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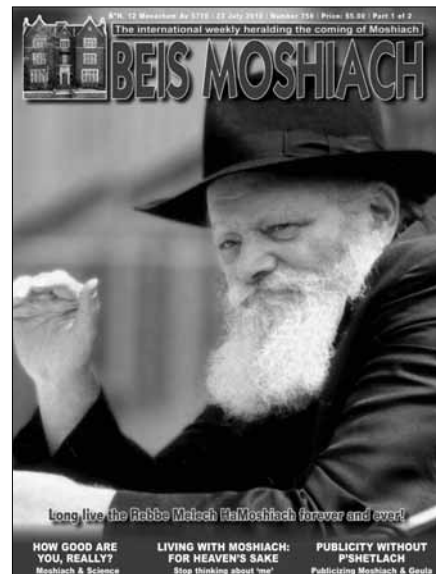
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WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME?

Story | Rabbi Chaim Sasson



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TO PLEAD WITH G-D

Sichos In English

WHAT IS PRAYER?

The Rambam describes prayer as follows: [1]

The obligation [this] commandment entails is to offer supplication and prayer every day; to praise the Holy One, blessed be He, and afterwards to petition for all one's needs with requests and supplications, and then to give praise and thanks to G-d for the goodness that He has bestowed.

In particular, the fundamental dimension of prayer is to ask G-d for our needs.

The praise and thanksgiving which precedes and follows these requests is merely a supplementary element of the mitzvah. [2]

A person must realize that G-d is the true source for every aspect of sustenance and blessing he receives, and he must approach G-d sincerely, with heartfelt requests. [3]

Often, however, we do not content ourselves with asking G-d for our needs. We desire a measure of bounty that goes beyond our needs, and indeed, is far more than what we deserve.

We request a boon that reflects G-d's boundless generosity.

For every Jew is as a dear to G-d as a only son born to parents in their vintage years. [4] And because of that inner closeness, He grants us favor that surpasses our needs and our worth.

TWO INTERPRETATIONS OF MOSHE'S PLEA

These concepts are reflected in the name of this week's Torah reading VaEschanan.

VaEschanan means "and he pleaded," and refers to Moshe's petition to G-d to enter Eretz Yisroel. [5]

Our Sages' interpretation of this term provides each of us with guidance with regard to the way we should approach G-d in prayer.

The Sifri states: [6]

[Moshe] could have depended... on his good deeds. Instead, [he] asked G-d for a gift.... How much more so, [lesser men] should make requests [of G-d in this manner].

Alternatively, [va'es'chanan] is one of the ten terms used for prayer.

The Midrash communicates similar concepts, stating: [7]

[This] is one of the ten terms used for prayer. Of them all, Moshe adopted [this approach], one of supplication.

From this, we can learn that no created being can make demands from its Creator, for even Moshe [approached G-d] in a tone of supplication, [asking] for a free gift.

EVERYTHING IS KINDNESS

Although there is a similarity between the statements of the Sifri and the Midrash, in particular, the commentaries [8] note a distinction

between them.

For the Sifri sees the concept of prayer and that of requesting a free gift as two different interpretations, while the Midrash fuses the two concepts into a single understanding.

To focus on this distinction more closely:

G-d is "merciful to all His works," [9] giving each his sustenance as required.

Moreover, when a person's deeds are worthy, he is assured: [10] "If you follow My laws... I will provide you with rain at the appropriate time." [11] Therefore, a person might have grounds to believe that he deserves G-d's assistance.

Nevertheless, even in such a situation, prayer is necessary as reflected by the verse: [12] "Kindness is Yours, for You render to every man according to his deeds."

Although a person's conduct may be worthy of Divine blessing, since G-d transcends the material realm entirely, for G-d's beneficence to be en clothed in a material form requires a unique measure of kindness. And this kindness is evoked by prayer.

Therefore, there is no way a person can demand favor from G-d. At all times, he must make requests of Him as one asks for a present.

This enables us to understand the interpretation of the Midrash mentioned previously.

VaEschanan teaches us the manner in which we should make petitions of G-d.

When asking for His goodness, one should plead with humility, rather than demand; even when deserving, a person should not rely on his merits, but should ask G-d for generosity and kindness.

NOT ONLY A HUMBLE TONE, A HUMBLE HEART

The first interpretation cited in the Sifri asks for a deeper commitment.

Not only should humility characterize the manner in which one

approaches G-d, it should permeate one's being.

A person should genuinely feel that he is asking for favor which he does not deserve. For regardless of the virtue of his deeds, there is always a higher standard which could be demanded of him. Therefore, his request is for "a free gift," unearned kindness. [13]

This approach was personified by Moshe, whom the Torah describes [14] as "more humble than any man on the face of the earth."

Moshe realized his own positive virtues, but he also understood that these virtues were granted to him by G-d, and felt that had they been granted to another individual, that person might have accomplished more. [15]

WHEN CAN A HEAVENLY DECREE BE CHANGED

There is a deeper dimension to the difference in interpretation between the Midrash and the Sifri.

Moshe was praying to enter Eretz Yisroel.

Although G-d had previously decreed that he would not enter the Holy Land, after the conquests of the land of Sichon and Og, Moshe thought that perhaps G-d would relent and therefore, turned to Him in heartfelt prayer. [16]

There is a difference of opinion among our Sages [17] whether prayer can have an effect after a negative decree has been issued from Above or only beforehand.

The Midrash follows the view that prayer can avert a harsh decree even after the decree has been issued. Therefore, Moshe was able to approach G-d through one of the accepted forms of prayer.

The first opinion in the Sifri, by contrast, follows the view that ordinarily, prayer can only help before a decree has been issued, but not afterwards. Therefore, Moshe had to go beyond the commonplace approach to prayer and ask for a free

gift. [18]

REACHING ABOVE OUR GRASP

Chassidic thought explains Moshe's request for "a free gift" as follows:

Had Moshe been permitted to lead the Jewish people into Eretz Yisroel, he would have been able to draw forth a level of G-dly revelation which our ordinary Divine service cannot reach.

For there are limits to the spiritual peaks man can reach through his efforts; the highest levels are dependent solely on G-d's initiative.

These levels cannot be reached by the standard approach to prayer. For prayer centers on man's efforts to refine himself and his environment, and therefore Moshe asked for "a free gift."

DOING MORE THAN WE CAN

G-d did not grant Moshe's request, because even the highest levels of revelation are not given as "free gifts," but instead must be realized by man through his Divine service.

The service required to draw down these levels, however, is not one that man can conceive or plot out on his own. It was beyond even Moshe's conception. Instead, it is G-d who charts this pattern of service and with this intent He has led the Jewish people on their odyssey through history.

For this reason, Moshe's prayer was not accepted, and it was Yehoshua and not Moshe who led the Jews into Eretz Yisroel.

Although this brought about the possibility of the Jews being driven into exile, this is part of the Divine plan to enable mankind to carry out the service necessary to bring about the Redemption. For it is the Divine service of ordinary men, confronting everyday experience which will make

the Redemption a reality.

Parshas VaEschanan is always read on Shabbos Nachamu, "the Shabbos of comfort."

The true comfort for the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash and the exile is the realization that these are only phases guiding us to the ultimate Redemption.

Leading us on a course above mortal understanding, G-d enables man to become His partner in creation, [19] and make the world a dwelling which they will share.

Adapted from: Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XXII, pgs. 115-117; Vol. XXIV, p. 28ff

NOTES:

1. Mishneh Torah, Hilchos T'filla 1:2.
2. This is reflected in the wording used by the Rambam, and the interpretation of his position by the Seifer HaChinuch (mitzvah 233). Note, however, the wording of the Shulchan Aruch HaRav 185:2 which refers to "the recitation of G-d's praise as the fundamental element of prayer."
3. In this vein, we can understand the connection to the Rambam's opening statement in Hilchos T'filla 1:1 that prayer is "the service of the heart," i.e., shaping one's feelings. For what affects most people most are their material needs, and appreciating and asking G-d for these matters requires a re-definition of one's inner feelings.
4. Keser Shem Tov, Hosafos, sec. 133.
5. Deuteronomy 3:23.
6. Commenting on the above verse, quoted (with slight changes) in Rashi's commentary to the verse.
7. D'varim Rabba 2:1; Midrash Tanchuma, VaEschanan, sec. 3.
8. Chizkuni on Deuteronomy 3:23; Levush on Rashi's commentary to that verse.
9. Psalms 85:1. Note K'subos 67b, Bava Metzia 85a.
10. In particular, a unique measure of Divine beneficence is assured the Jewish people as reflected by our Sages' statement (Bava Metzia 85a): Since they are the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, even the feasts of King Shlomo at the height of his opulence are not sufficient recompense for them.
11. Leviticus 26:3. In an expanded sense, rain includes all our material needs. Geshem, Hebrew for "rain," shares the same root as Gashmius, "material substance."
12. Psalms 62:13.
13. In this context, the Sifri's statement that Moshe could have depended on his good deeds must be interpreted to mean that, according to the mankind's prevailing understanding, Moshe could have depended on the virtue of his deeds. Moshe himself, however, had deeper knowledge, and therefore, greater humility, and made his requests as a petition for a present (Maharik).
14. Numbers 12:3.
15. See Maamarei Admur HaZakein 5562, p. 51, and the explanation of this concept in the essay in this series entitled "Pride that Runs Deeper Than Self."
16. Rashi, commenting on Deuteronomy 3:23.
17. Rosh HaShana 17b.
18. See also Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XVI, p. 277, which explains that when individuals who possess merit appeal to G-d's kindness without depending on their virtues, they evoke a measure of Divine favor which surpasses the natural order.
19. Cf. Shabbos 10a.

LIVING WITH MOSHIACH: FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE

By Rabbi Zvi Homnick

The Rebbe speaks to us in terms of the highest levels of selflessness, acting only for the sake of bringing about the divine revelation of G-d Himself and fulfilling His desire for a dwelling place in this world, to the extent that one feels that his entire existence from the moment he awakens to his last waking moment of the day is only “to bring to the days [i.e., revelation] of Moshiach.”

IN HEAVEN'S NAME

I can vividly recall sitting in my study sometime in the early nineties and going through the talks of the Rebbe Rashab recorded in *Toras Sholom*, when I encountered the talk where the Rebbe Rashab says, “Only a Misnaged would say that he is acting purely *l’sheim Shamayim* (lit. for Heaven’s name).” Having grown up in a Misnagdic environment, I could readily attest to the veracity of that statement except for the “only” part, as I had no real way of knowing whether other

groups did or did not claim purity of motive with any kind of regularity.

In fact, I had long puzzled over this phenomenon well before reading what the Rebbe Rashab had to say on the topic. That is because the need for purity of motive in the study of Torah and the performance of Mitzvos was a central issue of debate in the early years of the Chassidic movement, with the Misnagdim taking the more lenient approach and legitimating the service of G-d based on motives of reward and punishment.

Reb Chaim of Volozhin, although

having adopted a more measured approach in terms of his opposition to Chassidus than his mentor, the Vilna Gaon, was the only respected leader of his time that attempted to codify the theological basis for the Misnagdic point of view in his *Nefesh HaChayim*, beyond the tired arguments against change or the libelous accusations fabricated from whole cloth. In that work, he adopts the position that since most people are incapable of achieving the fullest degree of selflessness in the service of G-d, it is actually preferable to serve G-d for the sake of reward than to focus one’s energies on trying to “cleave to G-d” so as to transcend any personal ulterior motives outside of love for G-d.

According to R’ Chaim, the closest one can likely get to the idea of *lishma* in Torah study is to make the focus on the desire to know and properly understand what one is learning one’s primary conscious intention. The inability to reach beyond that for the overwhelming majority of people is such a foregone conclusion that to take precious time away from learning in order to work on one’s inner motives and intentions would fall under the category of *bittul Torah* (wasting time from Torah study). This

position was hardly anything new, and in fact almost mirrors that of the RaMChAL in his classic work *Mesilas Yeshtarim*, where he actively discourages most people from even attempting to reach the level of “Chassid,” one who serves G-d for His sake, warning that it is not only unattainable for the majority of people but can also be dangerous since it is very easy to fool oneself and stray into the arena of self-delusion.

Stop! Okay, although I could go on for many pages, since this is not meant to be a scholarly treatise, let it just suffice to say that the Chassidic view is, as the Rebbe Rayatz puts it in *Kuntres Toras HaChassidus*, “Our teacher, the Baal Shem Tov, opened the pipeline of ability in the service of Hashem, with instruction and guidance that each and every Jew can serve G-d with love and fear.” Thus, the position of the Chassidic movement was based not only on the views of almost every one of the Rishonim (early Talmudic commentaries and legal codifiers) and the overwhelming body of Kabbalistic writings (see *Yesod HaAvoda*, *Slonim*), but also on the fact that the “diminishing of the generations” argument had no standing in the face of the new revelation of Chassidus and the “opening of the pipeline” by the Baal Shem Tov.

In light of all of the above, I found it more than passing strange the frequency with which I heard declarations of acting purely for the sake of Heaven from self-identifying Misnagdim, great and small. Although this question had bothered me on and off over the years, and even more so after I became more knowledgeable on the subject, when I encountered the same observation from the Rebbe Rashab, I felt that I had to get to the bottom of the matter.

HEAVENLY PURCHASE

The Mishna at the end of Tractate Taanis (4:8, Talmud Bavli 26b) says, “...that there were no celebratory holidays for the Jewish people like the fifteenth day of Av and Yom Kippur when the daughters of Jerusalem would go out and dance in circles in the vineyards...” The Mishna cites what the girls would say so that the young single men would choose them, but the Gemara (31a) goes into more detail, “The beautiful amongst them, what would they say? Set your eyes on beauty, because [as the Sages say] a woman is only for beauty. Those of good lineage amongst them, what would they say? Set your eyes upon family, because [as the Sages say] a woman is only for children. The homely amongst them, what would they say? Acquire your purchase for the sake of Heaven, as long as you crown me with golden jewelry.”

Obviously, there is much that needs explaining regarding this account of the twice yearly courtship expo that took place back in the Temple era, but listing all the questions that come to mind (although essential for training the mind in analytical thinking) might induce tedium in those that only signed on for a brief article. So let’s take a look at what the Mishna there cites as the Biblical allusion to this practice.

The verse is from Shir HaShirim (3:11) and begins with the words, “*Tze’ena U’re’ena*,” “go out and see.” The Chassidic interpretation of this expression, quoted in different versions in the name of the Alter Rebbe, is that in order for a soul that has been sent down to inhabit a human body (in the verse; *B’nos Yerushalayim*) to “see G-dliness,” it must first “go out” of “self” along with the constraints of the body and animal soul.

“Going out” of one’s self can be understood on many different levels,

and in the broadest sense of the term is a lifelong labor-intensive process. However, on its most simple level, Chassidim have always understood this to mean training the mind to think about loftier, G-dly ideas, and not about me and my thoughts, feelings and desires, etc. For the lofty souls of the Tzaddikim, simply focusing their thoughts and feelings towards G-d, especially as He is revealed in Chassidus, is enough for them to become enraptured by the transcendent beauty and “glory of the King,” and completely lose themselves in “cleaving to G-d.”

However, for those who are more earthbound by their less refined physicality, the first step in this direction is alluded to in the first Mitzva in the Torah, to be fruitful and multiply through reproduction of the species, as the early Chassidim would say, “The first Mitzva is to make another Jew.” By investing my time and energy into putting another person’s material needs and spiritual growth and development before my own, I am able to transcend my own self-centered orientation and connect to G-d and G-dliness.

Then there are those whose inability to “see G-dliness” is not only due to the concealment of this world and of the animal soul and body, but is also due to the fact that “your sins are separating between you and your G-d.” For such an individual (as most of us are), it is not enough to study Chassidus and meditate on G-d and G-dliness, nor to channel his energies and thoughts into doing for others and putting them before himself, there has to be *t’shuva* – repentance. True penitence can only come through the realization accompanied by deep regret that the source of all my iniquities is the focus on self. Nobody ever committed a sin without first thinking, “I want,” “I need,” I think,” “I feel,” and so on.

For Chassidim the first step in spiritual growth and development in the service of G-d has always been “stop thinking about ‘me.’”

Through repentance, that same person who was so steeped in self-interest and self-gratification that he could actually defy, wittingly or unwittingly, a direct commandment from G-d Himself, becomes so disgusted with and distrustful of his own thoughts and desires that all he wants is to “go out” of himself, and this actually enables him to do so in ways that his spiritual betters cannot.

For Chassidim the first step in spiritual growth and development in the service of G-d has always been “stop thinking about ‘me.’” In Judaism, and especially in Chassidic teachings, a big part of the spiritual significance of marriage is that it empowers and enables one to grow beyond and transcend the pettiness and self-absorption of the child who has all his material and emotional needs (hopefully) provided for by his parents, to start thinking about others and their needs and to stop thinking about “me.”

And the aforementioned account in the Mishna and Gemara lays out the spiritual steps that each type of person needs to take to “go out and see” G-d on “the day of His marriage [Yom Kippur – the day of the giving of the Second Tablets] and the day of His rejoicing [the rebuilding of the Temple in the future time, represented by the 15th of Av, the day of the full moon following the destruction].” And it also emphasizes that the ultimate celebration of “going out and seeing” is associated with the approach of the *Baal T’shuva* – the penitent – as these celebration take place on days associated with forgiveness of sins and rebuilding

that which was destroyed.

HEAVEN IS CALLING

Theoretical theological disputes have practical real life implications. The Chassid knows that every thought that he has that begins with “I” is suspect and should either be rejected out of hand or at the very least avoided to the extent possible. A Chassid who “works on himself” (as opposed to one in name or affiliation only) will be deeply ashamed and broken by such thoughts, feelings and desires, and will work tirelessly to focus his thoughts “Heavenward.” The notion of claiming for himself absolute purity of motive, even as he totally believes that of his Rebbe, is so completely beyond the pale that he is shocked in disbelief or overcome with hilarity upon discovering that there actually are people who make such claims regarding themselves, let alone people who don’t learn and even oppose the teachings of Chassidus.

The Misnaged, on the other hand, has no option but to continue thinking about himself, as he has been told that according to Torah he is doomed to do so. The best he can hope for is to immerse himself in his learning to the extent that he is so caught up in the subject matter that he forgets himself for a brief moment, but even then he will quickly come back to “I say,” “I think,” “I hold.” When a person has no means to step outside of himself and get any kind of objective sense of who he is and where he is holding from a higher perspective, it is almost inevitable that he will delude himself, and that is why, “Only a

Misnaged would say that he is acting purely *l’sheim Shamayim*.”

And yet, in our generation, the Rebbe speaks to us in terms of the highest levels of selflessness, acting only for the sake of bringing about the divine revelation of G-d Himself and fulfilling His desire for a dwelling place in this world, to the extent that one feels that his entire existence from the moment he awakens to his last waking moment of the day is only “to bring to the days [day = revelation] of Moshiach.” How do we reconcile that with a two-hundred-plus-year-old tradition that has trained us to be suspect of our personal motives and to focus on “go out and see?”

The answer is that starting with the Baal Shem Tov, Chassidus has not been simply about a different tactical approach, but the idea that the Rebbe of each generation gives the people of his generation the ability to “go out” of the constraints and challenges of that time and “to see” and acquire the spiritual revelations and powers that he/we drew down through the very “pipeline” opened by the Baal Shem Tov. And starting with the Baal Shem Tov, it has always been about tapping into the divine energies shining forth from the impending Redemption and using them to make the final Redemption a reality.

It is exactly in the Chassidic tradition of suspecting one’s own motives in the face of G-dly truth that compels us to stop trying to analyze our own motives and those of others, and focus on fulfilling the Rebbe’s “instruction and guidance” in how to “go out” and what we need “to see.” This must be done with the complete confidence and belief that we have been given the strengths and abilities and that Hashem Himself is waiting impatiently for us to bring about the rebuilding of the Holy Temple with the coming of Moshiach, immediately, NOW!

THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT

By Shneur Zalman Berger
Translated By Michoel Leib Dobry

We recently commemorated eighty years since the Rebbe Rayatz's visit to America. The trip concluded with a White House meeting with the President of the United States.

THE REBBE AND THE PRESIDENT

Throughout his months-long visit to the United States eighty years ago, the Rebbe Rayatz stayed in numerous locations, met with hundred of dignitaries, and had direct contact with thousands of American Jews, who despite the coldness of America, wanted to see and get an up-close impression of the Rebbe, who had come from faraway Europe.

The Rebbe's visit to the United States was reaching its conclusion, but there was still one very important stop left – Washington, D.C. The Rebbe Rayatz left New York en route to the White House for a meeting with the President of the United States to thank him for his tremendous help and assistance to the Jews of the Soviet Union. The Rebbe came to Washington accompanied by his son-in-law, the Rashag, and several prominent Chabad askanim in the

United States.

The connection with the President of the United States was extremely important because of the numerous opportunities available to the President for pressuring the U.S.S.R. to improve the conditions for the Jews living within her borders. At the very beginning of the Rebbe's visit, Rabbi Mordechai Dubin – member of the Latvian Parliament and an outstanding Lubavitcher chassid – arrived in the United States for meetings with government officials, foremost among them President Herbert Clark Hoover, in a meeting that received considerable coverage throughout the print media in those days.

Rabbi Dubin worked in Washington for the benefit of Russian Jews. His primary achievement was that he arranged that Soviet Jews should be able to obtain US visas in Latvia on their way to America. His meeting with

President Hoover also dealt with Russian Jewry, and while the content of this part of the meeting was not made public, the courteous and diplomatic discussions regarding the nation of Latvia were disclosed in great detail. The President told his honored guest that just as he had been a friend of Latvia up until now, he would continue this friendship in the future. For his part, as a member of the Latvian Parliament, Rabbi Dubin thanked President Hoover for the tremendous assistance that the United States provided to Latvia.

Rabbi Dubin's meeting with the American President was scheduled for the start of the Rebbe's visit to the United States, while the Rebbe himself came to the nation's capital towards the end of the visit.

The Rebbe boarded a train en route to Washington on the night of the 14th of Tammuz, after midnight. He was accompanied





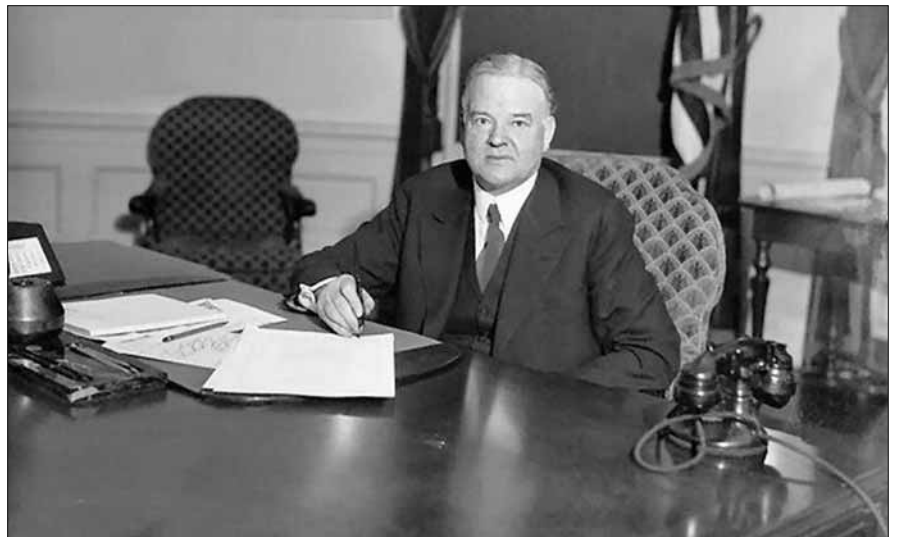
The Rebbe Rayatz in Washington. From left to right: Attorney Asher Rabinowitz, R' Chaim Elchanan Fogelman, R' Chaim Zalman Kramer, the Rebbe Rayatz, the Rashag

דער ליבאוויטשער רבי און אַוויזאָן און ווידעם
היו ביים פרעזידענט

The papers announcing the Rebbe's visit to the President: "The Lubavitcher Rebbe on a visit to the White House with the President"

ער דערציערט פון דעם רבי'ס באזוכה
בן פֿינעףצנט האנדערט לעצטן
דאטירטאג.
דער באזוכה איז געווען אין דאנערשט
דעם פינעףצנטן סוף דער פינעףצנט
יאָר אקטאָבער יום אידעל סוף דעם
אינסערעס וואס די רעגירונג געהאט
אין אירעם געשעענישען עבר יום.
די פינעףצנט אונטערזאכט פון דעם
ברעזידענט איז געווען אן אנדער באן
ווייל וואס דאס גור אידעל אן אידעל
אין אירעלייט האבען דא א גלייכע
צוקונפט.

The Rashag describes the visit in *Der Morgen Journal*



The Hon. Herbert Clark Hoover, 31st President of the United States, sitting in the Oval Office of the White House in 1930 (5690)

by his son-in-law, Rabbi Shmaryahu Gurary, Agudas Chassidei Chabad chairman Rabbi Chaim Zalman Kramer, and Attorney Asher Rabinowitz.

The Rebbe arrived in Washington at seven in the morning, and later that Thursday

afternoon, the Rebbe Rayatz came to the White House. President Herbert Hoover greeted him with great honor and respect. The Rebbe thanked the President for the freedoms that America gives to its Jewish citizens and for the genuine concern expressed by

the Government of the United States for the need to improve conditions of Jews in Russia and other countries throughout the world.

The visit received much publicity in the American newspapers and aroused

widespread attention.

After concluding his visit to Washington, the Rebbe returned to New York.

CHAG HA'GEULA IN NEW YORK

At the start of his visit, the Rebbe Rayatz stayed in New York for a relatively lengthy period of time, and only afterwards did he set out on his journey to strengthen Yiddishkait in other cities throughout the country. Towards the end of the visit, he stayed in New York again for a few weeks, save for his brief trip to Washington, until his departure on the 22nd of Tammuz. During this time, he lodged at the Hotel Newton in Manhattan.

The highlight of this stay came during the Holiday of Redemption, Yud-Beis and Yud-Gimmel Tammuz. The story of the Rebbe's imprisonment was still fresh in everyone's mind, as it had only been three years since it had all happened. Together with the material preparations in organizing this great farbrengen, there were spiritual preparations as well: The Rebbe printed a special kuntres of maamarim in honor of the Chag HaGeula.

The kuntres was called "*Drushim For Public Study on the Days of Chag HaGeula, Yud-Beis and Yud-Gimmel Tammuz*," and contained three maamarim from the Rebbe Rayatz: "Kol HaMaarich B'Echad," "Karov Hashem L'Chol Korav," and "Rabba Chazyei L'Rav Hamnuna."

The Yud-Beis Tammuz farbrengen was celebrated with great pomp and splendor, as the Rebbe presided over a large assemblage at the Hotel Newton. In practical terms, this farbrengen also constituted a "Tzeischem L'Shalom" gathering prior to the

Rebbe's departure from America and his return to Europe.

Chassidim from New York and the surrounding area had been arriving in the hotel lobby for some time prior to the scheduled start of the farbrengen, and many had already taken their seats in the large hall where the farbrengen would be held.

In the meantime, the Rebbe was waiting in his room with several mekuravim. Chassidim crowded near the door to have the privilege of seeing the Rebbe. Before going down to the farbrengen, Rabbi Avraham Schechter, the chief rabbi of Houston, Texas, who was in New York at the time, entered the room accompanied by the author Alter Yosef Margoshes and several chassidim. The meeting was mainly devoted to a conversation between the Rebbe and Mr. Margoshes on ancient s'farim and chassidic writings.

At nine in the evening, one of the gabbaim came in and informed the Rebbe that the crowd had already davened Maariv and everyone was waiting impatiently for the Rebbe. The guests left the Rebbe's room and proceeded to take their places for the farbrengen.

More than four hundred Jews crowded into the large hall on the hotel's first floor. Everyone wanted to see the Rebbe, and some even stood on chairs – a most unconventional mode of conduct for modern-day America of the thirties. The feeling of emotion and anticipation engulfed the entire hall in preparation for the Rebbe's entrance. As word came that the Rebbe had arrived, an expectant silence reigned. He was escorted into the hall by his son-in-law, Rabbi Shmaryahu Gurary, and approached the dais, which had been placed on an elevated platform. His closest

friends and supporters were seated near him.

The Rebbe soon began to speak in a quiet voice, as everyone listened attentively to his holy words. For most of those present, this would be their last opportunity to hear the Rebbe before he departed from the country.

BETWEEN THE "OLD HOME" AND THE "NEW HOME"

The Rebbe began by apologizing because he had originally thought that there was a difference between "*der alter heim*" (the old home – referring to the life of Torah and mitzvos in Europe), and "*der neier heim*" (the new home – meaning the United States). However, the Rebbe explained, during the months he spent in America, he reached the conclusion that the old home and the new home are one and the same. The only problem is one of attitude. The trouble is not with the new home itself, but rather its strength and stability in our minds. "We have gotten used to arranging 'permission' for a variety of matters, and the situation gets worse every day," the Rebbe said.

One must know," the Rebbe continued, "that subjugation of the mind to Yiddishkait is not enough, there must be subjugation of the heart that leads to actual mitzvah fulfillment. Studying is not enough, and it's impossible to settle just for putting on t'fillin. Mincha, Maariv, and Krias Shma bring greater closeness between the entire Jewish People and G-d Alm-ghty."

After sichos of strengthening and encouragement, the Rebbe said the maamer beginning with the words "Kol Hashanah

Halachos.”

The Jewish newspaper *Der Tag* publicized observations from the farbrengen, and the description began as follows:

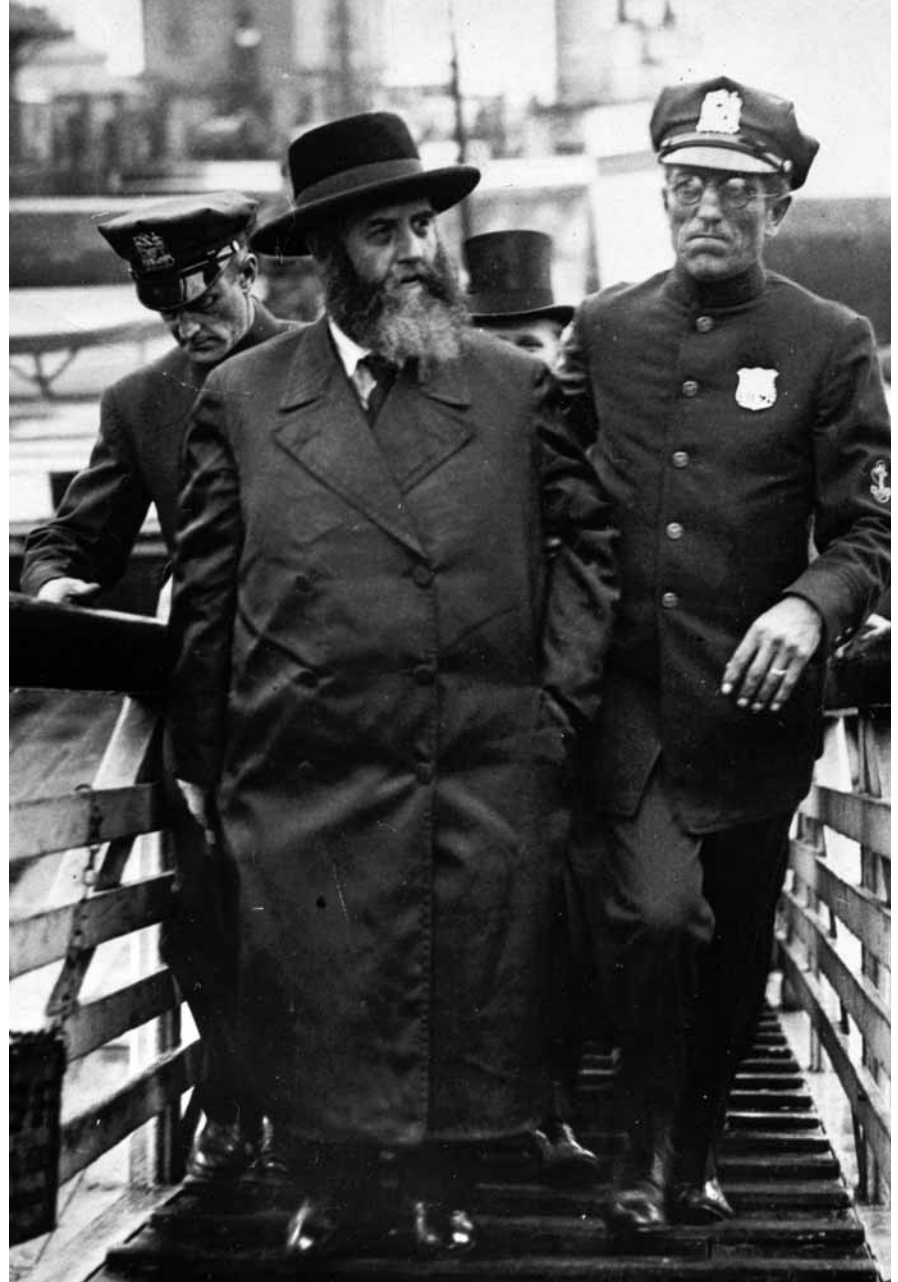
“Chassidim and other Jews sang chassidic melodies, and prepared a festive meal with one of the most important rebbes of our generation. The Lubavitcher Rebbe gave over words of Torah, the assembled crowd listened attentively, and the chassidim devoured every word, as those assembled rejoiced with the Rebbe on the day marking his release from imprisonment in Russia.”

The next day, Yud-Gimmel Tammuz, the Rebbe Rayatz wrote a special *tzeitl* for the Lubavitcher chassidim in the United States, which read as follows:

“I feel the deep heartfelt wishes of each and every one, and I hear his blessing which is very dear to me, and I wish to send my blessing to each and every one in particular that the Benevolent G-d should bestow upon you and your family an abundance of life and much bracha with children, long life, and ample sustenance, and may G-d Alm-ghty give them the merit to be seen with fullness of joy.”

As mentioned above, the Rebbe traveled on Motzaei Yud-Gimmel Tammuz to Washington, D.C., where he remained for only one day. He returned to New York on Friday, the 15th of Tammuz. Lubavitcher chassidim, who knew that the coming Shabbos would be the Rebbe’s last before departing the United States, arrived early at the Hotel Newton where the Rebbe was staying and arranged accommodations there as well.

Chassidim davened the Shabbos t’fillos with the Rebbe, and at the conclusion of



davening, they all gathered together, made Kiddush on wine, and then waited for an announcement of an impending farbrengen with the Rebbe. However, the Rebbe davened Shacharis until five in the afternoon, and Mincha followed immediately afterwards. The farbrengen began only after Mincha, lasting for about an hour and a half, during which the Rebbe spoke words of rebuke.

In the days that followed, the Rebbe visited the various Jewish communities throughout New York City to give them support and encouragement. On Monday,

the 18th of Tammuz, the Rebbe visited the Tzemach Tzedek Synagogue, where he delivered the maamer “Gefen M ‘Mitzrayim Tasia” before a large congregation.

THE MATERIAL IS ALREADY THERE

On the eve of his departure from the United States, Wednesday, the 20th of Tammuz, 5690, the Yiddish-language newspaper *Der Morgen Journal* published a special interview with the Rebbe Rayatz, by the journalist Ben Shlomo. During the interview, the Rebbe Rayatz

A GREAT REVOLUTION

Even towards the end of the visit, the Rebbe did not fail to use every possible moment to strengthen the Jews of America and save the Jews of Russia.

If you browse through the correspondence the Rebbe sent just prior to his departure, you can see a wide range of letters. One was dedicated to saving Rabbi Menachem Mendel Yanovsky of Kremenchug, and others to strengthen Jewish women throughout the United States, and so on.

The following is an excerpt of letter from the 10th of Tammuz, 5690, to a Rabbi Berzan [apparently Rabbi Dov Arye Berzan, who then served as the rav of the Ahavas Yisroel Synagogue in Flatbush]:

“When I arrived here in New York, I found that the articles I had sent about two weeks earlier to various places and parties, among them even the Reform who are far from religious feeling, have made a great revolution, and I hope that the Jewish women will read them and that they will have an effect upon them and their pure hearts and emotions, so that they will want to establish their homes on the foundation of Judaism, according to the law of Moses and Israel.

“When he speaks to Jewish women, he should please give over my words that I turn to them to fulfill their obligation to our faith, our Torah, and our People, and in this merit, G-d Alm-ghty will grant them success with healthy children and domestic harmony.”

expressed his opinion on the status of Judaism in the United States and his lengthy visit there.

The headline for the interview was: “‘There Is Great Potential For Yiddishkait in America,’ Says The Lubavitcher Rebbe Before His Journey To Europe.”

In the interview, the Rebbe emphasized the importance of activities with young people, and how Orthodox Jews must be more organized and work with greater energy. The reporter, Ben Shlomo was very excited by the Rebbe’s strong faith in American Jewry. The newspaper reported that during the Rebbe’s stay, he visited cities throughout the U.S., strengthening not only adults but young people as well, and working in a variety of ways to awaken youth organizations.

During the course of the interview, the Rebbe added that the materials for building the

great Jewish structure in the United States are already there, and now they have to erect it.

“Those who so desire can make their new home in America, as was their old home overseas.”

The reporter noted that the Rebbe is not only asking for the support of Torah institutions, he also believes that they will build new yeshivos and Jewish centers in America. In response to the reporter’s question, the Rebbe stated that the Yiddish language is the language that unites and strengthens the Jewish People in the Diaspora, and therefore, it is most important to speak Yiddish.

DEPARTURE

The visit was over. Ten months had passed since the 12th of Elul, 5689, when the Rebbe disembarked from the *SS France* before the thousands who come

to the port to greet him.

On Thursday, the 21st of Tammuz, 5690, a large crowd filled the square at the port to bid farewell to the Rebbe and his entourage. Special delegations from various American cities and many communities throughout New York City arrived to give the Rebbe a final send-off. The Rebbe spoke before those assembled, blessing them with warm words of encouragement.

At the conclusion of his address, the Rebbe boarded the German ship *SS Bremen*, setting sail for Berlin.

Upon his arrival in Berlin, he was greeted by his younger son-in-law, the RaMaSH, and his wife, the Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, the Rebbe’s daughter.

* * *

The visit was over, but by no means was its impact.

During the visit, there was talk about the possibility of the Rebbe settling in the United States. Even after the visit had been completed, the plan remained viable and it periodically came to the forefront of discussion.

After the Rebbe left the Soviet Union in Tishrei, 5688, he settled in Riga, Latvia. However, this was not on a permanent basis, and the Rebbe was still a wanderer, his official place of residence not yet determined. On his letters from this period of time, there appear the words “Riga-Temporary.” During the ten months he spent in the United States, the possibility of settling in America was explored in depth, and at a certain point, it appeared to be a most practical option.

The discussions apparently began during the Rebbe’s visit to Chicago, where he stayed from Shevat to Nissan, 5690. The stop in Chicago was particularly long, and being so close to the Rebbe

for such a lengthy period of time brought the chassidim to a state of great spiritual awakening. Everyone felt that if the Rebbe would be close to the chassidim in America, this feeling would merely intensify, and the wellsprings of chassidus would spread to all cities throughout the country.

The chassidim in Chicago also understood that it would be difficult for the Rebbe to settle in the United States as long as there was no Lubavitcher yeshiva there, not to mention a large Chabad community in the spirit of “*der alter heim*”. Despite these problems, the chassidim in Chicago wanted the Rebbe to stay in America and not return to Europe. Proposals were made to the Rebbe towards the end of his visit to the city.

On Motzaei Shabbos, the night of the 29th of Nissan, there was a Tzeischem L'Shalom gathering in the Chabad Shaarei T'filla B'nei Reuven Synagogue. The rav of the shul, Rabbi Chaim Tzvi Rubenstein, who also served as a member of the Agudas Chassidei Chabad administration in the United States, spoke on behalf of a large committee that suggested to the Rebbe that he remain in America or at least return to the States in the very near future:

“Providence has made it necessary for the Rebbe to visit America, which has such a large ingathering of Jews, *kein ayin ha'ra*, and perhaps this is a sign for the Rebbe's influence to flow directly to us, without the seas to divide us. We have come to ask the Rebbe to stay in America. We are not saying where the Rebbe should establish his residence; this we will leave to the Rebbe himself. Our desire is that the Rebbe should not return overseas. But if this does not prove possible



The Hotel Newton on Manhattan's Upper West Side, where the Rebbe Rayatz stayed during his visit in 5690.

and the Rebbe must go back to Europe, his journey should be a temporary one, and afterwards the Rebbe should come back to America.”

In reply to the request, the Rebbe Rayatz said that he would consider the matter. However, he immediately explained that he could not even begin to think about it, unless it was understood that his coming also meant the founding of an American branch of Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim, for without a Chabad yeshiva, he would not come.

Chicago Kroier correspondent M. Indritz wrote about the offer of the chassidim, the Rebbe's response, the subsequent steps, and the overall mood in the 1st of Iyar, 5690, edition of his paper:

“This response now leaves the whole question of the Rebbe coming to America in the hands of Chabad chassidim. If they know how to rise to the moment, stand united, and work with great vigor to realize their aspiration, then it is by no means unrealistic for America to have the privilege for its distinguished guest to

If they know how to rise to the moment, stand united, and work with great vigor to realize their aspiration, then it is by no means unrealistic for America to have the privilege for its distinguished guest to become a permanent resident.

become a permanent resident. But this movement cannot remain a local one; it must take on a national character.

“Local Chabad chassidim must immediately be in contact with other Chabad chassidim in America. There are about two hundred and fifty Chabad shuls in the country, with very prominent members. When all these shuls unite and work together, it will be quite easy to establish a Yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim in this country, and maintain it just as easily – let’s say through a certain contribution from each synagogue, according to its size and ability. As for the location of the yeshiva – that’s already a question for a later stage.

“It’s conceivable that it doesn’t necessarily have to be in a large city such as New York or Chicago, rather in a small town, far from the noise and life of the city, in a central location between the East and the Middle West.

“As mentioned, Chabad chassidim are in a state of yearning. They can’t live with the idea that the Rebbe will remain in Europe, and they want him closer to them. This movement also exists in Milwaukee and other cities along the way where Chabad chassidim are found. It’s not impossible that even those other cities where the Rebbe visited and has yet to visit will join the movement, and the Rebbe will become a resident of

America.

“However, as we have mentioned, the matter depends upon the activities that Chabad chassidim will implement from now on. The selected body, known as Agudas Anshei Chabad, has already taken a step forward in this direction. Officials have been chosen and members have already been registered. If they continue their work to include all Chabad chassidim here as members and bring the movement to other cities, wherever there are Chabad chassidim, and if they work with vigor, their efforts will be successful and great spiritual strength will enrich American Jewry, strength that will contribute much, very much, to the development and strengthening of Orthodoxy in American Jewish life.”

The journalist was present in the synagogue, and put his observations in writing.

At the end of the shul event, at half past ten in the evening, the Rebbe Rayatz returned to his place of lodging. Half an hour later, a delegation of twenty chassidim arrived at the location with some surprising news. The Rebbe wrote about this in a letter to his wife, the Rebbetzin:

“They told me openly that the chassidim of Chicago and the surrounding area had become organized, and they asked that I give my consent to establish permanent residence in America.

They were also joined by representatives of the misnagdishe groups, who also expressed enthusiastic interest... Their idea of my coming to America indicates their great excitement, and this from people who would not be expected to react in this fashion. They literally spoke with great emotion.”

The Rebbe’s answer to the delegation was short and non-committal, and they left without knowing what the future held in relation to his eventual settling in the United States.

The plans for the Rebbe’s transfer to the U.S. had their ups and downs. Various letters and announcements were passed among Chabad chassidim in the United States. At a certain stage, a special committee was chosen to accept responsibility for dealing with the matter. Heading the committee were Rabbi Menachem Lokshin and Rabbi Chaim Zalman Kramer, members of the Agudas Chassidei Chabad leadership. They held meetings, sent letters to chassidim, and even began to collect money to bring the plan to fruition.

About a month before the end of the visit, there was talk that the Rebbe would go back to Riga and then return to the United States shortly thereafter for the purpose of settling there permanently. This is based on a letter from the mashpia, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Havlin, who was staying in New York at the time, and wrote to his son that the Rebbe Rayatz will return to his home in Riga within a month. “G-d willing, it is his intention to establish his residence in the United States, and he will come back from there with the members of his family.”

In the end, the Rebbe announced that the plans were

canceled, and on the 21st of Tammuz, he sailed from America back to Europe.

Some time later, it turned out the plans had not been canceled completely, and there were various attempts to bring about the actual transfer of the court of Lubavitch to the United States. Evidence of this can be found in a letter written by the Rebbe's secretary, Rabbi Yechezkel Feigin, about a month after the Rebbe's departure. In this letter, he inquires to Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson from the United States on the subject of the "move": "Please inform me if something has been done in relation to the move."

Discussions and proposals began to go into high gear again, and during the month of MarCheshvan, 5691, the committee began to hold meetings on the issue. However, at this same time, it received a letter from the Rebbe categorically rejecting the plan:

"In reply to their suggestion of settling in their country... according to the present situation, nothing basic and organized has been done yet to enable a spiritual and material foundation for this purpose... As of today, I cannot tell you my decision on the matter of your caring and kind proposal to settle permanently in your country." (Igros Kodesh, Vol. 2, Letter #495).

At the same time, the Rebbe sent personal letters to chassidic leaders in the United States, clarifying in greater detail the reasons for canceling the plans. In a detailed correspondence to Rabbi Eliyahu Yachil Simpson, he explained that the spiritual considerations are stronger than the material ones, and therefore, he had decided to remain in Europe:



The SS Bremen, the ship upon which the Rebbe sailed from the United States to Europe. This picture was taken several months after the Rebbe's journey.

"I cannot consider the notion that this is the Will of G-d, and it is the holy thinking of my saintly and revered father, teacher, and Rebbe, of holy and righteous memory for a blessing of life in the World to Come, his soul rests in the hidden treasures of Heaven, may his merit protect us, that *ch"v* material necessity will influence the process of soul-related matters that must be determined only from a spiritual viewpoint and outlook." (ibid., Letter #497).

Yet, even after the explanations, the precise motives for the emigration plan and its cancellation remained shrouded and uncertain to the chassidim.

One aspect to this matter was revealed only twelve years later, two years after the Rebbe arrived in the United States with the outbreak of the Second World War. During those days, he wrote that it was clear to him that had he remained in America for those ten years, he wouldn't have suffered, but he couldn't emigrate to the U.S. until the time came when it was absolutely necessary. And why did he refrain from



Kuntres Drushim, published for Yud-Beis Tammuz, 5690, for those who visited the Rebbe.

staying in America back in 5690? The Rebbe specifies this in the following sentences:

"As I have seen in the customs of the country that even innocent people perceive some necessity to being drawn after the assertions of the world", and as a result, everyone is drawn after the conduct of the world: "What influence can a rav and

shochet exert without a beard and peios upon his flock – men, women, and children?” (Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayatz, Vol. 6, Letter #1616).

THE RESULTS OF THE VISIT

In the articles connected with the Rebbe Rayatz's historic ten-month visit to America, there were descriptions of festive greetings with thousands of participants, throngs of people going in for yechidus, farbrengens, enlisting assistance on behalf of American Jewry, and meetings with high government officials, foremost among them, the President of the United States.

The visit centered on attaining three primary objectives:

Meeting with and strengthening Lubavitcher chassidim in the United States – This objective was achieved in the best possible way.

Strengthening American Jewry – The Rebbe succeeded in causing American Jews, their rabbinical leaders, and Jewish public officials to start taking action in various areas for the strengthening of Judaism, besides the direct enthusiasm caused by the Rebbe's appearance before tens of thousands of Jews in the United States. This objective was also attained with great success.

Raising money for the Jews of the Soviet Union – This objective was achieved in part, but only in small measure. The hope was to raise large sums of money that the Rebbe could use to help provide those downcast Jews living behind the Iron Curtain with matzos and various holy items, and to arouse world Jewry and various influential people to pressure the U.S.S.R. to improve the conditions of

its Jewish population. However, due to a variety of reasons, including the harsh economic effects of the Great Depression, the contributions did not come through as anticipated, and large sums of money were not raised. While there were some nice donations, they were not as the Rebbe had hoped.

At the conclusion of the visit, the Rebbe took an assortment of steps to maintain the spirit of re-awakening that started to develop in American

cities. Letters were sent to chassidim and rabbinical figures with whom the Rebbe met during his stay. Not settling just for that, the Rebbe sent his personal emissaries to the United States in order to continue the activities that began with the visit. The emissaries chosen were among the Rebbe's greatest and most prominent chassidim: Rabbi Yitzchak Horowitz, may G-d avenge his blood (R' Itche der Masmid), Rabbi Mordechai Chefetz, may G-d avenge his blood, and Rabbi Shmuel Levitin, of blessed memory. They were sent to take action in a wide range of areas, including the strengthening of Lubavitch institutions, and raising money for the Rebbe's activities in Europe. The three emissaries toiled with great success and with much encouragement from the Rebbe Rayatz.

Sources: Igros Admur

HaRayatz, Seifer HaSichos 5689-5690, Toldos Chabad B'Artzos HaBris, Zichron L'Bnei Yisroel, Chassid Ne'eman, HaMashpia (Havlin), Morgen Journal, Forward, Chicago Kroier, Beis Moshiah, White House website, Hotel Newton website. "Drushim L'Yud Beis Tammuz" provided by the archives of Rabbi Bentzion Grossman.

I. SCHNEERSOHN
OF LUBAVITZ

יוסף יצחק שניאורסאהן
מליובאוויטש

ב"ה, ח"י מרחשוון, תרצ"א
ריגא.

כבוד ידירי הר"ג הנכבד והנעלה,
ו"ח א"א מוהר"ר אלי"ש י."

שלום וברכה

היום שלחתי מכתב כללי במענה על דבר התענה להחישב
במדינתם ה"י"א, ומכתב פרטי לחכמי חו"ד ז"ל בסדר העבודה על
להכא כעוה"י."

אין אני רשאי להעלים מאת ידיריננו אנ"ש ש"א את המצב
הנפשי כאשר הוא / ובמיוחד כסוגיא כך ואספ, סנהדרין דס"ר ע"כ,
אזרחם והכפחה, והע"ו ז"ל כפי' השנה י"א דפ"כ דמציעא / אכל עם
זה אין אני יכול לתת מקום ברעיוני אשר כן הוא רצון ה' ומחשבת
קדש הור כ"ק אאמ"ר הר"ח"ק וצוקלה"ה נכנ"ם ז"י"ע כי ח"ו הכרח
נפשי ישמיע על סמך העניינים הנפשיים אשר הם צ"ל נחללים אך ורק
במכס והתקפה רוחנית.

בס אם כלי החשב עם מצב כריאותי כהוא אשר דרוש לי
כעוה"י משך זמן להיות בסגולה ולהתקן בקרבת סביבה של חלמידים ש"י
מקשיבים כהורה, אשר זה ה"י מחזק את כריאותי כעוה"י."

הנה פרט אראת האפשרות ברוחניות ובנפשיות לעשות את הצעד
הגדול הלוה בהצלחה לטובה ולברכה, ובאסור במכתבי הכללי אשר דבר זה
דורש הכנה מסודרת כעוה"י, וחוקותי האמצעי כי יתחזקו בעבודתם אשר
החלו, והש"ת יהי' בעזרתם בנ"י. רג"ש ויחזקו כ"י

The Rebbe Rayatz's letter to Rabbi Eliyahu Yachil Simpson, explaining the cancellation of plans to settle in the United States: "I don't yet see the possibility...to make this great step."

HOW GOOD ARE YOU, REALLY?

By Aryeh Gotfryd, PhD

Even when a person's conduct does not seem worthy of favorable judgment, one should endeavor to find redeeming virtue within him.

--*The Rebbe, Shabbos B'Haalos'cha, 5741*

Who doesn't mess up?

Obviously we all do. And when we do, the thought of someone (or Someone) constantly watching and keeping score can be very intimidating. Think about the kid who covers his eyes and says "You can't see me!" Our inner child wants to wish away those critical eyes, too.

But then there are new beginnings. It may not be easy but we can all get there. The process is, basically, deal with it: Reflect, regret, restore, and poof... we are good to go with a nice clean slate. Then we retry, but oops. Error! And the cycle starts again. Refail, reflect. Regret, restore. Renew, retry. Then oops – Error! R-r-r-r-r... Error! R-r-r-r-r... Error! It can get pretty discouraging but fortunately there is another ingredient – Forgiveness.

True there are watchful eyes, whether they belong to someone

we know, Some One we don't, or even ourselves. But where there is forgiveness, there can be a new beginning. The magic of forgiveness lies in positive perception, focusing on the hidden good, but how does that work practically?

Love is blind. If I love myself I will cover my faults. If I love you, I will overlook yours. But what about the Omniscient One? Surely He is not blind. How does infinite awareness square up with forgive and forget? Does He pull out an err-brush to cover up our faults? In a way, yes.

To understand this a little better, let's explore a recent advance in image-enhancement (and after all, whose image does not need enhancing?). It's called Compressed Sampling (CS) and it's an algorithm (mathematical process) that excels at transforming very incomplete and messy data sets into crisp and accurate representations of reality.

CS was first stumbled upon in 2004 by CalTech Professor Emmanuel Candes and in the short time since, over one thousand papers have expanded

on it, millions of dollars have poured into developing it, and because of it, Candes himself has won the \$500,000 Waterman Prize, the National Science Foundation's highest honor.

The practical implications are immense. For instance, medical imaging can be done with just 10% of the radiation, saving 90% of the time, cost and most importantly health risks. Now, instead of creating huge audio or video files and then compressing and storing those, you can record a very low-definition file, apply the CS algorithm, and voila.

So what is the trick? How does the algorithm work? The simple answer is... simplicity.

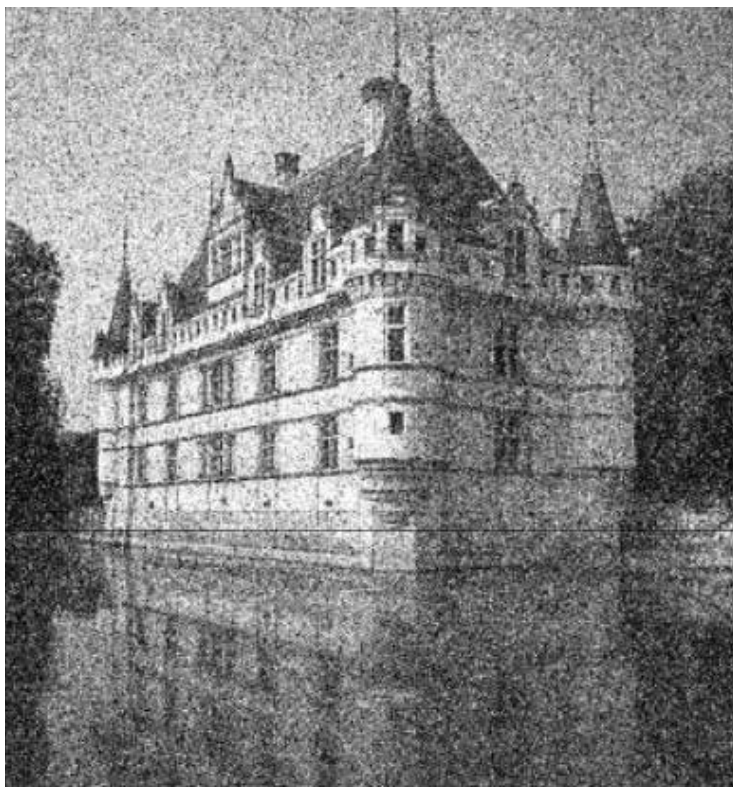
To explain, let's say you have two pictures of a scene - one is sharp with a million pixels and the other is grainy with just 100,000. There are nearly an infinite number of ways to fill in the latter to become a million-pixel image, nearly all of them wrong. The right way to reconstruct the rich realm of reality from a motley muddle of maybes turns out to be the simplest.

The heart of the CS algorithm is what the mathematicians call sparsity. It assumes that the most accurate guesses are also the simplest. First the program inserts the biggest blocks of color that fit between similar pixels. When the program is done with big blocks, it then moves on to fill in with progressively smaller blocks. The final solution, and the one that most accurately mirrors reality every time, is the one with the smallest number of blocks. Billions of alternatives will always be wrong, but the simplest one wins every time.

Now we can return to our original question. How can Justice and Forgiveness coexist? To resolve the paradox maybe we



The effect of Compressed Sampling on an image. Below is the “before” image.



can apply some lessons from the CS algorithm.

Let's picture, for a moment, the One Above gazing down at one of his hapless humans and determines that 90% of his deeds are folly and 10% are purposeful. The overall picture is a mess. It seems that Justice wants to condemn while Forgiveness wants to exonerate. How can we get the two working together to yield an accurate yet positive picture?

Let's make one simple assumption – that the bloke means well, that between his good deeds, deep down, the fellow really is good and wants to do good. All that other nonsense he does is just static, error, glitches. They don't form a coherent picture – it's only the good deeds that do. But since he has so few of them, there's just a trace of that.

Like CS, we follow our simplicity assumption and start with the biggest consistent area that's good, and fill that in with the biggest block of goodness that

fits. Once the biggest goodness blocks are mapped, we move on to slightly smaller stretches of goodness and fit goodness blocks in there wherever we can. By the time we work our way down to the splotches, most of the space is already filled with good. A nice picture indeed.

But, you may ask, why doesn't the ugly side sometimes form an even more consistent picture? Because rottenness tends to randomness. There is an infinity of angles at which one falls, but only one at which one stands. All the mess-ups are noisy and scattered, but all the goodness is consistent and harmonious.

Things aren't always the way they seem. Our sages teach that no matter how messy things may appear, the true picture of man in the world is a positive one. It may sound simplistic, but then again, sometimes the best solutions are indeed the simplest. Think good and it will be good.

Moshiach NOW!

MUSIC IN THE MIKDASH

Interview by Mendel Tzfasman

*Many people are unaware of the extent that music played a role in the avoda in the Mikdash. What instruments were used? How many years of preparation were needed before a Levi could play and sing in the Mikdash? Who was the first Levi to sing? What niggunim did they sing? Is there truth to the claim that we have some niggunim that were sung in the Mikdash? * For answers to these and other questions we spoke with Rabbi Lev Liebman, editor of “Negina L’Ohr HaChassidus.”*

Most lectures on the Mikdash are about its structure (as explained in the tractate Middos) and the avoda that was performed there (as explained in the tractate Tamid etc.). The music and singing in the Mikdash is a subject that is not often addressed. Sources about it are scattered in various places, which is why most remain in the dark on the subject. In speaking with Rabbi Lev Liebman we became more informed and we now share this

information with you.

LEVIYIM WHO SANG AND PLAYED INSTRUMENTS

The Beis HaMikdash, that magnificent G-dly structure. Whoever entered its portals found himself in a place wholly devoted to the service of Hashem and the revelation of G-dliness. The main avoda in the Mikdash was the avoda of the animal sacrifices brought on the altar in the Azara. This avoda was comprised of

numerous jobs, as it says, “the Kohanim in their avoda, the Leviyim on their duchar (the platform they stood on to sing) and Yisroel in their *maamad* (representatives of the nation to stand over the daily offerings).”

The joint goal of the Kohanim and Leviyim was the raising up of the sacrifice so that it be pleasing to Hashem. While the Kohanim were in charge of the process of sacrificing the korban, which



included many steps including having the proper intentions, the Leviyim were responsible for the spiritual “raising up” of the korban through their singing and music.

When did the Leviyim sing?

They sang and played while an obligatory communal korban ola was brought, though not for the korbanos of individuals. Therefore, **at least twice a day** a full choir and orchestra sang and played in the Beis HaMikdash when the Korban Tamid was brought in the morning and in the evening.

The Levite choir stood at the ready for the conclusion of the bringing of the korban and the moment the Kohen started pouring wine on the altar it burst into song and music.

Since singing is an inseparable part of the bringing of the korban and it is a biblical obligation, it sets aside the prohibition of using instruments on Shabbos and Yom Tov. The Leviyim played instruments an extra time on those

participate. However, even those who were not Leviyim could play instruments because it's not the main part of the mitzva but an adjunct to it which beautifies the singing of the Leviyim.

The Rebbe brings from the Rogatchover Gaon that in the future, not only the Leviyim but **all the Jewish people will be fit to sing Shira.**

long as his voice was pleasant.

Before a Levi could join the choir and sing on the duchar he had to undergo a five year program in which he studied music.

The first Levi to sing was Moshe Rabbeinu (Rashi) and he was also the first teacher of music, as it says in Midrash Raba, "How much Ben Amram (=Moshe) exerted himself until he taught the Leviyim to sing."

Where did the Leviyim sing?

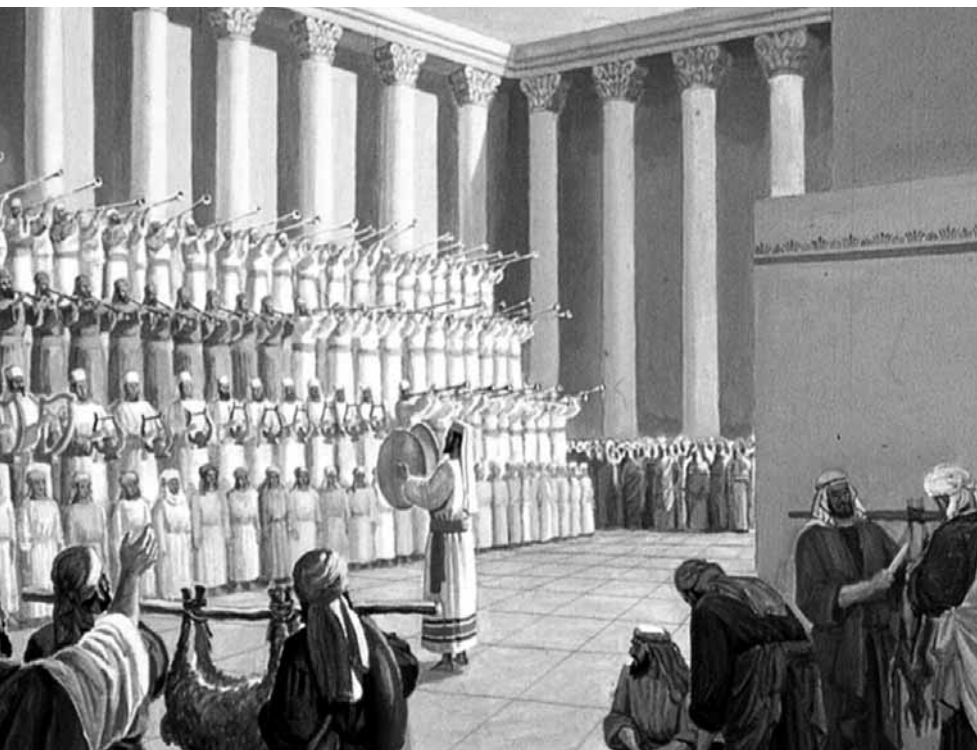
The duchar that the Leviyim stood on when they sang was located between the Ezras Yisroel and the Ezras Kohanim, in front of the altar where they brought the sacrifices. There were three steps to the duchar and those who sang and those who played instruments stood on it. It was only at the Simchas Beis HaShoeiva that the musicians stood on the fifteen steps in the Ezras Nashim, for that is where the dancing was done on the nights of Sukkos.

The Leviyim, including those who held heavy instruments, played while standing because "there is no sitting in the Azara except for kings of the house of Dovid."

What kind of instruments did they use?

The instruments were constructed according to G-dly wisdom, just as all the other vessels of the Mikdash were constructed, as Dovid HaMelech testifies, "All this is put in writing by the hand of Hashem who instructed me, all the works of this pattern" (Divrei HaYamim I 28:19).

In the Beis HaMikdash were a number of instruments preserved from the days of Moshe and there were even instruments made by Moshe himself! According to the opinion that *ikar shira b'kli* (the main service of song is with an instrument), the instruments were



days when the Korban Musaf was brought, for that is also a communal korban.

Could someone who was not a Levi sing on the duchar?

The Gemara learns from various verses that the singing is a **biblical obligation** for the Leviyim. The Sages disagree, however, whether the main Torah obligation is to sing or to play an instrument.

The Rambam paskens that the main thing is singing and only genealogically pure Leviyim could

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

When the Mishkan moved about in the desert for forty years, the choir of Leviyim was limited to those between the ages of 20-50 because they also had the job of carrying the Mishkan from place to place, work which demanded physical prowess and manual dexterity. In the Beis HaMikdash a Levi could begin to serve from the age of 13 and continue to sing as

CHASSIDIC PEARLS

-The bringing up of the korban was accompanied by the singing of the Leviyim because every aliya (elevation) is through song. The atonement of the korban is also through the song of the Leviyim. Their song reached the heavens and sweetened judgments that hovered over the Jewish people. (Mitteler Rebbe)

-The Leviyim are described in Chumash as the “**carriers of the Mishkan.**” That is seemingly a temporary designation, just for the forty years in the desert. However, according to Chassidus, this designation is eternal. The Leviyim “carry,” in the sense of elevation, the Mishkan and Mikdash with their song. (Likkutei Torah)

-Today our t’fillos are instead of korbanos. In the davening “Kohanim in their avoda” refers to our recitation of Korbanos; the “Leviyim on their duchen” refers to the P’sukei D’Zimra; and Yisroel in their “maamud” refers to Krias Shma. (Rebbe Maharash)



Rabbi Lev Liebman's book



in the category of **klei shareis** just like the other implements that the Kohanim used in the avoda.

The Meiri maintains that in the Beis HaMikdash they played on an “endless” number of instruments, another indication of the heavenly nature of those instruments.

In the Mishna and Gemara the

main instruments used in the Mikdash are mentioned: Flute, Harp, Kinor (translated as both violin and harp) and others. The commentators struggle in identifying them since the instruments changed over the generations. For example, the flute we know of today is very different than the flute used in the time of the Alter Rebbe, all the more so is it different than the flute of the Mishna.

You mentioned that each instrument had deep significance.

Indeed. Any instrument mentioned in the Torah, whether the Written or Oral Torah, contains a lesson for us in our avodas Hashem. For example, it is brought in Chassidus that the word Kinor is comprised of the letters “kaf-vav ner,” meaning a candle of G-d. The Kinor was able to arouse and ignite soul. The trumpet called Chatzotzra is comprised of the words “chatzaei tzura” (halves of one form). The sound of the Chatzotzra broke a person so that he felt like “half” of what he was so he would acknowledge that he can never reach shleimus without another Jew and without Hashem.

Where were the instruments kept?

Fifteen steps led from the Ezras Nashim to the Ezras Yisroel. Each step was half a cubit high, about 24 centimeters. In the seven and a half cubit space beneath the Ezras Yisroel, there were special rooms that were used to store the instruments and the entrance to them was from the Ezras Nashim. Some say that all the “song books” and music textbooks (text-scrolls?) were stored there too.

What songs did the Leviyim sing? There are Chassidische groups that say they have niggunim that were sung in the time of the Mikdash. Is that true?

We know from the “Shir shel Yom” in davening that the Leviyim sang from T’hillim on the duchen. What tune did they use? They used the *trup* for T’hillim which are different than those used for other books of the Tanach. They were particularly complicated and difficult to sing.

The Alter Rebbe had a tradition of what the trup for T’hillim is **as the Leviyim sang it in the Mikdash!** He taught it to his sons, grandsons, and even to his oldest great-grandson, the Tzemach Tzedek’s oldest son, R’ Boruch Sholom (the grandfather of the



Rabbi Lev Liebman playing in front of 770

Rebbe's grandfather). R' Boruch Sholom taught it to his younger brother, the Rebbe Maharash. The Rebbe Maharash was musically talented and had powerful lungs (as is known from his shofar blowing, when he would sometimes blow 72 notes for the *trua*). Nevertheless, when he read half a pasuk in T'hilim with the trup, his heart pounded rapidly. As far as we know, the last one to have been taught this trup was Raza, the Rebbe Rashab's older brother.

The Rebbe Rayatz told about the established liturgical tunes accepted throughout Klal Yisroel (called *skarbava*) which were arranged by the Maharal of Prague. They came to him during a period of harsh decrees against the Jews after he prayed for a revelation of holy niggunim to arouse heavenly mercy. The Tzemach Tzedek said that the niggunim arranged by the Maharal are **from the songs of the Leviyim in the Mikdash** and therefore they were particular that the chazanim not add anything of their own.

The Alter Rebbe also taught his great-grandson R' Boruch Sholom the nuschaos (liturgical tunes) of t'filla. R' Boruch Sholom was aggravated all his life that he forgot one small nuance of the t'fillos which the Alter Rebbe had taught him, a part that had been sung by the Leviyim in the Beis HaMikdash.

MUSIC IN THE THIRD MIKDASH

"The glory of this last house will be greater than that of the first." All the details of the third Mikdash will be more magnificent than the first and second Battei Mikdash. So too, the music of the Leviyim in the third Beis HaMikdash will undoubtedly be loftier than in the first and second, says R' Leib Liebman.

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PUBLICITY WITHOUT P'SHETLACH

R' Avrohom Mendel Wechter
Rosh Kollel in Nachalat Har Chabad

At the beginning of Tammuz, 5753/1993, R' Wechter wrote a long letter to the Rebbe in which he asked for permission to publicize the Besuras HaGeula according to the plain meaning of the Rebbe's sichos, without "p'shetlach," including that the divine inspiration of the Rebbe is actual prophecy as in the p'sak din of the Rambam. The letter speaks for itself.

The text of the letter reads:

K"K Admur Melech

HaMoshiach sh'yichyeh l'olam va'ed!

For over two years, and especially after the wondrous sichos in inyanei Geula and Moshiach began, I have been among those who are involved in spreading the B'sura of the imminent Geula, and we saw how the inyan was accepted by all segments of the people and they were greatly inspired as is well known

However, unfortunately, due to the terrible concealments we find ourselves in lately, the inspiration has greatly weakened to the point that for many

people, these concealments have caused them to hold completely opposite viewpoints.

Even those who were previously inspired need chizuk now. The signs that said, "Hichonu L'Bias HaMoshiach" (Prepare for Moshiach's Coming) that filled Eretz Yisroel at first caused amazing things to happen, but now people have gotten used to them and their effect has waned.

The sicha of Shabbos Parshas Shoftim, 5751, where it said that the announcement of "hinei zeh ba" is a "clear prophecy," was a sicha which breathed the breath of life into everyone. Now that two years have passed and to our great sorrow we still did not merit the full hisgalus of Moshiach, it has caused some people to start learning in this sicha (and in other Geula sichos) all sorts of p'shetlach and peculiar explanations whose common denominator is to cool off the simple truth that Moshiach is about to be revealed now, in this physical world, literally.



R' Wechter

Even though this is obvious in all the sichos, nevertheless, due to the great concealment which is lasting so long, people's patience has weakened and some have given way to despair. As a result they have arrived at odd explanations in the inyan of "Moshiach now."

Therefore, in order to strengthen the emuna and the simple understanding of the sichos of the Rebbe MH"M that "hinei zeh ba" is a clear prophecy, in this physical world below ten handbreadths; and that in this generation, the seventh generation, Melech HaMoshiach Nasi Ha'dor will come and be revealed. And that this generation will merit the true and complete Geula with the Rebbe leading us, and that this does not depend on anything and it is not conditional, as the Rambam states in Hilchos Yesodei Ha'Torah that "any good thing that G-d decrees, even conditionally, is not retracted," and that the only thing dependent on us is that through

this emuna and disseminating it, we can hasten it and cause it to happen with kindness and mercy –

Obviously, publicizing this with the Rebbe MH”M’s blessing

will cause a renewed chayus in all activities associated with the coming of Moshiach and through this we will soon merit the complete hisgalus.

When this was read to the Rebbe he nodded his head in a halachically valid affirmation and so too gave his holy blessing.

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CAMP-SCHOOL TEACHES THAT RAIN IS LIQUID SUNSHINE

By Aliza Karp

Even the best camp counselors can be better if they are trained. Although there may not be such a thing as a Masters Degree in Camp Counseling, training counselors is beneficial to the campers, the parents and the counselors themselves.

Teenagers can achieve a deeper feeling of satisfaction about their summer activities if camp is not just a great way to be paid to leave the city and hang out with friends, but a chance to make a positive impact on the lives of their campers.

A group of Lubavitcher head counselors went to such a training program called Camp School in Pennsylvania in June. They returned home to Crown Heights, Brooklyn, where they put together their own program which they called Staffweek (ironically, a one day program) and passed on their newly acquired knowledge and enthusiasm to a wide group of camp counselors going to camps around the world. The program was under the auspices of Tzivos Hashem Craft Workshops and Jewishchildren.com.

To utilize the summer months when school is not in session, the

Lubavitcher Rebbe stressed the importance of sending children to a Jewish camp. Out of the city, a child is not only closer to nature, he is further from the distractions of urban life. The physical activities, the camaraderie and the programs can refresh a student and generate spirit and energy that will be infused in his studies in the coming year, and perhaps beyond.

At overnight camp, in particular, campers are in an environment saturated with Torah values twenty-four/seven. Individuals who do not excel in a classroom situation may be able to excel on campgrounds.

There are many facets of the camp that make a major difference to kids. The individual bunk counselors would be at the top of the list. No beautiful lakefront can make up for a lousy camper/counselor relationship.

When they arrived back from Camp School the group of head counselors were full of enthusiasm and optimism. They discussed some of the things that made an impression on them and could help others who are going to be counselors, head counselors or any position that would put them in

contact with campers - which includes just about everyone in camp.

*It was unusual for a group of Rabbis to be attending the program and the boys were impressed by the effort that was made to make them feel comfortable. Everyone in the program was to be accepted for who they were. There was never any justification for leaving someone on the outside.

*The days were filled with classes and programs. Each class began with a song. Each participant in the program was asked at least once to lead a song of their choice.

*Despite the packed days, the flow of activities was very orderly. No screaming, no threatening to get people to be on time and in place. Every moment was used. There was no boredom. And if it rained, there was a backup plan... because rain is liquid sunshine, and no reason to get disoriented.

*Most of the classes were interactive, a method that helps generate a deeper interest in the material presented. When classes were split into groups to practice what they learned, there was a



counting system that scrambled the participants so that you were always working with new people.

*The program taught and exemplified being goal oriented (i.e., to bring Moshiach). Discipline should also be goal oriented. It is not to punish but rather to bring the camper closer to the desired (Moshiachdike) behavior. Discipline begins with reminding the camper of the expected behavior. Sometimes that is all it takes.

*Classes were taught at a round table. At the beginning of the session, everyone around the table would say their name, their goals for coming to the program, their life's fears and their greatest hopes. The simple ritual brought strangers together.

The Staffweek program featured guest speakers and workshops. The workshops were composed and presented by the boys who were at Camp School.

The opening speaker was Rabbi Sholom Baras, Principal of Lubavitch Yeshiva Ocean Parkway, who is also the Learning Director of Camp Gan Israel, Parksville, NY, in the summer. He spoke

about respect for even the youngest camper. Every child is important and how a counselor treats a child leaves a lasting impression. If he is treated with respect, a child will realize his own self worth and be able to live up to expectations. If a camper makes a staff member angry, the staff is to get over their anger, and only approach the camper when they are calm. Go outside and take a deep breath if you have to. Screaming at a camper makes him think that you hate him.

There is often one child who will not fit in. It is easy to ignore him. But if the counselor ignores him, so will the other campers. The counselor may want to regard this lonely soul as a special challenge. No child should be made fun of. It should be made known that a punishment, such as being grounded, will be applied if anyone makes fun of someone else.

Being a counselor or head counselor takes a lot of energy. Rabbi Baras spoke about the importance of getting enough sleep.

There was a workshop on Teamwork. It ended with an

activity to demonstrate the difference between acting alone or acting as a team with a coach. Eight participants were asked to form a circle holding hands. Then they were told that without letting go, they were to make their circle face outward. Immediately each participant tried to turn around. It was very funny to watch and, needless to say, not very successful. After sorting themselves out again, they were given instructions. Working as a team, the circle was transformed with ease.

The key words in the Teamwork workshop were: communication, bonding, common goals, clear expectations, chain of command, and empowerment of individuals through communication and delegation.

The Counseling workshop ended with the participants forming groups of three, in which one played the role of the camper, one played the counselor and the third was an observer to evaluate the response of the counselor.

But before they did this exercise they were given goals and guidelines. The participants listed



Even in an activity such as sports, there's a lesson to be learned. A camper who is not a good player is not to sit on the bench. He is to be part of the game because the goal is to win in Ahavas Yisroel, not in baseball.

goals that included: giving reassurance, making the camper feel better and steering the camper in the right direction.

The guidelines started with first recognizing when a camper wants to or needs to talk.

*Sometimes the need is obvious and other times it takes an awareness of other people to sense a need for counseling. If the camper does not want to talk, then just offer to do what you can. Use words like, "I would like to help you if you decide you want my assistance."

*The next step is to find a place that is private but not secluded, somewhere the camper will feel relaxed and confident. An office is not recommended. One of the beauties of being in camp is the availability of such places.

*Body language is important. Try to be on the same eye level. The camper should not have to look up to you. Leaning forward shows interest.

*Ask questions so you know what is going on and then ask how

the camper sees himself handling the situation. If necessary, the counselor can suggest alternate possibilities.

*Do what you can to make the camper feel better.

The Goals and Methods workshop discussed universal goals being applied to specific methods. There was a lot of interaction between the presenter and his audience and yet the audience respected the presenter as the leader. The workshop focused on the importance of team work.

To open the workshop, the participants listed goals including: instilling a commitment to Yiddishkeit in a fun way, generating enjoyment for Torah study, and coaching children who do not do well in school to do well in camp. Then the leader of the workshop went through a daily camp schedule and showed how each activity could be done in a way that leads towards accomplishing the goals. For instance, during davening the staff should be physically present with

the campers. The counselor should be together with his bunk, not at the front. The staff should be talking with G-d only. No cell phones, no texting. If there is a need for communication, it should be done without words, if possible. Sign language and monosyllables can often get the point across and it gives the message that the counselor is serious about davening. A living example makes more of an impression than discipline or lectures.

It may seem obvious that davening should be infused with Torah values, but the workshop dealt with less obvious parts of the camp daily schedule as well. Even in an activity such as sports, there's a lesson to be learned. A camper who is not a good player is not to sit on the bench. He is to be part of the game because the goal is to win in Ahavas Yisroel, not in baseball.

At Camp School in Pennsylvania, one of the Bachurim, Mendy, was asked to lead the song at the beginning of a session. Mendy was shy. He had never stood in front of an audience before, especially to sing. Yikes! His two brothers, who were also attending the program, came up and stood by him. Mendy chose to sing Hinei Ma Tov. The crowd loved it and it was repeated enough times that everyone joined in. When it was finished they asked for a translation. That sealed it. His first time on stage and Mendy was a star! Camp can do that.

Camp has the potential to bring out the best in campers and counselors. It takes some thought, organization, training and a good night's sleep. Reading one article cannot prepare camp staff... but it can inspire them to explore and proceed, so that by the end of the summer, the Team Work will be the Method to bring us to the Goal of greeting Moshiach Now!

‘WHO SHOULD BE A RAV? SOMEONE WHO IS NOT AFRAID?!’

By R' Yosef Yitzchok Naimark

Written for the occasion of the marriage of his son,
the great-grandson of R' Zalman Pevsner, R' Shlomo Zalman to Chana Galperin

That is what the Rebbe Rashab told the Chassid, R' Zalman Pevsner (“Buber”) before sending him to serve in the rabbinate. * A brief biography of a Chassidic rav in Soviet Russia.



The Chassid Zalman Pevsner at the time of the kiddushin.
Sitting to his right is Rabbi Yisroel Frankel

Rabbi Yaakov Shneur Zalman Pevsner was born on 20 Cheshvan, 5652/1892, in Buber, White Russia. Before he was bar mitzva he went to yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Lubavitch, where he learned for more than a decade. In yeshiva and afterwards, he was known as R' Zalman Buber for his hometown.

R' Mordechai Kozliner told about a special kiruv R' Zalman received from the Rebbe Rashab:

When R' Zalman became of draft age he had yechidus with the Rebbe to ask for advice and a bracha. The Rebbe advised him to try and be released from army service with the claim that he suffered from eye problems. The Rebbe motioned to him to come closer, stood him between his knees and gazed upon him. R' Zalman began to tremble. The Rebbe said to him: What is there to be afraid about when you share my birthday (20 Cheshvan).

In 5677/1917, he was given smicha from the rav of Lubavitch, Rabbi Dovid Jacobson. On the Rebbe Rashab's instruction, he assumed a position in Georgia. They say that at first R' Zalman

told the Rebbe he was afraid to take the responsibility but the Rebbe told him: "Who *should* be a rav? Someone who is *not* afraid?"

In 5678/1918, R' Zalman served as rav and melamed in Gzatsk and when a beis midrash for rabbanim was opened in Nevel he was sent there in order to be a mashgiach.

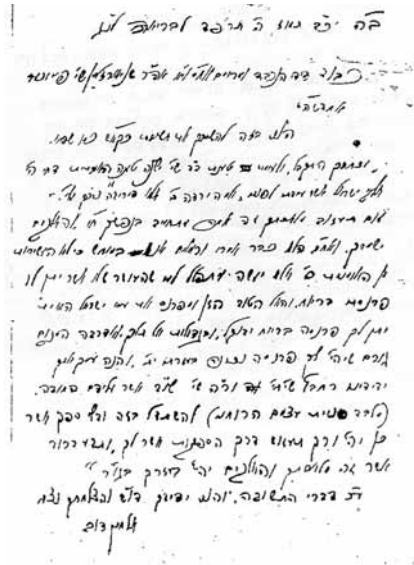
After the passing of the Rebbe Rashab, he served as rav in a number of towns throughout Russia: Hor, Drebin, Klimovitz, Mezayesk - all on shlichus for the Rebbe Rayatz. In these towns the Jewish communities were very poor and they could not support him and his family. In one instance the family had to live in another town altogether, and R' Zalman wrote to the Rebbe Rayatz and asked permission to join his family. But the Rebbe did not allow him to leave (see letter in sidebar).

ARREST

On 4 Tishrei, 5698/1937, R' Zalman was arrested together with another seven men who davened in a minyan in the home of Rabbi Tzeitlin. They were accused of organizing a secret shul where, under the guise of praying, they could hold meetings to discuss the hard life in Russia, aliya to Eretz Yisroel, the prohibition to send children to school on Shabbos and Yom Tov and teaching them Judaism.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the NKVD, R' Zalman's criminal file was found. It describes the harsh interrogations that lasted all night, which R' Zalman faced with fortitude and wisdom. He told the interrogators only what he was certain they already knew and denied all the activities and connections with which they could incriminate him and others.

The interrogators wanted to



The letter from the Rebbe Rayatz to R' Zalman Pevsner in which the Rebbe said, "Wealth is not derived from the craft etc. but you should do and pray to the One to whom wealth belongs, that He give him [R' Zalman] ample parnasa."

prove that the accused received aid from abroad, from the Rebbe Rayatz who was living in Riga, Latvia. For this purpose they forced R' Zalman to write to the Rebbe and tell him about the difficult financial situation and to ask him to send money.

R' Zalman did his work "faithfully" to the satisfaction of the interrogators but he addressed the Rebbe with various titles ("the famous gaon" etc.) which a Chassid wouldn't use when writing to the Rebbe. The Rebbe understood that the letter was written under duress and therefore he responded: "I am very sorry about your plight but a receiver cannot be a giver."

Seeing this, the interrogators dropped the matter.

When he was asked by the interrogators who organized the minyan, R' Zalman named Rabbi Chaim Keves, who was no longer alive.

Although R' Zalman denied all

the underground activities aside from the fact that they had come to daven, he was sentenced to eight years in a labor camp.

TASHKENT

After the war in 1946, R' Zalman was released and he began looking for his family. A year later, after many travails, he finally met his two daughters, Zlata and Esther Sheine, in Samarkand. His wife Odela had died of starvation in a small poor settlement called Algebs in Kazakhstan and was buried there.

In Samarkand the family planned to make aliya via Poland as many had done successfully. They gave a large sum of money to someone who was supposed to buy train tickets for them but he disappeared with the money. Their further attempts led them to Tashkent, where they learned that the authorities had caught on to the smuggling scheme and had arrested all the passengers of the train they were supposed to have been on.

So the Pevsners remained in Tashkent, a large city with Torah scholars and Chassidim. R' Zalman was known for his proficiency in all four parts of Shulchan Aruch but he was especially well known for his knowledge of the "fifth Shulchan Aruch."

R' Yisroel Brod quoted his father, R' Chaim Binyamin, as saying:

"I once went to him on Erev Shabbos with a chicken and a halachic question about it. As he examined it I could tell, by the movement of his head, that it was not kosher. He suddenly asked me: 'Whose chicken is this?' I said the name of a neighbor who was a G-d fearing person but was known to be poor. R' Zalman immediately paskened: 'Tell him it's kosher.'

"I looked at him in surprise.

The halacha is the same for all – what difference does it make whose chicken it is? R' Zalman took out a Shulchan Aruch and showed me that in such a situation, some paskened it was treif and some paskened it was kosher, so the halacha is that under difficult circumstances like Erev Shabbos and when the person is poor, it should be declared kosher l'chat'chilla."

R' Elimelech Lebenhartz told about R' Zalman's concern for the Jewish community in Tashkent:

"There was a time when the economic circumstances were very difficult. R' Zalman once complained to me about the decrease in halachic queries about chickens. I said perhaps people were eating more meat and he sighed and said: 'Halevai that was so, but I am afraid that they have moved on to potatoes.'"

R' Elimelech also related:

"I once asked R' Zalman his opinion about aliya. At that time the borders of Russia were still sealed but they had started talking about giving visas. His answer was that every effort ought to be made to make aliya. I asked whether he, too, would be leaving and he said: 'As long as there is one Jew left in Tashkent, I cannot leave.'"

HISKASHRUS TO THE REBBE MH"M

Even once it was easier to keep Torah and mitzvos, corresponding with the Rebbe still entailed great danger. When they needed a bracha for a marriage or the like, Anash in Russia would write to families in Eretz Yisroel or other countries and would ask for a bracha from "Grandpa." R' Zalman's correspondence with the Rebbe was done through his cousin, R' Sholom Posner of Pittsburgh.

A story that happened to me:



R' Zalman with his grandchildren

I went before the draft board in Russia and had the initial medical exams. All my efforts to be assigned a lower rating failed and they gave me a high rating. The letter that my grandfather wrote to the Rebbe said: "My grandson needs to undergo dangerous surgery which involves *damim* in both meanings of the word (blood and money)."

The Rebbe's encouraging response was soon to follow. Confident in the Rebbe's bracha, I appeared before the doctors in officers' uniforms. We all fasted that day: my grandfather, my parents, and myself. I won't tell you all the details of the miracle now, but the end of the story was that I was given an exemption from serving in the army.

HIS PASSING

The last week before Pesach, 5731/1971, was particularly busy. People didn't stop coming to R' Zalman's house to sell their chametz and to ask shailos. R' Zalman was a rav not only for the Jews of Tashkent but for all the surrounding cities and towns like Samarkand, Margilan etc.



On 12 Nissan he had difficulty breathing. An ambulance was called but the doctors couldn't do much for him. In the midst of this, two people came with shailos about chickens. His daughter Zlata did not want him to exert himself but he insisted: "They need the chickens for Yom Tov!"

The night of 13 Nissan, the day of the passing of the Tzemach Tzedek and the Beis Yosef, R' Zalman's pure neshama went to the Heavenly Yeshiva to study Torah and to speak favorably on behalf of his family and Klal Yisroel until those in the dust will arise and sing.

PUBLICIZING THE IDENTITY OF MOSHIACH ON A GLOBAL SCALE

R' Yitzchok Springer
Mashpia, yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim Lubavitch – 770



R' Springer

In the winter of 5753/1993, a series of ads was published in the newspapers announcing that the Lubavitcher Rebbe is Moshiach and people should prepare for his coming.

In Teves, 5753/1993, Rabbi Yitzchok Springer started a global publicity campaign about

Moshiach's identity. He ran large ads in *The New York Times* and other newspapers informing readers that the Lubavitch Rebbe is Moshiach and that in order to welcome him they needed to do more good deeds.

R' Springer tells us what happened and about the Rebbe's approval of his project.

How did you, a mashpia, come to place advertisements in the newspapers?

The story begins much earlier, during the Gulf War. Following the Rebbe's words of encouragement to the residents of Eretz Yisroel that were said as a guarantee, and his greatly discouraging leaving the country, I thought it would be a good idea to arrange a charter flight with dozens of Chabad Chassidim to fly to Eretz Yisroel during the war in order to show that Eretz Yisroel is the safest place in the world.

I wrote to the Rebbe and received this response: "to

campaign as it says in the Torah amongst the Jewish people here of his city – and he leading the way to add in Torah and mitzvos in actuality and thank you for when you let me know how much was actually added. I will mention it at the gravesite."

With the help of my friend R' Menachem Gerlitzky, I started a massive project to this effect. We printed forms for Anash and outsiders to fill in their good resolutions. These forms were printed in many languages - in Hebrew, English, French, Russian, Persian, etc. When people came for "dollars" we suggested that they fill out these forms and every week we would send **hundreds** of these forms to the Rebbe, as he had requested. We received dozens of responses from the Rebbe like "I will mention at the gravesite and the time is auspicious for good news" (4 Iyar, 5751), "they were taken to the gravesite" (14 Cheshvan 5752) and the like. These were accumulated into a large file.

Since the Rebbe had written, "the Jewish people here, of his city" – I thought that the work among Anash and mekuravim at "dollars" and mitzvaim wasn't enough. I decided to reach much further by placing ads in newspapers. Since then I have had an open line to the media...

Let's go back to the ads where you advertised that the Rebbe is Moshiach. What made you decide to do that?

During the months that preceded the ad, from the beginning of 5753, nearly every day the Rebbe encouraged the singing of Yechi and it was clear to all that this was a new era, the "kabbalas ha'malchus" of Melech HaMoshiach. More and more people asked the Rebbe for permission to publicize that the Rebbe is Moshiach and to have

people sign that they accept his malchus, and the Rebbe approved this and even encouraged Chassidim who worked along these lines.

In light of these facts, I spoke with some of the people most active in publicizing inyanei Moshiach and we decided that we have to start doing global activities. We thought of putting an ad in *The New York Times* and other newspapers.

What did other people think?

Whoever had been involved earlier in publicizing inyanei Geula and Moshiach agreed that the time had come to publicize Moshiach's identity as well but there were other askanim who vehemently maintained that this kind of publicity could harm our image to the point that people could be turned off from Lubavitch. These askanim also said that since we were talking about global publicity, this campaign could not be launched without the Rebbe's explicit permission.

"The Rebbe's answers about other, local projects cannot be thought of as granting permission for this project, which will bring the message to tens of millions of people," they maintained. Another point they raised was that this kind of publicity extended beyond our own personal domain and entered the domains of dozens of shluchim whose mekuravim would see the ad and approach them with questions.

We decided to ask the Rebbe directly. "If the Rebbe would approve the ad," we told these askanim, "that

would be the greatest proof that he wants there to be global publicity about his being Moshiach. It would also prove that the Rebbe does not think that these ads will turn people off from Lubavitch."

And what was the Rebbe's response?

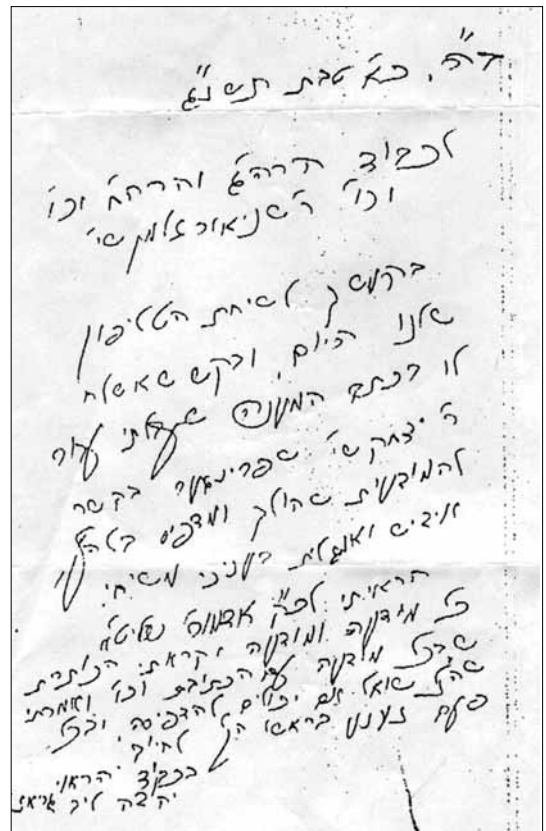
We prepared the ads in three languages: Hebrew, English and Yiddish, and I asked the secretary to show them to the Rebbe and ask whether I could place them in *The New York Times* and other major newspapers.

The secretary showed each ad separately to the Rebbe and even read the headings, while noting that the address to send the good resolutions is 770 Eastern Parkway. The Rebbe looked at all the ads and then gave his approval to publicize them. In order to certify this for the public, R' Shneur Zalman Gurary of the Vaad Rabbanei Lubavitch HaKlali asked R' Leibel Groner to put this in writing, and he wrote a detailed description of the Rebbe's consent to publicizing the ad.

So the Rebbe approved advertising his identity as Moshiach "without limitations?"

Yes, of course. Furthermore, we see that to the Rebbe, putting ads in the paper is "*b'ofen ha'miskabel*" and there is no reason to fear that this will turn people off from Lubavitch.

I hope that this interview is not just to reminisce about the past but to do something now, until we see the complete hisgalus of the Rebbe MH"M immediately!



R' Leibel Groner's letter to R' S.Z. Gurary about the Rebbe's approval of R' Springer's ads

The ad in Yisroel Shelanu that had the Rebbe's approval

WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME?

By Rabbi Chaim Sasson



Rabbi Eliyahu looked at me in wonder and he asked, “How did you know when I myself do not understand what I am doing here and how I agreed to leave the house in my condition?”

On 29 Teves, 5759, my wife gave birth to our son Menachem Mendel. Since I had been closely connected to the Rishon L'Tzion Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu z"l at the beginning of my t'shuva process (at Machon Meir near yeshivas Merkaz HaRav) 29 years before, I always wanted him to be the sandek, but it had never worked out. I hoped that this time it would.

I wrote to the Rebbe about it in the Igros Kodesh, mentioning the name of Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu. When I opened the volume, the words “**Mordechai HaTzaddik**” stood out on the right side, and on the left it said: “**one of the distinguished rabbanim.**” I saw this as a clear hint from the Rebbe.

I went to Rabbi Eliyahu's office, only to be told that he did not feel well and hadn't left his

house for several weeks. I tried waiting another two or three days, hoping he would feel better before the bris, but they told me that the rav was not attending any events at all. I almost gave up.

One day I met someone close to Rabbi Eliyahu and I told him the story. I didn't tell him about the answer in the Igros Kodesh but I said that I greatly desired to have Rabbi Eliyahu as the sandek. He advised me as follows: “There is one event that the rav said he must attend, even for a few minutes because he owes it to Baba Sali z”l because of the special connection between them. This is the hilula of Baba Sali that will be this Motzaei Shabbos, 4 Shevat. Go to the hilula and wait for him at the elevator and speak to him directly.”

That's exactly what I did. At that time I had a radio program on Kol HaNeshama on Motzaei Shabbos called Kol Mevasser. This time I had to cut it short. I raced over to the hall and waited for the rav. As soon as he exited the elevator I went over to him and told him I had a newborn son. He smiled and shook my hand and blessed me. I told him that I wanted to honor him with being the sandek at the bris. He smiled gently and, glancing around at his aides, he said, “Ask them ... I haven't left the house for a few weeks. It's just for the hilula of Baba Sali which is close by and I came for only a few minutes. I don't feel well.”

I told him, “I am making the bris in Givat Shaul, two minutes from your house, and I will do it at whatever time is convenient for you, just be the sandek!”

When I saw that he was hesitating because it wasn't pleasant for him to turn me down, I continued to plead, “It did not work out for my three older sons and this child is our eleventh.

Doesn't a mother of eleven children deserve to be made happy with your sandakaus for her son?"

This last plea won him over and the rav "gave in" and said, "You are right. She deserves it. Although it's hard for me, I'll come."

I was ecstatic. I thanked him profusely and ran home to tell my family that the Rishon L'Tzion Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu would be the sandek.

I made all the necessary arrangements with the rav's aides and the bris took place in the afternoon on the lap of the Rishon L'Tzion, friend of the Rebbe and of Chabad.

When the rav got up to leave, I thanked him for participating and making us so happy and then I said, "I have a nice surprise for you. I knew in advance that you would be the sandek at this bris!"

Rabbi Eliyahu looked at me in wonder and he asked, "How did you know when I myself do not understand what I am doing here and how I agreed to leave the house in my condition?"

I took out the volume of Igros Kodesh with the letter I had written to the Rebbe and said, "From the answer I opened to, I understood that you would be the sandek."

Rabbi Eliyahu was nonplussed and said, "What do you mean? Where did you see this?"



"Here, in the Igros Kodesh," I said, and I showed him my letter and the Rebbe's answer:

Mordechai HaTzaddik ... one of the distinguished rabbanim.

Rabbi Eliyahu read the question and the answer carefully and said, "I'm a tzaddik?" and he waved his hand dismissively. Then he looked at the Igros again and said, "Amazing. It's just amazing. Now I understand what I am doing here. The Lubavitcher Rebbe called upon me to be the sandek for this baby who is named for him. Why didn't you tell me to begin with that the Rebbe wanted me to be sandek?"

"I didn't know what your reaction would be," I said. "And what difference does it make when the main thing is that you were sandek as the Rebbe wanted?"

Rabbi Eliyahu smiled and said, "What difference does it make? If I knew ahead of time I would have come earlier in honor of the Rebbe!"

Some years went by and I arranged with the Rav's personal assistants for a t'filla gathering for the Geula at the Kosel. While talking to them, one of the rabbanim who sat next Rabbi Eliyahu told me that he was once present when Rabbi Eliyahu enthusiastically related to a group of talmidei chachamim about how he had been a sandek at a bris because of an answer in the Rebbe's Igros Kodesh.

When he finished telling me about the bris I replied that I was the father of the baby in that story!

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'MAISHKE'

By Shneur Zalman Berger

Moshe accepted the blame knowing he could be sent to Siberia for years but his love superseded everything and by being the scapegoat all the others would be released and could go back to learning

** Learning and teaching in underground yeshivos behind the Iron Curtain was the life of R' Moshe Robinson (Karalevitz) a"h*

"Under the present circumstances we must get used to fact that the bachurim themselves will be maggidei shiur and teach the younger boys. It is hard, at present, to appoint family men to these positions, when they will leave their wives as 'living widows.' So you have the holy obligation to disperse among the branches of the yeshiva and teach Torah with mesirus nefesh."

This was said with great emotion by the directors of the Tomchei T'mimim network of yeshivos in the Soviet Union at a secret farbrengen that took place in Moscow in the home of R' Moshe Katzman a"h.

At this farbrengen, which took place in 5697/1937, the older T'mimim were told the harsh reality of the time, that during these dark days many of Anash were arrested by the Soviet secret police and were sentenced to imprisonment or exiled for long

periods of time to some unknown destination.

This difficult decision, to send bachurim to teach, was made after a wave of arrests among Anash. In every city dozens were arrested and people were terrified. The directors of the yeshiva, R' Yona Cohen Hy"d and R' Mordechai Eliezer Lapatovsky were very happy when they saw that despite the danger, the bachurim agreed to their suggestion.

The very next day, one of the bachurim who had been at the farbrengen, Moshe Robinson, went to Berdichev to teach in the Chabad yeshiva there. He bravely disregarded the knowledge that sooner or later, the police would catch up with him.

MIKVA IN THE COURTYARD

R' Moshe Robinson was born in 5674/1914. His father was R'

Bentzion, a distinguished Chassid in Karalevitz in the Ukraine. With the outbreak of the Bolshevik Revolution the government closed the three shuls in Karalevitz and ruined the mikva. Bentzion and his wife Sarah organized a minyan in their house and built a mikva in their courtyard which served the Jewish community of 300 families.

His father hired a melamed for Moshe and his two brothers, Avrohom Hy"d and Dovber. The Robinson home had a special Chassidishe atmosphere and when the girls came of age they married top T'mimim of the time: R' Mendel Futerfas a"h, R' Mordechai Hirsch Charitonov Hy"d and R' Shia Korf a"h.

In 1927, when he was 13, Moshe went to Ramen to learn in the branch of Tomchei T'mimim in that city.

R' Berel, his younger brother, of Lud, relates:

"Moshe learned in Ramen and I learned at home. But the persecution intensified and the pressure to send children to school forced my parents to send me away from home, too. Moshe came home for Tishrei, 5688, and then we went together to learn in Ramen.

"I was only 8 and a half and I left home ... and it wasn't easy. My melamed was a ben Torah and a big Chassid, R' Yechezkel Greenfuss. The rosh yeshiva by whom Moshe learned was R' Yaakov (Yani) Gurary. Moshe and I and the other boys slept in two apartments of good Jews who agreed to host us and we ate *teg* by people in the community. I had to eat *teg* from a young age and it was very hard.

"After Pesach of that year I went with my brother to Vitebsk, where I attended yeshiva, and he went on from there to Polotsk. Moving from yeshiva to yeshiva was what we did to keep the GPU off our trail. Yeshivos were founded and closed

and talmidim moved to other cities. From a young age we became used to a life of fear and wandering. We kept in touch with home but we wrote brief letters with few details for fear of prying eyes. Our parents constantly worried. It was hard for them to have their children in distant places, in great danger. I didn't see Moshe for a long time. He learned in Polotsk by R' Shlomo Chaim Kesselman a"h and then moved on to learn in Vitebsk. I had already moved somewhere else so we did not meet."

R' Michel Rappaport tells about the branch of the yeshiva in Vitebsk in those days:

"The learning began each day at 4:30 in the morning. At the appointed time all the talmidim were present and nothing stopped us, not the fierce cold or the snow. We learned in the women's section of the Chabad shul. We would close the doors and windows so nobody would realize we were there. There was no electricity and we learned by the weak light of kerosene lamps. We learned until 7:00 and then went downstairs so people wouldn't realize that we had been in the Ezras Nashim and it would look as though we had just arrived. A few of us slept at the homes of balabatim, while others slept on benches in the shul."

SUSPECTED OF SMUGGLING FOREIGN CURRENCY

After Purim, 1931, the government closed the yeshiva in Vitebsk. Instructions were given from the hanhala to Moshe and some of his friends to travel to Baku in Azerbaijan, where they thought they could learn in peace. The directors of the yeshiva arranged with the gabbaim of the shul in Baku to allow the bachurim to learn there. Moshe and his friends, R' Michoel Lipsker and R'

Yosef Goldberg, arrived at shul in the morning. When the gabbai saw them he recoiled in fright. He feared that having young bachurim with beards and peios in his shul would lead to government investigation and the closing of the shul. The gabbai reneged and the bachurim had to learn outside in the courtyard of the shul. The members of the Jewish community had pity on them and gave them bread and some salted fish so they wouldn't die of hunger.

They slept outdoors. People were afraid to host them but Moshe and his friends did not



despair and constantly tried to come up with a plan of where to go next. They decided to go to Georgia, to Kutais, where they knew R' Avrohom Levi Slavin had been sent by the Rebbe Rashab. Obtaining tickets to Georgia was nearly impossible. One of the bachurim waited in line for an entire day until he got tickets for the train.

On the way to Kutais, Moshe and his friend, Avrohom Kwash stopped in Gurzy. The warm clothes they were wearing, which were appropriate in the colder regions near Baku, from where

they were traveling, attracted attention in more temperate Georgia. The heavy suitcase they carried, filled with s'farim so they would have what to learn from in Kutais, turned the unwanted attention into outright suspicion. They were arrested and held for a few days, suspected of smuggling various items and foreign currency. When their innocence was established, they were finally released.

They then traveled together with other bachurim to Kutais, where they started a branch of yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim. Rabbi Avrohom Levi Slavin was a big help to them in providing them with their material needs.

In the winter of 5692, R' Shneur Zalman Levitin a"h arrived in Kutais. He taught the bachurim Chassidus and ran the yeshiva. R' Dovber Robinson relates:

"From the time my brother Moshe brought me to Vitebsk, I wandered from one branch of the yeshiva to another throughout the Soviet Union: in Bobruisk, Moghilev, Chernigov, and Poltava. From Poltava I arrived in Kutais, where I was reunited with Moshe, who had been appointed mashgiach of the yeshiva.

"In Kutais, most of the bachurim were older and they learned on their own without shiurim. I, who was only 13, and my friend Shmuel Gurevitz were the youngest boys there, so we were helped in our learning by my brother Moshe. He was happy to help us but as mashgiach, he could not take my being his brother into account. If I showed up late he would fine me just as he did the others.

"After a year of learning I returned home to Karalevitz while Moshe went to learn in Novozavkov. After a year the talmidim in that yeshiva went to my hometown of Karalevitz, where

TRIAL BECAUSE OF SHABBOS OBSERVANCE

R' Dovber Robinson relates:

A short time before the outbreak of World War II, Lubavitch families in our town of Karalevitz began leaving the city – the Dubrawsky, Shapiro and Karasik families and more. The yeshiva which had been in the city had closed a few years earlier. The loneliness was tremendous and I also considered moving away. I was 20 and I wanted to be among Chassidim.

I somehow managed to send a letter to the Rebbe Rayatz, who was in Riga at the time. The answer said: **Don't be quick to leave your work or your city.** So I waited.

A few years earlier I had studied bookkeeping with my father, R' Bentzion and I began working in this field. I did not go to work on Shabbos. My employer knew I kept Shabbos and he looked away. One day, they told me that government inspectors would be coming on Shabbos since at that time they were very particular about absences from work. My employer asked me to show up even if I did not work, but I refused to do anything that even looked as though I was desecrating the Shabbos. They told me that the punishment could be very severe.

The inspectors arrived and decided to put me on trial. I was sentenced to an option of six months imprisonment or to forego a quarter of my salary. I chose the latter option. However, the problem was what to do on subsequent Shabbosos. A few days before the first Shabbos I was on a business trip to another city and I deliberately stayed there over Shabbos. The second Shabbos I was sick. By the third Shabbos, I was just about out of options when I remembered that the Rebbe, in his answer, had told me to leave the city at some point, although not to be in a hurry to do so at that time.

I boarded a train that was heading for Moscow, leaving my parents, brother, sister-in-law and their children behind. I did not know that I was saving my life thereby and would never see my family again. They were murdered by the Nazis Hy"d. I knew it was hard to get to Moscow. The inspections that the police made as the train approached it prevented me from getting to the capitol city. I considered getting off a few stops earlier but the inspection began before I had a chance to get off. I gave a nice sum of money to the conductor and whispered to him that I did not have documents. He hid me in the washroom.

When the inspectors came on, they demanded that the conductor open the washroom where I was hidden. The door opened and I hid behind it, my heart pounding. The door closed and I breathed a sigh of relief. It was an open miracle.

I got off the train and went to Yegorevsk (about 100 kilometers from Moscow), where I met my sister Leah and her husband R' Mendel Futerfas, who helped me settle in.

they were fed hot meals by my parents and helped in every way. They immersed in the morning

before davening in the mikva in the courtyard of our house. My father got them work permits so they

could reside there legally.

"Despite my young age, I was fully aware that this was real mesirus nefesh on the part of my parents to agree to host so many bearded bachurim, but my father wanted them to be able to learn without material concerns and did all he could to this end.

"In those days I was working already, but I devoted Thursday nights to copying maamarei Chassidus. The bachurim gave me a copy of the maamer and after a night of work I had made several copies for them so they could all learn 'inside.'"

DEVOTED TO HIS WORK

R' Nachum Volosov, a member of the hanhala of the network of yeshivos in Russia, related:

"When I received instructions from R' Mordechai Eliezer (Lapatovsky) to start new branches of yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim, I first went to Karalevitz, where I found the excellent bachur who was pleasing to G-d and man, Moshe Robinson. He was learning Tur with Rabbi Menachem Mendel Dubrawski (who was a maggid shiur in yeshiva in Lubavitch). It wasn't easy to convince 'Maishke' to come to Berditchev with me."

After Moshe agreed to go, he was called, together with other older bachurim, to Moscow in Tishrei of 5697. There, at a secret farbrengen, it was decided that the running of Tomchei T'mimim would be handed over to the bachurim and not long afterwards, Moshe arrived in Berditchev.

R' Nachum tells us about Moshe's work there:

"He was completely devoted to his work and excelled in his terrific shiurim and in his fatherly love for each student. As a result, a large number of talmidim (relatively speaking, considering the situation) gathered around him – no fewer

than 12!”

His student R' Heschel Tzeitlin relates:

“The shiurim started in the morning at five. One of the talmidim would close the shutters from the outside and go off. During the day, the learning took place in different shuls and they only gathered together for shiur.”

After Pesach, 1937, the older bachurim were called to Moscow once again. The menahelim bolstered their spirits and they reaffirmed their decision – “the existence of the yeshivos under the circumstances is possible only through the older bachurim.”

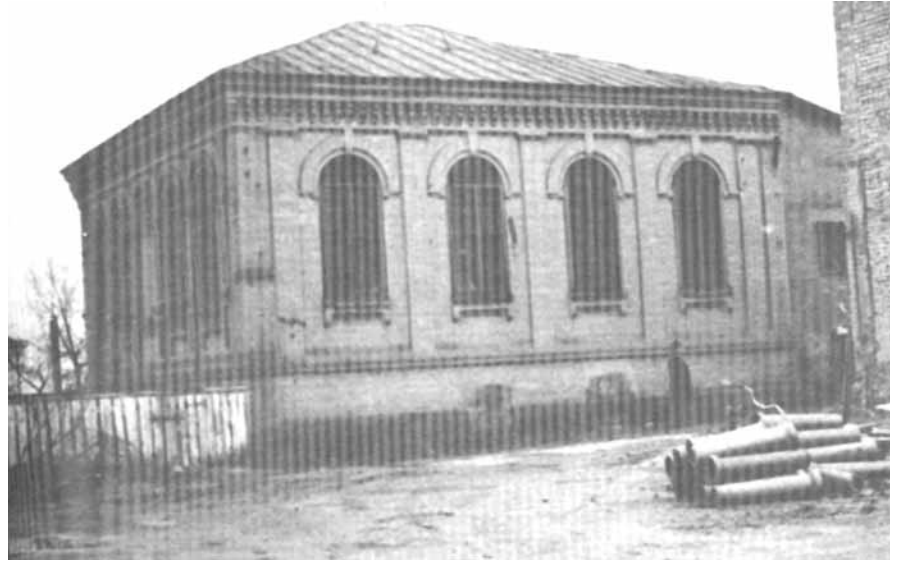
These were terrible times in which Chassidim were arrested on the street and sent to Siberia for many years.

R' Yona Cohen, menahel of the yeshivos, concluded the “meeting of older bachurim” (that is how it was referred to) with these ominous words, “When we meet again – that is, if they don’t take us to jail in the interim – we will speak further.”

UNWANTED VISITORS

I was 24 Teves, 5698, the Yom Hilula of the Alter Rebbe. R' Moshe sat and farbrenged with about ten of his talmidim in the tailor’s shul, one of eighteen shuls that were active at that time in Berditchev. The talmidim sat around a large table on which light refreshments were placed: bread, herring, boiled potatoes and of course, mashke. Moshe and Berel Gurevitz, who was the oldest of the bachurim, told stories and delivered inspired words.

They focused on the need to serve Hashem with kabbalas ol, without asking why. You do what needs to be done because that is what Hashem wants. Moshe explained at length the sin of King Shaul who, despite his high



“He continued asking me all sorts of general questions and then suddenly asked, ‘Do you put on t’fillin?’ ‘Yes,’ I replied, and immediately realized my error. The interrogator banged the desk with his fist and shouted, ‘You liar! How dare you tell me that you’re only eleven when you passed your bar mitzva?’”

spiritual level, sinned and fell since reason was important to him. They also urged the boys to be very particular about keeping to the learning schedule and valuing every minute.

The talmidim eagerly swallowed every word Moshe said. They sang niggunim and the atmosphere was wonderful and happy.

Suddenly, after midnight, there was a mighty pounding at the door. Instantly, Moshe and Berel leaped up and over to a small side room where logs were piled for firewood. The door of the shul burst open and in rushed two policemen brandishing revolvers.

The sight that met the policemen’s eyes was an innocent as could be. A group of boys were sitting around drinking mashke. They saw the young boys and the shul and were about to leave when one of them said, “No, we must first make a thorough search.”

They discovered the two men hiding and asked, “What are you doing here?”

“We were just walking past and saw light in the shul and when we entered and found this group of boys drinking, we decided to join them.”

The policemen did not buy this excuse. It turned out later that they

‘Chatzkel, you can admit it; I accepted all the blame. I told the interrogators that you learned with me. You can tell them the truth and end this situation.’

knew in advance about the yeshiva and had only waited for an opportunity to catch all the talmidim while they learned. They ordered them to form a straight line and to walk with them to the police station. They had the shamash of the shul join them. One of the policemen walked at the head of the line and one walked at the end.

Moshe and the talmidim spent the night at the police station. In the morning they were led by police van to the GPU office, a terrifying place, and they realized this was serious business. Their tzitzis were cut off and their t’fillin were confiscated.

One of the talmidim, R’ Yechezkel Brod, related:

“After this welcome we were taken in, one by one, for interrogation. Each of us was taken separately and asked his name, age, and what he did. When it was my turn and I was asked how old I was, I said eleven.

“‘You’re lying!’ he accused me. I was fourteen and I didn’t look like an eleven year old, nevertheless I responded, ‘Why do you call me a liar? I’m eleven!’

“The interrogator said, ‘What a nerve! He lies brazenly!’

“He continued asking me all sorts of general questions and then suddenly asked, ‘Do you put on t’fillin?’

“‘Yes,’ I replied, and immediately realized my error. The interrogator banged the desk with his fist and shouted, ‘You liar! How dare you tell me that you’re only eleven when you passed your bar

mitzva?’

“I recovered quickly and calmly said, ‘You can also put on t’fillin from the age of eleven.’

“‘Liar!’ he screamed.

He was literally insane with rage. ‘I will show you!’

“He pressed a button and asked for Moshe Robinson to come in. When he came in, the interrogator asked him, ‘Rabbi, from what age do you put on t’fillin?’ It looked as though Moshe immediately grasped what was going on and I was thrilled with his answer.

“‘The halacha is you put them on from the age of thirteen but the rabbis say you can put them on from the age of eleven.’”

The boys and Moshe were interrogated for hours and all of them repeated the same story; they were sitting and drinking mashke to warm up. They said they had run away from home and did not learn in yeshiva.

Towards evening they brought them all into the jail. They put the younger ones into one cell: Refael Wilschansky, Velvel Oerbach, Sholom Ber Pevsner, Heschel Tzeitlin, Yechezkel Brod, and Refael Brook. The three older bachurim - Berel Gurevitz, Elozor Mogilovsky and Shmuel Itkin - and Moshe were put into another cell.

During the next days and weeks they were interrogated and tortured. R’ Brod related:

“One evening they called me in for questioning, but this time they brought Moshe in too, and Moshe said, ‘Chatzkel, you can admit it; I accepted all the blame. I told the

interrogators that you learned with me. You can tell them the truth and end this situation.’

“I wasn’t impressed. I assumed the interrogators had forced him to say this in order to get me to admit. I looked at him as if he was a stranger and said, ‘You liar. I never learned with you and I don’t know you.’ I found out afterwards that they got the same reaction from another talmid who they tried to convince to confess through Moshe.

“However the interrogators wanted to conclude the matter and so they placed Moshe in our cell so he could talk to us without fear. What he said broke our spirits. ‘You can confess. I took it all upon myself. Don’t tell them who brought you here and who supplied you with food. You have to say you don’t know the details but you can tell them that you learned with me.’ At this point there was no longer any reason to continue the charade, and we confessed and signed to our admission. The matter was over – for us, at least.

“Moshe, who took responsibility for running the yeshiva, suffered greatly. The GPU tried to pile on additional accusations such as his having illegal ties with people abroad and being a participant in counter-revolutionary organizing. He was taken to Kiev, where they planned on holding a show trial in order to scare people.”

Berel Gurevitz and the two older bachurim were sentenced to a year in jail and suffered greatly. The younger boys, after spending four weeks in jail, during which they were tortured and suffered hunger, were taken to a government orphanage. When Anash heard where they were, they decided to smuggle them out. R’ Michael Teitelbaum did so with mesirus nefesh.

[Continued next issue be”H]