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# A MORTAL SPEAKING G-D'S WORD

Sichos In English

*Whenever a person studies Torah, regardless of his spiritual level, he is internalizing G-dly truth, making the infinite truth of the Torah part of his personal nature.*

## THE UNIQUENESS OF THE BOOK OF D'VARIM

This week's Torah reading begins: [1] "These are the words that Moshe spoke to the entire Jewish people."

Noting the distinction between this book and the previous four which are all "the word of G-d," our Sages explain [2] that Moshe recited the Book of D'varim "on his own initiative."

This does not, G-d forbid, mean that the Book of D'varim is merely a mortal invention.

Our Rabbis [3] immediately clarify that Moshe delivered his words "inspired by the Holy Spirit."

Similarly, when the Rambam defines the category of "those who deny the Torah," [4] he includes: "a person who says that the Torah

- even one verse or one word - does not emanate from G-d. If one would say, 'Moshe made these statements independently,' he is denying the Torah."

And there is no single commentary who posits that there is a difference in this regard between the Book of D'varim and the four preceding books.

Indeed, Moshe's identification with G-dliness was so great that when Moshe states, [5] "I will grant the rain of your land in its season," he speaks in the first person although the pronoun "I" clearly refers to G-d. [For] "The Divine Presence spoke from his mouth." [6]

On the other hand, it is also clear that the Book of D'varim also involves Moshe's own thinking process.

To give an example:

There is a difference of opinion among our Sages whether the proximity (*smichus*) of two subjects in the Written Torah is significant or not. [7]

One opinion maintains that it is, while the other explains that although when mortals structure their thoughts, order is important. "Since the Torah was, [by contrast,] granted by the Almighty, the order of precedence is not significant." [8]

With regard to D'varim, however, all authorities agree to the significance of the sequence of subjects.

"Moshe arranged its passage after passage for the sole purpose of allowing for extrapolation." [8]

Because D'varim was recited on Moshe's initiative, the comprehension of this book requires that the rules of mortal wisdom must also be taken into consideration.

## ABOVE THE LIMITS OF CREATION

The explanation of the above concepts depend on the appreciation of the relationship between the Torah and our world.

Our Sages state: "The Torah preceded the world." [9]

Here, the concept of precedence is not chronological, for time - like space - is a new creation, relevant only after G-d brought existence into being.

Rather the intent is that the Torah is on a level of spiritual truth which transcends our material framework of reference.

Although the Torah descends and invests itself in our world, speaking of ordinary matters such as agricultural laws, codes for fair business practice, and the proper structure for marriage and family relations, this is not the essence of the Torah.

The essence of the Torah is

“G-d’s will and His wisdom,” as united with Him in perfect unity. [10]

Since the Torah is fundamentally above our worldly framework, for the Torah to invest itself in the world, it is necessary for it to pass through an intermediary who shares a point of connection to both the Torah’s spiritual core and our mortal character traits.

Moshe our teacher possessed these attributes.

On one hand, Moshe represented the ultimate of “bittul” - selfless dedication - to G-d, a commitment which transcended worldly thought.

Simultaneously, he represented perfection in human qualities; his intellect, his emotions, and even his physical strength and stature [11] epitomized the complete expression of our human potential. As such, he was able to receive the Torah and transmit it to others. [12]

He was able to bring the transcendent spiritual truth of the Torah into a form which mortals could comprehend.

## CONTRASTING PATTERNS

In particular, Chassidic thought describes two ways in which an intermediary functions:

A) *derech maavir*: the intermediary functions merely as a funnel. He does not change or modify the influence he receives; he lowers it without causing it to undergo any fundamental change. As such, even as the influence is brought to a lower plane, it remains transcendent.

B) *derech hislabshus*: the intermediary translates the concept into his own words and his own understanding. This changes the form of the concept’s presentation, and in doing so,

makes it possible for it to be internalized by the recipients and grasped by them on their own level.

To apply these concepts with regard to the Torah:

The first four books of the Torah were transmitted by Moshe without his personal input at all. He conveyed them to the Jewish people as he received them, without making any change. [13]

With regard to the Book of D’varim, by contrast, its source was “the Holy Spirit,” G-d’s word.

In this instance, however, G-d’s word became part and parcel of Moshe’s own thought.

Based on this explanation, we can explain why all authorities agree that it is possible to derive points of Torah law from the order of subjects in the Book of D’varim.

With regard to the first four books of the Torah, although the order is not accidental, it is structured by Divine wisdom, according to a pattern higher than of mortal thought. [14]

As such, since the determination of Torah law is “not in the heavens,” [15] but rather given over to mortal intellect, there are opinions which maintain that the order of proximity in those books cannot serve as a source.

The Book of D’varim, by contrast, was filtered through the medium of Moshe’s intellect, and the order of its verses corresponds to that of mortal thought. Therefore, the proximity of subjects in this text can serve as a basis for the derivation of points of Torah law.

## INTERNALIZED KNOWLEDGE

The question arises, however, why is the Book of D’varim

necessary?

Seemingly, enclothing the Torah in human intellect does nothing but lower the Torah’s spiritual content. What purpose is served by G-d’s enclothing the Torah in mortal thought?

Nevertheless, precisely this is G-d’s intent in giving the Torah: that it permeate the realm of mortal thought and thus elevate man’s understanding.

Whenever a person studies Torah, regardless of his spiritual level, he is internalizing G-dly truth, making the infinite truth of the Torah part of his personal nature.

Were there to have remained only four books in the Torah, it would have been impossible for our powers of understanding to unite completely with the Torah.

This was the goal accomplished by having the Book of D’varim pass through the medium of Moshe’s intellect. And Moshe’s review of the Torah in this book gives us the capacity to understand the previous four books of the Torah in a similar fashion.

## ELEVATING THE TORAH

Enclothing the Torah in mortal intellect does not merely grant man the opportunity for advancement, it also introduces a higher quality to the Torah itself as it were.

For clothing the limitless spirituality of the Torah in the confines of mortal intellect represents a fusion of opposites, a meeting of conflicting movements that is possible only through the influence of G-d’s essence. [16]

Because G-d’s essence transcends both finiteness and infinity, it can fuse the two together, and bring the spiritual truth of the Torah into the grasp of mortal intellect.

***It is through the approach to the Torah emphasized by the Book of D'varim - fusing the word of G-d with mortal wisdom - that we will merit the age when - "the occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-d," the Era of the Redemption.***

### **ON THE BANKS OF THE JORDAN**

Moshe recited the Book of D'varim as the Jews stood on the banks on the Jordan, preparing to enter Eretz Yisroel.

The crossing of the Jordan was to be a spiritual as well as a geographic transition.

During their journeys through the desert, the Jews depended on the miraculous expression of Divine favor: they ate manna, their water came from the well of Miriam, and the clouds of glory preserved their garments.

After entering Eretz Yisroel, by contrast, the Jewish people were to live within the context of the natural order, working the land and eating the fruits of their labor.

To make this transition possible, they required an approach to the Torah that would relate to man as he functions within his worldly environment. And for this purpose, Moshe taught them the Book of D'varim.

Herein lies a connection to the present day, because we are also "on the banks of the Jordan"

preparing to enter Eretz Yisroel together with Moshiach.

It is through the approach to the Torah emphasized by the Book of D'varim - fusing the word of G-d with mortal wisdom [17] - that we will merit the age when - "the occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-d," [18] the Era of the Redemption.

*Adapted from: Likkutei Sichos, Vol. IV, p. 1087ff; Vol. XIX, p. 9ff*

#### **NOTES:**

1. D'varim 1:1.
2. Megilla 31b.
3. Tosafos, op. cit.
4. Mishneh Torah, Hilchos T'shuva 3:8.
5. D'varim 11:13.
6. See Zohar III, p. 232a; Shmos Rabba 3:15.
7. Brachos 21b, Yevamos 4a.
8. Raaban (Rabbi Eleazar ben Nassan), sec. 34.
9. Midrash T'hilim to 90:3, B'Reishis Rabba 88:2. See also the explanation of this concept in the maamer Isa B'Midrash T'hilim, 5653 (the maamer recited by both the

Rebbe Rashab and the Previous Rebbe at their Bar-Mitzvah celebrations).

10. See Tanya, ch. 4.

11. See Shabbos 92a, Nedarim 38a. See also the Rambam's Commentary to the Mishna (Sanhedrin 10:1), which describes Moshe as "the most perfect of all mankind."

12. See Avos 1:1.

13. See the eighth of the Rambam's Thirteen Principles of Faith (Commentary to the Mishna, Sanhedrin 10:1).

14. See Sh'la 402b.

15. D'varim 30:12; c.f. B. Metzia 59b.

16. See Likkutei Sichos, Vol. VI, p. 117-118 which explains that the number five reflects a connection to G-d's essence. It is D'varim, the fifth book of the Torah, which expresses this dimension in the most comprehensive manner.

17. This also relates to the unique contribution of Chabad Chassidus. Chabad is an acronym for the Hebrew words meaning "wisdom, understanding, and knowledge." As implied by that name, the teachings of Chabad endeavor to convey the deepest mystical truths of our Torah in a form that can be grasped by mortal intellect.

As the Baal Shem Tov taught (see the celebrated letter sent to his brother-in-law, Reb Gershon Kitover, published in Ben Poras Yosef), when the wellsprings of these teachings spread outward, Moshiach will come. See the essay entitled "Bridging the Gap," (Timeless Patterns in Time, Vol. I, p. 101).

18. Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Melachim 12:5.

**ADD IN ACTS  
OF GOODNESS & KINDNESS  
TO BRING MOSHIACH NOW!**

# MOSHIACH: BEYOND BROTHERLY LOVE

By Rabbi Zvi Homnick

*Anybody that has learned Chassidus and attempted, to one degree or another, to implement what he/she has learned, and has pursued a connection with the Rebbe to some extent, should know from experience and not just intellectually that it is only through Chassidus and the Rebbe that one can have any degree of true Torah understanding, true fear of G-d. \* Part 2 of 2*

[Continued from last issue]

## **BROTHER AGAINST BROTHER**

One of the frequent criticisms of Chabad in the post WWII era that I encountered while growing up was that they were the only ones that had continued to cling to the antiquated practice of calumination of those that hold differing and even opposing views. In a time when most religious groups had set aside many of their differences to join forces in various political and organizational entities, only Chabad remained

outside the unified camp and continued to raise generations that propagated the age old clichéd characterizations of “Misnagdim,” “Oilemishe” and “Poilishe.”

In fact, all evidence seemed to point to the idea that the average Lubavitcher felt more at home with a totally secular Jew than with those religious Jews that held opposing views, non-oppositional but worldly views, or adhered to an alternate Chassidic philosophy or leader. Although I understood even then that these accusations were a bit unfair considering that they were pretty much the only

Chassidic group under constant attack within the religious community, but it still rankled nonetheless when considering their preaching about unlimited and unconditional love for all Jews.

As mentioned previously, when I began looking into Chassidus in a serious way, I purposely sought out the most extreme statements, ideas and beliefs, especially those which were not offered up for public consumption. This was partially in order to get a sense going in as to just how far these ideas and beliefs go and to see if I thought I could ever embrace the whole package. I was not going to let myself be “pulled in” only to discover later that I had bought into a lot more than I had bargained for. In retrospect, this approach worked for me but those involved in outreach on the ground can tell you that this is not the way to go for the overwhelming majority of (normal?) people.

One of the works that I got my hands on which contains many such statements and stories (248 of them to be precise) was written by an author who had compiled three volumes of Chassidic stories for publication and had also produced a small anonymous pamphlet of these 248 that were

***My train of thought continued along these lines and by the time I got to the Rebbe I was so broken inside and ashamed of my very being that I could not look directly into the Rebbe's face...***

too “sharp” for the public at large. A few years earlier, an anonymous group purportedly from Satmar had published this pamphlet in order to “expose” to the rest of the frum world how Lubavitchers regard themselves and others, so it was relatively easy to get hold of. What shocked me in my reading was not so much the content but the fact that rather than shocking me, I felt that it spoke to me. It seemed so authentic and passionate, and not at all gratuitous and egocentric.

This in turn, created a personal dichotomy for me to contend with in addition to having to resolve the obvious philosophical contradiction between unconditional love for all Jews as brothers since we are all “children of the living G-d,” and complete disdain for and negation of anyone and anything in opposition, intentional or otherwise. As mentioned in part 1 of this article, I was quite taken by the idea that Chassidus had made it possible for a person to attain the level of truly loving his fellow as himself, so I needed to sort out for myself why I also connected so strongly with the always pointed and often acerbic categorizations of those that did not accept the teachings of Chassidus as explicated in the works and words of the Chabad leaders.

[Note: After writing the previous article, my son pointed out to me that we own all published Chabad works including

those that are out of print on the Otzar HaChochma computer program. When searching for the *B'Tzeil HaChochma*, we discovered that those conversations had been reprinted recently under the title *Siach Sarfei Kodesh*. The conversation quoted in that article took place with the current Gerrer Rebbe during a visit in 1977. There the Rebbe cited the Ibn Ezra and not the Ramban, who also posits that it is impossible to achieve actual parity in love for one's fellow Jew.]

## OH BROTHER

Okay, so I have managed to avoid citing a single example, while you are obviously sitting on the edge of your seat waiting for when this guy is finally going to put down something juicy. Well ... the issue really came to a head for me as I was standing one Sunday on line to get a dollar from the Rebbe (late 1991 or early 1992). I was learning the talks of the Rebbe Rayatz in Sefer HaSichos 5703 and was reading the talk given on the first Seder night of that year. There the Rebbe Rayatz addresses the seriousness of the times as Jews were being murdered wholesale on the other side of the ocean, how a Chassid needs to view the terrible times on the eve of Redemption and internalize what is expected of him and not be a fool, concluding with “A Chassid who is a *tipesh* (common Yiddish

usage of Hebrew word which literally means ‘one who is dense’) is a travesty and a disgrace.”

To illustrate that point, he follows up with the following historical account: “Of the brothers, the famous Chassidim, R' Moshe and R' Zev Vilenker, the Chassid R' Moshe although he was a merchant and even had dealings with the Misnagdim, he would not engage them in debate. In general, he would often say of them, “Yingelach” (little boys). He made no distinction whether it was a man with a white beard or black, “a yingel with a beard.” His brother, the Chassid R' Zev, was more social, and he would say to the Misnagdic merchants, “Never mind that you don't know how to learn, from where should you know; you are not a G-d-fearing person, nu; but why are you also a *tipesh*?”

Standing there on the line, making last minute preparations before coming to stand face to face with the Rebbe, the man who epitomizes the actual application of the concept of infinite and unconditional love for each and every Jew, who truly sees all Jews as they are rooted in their source of “One Father to all of them,” I found myself feeling completely thrown. To begin with, I was surprised because I knew a lot of the “sharper” material was often excluded from final publication, but what really got to me was the fact that as I read the words the scene came alive for me, the words hit home, and I felt to the very core of my being how a Chassid who is a *tipesh* is a travesty and a disgrace, while his Misnaged counterpart can't help but being such.

As the line inched forward, I felt truly broken and began to berate myself in an internal dialogue (not verbatim), “Do you really think it is enough to tell

yourself that you only relate to the disdain for and the excoriation of the Misnagdim described in this story insofar as it regards their external personae but not as actual people, actual Jews who you are obligated to love even if they were completely wicked, and how much more so if they are observant and even learned? Yes, the Rebbe can relate such a story, and the brothers Vilenker were most likely on the level that they could balance the fulfillment of chapter 30 of Tanya to come up with concrete reasons why you should see every Jew as really and truly being a better person than you, along with chapter 32 of Tanya to love every Jew from the perspective of your soul and his being part of the same divine entity, even as they responded the way they did. But what about you? Maybe the enjoyment you get from a “sharp vort” or a clever putdown is a result of your own negative character traits, and not because your soul recognizes the truth of Chassidus and can’t tolerate anything that stands in opposition, intentional or otherwise?”

My train of thought continued along these lines and by the time I got to the Rebbe I was so broken inside and ashamed of my very being that I could not look directly into the Rebbe’s face. In fact, immediately after receiving the dollar and blessing, I went off into a corner to be by myself, because I couldn’t deal with looking any person in the face. At first, the whole experience just seemed altogether unpleasant (my kishkes were still churning), but I quickly came to an amazing realization.

All the theoretical answers in the world as to how to balance unconditional love for a fellow Jew with a “take no prisoners” approach in standing up for what you believe in the very depths of your soul, are nothing more than

that – theories. Only through learning Chassidus and through connecting to the Rebbe might you have the merit and good fortune to experience the answer in such an intense gut-churning way, as you are hit by the realization that to truly love and to truly stand up for what you know to be true both require that you put your own ego aside.

## BEYOND BROTHERS

As we approach Tisha B’Av, which in its current incarnation is a day of mourning and fasting that will (hopefully this year) be transformed into a “day of joy and happiness,” we can’t help but consider the words of the Sages that the Second Temple was destroyed due to the sin of “baseless hatred,” and that the reason our exile has dragged on for so long is “since their sin was not revealed, their end-date was not revealed.” As Chassidus explains, this is because a sin that occurs internally within a person’s emotional world, and thus is by definition not subject to outside scrutiny, requires a much more difficult and far more protracted process to discern and to rectify.

However, anybody that has learned Chassidus and attempted, to one degree or another, to implement what he/she has learned, and has pursued a connection with the Rebbe to some extent, should know from experience (in the kishkes) and not just intellectually (in the kup) that it is only through Chassidus and the Rebbe that one can have any degree of true Torah understanding, true fear of G-d, and most of all not be a *tipeshe* when it comes to sensing the true nature, capacities and mission, of one’s own Jewish soul and that of every other Jew.

So, in these times, in which the

redemptive process has already begun almost two decades ago, the only way we can navigate and find our way to the final goal and destination is by following the road map laid out by the Rebbe in the most recent talks where the Rebbe addressed these topics directly. It is not enough to just learn the words; they must be internalized and implemented, since we all know that otherwise one falls into the category of “a Chassid who is a *tipeshe* is a travesty and a disgrace.”

In the sicha of Matos-Massei 5751, the Rebbe explains that we have already completed the process of rectifying the sin of “baseless hatred” that is necessary for the Redemption and building of the Third Temple, and it is now the time to experience the love of a fellow Jew that is a foretaste of the Redemption. The Rebbe explains that this love transcends even the love of brothers from the same father that can be sensed by elevating the soul over the body, but derives from the yechida level of the soul at which point all souls are one, in a manner that defies individuation. We are not just brothers, we are one. Even when you are being oppositional, I have no need to debate you or even point out that you are being a *tipeshe* (and between you and me, you are), because by loving you on that level it arouses your own yechida which knows and shares the same truth.

However, after all is said and done, the bottom line is that we have already completed the task of rectifying the sin/s that led to the destruction, and therefore there is no good reason that we should have to wait even one moment longer to witness its descent from Heaven, “and in fire You will build it in the future,” immediately, NOW!

# TRANSFORMING TEL AVIV FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry

*Some call it a yeshiva, others a Chabad House, or even a shul. Really it's a factory – for baalei t'shuva. "Bayit Chadash L'Midrash" is a beacon of chassidus and Yiddishkait illuminating the entire Land of Israel. Yechiel Sofer interviews several of its baalei t'shuva who lead chassidic lives in every way. Some are even on shlichus. This is the story of an organization dedicated to the Rebbe shlita from its very foundations.*

## THE CITY THAT NEVER STOPS

"Two types of people have learned not to be affected by anything – Tel Avivians and Chabadnikim," says Dado (David) Albachari, one of those who works at Bayit Chadash L'Midrash in Tel Aviv. Indeed, it seems that those who visit the pulsating streets of this great metropolitan city in the heart of

Eretz Yisroel are already used to every gimmick or any unusual publicity stunt.

The city is home to vivacious coffee houses, lively art galleries, prestigious stores and boutiques on every corner, and roads filled with noisy motor scooters roaring down the streets in order to get to the next source of recreation. Throngs of people roam the area with but one objective in mind: more and more enjoyment from

the selection of pastimes that the big city has to offer. It's no wonder that Tel Aviv's slogan is: "The city that never stops." Located in the city's center is the Ben-Yehuda pedestrian mall, the street which is known as one of the bastions of style and leisure, an area bustling with celebrities and other artists. It is situated near

the seashore and is a central location for cafes, restaurants, barbershops, and swarms of young people who want to experience a little of this world.

When you reach 93 Ben-Yehuda Street, the atmosphere completely changes. In a large display window, proudly stands a giant mezuzah more than six feet high next to a pair of t'fillin of similar dimensions. Alongside them is a mannequin, comparable to what we all see in display windows, only this one is dressed in a hat and suit. In the center of the display is a large viewing screen that constantly shows a short film entitled "What Does the Redemption Mean to You?"

Different? Without a doubt.

There are those who call this place a yeshiva, others call it a Chabad House, some call it a synagogue, while others claim that it represents a factory for baalei t'shuva. In any event, its official name is Bayit Chadash L'Midrash and it is undoubtedly a beacon illuminating the light of chassidus and Yiddishkait to the outside, an "outside" further than any other throughout the Land of Israel.





At the entrance, there is a bulletin board covered with pictures and newspaper clippings, all of which deal with the activities of Bayit Chadash L'Midrash. One picture shows the actor Yehuda Levy putting on t'fillin, another is of entertainer Eli Yatzpan completing a minyan, and more with famous singers and leading media figures who appear on television every day. The place unquestionably draws a lot of attention from all sectors of the Israeli population.

The informational material that attracts outsiders and brings them into the circle of friends and supporters is most unique. These are intellectuals, free-thinking professionals who are among the highest on the socioeconomic ladder. Some of them proved to be very hard nuts to crack, before they started doing t'shuva. One such example is Dado Albachari, mentioned at the start of this article, an actor and stage manager by profession, whose name is surely known to some of our readers from his

recent chassidic musical production, "Adventure in Town."

The facility is run with great success by Rabbi David Aziza, who has been working on the shlichus of the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, shlita, for close to two decades already, starting in Netanya and Tel Mond, and now in Tel Aviv for the past twelve years.

### WHAT DOES REDEMPTION MEAN TO YOU?

I stop again for a moment in front of the screen mentioned at the start of this article. The film being shown was produced by the highly talented R' Dado Albachari. Armed with a professional video camera, he turned unexpectedly to people in the street and asked them, "What does the Redemption mean to you?"

The answers were numerous and varied, at least as many as the number of people Dado approached. One said, "A world

of peace," while another, a rather philosophical and thoughtful type, replied, "Look, the Redemption is me, the Redemption is you – the Redemption is expressed in a different way for everyone."

The screen also showed various media stars, such as the actor Zevulun Moshiahsvili (known as Shashi, after one of the characters he portrayed) or the sports announcer and television personality Eli Israeli, who replied with one word – Rebbe.

It's no wonder that when I walk in the street, people call out to me, "Moshiach, come here," or "Yechi HaMelech, what's new?" These and other concepts have long turned into forms of expression among passers-by on the Tel Aviv streets – and for good reason.

"All Bayit Chadash L'Midrash activities," affirms a staff member, "are in the spirit of the proclamation on the huge sign hanging in the center of the synagogue – 'the only thing that remains [is] to greet Moshiach



**Spreading the announcement of the Redemption on roller blades**



**An original idea to arouse public awareness of the custom of Kaparos**

Tzidkeinu.” A quick look around justifies what he says. It’s impossible to find an informational brochure, a booklet, or a sticker that has no mention of the Complete Redemption and the identity of the Rebbe shlita as Melech HaMoshiach.

The activities on the subject of Moshiach are divided into two categories: publicity and information. Informational

services focus on the many Torah classes on the subject of Moshiach and the Redemption and the holding of regular farbrengens.

One of the more special attractions among the Torah classes is the weekly “D’var Malchus’ shiur, which draws many participants, including those who usually don’t come to the other classes.

The publicity angle is carried out by numerous flags, stickers, and signs throughout the area. All available talents and past experience are utilized. Bayit Chadash L’Midrash staff, some of whom specialize in their work on the stage – acting, directing, etc. – put out special theater productions, usually for the holiday seasons. These dramatizations are presented with great success before Tel Aviv schools, including those that generally oppose anything with the slightest smell of Yiddishkeit. The performances place an emphasis on the imminent Redemption, a message that has been properly accepted even among usually hostile audiences.

## **CHASSIDUS ON ROLLER BLADES**

One of the more prominent personalities on location, not to mention in the entire vicinity, is the tall Chassid regularly seen on roller blades. His name is Shai Shuruk.

Shai “caught the bug” at Bayit Chadash L’Midrash, and was quickly transformed into an integral part of the scene. Today, he is the activities director. The sight of Shai skating through Tel Aviv on roller blades, waving a huge Moshiach flag in his hands, is a familiar one to those who regularly visit the area. Shai has long been a favorite among Tel

Aviv photographers. For example, in a competition held in Hungary, where forty-nine pictures were chosen to represent Tel Aviv in honor of its centennial, Bayit Chadash L’Midrash stars in three of them, highlighted by the appearance of Shai Shuruk – on roller blades, of course.

Shai also met his wife through the program of Bayit Chadash L’Midrash activities. Looking for t’fillin customers, he walked into the real estate offices where she was working and told her about the Tanya class. She came for the shiur, and some time afterwards, at Rabbi Aziza’s advice, she traveled to Tzfas to study in the Machon Alte Institute. A year later, they got married and now they live in Tel Aviv with their two children.

Shai Shuruk relates, “I met Rabbi Aziza just as I was at a point of crisis between secular life and Jewish life. I learned in a Litvishe yeshiva, but my lifestyle remained secular. Rabbi David was the only rabbi I knew who managed to help me make the crucial choice between these two worlds.

“Before starting my process of t’shuvah, I was an actor who appeared in numerous commercials, and everywhere I went, I came with my roller blades. I ate with them, I traveled with them, and I acted with them. In short, I lived and breathed roller blades. I would go places with them every day, listening to music with my earphones, satisfied with my life.

“When I started getting closer to Judaism and joined a Litvishe yeshiva, the mashgiach asked me if I would come to my wedding on roller blades as well... He said that Judaism and roller blades don’t go together. I took them off.

“One day, after I had already

begun to get into chassidus and coming to the Chabad House, I was hurrying to the mikveh and set out on my roller blades so I wouldn't be late. Rabbi Aziza was pleased by the fact that I was using the roller blades for holy purposes, and he encouraged me to keep it up, even when I began wearing a hat and jacket regularly.

"Going out on roller blades wearing a hat and jacket elicited a lot of reactions in the street. People couldn't remain indifferent to such a display and they gave me much encouragement, even coming up to me to ask questions. Then I thought to myself: 'Why not publicize Moshiach this way?'"

"Tel Avivians have seen it all," Shai explains. "It's not easy to show them something new, and you surely can't 'pull one over' on them. The average Tel Avivian is looking for the real thing, and therefore, he's only ready to accept it from someone he knows, loves, and appreciates. When we speak with a Jew on an equal level, like a brother or a friend, he lets himself go and is prepared to hear everything. Today, even Tel Aviv is talking about the Redemption. That's the whole secret."

The credit for this success goes to Rabbi David Aziza, who came to Tel Aviv twelve years ago, and who since has brought about a revolution.

"The problem today," Rabbi Aziza enlightens us, "is that people don't concentrate on one thing. They jump from one experience to the next, from one stimulant to the next. It's difficult to get someone to sit down for a class, but once we succeed in getting him to focus on the letters of chassidus, even for just a few minutes, that's it – he's redeemed."



Listening with great interest to Rabbi Aziza's Torah class

***He was faced with a dilemma – should he listen to what the Rebbe said, or sign on a plea bargain that would give him a lighter sentence, if he was convicted.***

### **FROM A LIFE OF WILD RECKLESSNESS TO THE STUDY OF CHASSIDUS**

Rabbi David Aziza's story begins, of all places, with the ultra-Orthodox education he received in the Kiryat Sanz community of Netanya, the city where he was born and raised with his family. His parents sent him to an ultra-Orthodox school because they wanted to give him a traditional value-based education. However, he was heavily influenced by the secular lifestyle that prevailed in their home, which stood in stark contradiction to the education he was receiving in school.

Afterwards, he moved on to study in Bar-Ilan University, where the cold rationalism he encountered there drove him completely away from religion. "The whole thing simply didn't seem to ring true," he says.

After completing his military service, he went on a trip to Europe, where he went around with some Israeli friends, riding on big motorcycles all over the continent. Their income came from selling pictures from door-to-door. The journey ended in England, and Rabbi Aziza parted from his friend, who went to open his own business. When he arrived back in Eretz Yisroel, he returned to Netanya and started working as a diamond polisher. It was there that his baal t'shuva story began.

"That night," Rabbi Aziza recalled, "a few of the guys went out for a little recreation. One of them was about to get married, and this was sufficient reason for a little wild recklessness, biking on the cliffs of Netanya along the seashore. The motorcyclist with whom I was riding was going a bit too fast, and he lost control of

***“I sat and learned Tanya with them – a few lines over a period of six months. All of them are now Torah observant, four of them came out of prison as Chabadnikim, and one even became a shliach.”***

the motorcycle and overturned. We both rolled in the direction of the cliff, as I was suddenly thrown under a passing vehicle.”

Miraculously, a doctor was driving after them and realized what was happening even before the crash occurred. He quickly applied first-aid and saved their lives. For several long months, Rabbi Aziza lay in the hospital, connected to iron supports and other medical devices. Since there was a concern that he might lose consciousness again, a sizable portion of the painful treatments were performed without anesthetics.

Rabbi Aziza that on one occasion when the doctor had to drill into his leg – without anesthetics – he screamed from the agonizing pain. However, his father, who was there with him, remained calm and said, “At least from now on, you’ll start to sit like a mentch.” “Until then, I didn’t sit for a moment in one place,” Rabbi Aziza said with a smile.

## **BREAKTHROUGH**

After a year of lengthy and complicated rehabilitation, during which Rabbi Aziza had ample time to think about life and its meaning, he started getting closer to a life of Torah and mitzvos. At first, he did this in non-Chabad circles, such as those connected with Rabbi Uri Zohar and Amnon

Yitzchak. During this period of time, he learned in various yeshivos, while he also dealt in large sums of money via stocks and securities.

Then, it all fell through. Within a few very unsuccessful hours and due to a sharp drop in stock value, R’ David lost all of his money, and he was forced to get a menial job with the furniture delivery company where his father was employed. In the merit of this work, he established his first connection with Chabad through Rabbi Amir Kahana, today the material director for the Chabad yeshiva in Ramat Aviv. Rabbi Kahana had to move to a different office, and he used the opportunity to give a class in Tanya to the young moving man.

Rabbi Aziza’s connection grew and intensified, and by the time he got married, he was already a chassidic avreich connected to the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, with all his heart and soul. When he went to the Rebbe, he met Rabbi Rami Antian, of blessed memory, who left a deep impression upon him. After his wedding, Rabbi Aziza returned to Netanya to learn for smicha, while he worked spreading the wellsprings of chassidus among numerous young people in the synagogue in the Ayin HaT’cheiles neighborhood.

Ami Turiel, today a Chabad Chassid in every respect, is one of the people whose lives were

turned around by that shlichus in Ayin HaT’cheiles. “At the time, I was part-owner of a seaside pub,” he recalls. “A friend introduced me to Rabbi Aziza, and we started learning together a little. Over a period of three months, we learned the first three chapters of Tanya. While the ground we covered was small in quantity, it deeply penetrated my soul.

“After three months, I realized that this was it, I was going all the way. I left my partnership in the pub. I stayed several times at Rabbi Aziza’s home, where he ran his activities with great self-sacrifice.

“Rabbi Aziza has an amazing ability to connect with everyone, even on the lowest possible levels. For example, I remember a story about a person whom Rabbi Aziza escorted to jail until his trial. The Rebbe wrote to this person that he should go all the way. He was faced with a dilemma – should he listen to what the Rebbe said, or sign on a plea bargain that would give him a lighter sentence, if he was convicted.

“Rabbi Aziza trusted and supported him, with all the responsibility connected with it, that he would come to the right decision. The man eventually decided to follow the Rebbe’s advice, and in a simply miraculous fashion, all the important documents required for the case of the prosecution just disappeared. As a result, he was cleared of all charges.”

Ami Turiel then gave the names of many fine people who had been connected to the Rebbe, thanks to Rabbi Aziza. “There’s no ‘pareve’ with him,” says Ami. “He won’t give up until you’re wearing a kapote, but he shares his values with calm and grace. He leads you to come to your own conclusion that this is the truth and it exists within you.

“The personal connection, both before and after the wedding, the detailed guidance at every step – even when it required a tremendous amount of effort, long hours of outreach activities, and personal compromises – thanks to all this, I and many others are connected today to the Rebbe shlita.”

## NO EATING CANDY HERE!

“After I got married and learned in kollel,” recalls Rabbi Aziza, “Rabbi Nechemia Schmerling, the Rebbe’s shliach in Kfar Yona, came to me with a proposal to do outreach activities at the Tel Mond prison. At first, I decided to try to put together a group of prisoners for transfer to the rehabilitative wing, where it would be much easier to have an effect upon them. This rehabilitative wing was halfway towards resuming a normal life.

“I arrived there carrying a pair of t’fillin and a sack of candies. The first person I saw there was a serious criminal, sitting and staring at the wall. I approached him and said, ‘Shalom, have you made the bracha ‘Sh’Hakol’ yet?’ and I gave him a candy. His response was firm: ‘We don’t eat candy here!’

“From that greeting, this criminal made a long journey, and he eventually joined a group of twenty prisoners who learned with me on a regular basis.

“We’re talking about twenty young men who had been in and out of prison since age fifteen, having a completely materialistic perspective and particularly low levels of literacy and focus; I sat and learned Tanya with them – a few lines over a period of six months. All of them are now Torah observant, four of them came out of prison as



joyous dancing in the synagogue after davening

***“It turned out that he had a private bank in Los Angeles... We traveled together to the hotel, and he paid for the hall, the catering, everything. So it happens every time, as we see with our own eyes how the Rebbe arranges for it all.”***

Chabadnikim, and one even became a shliach.

“There was one who had been incarcerated for a very long period of time. One day, I saw him reading some holy text, albeit non-Chabad. ‘No problem,’ I told him. ‘You can read this and become religious. But do you want to be rehabilitated and get out of here? Only Tanya!’ This took place during the month of Nissan, and together we wrote a letter to the Rebbe via Igros Kodesh. The Rebbe’s reply dealt with the concept of the future Redemption in the month of Nissan. ‘That’s it,’ I said to him. ‘Now you’re waiting for the miracle to happen.’

“Some time later, after I was

already in Tel Aviv, I saw him walking along the street. ‘Furlough?’ I asked him. ‘No,’ he said. ‘I was released.’ Today, he is the head of a Torah observant family.”

## THE FIFTH SON

And so he arrived in Tel Aviv. “At first, the forces of klipa seemed to go wild a bit,” said Rabbi Aziza with a sigh, as he recalls the difficulties he faced at the outset. “Unlike today, there was no organized community at the time. The place was one big state of disorder, filled with young people at the farbrengens. We erected three large menorahs for Chanuka without permits or coordination. In fact, the

municipal authorities sent inspectors, but it was too late. We had already woken up the city with a boom.”

On thirteen separate occasions (!), unidentified individuals damaged Rabbi Aziza’s car, once even smashing the rear window with a brick. They knocked down his t’fillin stands, lodged complaints with the municipality, and more.

“But we had already placed a stake on the premises,” said Rabbi Aziza. “Since then, everything has changed. The Tel Aviv Municipality is very supportive now, and we work in cooperation with them on a number of projects.”

“In the beginning, it was at 22 Dizengoff Street,” recalls Yuval Barnes, today the Rebbe shliach at the Mimaal Mamash Center in Tel Aviv. “I began my process of t’shuva in 5759, and I already understood from the very start that I was going in the direction of Chabad. I realized that all the miracles and wonders happening to me were due to the Rebbe, and I knew that the Rebbe wanted me. But in the final analysis, the atmosphere in some of the Chabad Houses that I visited was not so suitable for me, and I was having difficulty connecting with them.

“When I met Rabbi Aziza in the Dizengoff Chabad House, it provided the missing link. Merging the soul, the teachings of chassidus, and chassidic warmth proved to be the winning combination. The place simply worked like a magnet. Around this same time, by Divine Providence, I met an old army friend of mine in a clothing store, and I suggested that he come to the Chabad House as well. This young man was R’ Alon Dvir, who today serves as a shliach in Ramat Aviv.”

From then on, everything continued to progress. “Ten years ago, there wasn’t a single Torah class in the Ben-Yehuda pedestrian mall. Today, half of the bulletin boards are filled with notices about shiurim and other activities.”

After about five years, the Chabad House moved to the large synagogue at 126 Ben-Yehuda Street. But this place also quickly filled up and became too small to hold the growing activities. Miraculously, Rabbi Aziza succeeded in obtaining a part of the building at 93 Ben-Yehuda Street (by the way, the building was donated by a Litvishe family!). The Chabad House received the name Bayit Chadash L’Midrash, and it operates there to this day.

The Azizas’ home on Frankfurt Street also served for many years as a Chabad House. Friends and supporters recall nostalgically the room where the bachurim slept, the roof where many unforgettable farbrengens were held, and dining room which hosted countless people for the Shabbos meals each week.

Just two years ago, in response to a letter that Rabbi Aziza received from the Rebbe, he and his wife moved to Kfar Chabad. Yet, the activities continue to grow with even greater intensity. A Chabad couple comes every week to spend Shabbos on the premises, and Rabbi Aziza goes out each day to spread the wellsprings of chassidus to more and more Jewish souls.

## **MONEY? THE REBBE TAKES CARE OF US!**

And from where did the budget come for all these activities? Rabbi Aziza was not worried about this little detail. The Rebbe would take care of it.

We’re talking about one of the more expensive parts of Tel Aviv. Rent and living expenses demand a sizable amount of capital, not to mention the outlay for special events and projects just getting started. In order to compete with the lively big city, Bayit Chadash L’Midrash would also have to provide the cash for an appropriate up-to-date venue.

Nonetheless Rabbi Aziza chose to make certain that the money came from within the community, and not from fund-raising trips out of the country.

“For example, every year we organize a large communal Seder for the first night of Pesach. One year, I thought that I would do something a bit smaller in scale, and I asked the Rebbe. When I opened the Igros Kodesh, the reply was: ‘The King’s glory is in a multitude of people’. I immediately headed for the Marina Hotel...

“The owners asked me about the debts from previous years, and somehow I was able to convince them to accept post-dated checks to pay for all the expenses. Thus, I found myself leaning on my shtender in the yeshiva, thinking about how I would obtain the money against the checks I had just laid out.

“This was the week before Pesach, and I had written two checks, one dated in two days, the other dated Erev Pesach, for a total of eighteen thousand shekels – covering just the hall. I still had to come up with funds for the catering and other expenses. Just then, a Jew came in, apparently after some jogging, and asked if he could put on t’fillin. Naturally, while he was there, I invited him to participate in a Tanya class. The next day, he came back and asked me, ‘What would you like to do now?’

“He didn’t appear to be a

particularly wealthy person, but I told him of my aspirations, that I want to build a large yeshiva, and the way to attract the students was by making this public seider. It turned out that he had a private bank in Los Angeles... We traveled together to the hotel, and he paid for the hall, the catering, everything. So it happens every time, as we see with our own eyes how the Rebbe arranges for it all.”

## THE LIGHTS OF TOHU IN THE VESSELS OF TIKKUN

In Bayit Chadash L'Midrash, they constantly are searching for new ideas and gimmicks for activities in spreading the wellsprings of chassidus, and the more unusual, original, and different the idea – the better.

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, one of the volunteers goes out dressed as a chicken, and suggests to Jewish passers-by that they fulfill the custom of Kaparos. During Chanuka, the attraction was a large dreidel moving along the streets of Tel Aviv. Spontaneous farbrengens are periodically held in the middle of the street with pleasure-seekers who are dragged into the light of chassidus.

However, the place's main emphasis is specifically upon the study of Torah. The rest, they believe, will come on its own. Rabbi Shai Shuruk relates that after three or four shiurim, you can see within each person, even someone totally distant from Torah observance, the war starting to awaken against his nature. Another sicha, another maamer, and the Jewish spark begins to jell, to the point that it already becomes hard to hold it back.

The yeshiva studies start in the morning as in any regular yeshiva – chassidus seider followed by



**Rabbi Zalman Landa gives over a class in the beis midrash**

Shacharis and a Tanya shiur. In the afternoon, they study Gemara in pairs, and then participate in a chassidus shiur given by Rabbi Aziza.

A wide range of people come for the study and class schedule – actual baalei t'shuvah and potential ones, businessmen and tourists, average citizens and stars of the entertainment world, side by side.

The atmosphere on the premises is very relaxed. Each bachur progresses according to his own pace, but, as one of the mekuravim put it, “like a video game, from level to level, the program becomes more complex...” Rabbi Aziza doesn't let the participants merely study the material superficially.

After Mincha, at five in the afternoon, the Tmimim break off into groups. Some go out to give classes at nearby places of business, while others stay to greet newcomers. From nine o'clock starts a marathon of Torah classes given by Rabbi Aziza with his unique talents.

The activities would be expected to follow a set and limited course program, but they only seem to grow from day to day. Every time that it seems



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L'Midrash website**

impossible to do more, another idea comes along that sets another record to this intensive array of activities.

Naturally, all the activities are carried out in coordination with the advice of mashpiim. Foremost among them was Rabbi Chaim Ashkenazi, of blessed memory, who invested considerable time and effort in giving over classes and farbrengens, and his wife, Rebbetzin Bruria, who teaches classes to women on the premises. Rabbi Zalman Landa visits the facility regularly, making farbrengens on Thursday evenings well into the night.



**T'fillin Campaign activities**



**Chanuka on a Tel Aviv street**



**Rabbi Aziza and Rabbi Boaz Segal farbrenging on Chaf-Ches Sivan**

## A NEW HOME

Rabbi Aziza places a special emphasis on finding a shidduch for those who have reached an advanced stage in their process of t'shuva. His amazing level of success in this area has brought together no less than eighty couples, who found their respective matches through the institution. The tremendous effort that Rabbi Aziza has invested in the marriages among people associated with his educational activities constitutes a most important aspect of the outreach work he carries out. Only after the wedding, when the young couple begins its new life together, does Rabbi Aziza feel that they have finally made their way along the king's highway.

In response to this extensive phenomenon, Israel's Channel One broadcast a television report on the shidduch project, entitled "A Match On Wheels." The story gave a particularly wide range of publicity to the facility and its programs, and brought a wave of appeals from young people looking for a suitable match. The reaction was swift. "We are not matchmakers. But if you sit and

learn, those will be the results."

"Learning Torah," Rabbi Aziza explains, "reveals the true desire hidden within everyone, and as a result, people who would otherwise be aimlessly cycling through casual relationships have now established proper Jewish homes."

By the way, one of the more distinctive activities at Bayit Chadash L'Midrash is done specifically with those close to Yiddishkait, and not those who are still far from their roots. This refers to providing a warm home to young people from Anash families who have left the standard learning programs, young people in whom no one believes any longer. Many such young men have managed to resume regular study programs on a full-time basis. With a lot of personal contact, faith, and trust, they return to the path of their forefathers.

## A KARATE CHOP

The fruits of Rabbi Aziza's labors have already borne fruits of their own. Yuval Barnes tell us about a friend, who is trained in karate fighting. While he has

learned a significant number of exercises, there's one technique that he studied with particular care. In face-to-face combat, he uses a karate chop at the right moment, ending the battle in one instant.

This is the style of Rabbi Aziza. He has one karate chop called the first chapter of Tanya, with which he has created dozens of chassidim. Yuval, who himself runs a Chabad House, says that in his estimation, no less than fifty people have emerged from this place as full-fledged chassidim in every sense of the word, right down to the kapote.

"I don't know if I have ten such people, or even five. Many people love the Rebbe and many have come close to Chabad. But actually to turn into a chassid? Just a few." But he underestimates. In one breath, he lists dozens of people who established their connection to the Rebbe in the merit of Bayit Chadash L'Midrash, and are Chabad chassidim today.

Shai Agiv, a graphic designer and website builder, tell us about how he came to Bayit Chadash L'Midrash.



"I was doing my exercises out in the Ramat Gan National Park, when suddenly I saw a group of ultra-Orthodox Jews with sweat pants and jackets, looking for a couple more players. I agreed to join the game, and I even stayed to daven Mincha. Afterwards, as they were getting ready to make a barbecue, they were already urging me to stay for a farbrengen, and they told me about the Torah classes on Ben-Yehuda.

"The first class created a change in my life. It simply hit the right note. Studying Tanya gave me the answers I had always been looking for, but which I had failed to find through the conventional methods I had always known. To this day, when I tell people about the teachings of chassidus, I do so with a twinkle in my eye.

"Since then, I have managed to travel to 770 and spent Tishrei last year with the Rebbe. The visit left a powerful impression on me that will never be forgotten, and it exposed me to a level of warmth and devotion that I had never known before. Today, thank G-d, I am engaged, preparing to build my own chassidic home. By the way, my future wife also learned in Bayit Chadash L'Midrash..."

Shlomo Ochayon, a puppet theater operator, married with three children, also tells us his own story about how he returned to his Jewish roots.

"After seven years working as a security officer with Israeli embassies overseas, I returned to Eretz Yisroel and started dealing with real estate in Tel Aviv. I came to Bayit Chadash L'Midrash at the suggestion of a friend. Rabbi Aziza took my phone number and stubbornly made certain to call me and get me to promise to come to more classes. I slowly started coming on my own and before long, I was there to stay.

"A few months after I came there, the yeshiva opened. At the beginning, I was the only student, and I slept on a mattress in the synagogue. Afterwards, more students came, and Rabbi Aziza rented an apartment for us. A year later, I moved to the yeshiva in Tzfas."

Shlomo Ochayon continued to recall his time learning in the Bayit Chadash L'Midrash yeshiva with great nostalgia. "We would start the day at six in the morning, when we went to the mikveh. Rabbi Aziza's wife would cook lunch for us. She worked together with her husband with great dedication. We only finished

our studies at ten o'clock at night. I especially remember the Thursday night farbrengens on the roof, when we would sit until late at night and the whole street joined with us."

Shai Shuruk sums up: "I once saw some graffiti in New York with the words: 'Make me feel uncomfortable so I can deal with my fears.' I think that sentence represents the method of our activities at Bayit Chadash L'Midrash.

"Something new, something people are not used to encountering, is what awakens a person to change his nature," he proceeds to explain. "Therefore, the chassidic principle of the 'talking bird' is so strong in the activities here. When we go against the nature of the world, when we succeed in doing things in contrast to what people usually encounter and recognize, this stimulates something within them and encourages them to get closer to Torah and mitzvos."

That's Bayit Chadash L'Midrash in a nutshell – a house dedicated to the Rebbe shlita from its very foundations.

*Our thanks to R' David (Dado) Albachari, for his tremendous assistance in preparing this article.*

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# I THINK I CAN

By Aryeh Gotfryd, PhD

**From the recognition of how the soul rules the body (the microcosm), it is only a small step to recognizing how G-d rules the universe (the macrocosm).**

--*The Rebbe, Mind Over Matter*,  
p. 311.

Paul Bach-y-Rita did not learn about the brain's ability to rewire itself from science and medicine. True, he was a famous doctor and biomedical engineer, but his extraordinary insights and innovative cures had no basis in the neuroscience of the 60's when his work first started to shake up the old mechanistic model of the brain.

Nor did he learn about it from kabbala or chassidic philosophy, although theoretically he could have because those sources had long been teaching principles of neuroeducation by then, as we discussed in last week's newsletter.

Where he *did* learn about neuroplasticity was from his father, Pedro. This man had unfortunately suffered a massive debilitating stroke that left him half-paralyzed and speechless. After the standard course of rehab leading to minimal recovery, all medical opinion was against any further progress, but Paul's elder brother George did not give up.

George decided to train his father in small, progressive increments, as one would a child. He got his father to crawl, first leaning against a wall, then unsupported. After countless

painful kilometers of this, he stood, then started to walk, to feed himself, to type, to work in the garden, and to speak. Finally after a year of home therapy, Pedro went back to work which he did for another seven years until he got a heart attack at the age of 72... while mountain climbing!

Paul's loss was also his gain, for the autopsy revealed something remarkable. Paul realized that his father had recovered near-normal functioning despite the fact that 97% of his brain stem had been destroyed by the stroke. Something clicked in Paul's brain too. He realized clearly that the only way this could have happened was if his father's brain had somehow undergone a massive reorganization.

The conclusion seemed obvious but alas, what was incontrovertible fact to Paul was mere idle speculation in the eyes of the scientific establishment. They had been too long indoctrinated in the fixed map, fixed function view of the brain to be influenced by some small exceptional facts. No one took notice.

But with his newfound faith in the brain's ability to change, Bach-y-Rita set out to use neuroplasticity to help people. He set out to train the visual cortex to process touch signals from the back or the tongue instead of light signals from the eye, and it worked! Bach-y-Rita's BrainPort technology allows people with vertigo to stand and walk for the first time without falling. Using

only patterns of touch sensation registered on the tongue, blind people can actually detect the size, shape and motion of remote objects in their environment, much as if they were seeing them with their eyes.

We can learn a lot from this story. First, where there is a will there is a way, even when physical obstacles and expert opinion stand in opposition. Also, look at the loyalty and commitment of a son to his father. How exemplary. Witness the humility and tenacity of the father to get down on the floor and crawl around for months, not knowing if this will ever lead to anything more. Be inspired by the wondrous nature of what is probably the most complex and dynamic entity in the cosmos, the human brain. It is the seat of the soul as well as the intellect, an organ for meditating on the soul's existence and implementing its will, while seeming to be nothing more than a highly organized gray blob of chemically enhanced bio-electric spaghetti.

And finally, see what one single scientist can achieve. He can stand alone and press forward to prove his goal, even if the whole establishment of his peers negates or even mocks his views, for he knows that in the end the truth must prevail.

All these lessons are especially relevant in our times, known in Kabbala as "The Footsteps of Moshiach." It is our will to actualize the redemption and that itself will hasten it and make it happen tangibly. There are definitely forces in opposition but with determination, humility and tenacity we will do whatever it takes, even if it looks odd to others in the interim. We only can take small steps but it is specifically those small steps that are most transformational. Just as Pedro needed specifically small steps to

make a spectacular recovery, so too we need all our little mitzvos to add together and tip the scales, bringing the Days of Moshiach to fruition.

There is an allegorical lesson as well. The Jewish people are blessed with a spiritual leader, the Rebbe, whose title is an acronym of "Rosh B'nei Yisroel," meaning Head of the Children of Israel. This reflects his role as our collective consciousness. Like a dynamic and responsive central processor, he serves as an unsung inner power

with such limitless possibility that however messed up the situation may get, we cannot despair because just as with the human brain, we have only scratched the surface of what is possible to achieve.

And finally, there is the commitment to truth. Even if the whole world including all the experts were to say no, it's not possible, the truth will ultimately prevail. And if this can happen in science, how much more so is it so regarding the ultimate future of

humanity, about which leading scientists and theologians alike are coming to a common consent, namely that we do in fact live in an unprecedented era of unity emerging.

So hang in there. Moshiach is coming 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](http://www.arniegotfryd.com) or call 416-858-9868*

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# PASSIONATE PROLIFIC PEDAGOGIC PENMAN

By Shneur Zalman Berger

*Chassidishe writer, R' Naftali Tzvi Gottlieb, has authored over fifty books. We spoke to him about his books, his writing, and various episodes behind the scenes.*

There were few educational books for children when I was a kid. One of the books that I loved, which I know by heart till this day, is the terrific *Yahadus HaD'mama* (translated as *In the Shadow of the Kremlin* – Artscroll) which describes the Chassidim in Russia under the communist boot who, despite the persecution, were moser nefesh for Torah and mitzvos.

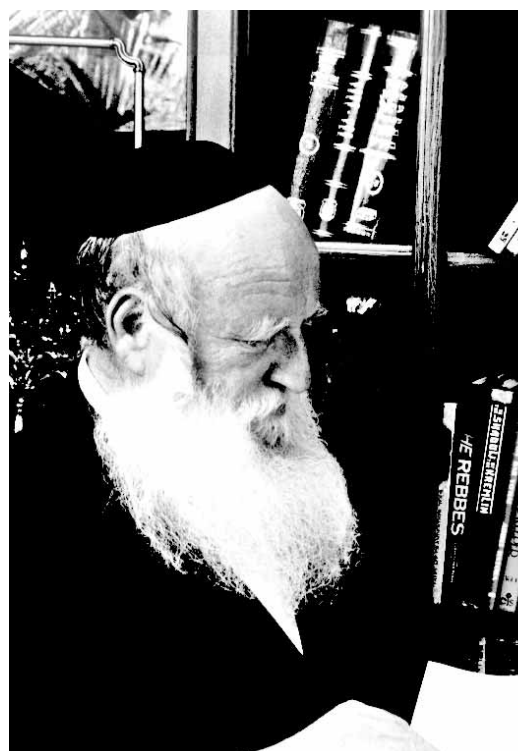
I frequently found myself drying my tears as I read the heartrending descriptions of what the Chassidim went through. I remember going to yeshiva in the morning with the resolution that I would learn properly that day. If

these Chassidim could be moser nefesh for Torah, despite the danger, then surely I could learn the way I should.

When I related this to R' Gottlieb, he nodded and said, "After the book was published, many people contacted me and said the book did not allow them to sleep at night. Stories of the mesirus nefesh of Chabad Chassidim in the Soviet Union certainly do inspire an uncommon sense of inner strength and glory."

**How does a writer reach the reader on such a deep emotional level?**

"If you cry as you write, then the readers will cry too," he said



succinctly. Then he explained. "I sat with the heroes of the book and they told me the terrible things they experienced, often bursting into tears as they recounted it. Afterwards, when I sat down to write, I listened to the recordings I made and I got caught up in it as well. You would have seen me writing and crying. There is no question that the emotions the author experiences as he writes are transmitted to the reader."

\*\*\*

Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Gottlieb was born in Battei Ungarin in Yerushalayim. His father, R' Chaim Yosef, was a Chassid of Rabbi Aharon Roth zt"l.

He learned in the local yeshiva and after he was bar mitzva he attended yeshivas Toras Emes in Yerushalayim, which was run by Rabbi Moshe Leib Shapiro and the mashpia Rabbi Moshe Yehuda Reichman. He was soon a Lubavitcher.

His literary talents were noticed



when he was still a boy. When the bachurim wanted to send a *duch* to the Rebbe about the mitzvaim they did and they wanted it to be written nicely, they would ask him to write it. When someone wanted to write a flyer or letter, they would ask Gottlieb for help.

When he was 17 he heard reports from Chassidim who had returned from Tishrei with the Rebbe. In those days, very few people went, and those who remained behind were interested in hearing every crumb of a story or hanhaga that they had seen and observed. Gottlieb was fascinated by the atmosphere and in his mind's eye he saw the stories as they occurred. He took out pen and paper and sat down to write a description of being with the Rebbe. The editors of *Bitaon Chabad* published it as a feature article. Feedback was positive. "Anash who had been there told me that it perfectly described what it was like."

That was his first article that

was published and he began writing articles that were published in *Bitaon Chabad*. After he married he started a monthly publication for children called *Shalhevet*. The goal was to influence children to behave according to Torah values. Back then, publications for children were not as popular as they are today. Actually, there was nothing like it for children at the time.

### **What was your first book?**

"My first book was *Zechor, Al Tishkach* (Remember, Don't Forget), about the destruction of Hungarian Jewry, written in 1968. The book was welcomed by religious Jews since there was a dearth of books about the Holocaust written with religious Jews in mind."

The book *In the Shadow of the Kremlin* was unique in its time. The style and contents were original. The Iron Curtain had not yet come down and not much had been written about Jews over "there." Hardly any information about what was going on there was known and the book was eagerly grabbed up.

The idea to write a book was born out of R' Gottlieb's friendship with R' Henschel Rappaport a"h. Over the years R' Gottlieb heard many stories from him about the life of Chassidim in the Soviet Union and it occurred to him to write a book as a testament to the heroism of Chabad Chassidim. He spent hours with R' Henschel and wrote down his stories, and that is how the book came to be written.

### **Wasn't it dangerous to publicize these stories when the Soviets were liable to take revenge on relatives?**

Yes. Many Chassidim whom I wanted to interview turned me down for this reason. And those who agreed to be interviewed refrained from mentioning the

names of their relatives who were still in Russia.

### **To that extent?**

The fear was enormous, and for good reason. When one of the Chassidim, who had helped smuggle Anash out of Russia to Poland, received a panicked phone call from the Rebbe's secretary telling him to beware of the KGB who were following him, he had been living in Crown Heights for decades. He left his home and hid for a long time.

\*\*\*

This is a loaded subject and R' Gottlieb could write an entire book just on the stories surrounding this book. He relates one story out of many that shows how tremendous the fear was:

"I was once sitting in the home of one of the heroes of the book when he told me his life story. His son walked in and I noticed how he locked the door of the room and closed the shutters. His father told me in tears that his son suffered so much from the persecution by the KGB that he still could not shake the fear and the nightmares. Even in the safety of Israel he felt they were after him, and he habitually locked the door and pulled the shutters closed, mainly when he put on t'fillin and davened."

### **Weren't there other people who spread Yiddishkeit in Russia besides Lubavitchers?**

"Some people asked me why I don't have stories about Jews from other groups who preserved Judaism there, and so I did research and found out that there were hardly any, certainly not those who organized yeshivos or built shuls and mikvaos.

"As I wrote the book, some people thought that the KGB might come after me personally because of it. I understood that the Rebbe wanted this book to be

## WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT

R' Gottlieb has a chilling story about the writing of the book *In the Shadow of the Kremlin*:

The idea to write the book, as I said, came when I heard stories from R' Henoch Rappaport. After he passed away, I went to console his brother, R' Michel and asked him to tell me his story as his brother had done. R' Michel refused but said that when he felt the time was right, he himself would write his life story.

R' Michel was at a farbrengen in Nachalat Har Chabad when he suddenly got up and went home. One of the people asked him why he was leaving in the middle of a farbrengen and R' Michel said he had promised R' Naftali Tzvi Gottlieb that he would write his memoirs the moment he felt the time was right, and so he was going home to write.

When he arrived home he sat until late into the night writing and only then went to sleep. A few hours later he returned his soul to his Maker!

He ends his memoir with the following lines:

"As a joke I always say that when I stand before the Heavenly Court after 120, if they ask me what sort of Chassid I was when I did such-and-such, I will tell the angel to go to the offices of the KGB in Leningrad and look at File 213 from the year 1951. There it says explicitly that I am a Chassid son of a Chassid, which is why I received the sentence of imprisonment."

***I lay down for a nap and fell asleep. Suddenly, in my sleep, I felt as though someone was pushing me and saying: Why are you sleeping? You left someone in the shul!***

written and so when it was published before Pesach 1984, I sent a copy to the Rebbe and a few days later I received his positive response and bracha by express mail. These stories were also publicized over the years in *Kfar Chabad*."

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Many of R' Gottlieb's books have been bestsellers, even nowadays when so many books are being published. One of his more important books, at least to Lubavitchers, is the book *Toldos Levi Yitzchok*. R' Gottlieb

considers it his magnum opus.

The book is a wonderful biography of the Rebbe's father, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneersohn. Today there is hardly a Chassid who doesn't know the history of his life to some degree or another, but when R' Gottlieb began writing only few people knew about him. The most amazing thing of all is that the Rebbe followed every step of the writing of the book and even helped R' Gottlieb personally.

The idea for this book came up at the end of the 60's. One day, R' Gottlieb thought about how almost

nobody was familiar with the Rebbe's ancestry. "I knew that the Rebbe's father wasn't just another rav in the Soviet Union." He thought of writing something but of course, he needed the Rebbe's blessing. When he received no response, he shelved the idea.

"I went to the Rebbe for the first time in Tishrei, 5735/1974. When I passed by the Rebbe for kos shel bracha, the Rebbe turned to me and said, 'You promised me a book about my father – where is it?' I did not remember what the Rebbe was referring to since so many years had passed. Then I suddenly remembered and I said that since I hadn't received the Rebbe's consent, I did not work on it.

"The Rebbe smiled broadly and said, 'What do you mean – do you need consent for something like this? The Ribbono shel Olam has to give you His haskama.' Then the Rebbe said, 'Now that you are here, work on collecting material for the book.'

"I was flabbergasted. First, how did the Rebbe recognize me? He had never met me before! Second, I was very surprised that this idea had surfaced again.

"When I had calmed down a bit, I began looking for people who knew the Rebbe's father. I quickly discovered that very few Chassidim knew him. One of the Chassidim who heard about the idea gave me Rebbetzin Chana a"l's diary. She had been in exile with her husband and she had written many stories about him. Starting with the diary and other testimonials I heard from people who knew him, I began collecting information and putting a book together with the help of R' Tuvia Blau.

"The Rebbe's involvement with the book was extraordinary, and for obvious reasons. He constantly asked for updates. Whenever I

finished writing a chapter I immediately sent it to the Rebbe for him to review. A few times, I got a phone call from R' Chadakov a"h, who would dictate the Rebbe's comments. I had no doubt that these suggestions came from the Rebbe, and this assumption was proven true when I saw a photocopy of the Rebbe's handwritten notes which R' Chadakov had read to me verbatim."

R' Gottlieb understood how important this was to the Rebbe and in 5737 the book was published. The book consists almost entirely of firsthand testimony; the Rebbetzin's diary, and from the Chassidim R' Yaakov Yosef Raskin and his sons who stood by him in Alma Ata.

The Rebbe was very satisfied and sometime later, when R' Gottlieb visited the Rebbe, he was called to R' Chadakov's room that same day and was told that the Rebbe wants him to visit some Chassidim who knew his father, including Rabbi Yosef Nimotin, Rabbi Moshe Binyamin Kaplan and others. R' Gottlieb wrote down their stories and submitted them to the Rebbe. The Rebbe edited it and the material was included in the next edition of the book.

Over the years there were another three editions of the book. The final, which was published in three volumes, was written after the fall of the Iron Curtain. R' Gottlieb was able to travel in the footsteps of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok in Nikolayev, Yekatrinoslav (Dnepropetrovsk today) and to his exile in Chili and Alma Ata, where he is buried. He even received some of the KGB files on Rabbi Levi Yitzchok from the heads of the KGB in Dnepropetrovsk, with information that shed new light on his arrest.

R' Gottlieb has written,



Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Gottlieb with the Rebbe in the entrance to Gan Eden HaTachton



Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Gottlieb receiving part of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok's file from the KGB. On the left: Rabbi Shmuel Kaminevski, shliach

***"The Rebbe once gave me two dollars for two books. I walked away and was called back and was given another two dollars. The Rebbe said, 'This is for future books.' I consider this both a bracha and a commission. Whenever I publish a book I feel it's thanks to the Rebbe's bracha."***

## RABBI LEVI YITZCHOK'S CELL

R' Naftali Tzvi Gottlieb wrote many books about Chabad in the Soviet Union but he himself, a Yerushalmi, didn't actually visit the places he wrote about until after the fall of communism.

"There are places I visited where I felt moved when I thought – this is where that Chassid walked and here is where he was imprisoned. I went to many places but without a doubt, the trips I made in the footsteps of the Rebbe's father were the most moving. Although the s'farim had been published already, I went to Dnepropetrovsk together with the local shliach, Rabbi Shmuel Kaminezki, and he saw to it that we got Rabbi Levi Yitzchok's file from the heads of the KGB. It was a chilling experience to visit the cell where he had been, seeing the very place where he sat.

"On another trip I went to his place of exile in the village of Chili and Alma Ata. I wrote about this trip in an article for *Beis Moshiach*, Erev Rosh HaShana, 5760."

etc. and were written, as much as possible, using the original wording. There are eleven books in this series in about fifteen editions!

The work that goes into these books is tremendous. "It requires a lot of patience. Each book takes a long time to complete."

R' Gottlieb related an amazing story in connection with this, whose meaning still eludes him:

"When I wrote the first book in the series, the one on Rashbi, Lag B'Omer was approaching and the book was still not finished. The publisher pressured me to complete it as fast as I could so it could be sold before Lag B'Omer.

"When I was up to the chapter which describes his passing, I was unhappy with what I had written. I rewrote it but still wasn't satisfied with the way it came out.

"A few days went by and one morning the publisher came to my house and said, 'Finish it! I'm not budging until you finish the book. Otherwise, you will cause me to lose money!' I thought that perhaps, for something so holy, I needed additional tahara. I decided to go to the mikva but since it was in the afternoon, all the mikvaos were locked.

"After spending a lot of time searching the streets of Yerushalayim, I gave up and started walking home when I noticed a little shul and remembered that it had a mikva. I walked in and saw a young man on his way out. I begged him to wait for me and he finally agreed, though he asked me to make it fast. When I came out of the mikva I saw that he had left and locked me in the shul!

"Having no choice, I sat down and wrote the conclusion of the book right there in the shul. To my surprise, within less than an hour I had completed the chapter. As soon as I finished it I heard the door open and the same man

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בברכה להצליח ולבשרות טובה  
בכל האמור

A letter from the Rebbe urging R' Gottlieb to finish the book about his father

compiled and edited over fifty books, an accomplishment not matched by many writers. Not all his books are intended for religious audiences in particular; many of them are for the broader public. The thing they all have in common is chinuch. His stories depict role models of mesirus

nefesh for observing Torah and mitzvos, chesed, Ahavas Yisroel, and Jewish/Chassidic behavior.

Some of his most popular books are in the series called *Adirei Torah*. These books contain stories of Tanaim and Amoraim that were taken from Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, Midrashim





**At the entrance to Chili.**  
**From the right: Rabbi Moshe Dovid Cohen, Rabbi Yehuda Kubalkin, and Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Gottlieb**

walked in and apologized that he had locked me in by mistake. 'I lay down for a nap and fell asleep. Suddenly, in my sleep, I felt as though someone was pushing me and saying: Why are you sleeping? You left someone in the shul! I immediately got up and ran to open the shul and here I am,' he said shamefacedly.

"It was an episode I cannot forget."

\*\*\*

R' Gottlieb's success is not only due to his talents as a writer but thanks to the prodigious effort he invests in writing his books.

After he interviews someone, he puts the interview down in writing, word for word. Then he corrects it, types it up, and goes over it another 4-5 times. "Between one amendment and the next I wait at least one night because I want to look at it with fresh eyes."

**How do you transform the raw materials into a book that people enjoy and are moved by?**

"The Rebbe wrote about this a number of times, saying that an editor has to put himself in the reader's shoes. I was always



**R' Gottlieb in Red Square, Moscow**

careful to do this and I tried to write not what interests me as an editor but what interests the reader.

"I also give the book to several people and ask for their feedback."

\*\*\*

"The Rebbe once gave me two

dollars for two books. I walked away and was called back and was given another two dollars. The Rebbe said, 'This is for future books.' I consider this both a bracha and a commission. Whenever I publish a book I feel it's thanks to the Rebbe's bracha."

## **HIS FIFTIETH BOOK**

Every Chabad Chassid has a set of Igros Kodesh of the Rebbe MH"M, letters that were written over many years to thousands of people on a vast array of subjects. The letters are arranged by date and the problem is that in order to find an answer to a question you have to search through the indices.

For Yud-Alef Nissan, 5760, R' Gottlieb published his 50<sup>th</sup> book, *Atzaso Emuna*, which solves the problem.

"It bothered me to see how much effort the Rebbe had put into the letters but when you want to look something up or find an answer to a question, it's not easy. I decided it would be a nice thing to publish my 50<sup>th</sup> book in honor of 50 years of the Rebbe's nesius in which I would arrange the letters according to topics.

"It was complicated work since I wanted to include only those letters which pertained to the general public. After a lot of work, two volumes were published with letters arranged according to topics which were alphabetized according to the Alef-beis. These two volumes contain topics from Alef to Yud. The next two volumes cover Chaf-Tav and Shabbos and Yom Tov. In order to make it easier for the reader, there is a brief summary of each letter together with the letter.

Feedback was extremely favorable. I hope that this provides me with the z'chus of helping thousands of people who want to know what the Rebbe's perspective is on many topics.

# LONG SHABBOS DAYS

By Mendel Tzfasman

*Shluchim in certain countries have to contend with an extremely late onset of Shabbos. In some countries, nighttime is just one hour! \* How do they host guests at the Shabbos meals? What about their children? When do they make Havdala? And how do the yeshivos in these countries contend with such a schedule?*

For many of us, recent Shabbasos have been very long, with Shabbos not ending until after 9:00. Some people revel in the summer Shabbasos. Tmimim see it as an opportunity to have extended time for mivtza t'fillin on Fridays and Mesibos Shabbos the following day. For ovdim, those bachurim who spend a long time on their davening, these long Shabbasos are a bonanza. In one day they can learn copious amounts of Chassidus, daven at length, sit and farbreng, go on mivtzaim, and have plenty of time to return for the Shabbos

afternoon learning session.

Balabatim also see an advantage to these long Shabbasos. They can rest and daven, learn and farbreng, take a walk and schmooze. On Friday they can do the shopping as well as rest before Shabbos and leisurely go to the mikva. The results are a nice Shabbos meal in which (some) people are rested after their afternoon nap.

But there are those who have a hard time at this time of the year, whether because of how late the meal ends or a Motzaei Shabbos that does not allow time for anything. As for the long Shabbos

afternoons ... Oy, it's so long and the kids have played with all their games and toys, and have quarreled, made up and quarreled again.

Be that as it may, the Shabbasos are starting to get shorter, once again.

## FRIDAY NIGHT MEAL IN THE AFTERNOON

One thing is certain; the real difficulty in handling the long Shabbasos is not in Eretz Yisroel or America but primarily in parts of Russia and European countries





such as Belgium, France, England and Sweden, as well as those parts of Canada or the US that are close to the North Pole.

For example, Yisroel D, an Israeli tourist who just returned from Belgium, told me that Shabbos recently began at 9:36. “As an Israeli who is used to Shabbos beginning as the sun sets, I was shocked to experience walking to shul with the sun beating down on me followed by a Shabbos meal in broad daylight. Europeans don’t want a Shabbos meal at midnight when the children are asleep and losing out

on the Shabbos experience. They start Shabbos a few hours before the time designated on the calendar and they daven Maariv while it is still day. When they go home after davening they make Kiddush precisely at the time that Shabbos officially comes in.”

If we thought 9:30 is too late for candle lighting, compared to some other places it’s not bad at all. In Moscow they recently lit Shabbos candles at 10:00 and in Rostov, a few hours away from there but still in the same country, candle lighting was at 11 pm and Shabbos was over at two in the

morning. When do you make Havdala? Whoever is awake at that hour makes it then, while the children hear Havdala in the morning where, alongside the spices and candle, there are Corn Flakes and milk.

Rabbi Ben Tzion Lipsker, a shliach in Petersburg, seems quite satisfied with the long Shabbos:

“I have a long day without phone calls, without a computer, meetings or trips. Real rest. There is time to learn and to make up for those things that often get pushed off because there is no time. There is plenty of time to farbreng with

***Our fast days end at 8-9 at night, while in London, the fast ends at 10:30, in Moscow at 12 midnight, in Petersburg at 1:00, and in Alaska at 2:00. In the Yukon in western Canada, it's 2:20. No wonder they can't wait for the fast days to be transformed into days of rejoicing!***

mekuravim. Nobody is rushing anywhere. After Mincha we learn and farbreng about practical applications from Pirkei Avos. Of course there is more time to play, talk and learn with the children, which there isn't always time for during the week."

On Friday nights the Lipskers make an early Shabbos, as do many of Anash in Petersburg and the rest of that part of the world. Kabbalas Shabbos is at plag Mincha and the meal is enjoyed by the children and guests.

"We have to get up for Krias Shma at one in the morning, since tzeis ha'kochavim is shortly before dawn."

In an overseas call, the Namdar family, shluchim in Gothenburg, Sweden, told me about a trip they made to Italy for a Shabbos in the summer (that's where their parents are from). A pleasant surprise awaited them there. Shabbos officially began at 8:30, unlike at home, where Shabbos is brought in at eight but officially begins at eight minutes to 12:00 midnight!

"There's no other way of doing it," they explain. "If we don't make an early Shabbos we will be eating the meal alone, as everyone else will be asleep. There would be no children or guests at the table."

A Chassidishe young man who moved on shlichus to Moscow related that when he first arrived there he did not understand why

the minyan for Maariv was so small despite the large k'hilla. Later on he realized that these people worked hard all week and got up early to daven Shacharis in the minyan at shul, but if they davened Maariv there at ten at night they would go to sleep too late, which would adversely affect the minyan for Shacharis.

### **PRIORITIES AND CHOICES**

As always, whenever there are two Jews there are three opinions. The same is true for this topic. There are Chassidishe fellows who are not willing to rely on the leniency of making an early Shabbos and davening Maariv before sunset (even though the halacha allows for it on condition that Shma is said again at night). They say that as Chassidim we should not rely on this because:

In the reshima of the Rebbe Rayatz's imprisonment, the Rebbe tells about his first day in jail in Leningrad (today Petersburg) and he describes Maariv, "... **During the summer, when the time for davening Maariv is not before half of eleven** (in other words, 10:30) **we would daven Mincha at six and Maariv at 11.**" In the margin it says, "**Early Chassidim would say that this is what the Alter Rebbe taught and practiced when he was in Petersburg**

during his second arrest in 5561."

So these Chassidishe yungelait say, "That's what the Alter Rebbe said and did and that is what the Rebbe Rayatz did, not reciting Maariv before sunset." They are forced to make a choice between forgoing a Shabbos meal with their children and the impact a Shabbos meal has on their Chassidishe chinuch – not to mention the guests and mekuravim who won't be attending the meal – and abiding by a Chassidic practice.

Those who rely on the leniency point at an explicit halacha in Shulchan Aruch and speak of the importance of having the children at the Shabbos table. They also have a Chassidishe rationale – the need for mesirus nefesh to sacrifice personal Chassidishe inyanim for the sake of another's gashmius and for the sake of chinuch.

One thing is certain, despite the long hours waiting for Maariv; it's not boring in Chabad shtiblach ...

By the way, the ladies of the house can tell you that no matter how long the Friday is, there will always be that last minute rush ...

### **THE FAST IS OVER AT TWO IN THE MORNING!**

There are times when you just can't have your cake and eat it too, and the Chassidishe mind tries to come up with creative ideas. What do you do in Chassidishe yeshivos in Europe and Russia – make an early Maariv? You just can't do that – these are Chassidishe bachurim. On the other hand, having them daven Maariv at 12 is not reasonable either – how will they get up on time in the morning?

The solution is ingeniously simple. They don't keep the same time as everyone else. They are on "yeshiva time" (like "camp time")

which is an hour earlier than the rest of the country. If that is not enough, then in the case of high schools where Maariv (before Shma and getting ready for bed) at 11 is too late, they are **two** hours earlier than the rest of the country!

It's not a perfect system because in the morning there is a problem with the time for Krias Shma, which is as early as seven o'clock. On ordinary days there is no problem with the early hour since the bachurim are in zal at that time, but on mornings following late night farbrengens, the staff knocks on doors in the dormitory and awakens them for Krias Shma.

There's another factor to contend with. The Rebbe Rashab in *Kuntres Eitz Chayim* says that Chassidus must be learned by day and by night, **"because the night needs it."** So when the Chassidus session ends at 9 at night and it is still not nighttime, what do you do? The bachurim get ready for bed and at 10:30 they convene once again for Maariv and Krias Shma, but then they go back to their rooms for lights out, and there is no time remaining for the study of Chassidus. Those who want to be super Chassidish manage to squeeze in some learning of Likkutei Sichos between the chair and the bed.

What about the summer fast days? We eagerly await the end of the long 17 Tammuz and 9 Av fasts. As we do, we can think about how our fast days end at 8-9 at night (depending on where you live), while in London, the fast ends at 10:30, in Moscow at 12 midnight, in Petersburg at 1:00, and in Alaska not until 2:00 in the morning! In the Yukon in western Canada, it's 2:20 am. No wonder they can't wait for the fast days to be transformed into days of rejoicing!

In those countries with "white



Brussels, Antwerp – white nights

nights," when sunsets are late and sunrises are early, there is a very short period of time between full night and dawn, which leaves very little time for Krias Shma of Maariv.

The main problem is with S'firas HaOmer, a mitzvas asei. The Alter Rebbe, in the halachos before S'firas HaOmer in the Siddur, writes, **"The time of the beginning of the dawn from the 18<sup>th</sup> of Iyar and later in those northern countries is at midnight; therefore they should not count after midnight except without a bracha. And this time for the dawning of the day continues up to and including the 17 of Tammuz, and therefore when it reaches midnight on the 17<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz one is forbidden to eat."**

It's not easy saying the Tikkun Leil Shavuos ... It is started while still day and is concluded in about two hours, which is already morning of the next day.

In order to understand the source of the issue and the

problems, remember that the concept of daylight savings time is relatively new and in days gone by, when the Shulchan Aruch or the Shulchan Aruch HaRav were written, there was no difference between the winter clock and summer clock.

Furthermore, we generally act according to tradition regarding special halachos of certain locales, but since there wasn't a continuous Jewish presence in those lands, there is no clear tradition about how to relate to daylight savings and the like.

One thing is certain and that is, those who breathe a sigh of relief when the time for candle lighting starts moving back are liable to find themselves, in half a year, complaining about the short winter Fridays when there is no time to do anything with Shabbos beginning at 3:40 in the afternoon. In those northern countries, Shabbos begins shortly after two in the afternoon. So we are best off being content with what we have...

# EDUCATING THE ANOINTED

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelewitz, Shliach, Beit Shaan

*In the sicha of Leil Simchas Torah, 5752, the Rebbe talks about the importance of children, the “anointed ones,” and the Rebbe wishes much success to educators and especially shluchim in their role of teaching Torah and Chassidus, particularly in bringing Moshiach. In this week’s column focuses on stories related to chinuch.*

## ARVEI CHABAD

In Beit Shaan there is a general-religious school. Most of the children in Beit Shaan attend it and it has close to 1000 students. My wife has been a teacher there for twenty-one years and her presence has had a great Chassidic impact. Nearly every month there is an evening for mothers and girls which hundreds attend. We invite lecturers, hold raffles, and give out materials. These “Evenings with Chabad” take place under the auspices of the school, which happily pays most of the costs. After each of these events we write it up for the local paper, which reflects well on the school.

## THE NEW PRINCIPAL

The Ministry of Education hired a new principal for the middle grades in the general-religious school in Beit Shaan. Upon assuming the position, he invited each teacher in for a personal talk. When it was my wife’s turn he immediately identified her as a Lubavitcher.

“I am also a Chabadnik,” he joyfully exclaimed. “I learned in the Chabad yeshiva in Tzfas by R’ Wilschansky.”

He reminisced and expressed his yearning to learn Chassidus, and requested that the local shliach give the teachers a Tanya class. It was pretty surprising to hear a fellow in a large knitted yarmulke, who

worked in the field of education for many years in the religious-Zionist sector, now sharing a deep connection with Chabad.

Gideon Tamir, son of General Avrosha Tamir, was raised in a military atmosphere in the Tzahala neighborhood of Tel Aviv, a neighborhood in the city center built for senior officers in the army.

“The first time I saw a religious person was when R’ Shloimke Maidanchek came to a commanders’ meeting in the neighborhood. I was a little boy and I was very taken by his tremendous warmth. My father explained that this man wasn’t a regular religious person but a Chabadnik from Kfar Chabad who always came and helped people do mitzvos. My parents told me that they, themselves, came from families of Lubavitcher Chassidim and rabbanim in Russia. My grandfather recalled that his father was an ardent Chassid who put on Rabbeinu Tam t’fillin and wore them until midday. A Tanya was always on his table.”

Despite his Lubavitcher roots, Gideon grew up irreligiously and it wasn’t until he was in his twenties that he became a baal t’shuva, learned Torah in Tzfas and got smicha. He was looking for a good place to learn Gemara in Tzfas, where he resided, and someone

recommended the Chabad yeshiva. He made the acquaintance of Rabbi YY Wilschansky and the mashpia R' Moshe Orenstein, who had just started the yeshiva. He learned Gemara, halacha and Chassidus, attended farbrengens and even had a personal miracle through the Rebbe's bracha.

## BORN BECAUSE OF THE REBBE'S BRACHA

Gideon and his wife were married for two years without children. He consulted with R' Wilschansky who advised him to send a letter to the Rebbe and ask for a bracha. A few weeks later, he complained that the Rebbe had not replied. The rosh yeshiva firmly said, "You'll get an answer." In other words, he was assuring him that the request will be fulfilled even without a written response.

That night Gideon's wife dreamt that she saw the Rebbe rocking a cradle and with a big smile he calmed the baby girl. It was more than a hint.

Within a few days, Mrs. Tamir sensed that the Rebbe's bracha had been fulfilled. A few months later their first daughter was born.

The bond between the Tamir family and the Rebbe grew stronger. Their second daughter traveled to India two years ago. She bought a map and began her journey across the country, but as soon as she arrived in Pushkar and discovered the Chabad house, she abandoned her plans and remained there for three months. Instead of touring India she toured among dozens of s'farim, attended shiurim and farbrengens and returned to Eretz Yisroel connected to the Rebbe and Chassidus.

Later, when I myself met Gideon, he told me more and more about his connection to Chabad. He gave Tanya classes in the religious pre-military academy in the Golan



Children boarding the bus on their way to a Chabad school

Heights where he was the principal. He didn't just make do with swapping stories but asked me to attend the Torah seminars held for the teachers, to teach Tanya and explain Chassidic concepts in an organized way.

## A THIRTEEN YEAR OLD WRITING CHIDDUSHIM

For Chai Elul I got an invitation to give a shiur to the seventh grade in the yeshiva high school in Beit Shaan. The religious studies teacher is a regular visitor to the Chabad house and when he heard about the concept of a Chai Elul farbrengen he asked me to farbreng with his class.

I told some stories about the Alter Rebbe, reviewed some Chassidic ideas and said goodbye. One student left the classroom together with me and asked to talk to me privately. The boy and his family are all mekuravim of the Chabad house, mekusharim to the Rebbe, and apparently they have several volumes of Igros Kodesh in their house.

The 13 year old boy told me he had a problem. He goes to shul, starts to daven with everyone else, but because he tries to have kavana

he can't keep up with the chazan. Before I could answer, he told me that he already asked the Rebbe through the Igros Kodesh and opened to an answer that said he should write chiddushei Torah on Shir HaShirim. There was also a response about continuing to daven with kavana even if he is unable to keep up with the chazan for the entire t'filla.

He is a smart and modest boy. I asked him whether he had something to say about Shir HaShirim. He was surprised by the question and said that on every verse he has several ideas and chiddushim!

I guided him in how to write and told him to consult with a rav about what he did. I explained the Chabad custom and how the Rebbeim pasken about davening with a congregation. I was happy and moved that the problem of a boy in Beit Shaan was about how to spend a long time davening as well as davening with a minyan. "Do not touch my anointed ones."

## SPREADING THE WORD

A relative of mine is a mashgiach in a restaurant in Yerushalayim. He called me and excitedly related:

"A group of about twenty



teachers and rabbanim had come in to the restaurant. They were the staff of the yeshiva high school in Beit Shaan. I overheard some of what they were discussing as part of their orientation meeting for the new school year. There was a sudden silence and the rosh yeshiva, Rabbi Binyamin Sofer, got up and said divrei Torah. I listened and my amazement grew from moment to moment. He was reviewing, nearly word for word, the D'var Malchus for Parshas Shoftim! He explained the difference between shoftim and shotrim and between the shoftim and yoatzim we will have in the future, and he spoke about the obligation to listen to the prophet. He said that this was the Lubavitcher Rebbe's sicha.

"When he was finished, I went over to him and asked whether he knew the shliach in Beit Shaan. 'What's the question? I daven regularly at the Chabad house, attend the farbrengens, and learn the D'var Malchus with Rabbi Ro'i Tor, the shliach to the kibbutzim near Beit Shaan!'"

Of course, Ro'i got a big yasher ko'ach.

## THE MOTHER INSISTED

Rabbi Noam Bar Tov, shliach at moshava Balforia near Afula, relates:

One of the families at the moshava decided to send their children to a religious school. Actually, it was the mother who was pushing for the religious school while the father leaned towards a school at kibbutz Meizra. The children, too, had differing opinions. The younger son protested that he had friends at his former school and who knew whether he'd make friends at the religious school.

I started looking into which religious school would suit them and found several possibilities, but

it was hard getting permission from the regional council for transportation and the school year was fast approaching. The day before the opening of school all the required permits had still not been obtained. Tension in the house was at a peak. The father was pressuring them to send the children to the kibbutz school but the mother insisting that they had to attend a religious school. She did all possible segulos – she wrote to the Rebbe, lit a candle, read the prayer of the Sh'lach for children, and finally, at the end of the final day of vacation, permission was granted with all the details worked out. Even the transportation costs were fully covered.

The father took them on the first day of school. On the way there, their son was flooded with worries about the new school. The father, who didn't want this school anyway, almost turned the car around ... He finally continued driving in the right direction.

Once school began, all were satisfied. The older son began studying with R' Noam for his bar mitzva. The father began calling him up to ask him questions about the month of Elul in order to be able to help his children do their homework – why do we blow the shofar, why do we say L'Dovid Hashem? And the younger son has friends.

## CHABAD – CHABAN, WHATEVER ...

Mesirus nefesh for a proper chinuch has been around for thousands of years. What follows are two stories from the period when the State came into being and there was the big aliya from Yemen and Russia.

In those days mighty battles were waged over where the hundreds and thousands of children of the new immigrants would be

placed when they arrived. Among the Chabad activists at the time were R' Zushe Wilyamovsky a"h (the Partisan) and R' Gershon Mendel Garelik.

One day, a large group of immigrants from Yemen arrived in Lud. One family after another were sent to the municipality each went to the department of education to reach an agreement as to which school to send their children. Representatives of the kibbutzim, Mizrahi, Chinuch Atzmai and the various government tracks were present, and these two young Lubavitchers were there as well. Each one tried to convince the immigrants to join them.

These two bachurim saw how hard it was to communicate with the new immigrants and noted how powerful the opposition was, and they came up with a creative idea. They knew that many of the Yemenite immigrants came from Chaban in Yemen, so they shouted, "Tell them you want Chinuch Chaban! Only Chaban!"

The Yemenites heard them and were thrilled to find out that there was Chinuch Chaban in Eretz Yisroel and when they were said, "Rak Chaban," they were understood to mean "Chabad."

This enabled them and their children and their children's children to get a proper chinuch, in Chabad.

## THE ROSH YESHIVA'S KISS

One day, a young man came to visit the Chabad yeshiva in Chaifa. It was evening and he did not have a place in the dormitory so he lay down on the floor in one of the rooms. This young man, from a Chassidishe family, had not walked the straight and narrow but had left yeshiva and registered in a religious pre-military academy. One of his friends in yeshiva had kept in touch



with him and was learning in the Chaifa branch of the yeshiva in Tzfas, and he had come to visit him.

The rosh yeshiva, Rabbi MM Wilschansky, walked into the room and saw a young man with an odd yarmulke lying on the floor. He asked the man who he was and where he came from. R' Wilschansky was excited to hear that this was the son of an old friend and he kissed the bachur and made sure he got a proper bed. He wished him well and a good night.

A few months went by and the young man began having second thoughts about his choices. He returned to yeshiva and began learning again.

One day, he told the friend who had kept in touch with him that the thing that made the greatest impact on him, which convinced him to return to yeshiva and Chassidishe ways, was the kiss the rosh yeshiva had given him. It moved him and gave him the feeling that he was not cut off and that he was an inseparable part of the family and of Chassidus.

## **A BRACHA IN MCDONALDS**

Rabbi Wilschansky's wife ran Chabad's daycare center in Chaifa for a while. The center also accepted children from irreligious families. One of these babies remained in the center till age three and then was sent to an irreligious preschool and elementary school.

One day, Mrs. Wilschansky met the mother of the boy. The mother told her that three years after the child had left the daycare center, he still asks her every day – when is Moshiach coming?

This boy, when he was two, surprised everybody with the Chassidishe chinuch he had received at the center. His mother once took him to eat a sandwich in

a local McDonalds. To her amazement, he took the sandwich and began chanting the HaMotzi bracha the way he had been taught. She was mortified as all the other patrons fell silent and only her two year old's clear voice could be heard reciting the bracha.

When he was finished, all the customers answered “amen” and applauded the courageous little boy. That's Chassidishe chinuch!

## **FROM THE WORLD OF SOCCER TO THE WORLD OF CHASSIDUS**

Rabbi Shlomo Chaim Lisson is the Rebbe's shliach in the Karmel neighborhood in western Chaifa. In the morning he teaches in the Chabad elementary school in Krayot.

A few years ago he had a student in his class whose sole interest was soccer. The child came to school only to play soccer during recess; during class time, he rested from the game and gathered his strength for the next recess. When he played, he beat everyone; he played with all his heart. This is why he needed a good rest until the next game.

In addition, he was an avid follower of professional soccer in Israel and around the world. He would wander the streets in order to watch the championship games on restaurant televisions or at a kiosk and slowly but surely he went downhill spiritually.

R' Lisson tried to intervene, taking him on as his project. He invited him to his house and lovingly convinced him that he was wasting his time and his best years. The child eventually dropped all the nonsense and devoted himself to his learning and Chassidishe behavior and today he is a wonderful bachur in 770. Those who know him would never believe that this is the same person.

Whenever he meets R' Lisson he

tells him, “It's all thanks to you. If you hadn't grabbed me at the time in the way you did, I wouldn't be the way I am today. Whatever I have today in Torah and Chassidus is all to your credit.”

## **THE POWER OF NIGGUNIM**

R' Lisson was asked to speak at the Kinus of teachers about the unique way in which he transformed his class. In an educational project that takes an entire year, he teaches his class 70 niggunei Chabad, with some words from the davening sung to the tunes.

His father, R' Avrohom, an elder Chassid in Kfar Chabad, is the originator of the concept. R' Avrohom uses niggunim when he davens for many hours a day, especially on Shabbos. Legend has it that one Shabbos morning his wife offered him a cup of coffee with milk and he said he was still fleishig because by the time he had finished davening and sat down for the Friday night meal, it was close to two in the morning.

The residents of Kfar Chabad are familiar with R' Lisson's lengthy davening. Sometimes when guests come for Shabbos, their hosts take them on a tour of the Kfar after the Friday night meal. The highlight is always when they quietly enter the shul at 12 or 1 at night and see an old Chassid still sitting and davening Kabbalas Shabbos or Maariv, singing Chassidishe niggunim.

R' Lisson, the son, teaches his students 70 niggunim and then takes them on an outing to Kfar Chabad, where they meet his father and hear him sing the special niggunim. Some say this is the best trip of the year, and it leaves an indelible Chassidic impression on the young students.

# CHINUCH IN A WORLD OF CHITZONIUS

By Rabbi Nechemia Schmerling

*A shliach and educator addresses the challenges we face today in providing a chinuch that develops a child's capacity for deep and organized thinking, as well as staying grounded in the world of Torah.*

One of the problems of our generation is superficiality. In an attempt to overcome the problem, different approaches have been taken. There are workbooks that color different portions of the topic in varying colors, or a sugya of Gemara may be presented in the form of a flow chart or simplified to an exaggerated and silly extent. All these approaches circumvent the problem of superficiality and don't provide real solutions to it.

It's a fact that all the new methods taught in teacher training programs do not begin to measure up to the level of scholastic achievement that has been the benchmark of our ancient traditional approach to learning. And yet, we need to adapt that approach to the capacities and distractions of today's

children.

In the Litvishe yeshiva world there is a concept of "talking in learning." Beyond the mitzva of "you shall teach your children" and internalizing the value of "and you shall delve in it [Torah] day and night," the proper use of this medium improves the child's ability to conduct a conversation with a beginning, middle and end.

Even in shiurim for adults, many interesting but off-the-subject questions are asked. Time and again, the lecturer – who as a yeshiva graduate has acquired a derech in learning – has to respect the questioner while explaining that the question has to be put aside for another time so as not to interrupt the flow of the lesson.

Conversing with a child, not

necessarily in learning (though that of course, is preferable) affords an opportunity to place emphasis on the direction of the discussion and to differentiate between what is important and what is trivial, giving the child the ability to think more deeply. So for example, if a child repeats an idea that he learned about, you can ask him: "You learned the machlokes of Abaya and Rava about *yi'ush shelo mi'daas* – whether it is considered a valid *yiush* or not? Tell me, what should interest us – the halachic disagreement, the halacha and its ramifications, or in which city Abaya lived when he said this halacha or what color his beard or clothing were?"

When a child tells about a book he read or an incident he saw and he goes from point to point and doesn't relate things in an organized way, you should stop him and ask him to go in order.

These kind of conversations and the development of an organized approach to thinking and talking, will give the child the basic tools to express himself in a clear and topical fashion.

You don't need to go far to find learning tools to acquire the necessary expertise, because every religious household has a Mishnayos, Gemara, and an array of s'farim from Tanach to halacha to Chassidus.

You need to match the text to the child's world in order to challenge him to learn and make progress from question to answer etc., so he will want to look into a Torah book and find it a source of inspiration.

I have two suggestions. One is to teach those chapters and tractates that relate to the child's world. It's true that the accepted practice from generations ago is to start learning Gemara with "eilu metzios" but "kav b'arba amos" is not part of the child's world and he immediately sees it as a burden. The other classic prakim are similar,

“ha’socher es ha’umnam,” “ha’mafkid,” etc. They are all fascinating but they cannot be the gate through a child today passes through to the world of Torah study.

However, if we start with “ha’meini’ach es ha’kad” which is about a person accidentally or purposely banging into another person’s object in a public domain and go from there to whether a person is allowed to implement justice on his own with the variety of examples cited there, this is eminently suitable for a child. It’s a chapter that discusses things that happen every day in the classroom, in the schoolyard, everywhere.

This approach is not just relevant to a teacher but to the parent too. When a child presents a dilemma that he’s facing, it’s a good idea to show the child that the question appears in s’farim. Knowing that the answer is there will motivate him to want to put in the effort to find out what it is.

My second suggestion is to liven up the sugya not only with flow charts and tables but with a story from the child’s own world. For example, if the child knows that the army is pursuing terrorists today, you can start a class with, “Today we are an elite unit that is going out to search for a wanted man.” After explaining the Gemara’s question, ask, “Is what we are looking for to be found in this question?” The “elite unit” continues and when they discover that what they are looking for is not in the answer, they need to focus their attention on the next question and so on. Of course one must be careful not to push the metaphor too far.

If you don’t want to connect the child’s world to messages like these, then find a short Chassidic story or saying that is connected with the material or enhances the explanation. The goal of the Gemara or halacha shiur is for the child to leave with a good feeling and the



**Rabbi Nechemia Schmerling**

desire for more. This can be accomplished when the lesson was enjoyable and not a nerve-wracking ordeal.

When we come to a statement of fact cited in the Gemara it’s enough for the teacher or parent to say the words, “let’s open a new file” a concept taken from the child’s world. Or when you learn Tosfos, you can introduce the child to the “entrance to the building,” “the first floor” – the question, “the second floor” – the answer, “the third floor” – the refutation etc. All of this will make it easier for the child relate to the words on the page and will improve his attitude towards learning Gemara.

### **What about reading books for enjoyment, especially the plethora of Jewish books?**

It’s hard to give a clear-cut answer to that. If it’s possible to get the child to make great achievements without this literature, that’s better. If the plentiful and positive material which describes the lives of g’dolei Yisroel succeeds in serving as an attraction, it’s still a good idea to serve as a filter and check out the books’ content. But if it’s a way to get a child involved with learning,

then this might be the price parents have to pay. That is besides the positive results that books of adventure and suspense have in developing the child’s imagination and the ability to draw mental pictures - traits that are very welcome to a Chassid, along with the enrichment of general knowledge.

We can utilize the reading of books to develop the abilities of the child by asking him to tell us what he read and discussing what is important and what is trivial. We can slow his speech down with the request to emphasize certain points, and hold an extended conversation to guide him in his reading and his ability to express himself verbally. In this way, we can indirectly give the child good tools that will serve him well when he reads sifrei kodesh and when he learns.

All the above relates to the child who enriches his world with books and is open to continued achievement in his studies. Of course, we must make certain that we were successful in the proper use of these tools, in helping him overcome all the different hurdles.

Our generation must contend with superficiality and hurriedness of life, and an over-involvement in materialism. Though the specific characteristics of each generation are unique, children who are looking to leave it all behind have been challenging. “What do I get out of this?” and “Who does this help?” since the time of the Gemara. The teacher or parent’s instinctive reaction is to beg the child to “just cooperate” and to fall back on oft-repeated arguments. Let’s not forget that the child has heard and seen this all before, and it is these things that he is lashing out against. In some cases there is even a certain enjoyment – conscious or unconscious – in being courted, which drives him to reject and resist. Even attempts to connect, to some

degree, to the new world of the rebel through acceptance, or to fight his rebellion using the knowledge of the world that he has become exposed to, are not the way to bring him back to the world of Torah.

Some children are drawn to materialism not out of any interest in rebellion, but simply resulting from chasing after materialistic desires. He is curious and there is the element of “stolen waters are sweet.” Personal example and patience, together with careful observation and waiting for the right opening, will definitely help.

A moment of disappointment in something that he found attractive or previously satisfying is an opportune time to conduct a serious and loving conversation. You can demonstrate to the child the emptiness and poverty of the material world in contrast to the worthwhile investment of the Torah world where there is refinement and satisfaction. The fact that the timing is exactly when the child is ready to hear you, can be the impetus for a change for the better in the child's behavior.

The other type is the rebel. This rebellion may be his way of legitimizing the world he has chosen, or may be a result of emotional baggage, where his pursuit of pleasure serves as fuel to drive his already confused self-image. A child in the throes of such a rebellion is suspicious and withdrawn, and he won't share his difficulties with anyone identified with the world that offended him and from which he is estranged. He won't cooperate with his parents or teachers, and will remain unmoved by even the most famous mashpiim who may attempt to reach him.

Here, it pays to speak to a professional, preferably a religious person. Do not, however, make the mistake of taking *the child* to this professional. This will only reinforce his rebelliousness as he will think,

“What happened? I'm a bit different than the world of my parents and they think I'm crazy?” The parent or teacher needs to describe the child's behavior and try to work out with the professional what is going on with the child and how to deal with it within the classroom or family.

A child whose rebellion is merely lashing out to protect his pursuit of pleasure is like an ox barreling forward who enjoys goring whatever is in its path. The best thing to do is to keep out of his way. A situation in which he races forward only to discover that there is nobody obstructing his path somewhat weakens the intensity of his rebelliousness. This takes the wind out of his sails so that, having satisfied his curiosity and experienced the disappointment of the big world, he will likely ease his way back on track. Even if, tragically, he remains outside, at least he won't be carrying around a grudge over the way he was treated by society.

Nonetheless, there must still be some boundaries that can never be crossed, such as blatant disrespect or undermining the authority of the teacher and the very Torah itself. A common example of this is how boys like these often mistreat Torah texts as an act of protest and even go to the extreme of throwing them into a far corner. When I see this behavior, especially in public, I always stop the lesson and describe to the children the decrees against s'farim throughout history, the burning of the Talmud in Paris in the Middle Ages or the burning of s'farim by the Nazis, and top it off with the famous line, “Where they burn books, they will eventually burn people,” emphasizing that this led to the breaking of all human barriers. Presenting things properly, even without referring to the child who threw the books, will usually be effective.

Another common phenomenon is

the adopting of obnoxious behavior like ostentatious spitting and outbursts accompanied by threatening hand motions etc. Here, too, it is appropriate to draw attention to the need for limits. You can say, “My dear friend, if you learned in the jungle of Uganda, sitting on the dirt floor and writing on a wooden board, would this kind of behavior be tolerated? Fortunately, you are in this classroom because over there you would have an unpleasant encounter with a whip and everybody would consider that the right way to treat a *porek ol* (one who throws off the yoke) like you.”

In many instances, at home and in school, we don't identify when a child is struggling with a problem. When we do know about it, we don't always offer the right response to the child. Even if we make a mistake, and sometimes mess up, the right thing to do is always to attempt to patch things up and not to give up. Either way, we have accomplished something. If we are successful, we achieved the goal. And if we are not successful, the child will eventually identify with our efforts to approach him. And as opposed to pleading, which tends to intensify the negative behavior, our constant involvement with his issues will cause the child to feel that we really care about him, and in the end it will help you achieve good results and at least won't leave the child feeling that he cried out for help and nobody responded.

In general, consistent effort does away with the feeling that we treat him lightly or don't care, and our caring has the spiritual ability to make a difference as we say that it's a *chazaka* that our efforts don't go wasted and they have the ability to expand the vessels for Hashem's *brachos* for success in *chinuch*.

*The above appeared in the magazine  
“Chinuch B'Derech HaMelech”*

# THE REBBE ENCOURAGED THE SINGING OF YECHI BEFORE MILLIONS OF VIEWERS

Rabbi Shmuel Menachem Mendel Butman  
Director of HaMatteh HaOlami to Bring Moshiach and director of Tzach

*When we produced the T-shirt that said ‘Moshiach is on his way’ and showed the Rebbe a sample while on line for ‘dollars,’ the Rebbe asked how many T-shirts we made. We said 2000 and the Rebbe said he would take one and we would still have 1999, and yasher ko’ach for the shirts.*

*On Yud Shevat, 5753/1993, The International Campaign to Bring Moshiach arranged a live broadcast, in front of millions of viewers, of Kabbalas HaMalchus of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach. \* The Rebbe approved and encouraged this.*

It was about five days after the sicha of Chaf-Ches Nissan, on 3 Iyar, 5751. R’ Moshe Slonim a”h and R’ Dovid Nachshon, who were very involved in inyanei Moshiach and Geula, met in the office of the Chabad Mobile Mitzva Tanks in Crown Heights with about forty of Anash to come up with a plan “of what to do and how to do it, to actually bring Moshiach.”

Among the participants were: R’ Mottel Chein, R’ Shlomo Majeski, R’ Berel Lipsker, R’ Yoel Kahn, R’ Leibel Altein, R’ Pinye Korf, R’ Kuti Rapp, R’ Itche Springer, and R’ Yaakov Spritzer, as well as many others.

They decided to form a worldwide Moshiach organization to promote activities in inyanei Moshiach. They called it “The International Campaign (HaMatteh HaOlami) to Bring Moshiach” and Rabbi Shmuel Butman was picked to run it.

Right after the meeting, R’ Nachshon reported to the Rebbe about who participated and about

the decision to form this new organization. The Rebbe approved of the name and of the director.

We spoke with R’ Butman, who told us about the work of the Matteh:

“We were encouraged continuously by the Rebbe for every single activity we did. The Rebbe responded with blessings to every single letter. When we gave the Rebbe material that we produced, he said yasher ko’ach and said he would take it with him to the Ohel. When we produced the T-shirt that said ‘Moshiach is on his way’ and showed the Rebbe a sample while on line for ‘dollars,’ the Rebbe asked how many T-shirts we made. We said 2000 and the Rebbe said he would take one and we would still have 1999 ... and he added, ‘**A yasher ko’ach for the shirts.**’”

**Did you receive specific horaos?**

Yes. At the beginning of Adar, 5752, we sent a report in to the Rebbe about the activities that were done. The Rebbe responded to us with a bracha and added, “**Shira v’zimra sixty days.**” When we reported about certain difficulties the Rebbe repeated this horaa.

At first we did not understand

the concept of “bittul b’shishim” in the deeper sense until the Rebbe explained it at length the next Shabbos, about how undesirable things could be nullified in sixty. We considered this a horaa that was given specifically to the Matteh HaOlami to Bring Moshiach and that is why, each year, singing and dancing are arranged in 770 for the month(s) of Adar.

**The biggest thing you did was the coronation you arranged for Yud Shevat, 5753, when the Rebbe encouraged the singing of Yechi that was broadcast live via satellite all over the world. When did this idea come up?**

It was the idea of several people, including R’ Menachem Gerlitzky who was so devoted to the organization. We examined the Rebbe’s sichos of recent years and came to the conclusion that it was time for the entire world to accept the Rebbe’s malchus, and we thought that Yud Shevat, the day the Rebbe accepted the nesius, was the right time. Let everyone around the world see how the Rebbe came out to the public and encouraged the singing of Yechi and take this opportunity to accept the Rebbe’s malchus with the proclamation of Yechi.

**Did you get the Rebbe’s approval for this plan?**

Yes. We gave the Rebbe the plans and asked for his approval and only after receiving his approval and his blessing did we get it underway.

**Rumor has it that there were rabbanim who opposed your plan and even publicized letters to this effect ...**

There is a lot of confusion and distortion about this. Rabbanim did *not* put out a letter that opposed the Rebbe’s very own approval of the plan. What happened was as follows:

There were some askanim who maintained that the Rebbe’s approval was meant solely for a broadcast in Chabad centers and not for the



satellite that would be seen on televisions viewed by millions of people, which was our plan.

Finally, on 5 Shevat, the Badatz of Crown Heights, the Beis Din Rabbanei Lubavitch HaKlali and the Beis Din Rabbanei Chabad in Eretz Yisroel put out a joint letter under the heading, “Fearful Warning” which said:

“Since certain things were publicized regarding the gathering on Yud Shevat... that could lead to a chilul sheim Lubavitch, we have found it necessary to warn about not doing television or radio for the outside ... the broadcast should be just for Anash and not for the outside because it is liable to ruin more than to fix. The entire inyan is only for Anash and not for the outside.”

The next day, we showed the Rebbe the entire plan once again and the proclamation of the rabbanim about participating in it. The Rebbe approved it and gave a bracha, and R’ Leibel Groner publicized this in writing, following which the rabbanim issued a retraction of their original letter. This is what they wrote:

#### **Clarification**

**In light of the Rebbe MH”M’s explicit agreement and bracha**

**(transmitted by the secretary, R’ Leibel Groner) to making a satellite (hook-up) on Sunday, 9 Shevat at 5:00 pm, we hereby wish to make known that “there is nothing to be said after the king has spoken” (and therefore, the letter in our name is cancelled).**

**Signatories in the name of the battei ha’dinim: Rabbi Yehuda Kalman Marlow, R’ Yitzchok Hendel, Rabbi Mordechai Shmuel Ashkenazi.**

Due to the sweeping approbation that we received, we had rabbanei Anash from all over the world sign ads calling upon the public to gather on Yud Shevat for a coronation and the proclamation of Yechi. In all Lubavitch communities worldwide we arranged for people to be able to see and join in the coronation in 770.

**Did people respond positively?**

And how! Until this day there was never a worldwide broadcast from 770 as there was that evening. It started with ads from rabbanim in *Kfar Chabad* magazine and after that it wasn’t necessary to advertise it any further ... Within a very short time this was being spoken about in all the Israeli media and from there it went to all media worldwide.

During the event itself, over

By Divine Providence, that night was the Super Bowl, the most-watched American television broadcast with an average of 106.5 million viewers. Nobody plans an event or family gathering on Super Bowl night. So millions of people were anticipating the game when there was a sudden announcement that the start of the game would be postponed and in the meantime the coronation of the Lubavitcher Rebbe would be broadcast.

The Rebbe came out for Maariv, knowing what was taking place. In addition, some of the secretaries made sure to tell the Rebbe again about the event and the extent of the publicity and the Rebbe was still willing to come out.

Unlike most days, the Rebbe stayed out on the open porch for about eight minutes and he

ובזה נוסף חיים ובריאות בחיי המלך, כמבואר בשחת ק' הידועה  
 ככל החיות אשר שיוח כל קיום שהם תלויים, בשעת המצות עברו (לפי שנתן ג.) אנשים,  
 לענין קבלת כל מים "שיוח יח חבית בשית - 770,  
 "הרשימה" - שיוח יח מכל העולם - 771,  
 רבני אנשי תורה, שיוח יח מכל העולם כולו, ישאו רבדים על המסחר  
 כי אנא אנשי תורה, שיוח יח ארצה ואנשי ארץ מלך המשיח, ועל תלובן תפסי  
 של תרבות יח מלך.

**The advertisement of the rabbanim  
the Rebbe approved. The ad was  
published in Kfar Chabad and the  
Israeli media picked it up.**

vigorously encouraged the singing of Yechi in front of the cameras broadcasting the event to millions of viewers. People also noticed

something unusual in that the Rebbe focused his gaze on each camera separately so that the Rebbe's direct focus was a part of each individual broadcast.

This strengthened the feeling we all had that the Rebbe was pleased and interested in a global effort of kabbalas ha'malchus.

Aside from the direct impact of the satellite broadcast in which everybody proclaimed Yechi seven times, it was an impetus for massive activity because from then on, the “secret” of the identity of Moshiach was out.

Merkaz and Tzeirei Aguch in Eretz Yisroel, for example, produced explanatory material on the topic of Moshiach for Yud-Alef Nissan, shortly afterwards, in which they referred to the p'sak din of rabbanim about the Rebbe being Moshiach and his positive regard for this inyan. On the side of the page they included a form for kabbalas ha'malchus.

The logo for Raskin's is prominently displayed on the left, featuring the name "Raskin's" in a large, bold, serif font, with the tagline "if it grows we have it" in a smaller, italicized script font below it. To the right of the logo is a stylized illustration of a fruit stand. The stand has a striped awning and is filled with various fruits like apples, oranges, and grapes. A sign on the stand reads "We Deliver". Above the stand, a speech bubble contains the text "Consistently Superior".

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