the United States. In a rich, literary Yiddish which few could emulate, and in a unique style of the previous generation, he conveyed authentic Chassidic messages and when necessary, he defended the honor of Chassidus and the Rebbeim firmly and proudly. He was one of the editors of "Likkutei Sichos" before they were submitted

to the Rebbe for editing and he gave the Rebbe much nachas with his writing.

The Chassidic writer R' Yehoshua (Heishke) Dubrawski a"h was able to do what few can do. He possessed the unique ability to express in words the deep feelings of the heart. He was a rare combination of intellectualism and emotion, humility and Lubavitcher strength, seriousness and humor. An entire world of opposites was

expressed by his gifted pen. He had depth of thought as well as a wealth of Chassidic feeling.

His childhood memories, which were published in the *Algemeiner Journal*, opened a window to R' Heishke's inner world. Thanks to his phenomenal memory he was able to bring to life the Chassidic town where he was born and paint a picture for his readers of his grandfather, his father, and Chassidishe melamdim. He brought tears to our eyes with his description of the terrible tragedies which befell him during the starvation years in Samarkand when he lost his father and two sisters. It was there, in that cruel unfeeling world, that his goodhearted, sensitive soul was developed, along with the Chassidic cleverness and sharpness which he derived from his Chassidic teachers.

R' Heishke was born in Shvat, 5688/1928, in Krolevets, which is located in northern Ukraine near Konotop. Krolevets was a Jewish town suffused with Chabad flavor, a small town where the Jews were all religious. Some of them were Torah scholars while others were "T'hillim Jews." The common denominator among them was Chabad Chassidus. The nusach ha't'filla in the shuls was Nusach Ari and they all kept Chabad customs. Not surprisingly, Krolevets was known as a Chassidishe town.

But by the time R' Heishke was born, Krolevets was a different town entirely. The communists rose to power about ten years before he was born and put an end to the yeshiva and forbade shiurim and the teaching of Judaism. The shuls were closed. R' Heishke was able to daven and absorb the Chassidic experience in the "old" shul, the only one that remained

open, but when he was seven, the wicked ones closed this last shul on the Yom Tov of Shavuot.

His father's father, Rabbi Menachem Mendel, the rav of the town, was a descendent of a family of Chassidim from the time of the Tzemach Tzedek and he learned b'chavrusa with the Mekubal Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneersohn, the Rebbe's father. His grandfather was saved from the bitter lot of most rabbanim in Russia, who were arrested by the government and sent to Siberia, and he continued leading the Chabad Chassidim in his town while keeping a low profile.

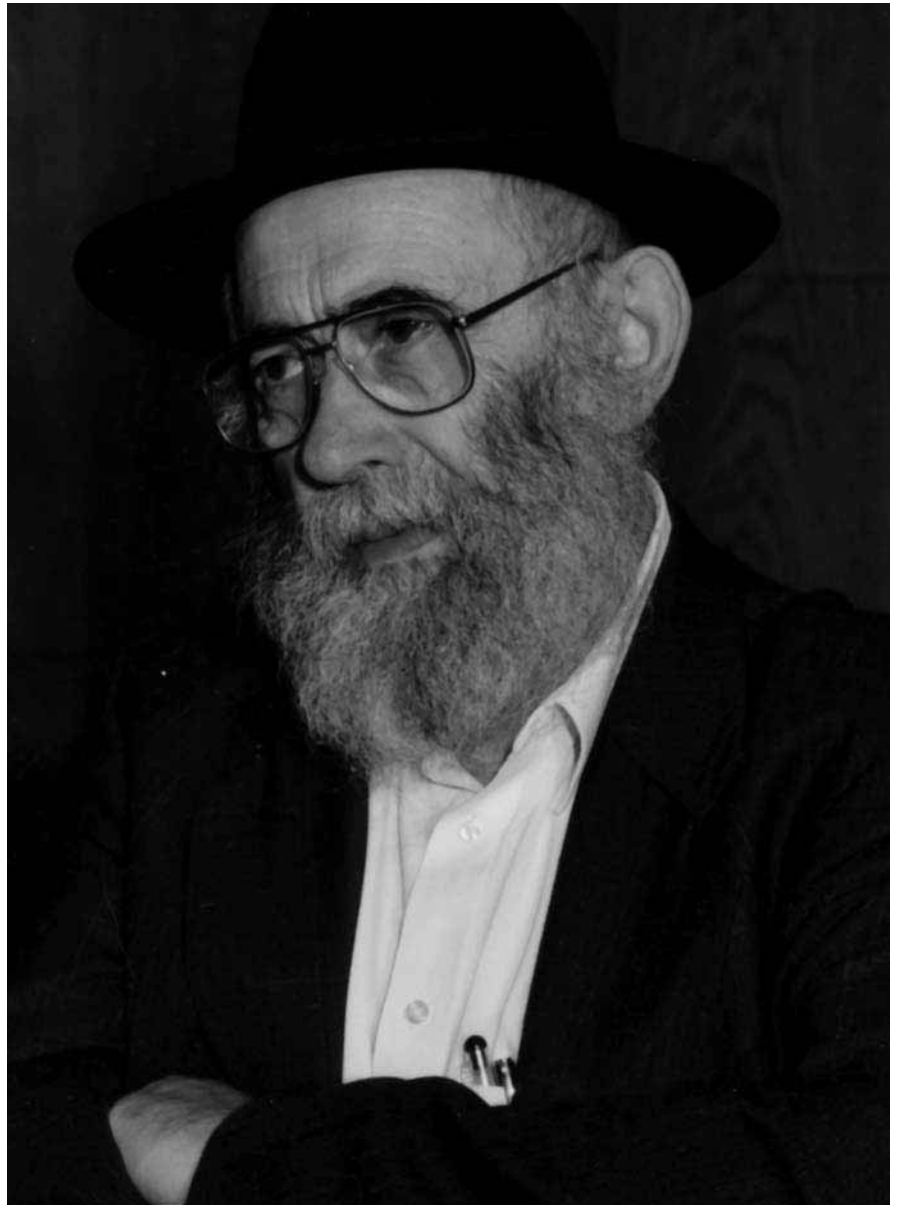
CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

His father, R' Eliezer Lipa was very strict. He zealously protected his children's chinuch and did not allow foreign ideas to enter his home. He hired a Chassidishe melamed to teach his son secretly and along with the teachings of Chassidus, also instilled the "ways of Chassidus" in his children.

In R' Heishke's memoirs he describes his father's mesirus nefesh to immerse:

"In our town there was no mikva and in the summer some Chassidim would immerse in the river. One year, before the Yomim Nora'im, when it was already very cold, my grandfather immersed in the river and my father wanted to do the same. My father had a heart condition and the doctor said it would be extremely dangerous for him to immerse in such cold.

"My father didn't say a word and my mother realized that he planned to do so anyway. I heard her plead with him not to go to the river. He kept quiet and my mother understood that he would go despite her protests. She discussed this with my grandfather and my grandfather told my father firmly that he could not do this.



My father waited until noon, when nobody else was at home, and then he told me to come with him. I was scared, but I didn't have the courage to argue or to refuse...

"That day, my father did not go and the atmosphere at home calmed down. The next day the weather was a bit warmer. My father waited until noon, when nobody else was at home, and then

he told me to come with him. My heart told me that he wanted to immerse in the river. I was scared, but I didn't have the courage to argue or to refuse. So I accompanied my father to the

As a Chassid and a man with a broad intellect and refined soul, he was pained by the crass style and harsh expressions that appeared in the article. That same night he sat down to respond in a “war of Torah.”

river.

“On the way my father stopped and checked his pulse. Then he checked my pulse and checked his own again. Why? Till this day I don’t know. When we got to the river I was completely out of sorts. My teeth were chattering. My father probably noticed this and he told me to stand ‘over there,’ far from the river.

“At this point I couldn’t restrain myself and as far as I remember I began shouting, ‘Father, Father, don’t go!’

“My father put his finger on his lips to indicate I should be quiet and went to a hidden area on the shore, where he quickly undressed. I could hear the swishing of the water as he immersed. I felt completely desolate and I ran to where he immersed, near the river.

“My father quickly shook off the water from his body, got dressed and said, ‘Nu, boruch Hashem.’ I don’t know why but I was overcome with emotion and I hugged him and buried my face in his chest. That was one of the few times that my father wrapped me in a hug, patted my head, and said over and over, ‘Nu, nu, boruch Hashem, s’iz gut, s’iz gut.’

When he was 12 they moved to the Darchova quarter, a suburb of Moscow, because of his father’s illness. That is where his bar mitzva took place. It was obviously nothing like the bar mitzva celebrations of today. A minyan of

Chassidim participated in the modest farbrengen that took place in their poor home. In the Russian cold of the month of Shvat, the Chassidim crowded in, and after he reviewed the maamer, they took some mashke and wished some heartfelt brachos to the bar mitzva boy.

Years later, R’ Heishke did not remember the brachos but one thing he could not forget was something his father told him. “On the first day that you become bar mitzva you should say: may Hashem make the Rebbe well and we should soon meet with the Rebbe!” These words were engraved in R’ Heishke’s memory and flowed in his blood all his life.

R’ HEISHKE’S SUFFERING IN SAMARKAND

When the war broke out and German planes began bombing Moscow, the Dubrawski family fled from the front to Central Asia. Like many Lubavitcher Chassidim, they arrived in Samarkand. The refugees flooding the city had to contend with starvation and epidemics. They tried avoiding the Angel of Death who stalked the city.

On 11 Kislev, 5702, his father died from starvation and heart disease. On Erev Yom Kippur, 5703/1942, his thirteen year old sister Menucha also died and a few months later, on 10 Kislev, his

eleven year old sister Tzivia died. Young Heishke and his mother were the only ones to remain alive.

The starvation that claimed his family took its toll on him, too, and he contacted a stomach ailment in which his intestines stopped functioning. It was in this weakened state, still in mourning for his father, that he fell ill with typhus. In this extremely hard period, the Chassid R’ Michoel Teitelbaum appeared and asked that Heishke join the yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim he wanted to start. His mother pointed at the dark corner of the room where he lay on a sort of bed which was more like boards on bricks. He lay there helplessly, unable to summon the strength even to stand up.

Michoel reassured his mother that if he joined the yeshiva this would be the best segula for him to recover, and in the quickest possible way. His mother said “amen” with faith and hope, and Heishke became one of the first talmidim of Tomchei T’mimim in Samarkand.

Due to his condition, the learning took place at first in the miserable hovel they lived in. The starving, broken orphan Zelig Katzman regularly came to his house. He later became one of the outstanding talmidim in scholarship and Chassidishkait. The two of them sat on the makeshift bed and shared one torn Gemara. All his life, R’ Heishke believed that it was in the merit of his learning in Tomchei T’mimim that his life was saved.

Despite all the hardships he learned diligently and acquired a great proficiency in Nigleh and Chassidus. He had vast knowledge in many areas and was considered knowledgeable in worldly wisdom as well.

PRESENTING THE POSITION OF LUBAVITCH IN TORAH JOURNALS

After the war, Heishke and his mother went, with most of Anash, to the border city of Lemberg, where a group of Chassidim worked devotedly to arrange the greatest smuggling operation in the history of Anash in Soviet Russia. They arrived in Paris and Heishke resumed his studies in the foundling yeshiva in Brunoy.

In Paris he married Asnah (Asya) the daughter of R' Alexander Sender Menkin. He emigrated to the United States in 1951 and lived in Detroit for a year and then moved to Crown Heights. Since he had been married for several years without having children, his grandfather, R' Mendel asked the Rebbe for a bracha. He received a bracha from the Rebbe that was worded as a promise and a short while later they had children.

In New York, R' Heishke worked for Shulsinger Brothers, the famous printing and publishing establishment, known for the numerous s'farim they produced as well as the quality of the publishing and binding. Although his official job was technical in nature, unofficially he would offer editorial comments on the s'farim that he saw. The owners soon realized what an asset he was and many authors asked to have R' Heishke review their work and offer his observations before it went to print. Rabbi Chaim Dov Chavel, editor of the publication called *HaDarom* (published by the RCA), once wrote referring to R' Heishke as, "my friend the Torah publisher, Rabbi Yehoshua Dubrawski."

The Shulsinger Brothers did not only rule the s'farim market. Most of the Torah journals that were published by Jewish



R' Yehoshua Dubrawski (sitting, first row center on the bottom) in his hometown of Krolevets. Above him sits his father R' Lipa.

organizations in the United States were printed by them. This is how R' Heishke got to have his say regarding the contents of these journals before they were published. When he saw an article that was critical of Chabad Chassidus, he tried to delay the printing until the offensive article was eliminated or he countered it

within the same issue so there wouldn't be a situation in which an article against Lubavitch would be printed without an immediate rebuttal.

Since these were important Torah journals that were written by the cream of the crop of Judaism in America, he did not rely on himself and usually reported to the

“Sometimes, he would sit with R’ Yoel Kahn for seven or eight hours and not move until they were satisfied that they had plumbed the depths of the Rebbe’s words.”

Rebbe about the content of articles and what he thought the response should be. The Rebbe often edited his articles and there were even times that the Rebbe wrote almost the entire response himself, though it was published afterwards under a pen name.

Over the years, R’ Heishke developed strong ties with rabbanim and authors as well as with the editors of various Torah journals. He often used these connections for the good of Chabad. R’ Chavel, the editor of HaDarom, was one of the people with whom he had a good relationship, and that is the background to the following incident.

In the winter of 5735, Rabbi Chadakov, the Rebbe’s secretary, called R’ Heishke to his office and told him that the Rebbe asked him to get all the previous editions of HaDarom.

R’ Dubraskwi contacted R’ Chavel and told him the Rebbe’s request. R’ Chavel quickly gave him a large stack with all the issues that had been published up until that time, including the freshly-printed issue 40. This issue contained a fascinating article by R’ Chavel on the topic of the avoda of Yom Kippur, with some of the article devoted to the prayer of the Kohen Gadol in the Holy of Holies as it appears in the Rambam.

Shortly thereafter, the Rebbe wrote a letter thanking R’ Chavel and as a nice gesture he included some comments which the article. R’ Chavel printed the Rebbe’s

letter and comments in issue 41.

For issue 42, the editor received a long article on the topic of the prayer of the Kohen Gadol by Rabbi Chaim Karlinsky, who was the editor of the Torah journal *Ohr HaMizrach* for a period of several years. In his article, he attacked what R’ Chavel wrote and used extremely sharp language against the Rebbe’s comments.

At the end of the long pilpul he wrote, “I think that in everything I have written here I have proven that the prayer of the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur was not a formula recited year after year. The Kohen Gadol would say a prayer in his own words each year, taking into consideration the situation and events of that time ... So it is clear that all the statements of the sages on this subject were not intended to give us the precise wording of the prayer of the Kohen Gadol but merely the nature of the requests included in the prayer.” Therefore, he concluded, there is no reason to ask questions or discuss the wording of the prayer as it is printed in the Rambam, since it was only meant as an example.

R’ Heishke’s excellent ties with R’ Chavel stood by him this time, too, and even before the booklet was printed the editor gave him R’ Karlinsky’s article so he could write a response. As a Chassid and a man with a broad intellect and refined soul, he was pained by the crass style and harsh expressions that appeared in R’ Karlinsky’s article. That same night he sat down to respond in a “war of

Torah.”

Although responses to articles are usually printed in the next issue and not in the same one where the article appears, because of R’ Heishke’s standing and his good connections, R’ Chavel agreed to print his response in the same issue as R’ Karlinsky’s article.

Since R’ Heishke did not want to rely on his himself in this matter, he decided to give it over to some of the outstanding bachurim in 770 who worked assiduously on the Rebbe’s teachings, for them to clarify the inyan and write something. For some reason there was a delay and a few days passed without any progress.

After a few days, he decided to give the galleys (proof-reading copy) of R’ Karlinsky’s article to the Rebbe’s secretaries. R’ Groner gave the galleys to the Rebbe and the Rebbe said there should be a response to R’ Karlinsky. When R’ Groner asked who should respond, the Rebbe said: “Dubrawski should respond.” R’ Groner told the Rebbe that R’ Heishke had already started writing but he hadn’t finished.

The next morning, the Rebbe sent out the galleys with R’ Karlinsky’s article with notes in the margins. The Rebbe also included a large card on which he wrote additional comments. The Rebbe asked that it be given to R’ Heishke for him to prepare it for publication and he also asked the secretary to find out whether the response R’ Heishke was writing had any points that the Rebbe had not covered.

R’ Heishke was very ambivalent about submitting his ideas to the Rebbe – of what value were they once the Rebbe had already written a response? – but since the Rebbe had asked, he told the Rebbe one point, that from the wording in the

Rambam in his commentary on Mishnayos it is clear that the wording of the prayer was standard. In the meantime, R' Heishke prepared to print the Rebbe's comments and then he sent the typewritten response to the Rebbe for editing. The Rebbe added R' Heishke's observation.

In the meantime, R' Chavel had already submitted the entire issue for publication and the issue was about to be printed ...

Thanks to his excellent connections with the Shulsinger brothers, they worked nonstop for a full day to find a place to put in the response. They had to open and take apart all the plates, because R' Heishke did not want R' Karlinsky's article to go in without a response. This would enable anybody who read it to immediately read an article that took apart all his questions on the Rebbe.

R' Chavel refused to print the response under a pseudonym (because he was afraid of R' Karlinsky's ire and R' Karlinsky was a good friend of his) and he said it had to be printed under the author's full name. However, the Rebbe hadn't written his notes to be published under his own name, but only as suggestions for R' Heishke's article, so R' Heishke couldn't even tell the editor, R' Chavel, about the Rebbe's connection to the submission.

So in issue 42 of HaD'arom, the rebuttal is under the name "Rabbi Yehoshua Dubrawski." Today the truth can be revealed. It is time that it was printed under the rightful name, because on the whole it was written by the Rebbe himself.

When issue 42 was printed, R' Karlinsky prepared a long article in response to "Rabbi Dubrawski," and with even stronger expressions of ridicule. Once again, the editor gave the article to R' Heishke and



asked him to write a response. This time he did not delay and immediately began to work on it.

Since the previous article was word for word the Rebbe's writing, R' Heishke submitted R' Karlinsky's second article and his response to the Rebbe in the hopes that this time too, the Rebbe would offer his own version.

But this time the Rebbe said that he didn't have time for it before Yom Tov and if R' Heishke wanted him to edit and write there was no knowing how long he would have to wait. If it was needed immediately then he should consult with knowledgeable people and decide.

R' Dubrawski decided to submit his answer "as is" and it was published in issue 44 along with R' Karlinsky's second article (this time it was really R' Dubrawski's response).

That was the end of the Torah debate in HaD'arom, as R' Karlinsky, annoyed that R' Dubrawski's responses had been printed in the same issue as his articles, debunking all his arguments, decided to move the debate to the periodical, Ohr HaMizrach, which he had edited in the past.

The editor of Ohr HaMizrach

at that time was Rabbi Shtzefanski, who was also on good terms with R' Heishke. He had seen R' Heishke's responses to R' Karlinsky's earlier articles, so he decided to give the third article to R' Heishke and offer him an opportunity to respond in the same issue ...

R' Karlinsky's article was full of angry expressions against R' Heishke's responses, the first of which was actually the Rebbe's response, and R' Heishke's rejoinder followed the same vein. His article was very sharply worded and he asked that it be printed following R' Karlinsky's article.

However, when he submitted his response to the Rebbe, as he had done the previous times, the Rebbe told him that it was too sharp and it should not be printed so as not to offend and arouse hatred on the part of R' Karlinsky.

That was the end of the exchange, with the Rebbe teaching us not only how to learn the Rambam but also a lesson in derech eretz.

I NEVER SAW SUCH A HANACHA

Along with his work at

R' Heishke portrayed for his readers the middle road which a Chassid ought to travel in the modern era – not to run away from progress but not to immerse oneself in it, either.

Shulsinger Brothers, R' Heishke used his scholarly and literary talents in the service of the Rebbe, and was part of the editorial staff for Likkutei Sichos. Officially, he was considered the stylistic editor of the sichos that were written in Yiddish, a language he was fluent in, but as in his other “technical” work, R' Heishke demonstrated a deep understanding of the topics in the sichos. He often sat for hours with the official chozrim and editors in order to internalize every nuance of the Rebbe's questions and answers in the sichos.

His children remember the hours he spent editing the sichos: “Sometimes, he would sit with R' Yoel Kahn for seven or eight hours and not move until they were satisfied that they had plumbed the depths of the Rebbe's words.”

He spent hours in his work area in the children's room. Since he worked at the publishing house during the day, he had to edit the sichos in the evening, once his children came home from school. They would come in and out and he ignored the noise as he delved into a different world, the world of the Rebbe's Torah.

The Rebbe gave his personal approbation of R' Heishke's writing, and once said, “When Dubrawski makes something, it's worth printing.”

One year the Rebbe expressed his dissatisfaction with the editing of Likkutei Sichos and he announced that he would stop

editing them. One of the editors, who wanted to defend himself to the Rebbe, wrote that due to technical reasons, R' Heishke was unable to edit the language of the latter sichos and that is why they were not as good as usual. The Rebbe responded sharply: “If I knew that Dubrawski was not editing the sichos for several weeks, I would have stopped editing them back then.”

R' Heishke was also the editor of the Yiddish section of the Lubavitcher publication *Di Yiddishe Heim*. Generally, any official publication of Chabad with the Kehot stamp on it would be edited by the Rebbe. *Di Yiddishe Heim* was an exception because the Rebbe said it was unnecessary for him to edit it since “you can rely on Dubrawski.”

R' Heishke wrote the *hanachos* (written record unedited by the Rebbe) of the Rebbe's sichos for this publication himself. The Rebbe once said about this, “Such a good *hanacha*, I've never seen before.”

At the end of the fifties, R' Chadakov suggested that he start working for Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch since the Rebbe wanted him to prepare his letters (as is known, the Rebbe would dictate some of his letters to the secretaries, who would write them up and then give them to the Rebbe for him check before they were mailed). Due to technical reasons, mainly because of his work in editing Likkutei Sichos, the appointment never came to

pass. However, the fact that the Rebbe made the offer shows how great was the Rebbe's esteem of him.

STRONG DEFENSE FOR KAVOD LUBAVITCH

While working for *Di Yiddishe Heim*, R' Heishke wrote thought pieces as well as fascinating memoirs. In his rich language he enabled American readers to visualize the difficulties of the terrible war years in Samarkand and thrill with the achievements of the Chassidim who turned the Gehinom of Samarkand into a spiritual Gan Eden.

With his sense of humor, R' Dubrawski described American life and mocked the “worldly assumptions” that dictate life in the western world. In various articles he dissected some American “mishugasin” like the annual pilgrimage to “the country” or the lavish weddings with the tremendous outlays of money on flowers and pictures. R' Heishke portrayed for his readers the middle road which a Chassid ought to travel in the modern era – not to run away from progress but not to immerse oneself in it, either.

His rich articles garnered him a reputation and placed him among the best Jewish writers in our time. The Yiddish papers were willing to pay him a lot for his articles. Even *The Forward* – a secular, socialist-democratic paper – agreed to forego its principles to have R' Heishke join their ranks and gave him a platform to publicize ideas on the parsha. Needless to say, all the ideas were taken from the Rebbe's sichos, enabling R' Heishke to publicize the Rebbe's teachings among all sorts of people.

R' Heishke took advantage of the great esteem in which he was held by the Yiddish language



R' Yehoshua and his sons

publishers when he wanted to publicize articles against those who tried to attack the Rebbeim or the belief of Chassidim. He was a gentle soul and an intellectual, an introvert, who could keep quiet if personally attacked, but when articles appeared that attacked the honor of Lubavitch, he went against his nature and strongly defended the Rebbeim and Chassidim.

At the beginning of the nineties, a wave of hatred broke against Chabad and the Rebbeim, generated by certain parties in B'nei Brak, with their main complaint being that Chabad is a messianic cult. R' Heishke couldn't tolerate this and he wrote a lengthy piece against those who mocked. Due to the sensitivity of the issue he submitted the article to the Rebbe for his approval.

The Rebbe made some observations, many of which diminished the negative aspects of the article and emphasized the positive. The Rebbe also wanted to delete sharp expressions against

And then, when a mass of Chassidim pushed from every side to stretch out their hands without any calculations – at that awesome moment of hisgalus, the Rebbe pleaded and shouted with a roar from the heart, 'Think about another Yid! Think about another Yid! Think...'

g'dolei Yisroel and said the article should not attack the Vilna Gaon so as not to revive the old machlokes. In a separate note the Rebbe wrote: His intentions are good but if you don't avoid the abovementioned, what will be the results?

In light of the Rebbe's answer, R' Heishke opted not to publish the article. It was only 14 years later, when hateful articles were published once again, that he submitted his article to *Beis*

Moshiach (issue #445) – after incorporating the Rebbe's comments.

On another occasion, also after a nasty article was printed in a B'nei Brak newspaper, R' Heishke wrote an article contrasting those who fly the flag of hate to the natural mesirus nefesh of Chabad Chassidim. "It is very hard to break the wall of blind hatred and to get it into the narrow Litvishe head that a Lubavitcher child, a Lubavitcher bachur – a Tamim,

“The biggest question of all is, how is it that an entire ‘side’ cannot see (or makes itself not see) the good intentions, the positive direction and goals, that the other side has?”

and all the more so an adult Lubavitcher Chassid, has more yiras Shamayim, wholehearted emuna and love for Hashem in the heel of his foot than that of all the popular ‘g’dolim’ in B’nei Brak.”

EXTOLLING THE YOUTH

Just as he couldn’t tolerate the attacks of Misnagdim against Lubavitch, so too – and perhaps even more so – he could not stand the controversy within Lubavitch about the belief of Chassidim in the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach and his eternal life.

With the same fiery Chassidic truth with which he admired the elder Chassidim of the previous generation, R’ Heishke was full of admiration for the young Chassidim who do not see or hear the Rebbe but nevertheless are full of yearning to hear every detail about the Rebbe.

“The most amazing thing,” said R’ Heishke, “is that these are not the nostalgic longings of an orphan but the yearnings of tense heightened anticipation, like that of children who know their father is ‘ut ut’ there.”

Despite his tremendous admiration for the T’mimim who do not make do with longing for the past but channel their feelings into action to disseminate the Besuras HaGeula, R’ Heishke understood those Chassidim who think otherwise and was pained by the machlokes over the differing beliefs.

In an article replete with

feelings of sorrow, R’ Heishke wrote:

“Without deciding between the two views and without pointing at those who are guilty for the terrible split, there is only the powerful desire to ask and ask again:

“All of us, who were united in a movement of ‘I am to my beloved and my beloved is to me,’ at countless long farbrengens on Yomim Tovim, Shabbasos etc.; we who stood ‘together as one in the light’ ... seeing and being seen opposite the holy countenance of the Loyal Shepherd;

“We who remember (on our own or someone told us) the Rebbe standing in the doorway of 770 after the famous Purim farbrengen and announcing, ‘whoever extends his hand is given.’ And then, when a mass of Chassidim pushed from every side to stretch out their hands without any calculations – at that awesome moment of hisgalus, the Rebbe pleaded and shouted with a roar from the heart, ‘Think about another Yid! Think about another Yid! Think...’

“Master of the universe: Where did our thinking of another Chassid disappear to? Where did that bond and relationship with our brothers, our bones and flesh, go?

“Have we lost even the basic ability to analyze and understand what happened? Let’s look – you, a Chabad Chassid, the moment the curtain blocked your ability to see the Rebbe, how did your stormy

soul find its way to hasten the moment when we would merit to bask in the light of life? With stubbornness on the one hand, and with added momentum on the other – that is how you proceeded then with complete fanaticism.

“If so, where does your current attitude towards your fellow Chassid come from? He, by the same measure and for precisely the same reason, and with precisely that inner agitation and inspiration (which is perhaps greater than yours) and with the same firmness and good intentions – he also searched (along with all the others on his ‘side’) for the way to realize his yearning to strengthen hiskashrus and implement the Rebbe’s ratzon! So why does his way look so different than what you decided? It’s very simple. By Jews, and by Chassidim, there are differences in soul powers, in views, and especially in middos (chesed, g’vura etc.). Why don’t people consider this obvious idea?

“The biggest question of all is, how is it that an entire ‘side’ cannot see (or makes itself not see) the good intentions, the positive direction and goals, that the other side has?

“On the other hand, when you wake up and see how the others really mean well, the entire premise changes and the gate opens to the palace of achdus. You suddenly realize how the right eye and the left eye are looking at the same thing.

“I have not come here to decide whether to walk ‘right’ or ‘left’ or maybe in the ‘middle.’ Even without such a decision, one must oppose with the utmost harshness the small-minded labels that each side attaches to the other, starting with the ‘k’fira’ here and the ‘messianism’ there; and imagine where the debate will lead if those are the opening positions of each side...”

In his private life, R' Heishke seemed to have remained in his hometown of Krolevets, living a modest Chassidic life without standing out in any way and keeping a distance from any honors, real or imaginary. He really hated kavod.

In addition to his literary endeavors he was also active in the Rebbe's mitvtzaim and was a member of the hanhala of Tzeirei Agudas Chabad of New York and a member of the hanhala of Chamah.

His tz'daka and chesed were exemplary and for many years ran

a gemach named for his uncle, R' Zalman Shimon Dworkin. With money from this fund he would help families in Crown Heights as well as members of the kollel, especially before Pesach.

R' Heishke felt endless love and admiration for the shluchim of the Rebbe. Although he himself fulfilled an important shlichus and did much to spread Toras HaChassidus, he was envious of the "simple" shluchim who left home and went off to distant parts. He educated his children in this spirit and would say to them: "If I did not merit to go on shlichus, I pin my hopes on you, my

children."

Indeed, R' Heishke merited to see his sons and daughters go on shlichus to France, Canada, Brazil, Texas, California, and Staten Island. He is survived by his wife, Asna Devorah and his children: Sara Gurevitch – Lyon, France; Yosef Yitzchok (Fitcher) – Curitiba, Brazil; Lipa – Vancouver, Canada; Menachem Mendel – Dallas, Texas; Mira Labkowski – Los Angeles, CA; Chana Katzman – Staten Island. His daughter, Zlata Geisinsky a"h, of Bethesda, Maryland, tragically just passed away at the age of 49, after the Shloshim of her father.

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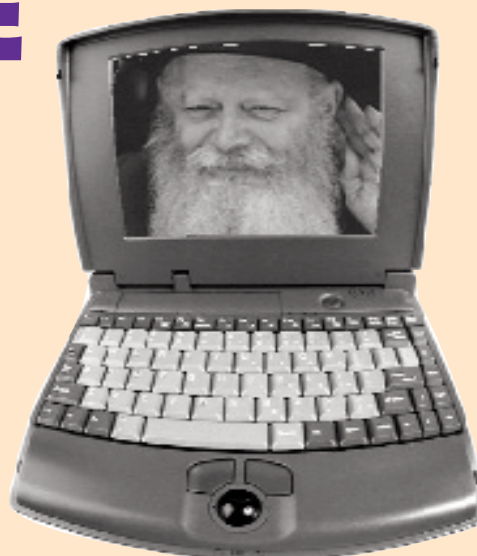
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ב"ה

WAS THAT AN EARTHQUAKE OR A TRAIN?

Dr. Aryeh Gotfryd

Pre-observant college students and young adults philosophize on line about Torah and science. Maybe the arguments aren't new, but the participants are and they deserve answers. Dr. Gotfryd gives it a shot.

Often human nature is such that when one is given a simple proof, it is difficult to accept because of its very simplicity.

--The Rebbe, *Mind Over Matter*, p.9.

Dear Greg, Vadim and Levi,
Thanks for including me in your virtual debate about Science and Torah. Your thread is about as long and rich in words as Jewish history is in years since Avraham Avinu, upwards of 3800, and I read it with interest.

Clearly you, like most of our brethren throughout the ages, are all intelligent, educated and thoughtful people. You raise dozens of points and counterpoints invoking references to many facts and opinions from a diversity of

sciences and cultures as well as your own logical analyses.

Your discussion revolves around one central issue: that the believing Jew accepts as fact all kinds of miraculous and supernatural stories just because they are recorded in the Torah, yet categorically rejects any number of alternative histories or refutations no matter how rational, documented, or widely held they may be.

That itself would be easier to swallow if the believing Jew would come straight out and say "I believe and that's all," or "Torah is right and science is wrong," but it seems that the believing Jew wants to have his cake and eat it too. He wants to embrace faith *and* reason, Torah *and* science.

Here is where the problems start, or so it seems. Your claim essentially is that if science is valid to run our hospitals and cell phones, then it should hold sway on all our beliefs about nature and history. When scientific views conflict with Torah, our religious dogma must adapt, even capitulate if need be (so the argument goes). Truth is what counts, wherever that leads us.

I think if we analyze this one issue carefully, the rest of the details will fall into place, including your problem with over a million species from around the world suddenly converging on Noah's ark, surviving a year on the boat, and then fanning out over the planet back to their natural habitats without any sign of the whole thing having happened, except a rainbow.

To begin, first you are quite correct in characterizing the Jew as both faithful and rational. The Torah has both principles of faith and principles of rational analysis. We approach scripture with the heart, talmud with the mind. Reconciling solar and lunar cycles for the Jewish calendar is a precept of the faith, but to do it requires advanced knowledge of mathematics and astronomy.

Jews take pride in study. About 25% of Nobel Prize winning scientists are Jewish, which is about 100 times more than their proportion in the world by population. Are such scholars any less likely to believe? On the contrary, Nobel Prize winners do not have faith *despite* their secular knowledge, they actually believe in G-d *more because* of it. For example, see the well-referenced collection of scientist quotes by psychologist Tihomir Dimitrov entitled "50 Nobel Laureates and Other Great Scientists Who Believe in G-d" (www.nobelists.tripod.com). Who

could argue with the likes of Einstein, Planck, Schrödinger and Heisenberg, or Newton, Galileo, Faraday and Maxwell?

One key to understanding this is to carefully define the notion of truth. When we say something is true we generally mean that it is not subject to change depending on time, place or context. As such it is an absolute. However, the truths of science are not like that. Ever since Heisenberg, we have come to understand that all science is conditional, tentative, and uncertain. If there is some way to determine capital-T Truth, clearly it is not through science.

The same science of the quantum that gave scientists a newfound humility, also leads us to acknowledge that the ultimate ground of reality is some indivisible wholeness beyond space and time which is conscious and from which all physical phenomena emerge at every moment via vacuum fluctuations (in chassidus this is called continuous creation *ex nihilo*). So rather than an omniscient and omnipotent creator being foreign to rational science, it is actually integral to it. In layman's terms we can really talk about science discovering G-d.

But there is more to it than that. Physics also negates the traditional notion of matter being made up of separate physical particles bouncing around like so many billiard balls on some giant cosmic pool table. Particles of matter are now seen as condensed energy waves shaped by our consciousness and downloaded from some higher consciousness. With the demise of material realism, science and nature have become re-enchanted. Now every event, each phenomenon is seen as a miracle.

This is comparable to what our sages teach, for example the Chacham Tzvi who says that

nature is nothing more than a continuous string of miracles. It's just that we get so used to watching nature go by that we neglect its supernatural character.

Empowered with a modern scientific outlook, we can return to the question of Biblical miracles with a new perspective. Since nature itself is miraculous, why be disturbed by the possibility of outcomes that are neither rational nor materialistic? And since there is some "conscious and indivisible wholeness" behind all this, who says that such a Being would not choose to communicate with man? On the contrary, why would such a Being create nature in such a way that man could infer His existence if He did not want such a relationship?

But, you may contend, the fact that divine communication is possible does not mean that it actually happened. With so many alternative religions and traditions, why believe in the Torah, specifically? This question, too, can be approached scientifically. But let me start with a little story.

As I was sitting at the computer today, composing this response, I started to feel my chair swaying back and forth. I listened to what was going on outside and heard a train in the distance. My house is not far from the tracks and I've often felt the house sway a bit when trains pass. But this seemed more intense than usual. Maybe it was a big train? Maybe a small earthquake? I didn't know.

I came downstairs and asked my wife if she had felt anything strange. "You felt it too? What do you think it was?" We checked a local news website, but nothing about an earthquake. A short while later, a newsflash popped up. Then I heard about it on the radio. Then Google started coughing up news reports and twitter feeds. Then I got confirmation from government

seismological websites.

Once I saw such a diversity of reports from so many places in Quebec, Ontario, New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, I was satisfied that indeed I had experienced a 5.0 quake today. We felt it, it was detected by independent means, and was widely reported in diverse media. Nobody is going to come to me tomorrow to say it didn't happen. And if they did, I would not believe them, nor would anyone else.

But what about my kids? And their kids? How about in 3,000 years? (Of course Moshiach will come by then but still...) Will my hundredth generation descendants necessarily believe in the earthquake of June 23, 2010? It depends. If there will be evidence from diverse sources describing the same event in pretty much the same way, even though none of those sources are first hand, I would probably believe it. Just like I believe that there was a famous British scientist named Isaac Newton even though no one I know ever met him.

On the other hand, if one or even twelve of my friends said they felt something like an earthquake and recorded it for posterity, but the rest of my friends felt nothing of the sort, no news stations reported it, and the seismologists did not register it, in such a case, I may not only have difficulty believing it myself, I would also have trouble convincing any rational, evidence-based society that such a thing happened. Over time, some people would defend the tradition, but others would deny it based on their records.

The analogue is probably obvious to you by now.

The giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai was not a revelation to one person or even to a small group. It was a public event with the participation of 603,550 adult

How can eminently sensible people accept the possibility that the stories in the Bible actually happened as described?

male Israelites excluding women, children, seniors, Levites and converts, probably some three million people in all, who all heard G-d speak to them directly without any intermediary.

That public was very diverse and included a lot of independent thinkers. They argued with Moses about bread, meat, water, aliya, marriage, the priesthood, you name it, they fought about it. But one thing nobody argued about - the divine origin of the Torah. And that's because they were all there. Who were they going to fool? People who experienced it themselves? They all knew they left Egypt without a Torah. They came into Israel with one. It had to come from somewhere. What kind of alternative story could they make up and who would believe it anyways?

Even after they settled the Land of Israel, they all had but one Torah text and that text was

testimony to the Sinai experience. The next generation had it too and the next. In fact, we've never been without it. The copying is always letter-perfect. Even the oral tradition is exact - the "fruit of a beautiful tree" is always an etrog and the "reminder between your eyes" is always a leather cube with four rolled parchments of Torah passages inside.

At what point in our history could someone come along and make something up like this and, more importantly, "sell it" to a whole nation so that they would all suddenly believe that this was their family heritage? Would argumentative Jews like you and me have no dissention on this point whatsoever?

So now that the balance of evidence and reason leans toward the Torah being of divine origin while alternative hypotheses are unrealistic, the details of how many animals in the ark and how

they got there and how they dispersed afterwards are small change. We live in a miraculous world anyway, so why not this miracle as well? And if you wonder about miracles still, consider the basic building block of your "natural" world, the atom - its enigmatic orbits of unknowable bits of energy with gargantuan proportions of empty space, yet presenting itself as hard, opaque and static.

Gentlemen, we are not Wiccans or Raelians here, we are children of Abraham. Most of the world's inhabitants pride themselves on being his spiritual heir, but what of us Jews? We aren't a cult. We are an empirically validated, philosophically sound, ethically grounded and socially cohesive nation and culture with a faith endorsed by the greatest minds of all time. Lets relax and enjoy who we are, and try just one more mitzvah to bring Moshiach now!

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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I FEEL THE REBBE'S HANDS

By Nosson Avrohom

Rabbanim and teachers in Eretz Yisroel are familiar with Machon Mordechai. For over thirty years, children have had enjoyable workbooks thanks to the Machon. Nosson Avrohom met with the founder, Rabbi Sholom Bar Yosef and heard about life in Eretz Yisroel after the Holocaust, yechiduyos with the Rebbe Rayatz and encouragement from the Rebbe MH”M. Presented in the days following Yud-Beis Tammuz.

I met Rabbi Sholom Mordechai Bar Yosef in his family's vacation home. He visits his modest apartment in Tzfas several times a year in order to concentrate on his learning and to work on producing new educational material. His organization, Machon Mordechai, was started nearly forty years ago and is a wonderful resource for teachers who want an easy and clear way of teaching their students. All sorts of religious

schools in Eretz Yisroel and elsewhere use his workbooks.

R' Bar Yosef is a tremendous Torah scholar who cares deeply about chinuch, and this has motivated him to invest great efforts and money into educational materials.

“For many years I was a teacher for many different subjects. I saw that in subjects like English and math there were plenty of workbooks but for limudei kodesh

there weren't, and I decided to do something about it.”

This is R' Bar Yosef's lifework but that's only part of my interest in interviewing him. R' Bar Yosef had a strong connection with Chabad even as a young man. He had yechidus with the Rebbe Rayatz twice at the beginning of 5710. It was with the Rebbe's blessing and encouragement that he later started his organization. Despite his advanced age he remembers the events of his life clearly, as well as their impact on his feelings at the time.

GENUINE AHAVAS YISRAEL IN THE FOREST WITH THE PARTISANS

During World War II he was with his family in the ghetto of Pressburg, Czechoslovakia. He was 14 years old and he remembers those terrible times:

“I was raised in a frum home. When the war broke out, the Germans confined us to a ghetto, where Jewish life went on as usual. My father decided to smuggle us out of the ghetto to a faraway village on the border. He sensed that it was just a matter of time before the Nazis would kill us all. We fled to Hungary and eventually we saw that my father's decision saved our lives.

“On Yom Kippur 5704/1943, huge numbers of German forces encircled the ghetto and brought everybody to the trains which transported them to the gas chambers and crematoria. My father constantly said that the Germans would not be able to utterly destroy the Jews of the city where the Chasam Sofer lived, taught Torah, and wrote his chiddushei Torah.

“Partisan groups formed to fight the Germans. Although there were many Jewish partisans, they were led primarily by gentiles

whose hatred for Jews sometimes superseded their hatred for the Germans who conquered their country. I joined one of these partisan groups. We hid in the thick forests and lived in dwellings in the Tatra Mountains. We climbed trees that were twenty stories high and from the treetops we kept an eye on the movements of the Germans.

“The partisans caused heavy losses to the Germans, both in killing their men and in stealing their food. The Germans deployed to try to trap us. To protect ourselves, so the dogs wouldn’t smell the scent of our shoes, we smeared them with tar. For months we lived in the trees. We had iron loops that were tied to stout ropes. Every few hours we would throw the rope to a nearby tree and when the loop caught, we moved to the next tree.

“In this manner we traveled many kilometers into the thick of the forest. We avoided walking on the ground so as not to leave tracks and we got food at night from the villages, which we supplemented with fruits from the trees. I remember a scary episode when the Germans caught up with us. The dogs found partisans hiding in a bunker. Some of them were killed while others fled. We, who were up in the trees, were saved. The Germans pruned a lot of branches and it was miraculous that they did not discover us.

“We were young boys, lean from hunger and thirst, and we could easily leap from tree to tree. Even when we were on the ground, our tarred shoes kept the Germans off our trail. I have a burning hatred not only for the Germans, but also for our equally anti-Semitic gentile leaders. They used us because they needed us in order to survive and fight but the moment they were able to kill a Jew, they did so readily.



“I remember one unfortunate Jewish partisan whom they wanted to get rid of. One day he was assigned the job of standing watch with a rifle, which was more precious than gold to us. The cold and exhaustion overcame him and he fell asleep. One of the partisan leaders, a wicked man, discovered him asleep and stole his rifle. The law of the partisans was that his punishment was death, since falling asleep on the job endangered us all. They ignored his pleading and told another Jew to kill him.

“I will never forget how the Jew ordered to kill him said, ‘I will not take the life of a Jew. If you want, kill me!’ It was a tremendous lesson for me, a young boy, about Jewish brotherly love. He was not religious at all, but he refused to pull the trigger on a fellow Jew. I

also learned how great is the hatred of Eisav for Yaakov and how the chesed that gentiles do is really only for themselves.”

THE WARMTH OF THE REBBE RAYATZ’S HAND

When the war was over, Bar Yosef joined the yeshiva of Rabbi Michael Ber Weissmandl, who started a yeshiva for Holocaust survivors. Rabbi Weissmandl is known as the author of *Min HaMeitzar* (translated as *The Unheeded Cry* in English) in which he describes his many attempts to save Hungarian Jewry. The yeshiva, located in the mountains of upstate New York, was called Nitra and it combined Torah study with work.

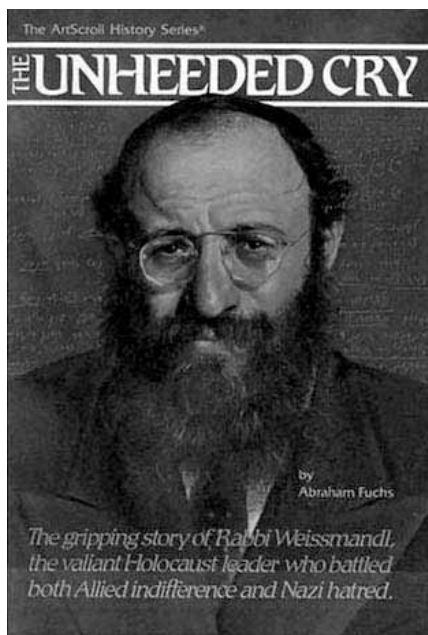
“We were a group of bachurim, survivors. Rabbi Weissmandl was

able to get visas for us for the United States and we traveled by ship to New York. I learned in Nitra and then switched to yeshivas Shearis HaPleita, which was founded by the Tzanz-Klausenberger Rebbe, Rabbi Yekusiel Halberstam. The yeshiva was in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, and I preferred to be in a large Jewish community, not far-off in the mountains.

“The Klausenberger Rebbe married the sister of our rosh yeshiva, and we attended the wedding. I watched the Admur and was very taken by him. So I went to his yeshiva. Today, nobody can describe those early days in which very few managed to hold on. Many Jews shaved their beards and became swept up in the liberal life of the land of opportunity. Great Rebbes held tishen on Shabbos, and the participants parked their cars nearby. Today, when you look at religious Jewish life it’s Yemos HaMoshiach!”

Bar Yosef always had a soft spot in his heart for Chabad; when I asked him why, he said that even before he saw the Chabad Rebbes or learned Chassidus, he had heard that Chabad is different than all Chassiduyos. In all the other Chassidic groups he found provincialism and a ghetto mentality, while in Chabad he heard about concern for all Klal Yisroel and not just for a small group of Chassidim. He wanted to know the teachings of Chabad and this is why he went to visit the Rebbe Rayatz. He had yechidus with the Rebbe Rayatz twice, and describes the experience:

“When I got to 770 I was met outside by a noble looking man with a holy face. I thought he was the Rebbe and I was amazed that the Rebbe himself had come out to greet me. Based on my reaction, the Rebbe’s secretary realized what I thought and gently asked me to



The Unheeded Cry by Rabbi Weissmandl

wait in the nearby room until I would be called to see the Rebbe. If the secretary looks like that, I thought to myself, who knows what the Rebbe himself will look like?

“When it was my turn to enter the Rebbe Rayatz’s room, I entered trembling. The Rebbe looked at me and his gaze caused my hands to alternately shake and go numb from great fear and trepidation. Even in the pictures of him, you can see the Rebbe’s penetrating eyes; you can’t run from them. The Rebbe sat in a wheelchair, welcomed me graciously and began to speak. The secretary stood unobtrusively in a corner. It was very hard to understand the Rebbe but I made a great effort and understood a lot.

“My first question was about my father and the rest of my family. They were in Australia and wanted me to join them, but I didn’t want to go since there was Yiddishkait in New York, yeshivos and k’hillos. Australia was barren of Judaism and how could I leave a place of Torah?

“The Rebbe’s answer surprised

me very much. He said that he had recently sent ten Chassidishe families there and instructed them to start a yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim. He dismissed my concerns and said I would be fine with them. He spoke enthusiastically about the new yeshiva and said I should be one of the first students to learn there.

“I didn’t readily agree. How could I leave a place of Torah? There might be a yeshiva there, even a good one, but in New York I had an excellent place to learn so what did I need this adventure for? Then the Rebbe explained for over half an hour what his ‘ani maamin’ is. He laid forth his plan, which was before the coming of Moshiach there had to be Judaism in every corner of the world.

“The Rebbe explained to me that just like in the time of the second Beis Mikdash, the Jewish people spread out all the way to Bavel, now too Jews need to spread out all over the world and prepare it for Geula so that all the goyim will know about Hashem. How will they know? By our being all over the world! The Rebbe spoke about Jews as an *am segula* and how all over the world, even in distant places, yeshivos and talmudei Torah had to be founded to refine the earth and air of that place and to bring it to a state where they would be ready to welcome Moshiach.

“As I stood there facing the Rebbe, my thoughts went blank and I felt greatly afraid. The Rebbe was sitting in a wheelchair in obvious suffering, but when he spoke he was completely overcome with passion, his hands moved here and there and you could see that he was experiencing everything he was saying. In the Rebbe’s room I felt in a more rarefied environment, the most exalted atmosphere I had ever experienced. When I left, I realized how

hypnotized I was by every word he said. I managed to say one sentence at the end of the yechidus, 'I am convinced and I will do as the Rebbe advises.'

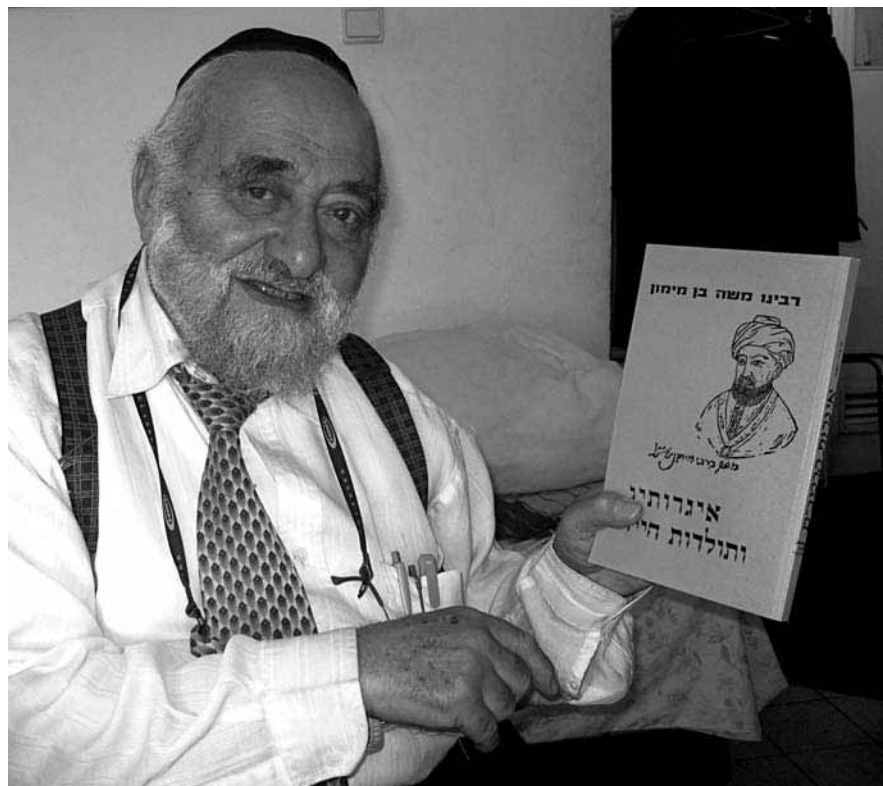
"Before leaving I held out my hands to the Rebbe for him to bless me. The Rebbe took one of my hands and placed it on the other hand and he put his two hands on mine, with one above and one below. The Rebbe apparently felt that my hands were cold and he blessed me that his hands should warm mine.

"When I left the yechidus the secretary exclaimed: "Do you know what sort of bracha you received?"

"The truth is that until today I feel the Rebbe's bracha. This bracha saved me many times. I went through many tests and hardships and through it all, I feel the Rebbe's hands. His hands warm me and accompany me.

"In the other yechidus with the Rebbe I asked for a bracha for my learning. I told the Rebbe that I didn't know whether I understood the Gemara and Tosafos well. The Rebbe blessed me that Hashem should help me so I could learn without interference and to learn Torah *lishma*. Today I see how the Rebbe's bracha was fulfilled, for not only was I able to learn for myself but in heading this institute we have published dozens of s'farim and teachers' guides. In the meantime, I continued learning in Tzanz and got ready to travel to my parents in Australia.

"The two yechiduyos were at the end of 5709 and the beginning of 5710. At that time the only way to travel to Australia was by ship. Getting a ticket and money for the trip took a long time and in the interim the Rebbe Rayatz was nistalek. I was in yeshiva when someone told me the sad news. I was in shock and great pain. I felt as though my father had died. I



felt that in my neshama I was very close to the Rebbe.

"The greatest difficulty was that I felt that my support had been lost. It was only in the z'chus of his brachos and encouragement that I was going to Australia, and now what would I do? I thought that the Rebbe would guide me before the trip and when I would be there. My desire to travel, which wasn't high to begin with, dissipated. When I attended the funeral on Sunday I felt tremendous pain and was in a state of confusion."

THE SHLICHUS TO AUSTRALIA

Sholom ended up getting a ticket for the ship that left New York to Australia. Before he left he asked many halachic questions to the Tzanzer Rebbe and other rabbanim because he was traveling during s'fira over the International Dateline and he needed to know

how to count.

"I was the first religious Jew to travel during s'fira between these two countries. Let's say I left on a Tuesday; in Australia, that day is Wednesday. This poses a complicated halachic problem.

"I also asked what to do about Shabbos. During the trip, should I follow the calendar in America or in Australia? At all the ports the ship stopped in, I was not allowed to debark and until I got to Australia I kept the date of the United States. During the trip there were some frightening storms which I miraculously survived. I credit the Rebbe's bracha as it was only because of this bracha that I was traveling.

"In Melbourne I found the Lubavitcher shluchim and became especially friendly with the Serebryanskis who had come from Russia. They had such Jewish strength and Chassidishe enthusiasm, something not of this world! It was As though there

hadn't been a Holocaust; as though they hadn't been persecuted. They were role models of strong faith. As the Rebbe Rayatz had told me in yechidus, that year a Chabad yeshiva opened in Shepparton, a town near Melbourne. I quickly became friends with the other talmidim and found a common language. All were Chabad Chassidim who had emigrated from the Soviet Union.

"The menahel of the yeshiva was R' Moshe Feiglin, a Chassid, a very wealthy importer of oranges who fled the Turks. The yeshiva was in a cottage which he had paid for and he paid the salaries and for various other necessities. R' Abba Pliskin was the mashgiach. He was a Chassidishe Yid, short but full of both power and charisma. I remember how we would learn Tanya and maamarim in the morning. Back then there weren't many sifrei Chassidus and even what was available wasn't easy to obtain.

"They were very particular when it came to farbrengens. On every Chassidishe date we sat and farbrenged with R' Abba. The talmidim would take mashke, something unfamiliar to me from the places I came from, and the niggun which was repeated the entire farbrengen was 'Nye Zhuritse Chloptchi.' We spoke a lot about the Rebbe and Chassidishe ways and each day I blessed the moment that I acceded to the Rebbe's request. All the talmidim acted simply, without looking down on one another, as I saw in other yeshivos. On the contrary, I saw lots of warmth and love.

"The bittul towards the Rebbe was astounding; the feeling that other than the Rebbe there is nothing. I remember that on the first day I came to yeshiva I brought with me the Musar s'farim that are learned in other

Chassidishe yeshivos, like Chovos HaLevavos (Duties of the Heart) and Mesilas Yesharim (Path of the Just), and one fine day they disappeared. When I made inquiries I found out that the mashgiach had taken them. When I asked him about it, he said, 'By us there is just Chassidus and there is enough to learn; you'll find everything in Chassidus.' Indeed, for two years I learned in the yeshiva and wasn't sated. Each day I learned new concepts and ideas."

THE BEARD IS THE INYAN OF THE 13 TIKKUNIM

When two years had gone by he began working in construction of cottages that were going up in the area but the difficulty in finding a suitable shidduch led him to travel to Eretz Yisroel. There he sought to enter one of the yeshivos.

"When I arrived in Eretz Yisroel I wanted to attend the Litvishe yeshiva in Chevron, that was well known as a good yeshiva, but when I went to their office they would not accept me because of my beard. So I went to Toras Emes.

"I greatly enjoyed the Chabad yeshiva even though it was a bit different than the one I was familiar with from Australia. The rosh yeshiva was R' Moshe Aryeh Leib Shapiro, a tremendous Torah scholar and genius. The mashgiach was R' Cohen and I will never forget his Birkas Kohanim. He said the bracha with such fervor in a thunderous voice that split all the heavens.

"The Satan mixed in and led the menahel to disagree with the Rebbe, who expressed his displeasure with the man and the yeshiva closed. I remember it as though it was today, the anger at that menahel for daring to disagree with the Rebbe. The other

talmidim found other places to go to; they had parents and homes to go to, but I had come from Australia and so I remained to learn with a chavrusa, alone in the yeshiva without food and without minimal living standards. There were many bottles in yeshiva which I sold and with the money I received I would buy food. But I ran out of bottles and there were long days in which I did not eat. The situation in Yerushalayim in general was hard and it was much harder for me. One time, when I left the mikva I fainted from hunger. Those were hard times.

"The situation then wasn't what it is today in which there is a yeshiva in nearly every city in Eretz Yisroel. There were no Chabad yeshivos and the Litvishe yeshivos did not accept me. I finally got up and went to the home of the Chazon Ish. Surely he would recommend me to some yeshiva. He suggested that I go to yeshivas Slonim which was in Ramat Gan. When I told him about the p'sak of the rabbanim in the United States about the Dateline, he told me he disagreed. He did not acknowledge the dates established by non-Jews and he gave me a pamphlet that he published.

"A very interesting conversation ensued. His pamphlet, which was called '18 Hours,' explains that the calculation follows Israel. He suggested that when I returned to Australia that I do as he wrote. The Chazon Ish recommended me and I was accepted in Slonim where, for the first time, I began trimming my beard.

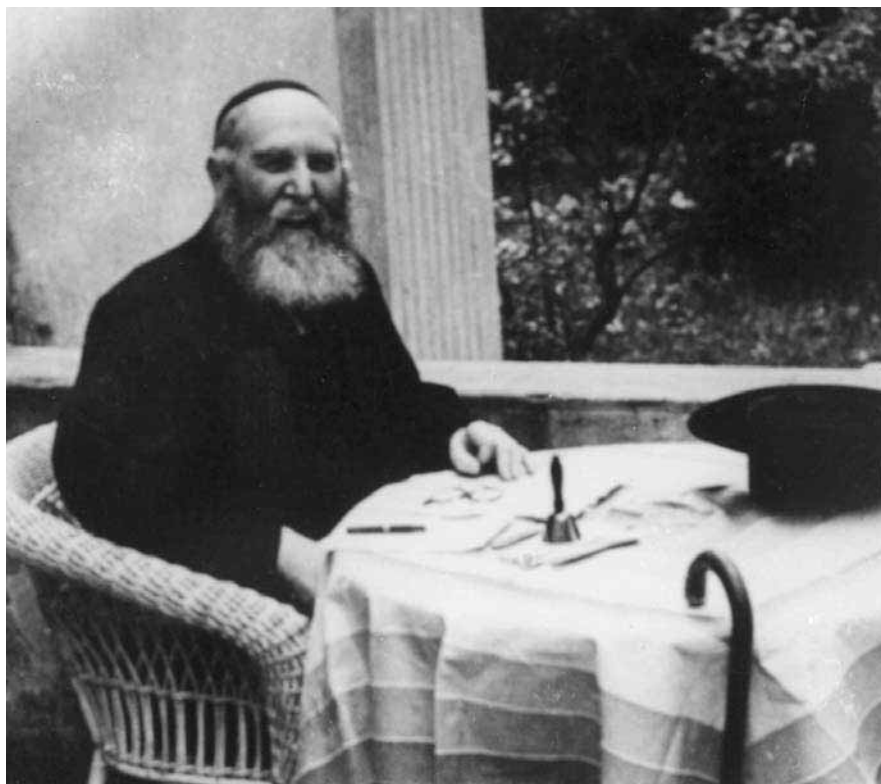
"Though I was glad to be in a yeshiva, I still wanted very much to be accepted in a Litvishe yeshiva and that is why I trimmed my beard (I also hoped that this would help me with shidduchim). Their yeshivos had excellent reputations but they only accepted Chassidim from other Chassidic groups and

not Chabad. How do I know? Because talmidim who had beards and peios were accepted but those who sported a beard without the long peios characteristic of other Chassidic groups were advertising that they were Chabad and they weren't accepted. I was confused about what to do and I wrote to the Rebbe mentioning, among other things, about trimming my beard.

"The Rebbe's answer was the first I received. It is dated 19 Iyar, 5713/1953, and it is signed by the Rebbe:

In response to your letter of 11 Iyar in which you write that you want to learn in a Chabad yeshiva in Eretz Yisroel (you do not specify in your letter whether you mean yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Lud or yeshivas Toras Emes in Yerushalayim) but what prevents you is that one of the conditions of the yeshiva is that you can't shave your beard and since you intend on returning to ... and there it is not customary to grow a beard, you ask for leniency in this, i.e. to cancel this condition since it is hard for you and nearly impossible.

Your question is surprising to me because surely you know the seriousness of chilul Hashem and "tearing down a fence" even if the matter on your part is not that serious. Imagine the situation in which you enter a yeshiva where they all have beards and you will be the only one to "tear down the fence" and not have a beard. Furthermore, this is a yeshiva whose inyan is also the study of p'nimius ha'Torah and guidance in love of Hashem and fear of Him, which are dependent first and foremost on what is written at the beginning of the Tur Orach Chaim and also brought in the Rema there, not to be ashamed



The Rebbe Rayatz looked at me and his gaze caused my hands to alternately shake and go numb from great fear and trepidation. Even in the pictures of him, you can see the Rebbe's penetrating eyes; you can't run from them.

before those who mock.

Without copying here what it says in p'nimius ha'Torah and the holy Zohar and other s'farim that the hairs of the beard are an inyan of the 13 Tikkunei Dikna and how they draw down success in Torah study and the fulfillment of mitzvos, all concede that the beard is a part of one's G-dly image. If he removes the beard, even according to those who allow it if it is done in certain ways, nevertheless he won't have this G-dly image. Behold a young man who merited that Divine Providence brought him to the

land which has Hashem's eyes upon it from the beginning of the year until the end of the year. And he wants to add to the study of Nigleh of Torah that of p'nimius ha'Torah – the inyan of Torah in general being the wisdom and will of Hashem, and p'nimius ha'Torah are the secrets of Torah which in previous days were not revealed except to special people, but for various reasons in our generations it has been revealed and publicized to quite a few Jews. But with all this one cannot forget the truth, that this is the inner will and wisdom

When I was an English teacher the students respected me and showed an interest, but when I transferred to teaching Gemara I felt their disdain.

of Hashem and of what worth is there in those who mock those who have a beard because they want to be mehader in mitzvos and have the image of G-d on their faces.

Furthermore, many of them are considered talmidim of the Tzemach Tzedek who paskens that it is a Torah prohibition (as he explains in his responsa) and it is unnecessary to go on at length about the severity according to the Gemara of residing in the place of a rav and acting contrary to the rulings of that rav, and Hashem should give you success to go in the right path and on the road that leads to Beis E-l and that you achieve this without too many tests.

“The Rebbe’s answer shook me up and I decided to remain in Slonim and to ditch the desire to trim my beard as well as dismiss the idea of going to a Litvishe yeshiva. After a protracted stay in Slonim I was very involved in shidduchim but still hadn’t found my wife yet. Months went by and I was very frustrated. I had gone to Eretz Yisroel because I thought that here I would more easily find a shidduch but that hadn’t happened. I felt close to Lubavitch and the first thing I did was write to the Rebbe.”

In a long and detailed letter he told the Rebbe his problem and asked for help. Part of the answer that he received is printed in Igros Kodesh vol. 8, p. 276:

B”H

**13 Adar II, 5714
Brooklyn**

Sholom U’v’racha!

... Regarding your personal matter, I think I already wrote to you regarding the statement of Chazal to “go down a step and marry a woman,” and apparently the words have not yet reached you and as the explanation in Likkutei Torah in the beginning of Shmini, reached - affected. In a humorous vein one can say that since they said that a zivug is as hard as splitting the sea, how was the sea split – by one Jew jumping in without excessive calculations. He just knew that this is what Hashem wants, and that Moshe Rabbeinu had raised his staff.

As you requested, I will mention it at the holy gravesite of my father-in-law, the Rebbe, for this matter, but you also know what Chazal say that for the opening like the entrance of a great hall you still need to make a hole like the opening of a needle.

With blessings for a happy Purim ad d’lo yada and with wine specifically, for in our Torah which is our life, that is the part of Nistar and as is hinted at also in what Chazal say that when wine enters, the secrets come out and as it is explained in the Zohar and in Chassidus in a number of places.

With blessings that you will relate good news in all the above at the earliest opportunity.

“The Rebbe’s words greatly encouraged me. I remember telling my friends who asked me about it that the Lubavitcher Rebbe says

you have to jump into the sea and that is what Hashem wants. And I jumped. It didn’t take long before I was engaged to the daughter of Rabbi Meir Dovid Levenstein, the first Knesset member from the Agudath Israel party. He was a man of integrity even though he signed the Israeli Declaration of Independence. My grandchildren showed me a newspaper clipping they found in which he wrote that those who authored this declaration did not really believe in the ‘Rock of Israel.’”

INSTITUTE FOR LOVE OF TORAH STUDY

The educational institute opened its doors 38 years ago. There were times that the output was minimal and times when it was prodigious. At this point, the founders and staff can look with satisfaction on the dozens of books they’ve published.

“In the period following the Holocaust it was hard to draw the students’ interest to Jewish subjects. Before I opened the institute I asked the Rebbe for a bracha and received his strong encouragement. The idea was to publish workbooks that would explain things in an easy to understand format. Where did I get this idea from? For many years I was a teacher in a number of schools that belonged to a wide range of Jewish groups. When I was an English teacher the students respected me and showed an interest, but when I transferred to teaching Gemara I felt their disdain.

“The situation today is much better but back then the Torah was a neglected subject and this bothered me. I saw that workbooks were being produced in the United States and I brought that idea over to Eretz Yisroel.”

R’ Bar Yosef said that

throughout the years, especially when he was first starting his institute, he got many encouraging answers from the Rebbe. The secretaries conveyed the Rebbe's responses.

"One year, at the end of the 80's I was visiting the United States and went by the Rebbe for dollars. I asked for a bracha that the Machon successfully carry out its objectives and the Rebbe gave me two dollars, one for me and one for the institute.

"I sent a copy of each book we published to the Rebbe. I felt that it was thanks to the Rebbe that this Machon was opened. There is no parnasa to be made from this since teachers photocopy the workbooks or keep them for years, which is something that we encourage.

"In the beginning we did a lot of things but not in as organized and serious a way as we do it today and I had some doubts about how to proceed. At that time I was also offered a position to serve as a rav in a community in Australia and I thought I would accept the offer.

"As with every weighty decision I had to make, I consulted with the Rebbe. I went to 770 and asked whether I should accept the offer. The Rebbe gave me one dollar for myself (to give to tz'daka) and another dollar for the shlichus in Eretz Yisroel. The Rebbe didn't say no to Australia but did not refer to it and he asked me to continue the

shlichus in Eretz Yisroel, which is what I did.

"From the moment I resolved that I would invest my energy into it, the Machon flourished. Later on I heard that that k'hilla in Australia was considered wishy-washy and who knows how my children would have turned out if I hadn't listened to the Rebbe."

UNCONDITIONAL YIRAS SHOMAYIM

To conclude the interview I brought R' Bar Yosef back to the beginning and asked him where he got the courage, after the Holocaust in which many of his friends perished and entire k'hillos were annihilated, to remain strong in his emuna and to rebuild.

"I will tell you my personal opinion. I cannot find fault with any of my friends who looked in other places. The *hester panim* (concealment of G-d) in the Holocaust was terrifying. Tzaddikim were murdered al Kiddush Hashem and the honor of Torah was trampled.

"But I see that those of my friends who before the war had real yiras Shamayim and did not compromise on details of mitzvos are the ones who, after the war, rebuilt Yiddishkait. They had *siyata d'Shmaya* (heavenly assistance), as did I. At the end of the war when I told my friends that I was going to learn in Nitra yeshiva they made

fun of me. Where will you have parnasa from? They thought work was the purpose of life. But I withstood all that and went to yeshiva to learn and build a Jewish home.

"Anyone who knows what state Orthodox Jewry was in back then, after the war, knows that what we have today is an open miracle. I remember the Imrei Chaim of Vizhnitz coming to Williamsburg to hold *tishen*. Every year he would come to live for half a year in the US and the Chassidim who sat with him were mostly clean-shaven. That was the case with the other Chassidic groups too.

THE EXECUTIVE ARM

This interview took place Friday afternoon. Shabbos was approaching and so I asked one of my last questions. As someone who saw both the Rebbe Rayatz and the Rebbe MH"M, I wanted to know what he considered the difference between them.

"The Rebbe Rayatz was an architect. At a time when everyone was licking the wounds of the Holocaust, the Rebbe was in an offensive war. The current Rebbe was the one who carried out all the plans. All the plans the Rebbe Rayatz laid out for me in yechidus about hafatza all over the world I see happening today under the Rebbe's leadership."

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RISHON L'TZIYON

RABBI MORDECHAI ELIAHU ZT"L

By Shneur Zalman Levin

*We were saddened to hear of the passing of the Rishon L'Tziyon, the gaon and mekubal Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu at the age of 81. R' Eliyahu was a close friend to Chabad and a tremendous admirer of the Rebbe MH"M. R' Eliyahu met the Rebbe several times in yechidus, in the course of which the Rebbe encouraged him to pasken that Moshiach must come immediately. R' Eliyahu led the way in the fight for shleimus ha'Aretz and forbade soldiers from participating in the destruction of Gush Katif, and he participated in many of the holy campaigns of the Rebbe. * In several speeches that he delivered, he revealed a little bit of his special relationship with the Rebbe. * Chabad Chassidim worldwide mourn his passing.*

R' Mordechai Eliyahu was born in 1929 in the Old City of Yerushalayim, to R' Salman and his wife Mazal Eliyahu. His father, a rav and mekubal, came from

Bagdad upon the advice of the Ben Ish Chai zt"l. R' Mordechai Eliyahu was orphaned of his father when he was 11. His mother was the sister of Rabbi Yehuda Tzadka

(1910-1991) and the granddaughter of the sister of the Ben Ish Chai.

From when he was very young, R' Mordechai attached himself to the sages of Yerushalayim, learning from the geonim Rabbi Ezra Attia (1885-1970) and Rabbi



Tzadka Chutzin in yeshivas Porat Yosef. From a young age he immersed himself in the tent of Torah and learned Torah day and night.

During the War of Independence he joined a group of young men who helped defend the Jewish quarter by putting up fortifications.

R' Eliyahu was very close with the elder mekubalim, Rabbi Mordechai Sharabi and Rabbi Yisroel Abuchatzaira (Baba Sali).

Upon instruction from Rabbi Yitzchok Nissim, R' Eliyahu worked on transferring the remains of the Chida from Livorno, Italy, to Eretz Yisroel. On 20 Iyar, 1960, the Chida was reburied on Har HaMenuchos in

Yerushalayim.

At the beginning of 5720, R' Eliyahu was ordained and certified for dayanus by the Chief Rabbinate. His appointment as dayan at the beis din in Beer Sheva made him the youngest dayan in Eretz Yisroel. After about four years he moved to the beis din in Yerushalayim and after another three years he was appointed dayan at the High Rabbinic Court in 5727.

In Nissan 5743/1983, he was elected Sefardic chief rabbi of Eretz Yisroel. He held this position for ten years, in the course of which he became known as a gaon in all areas of Torah, Nigleh and Nistar. During this period he disseminated Torah to

thousands. He went from city to city and even traveled abroad many times, strengthening Torah study and sanctifying the Name of Heaven amongst many Jews.

R' Eliyahu wrote dozens of s'farim on halachic responsa, thought, explanations on the Siddur, sugiyos, and thousands of articles on an array of Torah topics.

People flocked to his home, seeing him as the one who could resolve their complicated halachic problems. He would welcome them graciously. His lectures, given with the warmth of Ahavas Yisroel, drew crowds of all ages. His message was always to strive for more in Torah study, to do t'shuva and to prepare for Moshiach's coming.

YECHIDUYOS WITH THE REBBE

R' Eliyahu had known many of the g'dolim of this generation and the previous one, and was renown in his own right for his genius and his greatness in halacha and kabbala, yet his admiration and bittul towards the Rebbe was like that of a Chassid. His emunas tzaddikim was so great that it aroused amazement and admiration.

He visited the Rebbe several times. Some of their long conversations (those parts that were publicized) containing amazing discussions in halacha, kabbala and Chassidus, avodas Hashem, leadership, etc. were printed in *B'Tzeil HaChochma* and at the end of *Seifer HaSichos*, 5752.

The Rebbe's relationship with him was exceptional. You could see it in the Rebbe's face as he watched R' Eliyahu light the menorah on the satellite broadcast on Chanuka. And when R' Eliyahu visited the Rebbe in Cheshvan,



“There are no individual worries for one group or another. He is a ‘universal man’ in the deepest sense of the term. Whatever he does is done in a big way and with general concern for Klal Yisroel throughout the world. Fortunate is the generation that the Rebbe leads.”

5752, the Rebbe welcomed him with great honor and fondness, and on a number of occasions expressed his great admiration of him.

R' Eliyahu's first visit to the Rebbe was on Rosh Chodesh Kislev, 5744, when he had yechidus together with his colleague, Ashkenazi chief rabbi Avrohom Shapiro zt"l. The yechidus lasted two hours. They raised issues in halacha, minhag and kabbala with a strong emphasis on inyanei Geula based on Chazal, "The Torah that a person learned in this world is *hevel* (worthless) compared to the Torah of Moshiach," and about anticipating Moshiach in the manner of "for Your salvation we hope all day." They also spoke a lot about the need to learn p'nimius ha'Torah in *Ikvisa d'Meshicha*. The Rebbe even asked the chief rabbis to publicize a Kol Korei (public proclamation) about the obligation to study p'nimius ha'Torah.

The Rebbe asked the pardon of those who were present and said he wished to speak to the rabbanim privately. The private conversation took three quarters of an hour, at the end of which the Rebbe escorted the rabbanim to the door of *Gan Eden HaTachton*.

After his first visit, R' Eliyahu expressed his amazement of the Rebbe on various occasions. In an

interview with *Kfar Chabad*, he said, "We sat by him and saw that 'no secret is hidden from him' literally, in Shas and poskim, and in Nistar his understanding is very, very deep, mamash the 'Master of the Zohar.'"

When he visited mosdos Lubavitch in Paris, he once again recalled his impressions of that visit. He spoke about the great personality and holiness of the Rebbe who is baki (proficient) in all parts of Torah and in everything going on in Eretz Yisroel, and mainly about the Rebbe's appearance being like that of a veritable angel of G-d. "Fortunate is the generation that merited a leader like this," he told them, "and this z'chus will stand by the talmidim who merited to study under the Rebbe's leadership."

The two chief rabbis visited the Rebbe again two years later, in Adar, 5746. Following this visit, too, R' Eliyahu said, "The last visit to the Lubavitcher Rebbe took place 'between Geula and Geula' – between Purim and Pesach – and most of the conversation had to do with Geula. This is the second time that I am visiting the Rebbe. The time span was nearly two years between visits and I must say enthusiastically that what Chazal say, 'Torah scholars, the older they get the more settled their daas becomes' is something you can see

in the most wondrous and obvious way with the Rebbe shlita.

"Despite the late hour the Rebbe was alert to a degree that is difficult to imagine. We saw how he is constantly immersed in the world of the spirit. The entire Torah – Shas and poskim, Agada and Midrash and kabbala – everything is spread out before him in the clearest way. There is no need to speak in terms of (my) great admiration and veneration, but it is clear that each visit forms a greater closeness.

"No less than the amazement over his incredible Torah wisdom is the feeling of k'dusha. When we sat near him we felt this time, too, as though we were sitting in the chamber of holiness, by someone where k'dusha hovers and rests in its fullest intensity in his four cubits. When you sit near him you strongly sense the words of the Gemara, "this is not a son of man (i.e. not an ordinary human being)." In addition, we saw his great concern for the Jewish people. There are no individual worries for one group or another. He is a 'universal man' in the deepest sense of the term. Whatever he does is done in a big way and with general concern for Klal Yisroel throughout the world. Fortunate is the generation that the Rebbe leads."

One of his close assistants and confidantes, Rabbi Tzuriel Bublil, spoke in an interview he gave about some matters R' Eliyahu was struggling with before he had yechidus:

"When R' Eliyahu returned from New York he told me in open amazement about his meeting with the Rebbe. For years he had amassed questions in halacha and Torah topics. He told me that his struggles with these questions were ongoing until he went to the Rebbe. He put forth his questions and the Rebbe instantly dealt with

all the issues involved and explained them in a simple manner. I quote, 'It looked as though just recently the Rebbe had been involved in the topic. He displayed complete mastery of the subjects in the most amazing way. The difficulties suddenly disappeared. The Rebbe's genius was apparent and amazing.' As for the Rebbe's holiness, he had no words."

PASKEN THAT MOSHIACH HAS TO COME

In the yechidus with the chief rabbis, the Rebbe said, "We have rabbanim here and it is possible to pasken as a beis din that Moshiach needs to come." It was apparently an auspicious time.

R' Eliyahu accepted the idea enthusiastically and suggested that the Rebbe join the beis din. The Rebbe agreed but R' Shapiro hesitated, and the Rebbe did not pursue the matter any further.

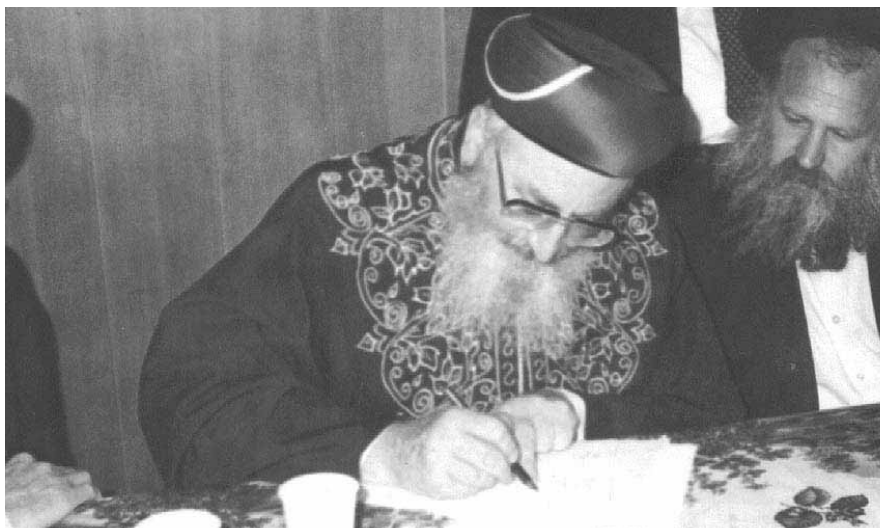
About two months later, something happened that was a sort of continuation of that conversation, but once again it seemed an opportunity was missed. Rabbi Menachem Mendel Gluckowsky, rav of the Chabad k'hilla in Rechovot, told *Beis Moshiach* what happened:

"When I heard that the Rebbe said that the rabbanim have to pasken that the time has come for the Geula, I decided I had to do something. In Iyar, 5746, I arranged for a Yom Iyun (day of study) for Chabad rabbanim in Eretz Yisroel. This was part of a series of Yemei Iyun for rabbanim in accordance with the Rebbe's mandate that rabbanim have to supplement their knowledge in areas where there are new developments.

"The start of that Yom Iyun was in Yerushalayim and the topic



Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu at a meeting of Chabad rabbanim in Iyar, 5746. From right to left: R' Halperin, R' Ashkenazi, chief rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, R' Slonim, and R' Wilyamovsky.



Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu signing the p'sak din that the Geula must come immediately

was mikvaos. We visited a mikva in French Hill, where Rabbi Michael Halperin is a rav. In the afternoon, the rabbanim continued the meeting in the Machon for Technology and Halacha, and for this part of the Kinus I invited the chief rabbis to speak. I hoped to use this opportunity to ask them to sign the p'sak din together with the other rabbanim.

"At 4:00 R' Shapiro came but R' Eliyahu still had not arrived. I really wanted the signing to be in

the presence of both chief rabbis so I tried to draw out the Kinus with speeches in the hopes that R' Eliyahu would show up. "After waiting a long time R' Shapiro got up and left. Just a minute or two later R' Eliyahu arrived. He apologized for coming late and said he was waiting for his driver, who had suddenly fallen asleep in his car, and when they finally set out, he lost his way, even though he drove that route many times a week! I considered this 'an act of

Right afterwards, I sent a fax of the p'sak din to the Rebbe. The next morning I had to travel to the United States, but in the middle of the night Rabbi Yaroslavsky received a call from the secretaries with an instruction from the Rebbe to add more signatures of rabbanim. Then came another phone call from the secretaries with additional instructions about the p'sak din, instructions that cannot be publicized yet.

[the] Satan.'

"Nevertheless, once R' Eliyahu sat down I brought him the nusach of the p'sak din and said that since the Rebbe asked that rabbanim sign it, it would be a good idea if he did so at this event. R' Eliyahu read the p'sak din and said it was a proper thing, added a few details and then signed it and read it in front of the rabbanim. He emphasized that this p'sak din was signed in Yerushalayim the Holy City.

"Right afterwards, I sent a fax of the p'sak din to the Rebbe. The next morning I had to travel to the United States, but in the middle of the night Rabbi Yaroslavsky received a call from the secretaries with an instruction from the Rebbe to add more signatures of rabbanim. Then came another phone call from the secretaries with additional instructions about the p'sak din, instructions that cannot be publicized yet.

"By now there are several piskei din like this but that was the first p'sak din and it was a very moving moment. We felt that we

were accomplishing something in the world and this is something we actually heard from the Rebbe later on."

AS A CHASSID BEFORE HIS REBBE

As mentioned earlier, despite his brilliance, toil in Torah and his knowledge, R' Eliyahu was battul to the Rebbe. He considered the Rebbe the Teacher of all the Jewish people who doesn't only look out for himself but is concerned about all Jews everywhere. He sits in New York but his net is cast throughout the Jewish world.

"I sensed in him a special holy neshama, not an individual soul but a comprehensive soul of Klal Yisroel. I don't know any other gadol in our generation who is concerned for Klal Yisroel and not just a limited group. I once said jokingly – 'what does a Jew from Russia who lives in Brooklyn have to do with Jews in Morocco, in Casablanca?' But it's a fact. The shluchim he sent there transformed Moroccan Jewry and educated a generation of

rabbanim.

"I once went to a distant location and was amazed by how his shliach is willing to remain there. I could not stay there for one moment! But he has an order from the Rebbe and that strengthens him. I was in Caracas, Venezuela, and there, too, I was amazed by the shliach and by the yeshiva and by everything he does."

In one of his speeches, R' Eliyahu disclosed a little bit of his special relationship with the Rebbe. He said that on several occasions they called him from the office and said that the Rebbe wanted to talk to him. At that time, this was something highly unusual. One such phone conversation took place at a time when in Israel it was already nearly midnight and the Rebbe asked him in a humorous vein whether he had said Tikkun Chatzos yet. "I cannot describe the feeling to have had such a great z'chus," he said.

R' Eliyahu said, "I had the privilege of being close to the Rebbe in a special way. I don't know why I merited this; perhaps it's my ancestors' merit that stands by me. The relationship in general was unusual."

I WILL VISIT HIS HONOR IN HIS HOLY CHAMBER

The highlight of all the meetings was one which took place in Cheshvan, 5752, when R' Eliyahu visited 770. In the lengthy conversation, Gemaras and Midrashim "flew" as did sifrei halacha and kabbala, sources in Nigleh and Nistar.

As on the earlier occasions, Geula was a major subject. The Rebbe spoke about the importance of a p'sak din of rabbanim who pasken that Moshiach must come

immediately. The Rebbe said, “The Geula is at the threshold and waiting for each one of us to open the door and drag it into the room.”

Before they parted the Rebbe said, “Yehi ratzon that very soon we will have the Geula and then I will visit his honor [R’ Eliyahu] in his holy chamber in Eretz Yisroel.” R’ Eliyahu was overcome by emotion with this statement and he enthusiastically raised his hands upward and exclaimed, “Boruch haba! I will happily say, ‘Boruch haba b’sheim Hashem!’”

The Rebbe escorted him to his car while encouraging the crowd which sang “Ki B’ Simcha Seitzei’u.”

After that visit to the Rebbe, R’ Eliyahu said at a gathering in honor of Kollel Chabad later that week in New York, “What amazed and moved me the most is that I saw the Rebbe not on an ordinary day, but on a Sunday when he stood on his feet from morning till evening without rest, without a moment’s peace, and he received thousands of people. Normally, some tiredness should be apparent, but I was astounded and enthralled by the clarity of his thought in an astonishing manner that has no place in the natural order.

“Each time I raised a certain topic in Torah, he immediately spoke about it as though he just now finished learning that masechta or that sugya and all was clear to him. It’s mamash unbelievable how a person can be like this. I said this is not a human but a holy angel standing before us.

“I have met many g’dolim of this generation and some of them definitely impressed me with their greatness, but the Rebbe is another thing entirely! I have never seen such greatness in all parts of Torah, in p’shat, remez,



Years later, Baba Sali appeared to his son in a dream, and asked him to give the clock in his room to R’ Mordechai Eliyahu, revealing that when the hands reached twelve Moshiach would come. Baba Boruch did as he was told. When he received it, the hands of the clock showed three o’clock. At the time he told the story, the hands showed 11:45.

drush and sod at once. After I met the Rebbe I said to myself: This is not a human being but an angel of G-d. As for his work in spreading Torah throughout the world, surely there is no need to elaborate on that. I have already related something that happened at my home which the Rebbe saw with his ruach ha’kodesh from the far side of the world, about a couple that would come to me and thanks to the Rebbe’s ruach ha’kodesh a tremendous disaster was averted.”

A few months after that visit, on 27 Adar, 5752, the Rebbe had a stroke. R’ Eliyahu took this to heart and at every opportunity

called for special prayers for the Rebbe. On one occasion he said, “The Rebbe is unique in his generation. Who knows what would be with us if we did not have the Rebbe; a holy soul, a unique soul that Hashem planted in this generation. There is nothing to compare to the Rebbe’s Ahavas Yisroel. How much he prayed for Klal Yisroel, how much he prayed for individual Jews. Now we, too, must pray for his refua and wellbeing. But not only that; I suggest that each of us, and even those who are not present, commit to performing b’hiddur one of the mitzvos that the Rebbe publicized.”

A CHAYUS IN INYANEI GEULA

R' Eliyahu had a special chayus in Geula and the coming of Moshiach, a topic that came up in all his conversations with the Rebbe. R' Eliyahu lived with this subject with all his heart and soul and would bring it up in his many talks and speeches.

He would tell a special story about Baba Sali's clocks:

"Baba Sali once called for me and said that he himself would see Moshiach, but then some time later he told me he would not merit this. He said: 'There is a great *kitrug* (accusation) against the Jewish people and I have to go up in order to pray so the *kitrug* will be annulled.' And that's what happened. Tzaddikim are greater in their death than in their lifetimes."

Years later, Baba Sali appeared to his son, Baba Boruch of Netivot in a dream, and asked him to give the clock in his room to R' Mordechai Eliyahu. In the dream he revealed to his son that when the hands reached twelve Moshiach would come.

"Baba Boruch did as he was told and gave me the gold clock from his father's room. Some months later his father appeared to him again in a dream and asked him to give me the silver clock, too. The hands of the clock showed three o'clock." At the time he told the story, the hands

showed 11:45.

R' Eliyahu confirmed the story and said, "I am careful not to touch it. I'm afraid. But I have it. I put the gold clock on bottom and the silver one on top, since silver represents mercy and gold represents judgment. I want mercy to be over judgment. May Hashem help and the Geula come quickly."

In one of his speeches he spoke movingly about anticipating the Geula and praying for it to come speedily. "The Rebbe agitates about the coming of Moshiach and the need to prepare for his coming. Ribbono shel olam, the Jewish people are waiting for Geula; we've waited a long time. We want to see Moshiach immediately. We've suffered, we have endured the chevlei Moshiach; we have Torah, boruch Hashem, we have Chassidus ..."

On another occasion he spoke about how the Rebbe devoted his life to hastening the Geula:

"The pious and pure Rebbe, holy faithful shepherd, 'cast his life aside,' in order to bring the Geula. Surely he won't weaken for a moment. Surely he will carry out his heart's desire to immediately bring the true and complete Geula. We cannot weaken from our great anticipation 'every day, that he [Moshiach] come.'"

"We all remember the time in which the Rebbe, the seventh candle, and 'all sevenths are beloved,' told us: 'I did what I could to bring Moshiach and now

do all that you can.' In one of my conversations with the Rebbe I asked him: 'Did the Rebbe want to exempt himself from the task and put it on others?' The Rebbe said: 'No, I will carry on.'

"It is clear to us that the Rebbe is carrying on with greater force to bring Moshiach, but we must continue and connect to the Rebbe and devotedly carry out his shlichus."

On Monday, 28 Sivan, R' Mordechai Eliyahu passed away after two years of illness, in the course of which he and his family saw open miracles (he suffered a heart attack two years ago and his doctors were amazed that he went back to giving shiurim). His funeral was attended by over 100,000 people including rabbanim, public figures, and Knesset members. All mourned the loss of this giant of a man who disseminated Torah to thousands. He loved the ordinary man on the street and was beloved in return. He is survived by his wife and children: their oldest son, an ordained rabbi and lawyer who serves an important public position in the Israeli government; their second son Shmuel is the chief Rabbi of Tzfas, and their youngest son Yosef is a Rosh Kollel in Yerushalayim. Their daughter teaches at a religious girls' school.

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