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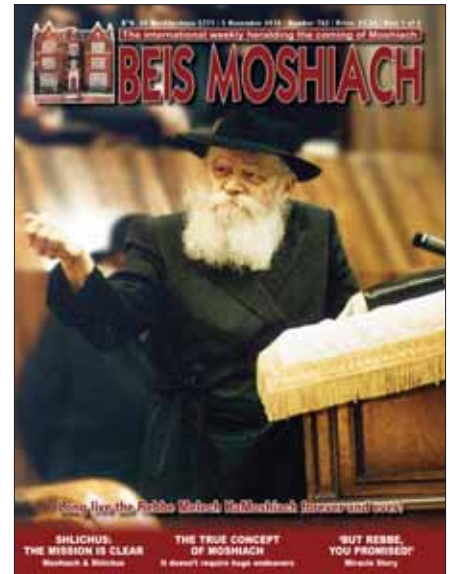
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Beis Moshiah (USPS 012-542) ISSN 1082-0272 is published weekly, except Jewish holidays (only once in April and October) for \$160.00 in Crown Heights, Brooklyn and in all other places for \$180.00 per year (45 issues), by Beis Moshiah, 744 Eastern 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.

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THE TRUE CONCEPT OF MOSHIACH

Translated by Boruch Merkur

He has merely awoken from sleep and as such, has no accomplishments, yet even in such a vacuous state, the most precious thing of all remains intact – the essence of his soul ... This manifestation of the essence of a Jew constitutes the true concept of the advent of Moshiach.

THE ESSENCE OF A JEW: THE TRUE CONCEPT OF MOSHIACH

According to the well known principle that all matters of the future Era of Redemption are dependent upon one's actions and Divine service throughout the entire duration of exile, it is understood that the preparation for the true and complete redemption through our righteous Moshiach must resemble the renewal that is characteristic of the new moon, for "they are destined to be renewed like it in the future." The new moon expresses the concept of the revelation of the essence of the Jewish soul, which is even higher than the Yechida [the fifth and highest level] of the soul. [Thus, in light of this comparison to the new moon, there presently must be, during the time of exile, just prior to the advent of the Messianic redemption, a preparation that

involves the very essence of the Jewish soul.]

In addition to what has been said several times – that the true and complete redemption through our righteous Moshiach comes about through the revelation of the spark of Moshiach in each and every Jew, the aspect of Yechida (as discussed in Section 2 of the original text of the address; see also *Tanya* Ch. 37) – the main intent here is (not the Yechida, which is one of the five names of the essence of the soul but) the very essence of the soul [which transcends any aspect of the soul that can be signified by a name]. Indeed, the essence of a Jew is the true concept of Moshiach (both with regard to the spark of Moshiach that exists within every single Jew, as well as, and especially, the Moshiach HaKlali, the Moshiach of all the Jewish people).

We may assert that the notion of the essence which transcends all levels is alluded to in the verse, "I have found (*matzasi*) Dovid My servant? I have anointed him with My holy oil," as follows. "I have found (*matzasi*)" (also) has the connotation of "*matzui*," "existing," signifying the essential quality of existence, which transcends description and classification, etc. This essential existence even surpasses the quality of existence itself. It is only because we are forced to use some form of verbal expression that we use the term "*matzui*" (as discussed above – see Section 5 in the original). With this insight in mind, the verse, "I have found (*matzasi*) Dovid My servant," refers to the essence of the soul of Moshiach, which transcends description and classification (even beyond the Yechida HaKlalis). In this sublime respect the essence of the soul is referred to as "*matzui*" ("*matzasi*"). The phrase continues, "I have anointed him with My holy oil." "Oil" refers to the aspect of the general Yechida of the soul of Moshiach, which permeates everything he is involved with, resembling oil, which absorbs into all things (see Chulin 97a, beg.; *Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deia* 105:5).

This concept relates to the Divine service of every single Jew, as follows. The essence of one's being, the essence of the soul, is present in a Jew even prior to his achieving

within himself the revelation of the Yechida (which is expressed in [total] self-nullification, submission, and devotion to G-d). (In fact, the essence of the soul is present and intact even prior to any consideration of a Jew's accomplishments. For example, in certain circumstances when one has just woken up in the morning, he is not permitted to even think about words of Torah (see the Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim* 1:6, Mahdura Basra, regarding not thinking words of Torah while still in bed prior to washing one's hands), and certainly not the Yechida of Torah, the inner dimension of the Torah. Nevertheless, even at this nominal level, the essence of the soul is present.) Knowing this fact (that he has merely awoken from sleep [and as such, has no accomplishments, yet even in such a vacuous state, the most precious thing of all remains intact – the essence of his soul]) precipitates and brings to the performance of all practical matters of Divine service, permeated with the revelation of the very essence of the soul. This manifestation of the essence of a Jew constitutes the true concept of the advent of Moshiach (as discussed above, Section 9 of the address, pg. 129).

THE VERY ESSENCE OF A JEW'S LIFE IS DEFINED BY BRINGING MOSHIACH

We may assert that this matter is alluded to in the wording our Sages used in saying, “‘All the days of your life’ – *l’havi l’Yemos HaMoshiach* ([this phrase] comes to include [or read literally, to bring to] the Days of Moshiach)”:

“All the days of your life” means every single moment that a person lives, both in the day and at night, whether awake or when asleep, for even then a person is sustained by means of breathing air (“*Kol ha’neshama* (all those who have a soul —Metzudas Dovid on T’hillim

150:6) praise G-d’ – for every single breath that a person breathes one must exalt the Creator”), which must be constant (as opposed to the need to eat and drink, which is intermittent). “‘All the days of your life’ – *l’havi* (to bring) to the Days of Moshiach” means that (at every moment) one’s energy is devoted to bringing about the Days of Moshiach. That is, his devotion to bringing Moshiach is not limited to when he thinks and speaks about Moshiach and does activities to bring Moshiach. Rather, the very essence of his life (“your life”) is defined by bringing about the days of Moshiach.

It remains to be examined the particular wording of the phrase, “*l’havi* (to include/bring) the Days of Moshiach.” The expression used here is “*l’havi* (to bring),” and not the more common term “*l’rabbos* (to include, to add).” Also, “Days of Moshiach” is plural, indicating that when every single Jew devotes his or her energy to Moshiach, as discussed above, that itself brings about (automatically) the special state characterizing the Days of Moshiach, when the essence of a Jew will be plainly revealed. And regarding the Messianic Era itself, which is attained through this personal devotion, the expression “days of Moshiach,” in the plural, alludes to the two general stages of the Days of Moshiach, as well as the profusion of ascents experienced in the Days of Moshiach, going from strength to strength ad infinitum.

More particularly:

The concept of “‘All the days of your life’ – to bring to the Days of Moshiach” is apparent in the fact that immediately upon waking, the essence of the soul (which reveals the essence of one’s being, and only the essence) perceives, in breathing in the atmosphere, the concept of Moshiach, the atmosphere of Moshiach, or as our Sages say, “*rucho shel Melech HaMoshiach*.”

It stands to reason that the “atmosphere ([or] *ruach*) of Moshiach” is even greater than the “light of Moshiach” [see Zohar III 34b; see Footnote 93 in the original, which explores the linguistic connection between “*avir* (atmosphere)” and “*ohr* (light),” insofar as “‘*avir*’ is composed of the letters that spell the word “*ohr*” with the addition of a Yud, etc.”], for the “light of Moshiach” signifies the revelation of Moshiach in virtue of his actions (such as “waging the wars of G-d” until he is “victorious,” and the like), whereas the “atmosphere of Moshiach” refers to the essence (life-force) of Moshiach. That is, the revelation of his existence (which is present [in the role of leader] even prior to [to his official] ascendancy to the throne [see Footnote 94 in the original, which cites the historical fact that leaders of the Davidic dynasty continued to govern during the time of exile [though not as king] — *Chiddushei Agados* of Maharsha on Sanhedrin 98b]) in the role of the Messianic King. The revelation of Melech HaMoshiach in the public eye, through his actions (the light of Moshiach), begins only after the revelation of his existence (atmosphere, which infinitely surpasses the light of Moshiach).

Accordingly it is understood that

[Continued on page 21]

All the above, however, does not necessarily require lofty endeavors connected with the aspect of Yechida ... but simple things.

SHLICHUS: THE MISSION IS CLEAR

By Rabbi Zvi Homnick

MISSION MADNESS

Amongst the more knowledgeable Misnagdim that I hung out with in my earlier years, the Rebbe's first official farbrengen and Chassidic discourse was analyzed, dissected and sifted through, and in general seen as a primary source for all that is "wrong with Lubavitch" nowadays. One of the key points that engendered hostility in some and hilarity in others was the concept of *shtus d'k'dusha*, which translates literally as "insanity of holiness." For people who see themselves, above all else, as rational and intellectual beings, the very idea of idealizing the irrational, or non-rational if you will, to the point of making it the definitive element of divine service for our generation, is an attack on all that is holy and sane.

I was well aware of these and other related objections before I even took my first tentative steps in Chassidic exploration, and so, they were at the forefront of my mind as I tried to process the ideas and teachings of Chassidus to see if they stand up in the face of the myriad protestations put forth by its opponents. Actually, the first time I sat down to learn the Rebbe's first discourse (Basi L'Gani 5711) in any kind of serious fashion was during my in-between stage when I was becoming more open to Chassidic ideas in general but still strongly

resistant to Chabad Chassidus in particular. It was in my first year of marriage and we were living in Eretz Yisroel. I can still picture the exact room and place in the shul where I was sitting at the time (like anybody could care less). The point being that I can recall as if it were today, the (cross between disquieting and oddly pleasant) surprise that I felt over the fact that I found the discussion of the concept of *shtus d'k'dusha* more intriguing than off-putting.

A number of years later, when I began to immerse myself more fully in the study of Chabad Chassidus, I was still more intrigued than convinced, as I tried to puzzle out this and other concepts, particularly those that were subjects of controversy. Instead of it being a linear process whereby I started with a question and directly deduced or divined the answer, I discovered over time that many previously difficult and even counter-intuitive ideas and concepts began to make more and more sense, to the point that they seemed so obvious that it was a wonder anyone could think otherwise. (Yes, I had been forewarned as to the dangers of the pernicious and persuasive nature of the material, but I figured I was smart enough not to get sucked in unless it really stood the test of intellectual rigor – ha!)

In simple terms, the human

being, unlike other beings that can only act on instinctive impulses which are compulsory and involuntary in nature, is also capable of developing a whole range of personally motivated goals based on values or lack thereof which instruct his behaviors on a rational level so that he can act purely voluntarily, or restrain his actions if he so chooses. In fact, a person who is driven entirely by impulse without any of the checks and balances of the rational mind, is legally defined as a *shoteh*, one who lacks the mental capacity to take responsibility for his actions.

And yet, every single person on the planet can find areas in his or her life where their self-control mechanisms are not able to withstand the sheer power of compulsion. The overwhelming majority of those compulsions are negative in nature, whether they are lustful self-indulgences or hurtful emotional outbursts aimed at others, or the seemingly more benign habits and passive aggressive withdrawals that provide shelter and comfort in the face of life's challenges. These negative impulsive behaviors are often the source of much frustration as well as much business for the mental health and self-help industries. We find ourselves doing or avoiding things in contravention of our rational thought processes, and although it seems like sheer



madness even to us, we feel helpless and out of control.

There are other manifestations of deep-seated instincts and compulsions, which we generally perceive of as positive in nature, such as survival instincts and parental instincts. When called into action, these enable the individual to access much deeper soul-powers which transcend the self-limiting restraints of the rational mind. The experience can feel so thrilling and liberating that later the person actually misses the threat and danger, which is why so many former soldiers become mercenaries or thrill seekers or else lapse into self-pitying induced self-destructive behaviors. And similarly, many parents, especially mothers, even those who are greatly accomplished in other areas of life, feel a huge letdown as their infant children become progressively less dependent on them and the intensity of the power of instinct retreats into latency.

So, basically, the Chassidic idea of *shtus d'k'dusha* is not about acting nuts or being a kook, it is about transforming one's negative compulsions ("insanity of evil") which "a person needs to know within himself that he has them," into expressions of the deepest instincts of the Jewish soul which is instinctively compelled to negate itself to G-d in order to be one with

G-d, and in turn is compelled by G-d to separate itself by being invested in the physical body of a Jew only to carry out its mission to create "a dwelling place for G-d in the lower realms." The Rebbe is simply pointing out in his inaugural discourse that in the final moments of history, as we near the completion of that mission to "bring down" infinite G-d into a finite world, we need to "bring down" and give expression to our infinite soul instincts and compulsions within the confines of a world that seeks to limit and inhibit our complete devotion to and oneness with G-d.

Later, as I began to integrate into the world of Lubavitch (as much as a misfit like myself can be said to be integrated into any human society), I was shocked to discover that there were many within the movement that felt uncomfortable and even apologetic about such ideas as *shtus d'k'dusha*. It turns out that being a card carrying member of a given fraternal order that promotes a given philosophy and worldview, does not mean that one buys into the whole package or even gets what it is ultimately all about. Oddly enough, as much as I love a good heated debate with creative insults flying back and forth (Yiddish insults are way cool), when I encounter a "Chassid" who is so enamored of his own intellectual and rationalistic superiority that he looks down his

nose at those "who take *shtus d'k'dusha* too literally," all I feel is disgust as it reminds me of how I used to be when I thought of myself as a Misnaged.

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

Anybody with half a brain who tracks the history of the Rebbe's leadership can see, plain as day, how the Rebbe's inaugural address was laying the framework for what would become the institution of Shlichus. Although the tradition of sending out emissaries to promote Chassidus, in addition to strengthening Jewish education as well as the general observance of the Jewish population at large, was a long and storied one, dating back to the Baal Shem Tov and continuing throughout the generations, the Rebbe in our generation set out to break new ground.

For the first time, the mission became less about exploiting and developing what is possible and more about doing the impossible. That is why, as each seemingly impossible task was completed, insofar as it became part of the possible, which anybody could do including those that previously opposed it, the Rebbe moved on to the next impossible task. With every fiber of one's rational being screaming that it was impossible, the only way to keep up with the Rebbe

was to suspend critical thinking and accept that this was G-d's will and commit to carrying it out with total self-sacrifice at all costs, which allowed one to tap into his own deeper soul powers and actually succeed. Obviously, this was a lot easier to do when the Rebbe himself was actively pushing and encouraging, but still it was not for everybody. Not because they were bad people, but because it really didn't make sense. How will I support a family with no obvious source of income? How will I build a community, synagogue, school etc. in a place where the powers that be have made it very clear that I am not welcome? How will I get someone who spits when he sees me to put on t'fillin? And so on and so forth...

As we go into the Shabbos of the International Shluchim Conference, which the Rebbe instructed should be held on Shabbos Mevarchim when we bless the upcoming month of Kislev, we need to remember that success on Shlichus was never about being possessed of a keen analytical mind or being an especially deep thinker, although there are some successful individuals who could be said to have such gifts. It was always about *shtus d'k'dusha*, about pushing beyond the self-imposed limits of the rational mind, and thus being able to reach out to other Jews by appealing and connecting to their transcendent soul-powers, much as soldiers in the trenches or parents and very young children connect on a level that has no equivalent in other more rational relationships.

All of this talk of "insanity" or "craziness" does not preclude using one's rational and intellectual faculties to the fullest, and in fact is supposed to bring about a heightened level of intellectual function. When your life or the life of your child is on the line, it is not enough to "go crazy" and be ready to do anything to save your life or your child. Your mind has to come

up with the best course of action, and provide the necessary direction in how to go about acquiring the needed help, tools and resources. It is when the unlimited drive of *shtus d'k'dusha* works in conjunction with the heightened senses of one's inner faculties that one can not only carry out his mission in the world at large, but also experience personal redemption.

The whole concept of spiritual exile is described as resulting from eating of the "tree of knowledge of good and evil." The negative impact of that action is that the rational mind does not always have the ability to withstand negative impulses, and that the inhibiting nature of the rational mind suppresses the G-dly instincts. And that is why the title given to the person chosen to bring the world to redemption is Moshiach, "the anointed one." What is so special about a person that has some ceremonial sacramental oil smeared on his head? Chassidus explains that oil represents the "essence" of a thing, as it seeps into every part of a given thing even as it remains separate and does not mix with anything else. Moshiach represents the "essence" of the Jewish soul and the ability to bring it to the fore, so as to overcome the "knowledge of good and evil," and only experience the reality of the "essence of the soul" that is "one with G-d."

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

The final Shabbos in the month of Cheshvan, when we bless the new month of Kislev, symbolizes the transition from the work in exile to the revelation of redemption. Cheshvan, the only month in the Jewish calendar without any Jewish holidays, the month that follows after Tishrei which is "sated" with holidays and is the beginning of the rainy season in the Holy Land,

represents the dark and dreary human struggle in exile. Kislev, the month replete with Chassidic holidays, as well as Chanukah, a miracle associated with oil and the light overcoming the darkness, represents redemption and is even referred to as the "month of redemption" in the Chassidic vernacular.

It is on this Shabbos that the Rebbe chose to hold the Shluchim Conference each year, and it is on this Shabbos in the year 5752 that the Rebbe delineated the primary focus and function of Shlichus in these final moments of exile. In that talk, the Rebbe proclaimed that the Shlichus has been completed and the only Shlichus that remains is to "welcome our Righteous Moshiach in actual deed." Although there are some that claim that the instructions in the talk that the Rebbe gave, and later edited and published, on Shabbos of Parshas Chayei Sarah 5752, are unclear and open to interpretation, they are actually more than clear. They are painfully simple.

Synthesis, integration, internalization, are all weighty words replete with meaning and are regular fare for those who as students and products of that soul manufacturing plant known as Tomchei T'mimim of Lubavitch (in any and all of its permutations and incarnations) live and breathe the teachings of Chassidus. But as we all know, even the loftiest and most ethereal concepts have to have a way of being put to the test.

In the world at large, people can be moved and inspired from a distance by those who live outside the boundaries of "normal" everyday life on a regular basis, but they also make us feel very uncomfortable. We cringe when confronted up close by these people whose very identity has been completely taken over by what they have devoted their lives to in a way that goes beyond the measures and considerations of the rational.

Soldiers who only talk about their service and the need to sacrifice for flag and country, mothers who talk only about their children and the importance and fulfillment of motherhood, and obviously those who are consumed by and obsessed with less worthy endeavors, creep most of us out if we have to spend any length of time with them in a social setting. That is why more “normal” soldiers, mothers, etc. make it a point to learn the skills necessary to “cover up” what they really care about and what they really want to talk about for the sake of societal and social convention.

Why do we like the idea of these people from a distance, but are really uncomfortable with them up close? The phony reason is that as rational

and intellectual beings we prize balance and broadmindedness, but the real reason is that we lack that one all-consuming compulsive drive that defines our very being and it makes us feel small even as we hide behind pretensions of sophistication. (Obviously, this does not apply to an encounter with someone whose all-consuming passion is something that is of little or no value, and all the more so if it is of negative value. One should feel put off by people like that, and they should be made to feel uncomfortable in the company of others).

When we are told that we have completed the mission intended to realize the purpose of all of creation, all of existence, all of history, and to reveal to the world that nothing else exists except G-d, and usher in a

time when “the involvement of the entire world will be with nothing else except to know G-d,” then the only thing that remains is to switch from the “getting there” mode to the “being there” mode. “Getting there” requires going “crazy” to do everything possible while focusing on the steps and strategies needed to overcome the challenges and obstacles of a world in exile. “Being there” and getting everyone else around you to “be there” requires focusing on what you have been working towards all this time with the same “crazy” devotion, commitment and single-mindedness, so that every detail and every activity is permeated with the idea of how it leads to and how it connects to the revelation of Moshiach, immediately, NOW!



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THE ONE- MAN ARMY IN KYRGYZSTAN

By Nosson Avrohom

*The riots that plagued Bishkek, the capitol of Kyrgyzstan, as well as the terrorist acts perpetrated against the shul in the Jewish community, prompted us to talk with Rabbi Aryeh Reichman, the shliach who, together with his wife, is working there with mesirus nefesh. * In an phone interview, he told me about the place, the hardships, and his activities which are reviving Jewish life there.*



It's a miracle! There is no other way to describe what happened in the Jewish community of Bishkek on the first day of Rosh HaShana this year. It's been half a year already that the rate of hate crimes against the Jewish community has risen – to be more precise, ever since the riots when the government was in chaos. A huge sign hung on the Parliament building in the center of the city stating that there was no room for Jews in Kyrgyzstan, and this was

only the beginning. From there things escalated, reaching a peak with Molotov cocktails being thrown at the shul. Miraculously, the rain prevented them from destroying the edifice.

"According to our original plan, the entire community was going to meet at the shul at 5:30 for Tashlich, which would be followed by the shofar blowing for those who did not hear it earlier, and then a Yom Tov meal," the shliach and rav of the

community, Rabbi Aryeh Reichman told *Beis Moshiach*. "What actually happened was, we finished Shacharis in the early afternoon and the people asked that we do Tashlich then and there and daven Mincha, and then come back to shul at 6:00. This seemed reasonable and I agreed.

"When they came to the shul at 6:00 they were shocked to see that the entire courtyard was destroyed. Terrorists had thrown explosives loaded with nails, screws and other



**Rabbi Aryeh Reichman
with the prime minister**



shortly after it was ignited. The police who examined the bottles said they were full of diesel fuel and not gasoline. If they had been full of gasoline the rain would not have extinguished them.”

R’ Reichman says that despite these frightening episodes he has not considered leaving the country. As long as there are Jews in Bishkek, he will remain there.

“IF YOU GO TO YESHIVA, I’LL TAKE YOU TO THE REBBE”

Spiritual desolation. That is what R’ Reichman and his wife found when they arrived in Kyrgyzstan nearly one decade ago. They had braced themselves for physical hardships, as Kyrgyzstan is not one of the developed countries of the world, but as R’ Reichman put it – the spiritual hardships were harder for him and for his wife. They have been reaching out to about 3000 Jews, most of who live in the capitol. The shul, which had been neglected, has turned into a bustling Jewish community center. They have opened a preschool and give numerous shiurim.

Before hearing about their

pieces of metal which were designed to cause maximum damage. The entire courtyard ceiling was riddled with holes; the barrel for Tashlich was completely destroyed. The explosives were thrown at five o’clock. They probably knew when we were supposed to come and divine providence directed us to change the time. I don’t want to think what would have happened had we been standing there.

“Before the uprising we never had anything like this. The

government promises to deal with this and even to eradicate it, but till today, the police do not know who did it.”

This miracle, emphasized R’ Reichman, is on top of another miracle, just as big, that happened half a year ago with the outbreak of riots:

“Three Molotov cocktails were thrown at the shul in the middle of the night. The miracle was that it was pouring and the rain extinguished the flammable material



shlichus work in a country ripped apart by civil war, we heard about R' Reichman's background and how his own spiritual life was saved by shluchim. The seminal event in his life was meeting the Rebbe when he was twelve. He still does not understand why he, out of all his friends in the Chernobyl children project, merited this encounter.

"I was born in Mozyr in Belarus when the Soviet Union was still in force. I grew up in a home without Jewish tradition but with a sense of Jewish identity nonetheless. I knew I belonged to the Jewish people, unlike my neighbors and friends. Nothing more than that."

The ones who enforced his Jewish identity were boys his age who bullied him for being Jewish. When they thought they had a legitimate reason to start up with him, they did so with a vengeance, and even when they had no specific reason, they taunted him with anti-Semitic epithets and curses. The only place he could see authentic Judaism was at his grandmother's house. She prepared matzos in her oven for Pesach so he knew that Jews have a holiday in which they eat thin crackers. Why? He had no idea.

"When the Iron Curtain began to crack at the end of the 80's, my

parents wanted to go to Israel. I was ten years old. One day they told me that religious Jews had come to take me to a school in Kfar Chabad where I would be educated and all my needs taken care of, and they would follow me later, which is what happened. I joined the first group of the Chernobyl Children project. The first groups were from Belarus. Thanks to the people who ran the project, I am a frum Jew and Chassid today. If not for them, who knows where I would be now!

"The project operated out of the immigrant hostel in Kfar Chabad and the counselors taught us mitzvos such as washing hands, tzitzis and t'filla. It was all new to me. Two years later, when I was twelve, a wonderful surprise awaited me that changed my life. Due to my young age at the time, I didn't realize its significance. My counselor, R' Moshe Asman, decided to take me with him to the Rebbe. This was Tishrei, 5752/1991. I had to promise him that I'd go to yeshiva and in exchange, he would take me to the Rebbe.

"I was fascinated by the Rebbe. Although I was just a boy, with the perspective and understanding of a child, I knew that this was something spiritual and deep. I passed the Rebbe for 'dollars' and as

R' Asman told me to do, I made two requests: a bracha for my continuing to learn in a Chabad yeshiva and a bracha for my parents. I spoke to the Rebbe in Russian and the Rebbe responded in that language. He gave me a dollar for my parents and a dollar for my desire to learn in yeshiva and blessed me to be a good Jewish child with much nachas from me. I hope that I am indeed giving the Rebbe nachas ruach with my shlichus.

"As I promised R' Asman and the Rebbe, I went to Yeshivas Ohr Simcha in Kfar Chabad for high school. After three years I continued learning in their yeshiva g'dola, where I studied sh'chita and got smicha. Then I went to Tashkent on shlichus, where I was able to put my knowledge of sh'chita to practical use. Rabbi Dovid Abba Gurewitz was the shliach there, a real mesirus nefesh Yid. I learned what real shlichus is from him, what dedication means, what it means to forego your comforts in order to be mekarev Jews.

"I already thought back then how in Eretz Yisroel, when we went on mitvza t'fillin or mitvza mezuzah we felt we had maximized the opportunity to be mekarev Jews. But when you go to the ends of the world and the tasks assigned to you are so weighty, you realize what you can really accomplish. You are the one to turn to for anything Jewish. I found in R' Gurewitz a shliach who devoted his life to the Rebbe's shlichus. In his community there were various sorts of Jews from different backgrounds; he had to deal with an unfriendly government, and yet he did so much for so long."

SHLICHUS THAT BEGAN AS A TRIAL PERIOD

After half a year of intensive work in Tashkent, the time came to say goodbye. The Yomim Tovim were around the corner and R'

Reichman wanted to spend them with his family back in Eretz Yisroel. R' Gurewitz, however, had other plans for him and for some other bachurim who were with him on shlichus in Tashkent. For a long time the Jews of neighboring Kyrgyzstan had been asking him to send them a rabbi. R' Gurwitz requested as follows – that the bachurim cancel their plans to fly to Eretz Yisroel and fly, instead, to the neighboring country to see whether they did, in fact, need a rav, what the community's needs were, and whether someone was needed year-round.

“Despite the hardship this entailed, we accepted his request and after a two hour flight we arrived. The shul was full. Jews saw the shul as their place. Throughout the month we did various activities and held t'fillos and farbrengens. Before we left, at the end of a month full of spiritual experiences, some leaders of the community asked us to stay. They said that they yearned for a rabbi who would live with them on a permanent basis and guide them. We promised to convey this to R' Gurewitz and did so. We told him that we met a warm and united community that wanted to learn and a permanent shliach would be ideal. A few days later I returned home and planned to finish studying for smicha.

“A year later, I got a phone call from R' Gurewitz who told me that the heads of the community liked me the year before and he suggested that I return there as a permanent shliach. This came as a complete surprise to me. On the one hand, every Lubavitcher bachur thinks of going on shlichus as his life's work but not everybody has the opportunity to realize this dream. On the other hand, in Eretz Yisroel I had everything: a social structure, a k'hilla, mosdos and friends. Why should I travel so far away? I gave it a lot of thought and finally agreed to



Birkas HaChama in the Chabad house yard



A bris mila at the Chabad house

a trial period.

“That trial period has lasted until today,” R' Reichman said with a smile. “It's almost ten years. I can't say that I've experienced physical hardships here, except for the fact that it is a somewhat primitive country at the ends of the world. I managed with everything else. The environment is pleasant and the Kyrgyz people are warm. The problems I've been dealing with lately, the attacks upon us, are new for me. Throughout the years it was quiet.”

And yet, wasn't it hard?

“The hardships were mainly

spiritual. There were people who remembered a little bit of the traditions but celebrated and did things incorrectly. When I went to shul the first Shabbos, I found Jews sitting there with newspapers discussing politics. I needed to reform their longstanding habits in a gentle and clever way, without compromising one iota. On the first Pesach that I was here, some Bucharian Jews who had some tradition, wanted to bring food to shul in honor of the yahrtzait of their father. They promised it would all be kosher for Pesach. Being experienced, I convinced them to



The destruction in the Chabad house yard after the attack last Rosh HaShana

just bring uncooked fruits and vegetables and I said I'd bring the matza.

"It wasn't easy convincing them but they finally agreed. When I arrived at shul what did I see on the table? A bottle of vodka! I asked them, what's this?! You said it would all be kosher for Pesach! They said, 'You just can't make a yahrtzait without vodka.' That's just one example of the ignorance of the people here. Today that has all changed. With the Rebbe's kochos, it's different now. People are much more aware, they are learning, attending shiurim, and things are seeping in.

"Another difficulty in the early days was the loneliness. Until then I was used to living in a community with a shul, mikva, someone showing what to do for special t'fillos and answering halachic questions that arose. Even in Tashkent, I had R' Gurewitz to ask but now I'm on my own and I have to have answers to all the questions. The responsibility is on me. I'll tell you, it's not easy to leave a community and be the only religious Jew in the entire area and to subsist on the kosher food that comes from Eretz Yisroel once in a long while.

"Nevertheless, when you are

living on shlichus you get the satisfaction and support in other ways. I make a *cheshbon ha'nefesh* (spiritual accounting) every so often and when I see that thanks to this shlichus there is another Jew who puts on t'fillin, another family that began observing the laws of Family Purity, I am happy and it's what spurs me on to continue living here."

R' Reichman told me about a particular incident that helped him decide to settle in Kyrgyzstan even after he returned home and got married:

"In my first year here, I went to shul to celebrate Simchas Torah. I was very happy to see Jews who until recently had hidden their Jewish identity, holding Torahs proudly. During the dancing the electricity stopped working and it was pitch black in the shul. We sat with the light of candles as we waited for the electricity to resume working. Then one old man got up and said emotionally, 'For fifty years they darkened our neshama and didn't allow us to rejoice with the Torah. Can we allow the darkness to stop us now?' This got everybody up on their feet and the rejoicing resumed. When I heard this, I decided that I would help them

overcome the darkness and bring them the light of Judaism."

A SMALL, INCONSPICUOUS COMMUNITY

The Republic of Kyrgyzstan is in the center of Asia. It used to be part of the Soviet Union and became independent with the dissolution of the communist party. It borders with China in the east, with Kazakhstan in the north, Uzbekistan in the west, and Tajikistan in the south. In recent years, Kyrgyzstan has become a tourist attraction, visited by plenty of Israelis and Jews from all over the world. Kyrgyzstan has breathtaking mountain scenery. The Tian Shan mountain range covers 80% of the country, earning it the moniker 'the Switzerland of Central Asia'.

Bishkek, the capital, is the largest city and where most of the Jews live. The largest ethnic group is Kyrgyz who speak Turkish, descendants of Russian tribes who came to the area during the Mongol invasion in the 1300's. Russian is still the main language of the country and the mother tongue of many residents because of the decades of Soviet rule. Most people here are Moslems but there is separation between religion and state. Most of the population is poor.

Despite the chaotic political situation, tourism is thriving and many Jews are happy to find a Chabad house and shliach in this out-of-the way place who is happy to help with any spiritual and material needs.

"The tourist attraction here is the Silk Route which goes from France until China via Kyrgyzstan. Many tourists follow this route, which passes through snowcapped mountains and wild vegetation and anything the typical tourist is looking for. It's no surprise that many Jews come here. On Rosh HaShana we had quite a few guests.

We had an Leading up to the holiday, we had an Israeli tourist who put on t'fillin for the first time in his life. We celebrated his 'bar mitzva' and gave him an aliya to the Torah. It was very moving to know that this tourist crossed the world just to connect to Judaism here, with us."

Under the Soviets, the city served as an industrial area with numerous factories. Today it is a modern city and the industrial activity has diminished, but you can still discern the Soviet influence. Over 80 ethnic groups live in Kyrgyzstan with the primary group being Kyrgyz who used to be a nomadic tribe and till today, preserve their cultural heritage. Their culture today is expressed mainly in their love of horses. Children learn to ride as soon as they can walk. The other two largest ethnic groups are Russians and Uzbeks.

The yurt is the main symbol of Kyrgyz culture. It is the portable round hut covered by goat hair which is on the country's flag. Since the country gained its independence, there has been no peace. Political crises and government overthrows happen often. The worst took place this past year when rioters killed Interior Minister Moldomusa Kongatiyev and the opposition announced a takeover. The next day, Mrs. Roza Otunbayeva, former Foreign Minister who is president of the new government, announced an interim government that would serve for six months.

"It was chaotic here," says R' Reichman. "People were killed and property looted. The rioting reached a peak on Purim. People, disappointed with the results of election held a few days earlier, went out to the streets to demonstrate. While I was occupied making final preparations for the big Megilla reading, the opposition stirred up the people to get them to rebel against the government. Most



Shacharis at the Chabad house

people, including the Jewish community, stayed locked up in their homes in fear.

"A curfew imposed on the city. Public transportation ceased and people preferred staying home. Of course we continued with all of our preparations but I wondered whether I should cancel the main Megilla reading. We had given out invitations to the members of the community, inviting them to come and hear the Megilla. In the end, after consulting with R' Berel Lazar, we decided to go ahead as we had planned and see what would happen. To my delight, dozens of people showed up. I was happy about every person who came. In hindsight I realized what an amazing thing it was that people were willing to show up, during a dangerous time, in order to do a mitzva."

The American ambassador, Mary Iovanovich, visited the community. She heard from them and R' Reichman about the latest attack and was horrified.

"This situation cannot continue. Every effort must be made to stop these acts of anti-Semitism," she said, and she promised to personally keep tabs on the situation. The ambassador met with R' Reichman after a tour of the shul and the Ohr

Avner preschool. She reminisced about the time she spent in Moscow and spoke at length about her help towards the efforts to release the "Schneersohn collection" which is in the Lenin library.

"Besides these morale-boosting visits there is not much we can do," says R' Reichman. "We are not a big community and we don't have influence like other communities in the former Soviet Union. So nobody seeks us out. Although this has drawbacks, I can't deny that there are advantages too. We don't arouse much attention and we can operate without interference. Under the previous government we enjoyed relative quiet, so we were rattled by the uprising and didn't know what would happen. In the end, we decided not to take a position and to remain on the sidelines and hope for the best.

"The uprising was not related to religion as many think, even though most of the people are Moslems. During the riots, a man in the community told me, 'We prevailed over the communists and we will prevail now too.' He was right. The quiet period we enjoyed under the previous regime is back in force and we pray that this continues.

"The shul was built under the

communists in a distant location on the edge of the city so as not to stand out. Today, we are planning a new Jewish center that will be built in the middle of the city.”

The Jewish community was founded in the 1800’s when some Bucharian Jews migrated there in search of a livelihood. During World War II and afterwards, with the arrival of Jews from Europe, war refugees, the k’hilla grew to 30,000 people. The communist government succeeded in trampling the beautiful community life and the next generation knew nothing about Judaism. Communism fell and the dormant Jewish community, with 3000 people, came to life. R’ Reichman is definitely responsible for this.

FOUR MONTHS SALARY FOR A PAIR OF T’FILLIN

Out of 3000 Jews who live throughout the republic, more than half are in touch with the Jewish community and are invited to various events and receive Jewish reading material. The shluchim opened a preschool and make sure the adults, too, are well educated with shiurim on a variety of topics for young and old, men and women. There are t’fillos at the shul on a regular basis, and many brissin take place every year.

There is a Jewish school that is funded by a wealthy Belgian Jew, and as rav of the k’hilla, R’ Reichman is also rav of the school.

Jews who used to live in Bishkek and businessmen who visit there today are amazed by the Jewish revolution the community has undergone. People who had an interest in Judaism had nobody to guide them, but now there is the Rebbe’s shliach, R’ Reichman, who is helping them realize their dream.

“A few months ago, I got a phone call from someone who lives outside of Bishkek. He heard about us from

a friend and decided he wants t’fillin. He asked me to get him a pair. I told him that the cost of a kosher pair of t’fillin is several hundred dollars, equivalent to a few months’ salary. I thought he would hesitate and his enthusiasm would be dampened, but I was pleasantly surprised. Without thinking twice he said he still wanted them. A short while later I met him in person and that is when I realized that for him, \$200 is his salary for four months’ work! And he is not a well-to-do person who can afford to spend so much money. I was so impressed and moved by this. I had thought that Jews like this are only to be found in stories of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok of Berdichev.

“The most moving thing for me is going to shul in the morning and seeing fifty men in tallis and t’fillin, waiting to daven. Others might not understand what is so moving about this, but these are people who did not know what t’fillin are and now you can see them coming to shul regularly and davening fervently as though they had always done so.”

In the Jewish community of Bishkek, there is not a single Jew who hasn’t heard of R’ Reichman’s work. Aside from community and rabbinic matters, he runs a soup kitchen which feeds dozens of the sick and elderly every day. Throughout the day, he gives a number of shiurim with the first one, a shiur in halacha, given right after davening and attended by close to forty people. Mrs. Reichman also gives an ongoing class for women. In addition, she started a club for young women who meet once a month for Jewish activities.

FIGHTING ASSIMILATION

Like most communities in the former Soviet Union, the biggest problem is assimilation. “Unfortunately,” says R’ Reichman,

“assimilation is not something new. For many years there have been Jews who weren’t even aware that they were Jewish and consequently, the assimilation rate is very high. There is only one solution – Jewish education.

“I cannot say we have won this war; on the contrary, we have a long way to go. It’s an ongoing battle. We are fighting the source of the problem and not just the symptoms. When more Jews know about their traditions and their Judaism, there will be fewer such instances, and that is precisely why we invest most of our energy into the youth. We have a whole range of classes and we offer scholarships for youth who come to study.

“We have twenty children in the preschool. I give classes a few times a week at the Jewish school and in addition to that we put a lot of effort into the local youth and we are seeing nice results. Some of them had non-Jewish boy/girlfriends and decided to drop them.

“Last year we sent some young people to Eretz Yisroel so they could get a proper chinuch. There is a girl who became interested in Judaism, made aliya, went to Ohr Chaya in Yerushalayim and today has a beautiful Chassidic home in Migdal HaEmek.

“We don’t have a precise method to measure our success but experience shows that these young people, most of whom knew nothing about Torah, become more traditional after taking some classes. A few years ago, we had a Jewish student who was so distant from anything Jewish that she had a cynical attitude towards it. Why did she come to us? Since she needed a scholarship, she had no choice. She mostly didn’t listen in class; it just didn’t interest her. She would come, do her own thing, and then leave and go home. If she actually heard something she would challenge me on it. The entire topic of the

Shulchan Aruch annoyed her. She said it was written long ago and had no significance today.

"I was patient with her and tried to answer her questions. I knew that negativity about Judaism is a sign that something is burning in her neshama and this was borne out. She had a one year old son and one day she called me and asked me to circumcise him.

"There are so many stories like this. Quite a few adults in the community are living in Israel today and are leading a Lubavitcher lifestyle. In recent years there is a great interest among the youth to seek out their roots. Those who are suited to it, I send to Israel because only in Israel can they find a proper shidduch."

How do you manage with your children's chinuch?

"It's the biggest hardship. It's not simple thing to raise children here. We are raising them to be future shluchim. The Online Shluchim School is a big help.

"Our children are really shluchim already. They have friends who would never think of going to shul on Shabbos but because my children go, they go too, and they bring their parents. It helps when children copy one another. A mother recently called me and said that she wants to recite the blessings before eating but doesn't know what to say. It turned out that her son saw our children saying brachos and he wanted to do the same. Another mother called and asked how big the candles for Shabbos need to be. Her daughter had told her that they have to light candles before Shabbos."

R' Reichman paused to say this is not thanks to his merit and his powers but the power of the Rebbe:

"We see how the Rebbe helps at



**Menora lighting
at the Chabad house**



Helping a Jew do the mitzva of Dalet minim

every turn. A few years ago, when things were terrible economically, they told us at

Ohr Avner that the budget which covered a significant part of the expenses would stop. That was really tough. We had a preschool and shul and it all costs a fortune. There are no wealthy people here who can cover the costs. And yet, things have worked out and not only haven't the activities stopped, they have doubled, even though I never fundraised before. It's miraculous. There is no other explanation."

Speaking of miraculous success, Jews in faraway Kyrgyzstan write to the Rebbe through the Igros Kodesh:

"At first, they wrote with our help but now quite a few do it on their own. There was a woman here who had two children, a daughter and a son, and she wanted another child. Years passed and it didn't seem to be in her future. She wrote to the Rebbe and committed to strengthening her observance of Torah and mitzvos. That was Erev Rosh HaShana of two years ago. During Yom Kippur she became ill and during the resulting doctors' examination, they found the problem

that had prevented pregnancy.

"Not long after Chol HaMoed Sukkos she couldn't keep it to herself anymore and she told my wife that she had good news. She gave birth to a girl.

"In general, the concept of a Rebbe is very much emphasized here. In the past, when I spoke about Moshiach, nobody knew what I was talking about. People asked me who that is. Today, before t'kios and every Shabbos, when I speak about the Geula, people know that Moshiach means the end of galus and they all look forward to that. And they all know that without the Rebbe there would be no Jewish life here."

In conclusion, I asked R' Reichman whether he doesn't find it hard to live there, without friends, without a Chabad community, the only shliach in the country.

"I will answer you directly. If I did not feel that I am here on the Rebbe's shlichus, I wouldn't stay here for even one day. It is not an easy country to live in, certainly not after the uprising and recent events, but we have a mission and I think about the mission – not about what I want and need, but what the Rebbe wants of me and what the Rebbe wants me to do."

STORIES SHLUCHIM TELL

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelewitz
Shliach, Beit Shaan

The following are wonderful stories that were told in 770, at workshops, at meals and the banquet at previous Shluchim Conventions.

THE TEST OF POVERTY AND THE TEST OF WEALTH

I heard about a certain shliach that there are days that the sum total of his food supply is a cup of rice! His wife deliberates whether to cook it for supper for their five children or to save it for the next day because who knows whether there will be food tomorrow.

Sometimes, one of the children comes home from school and tells his mother that his pants are torn and his classmates make fun of him and he asks when they can buy new pants. The mother says, maybe tomorrow. And the conversation repeats itself the next day. And the day after that, until a miracle happens and they get enough money to be able to splurge on such a luxury as a pair of pants.

It's a real story. There is a name

and address for this shliach, in a country that is known for its poverty, and some of the shluchim in that country have already left because of the hardships. But some stick it out and wait for the Geula. Anyone who is interested in helping can ask me for their address. I am sure they are not the only ones. If you look around perhaps you will find other shluchim who live with mesirus nefesh to whom you can offer financial assistance.

There is another shliach, and this is also a true story, who managed within a few years to erect a beautiful shul and Chabad house. There are hundreds of donors in his city who took part in putting up the building and they continue to visit the shul, to learn, and to daven and ... to donate. As per an explicit instruction from the Rebbe he follows the customs of the Eidut HaMizrach (Sephardic communities) and he has about 300

people at every t'filla on Shabbos. About 40 people get an aliya and each one donates an average of 200 shekel. Now go and calculate how much he makes just on donations from the shul alone.

The chairman of a well-known car rental in Eretz Yisroel davened there a few years ago and he was impressed by the tremendous work being done at the shul. He offered the shliach a vehicle on-call for all his needs. The shliach accepted gratefully, even though he has a vehicle available to him at all times from the owners of another known car rental business. In one day, this shliach makes a bris or two, a chuppa, gives shiurim, makes house calls, blessings at a place of business, leads the three t'fillos at the shul, and pays the salaries of 40 employees of the Chabad house. Wow!

EXPERIENCE FROM LACK OF EXPERIENCE

You wouldn't believe how many things which are considered obvious to us, are not at all familiar to our mekuravim, and they need to have it all explained.

R' S.A., a shliach in Eretz Yisroel, shared three incidents that happened with him "just one time." He has learned to explain everything.

In the first incident, a bar mitzva boy had an aliya. The boy was supposed to open the Aron Kodesh and remove the Torah. The boy's grandfather was there and their practice, which is always moving, is that the grandfather receives the Torah crown and places it on the Torah that his grandson is holding.

So the shliach handed the crown to the grandfather to put on the Torah. The grandfather, not knowing what to do with it, tried to put it on the boy's head. In front of hundreds of people. The crown didn't exactly fit the boy. The grandfather tried to make it fit until the shliach realized what was going on and showed the

grandfather what to do. Since then, this shliach makes sure to instruct the grandfather of a bar mitzva boy to put the crown on the *Torah*.

In the second incident, a guest came for the davening on Shabbos. He had a kippa and the shliach couldn't know that this was the first time the man was visiting a shul. The shliach asked the guest to do *hagba* (to raise the Torah high). With a little gesture he showed him the handles on the Torah. The guest thought he understood the hint but for some reason he lifted the Torah only waist high. One of the people called out, "Higher!" and the guest looked around and saw a chair nearby, and got up on it while holding the Torah. That was the last time the shliach honored someone with *hagba* before ascertaining that he knew how to do it.

In the third incident, the most painful, the shliach tried honoring a guest with *glila* (wrapping the Torah) and handed the man the belt. The man had a criminal past and had been taken to jail in handcuffs, so when he saw the belt with the metal clasp being held out to him, he simply held out both his hands together so the interesting looking soft restraints could be put on him.

All this teaches us that in the world of shlichus, nothing can be taken for granted and you always need to check to see what people know and what needs explaining.

DAILY ROUTINE

Let us leave these unusual situations for now and look at the routine of a typical shliach. A student who studies at a university in the US told me:

When I got to the university I knew nothing about Judaism. I saw a Chabad stand with a nice rabbi inviting Jews to come for Friday night meals. I talked to him a bit. It was interesting and new for me and so I went to the meal. It was so

The shliach handed the crown to the grandfather to put on the Torah. Not knowing what to do with it, he put it on the boy's head in front of hundreds of people. The grandfather tried to make it fit until the shliach realized what was going on and stepped in.

special that I stayed to talk to the rabbi until five in the morning. It wasn't until later that I realized that while I went to bed and enjoyed a good few hours of sleep, the rabbi immediately started with davening, a speech, a meal with guests, a shiur and Mesibos Shabbos. He didn't even hint that talking to me for such a long time was hard for him. It's really unbelievable!

But it is believable. And it happens in the US as well as in Thailand, India, Asia and Europe, South America and Australia. It happens with thousands of shluchim, some of whom live in towns you've never heard of. And they do this happily, because they are shluchim of the Rebbe.

GAN NER, KIRYAT TIVON, KFAR CHABAD AND DIJON

We sat at the Shabbos farbrengen, a few dozen shluchim, bachurim and Anash, around long tables in 770, facing the red chair and the white tablecloth, waiting for the Rebbe to appear and farbreng. Rabbi Avshalom Kiel, shliach and rav in yishuv Gan Ner, suddenly realized that the man sitting on the left on the other side of the table was Rabbi Chaim Slonim, shliach in Dijon, France, the son of Rabbi Moshe Slonim a"h who was the menahel of the network of Chabad schools in

Eretz Yisroel.

R' Kiel said to R' Slonim, "Your father was the guide of my life ... It was 5740/1980, and my wife and I were chassan and kalla (groom and bride). We asked the Rebbe whether to go on shlichus to Kiryat Tivon, and the Rebbe instructed us to live and work in Kiryat Tivon. It seemed there was only work there for my wife, and even that would be only for three months.

"Chabad askanim advised us to talk to R' Moshe Slonim. From the moment we went to meet him in Kfar Chabad, everything was okay. Thanks to him, a Chabad school was soon opened in Kiryat Tivon and the number of children quickly rose to 40 and from 40 to 140. Hundreds of children were educated in the way of Chassidus and ... there was work for me and my wife and a number of other men and women.

GILO, DRAMSALA AND AN ARMY OFFICER

At this farbrengen was the shliach from the Gilo neighborhood of Yerushalayim and menahel of the Talmud Torah, Rabbi Hirsch Farber. R' Farber began telling a moving story and it was only at the end that we realized that it was a personal story. This is what he said:

A number of years ago, I was sitting in the office, preoccupied with the problems of the school. My daughter walked in and placed an

interesting letter on the desk that was publicized on the Internet from an officer in an elite unit who was touring in India. At first I had no idea what it had to do with me but then I understood and was pleased.

The officer wrote:

Dear Shlichei Chabad,

You are emissaries of light. You have no idea what power you have. You must spread this light to the entire world. My name is Yotam. I was an officer in a "sting" unit. I am in India for 8 years now, seeking spirituality. When I came here, I vowed that although I am touring and I want to get to see all the interesting places in India, there was one place that I would not step foot into, and that is a Chabad house. I hate religious Jews. I know all their shenanigans and I have no intentions of learning from them or meeting them.

A few weeks ago, I was sitting with Indian friends in a coffee house when I heard strange trumpeting sounds that you usually hear in ceremonies or local parades. I looked outside but there was no parade. Then I noticed a guy with a hat and jacket, tzitzis sticking out of his pants, and he was blowing a shofar. I liked the looks of him and commented to my friends that it looked as though the fellow was about to come inside.

Indeed, he did and he scanned the room for Jews. The Indians pointed at me and he came over and asked my name. He said that it was Elul and he invited me for a meal at the Chabad house. I immediately felt that he wasn't as bad as all the religious people that I thought I knew. I went to the Chabad house and since then, that is where I am. I discovered what my neshama was seeking and had not found in eight years. I discovered interesting shiurim, genuine Ahavas Yisroel, and Chassidic joy at every moment.

This week, there was a big simcha here. It was a huge wedding, but only with a groom and no bride. What

happened? The fellow who runs the Chabad house arranged a wedding party because his brother is getting married tonight in Israel. Since he was missing the wedding, we made a big event here. I participated in this "wedding" and it was a real simcha. There were five musicians, all Israeli tourists, dozens of waiters, all from Israel ... and dozens more people eating and dancing, all from Israel. All took part in the simcha that lasted nearly all night. At the end of the evening I asked the shliach why he didn't attend his brother's wedding. Do you know what he said? He said, "If I go, who will be here?" That's Chabad, mesirus nefesh till the end.

R' Farber concluded:

It was only when I finished reading the letter that I realized why my daughter was so intent that I read the letter. The shliach was none other than my son Yossi who had gone to India on shlichus and therefore missed his brother's wedding. Only then did I really start to feel for the value of his sacrifice.

UMAN, CHERKASSY AND KFAR CHABAD

At a few tables over on the east side of 770 sat a few dozen other Chassidim farbrenging. Here, the storyteller was Rabbi Dov Akselrod, shliach in Cherkassy, deep in Russia (Ukraine):

Uman is a town in the district of the city of Cherkassy. I visited Uman and announced that we were opening a Jewish school with a dormitory in Cherkassy and whoever was interested in registering their children could do so. Nobody registered and so the dormitory did not open.

A few weeks later, a mother came to register her son for school and the dormitory. We took the boy into the "dormitory" of our home. He lived with us, together with our five children, for a year. Now we sent him to Kfar Chabad to the Chernobyl children project, along with another

child whose mother heard about the good care Chabad gives to children. Just now, at the Kinus HaShluchim, I got regards from Kfar Chabad that "my" two boys are doing very well there.

MADRID, BEER SHEVA AND MODIIN

In 770 I met Rabbi Avrohom Cohen, shliach in Beer Sheva. He was looking for Rabbi Yitzchok Goldstein, shliach in Madrid. He explained why:

On my way to the conference, on the flight from Istanbul to New York, a businessman from Modiin sat next to me. The entire time, he was busy with his laptop, but I still managed to engage him in conversation and to tell him that I am a Lubavitcher Chassid. When he heard that I'm from Chabad, his face lit up. He said that he had an old Lubavitcher friend who is a shliach in Madrid.

"Rabbi Goldstein is such a refined person. He knows how to make an impact on you without invading your privacy, just the way I like it."

I told him that the shliach in Modiin is the same type.

R' Cohen was looking for R' Goldstein to give him the man's business card so he could maintain the man's connection with Chabad.

VENICE, BEER SHEVA, AND THE DEAD SEA

R' Avrohom Cohen continues:

R' Chaim Krichevsky, my son-in-law, is a shliach Torah in Beer Sheva. When he went to the shul a year and a half ago to give a shiur, there was a wealthy man sitting there who waited till the end of the class and asked to speak to him. The man owned a factory that manufactured and serviced industrial pumps. He had recently invented a process to prevent leakage in industrial pumps and was granted a worldwide patent

and he wanted to form a company to produce it. Now he was asking the rabbi to be his business partner, i.e. to bring mezuzos and give shiurim, and he would earn a percentage of the profits.

The contract was signed and this company has already made it to the stock market. Both the profits and the shiurim are doing well. The man explained why he so wanted Chabad to be involved in his company. He said:

“Two years ago we were on vacation in Venice, about fifteen of us. It was Friday and we had no place to eat the Shabbos meal. One of the members of the group offered to call the Chabad house. I said it

was ridiculous to invite ourselves a few hours before Shabbos. How could they prepare food for all of us? But he called and the shliach said we were all welcome.

“We arrived at the Chabad house and could not believe our eyes. The tables were set with an abundance of food and the shliach went from one table to the next, making sure nothing was lacking. In addition to the delicious food, the shliach said divrei Torah and Chassidic stories and we sang z’miros. It was all tremendously uplifting. We spent the entire Shabbos at the Chabad house and had a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

“On Motzaei Shabbos, I told the

shliach that I was pleasantly surprised by his hospitality and I wanted to know how he knew we would be coming so that he had all that food prepared. His answer surprised me even more. He said that nearly every Shabbos he hosts groups like this and he always prepares food.

“I asked him, who pays for it all? He said that sometimes guests make contributions. I got the hint and raised money from our group that also covered the costs for the other groups. I learned that Chabad is a group that cares about Jewish people without any agendas. That is why I want Chabad to be a partner in my company, so it will be a blessing for all Am Yisroel.”

[Continued from pg. 5]

the principal innovation of the advent of Moshiach is the revelation of his existence (“*matzasi* Dovid My servant”), for all the details that follow that moment (the revelation before the eyes of everyone through his actions in redeeming the Jewish people, and all matters related to the Days of Moshiach) come as a result of the revelation of his existence and are included within it. The pre-eminence of the revelation of the existence of Moshiach is symbolized by the birth of the new moon, insofar as it includes the increasing revelation of light from moment to moment until the moon reaches its fullness [in the middle of the month]).

Further insight is gleaned from the particular wording of the phrase, “‘All the days of your life’ – to bring to the Days of Moshiach.” When the existence of Moshiach is revealed, the vitality (“your life”) (automatically) brings about the Days of Moshiach, insofar as his existence (his life) includes all aspects of the Days of Moshiach, for all of these are included within the revelation of his very existence (the

birth of the new moon).

WAKE UP AND BREATHE IN THE AIR OF MOSHIACH

The practical application of this message – “action is the main thing”:

Since we have already marked the birth of the new moon (“for they are destined to be renewed like it in the future”) on Rosh Chodesh Kislev (the Rosh Chodesh of Redemption), the third month (which is connected with the third redemption and the third Holy Temple) of the year 5752 (known by the acronym, “*haya tehei shnas niflaos ba* (a year containing wonders)”), every single Jew must add in greater strength and greater might in emphasizing the concept of “‘All the days of your life’ – to bring to the Days of Moshiach,” expressed by one’s entire existence, immediately upon waking from sleep, being permeated with the vitality of Moshiach (for this is the essential being of every single Jew, the Moshiach within him), which brings to the Days of Moshiach.

And this matter can and must be at this very moment, by awakening anew with the renewed strength of the essence of the soul (analogous to waking up from sleep) “to bring the

days of Moshiach” by way of adding another “single Mitzva” in order to incline himself and the whole entire world to the side of favor and to bring himself and to others salvation and deliverance.

All the above, however, does not necessarily require lofty endeavors connected with the aspect of Yechida, like studying and disseminating the teaching of chassidus, the Yechida of Torah, but also (and principally) simple things, such as providing for a Jew’s material needs, which are connected with his essential being (a soul invested in a body [for the body was chosen by G-d’s very essence – see Footnote 97 in the original]). This especially includes providing for the needs for the month of Kislev, the days of Chanuka, “days of joy and praise,” wherein we add in celebratory meals, including the custom to give Chanuka gelt (as was the practice of the rebbes, our leaders), and prior to Chanuka, the banquets and joyous farbrengens of the Days of Redemption of Yud and Yud-Tes Kislev.

(From the address of the first day of Rosh Chodesh Kislev and Shabbos Parshas Toldos 5752, muga; Seifer HaSichos pg. 130-132)

‘BUT REBBE, YOU PROMISED!’

By Chana Katz

*This amazing miracle story was 16 years in the making, but it took another three years before it was permitted to be disseminated to the world. * R. Kaye revealed this story on the day of the wedding of his nephew, Menachem Mendel Shiffman, sh’y, the son of his beloved sister, Libby Faige Malka, of blessed memory.*

For the past 15 years, Rabbi Eliyahu Kaye has worked quietly behind the scenes at the Ascent Media and Educational Center, developing a unique system of analyzing one’s personality, character traits and soul powers based on finding a person’s name within the letters of the Torah. The pure glory and truth of the precious Torah has drawn thousands of Jews, and in some cases, some well-known non-Jews, to seek their own personal connection within the depths of the Torah. They join R. Kaye as he skips letters and intervals and locates the letters of their name found within the Torah portion of their particular birthday week.

This story took place three years ago when a man contacted R. Kaye after he read about the

unique Torah code system in a popular Israeli magazine. When the actual session and analysis took place, one of the interesting points was that a letter in his name was connected to the korban (ritual animal offerings), in particular, a passage that dealt with the removal of the fat from the kidneys and its placement upon the altar.

“All of a sudden,” relates R. Kaye, “I heard silence on the other end of the line.” (The analysis is generally done either in person or by computer webcam or by phone).

“It’s totally silent on the other end of the line and it’s like that for a good 15 to 30 seconds. At the beginning I thought something was wrong with the phone line and I’m saying, ‘hello!? – hello?!’ and I

don’t hear any reaction on the other side until finally the person identifies himself again and says, ‘Yeah, Rabbi.....I’m here.’”

R. Kaye asked if everything was okay. The man eventually regained his composure and said to R. Kaye, “You’re a Lubavitcher Chassid? You’re a shliach of the Rebbe?”

R. Kaye answered yes to both questions and the man asked to be reminded later to share a certain story. Meanwhile, their discussion continued and went deeper into the kabbalistic interpretations of the words and verses themselves.

R. Kaye explained that the Tanya refers to the teaching of the Kabbala and Zohar that the kidneys are called “*klayot yoatzot*” – the “counseling kidneys.” This has to do with the spiritual levels of “netzach and hod” but when it comes to an individual’s personality, it signifies his soul powers to give guidance and counsel.

Again, this analysis triggered an exclamation from the man, who revealed that he’s actually a hi-tech computer consultant.

And the next point was even stronger although R. Kaye said later that he had no idea how strong the insight really was!

“I explained to him that the kidneys – as explained in the Zohar and Tanya – are the place for the wisdom of the father that is

drawn down from the mind, the brain; a station in which it becomes a material state to be able to give birth to a child.”

When the session ended, the man thanked R. Kaye and expressed his appreciation for the “unbelievable, mind-boggling” wonders of Hashem that had been implanted in the Torah portion of every individual from the beginning of creation. Then he asked permission to tell R. Kaye a story.

Nineteen years earlier the man had found a wonderful woman and they got married. They were from different backgrounds. She was from a more observant family, a graduate of Beis Yaakov. He was from a Mizrahi, B’nei Akiva background.

In those days, there wasn’t a nearby Lubavitch seminary so Lubavitch young women also attended Beis Yaakov to obtain their teaching degrees. His wife had become very close to some of the Lubavitcher students – so much so that when she traveled to America with her husband shortly after her wedding, she insisted that they must go visit the Rebbe.

R. Kaye continued, “They found themselves on line one Sunday morning to receive dollars from the Rebbe. And since they were a fresh bride and groom it was arranged that they both leave their respective lines (one for men and one for women) and went together for their brief moment before the Rebbe.

The Rebbe gave them each a dollar and said, “bracha v’hatzlacha (blessing and success). Then the Rebbe took another dollar and gave it to the couple and said, “This is for the children.”

The couple’s happiness was boundless. Not only was the Rebbe blessing them, but with a big smile the Rebbe also gave the couple a

confirmation, so to speak, for the upcoming children that would be arriving!

The couple returned to Eretz Yisroel to begin their lives. A year passed — but there was still no news in the area of children... And a second year... and a third year ...

The couple began to seek all kinds of medical advice and treatments, both conventional and natural. Many years passed — some 15 to exact! — but they still did not have any good news regarding children.

Meanwhile, the husband



Rabbi Eliyahu Kaye

became involved with the local Chabad house, frequenting its shul and developing a close relationship with the shliach.

Yud Shvat – the tenth day of the Hebrew month “Shvat” — was approaching and the shliach was preparing to travel to the Rebbe to mark the day when the Rebbe officially accepted the leadership of Lubavitch — and leadership of the entire world. The shliach urged him to write a letter to the Rebbe asking for whatever blessings or advice he needed and promised to read it in 770 at the door leading to the corridor to the Rebbe’s

room.

Obviously, the shliach was referring to the couple’s childless state, but the man declined. He said he appreciated the offer but it wasn’t necessary. The shliach persisted — and so did the man in his polite but firm refusal.

Finally, the man turned to the shliach and asked, “Can I write to the Rebbe anything I want – anything?”

Yes, he was told. Write whatever and however you want.

He sat down with a pen and paper, wrote to the Rebbe short and sweet, and gave it to the shliach

At this point in the story, the man became choked up with tears. R. Kaye asked him if everything was all right.

He collected himself enough to speak and said, “I’ll tell you ... This is something that I regret until this day but I’ll tell you what I wrote to the Rebbe.

I wrote, “Dear Rebbe: *Hivtachta v’lo kiyamta* – You gave me your promise and you didn’t keep it!”

The shliach also had regrets about what was written, but he had promised that he would deliver the letter to the Rebbe and so he did. After Yud Shvat, he returned to the Chabad house. A week later, our friend had terrible back pains and he knew that he must see a doctor immediately. His condition had become unbearable to the point that he could neither sit down nor stand up without a terrible pain.

The doctors did a primary check and found nothing wrong. Then he did a CT scan after which he soon received the news that he had cancer in one of his kidneys. Apparently, it had been there in a passive manner but it was now found to be in an active manner. The doctors told him he had several options but as far as they were concerned the only real

option was to undergo a serious surgery to G-d-willing, remove the growth from his body.

And this is exactly what he did. He underwent the surgery and had a miraculous recovery. It was a surgery which most people usually take a month to recover from, yet thank G-d, he was quickly up on his feet singing and dancing—to say the least. All of a sudden, in the course of the consultations with the doctor, he remembered that during training as an Israeli navy commando, his battalion did exercises in the Kishon River outside of Haifa. (Now touted as the most highly polluted river in all of the land of Israel) the Kishon was thought to be the root and source of many severe illnesses and diseases experienced by other naval commandos who served there. And they realized the same was probably the source of his sickness as well.

* * *

Life goes on and a few months later the blessing comes through Hashem. His wife has become pregnant! They are at the heights of happiness and joy.

* * *

Recalling the part of his personal code referring to “fat above the kidneys” he related to R. Kaye that the place where the

disease had developed in his body was in the fat above the kidneys. He could not get over the fact that a short while after the fat upon the kidneys was removed, his wife fell pregnant. This is what had just been discussed – that the kidneys have a major role in the impregnation process. . .

“Do you know when my wife gave birth?” he asked R. Kaye.

“I’m not into guessing games. Tell me,” answered R. Kaye.

“Yud Shvat.”

Then he asked R. Kaye if he would like to know what she gave birth to.

“Of course, definitely,” said R. Kaye.

“Just like the Rebbe blessed us! Remember I told you that the Rebbe blessed us and said, ‘This is for the children.’ The Rebbe said it in the plural and my wife had twins!”

* * *

This story was told to R. Kaye three years ago, but the man asked him not to publish the story until after the “upshernish” (traditional first hair cutting after a boy turns three) in order to establish a “chazaka” – a consistency of three years. After that, he said he would have the pride and joy to publicize the story to the world of the wonderful miracle of the Rebbe.

“Suddenly,” said R. Kaye, “he

asked me the following question: ‘Are you one who believes what the Rebbe says about Moshiach and Geula?’

“I said as a Lubavitcher Chassid I don’t allow myself to contemplate any other idea. Definitely, I’m a staunch believer! He says, ‘Listen, I know there are a lot of people who come with all kinds of comments and criticism about what the Rebbe said about Moshiach in regard to the Geula. I want to tell you from the bottom of my heart – and you can pass this on to every individual you know – that I experienced the words of the Rebbe and the blessings of the Rebbe on my own flesh and blood.

‘Yes, it took 16 years for this blessing to come to fruition, and there was that point in my life where I also doubted the Rebbe’s words. But after I’ve seen this miracle my wife and I experienced, I can say with no doubts and qualms on my side that if and when the Rebbe says something, there is no doubt the blessing of the Rebbe will come true. If the Rebbe has promised, the Rebbe will fulfill his promise, And since the Rebbe has promised the immediate and imminent revelation of the coming of Moshiach and the true and complete redemption, I have no doubt in my mind that it’s coming immediately, G-d willing.’

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AMERICAN DREAM 2.0

By Aryeh Gotfryd, PhD

Once, as a child, the Mittler Rebbe was asked to explain why the assembled chassidim appeared morose. He replied, “It is clearly alluded to in our prayers: ‘Atzabehem kesef v’zahav...’ (their idols are of silver and gold, the handiwork of man). The word ‘atzabehem’ can also be interpreted as: ‘Their depression stems from silver and gold, (i.e., because their thoughts are focused on acquiring another ruble).’”
--Seifer HaSichos 5705, p. 10

Somewhere along the way, the American Dream turned into a colossal nightmare. In principle, the idea is still intact. No one really contests the constitutional notion that everyone has a divinely bestowed inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. But the American Dream came with an icon, a timeless symbol of ‘making it’, of getting there. What has always been that premiere emblem of personal prosperity and material security? Home ownership.

Today that icon looks more than a little tarnished. An unprecedented three million American homeowners faced foreclosure in the past year, and nearly double that number are in arrears. Real estate values are plummeting and over one in five homes are “underwater”, meaning that the mortgage is more than the value of the home.

In the midst of this nightmare, Chris Suellentrop is issuing a wake-up call.[1] He’s an editor at the New

York Times whose family has joyously embraced the change from ownership to renting. Why tie yourself to property of questionable value when you can have at least as much security, less headaches and more cash as a tenant?

He says it’s liberating to never worry about property taxes, maintenance, insurance, and home improvements. After ripping on home ownership, he proceeds to question the whole notion of ownership in general. It’s been revolutionizing home entertainment (Netflix, Zune) as well as automobile access (Zipcar). Even lawn mowers, vacuum cleaners and tools can be easily accessed and returned relatively affordably and conveniently (Zilok, SnapGoods).

And if you are lucky enough to have holiday time, why throw a mound of cash at a vacation property that you may neither want nor be able to maintain down the road, when you can join a time-share (RCI) instead and go somewhere new each vacation without the hassle of buying, selling, furnishing, insuring, and maintaining a property?

That op-ed piece got me thinking. Not that I’m looking to get rid of my house or car. Nor am I short on appliances. And as far as TV, movies and exotic vacations are concerned, they aren’t even part of my lifestyle. What really got me going was the concept. How attached am I to the things in my life? Do I even know *how* to let go?

How much less would I enjoy life if it wasn’t really *my* house, *my* car, *my* stuff, if instead I owned no more than the *opportunity* to have shelter, to get around, and to use things.

The truth is that a home of your own is more than a symbol. The Talmud says that a man who doesn’t own his home is lacking, that one should rather sell all his chattels than divest of his primary residence for cash.

While all this is true, there is another side to the story. According to Jewish Law, when one buys real estate in the Land of Israel, it should revert to the original owner in the 50th or Jubilee year. Every seventh year, your produce is ownerless. Every seventh day, you have to give away for G-d. Your home, your stuff, your time, your money isn’t entirely yours. Ultimately it all belongs to the Creator and all these practices serve to remind us that we don’t own any of it, we just have right of use.

When Moshiach comes, and it will be soon, our values will change. All luxuries and delicacies will be available as dust, and valued as dust as well. We will all be joyfully celebrating divine revelations, immersed in the knowledge of G-d as waters cover the sea.

Without really knowing it, I think Chris Suellentrop is a harbinger of that era. He sees the silver lining in the heavy clouds looming over the American Dream and realizes that a solution is already at hand. Once we are free of worrying about our properties being “underwater” we can then let go and immerse ourselves in an emerging era of infinite abundance on demand.

The American Dream 2.0 has all the same rights, liberties and pursuits as before but without the need to amass endless stuff. Whether this dream becomes reality is anyone’s guess. But Torah’s dream of true prosperity will surely come about with the coming of Moshiach NOW!

AVROHOM AND A HALF

By Nosson Avraham

Translated by Michoel Leib Dobry

Rabbi Avraham HaKohen Tauber, of blessed memory, was renowned for his Birkas Kohanim, often bending his tall figure over his fellow Jews and blessing them with his hands upon their heads. He performed this custom in accordance with the explicit instructions of the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, and many people experienced personal salvation in the merit of his blessing. As a descendant of Aharon, he was also an extremely generous individual who devoted his whole life to helping and assisting others, both spiritually and materially. Recollections on this great Kohen and Chassid compiled in honor of his Shloshim.

On Motzaei Yom Kippur, hundreds of B'nei Brak residents, including rabbanim, rebbes, chassidim, and laymen, mournfully escorted a most unique member of

their community, the chassid Rabbi **Avraham HaKohen Tauber**, of blessed memory, who returned his soul to His Maker on the holy day of Yom Kippur, after years of physical

affliction that he accepted with great love.

Many people came to comfort the family, including friends and acquaintances who spoke about a Jew who dedicated his entire life to charitable activities, an “innermost” Chassid in every limb of his body who worked with all his strength and vitality to bring Jews closer to the Rebbe and the teachings of chassidus.

ESCAPING THE CURSED NAZIS

Rabbi Avraham HaKohen Tauber was born in Vienna, Austria, several years before the outbreak of the Second World War. When the winds of war began to sweep across the countries of Europe and the Germans “anschlussed” Austria into the Third Reich, he wandered from village to village with his parents until he arrived, as did many Jewish refugees, on the soil of France. Through a series of open miracles, the small family managed to escape the evil clutches of the Nazi gangsters. Once, his father paid a sizable sum of money to a professional smuggler for the purpose of getting the family over the Austrian border into Switzerland, a much safer place. They arranged a point on the border where they would have to meet with the smuggler.

As it turned out, when the two of them arrived at the border, they saw nothing but walls of snow before them. The winds blew gustily, and there was no smuggler anywhere on the horizon. Suddenly, the mother sat little Avraham down on a barren tree stump and cried out to Heaven together with him. “Let’s daven together to G-d,” she told her son in a voice that he would remember for the rest of his life. The two of them called out in Yiddish, “*Ribbono Shel Olam!* Just as You answered Avraham Avinu on Har HaMoria,

Ezra in the exile, and all the tzaddikim and chassidim, answer us as well.” This was a simple and most sincere call coming from the depths of the heart. Minutes passed, and the child’s skin turned bluish purple. His life seemed to be in danger.

Just as they were about to give up, a tall man appeared from somewhere. He looked strong and muscular with reddish hair. The woman asked him suspiciously what he wanted and what he was doing there. During those dark days of the war, you couldn’t trust anyone. He replied to her in these words: “I heard the voice of a Jewish mother crying, and I came to offer help.” He asked if he could take little Avraham, but the mother refused, as she wouldn’t relinquish the apple of her eye so easily. The man said that he had no sinister intentions whatsoever, and it was only with some difficulty that he succeeded in convincing her to give him the child. With the help of a bottle of alcohol that he pulled out of his sack, he managed to warm the child’s body until the color was restored to his cheeks...

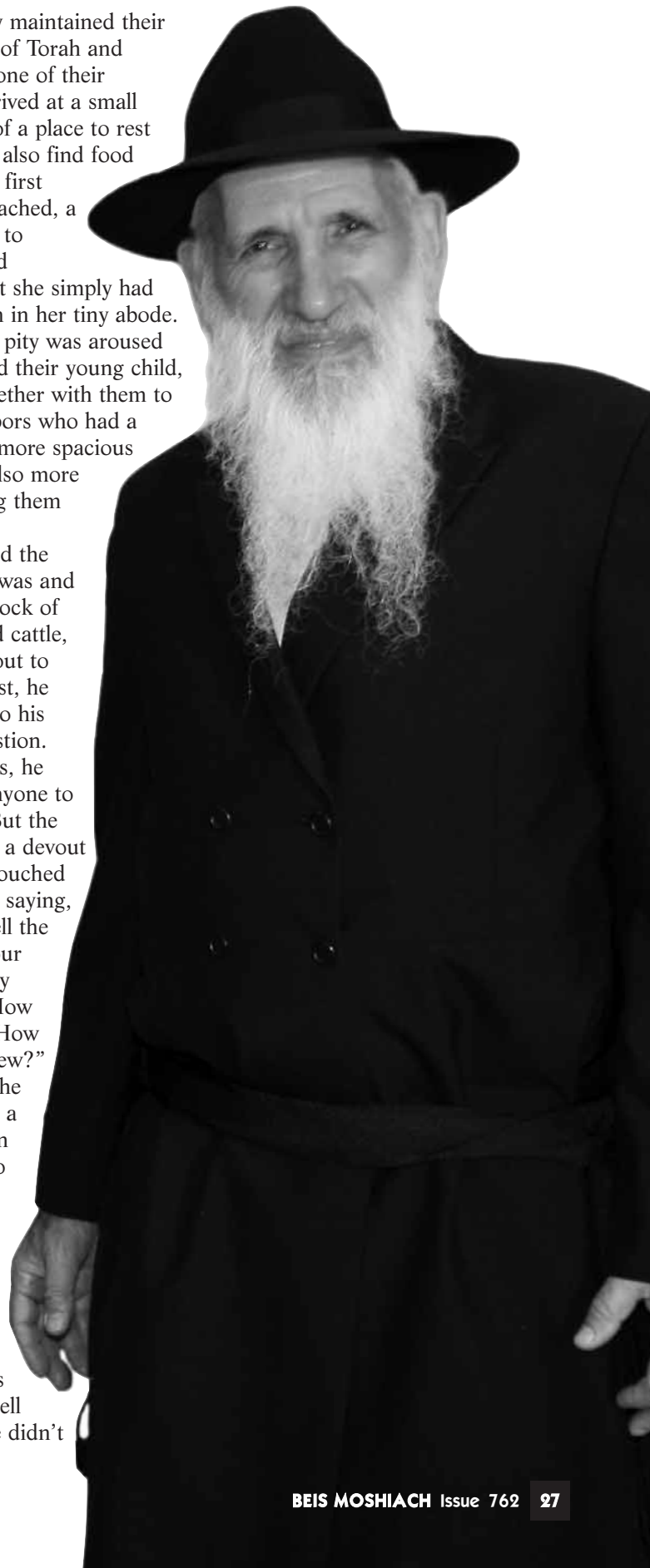
When the boy regained consciousness, he wrapped him in a warm blanket and then showed the bewildered mother where the smuggler she had been looking for was waiting for them. The mysterious visitor didn’t settle for that, and he remained and watched until he saw that they had met up with the smuggler. “I heard this story from my father many times,” recalled Rabbi **Ariel Tauber**, R’ Avrohom’s only son. “Every time he told it, he said that he felt as if it was happening again right before his eyes. It was the first vivid memory from his childhood.”

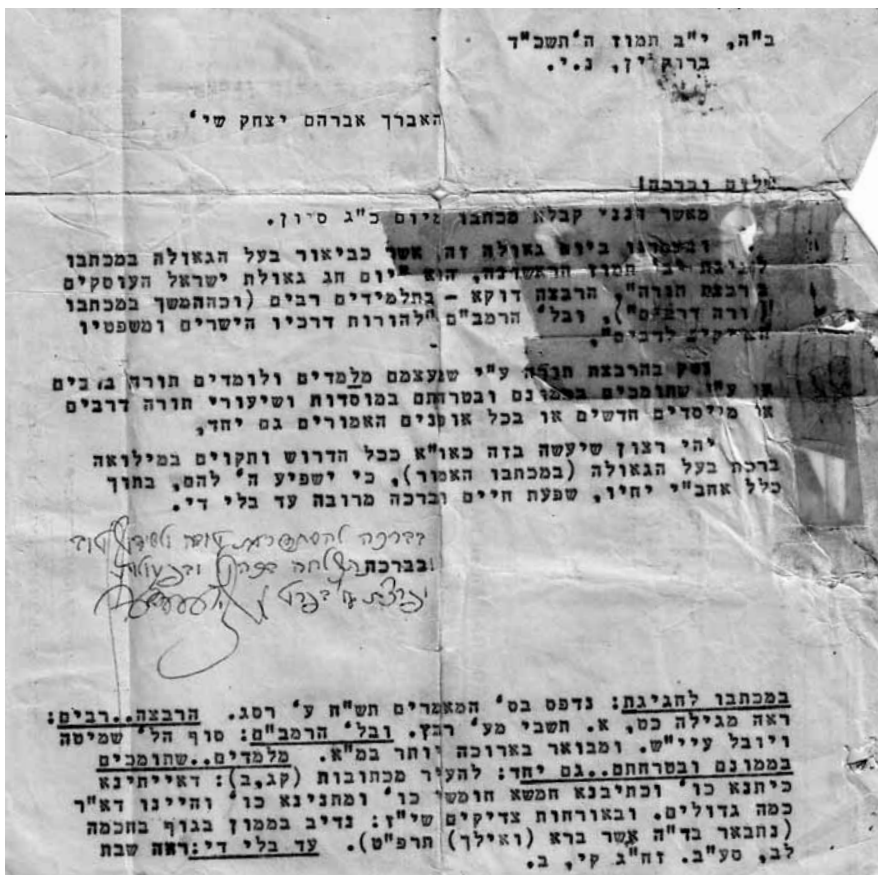
Such amazing miracles accompanied the family throughout those years when Jewish blood was spilled in an instant. Whenever they were on the run or in hiding, they identified themselves as Gentile war

refugees, but they maintained their strict observance of Torah and mitzvos. During one of their journeys, they arrived at a small village in search of a place to rest where they could also find food and water. At the first house they approached, a woman came out to them, but she said apologetically that she simply had no room for them in her tiny abode. Nevertheless, her pity was aroused for the couple and their young child, and she went together with them to one of her neighbors who had a much larger and more spacious house, and was also more capable of feeding them during their stay.

As they entered the neighbor’s farm, was and passed by their stock of ducks, sheep, and cattle, the owner came out to greet them. At first, he refused to listen to his neighbor’s suggestion. During those days, he wouldn’t allow anyone to enter his home. But the woman, who was a devout believer in G-d, touched his conscience by saying, “What will you tell the Alm-ghty after your death? How many goats you had? How many chickens? How much rice you grew?” The man closed the door, thought for a moment, and then opened it again to let them in. As payment for their upkeep, the family worked on his farmland.

When Shabbos came, the father sent his son Avremele to tell the owner that he didn’t





A personal letter sent by the Rebbe to Rabbi Tauber with the following words added in the Rebbe's own handwriting: With a blessing to organize himself properly and for a good shidduch, and with a blessing for success in all the aforementioned, particularly in "U'faratzta" activities.

feel well, and he thereby avoided doing the work he was expected to do. This went on every Shabbos.

When the month of Tishrei approached, the father reported being sick far more often. There were numerous days of "Yom Tov", and each time the reason given for not leaving his room was illness. What else could he say? Then the Gentile owner suddenly realized what was happening. He remembered that during the First World War, a Jew stayed with him who also closed himself up in his room during this time of year, and later he revealed that it always occurred on a Jewish holiday. He soon became suspicious that the family hiding in his house was Jewish. He knew that he wasn't lazy,

as he worked with great diligence on the other days of the week. The Gentile went to Mrs. Tauber, showed her the Christian symbol, and asked if they believed in it. "We believe in the One G-d," she replied unwaveringly.

This cursed Gentile didn't hesitate for a moment, and he told the family to pack their belongings and leave the house immediately. Nevertheless, they felt no regret for the demonstration of faith, and they continued to wander through the thick forests and plowed fields.

Not long afterwards, they learned that someone had apparently informed on them, and the Nazis had come to that farm and conducted a thorough search to find the guests that had arrived there.

The Germans turned the house upside down, but found no one. To the family's good fortune, their stubbornness in observing Shabbos and Yom Tov, along with their declaration of belief in the One G-d, had protected them and saved their lives.

On another occasion, the Germans searched for them in the forest. They concealed themselves in a pile of snow, and the Nazis, not believing that they were hiding there, withdrew and abandoned the search.

THE FIRST LETTER FROM THE REBBE

Rabbi Avraham a"h Tauber was not born into a Chabad family, and he was the only member of his family who became a Lubavitcher chassid. The start of his journey towards the wellspring of chassidus began when he was still a young boy, living with his parents in an displaced persons camp in France, prior to emigrating to Eretz Yisroel with thousands of other Jews. One day, he came to a place where Lubavitcher Chassidim had gathered, and he learned a Chabad niggun from them. From that moment on, he joined the company of the Chassidim and loved to be in their midst. When he arrived in Eretz Yisroel, he looked for a place where he could find Chabad Chassidim. He had a strong desire to learn more niggunim, and so he came to the Ramat Yitzchak Chabad shul in Ramat Gan.

He participated in classes on chassidus and in chassidic farbrengens with the mashpia, Rabbi Meir Shalom Blizhinsky, of blessed memory, and later he would come regularly to the yeshiva in Lud and in Kfar Chabad.

He made his living working for the Employment Service, where he tenaciously waged war for the preservation of the sanctity of Shabbos observance. He inherited

from his parents the importance of having self-sacrifice in keeping the holy day of rest. He often literally endangered his position at work by his stubbornness in this matter.

“I once heard from my father about a job assignment in an orchard, where he was worried that he might be sending young boys to work on Shabbos,” recalls his son, Rabbi Ariel Tauber. “He proceeded to give them severe warnings that anyone who works on Shabbos will not receive further employment – a totally nonstandard warning coming from a branch of the Israeli Ministry of Labor. But he wouldn’t settle for that, and he personally walked into the fields and found one young man who dared to disobey his orders... In general, Shabbos was very holy to my father, and if we would speak on mundane subjects on Shabbos, he would say, ‘On Shabbos, we don’t sell, we don’t buy, and we don’t speak of weekday matters...’

“During the Shmita year, he made an effort to check with the former rav of Komemiyut, a prominent rabbinical authority on the laws of Shmita, to determine whether he could send boys to work in the orchard, even though he had no authority to make such inquiries.”

Rabbi Tauber had a very strong and spirited connection with the mashpia, Rabbi Shlomo Chaim Kesselman. At first, Rabbi Kesselman adamantly refused to accept him to the yeshiva because of his affiliation with the Employment Service, but after he checked into his background, he became quite close to him.

“My father had a very spiritual nature. Anyone who met up with him for whatever reason and spoke with him felt that he could get far more than he could give. You could speak with him about delicate things, matters of the soul,” said R’ Ariel. “It was on this point that the connection was forged between my



father and Rabbi Kesselman. When my father was with him, he felt that he was in the presence of a truly sincere and spiritual figure.

“When we had an opportunity once to speak about Rabbi Kesselman, my father told me that for several days after his passing, he went around totally disconsolate. He felt as if the support upon which he had rested his head had been yanked out of its place. He was completely broken. Then one night, he saw Rabbi Kesselman come to him in a dream, saying to him, ‘R’ Avraham, R’ Avraham, wake up!’ Rabbi Kesselman’s words aroused him from his state of depression and sorrow.

“In general, it was in the yeshiva in Lud with Rabbi Kesselman, that my father came fully involved with Lubavitch. He began conducting himself, both outwardly and inwardly, as a Chassid in all matters – wearing a hat and jacket, and of course, not touching his beard.”

On the subject of a beard, one of the first letters that Rabbi Tauber received from the Rebbe MH”M dealt with this issue. He had already reached marriageable age and had received some highly regarded suggestions for shidduchim, on the condition that he would trim his beard, which he of course refused.

As a Chassid, he took no steps without consulting the Rebbe first.

In response to this question, he received a clear answer from the Rebbe, stating that since he was acting in accordance with the instructions of the Tzemach Tzedek forbidding any cutting of the beard, he should make no changes in this custom. However, if his plan was merely to arrange his beard with a comb – even though there are those who stringently refrain from touching the hairs of the beard in any way – this is permissible, and he will thereby fulfill the mitzvah of honoring his mother.

The Rebbe responded in this letter to his concerns that the beard might interfere with shidduchim. He wrote as follows: **“It is amazing to even consider this, since the position of our Sages, of blessed memory, is stated explicitly *without any disagreement* that the thirteen tikkunim of the beard are the means for spiritual influence and receiving Divine blessing, and it is clear that they only help in desirable matters, and particularly a truly good shidduch.”** (The letter in full is printed in Igros Kodesh, Vol. 20, pg. 182.)

Even before this correspondence, Rabbi Tauber had been privileged to receive letters from the Rebbe. After

During another yechidus, my parents asked for a bracha for more children, as they only had one daughter at the time. The Rebbe took out a silver dollar from the Rebbe Rayatz's box, gave it to them, and blessed them with more children. I was born not long afterwards.

he wrote to the Rebbe about his life and asked for the Rebbe's bracha, he received a reply in a letter from the 9th of Nissan, 5719:

"I confirm receipt of his letter from Erev Purim, in which he writes a summary of his life and his current efforts to influence the youth and bring them closer to Yiddishkait and to mitzvos in general, and to matters of chassidus in particular.

"And my hope is strong that he will not settle for his activities up until now, rather in the words of the Mishna, 'For a mitzvah brings another mitzvah', appropriate for the command 'one increases in matters of holiness', he should increase in this as much as possible.

"And may it be G-d's Will that he should succeed and see the fruits of his labors, and this is the merit of the many, those whom he influences with his help, as the G-dly soul within each of them has a covenant with our Father in Heaven, as is written, 'I sleep (as our Rabbis explain, in the exile) but my heart is awake (for G-d, His Torah, and His mitzvos). And in particular, as we are in the month of Nissan, the month of redemption from all matters that distract us from serving Hashem with joy and gladness of heart, and may G-d Almighty grant him success in bringing good news in all the aforementioned."

He would often tell his son that when he received a letter from the Rebbe, he wouldn't dare open it until he had immersed himself in a mikveh, davened Mincha with the Vidui from Yom Kippur, and learned chassidus. Only then would he open the Rebbe's holy correspondence...

YOM TOV MEAL AT THE REBBE'S TABLE

The first time he traveled to Beis Chayeinu was after his wedding, when he won a raffle for an airline ticket. He was faced with a bit of indecision over whether he should travel with his wife or by himself. On the one hand, it was during the first year of his marriage, but on the other hand, the cost of a plane ticket to New York was enormous in those days, far more than he could allow himself. Yet, he couldn't let a trip like this pass by, especially after he had won the raffle... They posed the question to the Rebbe, who referred them to the then-rav of Kfar Chabad, Rabbi Shneur Zalman Garelik, of blessed memory, and he gave his consent.

Among the privileges granted to the winner of a raffle to travel to "Beis Chayeinu" was dining at the Rebbe's table on Motzaei Yom Tov in the Rebbe Rayatz's apartment. Rabbi Tauber trembled with great emotion on that occasion.

At first he didn't want to eat, until someone explained to him that if he wouldn't eat, the Rebbe would

begin to inquire and this would just cause him more embarrassment, so he made a supreme effort to put the food into his mouth. "In later years, my father told me about the manner of conduct that he saw at this seuda. Among other things, he saw that between the fish and meat courses, the Rebbe would wipe the cup, his lips, and his eyes. The fish was prepared without seasoning and made very salty."

On the second night of Rosh Hashanah, Rabbi Tauber didn't come to the Yom Tov meal, and the Rebbe asked where the guest was who had come from Eretz Yisroel... They went outside to look for him, but they couldn't find him. Unaware that he had been invited for this night's meal as well, he went to eat at the home at one of the Chassidim living in the community.

When the secretary told him later that they were looking for him, he was deeply sorry that he missed the opportunity. He asked if they could let him in on the next occasion, and he came for Motzaei Yom Kippur. "My father told me that he heard the Rashag ask the Rebbe if putting honey on the table for the Motzaei Yom Kippur meal is in accordance with halacha or merely custom. The Rebbe replied that if they put it on the table, it's meant to be eaten.

"My father would eventually have the privilege of going in several times for 'yechidus' and receiving numerous letters. The Rebbe always told him that he is a Kohen and he must bless Jews, mentioning this subject during every yechidus my father had with him. My father religiously followed these instructions, and it was a most characteristic occurrence to see him blessing Jews anywhere and anytime.

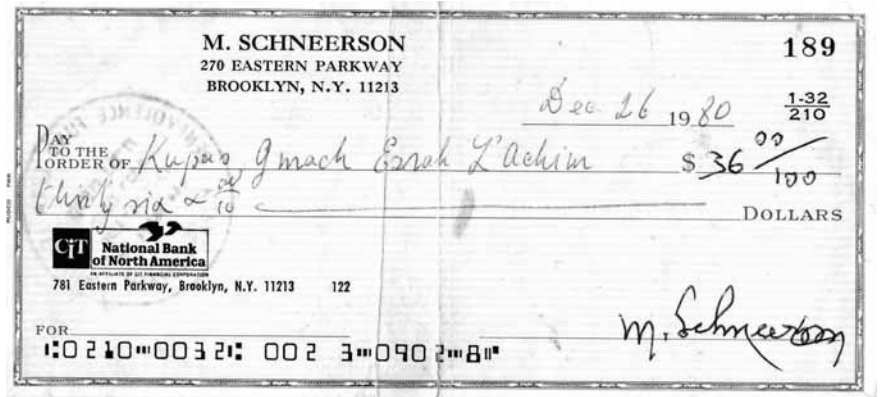
"Once when I was a boy, I went in for yechidus with my father, and the Rebbe said, 'You are a Kohen. Bless the Jewish People, and in this merit, G-d will bless you.' Father took the Rebbe's words with the

utmost seriousness. He would bless every Jew that he met in a deep and most heartfelt manner. During the Shiva, I heard stories from people blessed by my father, and the brachos were subsequently realized and they experienced various forms of personal salvation. Once at 'lekach' distribution, my father came late, and the Rebbe smiled and asked, 'Kohanim are supposed to be prompt. This is promptness?'

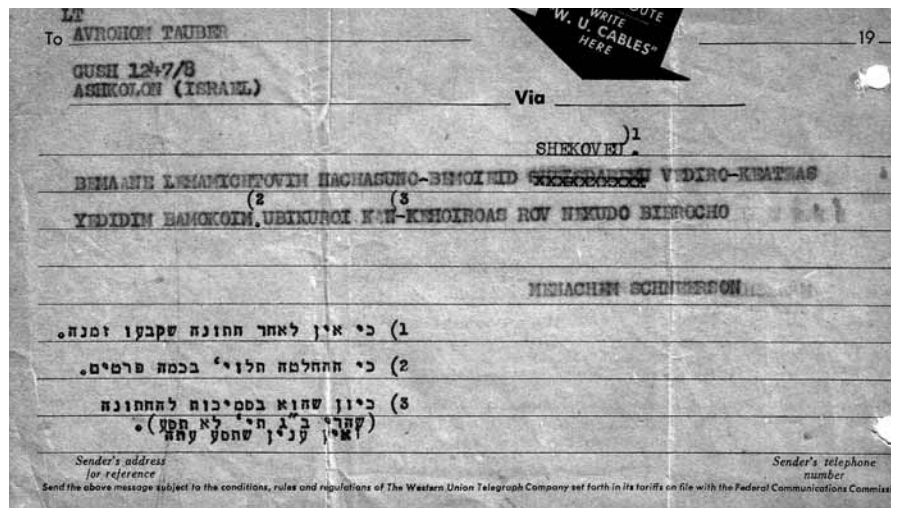
"It's interesting to note that in the first letters the Rebbe wrote to my father, the title 'Kohen' was not written, but after his first visit to 'Beis Chayeinu', the Rebbe added the title 'Kohen' in all subsequent correspondences.

"As I have told, my father was a very spiritual Jew, and on more than one occasion, he felt that things were going to happen that eventually did. During one yechidus, he asked the Rebbe what to do on this matter. The Rebbe became quite serious and said that since no one knows exactly from which spiritual powers this derives, it would be appropriate not to use them. During another yechidus, my parents asked for a bracha for more children, as they only had one daughter at the time. The Rebbe took out a silver dollar from the Rebbe Rayatz's box, gave it to them, and blessed them with more children. I was born not long afterwards. In general, my father was often privileged to receive many unique expressions of closeness from the Rebbe.

"My father was very active in the Rebbe's holy mitzvah campaigns. He would primarily work in the branches of HaShomer HaTzair, and he brought many in their ranks to the wellsprings of chassidus. On one occasion, my father made certain to arrange for shmura matzos at the Pesach 'Seder' at one of the most leftist kibbutzim in the country. When the kibbutz directors found out about it, they became extremely angry. Their complaint:



A \$36 check that Rabbi Tauber received with the Rebbe's holy signature



A telegram from the Rebbe with instructions for his pre-wedding trip to Beis Chayeinu

The kibbutz tables are used to serve treif and pork *r"l*, how could anyone dare to bring matzos?!... Their *pintele Yid* brought forth a spark without their even realizing it. My father told this to the Rebbe during a yechidus, and the Rebbe gave a big smile. It was clearly evident that the matter brought the Rebbe a great deal of satisfaction."

ORGANIZING A "CHABAD EVENING"...

For years, he davened regularly in the Chabad shul of Ramat Gan's Ramat Yitzchak neighborhood. One person who remembers him well from those years is Rabbi Yosef Hartman. "I remember the first day that he came to the shul. It simply

wasn't possible to miss his presence. He was a very tall Jew, and he had soon become a regular guest during davening and farbrengens. Despite the fact that his parents lived in the HaPoel HaMizrachi neighborhood, he would walk for half an hour to come to the shul. Already as a young man, he was working in the Kfar Saba branch of the government Employment Service, and he had a special connection with the kibbutz members. He had no qualms about working with them.

"You have to remember that we're talking about the years when the State of Israel was first established, and there was a lot of hatred towards religion. He would succeed in getting into homes inhabited by kibbutz members who

had come on official missions to various cities, and he made significant achievements with them. He would bring them for Shabbos to the yeshiva in Lud, go with them to the mikveh, get them aliyos to the Torah, and they would write letters to the Rebbe. The secret to his success was his simplicity. He was not a gaon, but he was very sociable, friendly, and above all, patient. His truth won over their hearts.

“During Sukkos, we would leave shul after davening and go out to give other Jews the opportunity of fulfilling the mitzvah of blessing the lulav and esrog. He wouldn’t pass anyone up. Once someone came up to us and asked what we were doing with a lemon in the middle of October. My father was not deterred by the question, and he eventually convinced the man to fulfill the mitzvah.

For the traditional second round of Hakafo in Eretz Yisroel on Motzaei Shmini Atzeres/Simchas Torah, he would bring numerous kibbutz members to the celebrations in Kfar Chabad, where they danced together until their last drop of strength. My father was generally a happy and optimistic person. He would be among the more joyous participants at weddings. He loved to dance. I can still remember him dancing at the yeshiva together with Rabbi Binyomin Mizrachi, who was short, while my father was tall, as they placed their hand on each other’s shoulder and away they went...”

One day during the Shiva, the family was comforted by the arrival of Rabbi Yekutiel Green, a close friend of Rabbi Tauber, who told them stories about their father and his tremendous devotion to the Rebbe’s mitzvaim and activities with young people, especially kibbutznikim. A few days before Sukkos more than fifty years ago, he met him on the street in Ramat Gan and said, ‘You see that building in

front of us? A group of young people from the Shomer HaTzair live there. Let’s go up and talk to them.’

They went up together, and my father knocked on the door and went in. The young people were shocked and stunned by the presence of this ultra-Orthodox Jew who suddenly entered their fortress. He was not affected by their response, and he opened a discussion with them that soon began to flow. He eventually got them to agree to make a “Chabad evening” in their apartment... It turned out that they had quite a few questions about Judaism, and they were happy that a rabbinical authority would provide them with proper answers. Rabbi Tauber brought a lecturer with him to speak with the group, and they were most pleased.

He organized many similar Chabad evenings with this same crowd. He would plan out the initial preparations for the Chabad lecturers whom he would invite to speak in private homes or on kibbutzim. Dozens of people were brought closer to Yiddishkait in this fashion.

Rabbi Green then told a story about a problem that Rabbi Tauber said deeply troubled him: It was just two days before Sukkos, and many Jews living in Ramat Gan were neither building sukkos nor did they know what a sukka was, and they had no place to celebrate the holiday. He arranged with Rabbi Green that they would go together the following day to Bialik Street, where he would show him the best place in town to build a sukka. The very next day, Rabbi Tauber took him to the street across from City Hall and showed him the location – an abandoned building belonging to one of the local Zionist political parties. The problem was that they didn’t have the necessary permits to build a sukka there. They stood

there for about two hours and tried to find a solution.

As they started walking, they met R’ Zusha Wilimovsky, the “Partisan”. They asked his advice on what to do, and like a true partisan, he told them to follow him. After walking for several minutes, they arrived at a large villa. R’ Zusha gave a knock, and an elegant-looking woman opened the door. R’ Zusha saluted and said, “Hello, Mrs. Krinitzi, wife of His Honor, the Mayor. I am accompanied here by two representatives of the Chabad Youth Organization in Ramat Gan. They want to give every Jew the opportunity to bless on the lulav and esrog in a sukka, and you must help them.” She stood before the three of them, totally stunned.

At first, she tried to explain that her husband, the mayor, will return later and he will speak to them then, but R’ Zusha wouldn’t let her evade the issue, until she promised to talk to her husband about giving a permit for a sukka in the city’s center. She told them to come to his office in City Hall the following morning. After a few minor delays, they were ushered into his office and presented their request. The mayor tried to tell them that the central synagogue is already building a sukka, but Rabbi Tauber explained that the shul’s sukka is for Jews who are looking for a sukka, whereas he’s searching for Jews who aren’t looking to go into a sukka. The mayor was pleased by this answer and gave his consent.

As Divine Providence would have it, all the municipal department heads were sitting in the mayor’s office, and the mayor turned to the director of the city’s beautification division and instructed him to accept the task of ensuring that the young Chabad chassidim will receive all the assistance they required. With this strong mayoral backing, the sukka was built that very day. It was manned every day of the Sukkos holiday by Rabbi Tauber, Rabbi

Green, and several yeshiva bachurim who came to help. As a result, hundreds of people were given the privilege of blessing on the lulav and esrog in a sukka.

This was the first time that a sukka of this type had been built in Ramat Gan – the result of inner chassidic stubbornness, one of the more prominently characteristic traits of R' Avraham.

AN UNOFFICIAL PUBLIC FIGURE

After his wedding, he went to live in Ashkelon, and he became the Rebbe's first shliach to operate in the city. In accordance with the Rebbe's explicit instructions, he moved to Nachlat Har Chabad when it was founded in 5729, and he was among the first thirteen residents in that community.

At one of the private audiences that he was privileged to have with the Rebbe, he brought the Rebbe a ceremonial key. The Rebbe looked at the key and asked if it was copied here or it had been brought from Eretz Yisroel. "From Israel," Rabbi Tauber replied. The Rebbe then asked if he had decided from the outset to present the key or if the decision had been made after he arrived. It was only when Rabbi Tauber said that the decision had already been made in Eretz Yisroel that the Rebbe agreed to take the key.

Even while living in the Chabad community of Kiryat Malachi, he never ceased his involvement in spreading Yiddishkait. Near Nachlat Har Chabad was the settlement of "Orot", which had a synagogue used only for bar-mitzvahs and other special occasions. Rabbi Tauber was the first to organize prayer services there for the High Holidays.

R' Ariel Tauber said, "My father once told me that there are those who travel to the Rebbe and there are those who fulfill the Rebbe's will,



Rabbi Tauber receiving a bracha and a dollar for tz'daka from the Rebbe

and the Rebbe wants that there should be a minyan there... He would go from door to door and ask local residents to come and help make the minyan. In his merit, the Jews living in the settlement who wanted to daven could do so. He gave a blessing for a good and sweet new year to all those who agreed to come to the minyan. For many years after we had moved to B'nei Brak, my father continued to travel there for the High Holidays and daven with the local residents."

One of Rabbi Tauber's characteristic traits was his charitable nature, which he manifested very discreetly. When he would hear about an opportunity to someone a favor, he would jump immediately as if he had found some vast treasure.

R' Ariel Tauber: "I was once met in the street by the gabbai of the Azhorover Rebbe, who told me: 'I worked in some factory when your father was the director of the Dan regional Employment Service, and I saw how he came with another Jew to the factory manager and demanded that he find a position for this Jew. He didn't send messengers, rather he helped him get a job

himself, which he also did for many hundreds of other Jews as well.

"There was a Jew who was fired after breaking the rules at his place of work, and he started looking for another job. However, every time he found a potential source of employment, the new employers would inquire about what had occurred at his previous job, and the old employers would tell about his violations there. This painful saga continued for several months until this Jew was literally unable to buy his daily bread. My father understood that there was a serious problem here, and he picked up the telephone and called the previous employer and 'gave him a piece of his mind'. 'You may be right about what happened in the past,' my father told him, 'but this Jew has already done t'shuva...'

When I went around with my father in the hospital during his illness, several people came up to us and reminded him that he had found them their jobs." R' Ariel states that his father had never told him any of these stories. Anyone acquainted with him knew that he spoke little about himself and his activities.

In later years, Rabbi Tauber

worked for Yeshivas “Tomchei T’mimim” in B’nei Brak, helping them in the area of fundraising. Rabbi Mendelson discussed his charitable activities, such as one occasion when Rabbi Tauber entered the ‘zal’ and saw a bachur with torn shoes and a tattered jacket. He went up to Rabbi Mendelson and told him to take the bachur to a clothing store and dress him from head to foot, and he would cover the expenses.

The gabbai of the shul in Neve Achiezer recalled how Rabbi Tauber gave a large sum of money twice a year for distribution to the needy. His wife and children never knew anything about this.

Rabbi Tauber was known as a very practical individual. He wasn’t the type to pontificate in lengthy speeches, and then do nothing when it came time for action. He spoke little and did much.

Last Sukkos, he asked why no one had brought a mashpia to the Chabad shul in B’nei Brak to make a farbrengen. When they told him that there was no sukka, R’ Avraham asked how much it would cost, and he proceeded to take the full amount of his pocket. However, it turned out that there was no room for a sukka large and spacious enough to hold the farbrengen. What did he do? He went in to see the Machnovka Rebbe, whose beis midrash was located across the way, and he requested his permission to use his large sukka. The rebbe replied that while he made a “tish” for his chassidim every night, he would finish the “tish” earlier than usual on that night to make room afterwards for a chassidic farbrengen in his sukka... Thus, a chassidic farbrengen was held that year in the sukka of the Machnovka Rebbe...

The mitzvah of honoring one’s parents was deeply rooted in Rabbi Tauber’s soul. His father was privileged to live a very long life, passing away just six months ago past the age of one hundred. R’ Ariel

said, “My father would visit his father, my grandfather, at the geriatric center where he stayed, providing for all of his needs as if he was his personal attendant. There were times that his father would complain about the food there, and my father went into the kitchen and prepared all the food again from scratch for him. Even during the difficult times of his illness, he continued to visit his father and wouldn’t show him any signs of the suffering he was enduring. He did everything out of a sense of great joy, not as if it was some kind of burden on his shoulders.”

During the last four years after his illness was revealed and his health weakened him considerably, Rabbi Tauber continued his charitable activities and acted as if his body and his soul were two totally separate entities. “In this last year, we hoped that there was a doctor in the Canary Islands who could improve the situation. We traveled there together, and due to our outwardly ultra-Orthodox appearance, numerous Jews came and greeted us. Many of them even gave us their addresses. When my father returned to Eretz Yisroel, disappointed that the treatment had proved ineffective, he decided to establish a connection with those Jews he had met. While he lay in bed suffering with great pain, he was involved in other things far more important.

“Even during the more difficult days of the last months of his life, he continued to maintain his stringent mitzvah observance as always, and he constantly apologized for all the great trouble he was causing everyone due to his illness. He was indeed a most gentle and noble person, who never brought harm to anyone. He always knew how to give, not to receive, and it bothered him very much that people made such an effort for him.

“During one of the more difficult

treatments, a draining tube was inserted into his body. The doctors forbade him from bathing himself during this period. What deeply troubled him was the mikveh. ‘What about the mikveh?’ he asked the scoffing physicians, who said that it would be impossible for him to go to the mikveh. Yet, their clear instructions didn’t last for very long, as my father simply could not go without spiritual purification. Thus, one morning, he stubbornly went out and immersed himself in a mikveh.

*

Everyone called Rabbi Tauber “Avraham and a half”, because of how tall he was. There were also those who called him “HaKohen HaGadol”. One person who came to comfort the family during the “Shiva” had his own definition: a large soul in a large body.

He is survived by his wife, son, two daughters, and countless friends and acquaintances who are pained and saddened by this tremendous loss that has left a deep void in the Chabad community of B’nei Brak. His funeral was held on Motzaei Yom Kippur, and culminated with his burial in the “Zichron Meir” cemetery.

*

The Tauber family is collecting stories in connection with their father, and they wish to thank in advance all those who knew him and could tell about him for the purpose of preparing an assortment of such stories for publication. They can be contacted by phone at 972-75-737-0227 or via e-mail at RabbiATauber@gmail.com.

(This translation is dedicated to the young new soldier in Tzivos Hashem, Ido ben R’ Yisroel Yosef HaKohen Hoffman, born in the Holy City of Tzfas on the 19th of Tishrei, 5771. May he be a source of blessing and much Yiddishe and chassidishe nachas to his parents, his grandparents, the Rebbe MH”M, and all Am Yisroel.)

THE UNHEEDED WARNING

By Shai Gefen

Israeli state archives recently released classified documents about the 1973 Yom Kippur War. The protocols reveal secret meetings and demonstrate how correct the Rebbe was in his outcries at the time.

If you look at the Rebbe's sichos on the topic of Eretz Yisroel, you see how right the Rebbe was. However, it's not every day that we have the opportunity to examine the sichos that were said in light of the security and political situation, and compare them to the protocols of the politicians and senior military men here in Eretz Yisroel. There was a time that the Rebbe said things that were not understandable. Chassidim interpreted this as "Heavenly matters," but there were some who knew that the Rebbe was privy to information that the public was unaware of.

Israeli state archives recently released classified documents about the Yom Kippur War and those who directed it, i.e. Prime Minister Golda Meir and Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, ministers and IDF chief of staff Dovid "Dado" Elazar. When you read these documents you see how a leader sat in his room in Brooklyn and understood better than the military leaders sitting closer to the front, what is best for the Jewish people. He knew what advice to give as opposed to the politicians who are exposed as ready to forego the nation because of "what will the non-Jews say," a consideration that, unfortunately, is still prevalent today.

SHOULD WE CARRY OUT A PREEMPTIVE STRIKE?

One of the disagreements that we see in the protocols between Golda Meir, Moshe Dayan, and Dado is whether to carry out a preemptive strike before war breaks out. The chief of staff was in favor of calling up the reserves and doing as they did in the Six Day War but Golda Meir and Dayan refused.

Dayan: "We cannot allow ourselves to do it this time ... based on the information we have now, we cannot launch a preemptive strike ... not even five minutes beforehand."

Dado: Such a strike would be a



huge advantage and save many lives.

Golda Meir: The heart is tempted but we shall see ... It is very tempting to launch a preemptive strike but this is not 1967. This time, the world won't believe us.

In order to understand the background, we must begin by saying that already three years before the outbreak of war the Rebbe warned against the ceasefire that Israel signed with Egypt. The Rebbe warned that this ceasefire would be used to the advantage of the Egyptians who would arm themselves and prepare for the next war. This is what the Rebbe said, Parshas Mattos-Massei 5730/1970:

In addition to all this, the matter is very simple and clear. This ceasefire is a diversion since during this time Nasser wants to build up and bring weapons into the Suez Canal. Now, the weapons bought and received from the French and Russians are in Libya and waiting to be shipped. They are waiting for the moment when they will stop the bombing and then they can send all the weapons and start construction there.

Do they really not know that the ceasefire is absolutely illogical and a game to the Egyptians? They certainly know and understand this. The problem is that they are afraid to say this to "good friends" – the Americans. And even though the Americans understand how illogical this is, and although Jews know that this is what they are thinking in the US, they are still afraid to say it to them. The reason they are afraid to tell the non-Jews the firm truth, is that they lack faith in Hashem, Creator of the world. Although Hashem openly showed that "he saw they have no more strength," in that the Jews won in a miraculous manner both in the Six Day War and the War of Independence, they still don't



believe in Hashem.

THE REBBE CRIES: WHY HAVE I COME AND THERE IS NO MAN ...

On Parshas Eikev, the Rebbe referred to the words of the Haftora and cried. He thus alluded to what was to come when the leaders were blinded and the public did not know what was really going on. The Rebbe hinted that a bloody war was about to happen because of Israeli weakness:

... Instead of bombing and immediately destroying all these fortifications, they sent a protest to Washington while Egypt continues to bring in more weaponry and does not stop fortifying. If they continue with these fortifications, heaven forbid, even Phantom jets will not be able to destroy these fortifications!

Nasser maintains that you knew about the breaking of the ceasefire on our side for six days and kept quiet. Why are you suddenly screaming now? And there is nothing to say.

And when the military asks: If you announced a ceasefire which is

obviously being used to fortify and move forward missiles, what was the purpose of all those korbanos that fell, of the blood that was spilled, and the enormous expenditures of money? They are told that since we want peace we first need a ceasefire, as a first step towards peace.

It is known that during the Second World War (as well as in the war that preceded it) the vanquished side asked that before they begin negotiations for peace they should make a ceasefire, and all the military men opposed this. They explained that they would use the ceasefire to fortify and a ceasefire would reduce the chances for peace!

(The Rebbe concluded with copious crying): My teacher was happy when he found a verse connected to current events. Today, when I read the Haftora I saw that there is a hint to the serious situation we are in now. There it says, "Why did I come and there is no man; I called and nobody responded, is My hand short (of strength) for redemption?"

Three years later the consequences were severe. Egypt

attacked Israel on Yom Kippur. The Israeli government was afraid to carry out a preemptive strike despite knowledge of the planned attack, as we can read in the protocols, despite the request of those in security and the IDF.

BECAUSE OF POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS, JEWISH LIVES ARE LOST

In a sicha of 3 Tammuz 5742/1982 (edited) the Rebbe spoke sadly about politicians who did not listen to the opinions of those in charge of security during the Yom Kippur War:

This is not the first time that they are making this mistake, i.e. to favor the opinion of politicians over the opinions of top military men in security matters. It is an error that repeats itself: with the signing of the unfortunate Camp David Accords, the Yom Kippur War, the Six Day War, the war in Sinai. Each time they favored the view of the politicians even though this was diametrically opposed to the view of the military which bases itself on reasons of security, as they said directly (and they said this also during Operation Peace in Galilee) that this will lead to additional korbanos, heaven forbid.

Thanks to political considerations of politicians, Jewish korbanos are lost (each of which is an “entire world”) for no purpose! In connection with the Yom Kippur War, the prime minister at the time admitted that if they listened to the views of those in security and would have announced a call-up at the right time, they would have saved (in the natural way of things) hundreds of Jewish korbanos! As she herself publicized in writing and in print, “so that they hear and fear.”

These hundreds of korbanos were certain that at least from now

on they would not repeat this mistake, but nevertheless they repeated the same mistake with Camp David. Their fear of the non-Jews is so great that they act in a way that the non-Jews themselves never thought to demand of them!

The real reason for this fear of non-Jews is – the fear and abjection before the goyishkait within, which is the animal soul, “the foreign god within you.” There is no greater galus than when a person is afraid of the goyishkait within him. And the more distinguished his personal position and job, the deeper the galus!

NOT CALLING UP THE RESERVES

Golda Meir and Moshe Dayan agreed not to call up the reserves because of political reasons of “what will the non-Jews say.” Dado was in favor of calling them up in order to have the advantage over the enemy.

Dado: It can have an impact because the Arabs will realize they lost the advantage of surprise. They will say that we called them up in order to start a war. Better they should say we started and we won. They’ll say it regardless.

Dayan: I am afraid that all the media will say that we are going on the attack and are carrying out a full mobilization before even one shot was fired.

The politicians carried the day and the reserves were not called up and the war broke out suddenly without Israel being able to defend its soldiers.

The Rebbe, in a sicha said a few years later, focused on this point – on the hesitation to call up the reserves because of fear of what would be said.

On the holy day they held a meeting. Security experts testified and said explicitly that if they wanted to prevent the war and

avoid korbanos, the only way is to mobilize the forces immediately and to even publicize and announce that they are doing so, without reckoning with those who are fearful. The conclusion of that meeting was not only wouldn’t they call them up but they would even announce that they are not calling them up so they would be spoken well of by the nations of the world.

At the time, the experts said – but it will cost us in many korbanos since there can’t be a war without korbanos, but this did not help. We know who voted in favor of no call-up and at the meeting itself they had testimony from military men who said that because of the security situation they had to call them up if they wanted to prevent korbanos.

They did the opposite of the p’sak din in Shulchan Aruch which says that under these circumstances you must listen to the security people (and the obligation to listen to them is only when they are speaking from the perspective of security needs. And not as they said at the end of the meeting that if so-and-so [Golda Meir] says, for political reasons, not to call them up, he would agree with her since then he would be leaving the category of “security” and becoming a “politician” – and then they have no right to express a view concerning danger to life associated with security). But they did as the politicians wanted and this war cost in korbanos, may Hashem have mercy, more than in all the previous wars! (12 Tamuz 5739)

PREVENTING THE CAPTURE OF DAMASCUS

Dayan: I suggest asking for approval to bomb within Damascus.

Golda Meir: Inside the city?

Dayan: Inside the city and its environs. We have to break the

Syrians. They are shooting FROG (Free Rocket Over Ground) rounds for two days already. We have to get out of this situation. The goal is to finish on this front.

Dado supported bombing Damascus: Syria is in terrible shape. Attacking Damascus is vital to break Syria.

He added that he also wanted to attack the presidential palace in Damascus: But first Damascus. It will dramatize a turning point in the war. Turning points are achieved under pressure. Whether it's the command center, the presidential palace, Assad.

As the protocols go on what you read time and again is Golda Meir's reluctance to bomb Damascus despite the pleading on behalf of such a strike by the military leaders.

IDF Intelligence chief Zeira: There are things outside the city [Damascus] and they are significant: Damascus' electric power plant, the bunker of the air force outside the city, the Al Khums power station and the oil refineries. All that will be impactful but not as impactful as [bombing] the central area of Damascus. That will be far more impactful. The air force has the ability to do both this and that.

Dayan: [trying to calm down Golda Meir who is afraid of bombing in the center of Damascus and the world's reactions] If the air force would select their targets carefully and to as great an extent as possible prevent it from deviating into neighborhoods, I would approve it at this stage.

Golda Meir: I would like to start with other objectives ...

At that time, the Rebbe spoke about conquering Damascus which sounded "far out," but the Rebbe insisted. Now that we can read the protocols, the Rebbe's view is seen in an entirely different light:

... They say that now there are problems with Damascus. It was mentioned on Simchas Torah that



The bridge over the Suez Canal during Yom Kippur War

they should have advanced the 15 or 20 remaining kilometers and conquered Damascus since at that time there was nothing preventing them from doing so. If they had done so then, they would not have all the problems today and they would even have extricated all the captives from there. At that time it did not take excessive effort to advance those kilometers since there was no opposition from the other side.

The government should just not have given the army the order to stop. The reason they gave the order to stop is because they claimed that the US will be upset if they do so. The non-Jew will be upset regardless and even wants them to conquer Damascus because that would prevent all the problems and difficulties that come from there. They would have conquered Damascus and although they would return it afterwards, it would remain an abject kingdom.

The reason for all this is that they fall before the non-Jew and are afraid lest they do not find favor in his eyes. The problems come from this fearfulness and abjectness. (Shabbos Parshas Emor, 19 Iyar, 5734/1974)

THE REBBE SEND A PERSONAL MESSENGER TO DAYAN

I heard an amazing first person story a few years ago that now, with the publicizing of the protocols, has documented proof. In the first days of the war, the Rebbe's office called Yosef Chachnover who was a senior member of the security apparatus in Israel and asked him to convey a message to Moshe Dayan in the Rebbe's name that the Rebbe said to conquer Damascus immediately.

Chachnover was very uncertain as to whether he ought to "bother" Moshe Dayan at this critical time but he realized he could not play around with instructions from the Rebbe and he did as he was told. He told Dayan who sat in "the pit" in the military headquarters in Tel Aviv what the Rebbe said. Dayan responded, "The Lubavitcher Rebbe is correct; I think the same, but unfortunately there is no one to talk to ..."

From the protocols recently publicized we see that Dayan also thought of bombing Damascus as the chief of staff did but could not get permission from the prime minister who opposed it along with other ministers.

“At the end of the conversation the Rebbe asked us to return home right after the hakafos and call Israel and convey an urgent message in his name to the heads of state, to give the order to conquer Damascus without fear of anyone.

They could have conquered Damascus on the very day they began the attack. The Syrians had fled and there were no defenders and there was no army to oppose them. If they had done so, then they wouldn't even have their capitol city and then Syria would immediately agree to a peace agreement since their capitol city was taken from them and then Saudi Arabia would not have been able to enter the war and Jordan would not have felt the need to enter. They would have been free of an additional front, and they could have freed up 40,000 soldiers from this front as well as tanks and numerous weapons.

Even in Washington they waited for them to conquer Damascus since they want to live in tranquility and without irritations and so they want to help Israel. However, they don't want it to be said that they are involved in the war so they want to be able to say not to conquer it but in order to be able to help the Jews they want to get rid of an additional front. They want Israel to present them with a done deal and then they can say to everyone that they had no part in it, the proof being that they said such-and-such and the Jews did the opposite. But the truth is they don't want them to listen but to do the opposite.

On the other hand, when there was a government session in which they discussed how to act regarding a certain matter, the answer was:

let us hear what Washington says. They tried to keep this secret but it did not work and even in Arab capitals they know about it since their spies in Israel made sure to ask at the government session why they did not do thus, in order to hear the answer: so as not to anger Washington.

And when I asked why they did not conquer Damascus and they told me, “Because there are cliffs and boulders that are hard to conquer – if I hadn't heard it from him directly I would not have believed it. And when you hear an answer like this, you realize that the question is that much stronger.

The young people [the warring soldiers] want to advance – they have nothing to do there. They brought in thousands of soldiers to the area and do not advance, not here nor there. It is natural for a soldier in war to want to either finish the war or go home, but over there, they are holding a large army inactive and in order to distract them from the fact that they are doing nothing, they bring singers from New York and London.

I AGITATED AT THE TIME ABOUT CONQUERING DAMASCUS

In a letter that the Rebbe wrote to Rabbi Jakobovits, chief rabbi of Britain, he wrote about bombing Damascus in the Yom Kippur War (the letter was written in Elul

5741/1981):

Another development that occurred lately substantiated the view that I expressed during the Yom Kippur War. I agitated then, based on the halacha that you must pursue the enemy “until it has fallen,” i.e. to conquer Damascus – not to hold on to it but in order to ensure that it will “never” represent another threat. They all knew then that Soviet advisors were there with command posts etc. Only a few hours of conquering it would have sufficed to achieve the goal, but for “odd” reasons it was not done. The consequences of the failure are demonstrable...

Recently, one of the members of the consulate at that time, Aryeh Morgenstern (from the Shalem center in Yerushalayim) revealed what he heard from the Rebbe when he visited on Simchas Torah during hakafos:

“... A few days after the outbreak of war, on the night of Simchas Torah 5734 which for us was ‘Yom Tov Sheini shel Galuyos,’ Menachem Levin and I arrived at the Rebbe's beis midrash in Crown Heights after Maariv and before hakafos. The two of us stood near him and for over an hour, before hakafos, the Rebbe spoke to us while the congregation waited silently, astonished by the delay. The Chassidim, who were riveted by the unusual sight of the Rebbe talking with two Israeli representatives, realized that the conversation certainly dealt with the war going on.

“A feeling of holy awe permeated the conversation. The Rebbe spoke to us about the significance of the war, mainly about the importance of the period in terms of the Geula process. Since I was very excited and moved I don't remember whether the Rebbe used the term ‘war of Gog and Magog’ but that was the gist of what he said.

“The Rebbe asked repeatedly and sharply why the military was halted on the Golan Heights and why IDF forces that had already pushed back the Syrian army had been prevented from advancing and conquering Damascus. At this time, it should be noted, the IDF had been extricated from the defensive position it had been at the start of the war and had gone on the offensive and were already nearly thirty kilometers from the Syrian capital. It would have been possible to continue the momentum of the attack and conquer Damascus and decisively determine the outcome of the war.

“We tried to excuse the process and say it had to do with the fear of Russia carrying out its threats and getting involved in the war on the side of Damascus if the Israelis moved on the Syrian capital. We also said that apparently the Israeli government wanted to concentrate its forces on the southern front in order to decisively rout the Egyptian army beyond the Canal.

“The Rebbe dismissed these points one by one. He maintained that entering the Egyptian domain was a strategic mistake for it would not be able to change the balance of power in Israel’s favor. He said that the most serious problem the Israelis had was the war with Syria and that until it was ended decisively, the Arabs’ war against the very existence of the State of Israel would not end. Since Damascus is an ancient historic city, he said, it represents the stability of the Moslem world and consequently, the threat against the Jewish people. Attacking this symbol would fundamentally shake up the entire Arab world.

“The Rebbe mixed quotes from the Midrash and Kabbala into his political commentary about Damascus being the thorn in the flesh of Yerushalayim. He repeated several times the well-known Gemara (Megilla 6a) about Caesarea which he compared to the Damascus



The Bar-Lev line, fortifications that were supposed to thwart an Egyptian attack

of today, and Yerushalayim: ‘Caesarea and Yerushalayim, if someone tells you they were both destroyed, don’t believe that. Both are settled, don’t believe them. Caesarea is destroyed and Yerushalayim is settled, Yerushalayim is destroyed and Caesarea is settled – believe that.

“I found it hard to follow the numerous sources and quotes but the Rebbe repeated the Midrash (Shir HaShirim Raba 7:10) that ‘in the future, Yerushalayim will expand on all sides and the gates of Yerushalayim will reach Damascus’ several times.

“At the end of the conversation the Rebbe asked us to return home right after the hakafos and call Israel and convey an urgent message in his name to the heads of state, to give the order to conquer Damascus without fear of anyone.

“Under the impact of the conversation we promised the Rebbe we would do so. Menachem Levin promised to bring the matter to the attention of Golda Meir and I promised to call the heads of Mafdal (the Mizrahi party) and convey what he said in detail.”

THE MIRACLE OF THE YOM KIPPUR WAR IS GREATER THAN THAT OF THE SIX DAY WAR

The paralysis, hesitation, and fear of “what will they say” as well as the complacency of the Israeli politicians of that time, led to disastrous results. The Egyptians and Syrians invaded Israel and toppled all the defensive walls the IDF had erected. The protocols describe the catastrophe:

Yitzchok Rabin: We had a tactical meeting with all the Division Commanders by Gorodish [Chief of the Southern Command, Shmuel “Gorodish” Gonen]. Three divisions: the northern – Bern [Avraham Eden]; the southern – Albert [Avraham Mandler Hy”d]; the center – Arik [Ariel Sharon]. Albert’s Division has taken heavy losses, though I can’t give exact figures. Many tanks have got mired in mud – we’ve lost about 150 tanks. On the [Golan] Heights we lost the same amount. What is the situation there? The issue of the dead and wounded is complicated. There are 400 wounded and 80 dead. Gorodish thinks that by the time of the attack there’ll be 150-200 dead.

Most of our losses are not from tanks but from infantry and anti-tank missiles. There have been just a few losses in tank battles... It seems a minimum of 350 (Egyptian) tanks have crossed (the Suez). It’s probably closer to 500 tanks.

Our ability to reach the bridges, in the meantime, is minimal. The air force is attacking but the results are paltry ... Bern says they are sending people over but it is literally a suicide mission. On the northern axis near Romani, 40-50 people held back an entire brigade. They are fighting. All note that their infantry (maybe commando) is very good.

Despite the dire situation, with

Hashem's great mercy the IDF forces were able to stop the Egyptian and Syrian attack, albeit with many casualties, and were back on the offensive.

From another secret meeting:

"They went south. There are bridges. It is not clear why they [the Egyptians] are not moving with their armored division. Practically, we are not holding them back. From our two tank brigades only a third of the tanks are left. The entire line of the canal – the embankment is in their hands, their infantry plus their anti-tank artillery. Our tanks will only come later... Crews are missing (Bern has 60 tanks with nobody to man them)."

On Parshas Toldos the Rebbe referred to the great miracles of the Yom Kippur War. Despite all the failures of the leaders we experienced open miracles:

But the truth is, in this war it was a big miracle, completely above the natural way of things, far greater than the miracles that took place in the Six Day War.

When the Arabs crossed the Suez Canal and broke the Bar-Lev line, they had nothing in their way and could have reached Tel Aviv

and Yerushalayim without any problem (may it never come to pass what would have happened then). Likewise on the Syrian front.

Nevertheless, they stopped 12 kilometers past the Bar-Lev line and remained there.

The greatest proof to this big miracle that happened here: during the Second World War, the French built a very strong fortification called the Maginot Line (the line in the Sinai was nothing compared to it) and the Nazis, *yimach shmam* came with their entire armored forces and broke through the line (just as they did now) and they conquered France in a day!

Furthermore, in France the Nazis had to go through cities and there was an army in each city. And here, the war was in a desert, against a very small number of soldiers, and despite this (and despite knowing what happened in France and they could have done as the Nazis did) they remained where they were.

The Americans knew what was happening in Eretz Yisroel and thought they would no longer have any concerns regarding Israel (G-d

forbid). Their only concern was that the Russians shouldn't become the only ones in power there.

It was an utter miracle, a miracle not at all hidden within nature. And despite this, they are hiding the truth from the Jewish people and don't tell them that their victory was an utter miracle even when they all know it, since the soldiers saw this with their own eyes and afterwards told this to everyone.

The reason they hide it is because this miracle contradicts "the power and might of my hand."

It's one thing for those who don't believe, just yet, in Toras Moshe but those who are supposed to defend Toras Moshe – why aren't they saying this was a big miracle?

The answer to this appears (as every topic does) in the holy Torah. In Tanach it says that the prophet Yeshaya went to Achaz the king of Yisroel and told him that Yerushalayim is in danger and he could make a miracle. Achaz said: A miracle? No, I don't want miracles.

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