

*Wishing all our readers a k'siva
v'chasima tova l'shana tova u'mesuka!
The next issue will be printed, G-d willing,
for Sukkos.*

4

LIGHT FROM DOUBLE DARKNESS

D'var Malchus

6

**THE GADOL AND ME STANDING
TOGETHER BEFORE THE KING**

The Editor's Desk | Boruch Merkur

10

**MOSHIACH IS HERE: ARE YOU
LAUGHING YET?**

Thought | Rabbi Zvi Homnick

14

THE P'NIMIUS OF ROSH HA'SHANA

Rosh HaShana | Interview by Avrohom Rainitz

20

GOING TO THE REBBE

Tishrei | Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelevitz

24

**NEW YEAR INSIGHTS FROM THE
FATHERS OF CHASSIDUS**

Sicha | Presented by Rabbi Boruch Sholom Cohen

30

VISITING THE REBBE

Stories

32

FROM FIELD TO PALACE

Insight | Rabbi Chaim Ashkenazi a"h

36

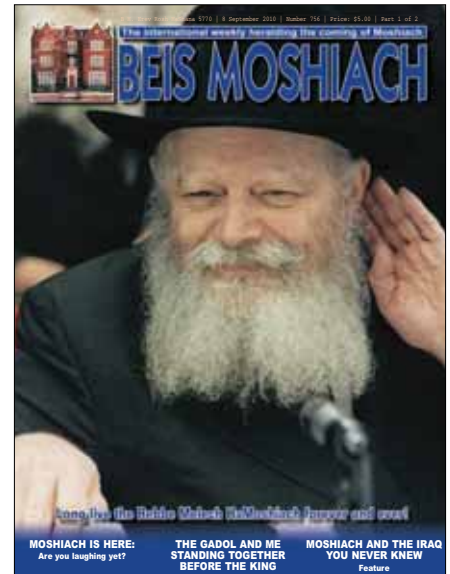
**MOSHIACH AND THE IRAQ YOU NEVER
KNEW**

Feature | Rabbi Avishai Efargun

41

CHIYA MINAYIN?

Tishrei | Shmuel Alexander



USA

744 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409
Tel: (718) 778-8000
Fax: (718) 778-0800
admin@beismoshiach.org
www.beismoshiach.org

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:
M.M. Hendel

ENGLISH EDITOR:
Boruch Merkur

HEBREW EDITOR:
Rabbi Sholom Yaakov Chazan
editorH@beismoshiach.org

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

Beis Moshiah is not responsible for the content of the advertisements.

LIGHT FROM DOUBLE DARKNESS

Likkutei Sichos Vol. 9, Pg. 193-195

Translated By Boruch Merkur

The disguise is so great that we don't at all perceive that it is a concealment, to the extent that it can result in, G-d forbid, "They esteem darkness as light..."

1. It is known that the Baal Shem Tov gives the following teaching on the verse, "I will surely have concealed My face on that day" [VaYeilech 31:18] – that the meaning of "I will surely have concealed (V'Anochi *hasteir astir*)," a **double** concealment, is that the concealment itself is hidden. That is, the disguise is so great that we don't at all perceive that it is a concealment, to the extent that it can result in, G-d forbid, "They esteem darkness as light" [Yeshayahu 5:20. See Rambam Hilchos Deios, Ch. 2, beg.].

As it is explained in *Likkutei Torah* [B'Chukosai, beginning on 48a, end] regarding the matters stated in the Rebuke – that "according to the truth, they are actually blessings." The fact that they are expressed in such a manner that they appear superficially as the opposite of a blessing is because the blessings come from such a lofty place, "from the aspect of concealment (*sasum*)." Accordingly it is understood with respect to the topic at hand – regarding, "I will surely have concealed My face on that day" – that "according to the truth" it is actually a sublime blessing.

Furthermore, from the very fact that superficially it appears as the **ultimate** expression of the opposite of a blessing—

(since when we are **aware** that it is a "concealment," the tendency is to hope that we will discover advice on

how to overcome it, however, when there is "*hasteir astir*" [i.e., a double concealment], to the extent that we perceive darkness as light, then we are satisfied with the state we find ourselves in, which is indeed the ultimate opposite of a blessing)

—it is understood that the blessing is extremely great, for which reason it comes in an extremely hidden manner.

2. This will be understood in light of a discussion of the saying of the Alter Rebbe [*Boneh Yerushalayim*, Section 120; *Maamarei Admur HaZakein*, K'suvim Vol. 2, pg 156] on the verse, "I am asleep, but my heart is awake" [Shir HaShirim 5:2] – that at the level of [G-dliness described as] *Memalei Kol Almin* (Filling All Worlds), which is called, "I," it is possible that there should be "sleep," whereas the level of *Sovev Kol Almin* (Transcending All Worlds), "my heart," is always "awake."

There the Alter Rebbe explains that when a Jew "attaches his thought to worldly desires...and he wishes to receive vitality from that, and he foregoes the vitality of 'You enliven them all, which is [the manifestation of G-dliness described as] Filling all Worlds,'" he thereby is **separated** from the level of *Memalei Kol Almin*, whereas "it is impossible to be separated in any manner" from the level of *Sovev Kol Almin*, for the "Will of the Heart" that comes from the level of *Sovev Kol Almin* ("my heart") "is present in every person." And "even though it appears to him that he does not possess it, and he does not perceive it, this is certainly false, for 'notwithstanding the fact that he does not see, his *mazal* (spirit) sees.'"

At first glance, this is not understood:

Since [it is said of the level of *Memalei Kol Almin* that] "You enliven them **all**," the level of *Memalei Kol Almin* enlivens even one who "**foregoes** the vitality of 'You enliven them all.'" Nevertheless, we say that since the person "runs after his livelihood" [FN 10: wording of the Talmud (Shabbos 32b), quoted in the Alter Rebbe's maamer, *ibid*] and "he **foregoes** the vitality of 'You enliven them all,'" (in

terms of **his** perception) **he** is “**separated** from the level of Memalei Kol Almin.” Why is it that we say with regard to Sovev Kol Almin that even if “it appears to him that he does not possess it, etc.,” “it is impossible to be separated in any manner”?

We must answer that since the Alter Rebbe says about the Will of the Heart that it “is present in every person,” he means this not only with respect to “his mazal” but also with respect to the person himself (his perception). But at first glance, since “he **does not** see,” the person himself is indeed **separated**!

3. The explanation is as follows:

The level of Memalei Kol Almin, since it “**fills** and enlivens all the **worlds**, etc.,” is characterized by its influence being grasped by [the inhabitants of] the worlds [FN 11: see *Tanya* Ch. 48 (pg. 67b, end): “the influence which is at the level of revelation, etc.”]. Thus, when one **does not** grasp that his vitality is from G-dliness (“he forgoes”), the **G-dly light** is manifest in him in a manner of concealment and transcendence (*sovev*). Of consequence, one who forgoes the G-dly vitality is, therefore, separated from Memalei Kol Almin. [FN 12: However, with regard to Jews, since their vitality (and likewise with regard to the provision of their livelihood and etc.) is revealed G-dliness (see *Kuntres U'Maayin*, beginning from Maamer 6, end), therefore, it is not possible for them to be completely separated. Thus, also with regard to the level of Memalei, the level of “I,” it is said “I am **asleep**” (only the aspect of sleeping, not departure, G-d forbid).]

This is not so, however, with regard to Sovev Kol Almin, “which **transcends** all the worlds.” The fact that it is present in the worlds is (**not** because **they** have a connection to it, but) of **its own** account (i.e., being that it is boundless, it is omnipresent). Similarly with regard to the Will of the Heart, which is derived from the aspect of Sovev of the soul—

—it is not possible that the lack of its being **grasped** should effect a change in the aspect of Sovev or in the Will of the Heart; they are present — in **their** revealed state — even where they are not perceived. [FN 13: See a similar discussion in the maamer “Hikabtzu” (in *Hemshech* 5666) and in several other places.]

Thus, it states in the maamer, “even though it appears to him that he does not possess it, and he does not perceive it, **this** is certainly false” (i.e., the notion that “it appears to him that he does not possess it, and he does not perceive it” is certainly false), for the Will of the Heart of every Jew — being that it is said of every Jew, “his mazal sees” — is found even in his revealed faculties, in the place where “it appears to him that...he does not perceive it.”

4. This, however, requires further analysis: The fact that the Will of the Heart is present even in one of whom it is said, “it appears to him that he does not possess it,

and he does not perceive it” — this is with respect to the level of “his mazal” and Sovev, for at that level, it is inconsequential that it appears to the person that he does not possess the Will of the Heart, and he does not perceive it. But with respect to “it appears to him” — that which he **sees** and that which he **perceives** — at that level “it appears to him that he **does not** possess it, and he does not perceive it.” Why then do we say that **this** notion that “it appears to him that he does not possess it, and he does not perceive it — **this** is certainly false”?

The answer to this question follows the reasoning of the explanation that the contraction [of G-dly light or revelation] has an advantage over light [itself], enabling it to contract the light: **The very notion** that “it appears to him that he does not possess it, etc.” derives from a level that is even higher than the level of “present in every person” [illustrated by the fact that it empowers him to deny that level, the reality of the omnipresence of Sovev, just as the power to diminish light illustrates supremacy over the light itself]. It comes out that at the level of “it appears to him that he does not possess it, etc.” we see the **revelation** of a level that is even higher than Sovev — not one instance of concealment and hiding but two.

Therefore, at the same time as this “it appears to him, etc.” causes the person to be an agent of concealment, he thereby denies also the cause and the strength of the “it appears to him, etc.” itself; he perceives the **opposite** of how it is unto itself [i.e., a sublime height]. Therefore, the Alter Rebbe says that the notion that “it appears to him that he does not possess it, etc.” — **this** is certainly false.

5. And this is also the explanation of the greatness of the blessing of “I will surely have concealed (*V'Anochi hasteir astir*) My face on that day”: Even the “concealment” (*hasteir astir*) comes from “I” (*Anochi*). Since this is so, not only does it not conceal G-dliness — on the contrary — at the moment that one contemplates the concept as it truly is, he thereby fully reveals a much higher concept than through the path of revelation.

6. This is also the connection of the verse (and concept), “I will surely have concealed My face, etc.” (of the Torah portion VaYeilech) to the Ten Days of Repentance, as VaYeilech is always read close to Rosh HaShana, (which is also) the first day of the Ten Days of Repentance:

This very concept — that “I will surely have concealed” does not oppose holiness, but on the contrary, specifically in it we see, through it we connect with “I” (*Anochi*) — is revealed specifically through the service of **repentance**, for repentance causes intentional sins to be transformed into acts of merit [Yuma 86b].

(From the address of Shabbos Parshas VaYeilech (Shabbos T'shuva),
6 Tishrei 5725, the day of the passing of the Rebbe's mother,
Rebbetzin Chana of blessed memory)

THE GADOL AND ME STANDING TOGETHER BEFORE THE KING

By Boruch Merkur

What possible role could the Messianic Monarch play then, in the Era of Redemption? Or in a more direct context: what role will the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach play in the lives of chassidim if we will all be elevated to the level of talmidei chachomim, Torah geniuses in our own right?

Coming from a big city, it was refreshing to learn in the yeshiva in Morristown. It's set on a grassy, sloping, rustic setting. It's no concrete jungle. It is peaceful and quiet. There are no busy roads nearby. A pleasant breeze was blowing through the open windows of the learning hall, intermingling with the scent of old s'farim.

Rabbi Wichnin of blessed memory, the rosh yeshiva of Tiferes Bachurim, was busy teaching his shiur. He often taught while smiling, his face and gestures animated by an apparent love for the Torah, as he spoke its holy words.

All the students admired and respected Rabbi Wichnin, but notwithstanding the clear distance we stood from him when it came to knowledge and experience in the study of Torah, we felt that Rabbi

Wichnin was approachable, for he was welcoming and warm, happy and humorous and humble.

Now, entering the study hall were two imposing rabbinical figures, with long white beards, black coats and all.

I don't think I would have even noticed the visitors if Rabbi Wichnin hadn't jumped to his feet to greet them. His hand was extended and I thought I saw money in it. (I heard later that it was a single fifty dollar bill. No, Rabbi Wichnin was no tycoon.)

Was this a rosh yeshiva and a fundraiser coming all this way to raise money from a bunch of students? Collectively in the room we might have had a few dollars (in coins) between us.

Rabbi Wichnin had a few quick words with the rabbis, explaining that this was certainly not a lucrative venue for them, and they were off...

Then Rabbi Wichnin addressed the zal. Evidently we had a lesson to learn, but not one that we were expecting. You see, Rabbi Wichnin was the only one who rose when the rabbis entered the room. With considerable grace, Rabbi Wichnin illuminated his students, *baalei t'shuva*, regarding the Mitzva to honor Torah scholars – that we must rise when a rabbi enters the room.

It was indeed an awkward topic: we never granted this honor to our own rabbis, our teachers, not even to our beloved rosh yeshiva. But Rabbi Wichnin was not attempting to indulge himself with newfound airs and graces. Actually he pretty much ruled that out, saying that in our circles, in Chabad, rabbanim are less *makpid* about receiving these displays of honor. Amongst others, however, it is right to do so, as outlined in Jewish law.

Hmm... Why would it be different in Chabad? I mean, if it is a Mitzva...

THE GADOL IS PROBABLY 60 TIMES GREATER THAN ME!

I found out the answer to this question at a farbrengen with the mashpia Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Greenberg. In the spirited tone characteristic of a chassidishe farbrengen, Rabbi Greenberg was contrasting the manner whereby a misnaged sizes himself up against his rav to the way a chassid relates to his rebbe.

To a misnaged, the main thing is learning, of course. I have learned 5 tractates, Rabbi Greenberg said, speaking on behalf of the hypothetical misnaged. And the rav, who is a *gadol ba'Torah*, has surely learned through Shas, maybe even 5 times! He is indeed much greater than me – 60 times greater, in fact! Obviously I should definitely show him respect, as delineated in the *Shulchan Aruch*.

The way a chassid approaches the Rebbe is different, Rabbi Greenberg continued. Even if the chassid has learned only a few pages of Gemara, and even if he doesn't know them very well, and who knows how many times the Rebbe has been through Shas, and with all the commentaries, of course – he isn't such a fool to think that that makes the Rebbe merely thousands of times greater than him. When a chassid stands before the Rebbe he knows, with every fibre of his being, that he (the chassid) is nothing – and not even just in comparison with the Rebbe. Truly nothing. And the Rebbe is everything. *HaNasi hu ha'kol!* So even when a rav approaches the Rebbe, a chassidishe rav, a *baki b'Shas*, he too knows that he's really nothing. Do the math! A thousand compared to infinity is zero! Look it up in *Tanya*.

That's why in our circles rabbanim don't demand *kavod* from the other chassidim, from other Jews. They are chassidishe rabbanim and they have the Rebbe on their minds, not themselves. And since compared to the Rebbe they are truly nothing, how could one nothing demand respect and honor from another nothing?! In fact, maybe the other nothings have more merit than themselves...

L'chaim!

BUT WHY DO WE (SAGES) NEED A KING?

The Rebbe the Tzemach Tzedek, in *Derech Mitzvosecha*, in the section "The Mitzva of Appointing a King," entertains the notion that the *talmidei chachomim* of the time – when the Yidden asked of Shmuel HaNavi to appoint for them a king – didn't really need a king. A king serves two primary functions: 1) to serve as a conduit for self-nullification before Hashem (i.e., the king is *battel* to G-d, King of Kings, and the people are *battel* to the king); 2) to oversee the correct conduct of the

nation, with justice. Naturally the second reason doesn't apply to scholars, dedicated – through delving into the Torah day and night – to determining and practicing the will of G-d. Likewise, the first reason doesn't apply to a *talmid chacham*. A *talmid chacham* is naturally inclined towards self-nullification to G-d in virtue of his elevated soul and spiritual sensitivity. Thus, he readily acquires (by means of Torah study and contemplation) a profound appreciation of His Creator, Who creates the world *ex nihilo*. Realizing that the world is nothing and that G-d is everything, the *talmid chacham* is humble and *battel* to Hashem. Shmuel therefore had disdain for the request to appoint a mortal king, for he was hoping to see the Jewish people all achieve the level of *talmid chacham*, making the role of king obsolete.

But there is a higher quality of kingship that apparently eluded Shmuel, a quality that not only applies to *talmidei chachomim* (along with the rest of the nation) but even in the times of Moshiach, when all the Jewish people will attain the level of *talmid chacham*.

Shmuel was correct in his assessment that a *talmid chacham* doesn't need to rely on the king to attain the *bittul* to G-d of a servant to his master, nullifying his sense of self in the face of the true existence of G-d, because the *talmid chacham* is at the level that is called

"'brothers' or 'friends' of the Omnipresent, or 'children.' Thus, they don't at all need a king to facilitate the nullification of self, as a subject before the king, for they are inherently nullified at a level of *bittul* that surpasses *bittul ha'yesh* (nullification of ego)" (*Derech Mitzvosecha* 108b).

Shmuel wanted all of the Jewish people to attain this higher level of nullification before G-d.

In fact, every Jew is destined to reach this level, with the advent of Melech HaMoshiach in the true and complete Redemption. So what possible role could the Messianic Monarch play then? What contribution can a king provide for a nation of *talmidei chachomim*? So much emphasis is placed on the role of Moshiach in the coming Redemption, but what will the Jewish people, lofty sages, be lacking that he will provide? Or in a more direct context: what role will the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach play in the lives of chassidim if we will all be elevated to the level of *talmidei chachomim*, Torah geniuses in our own right?

The Torah, of course, is infinite in its depth. Whatever understanding of its wisdom one has achieved, there are always limitless levels he has still not fathomed. Certainly those parts of Torah that are

It was indeed an awkward topic: we never granted this honor to our own rabbis, our teachers, not even to our beloved rosh yeshiva. But Rabbi Wichnin was not attempting to indulge himself with newfound airs and graces...

in the grasp of an individual do not require faith to comprehend; they can be learned and fully understood, and they can be internalized into our minds and hearts and assimilated into our lives. In this context, Moshiach will be a great sage and teacher, a *rav*, who will enlighten us to the greatest secrets of the Torah, the most esoteric reasons behind the Mitzvos.

But even in the times of Redemption, when we will have perfected ourselves and become perfect students to receive the teachings of Moshiach himself, there will remain an endless treasury of teachings that will be beyond our capacity to comprehend. However, Melech HaMoshiach himself will be capable of possessing this knowledge, for he will far surpass us, even the greatest sages among us, and that is why he is called a king:

“The reasons of the Torah will be revealed in the Future to Come through Moshiach. Of course, much more will be revealed to him privately than he will be able to reveal to the nation – infinitely more, without end – as it is written about him, ‘Behold My servant shall excel; he shall be exalted and uplifted, and he shall be exceedingly lofty’ (Yeshayahu

52:13). This verse alludes to five heights [that Moshiach will attain beyond even the greatest of men]. Namely, he will ‘excel’ beyond Avrohom, etc., and ‘he shall be exceedingly lofty (*gava m’od*).’ Here ‘*m’od* (exceedingly, extremely)’ has the same letters as ‘Adam,’ for he will be even loftier than Adam HaRishon, who is the embodiment of Supernal Wisdom, for even more [wisdom] will be revealed to Moshiach.

“Thus, Moshiach will also be king of the Jewish people, notwithstanding the fact that they will all be at the level of *talmidei chachomim* ... [for] not all that will be revealed to Moshiach will he reveal to them. Rather, it will transcend them. In this sense he is described as being a king upon them, for kingship refers to that which is beyond the intellect of the *mekabel* (one who is [attempting to] receiving the knowledge).” (ibid.)

The Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach infinitely transcends every single Jew, regardless of their rabbinical status or spiritual achievements. Thus, it is fitting that in order to properly accept his kingship upon us, we should honor and respect every Jew equally, standing together as one to submit ourselves before the king, “the head of the Jewish people.”

In so doing, may we succeed in sincerely accepting G-d as our king on Rosh HaShana, the head of the year, as the Rebbe says in the *sicha* of Erev Rosh HaShana 5752:

“In addition to the revelation of the name of Moshiach [i.e., Tzemach Tzedek, the name of the third Lubavitcher rebbe, who includes within him all the rebbes – see above in the *sicha*] ... there is also the manifestation of the essence of Moshiach Tzidkeinu, which is one unit with the Essence of the Infinite (*ein zach mit Atzmus Ein Sof*). [Footnote 49: See *Seifer HaMitzvos* of the Tzemach Tzedek, The Mitzva to Appoint a King, end: “Regarding Moshiach, You have given the *Ein Sof* within his essence, etc.”] Thus, the revelation of Moshiach (on the eve of Rosh HaShana [the birthday of the Tzemach Tzedek]) is connected with the acceptance of G-d’s sovereignty on Rosh HaShana.”

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

MOSHIACH IS HERE: ARE YOU LAUGHING YET?

By Rabbi Zvi Homnick

We begin the process of celebrating the positive outcome of which we are confident in advance, and draw our strength and confidence from the fact that G-d rejoices when we rejoice, and this in turn helps guarantee that we are blessed with a positive judgment, signed and sealed, for a good sweet year in the form of visible and revealed good.

NO LAUGHING MATTER

One of the greatest universal challenges in religious Jewish life, is the effort to attain true *bitachon* (absolute trust in G-d). This is often an area of difficulty even for those who have no real doubts or struggles regarding matters of belief and faith. All the early sources in Jewish tradition seem to be unanimous in the view that attaining complete and absolute trust in G-d is not only a spiritual and moral imperative, but also plays a direct role in bringing about the desired outcome in any and all areas of life.

If you trust fully that things will work out a certain way – then they will work out that way even if you are undeserving on other fronts. If your trust is weakened for any reason at all, even due to seemingly legitimate spiritual concerns such as “perhaps the sin/s will be causative,” that itself can undermine the result, and in the case of the truly righteous (such as Yaakov Avinu and Moshe Rabbeinu) might be cause for punishment.

I was in my late teens when I first encountered the writings on the topics of belief and trust in G-d of a certain Lithuanian Torah scholar,

who had become the uncontested spiritual leader of that segment of Jewry in the years immediately following the devastation of WWII. Living in B’nei Brak and holding no official position, he nevertheless was held to be the final word on just about every major issue facing the religious public in the fledgling state that chose as its founding principles many ideas that were antithetical to Torah.

Interestingly enough, the person who steered me in the direction of those writings recommended them because of the sections that were blisteringly critical and mocking of Chassidus and Chassidim. Although those sections had been excised from later printings, he showed me where I could read the entire work in the original. At this point in my life, I am horrified and dismayed over many of the ideas presented there, but even then, in my early teens, I found some of the positions taken there somewhat disturbing (despite enjoying and later quoting the jabs at Chassidus and Chassidim; may Hashem forgive me).

Particularly disturbing to me was the assertion that *bitachon* is nothing more than the sense of security and serenity that comes from knowing

that G-d knows what is best for you and can be relied upon to do what is best for you, even if it is not what you think is best or even good. This is as opposed to those who labor under the (according to the author's opinion, false) impression that *bitachon* means that if one has enough trust in and reliance upon G-d, then He will reward that trust with the desired result according to what that person wants and desires.

I remember clearly that I wasn't buying it back then, even before I could articulate for myself just how divergent this position was from that of the early authorities such as the *Chovos HaLevavos* and others, as well as so much of Talmudic literature, not to mention that from a Kabbalistic viewpoint it borders on heresy. Maybe it was due to having been exposed to so many Baal Shem Tov stories as a child, which clearly portray a directly opposing worldview, or perhaps it was just instinctive. (Sadly to say, this view has gained much currency in the contemporary yeshiva [and even generic Chassidic] world, due to the esteem in which the author is held. It is especially sad when one encounters sincere people who labor in confusion trying to somehow juggle what they know on a soul-level to be true; "think good and it will be good," and their unquestioning acceptance of the "daas Torah" of the "gadol" in question.)

Accordingly, when I started becoming exposed to the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov, I related very strongly to his formulation and articulation of the traditional understanding of this precept as Jews believed through the generations. In fact, the Baal Shem Tov goes so far as to say that if a Jew has true and proper *bitachon* in a given outcome, then G-d is compelled (as it were) to deliver on that trust. Obviously, the trust has to be real and meet the criteria set out in *Shaar HaBitachon* of the *Chovos HaLevavos*, which determine whether it is real or artificial and contrived.

LAUGHING FIRST AND LAUGHING LAST

Obviously, when it comes to *bitachon*, there are differences between the level of trust that a person must

maintain regarding the provision of his everyday needs, and the level of trust that one needs to muster when confronted with a situation that requires special intervention. When one finds himself in a difficult or even dire situation (Heaven protect us) and is in need of salvation and deliverance, it is far more challenging to remain completely trusting and serene even as negative emotions rush to the fore and the mind is busy conjuring up worst-case doomsday scenarios.

In certain extreme situations, we are told that the best course is to demonstrate one's complete trust by simply putting the whole issue out of mind and leaving it up to G-d, much like King Chizkiyahu who when faced with the impending attack of the most powerful army in the world, led by Sancheiriv, said to G-d that "I will sleep on my bed and You take action," which is exactly what happened. (Interestingly, back in 1991, those who would keep an eye on the Rebbe's windows from the outside, noticed that the night before the beginning of the first Gulf War, the Rebbe closed his lights earlier than he ever had before or later.)

Unlike Chizkiyahu, who had received a clear prophecy that the people of Judea would be delivered from the seemingly insurmountable threat and that Sancheiriv would have his downfall, most of us are flying blind when it comes to matters that we have to deal with in our personal lives. In the case that one receives a bracha from the Rebbe, then the challenge becomes to believe and trust in the fulfillment of that bracha to

the degree of certainty as if it were an outright prophecy. The ultimate expression of this is when one actually achieves such a degree of certainty that he is filled with joy over his imminent salvation, much like the women in Egypt who prepared instruments in anticipation of the great celebration that would follow the exodus that was yet to take place.

Like in all areas of divine service, sometimes a person experiences a helping hand from Above which propels him to a spiritual level that he cannot account for being at purely through his or her efforts. I personally had such an experience in the area of *bitachon* regarding the matter of shidduchim (finding a marriage partner). At the end of a year of learning in the Mirrer Yeshiva in



Interestingly enough, the person who steered me in the direction of those writings recommended them because of the sections that were blisteringly critical and mocking of Chassidus and Chassidim...

Yerushalayim, I was planning to return to the US and going on to learn in Lakewood. My cousin who lives in Yerushalayim, expressed his horror over the fact that I had spent a year in Eretz Yisroel and was returning to America with the hopes of eventually getting married without having visited pretty much any of the Graves of the Righteous. He thought it was especially unconscionable that I hadn't gone to Amuka, the burial place of Rabbi Yonason ben Uziel, who legend had it that anyone who prayed for a shidduch at his gravesite would find his or her match within the year.

Having heard that a group of Israeli bachurim in the Mir that he was friendly with, and who were getting on in years, had arranged to rent a minibus and travel to Amuka and other prominent burial sites in the North and Center of the country, he asked if they would be willing to include me. The two main organizers knew me as a casual acquaintance (and a bit of a character) and so they agreed. That is how I found myself sometime after midnight in the blackest pitch of night (the only light was from the headlights of the vehicle, which had to be kept running the whole time we were there, and of course, part of the "fun" was that some wiseguy had to turn it off and freak everybody out for a while) I had ever seen, standing by the burial place of Rabbi Yonason ben Uziel in Amuka.

I can't begin to explain what exactly transpired there, but as I stood there I felt myself filling up

with joy and the absolute certitude that I would be married within one year from whenever I would begin my efforts in finding a wife (or "dating" as it is called in America). When I returned from the trip (I could write a whole book about the adventures and misadventures of that trip, as well as the people [although now, twenty-five years later, some of the details are fuzzy]), I told my cousin and any of my friends who would listen to me that I was absolutely confident in that timeline. Some people reacted with a sort of wonder at my sureness and attendant jubilancy, but most just rolled their eyes in unabashed skepticism.

I flew home (to my home in exile) a few days later, on the night after Purim 5746, and I started learning in Lakewood immediately after Pesach of that year. Although I was only 22 years old and in no rush to start seeing people for the purpose of marriage, almost everyone else there was heavily involved in the process. One of the things that mystified my friends and acquaintances in yeshiva was the fact that when it came to this one topic, I projected a steadfast confidence that things would work out exactly as I had sensed on that fateful night, even as many people around me were struggling for years.

Well-meaning friends would try to prepare me for the inevitable disappointment that was to come, since people like myself who had reputations as being "nonconformist" generally had a

hard time of it, as girls and their parents considered that to be a sign of possible instability (who knows - he might wake up one day and become a Lubavitcher?). I would just cheerfully thank them for their concern and reiterate my absolute confidence in the outcome.

To make a long story short, I only announced my readiness to get involved in finding a shidduch after Tishrei 5747. I met the first prospective candidate shortly after Chanuka 5747, and became engaged the day before Erev Rosh HaShana of that year. The wedding took place on the night following the eighth day of Chanuka 5748. How was I so sure? How did I stay upbeat and even joyful regarding this one issue even at times when I was feeling generally miserable and depressed? How was it that the rejections along the way only made me feel ever more certain that I was that much closer? I had no way to explain it, but even then, before I had the spiritual lexicon of Chassidus at my disposal, I knew it was a soul experience.

LAUGHING ALL THE WAY

Truth to tell, there is no need to get all mystical and the basic underlying premise is hardly esoteric. Human laughter as an expression of unadulterated joy (as opposed to mirth or scorn) comes when a person achieves a positive outcome following a period of uncertainty and tension. The less sure the person was of the outcome previously, the greater the relief of fear and tension there is when it turns out well, the greater the joy and celebration accompanied by ever heartier laughter. In fact, in the case where the person becomes certain of the outcome in advance, he already begins to experience that joy and laughter when his mind is on that specific matter, even if he may be worried and concerned about a whole host of other things, including

the hardships and difficulties he may still have to go through on the way to the certain outcome.

If that sounded too complicated, let's try for a real down-to-earth analogy from the wonderful world of sports. I was never into sports that much, but I think I have a pretty good sense of the role it plays in the culture. So let's imagine the final minutes of the Super Bowl with one of the teams ahead by less than one touchdown. There is too much time left on the clock to simply down the ball, and they don't want to hand the ball over on downs, so the team in the lead is forced to run a play.

The quarterback makes a bad throw in his own team's Red Zone and an opposing defender intercepts the ball with a clear field ahead. Nobody is even close to him. Yes, he has about ninety yards to run downfield with every single member of the opposing team focused only on trying to catch up to him and bring him down, but as long as he runs all out with everything he has it is obvious to everyone there including himself, along with all the millions of people watching, that none of the opposing team has a chance of catching him.

Do you know what happens then? Pandemonium. Every fan of that team present in the stadium comes flying out of their seats. They are screaming, cheering, laughing, crying and out of their minds with joy and excitement. So too, millions of fans around the world, at home or in their cars, in restaurants or in sports bars. People are hugging and/or pounding each other on the back, some are jumping up and down, and yet the points have not been scored and the game has not yet been won and so many things could still conceivably go wrong as unlikely as that might be. Additionally, many of these people have all sorts of other problems in their lives that are the source of

much misery and unhappiness.

Afterward, with the game safely won and all of the celebrations done with, if you were to ask each person, from the player that scored the winning touchdown to his teammates and coaches, from their family members to the fans, what the happiest moment was for them, each would no doubt tell you that it was the moment that they felt that it was a sure thing, a done deal, even before it actually unfolded.

The player who ran with the ball, despite the fact that he knew that he couldn't slow down for a second for even the briefest respite, despite the fact that every bone, muscle, sinew and blood vessel in his body were all screaming in pain after months of training camps and more than twenty brutal games of football, will tell you that everything that followed was great and wonderful and he wouldn't trade it for anything in the world, but there is still something special and precious about that first burst of exultation when he "knew" that he was going to take it all the way. Yes, he still had to keep running and overcome the various obstacles and hardships remaining, and yes, he still had other problems at home and in other areas of life, but all of that faded into nothingness in those moments when he "knew" but still had to run those last yards to complete the job.

As we approach the Days of Awe, beginning with Rosh HaShana, Jewish law says that we are expected to conduct ourselves as people who are approaching Judgment Day, and at the same time are fully confident of a positive outcome for a good sweet year. That is why we groom ourselves and dress up in our finest clothes, prepare fine foods and hold sumptuous meals on the day itself. In the words of the Prophet Ezra regarding this day, "Go, eat fatty meats and drink sweet wines, and send portions to the one who is

undeserving because this day is holy to our Master. And do not be despondent because the gaiety of G-d is your fortress (of strength)." We begin the process of celebrating the positive outcome of which we are confident in advance, and draw our strength and confidence from the fact that G-d rejoices when we rejoice, and this in turn helps guarantee that we are blessed with a positive judgment, signed and sealed, for a good sweet year in the form of visible and revealed good. Of course, we still have to "finish the job," by doing the necessary work of introspection and repentance, crowning the King and accepting the yoke of His Kingship, the prayer services and blowing the shofar etc.

Similarly, the Rebbe has told us that we have to "know" that Moshiach is here and not only to begin rejoicing as a "ploy," but as an expression of absolute certitude in the outcome, not only because we were told that this is so, but because we see it happening before our very eyes. Yes, we will rejoice and celebrate then, when Moshiach is fully revealed and takes us to the Holy Land and builds the Third Temple, but there is still something exquisite and pure about that first realization, that first sense of "knowing," from which everything follows.

Yes, we have to continue to carry the ball in the final days of exile, and yes, there are forces all around us trying to pull us down into the mud, but if we "see" the end zone and "know" that it's a done deal, we can do so without fear and worry. And beyond that we can do so with the joy of victory, "Didan Natzach" (our side has been victorious), as we crown Melech HaMoshiach and accept his kingship, in anticipation of his full and complete revelation, immediately, Now!

THE P'NIMIUS OF ROSH HA'SHANA

Interview by Avrohom Rainitz

Rabbi Zalman Notik, mashpia in yeshivas Toras Emes in Yerushalayim, answers a number of questions on the topic of Rosh HaShana. Some of these questions may have been troubling for years; others may be an entirely new and enlightening perspective.

KABBALAS HA'MALCHUS OR YOM HA'DIN?

Unlike the rest of frum Jewry who focus their Rosh HaShana preparations on t'shuva, correcting one's deeds and middos, and the seriousness of the Yom HaDin, in Lubavitch the emphasis is primarily on Kabbalas HaMalchus. Why is this?

There are many maamarim from our Rebbeim that speak about Rosh HaShana as the Yom HaDin so it is not correct to say that we don't talk about that in Chassidus. Yet, the emphasis is on the inner meaning of the Yom HaDin which is Kabbalas HaMalchus.

Rosh HaShana, according to Chassidus, is the subservience of the

Jewish people before Hashem which arouses, as it were, Hashem's desire to rule the world once again. It follows the departure of this desire on Erev Rosh HaShana. This is the inner meaning and essence of Rosh HaShana. It in no way contradicts Rosh HaShana as the Yom HaDin.

All the material bounty that Hashem bestows throughout the year comes from Hashem's desire to rule the world. This desire is the source for all the blessings that descend to the world and depends, as it were, on the quality and extent of our bittul towards Hashem. The more battul we are to Hashem, the more we arouse His desire to rule and the more we draw down material and spiritual plenty.

The Rebbe explains (Likkutei Sichos vol. 19) that the simplest Jew who comes before Hashem – even if he does not know about the concept of Kabbalas HaMalchus or Binyan HaMalchus – when he asks for children, health and sustenance – it is actually the G-dly soul which dictates to the animal soul to ask for material things so that through them G-dliness will be drawn down into the world. The Rebbe refers to the Baal Shem Tov's explanation of the verse, "hungry and thirsty – their souls were cloaked within them," that when a Jew is hungry or thirsty the truth is that the hunger and thirst come from the G-dly soul's desire to refine the spark of G-dliness in that food or drink.





Chassidus reveals the inner significance of the prayers on Rosh HaShana and what lies behind a Jew's material requests. Although externally it looks like a purely material concern, the truth is that this itself comes from a request of the G-dly soul, whose desire is to refine the sparks of holiness within the physical, thus crowning Hashem as King over the world.

The Rebbe says that on Rosh HaShana one is permitted – and should – ask for material needs, but that at the same time we should connect these requests with the real requests of the G-dly soul. And what are these real requests of a Jew? A Jew wants to coronate the King which is actualized with the Geula of

Am Yisroel. This what Chassidus explains and this is what Chassidus is about. The word Chassidus has the words “chai sod” in it, that a Jew who is truly alive reveals the secrets and the inner significance of all external things. The more a Jew is aware of the inner aspect – by asking that the Sh'china be taken out of galus in his Rosh HaShana prayers – the faster Hashem responds to his material requests.

KABBALAS HA'MALCHUS IN GENERAL AND IN PARTICULAR

When you see the preparations for Rosh HaShana being made among other groups you see how inspiration leads to practical results. Can the Binyan HaMalchus of a Chassid be translated into practical terms?

In Chassidus it explains the difference between daily kabbalas ol and the kabbalas ol demanded on Rosh HaShana. It's like the difference between the acceptance of ol malchus Shamayim and the acceptance of the yoke of mitzvos. Kabbalas HaMalchus on Rosh HaShana is not a personal matter – that I failed in the performance of a mitzva and therefore I make a personal commitment. On Rosh HaShana a Jew cries out, “We have no King but You” – he wants and asks for the King Himself. Not as the King as He makes decrees and relates to His created beings, but Hashem in His Essence, when all of existence is nullified before Him.

What is the difference between the bittul one has for a king all year round and the bittul for the king on the day of his coronation? Throughout the year there are two realities: the king's and the citizen's. There are orders that the citizen must carry out, and if he fails to do so, the type of restitution required of him is that from now on he carries out that order in the best possible

way.

On Rosh HaShana, though, the day we coronate the King, the bittul is that which creates the desire to rule. It is not the bittul of “We will do whatever You tell us. There are 613 mitzvos and we will do them.” The bittul of Rosh HaShana is the bittul to the existence of the King Himself – to His Essence. The citizen feels that there is nothing to his own existence and that his entire existence is solely that of the king. It's not that he – as an independent entity – is ready to accept Hashem's mitzvos, but that he does not have any existence of his own and his purpose is only to serve his King.

The question still remains – is the topic of Binyan HaMalchus such a general one that it cannot be broken down into practical details that can be applied to day-to-day life?

The Aseres Yemei T'shuva is the time when we take the bittul of Rosh HaShana and bring it down into practical terms, i.e. fulfilling orders. When the King's rule actively begins, that is when we take the good resolutions and carry them out. The bittul on Rosh HaShana is a general bittul, subservience to the King Himself above any association with mitzvos. After this avoda of Rosh HaShana begins the bittul to the orders and directives of the King.

Then what is the avoda of Elul?

In order for a Jew to receive the privilege of being in the King's palace during the coronation, he has to be an outstanding individual. This is what the month of Elul is for, because that is when the avoda is to approach the King in the field and seek him out.

Kabbalas HaMalchus is the concept of kabbalas ol, acceptance of the yoke. This avoda is about feeling, once again, that there is a King. This is simple kabbalas ol, the knowledge that there is Someone in charge and that we don't do as we please but what Hashem wants. A

In this maamer, the Rebbe says that the reason we don't say Tachanun on Friday afternoon is because that avoda does not pertain at that time. This is the time we are in right now, metaphorically speaking, Friday afternoon before the Geula, and we need to do everything with simcha.

person has a responsibility to carry out the King's orders – to stop doing what he himself wants and start doing what the King wants. That is how we prepare for the coronation.

DOING T'SHUVU AND BEING HAPPY!

The Rebbe says in the name of the Arizal that the neshama of someone who does not cry during the Aseres Yemei T'shuva is not whole. What does this mean? Does this apply nowadays too?

In the maamer “Margela B'Puma D'Rava” which was said in 5746, the Rebbe explains that today everything is accomplished through simcha. That doesn't mean we don't need to do t'shuva with all the soul searching and regret that goes along with it, but this, like everything else, must be done with simcha. The approach needs to be - how wondrous is Hashem for opening the gates of t'shuva and giving us the opportunity to regret what we did and be accepted once again like the prince who rejoices that his father invited him back to the palace to reconcile the relationship and restore mutual trust. Of course he feels terrible about his sins but there is tremendous joy over the ability to do t'shuva.

The Rebbe often said that all the things that were previously

accomplished through bitterness can now be accomplished with simcha. Even in the Igeres HaT'shuva in Tanya, the Alter Rebbe writes that the spiritual accounting one needs to make on Thursday nights should be done with bitterness. He negates sadness and even the bitterness is limited to Thursday night, the time for *t'shuva tataa*.

In this maamer, the Rebbe says that the reason we don't say Tachanun on Friday afternoon is because that avoda does not pertain at that time. This is the time we are in right now, metaphorically speaking, Friday afternoon before the Geula, and we need to do everything with simcha.

However, the chiddush is that even the bitterness of Thursday night needs to be done with simcha, as in the statement of our Rebbeim “think good, and it will be good.” What does “think good, and it will be good” have to do with this? Often, a person thinks things over and realizes that he made many resolutions that he did not keep and he despairs in his spiritual avoda. The Rebbe wants us to be optimistic and trust in Hashem that this time He will give us the kocho to be successful, and this itself will help make a change.

So as far as your question, crying is the end of a long process of regret and sorrow over sins that were

committed and the desire to reconnect with Hashem. That a Jew knows that his crying can help because Hashem hears him, and every sigh is like *t'shuva ilaa* – that knowledge itself leads to the greatest simcha. So the t'shuva process includes regret for the past and resolutions for the future but in our generation (after that maamer was said in 5746) all this must be done with simcha and lead to even greater simcha.

T'HILLIM VS. MIVTZAIM?

In Lubavitch, in addition to the davening which requires great kavana, there is also the inyan of inner spiritual work and the recitation of a lot of T'hillim. At the same time, in our generation there is Mivtza Shofar. What should be emphasized on these holy days?

The Rebbe Rayatz says we should say a lot of T'hillim on the two days of Rosh HaShana and that this is the main avoda, more so than learning Chassidus, even Chassidus on the topic of Rosh HaShana. When you say so much T'hillim, the letters of the T'hillim accomplish the inyan of kabbalas ol, which is the main avoda on Rosh HaShana. The recitation of T'hillim on Rosh HaShana is bittul and kabbalas ol.

At the same time, the Rebbe demands that we forego our ruchnius – which means that we will lack somewhat in kabbalas ol – in order to enable another Jew to fulfill the Biblical mitzva of hearing the shofar blowing. Our T'hillim is considered a luxury when there is a Jew who did not hear the shofar.

The Rebbe says (Shabbos B'Reishis, 5714) that a Jew needs to forego his giluyim (spiritual revelations) because when he says the sh'hakol bracha with a Jewish child over a candy - that is *etzem*, while his own learning might be no more than gilui.

We need to forego the giluyim and iluyim, even if the entire year depends on it, and help another Jew. That is the will of “Atzmus” (the Divine Essence). That is the unique quality of a Chassid - one who forgoes his own attainments.

As far as how much time to allot to each thing, each person should consult with his mashpia.

HISKASHRUS TO THE REBBE MH”M, NOT ONLY IN THE DETAILS

The Rebbe says that everything must be permeated with kabbalas p’nei Moshiach, certainly something as essential as Kabbalas HaMalchus. How is Kabbalas Malchus Shamayim connected with kabbalas malchus Moshiach?

It’s one and the same thing! On Erev Rosh HaShana, 5752, in the general bracha, the Rebbe said that Hashem’s malchus is “bound up with and revealed in its entirety through Dovid Malka Meshicha (whose inyan is s’firas ha’malchus).” In a footnote, the Rebbe cites *Derech Mitzvosecha*, the mitzva of appointing a king. There, the Tzemach Tzedek writes that Atzmus Ein Sof is invested in the inyan of Moshiach.

We need to have utter subservience, “we have no King but You” – for the Rebbe too. A Chassid has to know that outside of the Rebbe there is nothing. Everything we said previously pertains to the Rebbe’s malchus too. When we are in 770 in the Rebbe’s presence, what we should feel before and during the t’kios is the utter bittul to the Rebbe.

Each of us has his personal life as well as those inyanim of the Rebbe like hiskachrus, mivtzaim etc. You can see this in shidduchim when you ask about someone: Does he say Chitas? Rambam? Nigleh? Is he mekushar? That latter question implies something about who he is above and beyond what he is doing.

If a passerby were to ask the workers what they were doing, each would answer with his job: I’m putting in the tiles, I’m installing the windows, etc. But if he were to ask the king what he is doing, the king would say, “I am building a palace,” because the king is interested in the palace as a whole.



It doesn’t have to be that way because everything ought to be hiskachrus to the Rebbe. The same is true for Rosh HaShana. We need to feel that there is nothing aside from the Rebbe. After our utter subservience to the Rebbe we need to break it down into: Chitas, keeping s’darim, mivtzaim. That’s already in the category of kabbalas ol mitzvos which follows kabbalas ol malchus Shamayim.

This is analogous to a king who builds a palace. In order to build it he has many workers. Some

construct the floor, and some the ceiling, while others work on the plumbing or the lighting. Each part of the palace has its workers. The king is so excited about it that he shows up to help out. He puts on work clothes and starts working. If a passerby were to ask the workers what they were doing, each would answer with his job: I’m putting in the tiles, I’m installing the windows, etc. But if he were to ask the king what he is doing, the king would say, “I am building a palace,” because the king is interested in the palace as a whole.

So too, throughout the year I, a Chassid, look at the details. I have to do t’shuva for Chitas, Rambam and all the other horaos of the Rebbe, but these are all details. Come Rosh HaShana it’s time to look at things in their totality, at the Rebbe himself.

GOING TO THE REBBE

Some people think that those who go to Crown Heights for Tishrei don’t use the time properly. They prefer to stay put and observe the holidays in their nearby shul, where they can concentrate and do plenty of mivtzaim etc. Are they right?

This is not a new problem and it existed before 3 Tammuz. I was at the Rebbe many, many times since 5745, and every year there was a

problem of bachurim wandering around aimlessly. Enough time has elapsed – since the beginning of the 80’s – that we can see throughout the year, the great benefit to those bachurim of being with the Rebbe for Tishrei. Even those who don’t make good use of every minute – something which is in fact improper – experience a lasting positive effect. The truth is that every trip to the Rebbe has a good effect, even if the bachur doesn’t use every minute or take proper advantage of his visit. We know and believe that just being in the Rebbe’s presence has a positive impact.

This is not to justify those who don’t make good use of their time there. On the contrary, the administrations of yeshivos as well as the administrations of girls’ schools need to put in more effort so that the bachurim (and girls) do what they’re supposed to do. But we shouldn’t hold back a bachur from going (except in an unusual situation where his going will be detrimental).

In recent years the bachurim in 770 are using their time better than ever. S’darim are more stringent and attendance is much higher. In past years bachurim sometimes felt that just by getting a dollar from the Rebbe and attending the farbrengens, that was enough for them to get the hashpaos (spiritual and material “flow”) from the Rebbe. They didn’t necessarily feel the need to keep s’darim all week because they felt like a Chassid in other respects.

Today, while knowing that the Rebbe is there in 770 and he is still bestowing the largesse of farbrengens, t’fillos and yechiduyos as he did all the years, and furthermore, that the Rebbe sees us and is arousing our yechida of the nefesh – there is still the feeling that we need to do the inner work to merit the giluyim and illuminations. These past many years the learning

and the s’darim are done with a much greater “shturem” than in the past, and with much more seriousness.

In other words, even when we saw the Rebbe we had to make good use of the time, but a bachur could fool himself into thinking that just by being there and seeing etc. he accomplished everything. Now, a bachur feels that his being with the Rebbe is more dependent on his personal avoda and he responds accordingly.

What should a bachur think when he is in 770?

1- He needs to keep in mind that he is in the Rebbe’s presence. That the Rebbe loves him, that the Rebbe is his father, that the Rebbe loves him more than his biological father. Not that the Rebbe loves him among his other Chassidim but that the Rebbe loves him personally and thinks only about him; he is involved with all his problems and is happy with his progress. Thinking this will arouse an endless love for the Rebbe.

2- When we can’t see the Rebbe this does not contradict the Rebbe’s ability to see us. It says, “three times a year all your males should be seen” – just as he came to see, so too he came to be seen. Today, we don’t see the Rebbe but we are definitely seen. By the Rebbe seeing each one, looking at everyone in 770, he uncovers the yechida of the nefesh.

True, the Rebbe sees us wherever we are in the world, but it’s not the same as being in his presence. Hashem certainly sees the entire world and yet He wants us to go to the Beis HaMikdash. There are two types of “being seen” – seeing and gazing. Seeing is more superficial. In the Beis HaMikdash there was gazing which is a deep looking and this reveals the hidden good within each person. The same is true with going to the Rebbe. The Rebbe sees us wherever we are but in 770 he gazes upon us.

When I was with the Rebbe for my year of K’vutza, every Sunday we would stand by the long line for dollars and the bachurim would set up two t’fillin stands. One bachur asked the people who were waiting on line if they would put on t’fillin while the other was stationed where they passed after leaving the Rebbe. There were people who waited for hours on line but were so far removed from Jewish observance that even as they anticipating their meeting with the tzaddik, they did not agree to put on t’fillin. But when they left the Rebbe I don’t think anyone refused, even those who declined earlier.

That year on K’vutza, Rabbi Lew of London farbrenged with us and he said: It doesn’t make sense. You are standing on line and have nothing to do. You are going to meet the Rebbe. What do you care if you put on t’fillin? As for those who left the Rebbe, they are ready to go home after a long wait and yet they stop to put on t’fillin?!

He explained it based on the verse, “one with a good eye is blessed, for he gave of his bread to the poor.” Moshe had a “good eye.” When he looked at a Jew, even if he was far from Judaism, he saw the good hidden within him and the seeing itself revealed that good. When a Jew walked past the Rebbe, the Rebbe’s gaze revealed the person’s yechida.

When we go to 770 for these special days we are present at farbrengens – farbrengens with the Rebbe on Rosh HaShana, Shabbos Shuva and Simchas Torah. The Rebbe is looking at us and revealing our yechida. We need to remember where we are and before whom we are standing, and at the same time to know that the Rebbe reveals our yechida. From there we need to take the kochos and this “gaze” and translate it into hishakshrus in all those things the Rebbe demands of us throughout the year.

GOING TO THE REBBE

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelewitz
Shliach, Beit Shaan

As Tishrei approaches, a Chassid's thoughts turn to his Rebbe. Those who aren't making the trip to spend the holidays in his court, wish they could. The following are stories about travelers and trips to the Rebbe.*

AN EMERGENCY LANDING AND A KARKAFTA ON A FORSAKEN ISLAND

Sholom Dovber Yehoshua Lifsh, a bachur in 770, went to Eretz Yisroel for two weeks in order to run the Yeshivas Kayitz in Beitar Ilit. Then he returned to 770. El-Al is known for its superb security and he was on a reliable jumbo jet, so Lifsh was sure the trip would proceed smoothly. Then suddenly, while at an altitude of 10,000 feet, the captain announced that there was an electrical short in one of the engines and they were looking for the nearest place to make an emergency landing.

Everybody began murmuring prayers, hoping that all would end well, but Shiya Lifsh was thinking a few steps ahead. "It seems we have a special shlichus on the way to the Rebbe. It is only because of this shlichus that this is happening; we

must be going someplace where we will meet a Jew and carry out the shlichus."

The captain announced that the nearest place was the island of Iceland and everybody should prepare for landing. They would be staying for 12 hours in a hotel until a team came from Israel to fix the plane.

The emergency landing went well and buses brought the hundreds of passengers to the hotel. They all hurried to their rooms to rest and recover from the tension they had experienced just a short while ago. Only Shiya Lifsh didn't rest. He walked around among the employees of the hotel asking if anybody was Jewish. They all looked at him in wonder. What would a Jew be doing in Iceland? But Lifsh was sure he had arrived on a shlichus. He was nearly up to the last of the employees when one of them said to him that if he wasn't mistaken, the

clerk at the reception counter of the hotel, although not a Jew, had a Jewish mother.

Lifsh rushed over to the counter and soon confirmed that the clerk was Jewish. He had never before been exposed to Torah and mitzvos. T'fillin? He didn't even know what they were. Lifsh was excited by this find. Within a short time he had managed to explain what t'fillin are, to convince him to put them on, and to celebrate his bar mitzva despite his advanced age.

Now Lifsh and the clerk (and we readers) know why hundreds of passengers had to make an unscheduled stop in Iceland.

WHEN MAARIV MOVED THINGS ALONG

A few years ago, a group of us shluchim were returning from the Kinus HaShluchim in 770 when, an hour before landing, we felt the plane make a sudden turn. The captain announced that due to a workers' strike in Israel, all airspace was closed and they had no permission to land. We would be making a temporary landing in Turkey but there was no knowing how long we would have to be there.

The passengers were understandably unhappy about this. Everybody anticipated landing in Israel; many were looking forward to seeing their spouses and children and now this. The gloomy atmosphere intensified as time stretched on while we still sat on the plane on foreign soil. After an hour's wait, we were told that the crew was trying to find rooms in hotels for us to sleep in. It was Thursday night and we didn't know if we would make it home before Shabbos.

Many of the passengers began make peace with their "bitter lot," while yours truly, the shliach in Beit Shaan assured his friends, "Nonsense. We won't be here for long. Apparently we have some

shlichus to do here and as soon as we do it, we'll leave for Israel." One of the people sitting nearby heard me say this and she said, "Nu, let's see how these religious people can help."

A discussion ensued about which mitzva needed to be done to enable us to fly once again. Someone suggested that we daven Maariv there on the plane while someone else said it would be better to wait until we got off the plane so we could daven in the terminal. I said it would be better to daven on the plane because the faster we carried out the shlichus, the quicker we would be able to get home.

The discussion continued for another minute or two but in the end, ten shluchim stood up and began davening on the plane. I was the chazan and I remember that the second that I finished the first pasuk, "v'Hu rachum ... b'yom koreinu" we heard a bell ring and the captain announce, "We have just received permission to land. We will be taking off in ten minutes."

The woman who was watching us joined in the applause and loudly said, "Kol ha'kavod to the religious Jews. Thanks to them we are moving on."

Ten minutes were enough to finish Maariv, return to our places, put on our seatbelts and we were off!

THE DONORS CAME TO ME

Rabbi Yosef Elgazi is the shliach in the Kiryat Yovel neighborhood of Yerushalayim and has been for the past 12 years. He has dozens of stories about mekuravim and new Chassidim who are themselves being mekarev other Jews, giving shiurim and arranging farbrengens. R' Elgazi even has a Chassidic yeshiva in Kiryat Yovel whose students are disseminating the light of Torah and Chassidus throughout the



Spreading the Besuras HaGeula everywhere, even a garage

An hour before landing, we felt the plane make a sudden turn. The captain announced that due to a workers' strike in Israel, all airspace was closed and they had no permission to land. We would be making a temporary landing in Turkey but there was no knowing how long we would have to be there.

neighborhood.

R' Elgazi told me that every time he travels to the Rebbe and back to Kiryat Yovel he sees miracles in every one of his shlichus tasks. He gave me some examples to illustrate what he means:

I usually go to the Rebbe every year and combine this trip with the Kinus HaShluchim. Between the lectures and workshops, I fundraise in Crown Heights for the continuation of my work. One year I decided that I would not permit myself to miss a single t'filla in the Rebbe's minyan. I would maximize

my learning of Chassidus and hiskashrus even if it meant minimizing my fundraising. I hardly went around Crown Heights and yet, incredibly, the donors and donations came to me without my going after them! When I arrived back home and added up what I had been given I discovered that it was a larger amount by several thousand dollars than what I had raised in previous years.

I concluded that because I had devoted myself to connect to the Rebbe, the Rebbe helped me and the shlichus in Kiryat Yovel.

THIS ALSO HAPPENED ON A FLIGHT TO THE REBBE

R' Yosef Elgazi relates:

It was 5755 or 5756 and I was a talmid in a Chabad yeshiva, living with my parents in yishuv Neve Tzuf in the Shomron. The Intifada was raging and many Jews were hurt and endangered, especially in the Yehuda-Shomron area. On my trip to the Rebbe I met R' Itzke Gansbourg a"h in 770.

He was known for his activities on behalf of security in Eretz Yisroel, and had just implemented a wonderful new project. He asked people in Crown Heights to give him dollars that they got from the Rebbe so he could give them to residents of the "settlements" for protection. He was given hundreds of dollars and he designed a beautiful seal for the display and laminated them. He would send them every so often to Eretz Yisroel to be distributed among soldiers as well as settlers. When I told R' Gansbourg that I live in the Shomron he was very happy and he asked me to help him distribute the dollars. He gave me a package of 100 dollars and I kept a close watch over them.

I boarded the plane and my luck, a woman who wasn't fond of religion was sitting next to me. Throughout the trip she spoke to her friend with open hostility against religious Jews. I didn't hear exactly what they were saying but you could feel their malicious glares.

Towards the end of the flight I began arranging my belongings when she noticed my package of laminated dollars. "What's that?" she asked. I told her about the dollars the Rebbe gave out and R' Gansbourg's project. The woman was excited by this. She had not known that the Lubavitcher Rebbe distributed dollars and a bracha to everyone who went to him and that there were Chassidim who were willing to part with their special dollar for the sake of another Jew they did not know. She said that it changed her entire view of religious Jews.

The two women learned some Chassidic ideas and promised to find out more in their place of residence. In a way, they, too, "went to the Rebbe."

was in such cramped quarters and I told him about the need to move as well as the money problems. He told me, "You found the right man. I want to help." He asked to see the former carpentry shop. He gave it a professional appraisal and said, "You rent the place – the renovations are on me."

Not only did he keep his word but he got all his friends involved too. One did the flooring, another the electrical work, the painting, the plumbing and within a month we had moved into the spacious Chabad house which serves us well till today.

It was only at the end of our first meeting that I found out that he is a contractor. He'd called Information to find out where he could check mezuzos and by Divine Providence sent him to me just when I needed his assistance.

THE REBBE ANSWERED

The next time I went to the Rebbe I had a new worry. We had just had twins and had four children at home. Our family car could not take all the children every morning to preschool and daycare. I asked the Rebbe for a larger vehicle.

I returned to Israel and looked longingly at the vehicles passing by on the road and thought about a particular type that I wouldn't mind owning. It was a nice dream, but I had to get back to reality. I walked into the Chabad house and learned with a member of the community. When we finished learning he asked me, "What's worrying you lately?" He urged me to tell him more and more until I finally got onto the subject of a vehicle. He said, "Come outside and show me what kind looks right for you." We went outside and I showed him. I thought that he might give 1000 or possibly even 2000 shekels.

"How much do you need to buy a vehicle like that?" he asked.

"70,000 shekels", I said sadly.

RENOVATIONS WITH THE REBBE'S BRACHA

A few years ago, continued R' Elgazi, we had a small Chabad house, just a little room that quickly became too small for our growing activities. I knew we had to move to a bigger location but I didn't know where the money would come from.

I went to the Rebbe for the Kinus HaShluchim and asked for a bracha that I should find a good place and the money to pay for it and run it. I returned home to find that the problems had only increased. Neighbors complained constantly about the noise from the farbrengens and it reached the point that moving

wasn't a choice but something I had to do.

A few days after I returned from the Rebbe I heard about an available place for rent in the business district. I went to take a look. It used to be a carpentry shop and when I looked at it, it was a wreck. How could I renovate it? I went back home, thinking about it and worrying.

The phone rang and the caller said he wanted to buy mezuzos because he had problems. I invited him to come over and stopped by not long after.

We sat in the Chabad house and along with the mezuzos we also wrote to the Rebbe. He asked why I

My friend looked at his watch and said, "Come quickly to the bank. They'll be closing soon." He withdrew 70,000 shekels and gave them to me.

I felt that the Rebbe had answered me in a way that was completely beyond the norm.

MOSHIACH CAR REPAIR THANKS TO A TRIP TO THE REBBE

R' Elgazi continues:

Three years ago I started taking groups of mekuravim to the Rebbe. In the first group there were several people. They all became amazingly mekushar to the Rebbe. One of them owns a car repair shop and he wasn't at all religious. We were in touch for years but he remained as he was. Three years ago he moved to the neighborhood and started attending shiurim and farbrengens.

At one of our events he won the raffle for a ticket to the Rebbe. He joined our group and the trip wrought a big change in him. He returned to Israel and immediately began to miss 770 and prepare for his next trip. He said things like, "When I remember how I felt in 770 I feel like a child who returned home after a long absence."

He went to the Rebbe again the following year and he returned with very Chassidishe ambitions. Within a short time he and his children began wearing yarmulkes (with Yechi), his children were registered in Chabad

schools and he himself became someone who positively impacted those around him. Farbrengens are held in his home with many participants.

Even his garage has turned into a Chabad house with Moshiach flags, bookcases full of s'farim, t'fillos and shiurim. He wasn't satisfied with all the different standards of kashrus on food the workers brought from home and so he arranged for meals to be served, all with Lubavitcher sh'chita. Even the uniform that the employees wear is decorated with a Moshiach flag and Yechi.

NEW YEAR INSIGHTS FROM THE FATHERS OF CHASSIDUS

Presented by Rabbi Boruch Sholom Cohen
Edited by Y. Ben Boruch

From the Sichos Kodesh of the Rebbe Rayatz, said following his arrival in the United States; from the sichos of Rosh HaShana 5702/1941.

THE FIRST NIGHT OF ROSH HA'SHANA, DURING THE MEAL, 5702

HASHEM WANTS TO HEAR THE PRAISES OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

The custom of the Rebbeim was (usually) not to talk the first night of Rosh HaShana at the meal. At the meal of the first night of Rosh HaShana, 5608/1848, the Tzemach Tzedek related that on the first night of Rosh HaShana, 5559/1799, the Alter Rebbe said that the Baal Shem Tov once told his disciples on the first night of Rosh HaShana that “Our Father (Hashem) wants to hear the good qualities and praises of His children (the Jewish people).”

DON'T BE LIKE A HORSE

In connection with relating the praise of the Jewish people, R' Kehos – one of the close talmidim of the Baal Shem Tov who was one of the hidden tzaddikim - then said:

One time, as I walked on the road, I heard two wagon drivers conversing. One said to the other: In T'hilim (32:9) it says, “Do not be like a horse, or like a mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and rein ... must be restrained.” When you put a bit and rein on a horse to restrain his mouth, it thinks that it is so that it won't forget how to chew the hay! That is “which have no understanding,” but you – don't be that way. You *should* understand.

THE SOURCE OF THE ALTER REBBE'S NIGGUN

When the Baal Shem Tov heard this he was excited with a tremendous d'veikus and he prostrated himself and sang a niggun d'veikus. It is from this niggun that the niggun of the Alter Rebbe is derived. The Alter Rebbe and all the Chabad Rebbeim who followed him used this niggun for Maariv on the first night of Rosh HaShana, with great d'veikus and heartrending tears, like a person crying over the passing of his faithful beloved.

My father (the Rebbe Rashab) also used this niggun on Rosh HaShana.

A YEAR OF PLENTY AND BLESSING

And the Rebbe Rayatz concluded:

That year (of the story of the Baal Shem Tov) was a year of plenty and blessing, and the year 5559/1799 (in which the Alter Rebbe related this story) was a year of plenty and blessing – except for the arrest and release of the Alter Rebbe; and the year 5608/1848 (when the Tzemach Tzedek related this story) was a year of plenty and blessing.

THE WAGON DRIVERS – SOULS OF ATZILUS

The Rebbe Rayatz explained what the wagon drivers said:

It is like Chazal say that “in the time of Chizkiyahu they checked and found that from Dan [in the north] until Beer Sheva [in the south], there was not a single boy or girl who was not expert in the [difficult] laws of purity and impurity.”

Similarly, in the days of Rashbi, even children knew and were expert in p'nimius ha'Torah. Likewise, in the time of the Baal Shem Tov even

wagon drivers were souls from Atzilus.

BRACHA ON COMPOTE

At the end of the meal they discussed the halachic implications of eating compote at the end of a meal, whether it is included in the bracha for the apple that was eaten at the beginning of the meal. The Rebbe Rayatz said:

There is a long *pilpul* on this and I am saying another bracha now because I had in mind from the outset not to include the compote in the bracha on the apple.

THE SICHA OF THE SECOND DAY OF ROSH HASHANA DURING THE MEAL

The chadarim set up by the Alter Rebbe in Liozna consisted of two classes, alef and beis. To get into “alef” you had to be knowledgeable in Shas, Tosafos, the RoSH, and Rambam. The Chassid R’ Moshe Meizlish was one of the people accepted into this group.

There were higher standards for “beis.” The Chassid, R’ Yitzchok Isaac of Homil was accepted into this group.

They demanded of the talmidim in the chadarim that aside from proficiency in Nigleh, that they had to innovate a *derech* in learning. It is known that R’ Moshe (the brother of the Alter Rebbe) said that if they did not innovate something, that showed that they did not delve sufficiently into it.

R’ YITZCHOK ISAAC WAS ACCEPTED TO THE CHADARIM

When R’ Yitzchok Isaac applied for the chadarim, Maharil – the brother of the Alter Rebbe – tested him and R’ Yitzchok Isaac was



definitely not lacking in proficiency in Nigleh. When Maharil brought the test results to the Alter Rebbe, the latter asked him: What about *Ikarim*, *Kuzari*, and *Moreh Nevuchim* (philosophical works)?

R’ Yitzchok Isaac was given five months to become proficient in those *s’farim* and they told him that if he had any questions he should ask Berel, i.e. the future Mittlerer Rebbe (who was appointed to guide the young men).

HOW CAN THERE BE “MAALOS” IN G-DLINESS?

R’ Yitzchok Isaac was of a philosophic bent by nature and even when he heard *maamarim* from the Alter Rebbe he would hear it in terms of *chakira* (philosophy). One time, on Shabbos, the Alter Rebbe taught something about different *maalos* in G-dliness but this teaching wasn’t fully grasped by R’ Yitzchok Isaac and the other men. Being used to thinking in terms of *chakira*, they did not understand that he was using the word “maalos” in reference to levels but thought he was using “maalos” as opposed to “chesronos” (deficiencies).

On Motzaei Shabbos the Chassidim were immersed in *avoda p’nimis* and the Alter Rebbe came out and said:

The Rebbe (i.e. the Maggid of Mezritch) revealed the “maalos” and levels in G-dliness and the grandfather (i.e. the Baal Shem Tov) revealed the “maalos” and levels in the souls of Yisroel.

WHERE A PERSON’S DESIRE IS – THAT IS WHERE HE IS

As is known, the Baal Shem Tov showed his disciples how where a person’s desire is, that is where he is. There was the story of how the Baal Shem Tov once showed them how someone was eating meat in honor of Shabbos and they saw an ox sitting there in Shabbos clothes (*shtraimel* and all!) and eating meat.

This, the “maalos” and the levels of the neshama, were revealed by the Baal Shem Tov himself, how through a person’s *ratzon* the neshama unites with and is incorporated in Atzmus of Elokus.

But the Rebbe (i.e. the Maggid of Mezritch) revealed the “maalos” and levels in G-dliness along the lines of what it says, “Six maalos to the throne.”

When they heard this, R’ Yitzchok Isaac grasped the idea of “maalos” in Elokus.

WHEN MOSHIACH COMES, THE “HEART” OF THE BESHT WILL BE REVEALED

With the revelation of Moshiach Tzidkeinu, the heart of the Baal Shem Tov will be revealed, i.e. the burning passion for Ahavas Yisroel in the physical heart (of every person) will be revealed. But the Baal Shem Tov attained this by his *avoda* and not through a revelation from Above.

TEACHING THE TEACHERS (2)

By Aryeh Gotfryd, PhD

READERS WRITE

Hi Arnie –

I'm responding to your recent article with its call for help in developing a companion curriculum as a kind of running commentary to the standard science curriculum and textbooks taught in Jewish high schools:

Here are my thoughts:

I think the basic emphasis should be on driving home certain basic principles, such as:

(1) What is science and what is it not? People think that science is whatever a scientist says about nature and that's simply not correct, at least to my understanding. There are facts, theories, hypotheses, and just plain guesswork and students need to know the difference.

(2) What is the purpose of science? Is there more to it than inventing a cooler iPod or a better cure for disease? At a deeper level, science is inspiring when it is understood as the constant search of the fundamental rules and complexities of Hashem's beautifully designed world. None of this is currently taught in school.

(3) We need to emphasize that scientific conclusions are always conditional and tentative, a work in progress and not fixed dogma based on absolute fact. Today's knowledge is just a milestone to chart our progress and guide us to future investigations. Theories change and

get replaced all the time. This fact alone will take the edge off of many conflicts.

(4) Science is the study of creation, and through it we better get to know the Creator. And that's a great way to fulfill Rambam's Mitzva No. 1 of Anochi Hashem. Hence, in this context, scientific investigation should never be rejected in and of itself. Indeed it can be a religious act! I recall the Rebbe once told a NASA employed chassid, Velvel Greene, that for him to cease investigating the possibility of extraterrestrial life would be to implicitly limit what Hashem could / could not do with his creation. I also recall reading how the Rebbe told someone that if he feels that Torah books don't belong on the same bookshelves as science books, then he understands neither what Torah is, not what science is. [This was said to a mathematician, Prof. Pesach (Paul) Rosenblum. He also told him that keeping them on separate bookshelves is the beginning of idolatry - *ed.*]

Science can be a worthwhile subject. It should be given adequate attention and treated carefully, and not simply disregarded as "goyishe" mind-poison as some do. For one thing, handled properly, it is not. And more importantly, I think that such a hostile and categorical approach would simply backfire amongst our kids, as they grow older.

Therefore in addition to posing famous issues such as dinosaurs, fossils, age of the world, heliocentric theory, etc. and pointing out the discrepancies between what the science books say and what Torah says, there also needs to be adequate discussion of:

1. Alternative scientific views amongst scientists themselves;

2. Possible flaws in current views and / or how they may be (mis)represented in the general media and school textbooks;

3. More general concepts such as why would Hashem make the world appear as if it is billions of years old, or as if we evolved from lower species, etc.;

4. The social and historical reasons why science turned so materialistic and rationalistic. Basically, two and change centuries ago, the "Enlightenment" was a way to free the public of church domination of their public and private lives. Unfortunately, they threw out the baby with the bathwater, meaning they dropped G-d when they ousted the church.

5. Different ways of interpreting Genesis on the spectrum between literal and literary.

6. Apologetics tries to interpret or even adapt Torah according to science. Chabad rejects that approach and accepts Torah's statements in every case, even where they clash with prevailing scientific views.

7. Science vs. scientism. Observations and causal reasoning are compelling. Subjective interpretations and personal opinions, even by scientists, are not.

I hope this helps.

Chasiva v'chasima tova,
Benny T,
Toronto

* * * * *

Dear Benny –

We are definitely on the same page as to what to convey to high school students. Now the question is

how.

Following is an extract from a sample lesson I have just prepared. It introduces issues in astronomy and cosmology in the context of Rosh HaShana themes, such as:

*The creation of man – the crown of creation.

*Kabbalas HaMalchus – accepting G-d's kingship.

*T'shuva – repentance

*Shofar – blowing the ram's horn

*Din v'Cheshbon – judgment and accounting

Here's one conceptual template one could use to devise such lessons:

1. Set the tone with a short thought-provoking or entertaining piece.

2. Summarize the science narrative that seems to conflict with faith.

3. Explain a bit about why scientists hold this view.

4. Present a critical review of that narrative.

5. Provide positive information about the synergy of science and faith.

6. Provide reference articles for deeper study.

7. Conclude with a take-home message of what was learned.

Here's an abridged version of a timely sample lesson one can use in any Jewish high school class. (The full version is available on request)

MAN IN THE MIDDLE

or "The Cosmic Significance of an Insignificant Speck Like You."

THE LIGHTER SIDE: There was a group of scientists and they were all sitting around discussing which one of them was going to go to G-d and tell Him that they didn't need him anymore.

One of the scientists volunteered and went to go tell G-d he was no longer needed.

The scientist says to G-d - "G-d, you know, a bunch of us have been

thinking and I've come to tell you that we really don't need you anymore. I mean, we've been coming up with great theories and ideas, we've cloned sheep, and we're on the verge of cloning humans. So as you can see, we really don't need you."

G-d nods understandingly and says. "I see. Well, no hard feelings. But before you go let's have a contest. What do you think?"

The scientist says, "Sure. What kind of contest?"

"A man-making contest."

"Sure! No problem".

The scientist bends down and picks up a handful of dirt and says, "Okay, I'm ready!"

G-d replies, "No, no, no... Go get your own dirt."

SCIENTIST QUOTES

"The first gulp from the glass of natural sciences will turn you into an atheist, but at the bottom of the glass G-d is waiting for you." - *Werner Heisenberg, Nobel Physicist (discovered the uncertainty principle)*

"A life-giving factor lies at the center of the whole machinery and design of the world."

--Leading Physicist John Wheeler in *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle*, p. vii.

TORAH QUOTES

"Moses prostrated himself and kissed Yisro." Moses embodied Divine wisdom, whereas Yisro embodied natural, worldly wisdom. By bowing down to Yisro, Moses elevated natural wisdom and accepted it into the sphere of Divine wisdom. This, as we have seen, was a prerequisite to the Giving of the Torah.

--The Alter Rebbe on *Exodus 18:7*

Atheist: "Who created the world?"

Rabbi Akiva: "G-d created the world."

Atheist: "Show me clear proof."

Rabbi Akiva: "Who wove the

clothes you are wearing?"

Atheist: "A weaver of course."

Said Rabbi Akiva, "The same as cloth testifies to a weaver, a door to a carpenter and a house to a builder, so the world testifies to a Creator."

--Midrash Temurah 3.

SCIENCE UNIT PREFACE – ASTRONOMY AND COSMOLOGY

Your text teaches that everything evolved from the Big Bang over billions of years. In the beginning, a dense fireball expanded immensely and when it cooled, stars formed from swirling hot gases and when those cooled, some of them condensed into planets. Then in some original chemical soup on the surface of the pre-historic watery earth, some lightning struck chemicals and transformed them into the first living organisms that were only one cell in size. These evolved into multi-celled organisms and those eventually turned into all the living things in the world including people.

All of this evolution is believed to have happened by chance, by which they mean random mutation (tiny glitches from one generation to the next) and natural selection. Natural selection means that creatures that are better adapted to their environment have more surviving kids who pass on their tiny glitches and over long enough periods, from the first ancestors all the diversity of life evolved.

This entire evolutionary picture from the big bang to the emergence of man, is supposed to have taken some 13.7 billion years. How, you may rightly ask, do they know all of this information about these pre-historic events? The answer is that they don't know. They guess. They make educated guesses but these are just guesses by educated people. Surely they have plenty of data that

they call upon, but the bottom line with all that is that the observations can be interpreted in different ways, and theirs is just one interpretation and it is both unverified and unverifiable.

Another concept taught is how stars and planets move. We learn in the text how gravity pulls masses together and lighter objects orbit around heavier ones. Seeing how moons orbit planets we infer that we too are a light heavenly body that orbits around the heavy sun and that our whole solar system orbits around the center of mass of the Milky Way Galaxy, which in turn turns in the gravitational field of a cluster of galaxies. This too is just one interpretation of how things move and it too is both unverified and unverifiable.

If I were to uncritically accept this whole picture as presented by the secular scientists, I would see myself very differently than the Torah views me. I would say that there is no G-d, there is no soul, and there is no meaning to human life or to existence. We are an insignificant speck on an insignificant planet in an unimportant galaxy hurtling through space according to random forces.

If science is right on all that, then Sinai was a myth, Torah is just a cultural document, the mitzvos are irrelevant and my life has no meaning in the grand scheme of things.

The Torah, of course, provides a very different picture of all this. It tells of a universe that was planned, designed and created with man in mind. This is not just about mankind in general, but you in particular, as the Mishna says, every individual is obliged to say, “Bishvili Nivra HaOlam – For my sake was the world created.”

Man was created not as a species but as a single individual and he is a partner in the Creation, a kind of co-creator. Sinai was a Divine

revelation, the Torah is G-d’s will and wisdom and the mitzvos bathe us in divine light and bring the Moshiach. Our lives touch everything everywhere and any one deed can tip the scales for good.

THE REBBE’S CRITIQUE.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, as master of both divine and human wisdom, has written literally hundreds of letters exposing the flaws of pseudo-science and explaining how science is in fact moving forward toward redemption. The book *Mind over Matter: The Lubavitcher Rebbe on Science, Technology, and Medicine*, available on line, has the largest collection of these to date. Here is an extract:

Conjectures and Refutations[1]

...When one wishes to discuss evolution from times gone by, one must rely on numerous assumptions, many of which have no practical experiential basis. All researchers readily admit that environmental and biological conditions then were completely different than they are now. These highly variable unknown quantities included temperature, atmospheric pressure, ambient levels of radioactivity, interactions between flora and fauna, etc. etc.

In fact, it is astounding how researchers use current evolutionary processes as the basis for retroactive conclusions about the distant past, as if nothing had changed. They set forth assumptions and they reach conclusions (without anyone even trying to test these theories under conditions that may have been around then), and these are accepted without any doubt, and announced as “laws.”

In our era of dramatic scientific progress, any tenuous claims to validity previously held by evolutionary theory have since dissipated. For instance, it has now been proven that even the minutest amount of radioactive material

completely changes the process and speed of events, sometimes to an amazing degree. This discovery completely negates any possibility of scientific proof or conclusions regarding the evolution of plant or animal species, etc., where environmental conditions include significantly greater amounts of radioactive material than are present today...

[1] Igros Kodesh, vol. 13, p. 143. From a letter to the Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Dr. Yitzchak Eizik HaLevi Herzog.

SCIENCE STORY

The Cricket and the Shofar

The humble cricket’s summer song would evaporate into the night breeze were it not for the acoustically impeccable earthen horn it fashions to optimally amplify its call. Is there a message here for us?

Why did we wake up this morning? Obviously so that today would be better than yesterday. To this end the Baal Shem Tov enjoined us all to take a lesson in our divine service from everything we see or hear. Since everything is according to specific divine providence, each event in our lives is significant as a message towards a more meaningful life.[1]

Take crickets for example. Chances are, that if you walk around your neighborhood tonight, you will probably hear the songs of crickets in some park or field. Of course that’s going to get you thinking about Rosh HaShana. How? you may ask. We don’t dip a cricket in honey, we use an apple. And we don’t chirp or rub our wings together, we blow on a ram’s horn to celebrate the New Year, marking the onset of the 10 days of t’shuva, repentance, between Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur.

The sages say that if the Torah would not have been given, we could learn modesty from a cat, not to

steal from an ant, and fidelity from a dove.[2] But what do we learn from a cricket? Let's follow that chirping to its source to find out. In the case of the Mole cricket for example, that source is a hole in the ground, the shape of a shofar! Rubbing its forewings together creates harp-like vibrations that make the familiar chirping sound. But those short wings would not be nearly as loud were it not for the amplification provided by those meticulously formed and utilized burrows that crickets use to amplify their songs as high as 90 decibels, the volume of a train whistle 500 feet away.

The sound of crickets can be so deafening that vacationers in the countryside often have trouble falling asleep. Similarly, the sound of the Shofar is designed to wake us up from our spiritual slumber so that we can refocus on what's really important in our lives.[3] When we realize how messed up our lives are, we call out to G-d because of our stress and pressures. The Shofar is emblematic of that call, since when you blow with compressed lips at the

narrowest part of the horn, the sound becomes magnified as the horn expands upwards. This is why, before hearing the Shofar in synagogue, we recite the verse, "From out of narrowness, I called to G-d; with expansive relief, G-d answered me." [4] The cricket actually makes a point of chirping specifically at the narrowest point in its burrow. From the bulb at the base of the burrow, to the smoothed walls, and to the exponentially curved flare at the top of the horn-shaped hole, the cricket's call center is magnificent structure, acoustically optimized in its every detail.

Our call to our Creator through the simple hollowed horn, is a mixture of pure and broken tones from the depths of the heart. Similarly, our humble cricket, calls out from a simple, hollowed horn with one pure tone, made up of continuous series of broken tones, emanating from deep in its burrow.

As the cricket digs its earthen Shofar over several days, its song gets progressively louder as the acoustics improve, until the burrow

is complete and the sound is optimized. One of the many things the Shofar symbolizes is the coming of Moshiach and a world of good. As we hollow out our earthiness and shape our lives properly, our call to the Creator gets progressively better, too, until we've optimized ourselves and the world around us the best we can and then Moshiach arrives, quick as a cricket.

[1] HaYom Yom for the 7th of Tishrei, p. 93.

[2] Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Eruvin, p. 100b

[3] Maimonides, Laws of Repentance Ch. 3, Par. 4

[4] Psalms 118:5

Cricket facts and diagram from articles by H.C. Bennett-Clark in the Journal of Experimental Biology.

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

LIVE SHIURIM ONLINE

Anywhere, Anytime!

CHITAS

**INYONEI GEULA
& MOSHIACH**

RAMBAM

**SHIURIM IN LIKUTEI
SICHOS KODESH**

חת"ת

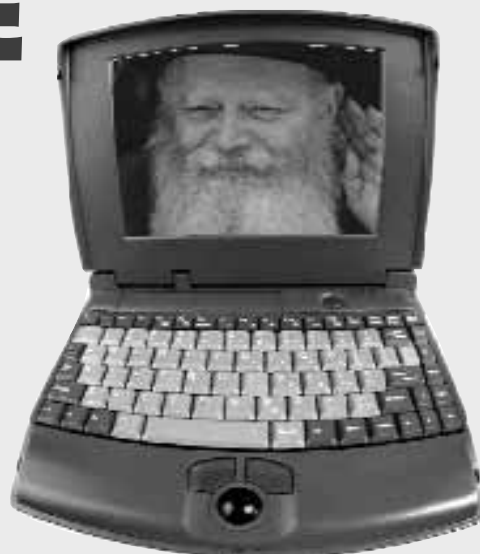
עניי גאולה ומשיח

רמב"ם

שיעורים בלקוטי

שיחות קודש

WWW.770LIVE.COM



יחי אדונינו מורנו ורבנו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד

ב"ה

VISITING THE REBBE

*A compilation of stories about traveling to the Rebbe, the preparations, and being in the location where the Mikdash of the future will be revealed first. * Presented by R' Sholom Ber Reichman, mashpia in yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim in Krayot.*

ALWAYS FOCUSED ON 770

On 6 Teves, 5747, I arrived in yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim Lubavitch after having spent some years of my youth in yeshivos where they weren't exactly admirers of Lubavitch. The first time that I heard R' Mendel Futerfas farbreng was on Shabbos Parshas VaYigash.

R' Mendel usually left Eretz Yisroel at the beginning of Elul and spent a few weeks with his family in London to raise money for Russian Jews and then he would go to 770 for Tishrei. After Tishrei he would spend some time in California working for Russian Jews together with Shadar R' Shmuel Dovid Raitchik a"h. He would go back to 770 for Kinus HaShluchim, and then return to Kfar Chabad.

That year he stayed on longer in Crown Heights in order to attend his grandson's wedding and he returned to Eretz Yisroel close to Shabbos VaYigash. The topic of the farbrengen was the preparations the bachurim in shiur Gimmel were

making to travel on K'vutza, and how this name that the Rebbe chose demonstrates that the Rebbe's desire, and the basis for the success of each of the talmidim on K'vutza, is when each remembers that he is not on his own. He is part of a K'vutza-group and he needs to inquire about his friends' material and spiritual state.

I found it surprising how he had just landed and already his thoughts were on the trip to the Rebbe the following Tishrei. His entire life and interest focused on the trip to the Rebbe.

TO FEEL AT HOME

The mashpia R' Shlomo Zalman Landau told me that he once met R' Mendel in 770 and R' Mendel asked him, "How do you feel when you come here?" And he immediately went on to say, "As for me, when I walk into 770, I immediately feel at home."

LIKE A FISH IN WATER

In his final years, R' Mendel's intake of mashke was limited for health reasons. Until then he had been used to drinking a lot and it helped him speak more freely. It became hard for him to speak at farbrengens but when he farbrenged in 770 he was like a fish in water and he enjoyed every minute.

THERE ARE PREPARATIONS AND PREPARATIONS...

One of the mashpiim in the yeshiva in Kfar Chabad held a farbrengen with us and spoke strongly about those who, while making serious preparations, mixed in preparations of a more trivial nature. He vividly described a bachur preparing to go on K'vutza who fills his suitcase with his "whites." After all, he isn't going just for a month when a few pairs would be enough. He's going for an entire year, no small thing! That requires a lot of preparation so he needs plenty of clothes to change into lest something tear or get lost. You understand what sort of preparation this is.

EVERY TRIP HELPS

I once heard R' Mendel say that when we go to the Rebbe, the main thing is not that we see him but that he sees us and fixes us, so every trip helps.

DON'T DELAY WITH PREPARATIONS

It wasn't clear whether a K'vutza would be organized for Pesach 5737. There were a few talmidim whom the hanhala agreed to send since they kept the s'darim etc., but amongst themselves some of them wondered whether they were worthy or whether they needed additional preparation. They went to the young

mashpia, R' Shneur Zalman Gopin, and to their surprise he advised, "Go in a way of l'chat'chilla aribber and don't delay with preparations."

They had thought that since he was a talmid of the mashpia, R' Shlomo Chaim Kesselman who was known to demand avoda p'nimis, to make a lot of preparations for davening and meditating on Chassidus, that he would think they should wait a little longer. But since R' Zalman was also a talmid of K'vutza, apparently he looked kindly on others in this regard and wanted them to benefit as early as possible. Another consideration was the Chassidic saying: if you wait too long then the situation is likely to get worse.

(I heard this from R' Boaz Segal who was one of the talmidim)

THE EARLIER, THE BETTER

R' Mendel once said at a farbrengen in yeshiva that he was asked the following by some Anash in Australia: They had the opportunity to go to the Rebbe, and needed to determine when to travel. They could go for Chai Elul but then they would have to return home for Rosh HaShana and lose out on the Rebbe's t'kios and spending these special days in the Rebbe's court, or they could go for Rosh HaShana but they wouldn't arrive until immediately before the Yom Tov.

R' Mendel's answer was that they should go for Chai Elul. Why? Because Chai Elul comes before Rosh HaShana and the earlier you get to the Rebbe, the better.

DON'T POSTPONE GOING ON K'VUTZA

In the years 5743-5745, shortly after Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Ginsberg became mashpia in the yeshiva in Kfar Chabad, he got a phone call from R' Mendel asking him to attend a staff meeting of the yeshiva. As the

new mashpia, he did not belong at this meeting but R' Mendel insisted that he attend.

One of the topics raised for discussion was the suggestion of one of the members of the hanhala to extend the yeshiva learning for another year and only then would they send the bachurim on K'vutza. The reason given was that it would strengthen the sense of order and keeping to the schedules as opposed to the year on K'vutza and afterwards when the learning and diligence depended more on the interest of the bachur as in 770, there is not so much fear of punishment. R' Mendel said that they should not postpone going to the Rebbe. At the end of the meeting there was a vote and R' Levi Yitzchok's was the deciding vote. The proposal of having a shiur Dalet was shelved.

(I heard this from R' Levi Yitzchok Ginsberg)

LIVING IN THE MOMENT

At the 12 Tammuz farbrengen in 770 in 5753, R' Mendel announced a few times, "and the first days should fall." He did not explain but it was obvious that he meant not to wax nostalgic over memories of the past.

As he sang in those days at one of the farbrengens, "There is no yesterday, there is no tomorrow, let us take a piece of today; what is there to worry about?" He explained that comparisons to the past can sometimes make a person depressed, and looking toward a rosier and loftier future can make a person

agitated as worries how to attain it, but when you conduct yourself simply and live each individual moment you are settled and serene.

R' Mendel, an elderly man who suffered a lot, would say in the years 5752-4, "Tamim tihiyeh im Hashem Elokecha" – Rashi says "go with Him with t'mimus-sincerity...don't seek to know the future...what comes upon you accept with t'mimus, and then you will be His nation and portion."



Chassidim Farbrengen in 770

By Chassidic artist Zalman Kleiman

BITTUL IN THE MIKDASH

The gabbai, R' Yaakov Lipsker a"h would say about those who, instead of becoming nullified in the Mikdash Me'at, felt like balabatim in 770 and for Simchas Torah would turn Beis Chayeinu into a workroom and knock in nails and shelves, along with other assorted implements so as to be able to see the Rebbe, "about this it is said 'because of the hand that was sent forth upon Your sanctuary.'"

FROM FIELD TO PALACE

By Rabbi Chaim Ashkenazi a"h

*On Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, we stand before HaKadosh Baruch Hu in His holy chamber, awaiting judgment. But we can be confident that Hashem isn't looking to condemn us; after all, He came out to the field in Elul specifically to invite us all to spend Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur in His palace. * An article that sheds light on the proper attitude towards Rosh HaShana.*



WHICH ELUL IS YOUR ELUL?

The month of Elul makes the heart of any Jew who knows and understands the significance of this time skip a beat. It's impossible to go through Elul without stopping a moment and giving it some thought. From the moment the shofar is heard and we start to say *L'Dovid Hashem Ori*, every Jew begins to think about E-l-u-l: **Nu, where am I up to?**

The Rebbe Rayatz describes what Elul was like in Lubavitch. It was a general feeling of dissatisfaction with oneself; every person asked himself: Ayeka? Where are you up to in

avodas Hashem?

The story is told of a Maggid (itinerant preacher) who arrived in the United States one Elul many years ago, when American Jewry was in a deep spiritual freeze. A great deal of advertising had been done to get the Jews to turn out to hear the rabbi from Israel who was coming to speak. He gave a bang on the shtender and shouted, "**EIIIIlul**" but nobody reacted. He gave a stronger bang and shouted louder: "**EIIIIlul!**" but still nobody budged. He realized that his audience did not know what Elul is, as he recalled that in America they call this month September, and so he gave a bang and called out: "**Septeeeeeember.**" The people didn't know what he wanted.

Since then things have changed. In America and all over the world people know what Elul is and they do not remain indifferent to its message. But even among those who know what Elul is there are two ways of relating to it. One way is the norm in the frum world which satisfies itself with the lofty goal of striving to live according to the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch and sifrei Musar. The other way, according to Chassidus, is this and more.

According to Shulchan Aruch, when Elul begins a person needs to know that the days of judgment are approaching. This sounds almost as though Hashem is coming to ask for something in exchange for providing us with food and drink and all of our other needs throughout the year. Just as everyone understands that if the electric company, phone company or city provides services, the time comes when you have to pay the bills because none of it is given for free, a person thinks that Hashem operates the same way. He doesn't give freebies but settle the account once a year, during the Yomim Nora'im (although there is a monthly charge which is why we have a "Yom Kippur Katan" on every Erev Rosh Chodesh).



If you want to continue receiving services from the “companies” that provide what Hashem allotted you, you need to pay. If accounts are closed for the past, you will be given more for the future, but if you don’t pay up, your account will be frozen and your checks won’t be honored and your ATM card won’t work.

To sum up, according to this perspective, the month of Elul is a month in which we need to settle our accounts and if we don’t pay, it’s a very serious problem. He admits that yes, he used a lot of “electricity”, a lot of “water” (energy, food, money) but when it comes payment time, he protests: “Such an inflated bill? It can’t be!” He wonders whether a mistake was made but realizes that in the end, he has no choice and he must pay what it says on the bill. He might even think: what a shame that the bill didn’t get lost or the company didn’t go bankrupt, even though those exigencies would not absolve him of payment. If a person recoils from a bill that comes in the mail then he is surely frightened by a the bill presented to him by Hashem. Hashem is particular about every detail and you cannot deny a bill that He presents since He knows everything. Whatever he thought, spoke and did – it’s all written

down. So awareness of the G-dly cheshbon leads to thoughts similar to those of someone who receives a bill in the mail: If only there wasn’t a Rosh HaShana and a Yom Kippur and no Elul either. Even though Elul is an opportunity to change and rectify things I’d rather have “neither your honey nor your sting” – I don’t want to fix things in Elul because I don’t want to be judged on Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur.

Although nobody expects Hashem to give him something for nothing, at the same time you can’t say that people with this approach take pleasure in this Elul-Yomim Nora’im season. When the forty tension-filled days are over, they breathe a sigh of relief.

KABBALAS HA’MALCHUS IN ELUL AND TISHREI

Chassidus agrees that Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur are days of judgment but the judgment, according to Chassidus, is much more significant than the Nigleh understanding alone.

This is in light of the Baal Shem Tov’s revelation of the inyan of “ein od milvado,” and the explanation of the Alter Rebbe in Shaar Ha’Yichud V’Ha’Emuna, about how a created being is not a metzius at all. If not

for the d’var Hashem that makes it exist, it would not be, and therefore the existence of a created entity is only because of the Creator. It’s not just that Hashem supplies him with electricity and water and other services so he can exist comfortably, but his very existence is thanks only to Hashem’s constantly renewing the world in His kindness.

Our obligation towards G-d is far more than payment for services rendered. We have nothing of our own; our existence is thanks to Hashem, and we have no right to use it for anything that is not to His liking and for any reason that goes contrary to the purpose of our existence. So the cheshbon is much, much deeper.

One point needs to be emphasized: Hashem doesn’t make a judgment on Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur because He is looking for an opening to say that perhaps we don’t even deserve to exist; on the contrary, according to the mashal of the Alter Rebbe which sheds light on the entire topic (that Hashem on Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur is like a king in his palace while during Elul He is like a king in the field), and especially according to the explanations that we heard from the Rebbe on this mashal – Hashem comes in Elul to the field

because **He wants to see us on Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur in His palace** a setting befitting city dwellers and distinguished ministers.

So in Elul He appears in the field without His royal garb and trappings, and we need to come to greet Him despite our humble station. Speaking to the King in the field is very precious to Him and so He receives every person graciously.

Hashem especially cherishes our kabbalas ha'malchus under these circumstances, in the field while the King is outside of His palace. This is why, explains the Rebbe, the blowing of the shofar during Elul (which symbolizes kabbalas ha'malchus), though it is only a custom, is greater than the blowing of the shofar on Rosh HaShana which is a great mitzva. This is because on Rosh HaShana the t'kios are taking place when He is in His palace. Whoever is in the palace, even if he is drunk or a fool, will be terrified because of where he is and the sight of many ministers bowing to one person.

In Elul when the shofar is blown there is no palace, no royal clothing and no entourage of prostrating ministers. There is the king **without any trappings**. Thus, there is no compelling reason to desire him due to the pomp and awe because that doesn't exist at that time. And if, despite it all, the people of the city who are in the field turn their attention to the king, this causes the king to look at them graciously. The happy countenance of the king causes them to want to try and be among the distinguished ministers so they can enter the palace with the king on Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur.

The Rebbe raises the question of how we can use the pasuk, "Ani L'Dodi v'Dodi Li" as an acronym for Elul when Elul is about "Ani L'Dodi" while the words "v'Dodi Li" allude to Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur. He explains that the **main thing is the t'kias shofar and kabbalas**

ha'malchus of Elul, when the **king is in the field**, and this includes the kabbalas ol of the shofar blowing on Rosh HaShana. Obviously then, **the degree of kabbalas ha'malchus on Rosh HaShana depends on the avoda of the month of Elul**, which consists of awareness of the presence and existence of the king even in the field when he doesn't look particularly majestic.

While Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur are days of judgment, the goal, according to Chassidus, is completely different than the way it looks just in Nigleh. Hashem wants to see every Jew in His palace. Where is a Jew's place if not in there? Each of us is a part of G-d Above, i.e. that Hashem, every year, gives a new chayus to all of creation as the Alter Rebbe says on the pasuk, "a land which the eyes of Hashem your G-d are upon it constantly from the beginning of the year until the end of the year." The Alter Rebbe asks: And what happens at the "end of the year?" There is still chayus! So it should have said only, "the eyes of Hashem your G-d are upon it." Why do we need the words "from the beginning of the year until the end of the year?"

The Alter Rebbe explains that every year on Rosh HaShana a new chayus is elicited that never existed before. This is a higher chayus than what we had previously. This year, on Rosh HaShana 5771, a new chayus will be drawn down that is loftier than anything that preceded it for 5770 years. It must be, because a lower chayus would not constitute a new chayus because "included in 200 is 100."

That means that every Rosh HaShana Hashem wants to bring every Jew to His palace in a loftier way than in previous years. This is the purpose of the month of Elul; it's not "Black September" but a month unlike any others as far as the great opportunities it provides. The kabbalas ol of Elul includes and

leads us to the kabbalas ol of Rosh HaShana

If so, says a Chassid, I wish the entire year was Elul! I want "the king in the field" for the entire year. The Chassid's feeling about Elul is not one of dissatisfaction and discomfort. Having a discontented look on our faces is due to a lack of satisfaction with ourselves, that we nearly forgot that there is a King. Therefore, we need to greet Him with greater devotion to having set times for Torah, with great attention paid to davening and brachos, with more chayus and concentration when doing a mitzva, etc.

"*Yakar b'einei Hashem ha'mavsa la'Chassidav*" – the Baal Shem Tov explains that this refers to the bittul of His Chassidim which is dear to Hashem. The bittul of Elul is certainly precious because it is the **fruit of the labor of a person and his true desire to get close to the King**, and not a consequence of the awe which a person feels when he enters the royal palace.

THE "FIELD" AND THE "PALACE" OF MELECH HA'MOSHIACH

"Elul" and the "king in the field" can also be used as metaphors for our situation today. Until 3 Tammuz and until 27 Adar we had a king in the palace with all the pomp and awe. All over the world there was high esteem for the Rebbe and this was true for Jews and (l'havdil) non-Jews. As Chabad Chassidim we merited a tremendous abundance of Chassidus and Nigleh from the Rebbe, a tremendous abundance of brachos for children, health and parnasa and an astonishing number of miracle stories like those told about the Baal Shem Tov and even more so.

Who wasn't amazed? Even his sharpest opponents were affected by what they heard. So in the hidden recesses of their hearts they, too,

accepted the Rebbe's malchus. It was great being a Lubavitcher – we felt like we were in the palace. Who could compare to us?

It's over 18 years (or 16 years) that we don't see the majesty of the king and Lubavitch does not look like someone in the palace of the king. We can bemoan the passing of the glory days and be frustrated that Hashem destroyed our palace and maybe even go and look for an important position in another palace, G-d forbid, because the Rebbe isn't here the way we saw him for decades.

But then there is another approach, a completely different perspective. It wasn't a blooper that took place on 27 Adar and 3 Tammuz. We saw and heard how the Rebbe prepared all kinds of things and hinted at the situation that we are in today. It's a process that needs to happen and that we need to go through. The only question is how to get through it and which kochos will enable us to get through these difficult days until we experience salvation. We can call this period "the king in the field" since it's not a time when we see the king in his glory. As of now there are no "dollars," no yechidus. We don't hear new maamarim and there are no sichos and maamarim edited by the Rebbe. There's no davening with the Rebbe, at least not that we can see. There are farbrengens but we don't see the Rebbe farbrenging etc.

Because there is a Rebbe, a Moshiach and a plan for Geula – Moshiach is about to come. There is Beis Rabbeinu Sh'B'Bavel which any minute now needs to have the Beis HaMikdash built there and then proceed to the Temple Mount. There is Chabad and Lubavitch. There is no change – not in behavior and not in chinuch, not in learning and not in avodas Hashem. What was - will continue to be. The only thing that characterizes this present state is that the Rebbe is like the king in the

What's the big deal in coming to the palace on Rosh HaShana on coronation day when it's a great honor for those who are invited? The kuntz is in finding Hashem in daily life, at work, at home, in the field, throughout the year!

field.

We yearn to see the Rebbe – **the king in his palace** – and we won't compromise on that. Just as in Elul nobody wants to remain in the field because the plan is to see the king in all his glory, on Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, we cannot be satisfied with the status quo.

We see a support for this inyan in the "HaMelech" that we say on Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur in Shacharis with a special tune. In the machzor in little letters it says what happened with the tzaddik of Karlin who fainted when he said "HaMelech" because he thought of the question that Vespasian asked Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai, who came out to him from the besieged city of Yerushalayim, "If I am a king, why didn't you come to me until now?"

What's the big deal in coming to the palace on Rosh HaShana on coronation day when it's a great honor for those who are invited? The *kuntz* is in finding the Melech in daily life, at work, at home, in the field, throughout the year!

The king's question is even more pointed regarding Elul: Where were you this month? I was in the field, near you, and even though you looked, dressed and acted like a man of the field, that didn't bother me.

The Rebbe asks: Where were you throughout this time, since 27 Adar? Where was all the yearning? Did you keep your focus every moment that there is a king and that you must do all you can to see him in the

flesh? I am not coming to you now as a king in his glory (i.e. there are no sichos and maamarim, brachos at dollars etc.) and I am waiting for you, even though I am not seen, and am looking forward to your accepting my malchus, the malchus of Moshiach. I was prepared to receive you as you are, viewing your daily attire as uniforms with polished buttons which make you worthy to enter my palace.

How will we respond?

Let us increase in behaviors that demonstrate that we accept his malchus, which are expressed in the **thought, speech and action** of someone standing near the king.

Let us **think** about whether we are crowning Hashem with all our actions throughout the day. 23 hours and 59 minutes are not good enough; only 24 hours will do!

Let us **talk** in a manner befitting someone in the royal palace, knowing that all of Am Yisroel are there together (so surely we will only speak well of one another).

Let us direct all our **actions** so that they fulfill the King's wishes and disseminate His Torah. Let us especially publicize the name and depiction of Moshiach so that as many Jews as possible will be ready to greet him.

And then we will merit to go from the field to the city, the rebuilt city of Yerushalayim, to His palace, the third Beis HaMikdash. And we will see Melech HaMoshiach revealed in all his glory, with the true and complete Geula, may it be now!

MOSHIACH AND THE IRAQ YOU NEVER KNEW

By Rabbi Avishai Efargun

(The author served in the IDF Intelligence Corps during the Gulf War and today heads a yeshiva for baalei t'shuva in Kfar Saba)

*11 Av twenty years ago marked Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, an event that made the world panic. Jews the world over were petrified by the threats of Iraq's dictator to attack Israel with missiles. At this point, the Rebbe revealed that this was a series of miracles that opened "The Year that Melech HaMoshiach is Revealed." The Rebbe also emphasized the continuation of the process, citing the Midrash that says "at the time that Melech HaMoshiach comes, he stands on the roof of the Beis HaMikdash and announces to the Jewish people: humble ones, the time for your redemption has arrived." The following is an overview of the dramatic events of Av-Elul 5750/1990. * Part 2 of 2*

THE REBBE IS REASSURING

On Sunday, 14 Av, Mr. Eli Kolas former chairman of the committee on foreign relations and security in the Knesset, passed by the Rebbe for "dollars." He requested the Rebbe's bracha for the people of Israel and asked whether the Rebbe had any message for them regarding Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, which had them all worried. The Rebbe responded, "They need to increase their confidence in G-d and then He will increase His blessings even more. They will be healthy and peaceful blessings with serenity for the soul and body."

That was the Rebbe's first public comment regarding the situation.

On Tuesday, 16 Av, after Maariv and the giving out of dollars, on the way to his room, the Rebbe stopped near the exit and looked at an excerpt from the Yalkut Shimoni that was hung on the bulletin board, "Rabbi Yitzchok said: In the year that King Moshiach is revealed, all the kings of the nations will provoke one another; the king of Paras provokes an Arab king and the Arab king goes to Aram ... and all the nations of the world are distressed and panicking ... and Israel is distressed and panicking ... [and Hashem] says to Israel 'Don't be afraid, all that I have done, I did not do except for your sake—the time of your redemption has arrived.'"

That same evening, R' Leibel Groner called the home of the person who had hung it up and asked him (on the Rebbe's behalf) why he had not included the lines that followed, "When King Moshiach comes, he stands on the roof of the Beis HaMikdash and announces to Israel: Humble ones, the time for your redemption has arrived." The man quickly hung up the Midrash in its entirety.

(Rumor has it that the Rebbe explicitly asked that the line "and the



American aircraft carriers. Six of these were stationed in the Gulf

King of Persia destroys the entire world” be deleted. As is known, in all the sichos where the Rebbe quotes the Yalkut Shimoni, as well as any place where it was publicized, that line is not quoted. When the Rebbe was asked about people’s fears he supposedly answered that “his angel already fell,” i.e. the spiritual source. I also heard that already back with the war in Iran someone asked the Rebbe whether the Yalkut Shimoni was talking about this war and the Rebbe said no. But during *this* period, when the same Chassid asked the Rebbe, the Rebbe said, “*dos iz dos*” – this is it).

At the farbrengen on Shabbos Parshas R’ei (27 Av), the Rebbe noted that the Yalkut Shimoni was already publicized and this is one of the signs of Geula. He concluded with: **From the outset there is**

nothing to be frightened of for we already have the promise of “do not be afraid ... the time for your redemption has arrived.”

The media began publishing frightening pictures and reports of Iraq’s use of chemical weapons. As a result, rumors began to spread and worst case scenarios emerged in Israel as well as in the Arab countries and among members of the Coalition who were afraid for their soldiers. A public debate ensued in the media about the necessity to distribute gas masks. This itself did a lot to intensify people’s fears about the possible danger (which was indeed formidable).

At the same time, there were debates about the best possible defense – should people go to a bomb shelter (which takes time to

reach) or a sealed room, and about the effectiveness of the mask. What would people with beards do? How would they protect little children and babies? What about pets? And so on and so forth.

Today, we know (on the authority of UN inspectors in Iraq and information that came to the UN from commanders in the Iraqi army, deserters etc.) that already in Av **Iraq sent seven mobile Scud launchers to the west of the country.** The launchers were brought at night and dispersed on agricultural plantations and other locations that were carefully chosen in order to hide them from spy satellites. **They also sent seven armed and primed missiles to the west of Iraq fitted with chemical warheads.** These missiles were supervised by a special unit (note: it

WHERE IS THE MIRACLE WHEN THEY DID NOT FIND CHEMICAL WEAPONS IN IRAQ?

In lectures on the topic of “Miracles of the Gulf War,” many people say that after the second Gulf War they did not find any chemical/biological/nuclear weapons in Iraq, and therefore, “Where is the miracle when there were no chemical weapons?”

This question demonstrates confusion between the first Gulf War and the second Gulf War. With the outbreak of the first Gulf War in 1990, Iraq had enormous quantities of chemical and biological weapons. Iraqi scientists were on the verge of obtaining nuclear weapons (for which they worked six different ways to obtain enriched uranium and separate plutonium!).



Chemical bombs before they were destroyed by the UN (after the war)

A small amount of these weapons was destroyed during the war but most of it was located and destroyed by UN inspectors who, in the 12 years they worked in Iraq, discovered enormous quantities of chemical and biological weapons. In UN reports there is testimony in pictures and detailed descriptions of the tremendous work they

did in dismantling thousands of unconventional missiles and shells.

The biggest miracle of the first Gulf War is that the evil Iraqi dictator who had huge quantities of these weapons, which he had used in his war against Iran, refrained from using it against Israel. Furthermore, not only did he have them but they were actually prepared for use! About three years ago, documents were publicized in the United States that prove that unsuccessful attempts were made to use biological weapons!

Examination of the UN inspectors' reports reveals that the moment Iraq invaded Kuwait, the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) surveillance on the reactor that Russia sold them was removed and Iraqi scientists took uranium and tried to make a bomb. Then the war broke out and ruined their plans.

was several months until even the meager defense that the Patriot missiles provided was set up; that came only in Shevat). **Also, during the war itself there were chemical missiles ready to be sent off in the west of Iraq.**

Word about Iraq's biological weapons began to be publicized. These weapons are comprised of germs and toxins that are derived

from animals and plants and are far more dangerous than chemical weapons. Unlike chemicals that dissipate after a while, these germs can remain on the ground for years and even multiply. Masks are not effective against it (and you can't wear a mask for years anyway) and a small quantity can contaminate a vast area.

In a report to Congress about the

Gulf War it said that one Scud missile armed with botulism could contaminate an area of 3700 kilometers! Anthrax, sent the same way, would contaminate an even greater area.

Word began to spread (which after the war was proven to be accurate), that intensive work was being done in Iraq to develop biological weapons using the anthrax germ and the botulism toxin (which can kill within a minute) and other types of weapons. After the Gulf War, UN inspectors discovered that **Iraq had 25 missiles loaded with biological weapons and ready to be sent as well as 157 bombs loaded with three different kinds of germs and toxins.** Boruch Hashem, these terrible weapons were not used.

This is why American Secretary of State James Baker strongly warned Iraq against using biological or chemical weapons. In Germany, the minister announced the need for the coalition partners to present an economic unified front, because Iraq's invasion threatened to turn into a **region-wide conflict** in which countries were liable to use chemical or nuclear weapons.

For over two months Coalition forces stood at the ready opposite the Iraqi forces. Many troops were sent without enough supplies because of the desire to quickly amass a deterrent force in the area. If the Iraqi army would have gone immediately on the attack and conquered the sea and airports, it would have been able to torpedo the entire troop buildup. **Boruch Hashem**, the nightmare did not materialize and for half a year Coalition forces amassed without a hitch.

In 5755 the Iraqi president's son-in-law and right-hand man, Hussein Kamel, admitted that Iraq's original intention **was to conquer Saudi Arabia.** And after the Gulf War, Iraq was ready to do so.

We see how great the miracle

was, that despite their intentions and plans, the Iraqis did not proceed but allowed the Coalition forces to amass, organize, and prepare without any interference. This went against all military logic, and certainly against their former *modus operandi*.

The Iraqis began to round up thousands of European and American citizens and imprison them or place them in strategic locations. This was to provide them with a human shield to deter the US from bombing these areas. In Elul, the Iraqi Foreign Minister threatened Israel and in Tishrei, 5751/1990, Saddam Hussein announced that if war broke out, Iraq would strike at Israel with missiles.

In the face of all the fears and threats and horror stories, the Rebbe MH"M, Nasi HaDor, Navi and leader, continued to be reassuring. On 28 Av/August 19, 1990, MK Ronny Milo came to the Rebbe and said, "This is a difficult time." The Rebbe interrupted him – which is unusual for the Rebbe – and said, "These are not difficult times. I already said that it says explicitly, 'The eyes of Hashem your G-d are upon it from the beginning of the year until the end of the year.'"

(After the war, Ronny Milo said at a 19 Kislev farbrengen in Kfar Chabad, "When I went to the Rebbe the panic was at its height. Everyone was anxious, worried and trembling. When I told the Rebbe, he answered firmly, 'There is no room for worry. There will not be any strike against the Israeli People.' I listened in astonishment. How could this be? It's impossible! We are distributing gas masks to the entire populace because of reliable intelligence sources...")

That day, R' Groner was interviewed by *Kol Yisroel*. He stated that the Rebbe said to convey that there was nothing to fear. As far as the masks were concerned, there was no reason to rush because he



An empty chemical warhead for Iraqi Scud missiles, ready to be filled with a chemical compound

did not think they would be necessary, and as for stockpiling food – he said not to do that.

Rabbi Yehosef Ralbag a"h, rav of Kiryat Yovel, wrote to the Rebbe about the security situation and that people were asking about masks etc. The Rebbe responded: 1) Ask a *ben chamesh l'Mikra* – a child who knows the *pasuk*, "The eyes of the Lord your G-d are upon the land from the beginning of the year to the end," and 2) Concerning hoarding food: This is forbidden by halacha (Jewish law), as it drives up the price of essential needs in the Holy Land (see Rambam Hilchos Mechira perek 14 about the prohibition to hoard "fruits that are essential in Eretz Yisroel" and about how driving up the price or hoarding fruit in Eretz Yisroel is like lending with interest).

This response was widely publicized in the newspapers. They wrote that the Rebbe says there is no reason to fear a gas attack on Eretz Yisroel, and it was very encouraging. The Rebbe's message came out as "buying panic" was setting in. Shelves were emptying and there were fears of food shortages. A customer seen leaving a store with a

wagon full of food that would last for months was asked by a reporter how he would pay for such an expensive purchase. He said, "In any case it's the end of the world. I don't have to worry about covering the check." That was the prevalent feeling.

Rabbi Yitzchok Springer sent a copy of the Yalkut Shimoni to a rabbi in Eretz Yisroel and that rabbi said that people in his area were very excited by it – it got passed around and was the talk of the day. R' Springer wrote about this to the Rebbe and on 24 Av, he received a response in which the Rebbe circled the words, "and it got passed around" and added the words, "Whoever increases in this, is praiseworthy."

On Rosh Chodesh Elul the Rebbe went to the Ohel. This was, as mentioned earlier, the second time in all his years of leadership that he went to the Ohel on Rosh Chodesh, with the first being the preceding month.

On Shabbos Parshas Shoftim (4 Elul), the Rebbe said that the lesson to be learned from the name Yisroel is that Jews have the power to rule the nations of the world, noting that

PUBLICIZING THE MIRACLES

If you study the Rebbe's sichos you will see that many times throughout the years 5750-5752, the Rebbe focuses on the miracles and wonders of that time, explaining and emphasizing them, highlighting the importance of acknowledging them, and being thankful for them.

In the sicha of Parshas VaYeishev, 5752, the Rebbe spoke about how France changed its national anthem after Chassidim turned it into a Chassidic niggun. The "angel and mazal of France" perceived that the tune had been transformed to k'dusha and that is why the anthem was changed. The Rebbe said that this was being explained at that time because "there ought to be awareness and thanks to Hashem for the miracles that He does." The Rebbe emphasized, **"Furthermore and most importantly ... this also pertains to the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu ... as the Gemara says, 'Hashem wanted to make Chizkiyahu Moshiach ... The Attribute of Judgment said to Hashem ... You did all these miracles for him (he was saved from Sancheriv and was healed from his sickness) and he did not say Shira before You – will you make him Moshiach?' And from this we have the essential lesson, something that is very fitting, which is to be involved in publicizing miracles ... in every single place."**

In an unedited sicha the Rebbe said, "Therefore, although this was spoken about in the past ... we are speaking about it again now and at length in order to arouse the proper attention ... furthermore and most importantly ... this **pertains to the hastening of the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu!**" (In *Beis Chayeinu* the wording is: "Although it was already said ... and the sicha was already recorded accurately and is on the shelf ... mainly **to correct** what Chizkiyahu HaMelech lacked in not saying Shira for the miracles that happened to him").

In connection with the Gulf War the Rebbe said, **"A great miracle took place and nobody (and certainly not many) pays attention ..."** (VaYakhel-P'kudei 5751).

In recent years, more miracles that took place during the Gulf War have been disclosed (whether because of the ensuing time or because the evil kingdom in Iraq fell), and we can now better appreciate the kindness Hashem did for us. The Rebbe wrote in his letter of 25 Adar, 5751, "Those who know what is going on **'behind the scenes'** are far more conscious of the incredible miracles and wonders at this time, and therefore today we can (with information from the UN and the American army etc.) be aware of the miracles and wonders that happened then and to recognize that these are miracles and to thank Hashem for them and to publicize them with the knowledge that 'this affects the hastening of the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu.'"

the Tzemach Tzedek would make "arrangements" in Petersburg. "Every Jew has the power to rule over the nations of the world and over their leaders," the Rebbe emphasized. "Now that all endpoints [of galus] were reached, the Geula

will come immediately with Hashem's help ... and this is connected with the Yalkut Shimoni that is being publicized ..."

With the increase of threats and fears, many people began asking about leaving Israel and about

canceling plans for going there. The Rebbe's answer to everyone was to remain there and not to cancel plans to visit.

To a soldier in Reserves who passed by for dollars on 5 Elul and asked, "In the event that war breaks out in Israel, should I go there to defend the country?" the Rebbe replied, **"There won't be a war there."**

When he continued to ask, "But if war does break out, should I go to defend it?" the Rebbe said, "War won't break out now because there will be peace in the land."

Although missiles landed in Israel it was clearly not a war in which two sides participated, since Israel did not respond. The soldier was thinking about the scenario all were predicting at that time, in which there would be a direct attack against Israel that would include not only Iraq but also Syria, Jordan and maybe Egypt, and the Rebbe's response was that this would not happen and it didn't.

In the sicha of the second night of Sukkos, as well as in the sicha of Shabbos Parshas B'Reishis the Rebbe explained that "Persia" refers to Iraq, and "Aram" to the countries that are *"ram"* – raised up, i.e. the superpowers. In a note there it says it also refers to the country which opened its doors to the Jewish people, i.e. Russia. In the sicha of 22 Elul, 5750, the Rebbe quoted the Yalkut Shimoni and on the word "to Aram" the Rebbe commented in the footnote that there is a version in the P'sikta "to Edom."

In general, the Rebbe repeated the Yalkut Shimoni many times, emphasizing that there was nothing to fear and on the contrary, this was one of the signs of Geula **and this is the year that King Moshiach is revealed** and that the general theme of the year 5751 is "I will show them wonders."

CHIYA MINAYIN?

By Shmuel Alexander

The Rebbe Rashab once said, “How could a Jew not be in Lubavitch on Rosh HaShana - where else would he be?!” * The Rebbe once wrote to someone: “I thought we would see one another here during Sukkos (as it was your habit to come to the Rebbe my father-in-law for these days) to be blessed with a piska tava for a good and happy year. I was sorry that you did not come this year.” * Presented for the upcoming Yomim Tovim.

Going to the Rebbe was always an important aspect of hiskashrus and the darkei ha'Chassidus. With the founder of Chassidus, the Baal Shem Tov, we find a special takana by which he told his disciples to come to him from time to time and as the Rebbe Rayatz put it, “an immutable law amongst Chassidim.”

Over the generations the Rebbeim spoke highly of coming to see and be seen by the Rebbe. The account of an early Chassid who went to the Rebbe as a child is famous. He describes the trip in vivid language as well as his feelings. This reshima was published in *HaTamim* that was the main

publication for the bachurim and Chassidim of those days.

On a certain occasion the Rebbe spoke highly about visiting Beis Rabbeinu and observed, “There are those who did not come but remained to sit in their ‘hole,’ thinking that they were sitting in the king’s palace ...,” and the Rebbe concluded, “Obviously, it is a great pity on them.”

The special reason for traveling to the Rebbe is that being in the Rebbe’s presence gives a Chassid renewed chayus as the Rebbe says, “The very inyan of a Chassid traveling to the Rebbe – that’s obvious, for from time to time a

Chassid goes to his Rebbe and this trip affects his avoda throughout the year until his next trip.” Or as the Chassidim put it in a play on words, “*Rebbi lo shana, Chiya minayin*” (which literally means if Rebbe did not record it in the Mishna where did (R’) Chiya get it from) – if you don’t go to the Rebbe at least once a year, where will your chayus come from?

On another occasion the Rebbe explained that the ideal place that is most suited to every Jew, and a Chassid in particular, is the Rebbe’s place. Hashem designated for us the place of the Rebbeim which are oases on our long trip in the desert of galus. These locations are like inns (or motels) in which we rest up for a while from the rigors of the road, where we can daven and learn with peace of mind.

KABBALAS P’NEI RABBO ON YOM TOV

The trip to the Rebbe could be at any time. Any day and date is a good time but when it is a Yom Tov or special date in the calendar, especially Tishrei, it has a far greater impact.

The Rebbe Rashab once said, “How could a Jew not be in Lubavitch on Rosh HaShana - where else would he be?!”

The Rebbe once wrote to someone: “I thought we would see one another here during Sukkos (as it was your habit to come to the Rebbe my father-in-law for these days) to be blessed with a piska tava for a good and happy year. I was sorry that you did not come this year.”

The Rebbe also said, a number of times, that the trip to the Rebbe on the Three Regalim is the inyan of aliya l’regeil in general and “kabbalas p’nei rabbo b’regeil” in particular. This is especially so during Tishrei which has many Yomim Tovim when “many Jews from all over the world”

gather and unite in the shul of Nasi Doreinu which gives the strength to draw down and effect the inyan of unity the rest of the year when everybody is back in their place.

In Tishrei 5747/1986 the Rebbe spoke very highly about traveling for Tishrei and explained that today we don't have the Beis HaMikdash and so the place where we can fulfill just a drop of the inyan of "bowing before You" is mainly in the shul of the Nasi HaDor. Then the Rebbe pointed out that "quite a few tens and hundreds of Jews schlep (men and women) from their homes and places in order to spend the holidays of Tishrei in the presence of Nasi Doreinu which is something like and a commemoration of the inyan of aliya l'regel when the Beis HaMikdash stood."

The next year, in 5748 the Rebbe used a very unusual expression about the guests who came for Sukkos. He said, "Yashar ko'ach to all the guests whose Chassidic hergesh shone forth within them openly and came to fruition to fulfill the "lech lecha from your land" in order to be in the four cubits (the shul and beis midrash) of Nasi Doreinu."

The fact is that in this generation in general and in recent years in particular, Tishrei has become the main time to visit the Rebbe. This month contains the special qualities of the Yomim Nora'im and the beginning of the year which are auspicious times to be blessed with a good year and then, in the second half, the Time of Our Rejoicing until the finale on Simchas Torah which the Rebbe turned into the most special day in the year and was known by Chassidim as "the Rebbe's day."

Aside from the tremendous importance of seeing and being seen by the Rebbe, traveling to the Rebbe has great value in the very fact of being in the Rebbe's presence. The Rebbe's place, in and of itself is of



vast importance and even if we don't see the Rebbe, there is still the maala (advantage) of **being with the Rebbe.**

A famous Chassidic aphorism illustrates how far this goes. A Chassid in the time of the Tzemach Tzedek went to visit the Rebbe but since the maamarim were said quietly, the Chassid did not hear them. He complained to one of the Chassidim, "What did I come for?"

The Chassid replied, "If He brought us to Har Sinai and did not give us the Torah – Dayeinu!" Just being at Har Sinai is important and wonderful.

BEIS MOSHIACH – 770

In that reshima referred to in *HaTamim* there is the special designation that a Chassid gave to the Rebbe's house. It was even publicized later – in part – in an edited sicha of the Rebbe. "From the day the Beis HaMikdash and the Holy of Holies were destroyed until

Hashem has mercy and sends us the Righteous Redeemer who will gather us from all four corners of the earth and lead us to Eretz Yisroel ...

Lubavitch is our Yerushalayim and the shul that the Rebbe davens in is our Beis HaMikdash and the room that the Rebbe sits in is our Holy of Holies and the Rebbe is the Aron which contains our Luchos of Hashem's Torah."

When speaking of our generation, the seventh, the last generation of galus and the first of Geula, the concept of Beis Rabbeinu takes on added significance. The Rebbe attributed great importance to 770, unlike anything we saw with earlier Rebbeim.

In the winter of 5752, a few months before 27 Adar – the date that marks the start of the great concealment of "he bears our sins" – the Rebbe put out a kuntres that was devoted entirely to explaining the significance of 770 in our generation, the seventh generation in

general and in this final period before Moshiach's coming in particular. This kuntres was so important to the Rebbe that he held it in his Siddur for all the months after that until 27 Adar which was highly unusual.

In this kuntres the Rebbe reveals that 770 is the home of the Nasi HaDor and from 770 light goes forth to the entire world. It is the *talpiyot* – the mound that all turn to. It is the main “miniature sanctuary” during galus until the coming of Moshiach.

(It is interesting that during the very period that the Rebbe spoke about “cheshbono shel olam” (i.e. a life reckoning) regarding the current situation, **on the very day** that he was involved with writing a will he himself laid the cornerstone to

expand 770. This was 17 Elul 5748, 48 years since the original building was bought).

The Rebbe goes on to clarify the special quality of Beis Rabbeinu being the building where the Geula of the Sh'china will begin with the descent of the Beis HaMikdash to this building. This is why the Rebbe calls the building Beis Moshiach.

And this is just a drop in the sea of the special qualities that the Rebbe reveals in this kuntres which everyone should learn.

GOING TO THE REBBE NOW TOO!

From all that was said above we see how precise is the aphorism of the Chassidim, “Chassidim are not alone” because wherever they go, the Rebbe is with them. Today too, even

when we don't see the Rebbe, the Rebbe demonstrated his concern for us and clarified everything for us. He vivified us with the advantage of being in the Beis Rabbeinu – 770 which is the home of Nasi Doreinu from which light goes forth to the entire world until the coming of Moshiach.

The main thing being that *teikef u'miyad* we see the third Beis HaMikdash descending and connecting to Beis Rabbeinu Sh'B'Bavel with the immediate hisgalus of the Rebbe MH”M.

Tai'erer bridder, mir vellen zich vaiter zen, der Oibershter vet gebben gezunt un leben, mir vellen foren tzum Rebbe'n, mir vellen zich vaiter zen. Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V'Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach L'olam Va'ed



Crown Travel International

- Express service
- Fully Computerized

שירותי אקספרס
המשרד ממוחשב

331 Kingston Ave.
(2nd Flr) Brooklyn NY 11213

(718) 493-1111
Fax: (718) 493-4444

Get your tickets within minutes!
קח את הכרטיסים שלך בתוך מספר דקות!

Make a “Mivtzah Kashrus” in your own computer!

Introducing JNET-The world wide web without the world wide worry™

While The Internet can be a helpful tool for business, education and personal use it can also be a potentially dangerous one.

That's why J Net was created.

Using exclusive multi-tiered intelligent filtration, the J Net portal is probably the most effective consumer resource for eliminating material not conducive to our needs.

More than virtually foolproof, J .NET is also easy - both to install and use. Plus its available in both dialup and high speed DSL and backed by highly trained customer service

experts that will solve your problems fast.

Most important, you can now get the JNET Advantage for only a bit more than non-filtered on line providers.

If you're ready for the world wide web without the world wide worry, you're ready for JNet.

✓ DIAL UP ✓ DSL ✓ Unlimited Access ✓ 24 Tech Support
✓ 4 Profiles per Account ✓ Web Mail

Call us toll free at 1-866-866-JNET (5638)
(mention code “770” for special ANASH Rate)



Only 1 minute from 770 ● High Style Hotel in a small format ● Fancy Studio Apartments



- ◆ Kitchen with all the latest technology appliances: Fridge, Microwave, Toaster
- ◆ Breakfast, drinks in fridge all day
- ◆ Broadband Internet
- ◆ FREE calls & video

KINGSTON HOTEL

917-691-5212
718-473-5937

Linen & Towels changed
Fancy Bath & Shower with plenty
of Shampoo & Soap



PRODUCING SOLDIERS OF THE REBBE IN TZFAS

By Nosson Avrohom

Nosson Avrohom, a graduate of the Chabad yeshiva in Tzfas, visited the yeshiva for a week and farbrenged with the bachurim, spoke with the Maggidei Shiur and interviewed faculty, alumni and the Rosh, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Wilschansky. He spoke about the early days, over thirty years ago, about the atmosphere there today, and tried to pinpoint why the bachurim and graduates love the place so much, no matter how much time has elapsed.

One of the flagship Chabad yeshivos in Eretz Yisroel and indeed, throughout the world, is the one in Tzfas. The number of talmidim continues to grow and the successful educational approach promulgated

by Rabbi Y. Y. Wilschansky is one that dozens of Chabad yeshivos have adopted. There's an amalgamation of Nigleh and Chassidus on a very high level, together with an atmosphere of brotherly love which

does not allow divisions to develop among the talmidim. They are all brothers and equals - from the scholarly and studious to those who struggle with learning, from those who come from Lubavitcher families to those who recently arrived from touring Bolivia or the Far East and want to experience a yeshiva and learn about Judaism.

The approach of the staff is caring with personal attention given to each talmid. Every activity, large or small, is measured by what extent it is in line with the Rebbe's ratzon and how it hastens the hisgalus.

Over thirty-three years, thousands of chassidim including a vast number of shluchim, mashpiim, roshei yeshivos and rabbanim, have been shaped within the stone walls of the beis midrash.

I visited the yeshiva for a week. I got up with the talmidim, attended the s'darim, shiurim and farbrengens. I went on mivtzaim with them and experienced the special atmosphere of spiritual elevation and hiskashrus to the





Over thirty-three years, thousands of chassidim including a vast number of shluchim, mashpiim, roshei yeshivos and rabbanim, have been shaped within the stone walls of the beis midrash.

Rebbe. I soon realized the impossibility of fully conveying the impact of the yeshiva in one article.

There is something special about it that causes the bachurim who learn there to walk around with a gleam in their eyes. It comes from the pride of the Soldiers of the House of Dovid.

RABBI YITZCHOK ISAAC LANDAU

“WE ALWAYS FOUND A LISTENING EAR”

Chassidus explains that true unity is when two opposites are joined. In the yeshiva in Tzfas that has built its educational approach on

hiskashrus to the Rebbe, you don’t feel the need to integrate two worlds and combine opposites because everybody here feels as one. This is evidenced in the personal conversations that take place among the talmidim, at the farbrengens, in the chavrusos, and in general throughout the day.

You look at them, with each of them coming from a different background and different mentality; students from the United States, Argentina, Brazil, France, and Eretz Yisroel; baalei t’shuva alongside young talmidim from Lubavitcher homes, and you can sense the “bless our Father all as one.” There is

extraordinary achdus.

The bulletin boards are full of notices with texts that read of emuna and hiskashrus. In the entranceway a paper caught my eye, one of many, that sought to encourage the talmidim to increase the chayus in mitvzaim, “To be permeated with Rebbe, to give of myself to the Rebbe. No more slogans. Actual mitvzaim.” That’s the atmosphere and it says it all.

Here, every horaa of the Rebbe is given full attention. Even after a full day of learning, though the talmidim are tired, they don’t rush off to the dormitory. Most of them participate in learning after hours, Likkutei Sichos and inyanei Moshiach and Geula, and they take part in the dancing in the month of Adar as the Rebbe said to increase simcha in Adar. Where do they get the strength from? The answer is simple: it’s a horaa from the Rebbe.

Life in yeshiva has always been one in which the talmidim live sincerely with the Rebbe’s horaos. After spending a week in yeshiva, I left with the feeling that I must return. It’s very hard to leave a place where you can live such a vibrant Chassidishe life.

The scene that greeted me in the big zal was inspirational. About 200 sets of chavrusos were learning with a deafening *kol ha’limud*. S’farim of Rishonim and Acharonim like the Rashba, Ritva, Rosh, Ketzos, and Ran are studied with gusto. Young talmidim from Lubavitcher homes learn with fresh baalei t’shuva. They are all asking, answering and involved in their learning. The Rebbe’s teachings shed light on every subject matter. Applying the Rebbe’s teachings in Nigleh is something the talmidim get from the Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Wilschansky, who often quotes the Rebbe in his general shiurim, which have acquired a fine reputation.

Aside from the regular s’darim

THE KOLLEL TIME-SHARE PROGRAM

When I walked into the zal in Tzfas, I saw a number of men learning with young bachurim. When I asked R' Wilschansky about the large numbers of men and what they were doing in yeshiva, I was informed of a program that was started in recent years:

"We decided to give young married men a chance to continue learning in yeshiva," said R' Wilschansky. "There are Lubavitcher young men who feel that yeshiva is their home and it's only natural for them to want to continue learning in yeshiva for another year or two after they get married. This kollel program is open only to alumni of the yeshiva and its branches. Each of them must give at least an hour a day to bachurim who need help in their learning; some give more than an hour.

"There are also baalei t'shuva who married and want to continue in yeshiva with the Chassidishe atmosphere, learning and farbrengens, in order to acquire even more of what they missed earlier in life."

R' Wilschansky referred me to the person in charge of this kollel program, Rabbi Yossi Daniel who was the one who promoted the idea. I had met R' Daniel when I myself learned in yeshiva. Like the rest of the staff, he is an alumnus and he was happy to return to yeshiva.

"I made my first steps towards a religious life when I was touring in India. In Poona and Pushkar I met the Rebbe's shluchim, R' Betzael Kupchik and R' Shimi Goldstein, and they directed me to the yeshiva in Tzfas. I arrived on a Friday in the summer of 5760. My initial reaction was shock. I had naively thought that a yeshiva is a beautiful looking place with carpets and chandeliers. From the stories that are frequently reported in the newspapers about the supposed shenanigans in yeshivos I was sure that a yeshiva is a place that brings in a lot of money, yet this was a

simple looking place.

"Later on, when the bachurim came back from mitzvaim and I joined the davening on Shabbos, I was overcome with emotion. On the one hand, they all looked 'black' (i.e. religious) to me; on the other hand, I sensed that this was the Truth and that I had to abandon everything I was familiar with from the past. I felt that all of the enthusiasm and upbeat feelings that the bachurim had, came from a place of authenticity. The attitude of the staff, the seriousness and the depth, all convinced me to remain in yeshiva."

There were two main things that "grabbed" him: "At a farbrengen with the mashpia, R' Maidovnik, they brought watermelon to the table. I noticed that as

each bachur took a slice, he offered one to a friend too. This farbrengen made a tremendous positive impression on me.

"R' Ne'eman's shiurim on maamarim that he gave us new baalei t'shuva were so sweet and clearly explained – I can't praise them enough.

"When I got married, I looked for a kollel but there was nothing suitable for me in Tzfas. I asked R' Wilschansky, who welcomed me and said, 'You were educated here and this is your home.' And that's how the kollel program was

started. In exchange, we learn with boys who need help. I am R' Ne'eman's right hand man in the work with baalei t'shuva who come to yeshiva and need guidance as they start out.

"We are devoted to this yeshiva because this is not only where we got direction in learning but it's where our lives were shaped. We love the yeshiva. Even married guys who don't learn here anymore but live in Tzfas take a long walk on Shabbos in order to daven in yeshiva. When you're in yeshiva you feel that you're not turning into a balabus but are remaining a Tamim with the Rebbe's outlook, the koch of mitzvaim, and the chayus of inyanei Moshiach. The yeshiva is the hothouse for Chassidishe chayus."



there are learning contests for Nigleh and Chassidus with long lists of those who have won raffles and keep in mind that each contestant devoted a lot of time and effort to his learning.

The shiurim, both Nigleh and Chassidus, are given by excellent maggidai shiur and mashpiim. It is a pleasure to attend the Gemara shiur of Rabbi Yitzchok Isaac Landau, who conveys the depths of the topic with amazing brilliance, as well as with patience and Chassidishe chein. I remember that when I learned on K'vutza in 770, we always eagerly grabbed up the summary sheets that were sent to us from R' Landau's shiurim.

"I came to yeshiva after K'vutza in 5742, with my chavrusa, Rabbi Ofer Maidovnik who is a Mashpia here now," said R' Landau, the son of the rav in B'nei Brak. "About fifty talmidim learned in yeshiva at that time and there was a very unified atmosphere. The zal had an intimate feel; it felt like family. Everybody knew what was doing with the others, not only among the talmidim but also between the talmidim and the hanhala. We could talk to them openly and always found a listening ear.

"The hiskashrus to the Rebbe was, and still is, pnimius'dik and intense. It's amazing to see that today too, when the number of students has increased many times over, that same family atmosphere still exists, as well as the dedication the hanhala has for the talmidim. We have the privilege of teaching the next generation in the same manner we were taught."

"Since I was a talmid there, the goals have remained the same: a p'nimius'dike chayus, Ahavas Yisroel and dibbuk chavéirim, but I found differences too: the number of talmidim has grown steadily and the gashmius has improved. The beis midrash was enlarged and the rooms



R' Wilschansky guiding baalei t'shuva



R' Wilschansky with R' Mordechai Eliyahu and R' Bistritzky a"h

It's amazing to see that today too, when the number of students has increased many times over, that same family atmosphere still exists, as well as the dedication the hanhala has for the talmidim. We have the privilege of teaching the next generation in the same manner we were taught.

WRITING AND GIVING NACHAS TO THE REBBE

As mentioned in the body of the article, the talmidim published eight booklets of he'aros in Nigleh, Shulchan Aruch, Chassidus and inyanei Moshiach and Geula in the past year. One of the people responsible for organizing the material is Yehuda Ginsberg. He relates:

"Each booklet is packed with he'aros even though so many of these booklets are published. In yeshiva there is a great chayus in writing he'aros. Many bachurim who thought they would never know how to write he'aros or pilpulim have written beautifully. R' Wilschansky strongly encourages the talmidim to write. He gave a talk on the subject, saying that everybody can write chiddushei Torah."

Feedback from Anash and Chabad yeshivos, both within Eretz Yisroel and elsewhere, is favorable. Ginsberg says there are some Lubavitcher rabbanim who contacted the editorial board about sending in their own he'aros since they see that this publication is highly regarded.

On the top floor of the yeshiva one of the people in charge showed me a room that is locked during s'darim. Bachurim are sitting in front of four computers and typing, with piles of s'farim of responsa and halacha next to them.

"These bachurim are writing pilpulim for the next edition," my guide explained.

Ginsberg said that the Rebbe once advised a Chassid who did not know how to respond to someone who asked him, "Do they learn in Chabad?" He told him to show the shelves of pilpulim that are published in Chabad yeshivos.

"That's what spurs us on, the nachas that it gives the Rebbe."

The yeshiva purchased Otzar HaChochma which contains (almost) all extant s'farim on one disc. This helps tremendously in locating sources.

discuss the yeshiva and answer my questions.

"It all began in Av, 5733, when Rabbi Leibel Kaplan a"h came to Tzfas on shlichus. He was chosen by the Rebbe to found a Chabad community in Tzfas and schools from preschool through Kollel. At first a group of ten Israeli shluchim joined him, including one of the roshei yeshiva, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Levkivker who is a Maggid Shiur and Mashgiach Klali in the yeshiva now. In the middle of 5737, after successfully opening the other schools, he got to work on opening a yeshiva g'dola.

"R' Yisroel Kenig, a special person who was the appointee of the Interior Ministry for the north, urged R' Kaplan to open a Chabad yeshiva and guaranteed to provide him with funding. R' Levkivker and I, who had been sent there by the Rebbe the year before, 5736, were chosen by R' Kaplan to run the yeshiva.

"The yeshiva went through many transitions until it came to where it is today. It opened with a group of talmidim who came from the yeshiva in Lud. The thing that motivated boys to come to the yeshiva here was a program for learning sh'chita. The yeshiva has grown since then and we had to enlarge the beis midrash and the dormitory. The administration of the yeshiva was taken on by two of the first Chabad settlers in Tzfas here on shlichus: Rabbi Eliyahu Aryeh Friedman a"h and Rabbi Avrohom Goldberg a"h as assistant menahel.

"I remember that for a long time we could not all go together to the center of the country because one of us always had to remain behind with the talmidim. When there was a simcha or kinus, I would alternate going with R' Levkivker. Later on, the mashpia Rabbi Moshe Orenstein, who is now the head mashpia, joined the staff.

"After a year we decided to open

The bachurim call the outreach aspect of the yeshiva "The Biggest Chabad House in the World," and it is no exaggeration.

are nicer.

"Many of the staff are themselves alumni of the yeshiva. The staff comes from different backgrounds – those who learned in Chabad yeshivos as kids and baalei t'shuva who got their start here later on. The chinuch they received in yeshiva prepared them to be educators themselves.

"Every graduate knows that the yeshiva in Tzfas leaves its mark. You can't go in and come out the same

way you went in. Not surprisingly, many talmidim after their year on K'vutza come back to learn in Tzfas for shlichus and smicha."

**RABBI YOSEF YITZCHOK
WILSCHANSKY**

"ALUMNI WANT TO COME BACK AS SHLUCHIM"

Even after a long day of work in the yeshiva, R' Wilschansky graciously sat down with me to

a division for baalei t'shuva. In Eretz Yisroel of those years the only Chabad yeshiva for baalei t'shuva was the one in Kfar Chabad and run by Rabbi Shneur Zalman Gafni, which was for English speaking people only.

"The idea was proposed that we turn the yeshiva from a regular yeshiva into one for baalei t'shuva, which was really needed at the time. When we asked the Rebbe, he added the word 'also' before the words 'baalei t'shuva,' and we understood that this meant to include a program for baalei t'shuva within the regular yeshiva (see box)."

The yeshiva in Tzfas was innovative in many ways that later became standard for Chabad yeshivos:

"We wanted to attract bachurim who had finished K'vutza in 770 so we opened a program for Yoreh Dei'a. We were the first to have a group that learned the halachos of *issur* and *heter* with a rav. Until then there was no formal program for those who were studying for smicha. This also helped those bachurim who had a hard time with the material. Our smicha program for baalei t'shuva is currently run by Rabbi Teitelbaum, and talmidim who learned here and who finished a year on K'vutza, like to come back as shluchim and to take advantage of this program."

NEARLY 50% OF GRADUATES OF ISRAELI CHABAD HIGH SCHOOLS GO TO TZFAS!

One of the characteristics of the yeshiva in Tzfas has always been the variety of bachurim:

"The yeshiva is big and has all kinds of talmidim. Most of them are graduates of *yeshivos k'tanos* (high schools) throughout Eretz Yisroel and around the world, with nearly 50% of graduates of Israeli Chabad



The first class of the yeshiva. In the front row are sitting (left to right): Rabbi Wilschansky, Rabbi Levkivker, Rabbi Alter Eliyahu Friedman a"h

I went to the Shuk in Acco with the boys on Friday and found that every single stall owner knew about the Rebbe; the Rebbe's pictures decorate the stores, and even the "toughest nuts to crack" had shed their shells long ago.

high school yeshivos coming to Tzfas.

"We try to include bachurim who are not up to par when they come here. Our goal is to help them. This requires a lot of effort on our part and entails taking some chances and being disappointed sometimes, but we are convinced that the Rebbe wants us to do this. Along with the outstanding bachurim who do well in the regular yeshiva program, we also make sure that the weaker boys get the help they need."

What is the goal of the yeshiva?

"The goal is to sit and learn diligently with emphasis placed on devotion to the Rebbe's horaos: going to the Rebbe, going on mivtzaim, and even the learning is to carry out the Rebbe's will and to be a nachas ruach for him. The yeshiva

is known for simcha and it comes from that same point, being devoted to what the Rebbe wants of us. The Rebbe demands simcha so we'll be b'simcha. From 5753 the Rebbe put a strong emphasis on 'Yechi Adoneinu' and this has become central to the yeshiva.

"It's no secret that the yeshiva in Tzfas leads the way in inyanei Moshiach and Geula."

Where is the yeshiva's chayus expressed?

"There are shiurim on the subject of Moshiach and Geula in all the classes. Rabbi Y. Y. Silberman and R' M. M. Harel are alumni of the yeshiva who were chosen from among the staff to give special classes on those topics. There are also special shiurim with guest speakers that are given to all the



Rabbi Mordechai Ashkenazi, rav of Kfar Chabad, giving a shiur

talmidim. The Rebbe says that the ‘direct path’ to hasten the Geula is by learning about it and that’s why we set this up. Inyanei Geula includes deep intricate topics of study and we try to instill an awareness of the Rebbe’s demand in the bachurim.”

You are aware of the complaints that the yeshiva is more involved in inyanei Geula and mitzvaim and less involved in learning?

(R’ Wilschansky smiles):

“Whoever comes into the yeshiva sees and hears the *koch* in learning and the involvement in learning on a high level in both Nigleh and Chassidus, and can attest that the complaint is baseless.

“The talmidim produce booklets of *he’aros* and *biurim* about ten times a year, and that’s in addition to the thick volume of *pilpulim* that is published for 11 Nissan and the book we put out for the end of the year (see box).

“Our emphasis on inyanei Moshiach is not excessive. As long as the Geula isn’t here, whatever we do isn’t enough. All these Moshiach studies and activities are done outside of the hours of regular seider.

“Over the years, different divisions have been formed in the yeshiva, to cater to students of every educational level, from the students

from strong backgrounds to the baalei t’shuva as well as weak bachurim whom we do not hesitate to accept. We opened a division for safrus (scribal arts). Every year there are three rotations of six talmidim each time who learn safrus in the afternoon. They are taught by R’ Rossen Samulkin, who is also a graduate of the yeshiva.”

RABBI ASHER GERSHOVITZ

“I AM HELPED BY THE INSIGHTS THAT I ACQUIRED IN THOSE YEARS”

There are various aspects of the relationship between the staff and the talmidim that are unique. For example, the yeshiva has several mashgichim who are “*mashgichei mahus*.” You may be familiar with the world of yeshivos for many years but still not know that term, as it is special to the yeshiva in Tzfas. These mashgichim don’t mark attendance and don’t deal with discipline problems. Their job is to develop the learning potential in every bachur.

“In the past I would mark down attendance and whether the boy was learning or not, but now my job is very different,” says Mashgiach R’ Asher Gershowitz. “When you circulate among the bachurim, talk

with them, urge them to learn, and help them with difficulties, you discover that a bachur who you previously assessed as unable to produce scholarship on his own, has abilities you didn’t know he had. There were many bachurim who we believed in much more than they believed in themselves.”

R’ Gershowitz, like most of the staff, attended the yeshiva himself:

“When I came to yeshiva in the middle of the 80’s, the staff consisted only of R’ Wilschansky and R’ Levkivker. I liked the intimacy and the warm, family-like feeling. There was an atmosphere of *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe and we, the young talmidim who came from Lubavitcher homes, learned together with baalei t’shuva. The hanhala would ask us to help one bachur or another. It was an amazing period in my life. Today I am helped by the insights I acquired back then in my attempt to understand the bachurim of today.”

RABBI YARON NE’EMAN

AN ATMOSPHERE OF AHAVAS YISROEL AMONG THE TALMIDIM

On Friday night I joined a *farbrengen* with baalei t’shuva, led by R’ Yaron Ne’eman, coordinator of the program for baalei t’shuva and general Mashgiach in the yeshiva. His two jobs express the point I’ve mentioned earlier, that of integrating all kinds of talmidim into the yeshiva.

“There’s a lesson in chinuch to learn from Parshiyos VaYakhel and P’kudei. VaYakhel represents the ‘general’ and P’kudei the ‘specifics.’ We have to also focus on the specific details. Even if sometimes, pushing a student for the details causes some temporary slip-ups that’s nothing to be afraid of because the only way to progress is from our ‘falls.’”

“Since the program for baalei

t'shuva was established, until today," said R' Wilschansky, "our guiding principle, which has proven to be effective and successful, has been to allow the talmidim to build themselves up. Progress is measured by **healthy integration** amongst the other talmidim, in learning with chavrusos who are primarily from Lubavitcher homes. Although there are gatherings and events just for them, the goal is for them to participate in the regular shiurim and to be part of the general yeshiva atmosphere.

"Integrating the baalei t'shuva within the general program enables them to build themselves up so that in addition to the shiurim and farbrengens that are designated for them, they mix with the other bachurim and there is tremendous mutual aid. In the yeshiva there is a strong and healthy connection between the older and younger talmidim as well as between baalei t'shuva and those born and bred Lubavitch."

Many baalei t'shuva who learned in Tzfas have gone on to become shluchim and rabbanim. We didn't have to go far to find a good example of this successful educational approach because the Mashgiach, R' Ne'eman is one of its many products.

"I came to yeshiva in Tammuz 5747/1987. I had become a baal t'shuva a half year earlier on my own. During Reserve duty in Kochav HaYarden, I met Rabbi Shlomo Benisti. He is a very delightful religious Jew and his smile and depth won me over. We slept in the same room and my first lesson was from the large volume of Rambam that he kept beside his bed. I already knew that if I wanted to acquire broad knowledge I had to attend yeshiva. He recommended the yeshiva in Tzfas and promised that I would be satisfied. I imagined a yeshiva to be a dark, dank place but I was determined to go.



R' Wilschansky giving a shiur



R' Levkivker giving a shiur

"When I completed my stint in Reserves, I called R' Wilschansky. He asked me some questions and suggested that I come to yeshiva for Shabbos and if I liked it, I could stay on. (I liked his approach and it's one I use today with baalei t'shuva. No pressure. Come and take a look and if you like what you see, stay and learn). When I arrived at yeshiva that Friday I met the talmidim of Atah, who hadn't yet left for mitvzaim. They told me that all the bachurim had gone on mitvzaim. I didn't know what that was. I didn't know that Chabad is an army and the T'mimim are soldiers. In the



Rabbi Yaron Ne'eman and Rabbi Alkobi at a Hachnosas Seifer Torah for the yeshiva

meantime, they sent me to the mikva and then I waited in the deserted dormitory.

“At 3:30 the bachurim began trickling in. We got ready for Shabbos and one of the bachurim took me to the zal and we began learning Likkutei Torah. What got me were the words, ‘and we need to understand.’ Before that I thought religion was just about accepting everything on faith. Now I knew I was in the right place. What I especially remember about that Shabbos is the atmosphere of Ahavas Yisroel between the talmidim. R’ Orenstein’s farbrengen and the niggunim with R’ Wilschansky also made a deep impression on me and won my heart and I decided to stay.”

As coordinator for the baal t’shuva program, R’ Ne’eman takes care of their special needs, and provides heart to heart counseling as someone who has been through the process himself. Later on, he helps many of them with shidduchim.

THE BIGGEST CHABAD HOUSE IN THE WORLD

Every week, hundreds of bachurim go on mitzvaim: mitvza t’fillin, mitvza mezuzah, shiurim, seasonal and holiday activities, etc. We would go to nearby cities in order to register children for a letter in a Torah scroll. On the wall of yeshiva was a sign on which it said how many we managed to sign up each day. Every Friday, buses full of talmidim head out to cities throughout the north of the country, from Haifa in the west to the Golan Heights in the east. During Purim and Chanuka, the yeshiva boys go beyond the northern cities to yishuvim in the south, in Yehuda-Shomron, and army bases deep in the south of the country. The shliach in Eilat has told me how much he enjoys the “Tzfasim.”

Months before the Yomim Tovim,

UNIQUE FLAVOR

Every yeshiva has its uniqueness. The Chabad yeshiva in Tzfas has so many special qualities. Here are some of the outstanding ones:

*A chayus in inyanei Moshiach and Geula

*Regular shiurim in halacha, Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim and Yoreh Dei’a

*Shiurim in Hilchos Stam for those who are interested

*A special program for baalei t’shuva

*For every shiur (level) there is a special class for learning Gemara-Rashi-Tosafos

*A nosei v’nosein for each class

*Shiurim in inyanei Moshiach and Geula

*A special connection with the talmidim even after they graduate

*A special emphasis on finding a mashpia

*Nearly all the of the staff, including teachers of Nigleh, farbreng with groups of bachurim

*Tutors for Gemara, Tanya, and Chassidus for English speakers

*A kollel program in which kollel members learn with bachurim for an hour a day

*A library with computer stations that have Otzar HaChochma and Otzar 770 installed, for reference purposes

*Mitzaim and programs as part of the yeshiva schedule

numerous shluchim call the mashgichim of the yeshiva and ask whether talmidim can come to them. “When the Rebbe’s inyanim are ‘alive,’ then outreach is an integral

part of yeshiva life,” explains R’ Wilschansky.

I went to the Shuk in Acco with the boys on Friday and found that every single stall owner knew about the Rebbe; the Rebbe’s pictures decorate the stores, and even the “toughest nuts to crack” had shed their shells long ago. When I learned in yeshiva I went to the Shuk regularly and got to know the people there. To my dismay I discovered that there were less people putting on t’fillin in the Shuk now than there were when I was there. I was relieved when I was told that this is because many of the store owners have bought their own t’fillin, which they put on daily.

The bachurim and the store owners have a good relationship. Many of the store owners have seen miracles thanks to brachos they received when they wrote to the Rebbe through the Igros Kodesh.

Sammy runs an automotive electrician shop. “Every week,” said one bachur, “at the end of our route we come to his store to farbreng with him and speak about the parsha. One week we saw that his entire face was covered with dark blotches. He told us that he had kidney stones and that we shouldn’t come the following week because he would be having an operation. We had a bottle of the Rebbe’s water and gave him a little to drink and he made good hachlatos.

“The following week, when we finished our route, we debated whether to go to him or not, and decided it doesn’t hurt to try. How surprised we were when he came out to greet us and shouted, ‘You won’t believe what happened! Before the operation I underwent tests and they showed that the stones had been passed naturally!’”

While the bachur told me the story, Sammy nodded his head and affirmed every word.

The bachurim call the outreach aspect of the yeshiva “The Biggest



R' Yisroel Halperin giving a shiur

Chabad House in the World,” and it is no exaggeration. The yeshiva has rooms designated for shiurim that are given via telephone every week to hundreds of people. Talmidim also give shiurim in dozens of places. Numerous shiurim are also given in yeshiva high schools and hesder yeshivos throughout the north. These shiurim are mainly given by the talmidim-shluchim of the yeshiva.

ONE FAMILY WITH 400 BROTHERS

Towards the end of my visit to the yeshiva, I asked R' Wilschansky:

How do you and the staff create a warm family atmosphere for about 400 students so that each talmid truly feels the cohesion?

“First, the talmidim know that there’s someone here to help them twenty-four hours a day, and they avail themselves of this when necessary. In addition, we’ve enlarged the number of staff and have a terrific team which includes mashpiim, mashgichim, meishivim, maggidei shiur, and “nos’im v’nosnim” for every shiur. They don’t rest for a moment. Aside from them we have rabbanim and special staff members for different groups: men who speak French, Spanish and



Hundreds of alumni attending a reunion

English who are responsible for students from France, Argentina, Brazil and the United States. We encourage talmidim to accede to the Rebbe’s request and get themselves a mashpia, preferably a member of our staff, which definitely adds to the special personal atmosphere we have here.

“Our alumni who return as shluchim also do a great job. We also encourage farbrengens for classes and even smaller groups with staff members and shluchim. These farbrengens do so much for the talmidim. In smaller groups the talmidim feel more comfortable opening up, which enables us to help them. The practice of farbrengens remains with them even after they leave yeshiva.”

After 31 years do you have any special plans for the future?

“A few years ago we bought property behind the yeshiva thanks to the generosity of our friends R’ Dov Liebman of Argentina and R’ Menachem Mendel Shagalov of New York. Our plan is to build a building that will contain the entire yeshiva, the dormitory, zal and offices, to house and serve 600 bachurim. There are so many bachurim who want to come to our yeshiva but we cannot accept them all due to lack of space. With this expansion, we will be able to accommodate everyone. Moshiach is coming soon and he will make sure everyone is accommodated long before our expansion is done.

COVERING UP IN THE FACE OF DANGER

By Menachem Ziegelboim

PART I

A light breeze blew that late evening. One who listened to the sighing of the wind would certainly hear the sigh of t'shuva during these days, the Aseres Yemei T'shuva. The sounds of the niggun that wafted from the windows of the shul were laden with yearning, a longing for t'shuva, to return to our Father in heaven.

At the table sat the mashpia, R' Mottel Kozliner who was farbrenging with a group of Chassidim, men and bachurim, those who did not go to the Rebbe that year. He spoke about the uniqueness of these days and their preciousness, and the need to use every moment to return to our Father in heaven. He spoke about taking care in mitzvos and especially in minhagim. In this spirit he told the following story:

It was some time after the Rebbe Rayatz left Russia, an event which made the Chassidim who remained there feel bereft, distant from a concerned father, with a barrier of iron separating them. Nevertheless, the work to spread Judaism throughout the Soviet Union not only did not stop but increased. Branches of yeshivos opened up in

various cities while others wandered from place to place because of the KGB that pursued them, wanting to eradicate every vestige of Judaism and particularly to stamp out the remnant of "Schneersohns" who remained in the country.

However, the Chassidim, as loyal soldiers, carried on their work. Secret agents were sent to run chadarim in damp cellars. Here and there Chassidim congregated secretly for minyanim, learning Nigleh and Chassidus, and holding farbrengens. Jewish and Chassidic life continued unabated under the noses of the Yevsektzia.

The 1930's were the hardest years. The KGB, with an order from above, intensified their persecution of Chassidim and dogged their footsteps for the purpose of catching as many of them as possible. They could not allow a handful of Chassidim, without arms or any other significant means at their disposal, to make a laughingstock of the entire mighty Soviet regime.

Indeed, the zealous KGB were successful in that they were able to arrest a number of Chassidim, and they eagerly tried to extract from them details about their work. Most of the Chassidim who were caught

were able to heroically withstand the torture and not reveal a word about what was going on. But under the extreme pressure, some Chassidim broke and they revealed incriminating information.

KGB interrogators were amazed when they discovered the extent of the work being done throughout the Soviet Union and they rejoiced over the information. They descended at night simultaneously on the homes of Anash in various places. Arrests, trials and exile to Siberia followed and there were even impromptu executions without trials that took place in cellars. Thus ended the lives of those holy Chassidim. This became the fate of anyone who was suspected of being associated with Lubavitch. They all knew that they were in the KGB's sights and they fled from place to place, not knowing what the morrow would bring.

PART II

Due to the nonstop persecution, many Chassidim left their homes and tried to get as far away as possible. Some Chassidim ended up in a certain town. To the best of their knowledge this place was safe, for hardly any religious Jews remained here, let alone Chassidim. Thus persecution in this town was far less than in other places and it was possible, at least for a short time, to be able to breathe without constant fear of arrest.

One shul remained. It was purposely left by the communists who wanted to demonstrate that in Russia they did not persecute religious people but permitted all who wanted to, to live a religious life. The Chassidim knew that like the other such shuls throughout the country, this shul was run by gabbaim appointed by the government who reported to the KGB. Visiting the shul was dangerous and if someone went

there he knew he was being watched. These gabbaim reported about every stranger who walked in and every conversation that took place.

The Chassidim who took refuge in this town went to the shul to daven on Shabbos and Yom Tov, taking care not to talk to one another and not to do anything that would arouse suspicion.

PART III

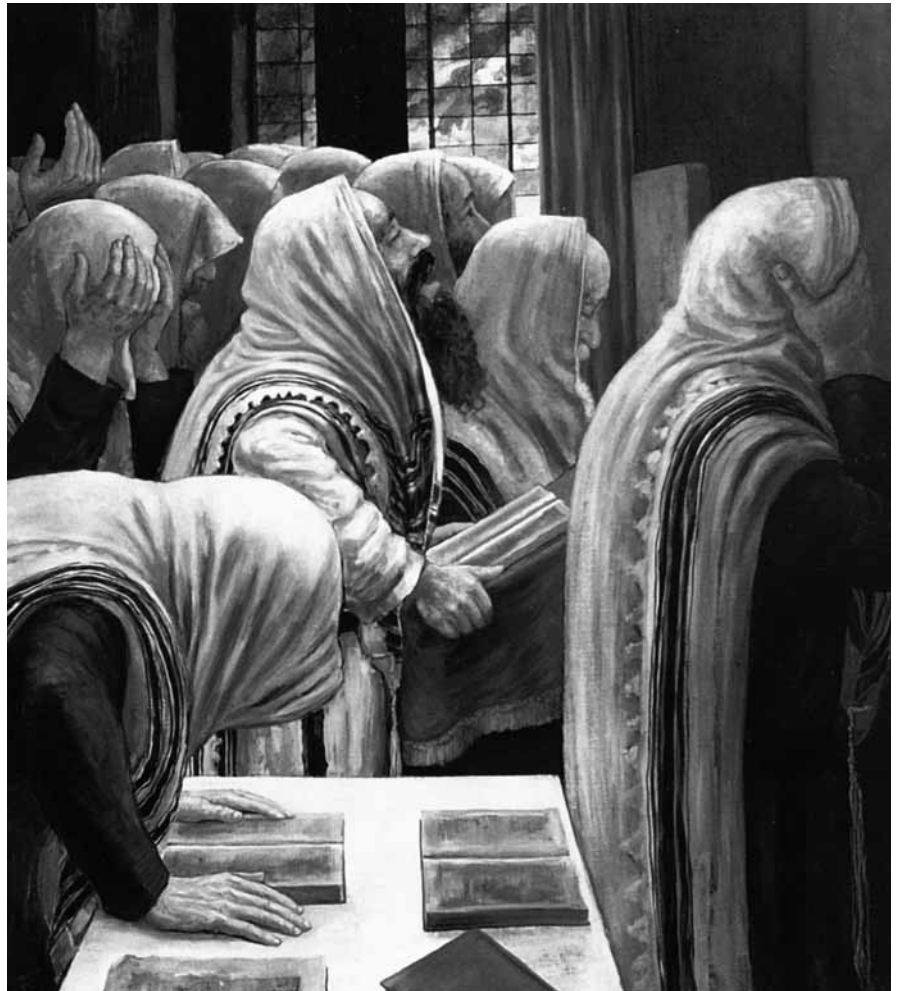
One of the guiding principles given to KGB agents in order to catch “Schneersohns” was to follow and see how they davened. They heard that in Lubavitch they were particular about davening with a tallis over their head and not just on their shoulders, in contrast to other groups which were not particular in that way and mostly kept their tallis on their shoulders.

When the KGB discovered this practice they immediately sent their agents to shuls to follow all those who davened with a tallis over their head. It was almost a certainty that he belonged to the “Schneersohns” and deserved special treatment.

Chassidim eventually found out about this and they passed the word around that due to the danger, they couldn't wear their tallis over their head. Knowing this, the Chassidim who arrived in this town were careful about not putting their tallis over the head so they wouldn't fall under suspicion.

“We davened there,” said R' Kozliner, “on the Yomim Nora'im – on Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, too. We made sure not to put the tallis on our head for we knew how dangerous this was.”

It was Yom Kippur, the day of forgiveness and the wiping away of sin. The shul was full. Even Jews who stayed away from shul the rest of the year, Jews who had strayed from their traditions willingly or because they had been forced, went



“During those lofty moments of N’ila there was no room for questions or discussion. All did as Chassidim had always done. I saw the revelation of the yechida of the nefesh during N’ila”

to shul on this day. It was a day in which the spark in their neshamos, dormant throughout the year, was ignited.

The Chassidim tried not to stand out.

The sun was setting and soon the holy day would be over. There were only a few minutes left of k'dusha to grab onto. The chazan began Ashrei of N'ila and then suddenly, as though it had been preplanned, all

the Chassidim lifted their talleisim over their heads, as though they had forgotten for a moment where they were and how dangerous this was.

“During those lofty moments of N'ila there was no room for questions or discussion. All did as Chassidim had always done. I saw the revelation of the yechida of the nefesh during N'ila and boruch Hashem all turned out well,” concluded R' Mottel.

THE CUP OF WATER WHICH SAVED THE MIKVA

Prepared for publication by Avrohom Rainitz

*The health department officials, who came for the purpose of preventing the mikva from opening, claimed that the water was unsanitary and people could not be allowed to immerse in such water. When R' Refael heard that, he protested mightily and insisted that the water was perfectly clean. To prove his point, he drew a cup of water from the pit, made a loud bracha, and drank the water...** Another chapter in the memoirs of Rabbi Hillel Zaltzman.

PAINFUL DISAPPOINTMENT THE NIGHT OF YUD-TES KISLEV

The bitter galus we were in, in Samarkand, and the tremendous fear engendered by informers, sometimes over nothing, occasionally were the cause of some very painful incidents. In the early years, when the bachurim learned by us, we tried to hold farbrengens far away so that undesirable guests wouldn't come to us. The windows were always covered on the inside

with blankets so from the outside they wouldn't see or hear sounds from those farbrenging.

We once held a Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen in the home of R' Dovid Mishulovin in the old city. It was a dark and cold night and it was pouring when we heard a sudden knock at the gate of the courtyard. We instantly fell silent and strained our ears, waiting for the knocking to stop so we could continue our farbrengen. But the knocking continued and we decided that all the bachurim would hide behind one of the closets while R' Dovid's wife

Sarah would go out and see who was knocking so late at night.

We who remained in the room peeked from a tiny crack in the window and we saw Sarah arguing with someone. After two long minutes she returned and said that it was R' Refael Chudaitov who had come from the Gishmal quarter to attend the farbrengen. Our hearts melted. He wasn't young and he had traveled by bus and then had to walk for twenty minutes from the bus stop on the dark and cold street in the pouring rain and yet, for fear of discovery, he had to be turned away.

It wasn't easy returning to the table and continuing the farbrengen. The bachurim came out of their hiding place but we felt once again how difficult this galus was. We were even afraid of one another!

To R' Refael's credit, it should be noted that although he suspected – and sometimes he saw clearly – that we were hiding things from him, he never got angry or offended. He understood us and knew that we were frightened of everybody.

AN EMOTIONAL PRAYER AT THE GRAVESITE OF THE REBBE RASHAB

R' Refael's son, Shemtov, worked in the agricultural sector fattening sheep. Gentiles once made up a story about him that he wasn't doing his work and he was arrested and



was interrogated. R' Refael had good connections with senior officials in town who were capable of helping him and getting his son out of jail, but he was in the hospital in the Crimea at the time with his wife.

Due to the seriousness of the situation, the family decided to inform him via telegram. Since they were afraid to write openly, they merely wrote that Shemtov was sick (a code word that hinted that his son had been arrested) and they all awaited his coming.

They waited anxiously for R' Refael to return in response to their telegram, but days passed and he did not show up. In the meantime things worked out miraculously and Shemtov was released.

The day after he was released, his father arrived in elevated spirits and he asked: "What's new? Did they release Shemtov yet?"

After the family told him about his son's release they asked him why he had delayed in coming and why he was in good spirits before knowing that his son was released. He replied with his characteristic smile: "After I got the telegram I thought, how can I help when I get to Samarkand? I might be successful and I might not. I opted to travel directly to Rostov to the Rebbe Rashab, where I prostrated myself on his grave. I told the Rebbe what happened: (he would often speak of himself in the third person) 'Refael is standing and crying. My

son was arrested. Help us Rebbe.' That's what I did; I davened and cried and asked the Rebbe to help us. Refael was sure that his prayer was accepted and that Hashem would help. I returned to Samarkand with a tranquil heart. I was confident that the Rebbe would do everything to get my son out of jail."

THE CUP OF WATER THAT SAVED THE DAY

R' Refael's heart was alert to all matters of k'dusha, whether in Samarkand or in the surrounding areas. If he heard that his help was needed with some spiritual matter, he would go and offer his assistance.

In Samarkand there was one mikva that operated officially. It was called "R' Abba Pliskin's mikva" for the Chassid, R' Abba Pliskin, who took care of it during World War II. As I mentioned in previous installments, the official law in the Soviet Union did not forbid religious services in an overarching way, and most of the attacks against religion were done with various excuses such as going against the spirit of communism. At the time of the infamous Doctors' Plot, the government took advantage of the atmosphere of incitement against the Jews to close the mikva.

At first people went to other cities in the vicinity where there was an operating kosher mikva. Secret

mikvaos were made which were used by G-d fearing families but these mikvaos had a big disadvantage. We were not able to tell people outside of our immediate circle about them because we were afraid that someone would tattle. I was once in Tashkent and I stayed with a Lubavitcher. Shabbos morning, as I got ready to go to the mikva, my host said: "Let's toivel together."

I asked: "Where, here?"

He brought me into the kitchen and said: "Can you guess where the mikva is?"

I didn't know what to tell him. How could I guess? I saw an ordinary kitchen and that was it. Then he raised the linoleum and I could immediately tell that under the boards was a mikva.

This was the reason that in the 60's, many years after the Doctors' Plot and when things had quieted down, the men in Samarkand decided that the time had come to reopen one of the local mikvaos, officially, so we could publicly announce it for the benefit of all. Since officially opening the mikva necessitated dealing with the government, an undertaking that all of us feared, R' Refael acceded to the requests of the young men and presented a request to the authorities to open the mikva.

The advantage in R' Refael presenting our case was two-fold. First, he was a local citizen who spoke their language and second, he

was an older person and most of the government's wars over religious matters were directed against religious education of the young. In addition, he was a tremendous baal bitachon and was not at all fazed by the government. He would say, "Why are you worried? You need more bitachon."

(R' Refael organized the learning in the towns surrounding Samarkand and as we arranged, we were responsible for the finances. It once happened that we were asked to pay up our accounts in full, but we simply didn't have any money and we didn't know where we would get any. R' Refael just said: "Why worry? You need bitachon!" I remember telling him: "R' Refael, the goyim in the market don't sell anything for bitachon!")

Government officials who heard R' Refael's request about opening a mikva immediately began looking for reasons to refuse him. Their main reason was that according to the health laws, public places had to be extremely hygienic. The water would have to be changed after every person immersed and since this wasn't practical, the mikva could not be opened. R' Refael maintained that the mikva was up to the sanitary requirements and if they wanted to check it out they should send someone.

After much effort the government announced that they would be sending an inspection committee which would decide whether the mikva was up to standard and could be opened to the public. Of course R' Refael was there when they came. The inspectors who came for the purpose of not allowing the mikva to open immediately said that the water was dirty and people could not immerse in it. When R' Refael heard this he protested and said the water was perfectly clean and they were just making things up. To prove that he was right he took a cupful of water from the mikva, said a bracha out loud, and drank it.

R' Refael's courage and his willingness to unhesitatingly drink the water left the committee members stunned. In the end they allowed the mikva to open.

PERMISSION FROM MOSCOW TO BUILD A MIKVA

Another few years passed and towards the end of the 60's a wind of greater freedom began to blow. The government began to give visas to leave the country and the general mood of terror toned down. R' Refael decided to take advantage of this new era and to build an official mikva in the shul in the old city, since R' Abba Pliskin's mikva was only "half official."

Since all religious matters were officially under the cultural department of the city, R' Refael met with the head of the religious department in Samarkand and asked for permission to build a mikva. Although, as I mentioned, there was no legal problem in building a mikva, the head of the local department was afraid to give R' Refael a permit. He advised him to go to the main office for cultural and religious affairs in Moscow and ask them. "If they, in Moscow, give you permission, then you have a green light to build one and nobody in the government here will dare to countermand instructions issued in Moscow. And between you and me, why will the head of the department of culture and religion in Moscow care about what is going in distant Samarkand in Uzbekistan? Surely he will give you permission."

R' Refael accepted his advice and went to Moscow. He stayed with his brother, Tziyon Chudaitov, who ran a large hotel called Uzbekistan. His hotel was frequented by government officials from Uzbekistan on their trips to Moscow, as well as other important people. Thanks to this, Tziyon had good connections with the government in Moscow.

Through his contacts he enabled his brother to meet with one of the officials in the main office for cultural and religious affairs in the Soviet Union. R' Refael told the official that he had come from Samarkand in Uzbekistan and since according to Jewish law everyone had to immerse in the mikva before davening, he wanted a permit to build a mikva in the yard of the official shul in Samarkand.

The official, who did not care what went on in that Moslem state so far from Moscow, gave R' Refael an official permit on the stationery of the head office of cultural and religious affairs in the Soviet Union.

When R' Refael returned to Samarkand with the permit he received in Moscow, the head of the religious affairs department said: "Now you have nothing to worry about. You can start construction."

R' Refael, preferred to be sure he wouldn't be bothered once he started the work, so he wanted to obtain a permit from the local department of culture and religion. To do so he and R' Yaakov Baroshansky gathered a minyan of Jews and asked them to accompany them to the department and to say that because they need to immerse before davening they wanted an official permit to build a mikva.

Despite the fear of getting entangled with the government, they agreed to go with him after R' Refael convinced them that he was leading the group and they were there only to confirm that this is what Jewish law required. When the group appeared in the municipal office, the clerks told them that once they got a permit from Moscow there was nothing to be nervous about.

R' Refael didn't delay but immediately sent his son Moshiah to get bricks and other building materials. He hired workers and quickly had a pit dug and they began building the mikva.

[To be continued next issue, G-d willing]