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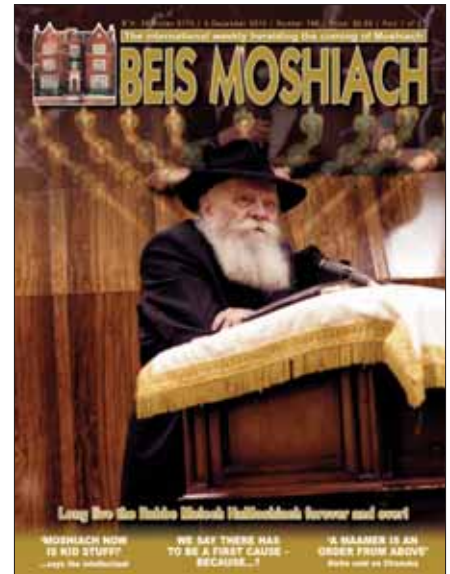
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USA

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

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:

M.M. Hendel

ENGLISH EDITOR:

Boruch Merkur
editor@beismoshiach.org

HEBREW EDITOR:

Rabbi Sholom Yaakov Chazan
editorH@beismoshiach.org

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‘MOSHIACH NOW IS KID STUFF!’

Translated by Boruch Merkur

They argue that clapping hands is the work of children. The children must sing that they want Moshiach now and they don't want to wait, etc., but [an adult, an intellectual] has the capacity to contemplate the essential quality of Moshiach – “My servant shall prosper; he shall be extremely exalted, uplifted, and lofty” – high levels!

‘MOSHIACH NOW’ – HARSH LABOR

When you look at those who are singing and even clapping hands at farbrengens on the Shabbos day it is apparent that their faces are sullen, for they are being compelled to do “harsh labor,” forcing “men to do the work of women” (Sota 11b, beg.).

When you look at them it is indeed very depressing.

They argue that clapping hands is the work of women, of children. They (the children) must sing that they want Moshiach now and they don't want to wait, etc., but [an adult, an intellectual] has the capacity to contemplate the essential quality of Moshiach – [regarding whom G-d proclaims] “My servant shall prosper; he shall be extremely

exalted, uplifted, and lofty” – high levels!

This claim is especially convincing in light of the teaching of the Baal Shem Tov – that a person is present in the place where his thoughts are directed. When one's thoughts, therefore, are on the special qualities of Moshiach, he is found “there,” attaining the virtue of Moshiach himself! Why then must he sing [that he wants Moshiach now]?!

However, since it is forbidden to “separate from the congregation,” one must fulfill his obligation in the presence of his grandson. So he puts his hands together and claps.

LOOK ALIVE IN YIDDISHKAIT

Unfortunately, he behaves like this in all matters connected with the

Rebbes, our leaders:

When it comes to disseminating the wellsprings of chassidus, [for example, he does so halfheartedly, merely fulfilling his obligation]. He goes out and extends (his hand with only) one finger. Similarly with regard to handouts – he gives not just “from the lip and outward” [as is said regarding verbal commitments; i.e., his words are merely lip service; they don't come from the heart] but from the hand and outward!

To be sure, from the perspective of the recipient, it makes no difference whatsoever whether he gives with enthusiasm, with sloth, or simply because others are compelling him to do so, for giving casts the person in the best possible light (*das iz der grester limud z'chus oif im*).

Moreover ... it is brought in Sifri regarding the case where one loses a coin and a poor person finds it that the one who lost it still fulfills the Mitzva of giving charity.

And this is so even if one is regretful of losing the money.

(In fact, according to Torah, it should disturb him to lose money, for “the Torah is sympathetic with regard to the money of Jews.” Indeed, he doesn't know who picked up the money. And even if he does know, he should still be concerned about his loss, because he could have willfully given it to charity, with

a lofty intent, and taking pleasure in doing so, etc.)

As it says in Sifri, one fulfills the Mitzva of giving charity when this transpires, for [irrespective of the giver's intent] the person has received it.

However, where the giver is concerned, [although he has properly fulfilled the Mitzva of giving charity – for this fact is established strictly in virtue of the recipient – nonetheless] his giving is lacking vitality, since it occurred at a time when his G-dly Soul was asleep. (He only managed to succeed in giving charity because his second soul [his Animal Soul] was also asleep.)

One must give willfully and with intent, and with all one's inner faculties.

CLAPPING HANDS: A GREAT ACT OF SELF-SACRIFICE

The same applies to singing and clapping hands:

Clapping hands on Shabbos is indeed a great act of self-sacrifice, for the misnagdim argue that there is a debate among the Acharonim whether it is permissible to clap hands on Shabbos. To that extent, one is endangering himself by clapping his hands on Shabbos, endangering his status as someone who is scrupulous in Mitzvos. Yet he doesn't permit himself to rest on his laurels; he strives towards a higher level of self-sacrifice! ...

In more subtle terms: (Indeed, on Shabbos it is appropriate to speak about the merit of the Jewish people.)

It says that "Sleep on Shabbos is pleasurable." Thus, there are those who are sleeping at the farbrengen.

The same applies in other matters. They sleep during davening, they sleep when learning Torah, they sleep at a seuda – and when they are called up to the Torah, they sleep when saying the blessings!

Although they do fulfill the Mitzva of eating and davening, of getting an aliya to the Torah and so on – they do this in their sleep, for "Sleep on Shabbos is pleasurable"!

Thus, we say to them, on Shabbos there is a manifestation of the G-dly level of Atik, "An open eye that does not drift off," meaning that the whole concept of sleep is not applicable to it. Atik is far beyond the concept of sleep. Atik is the [true] concept of pleasure.

THE EVIL INCLINATION IN A LONG COAT

Therefore, everything must be done with vitality, especially now when we want Moshiach.

Moshiach is the object of desire of the right side of the heart [associated with the Good Inclination]. The left side of the heart [the Evil Inclination] garbs itself in a long coat and says: This is not our way! Our approach is not to make demands of G-d to hurry the advent of Moshiach. Our job is to study Torah and do Mitzvos, and rely on the righteousness of G-d – that surely He will bring Moshiach in the right time.

This is indeed not their approach; it is the approach of the Shulchan Aruch, of the Jewish people at large, and every Jew who davens and knows the meaning of the words he utters!

There is a clear ruling in Shulchan Aruch that one must know the simple meaning of the words when one prays. And even if he has a difficulty with the Rambam which he must resolve, nevertheless, he must have in mind the meaning of the words during prayer!

The Beis Yosef [author of the Shulchan Aruch] was also a man of knowledge, more knowledgeable than this chassid, in fact. Some of the difficulties he had were resolved quickly and others took extra time. He even left some matters with "tzarich iyun (further analysis is

Moshe Rabbeinu prayed for forty days! And being that the attribute of Moshe is the attribute of truth, certainly when he says that he davened – he truly davened!

required)."

Nevertheless, regarding prayer, it is a clear ruling in the Shulchan Aruch that we must have in mind the meaning of the words!

FORTY DAYS OF CONSTANT PRAYER

Moreover, their approach is the opposite of the way of Moshe Rabbeinu himself:

We find with regard to Moshe Rabbeinu that notwithstanding the fact that he was the greatest of intellectuals – "Moshe received the Torah at Sinai" and "all that scholars innovate in the future had been given to Moshe at Sinai" – he spent forty days on Mount Sinai occupied with prayer!

This chassid argues that his approach is to sit and study. Regarding the fact that there are other matters that need his attention, he responds with the familiar expression – through Torah one effects a refinement in a manner that is initiated from On High.

He goes on to assert that a little bit of light – and how much more so a great light – burns up the darkness, and in the meanwhile there will be more innovation added to the Torah!

[Continued on page 41]

THE NIGHT BEFORE THE WEDDING

By Shneur Zalman Berger

*He had been walking down the street and was suddenly captured by the secret police. His fate was uncertain, and to further complicate matters, it was the day before his wedding! His family was in turmoil. Should they tell the bride or not? * We present a biography of the short life of an extraordinary Chassid, a model of mesirus nefesh, hiskashrus, bittul and tznius, starting from his childhood until his untimely passing under mysterious circumstances in exile in Kazakhstan. The Chassid, R' Shoel Friedman, may Hashem avenge his death.*

At a Chassidishe farbrengen in Tashkent, Shoel Friedman burst into tears and he told about his exile to Siberia:

"It was at the end of a workday. I was exhausted from the hard labor

of chopping trees when a sudden thought came to me – it is the Chag HaGeula today. How can this day go by like any other day?

"I quietly went over to one of the gentile prisoners with whom I was

friendly and whispered, 'This day is very important to me. Do me a favor and get me a bottle of vodka and we will celebrate together.'

"When I returned at night to the barrack I lived in, he came over to me with a mysterious smile on his lips and pushed a bottle of vodka into my coat. The prisoners in the barrack wanted me to raise my cup and say a few uplifting words. I filled a cup and with my voice choked with tears I asked these gentiles: 'Have you ever seen Jews with beards and side-locks?' They nodded, and in a trembling voice I shouted – 'L'chaim! To the lives of these religious Jews who preserve their beard and side-locks. G-d should protect them from any evil occurrence and angels of destruction – the cursed KGB. The main thing is we should all get out of here soon!'

"They all said l'chaim, to the lives of the Jews who stubbornly fight the government and preserve their religion fearlessly.

"That is how I celebrated the Yom HaGeula in Siberia," concluded R' Shoel, and he began fervently singing a Chassidic niggun with his voice breaking in tears every so often.

A MEMBER OF THE REBBE RAYATZ'S HOUSEHOLD

The Chassid, R' Shoel Friedman was born in 5675/1915. His parents R' Alexander Sender and Chaya Devorah, lived in the town of Retzitz in Belarus. His mother was known as "Chaya the Angel" since she did kindnesses with all in need and did so graciously. This was how she raised her children too.

Chaya the Angel did not live long. She died while giving birth to her daughter and the baby was named for her. He and his five brothers and sisters were orphaned at a young age. Shoel was only six

years old.

In 1925, the Friedmans moved to the big city of Leningrad where they lived in the home of the city rav, Rabbi Epstein. His house had three floors and the Friedmans lived on the ground floor.

The father, R' Sender had learned in Lubavitch in his youth and he transmitted the deep Chassidic feelings that he acquired in Lubavitch to his children. His home was a "meeting place for sages" and there were always minyanim and Chassidishe farbrengens held there secretly, despite the danger this entailed. The NKVD constantly followed him and conducted searches of his house every so often.

R' Sender was a *ben bayis* (member of the household) of the Rebbe Rayatz and merited many great *kiruvim* (gestures of closeness). The great distance between his home and where the Rebbe lived prevented him from davening with the Rebbe on weekdays and Shabbos but on Yom Tov he walked the long way, in order to be able to participate in the Rebbe's minyan. His children, who were trained to be mekushar to the Rebbe, accompanied him occasionally.

In order not to have to work on Shabbos, he manufactured berets in his house and did not make much money doing so. His spiritual parnasa, on the other hand, was plentiful. He spread the wellsprings of Chassidus by printing Chassidic maamarim with the copperplate method. His young sons, Avrohom Yosef, Shneur Zalman and Shoel helped him in this important work, which was done with utmost secrecy. After the windows were darkened they took the maamarim out of hiding and the holy work was done with alacrity and in utter silence. They smeared a material on the handwritten maamer, attached it to a blank page, and went over it



R' Shoel Friedman, shortly before his wedding

with a special wheel. The wheel was like a printing press and that is how the maamer was copied to the empty paper.

They worked for hours to make as many copies as possible and distributed them to the Chassidim. When they were done, they hid the booklets and work tools in a hiding place under the floor.

Before he was even 12, Shoel left home in Leningrad and went to yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Nevel where, together with his brother Shneur Zalman, he learned by the celebrated Chassid, R' Yehuda Eber,

Hy"d.

At this tender age he had to "eat *teg*" by strangers. Like all the T'mimim, he was totally dependent on his hosts and not all hosts had much to offer. There were days that he went to sleep with his stomach growling in hunger. His communications with home were slow and minimal. He occasionally sent home letters in which he told his father and siblings that he was doing fine and learning Nigleh and Chassidus with his friends. He did not write anything about persecution and tzaros.

He and his brother tried to go

home to celebrate Pesach or the holidays in Tishrei with their family, but that was not always possible. His sister Chasya Tuch relates:

“I remember that one year, a few days before Pesach we received word that Shoel’ke and Shneur Zalman would not be coming home. My sister and I were little girls and we had to learn the Four Questions.

“We were very worried about our brothers on their own in Nevel but we knew they were in good hands and that the staff watched over them and took care of them. We mostly relied on the brachos of the Rebbe to the T’mimim that in the merit of these brachos they would be able to learn and not be caught.”

Persecution was daily fare and yet Shoel persevered, together with his fellow talmidim, and continued to learn. At night they farbrenged and encouraged one another to stand strong and not to lose hope even in light of the serious situation.

This support was vital, especially during the period when the enemy reached the yeshiva in Nevel in the summer of 1928. R’ Dovid Okunov relates:

“We were about 16 talmidim sitting around the table and listening closely to what was being taught on the first chapter of the tractate Bava Metzia, oblivious to what was going on around us. Suddenly, R’ Eber felt somebody behind him. On the steps, in the Ezras Nashim, a policeman stood watching us in astonishment.

“Of course R’ Eber immediately stopped. He was arrested and within a short time was sentenced to hard labor in the city for six months. That didn’t stop him. Every day when he came back from work he would give us a shiur and only then would he go home.”

The government did not give up in its war on the yeshiva in Nevel. They published hateful articles in the local newspapers against the yeshiva. Members of the Yevsektzia (Jewish communists) prepared the

groundwork for the closing of the yeshiva. They continued with their poisonous propaganda until in Kislev, 5689, some of the bachurim were arrested and thorough searches were made for the menahalim and the other bachurim.

A Yevseki by the name of Altschuler conducted the closing of the yeshiva. He was the one who closed the shuls where the learning of the yeshiva and beis midrash for rabbanim took place. With no recourse, the menahalim (from their hiding places) told the talmidim to leave Nevel and move to branches of Tomchei T’mimim in other cities.

Shoel left Nevel and began wandering from yeshiva to yeshiva. Wherever he went, his diligence in learning, brilliant mind and refinement were apparent.

In those terrible times, to be a Lubavitcher Chassid was dangerous, but Shoel did not touch his beard. He continued the Chassidic way of life in all its details.

THE NIGHT BEFORE THE WEDDING

Shoel was an exceptional bachur. His diligence in learning, his wide-ranging knowledge and his genius were well known. He was also a sensitive soul who was a tremendous baal chesed. He was deeply sensitive to the needs of others and fully understood them. Whoever knew him, loved him.

In the winter of 5698, he became engaged to Baila Koznitzov. People rejoiced because both the bride and the groom were from outstanding Chassidic homes. The *mechutanim* had learned in yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim under the Rebbe Rashab. The kalla’s father was R’ Dovber Koznitzov, Hy”d, known as Berel Shtzedriner. They said about him that every year, before the Yomim Nora’im, he would walk to Lubavitch, a distance of over 50 kilometers, in order to spend these

holy days with the Rebbe. He lived in Kremenchug and his home was open to all. Seeing that the noose was tightening about them, they moved to Leningrad where many Chassidim lived and the spiritual situation was easier.

The wedding date was approaching. A day before the wedding, the preparations were in high gear. 300 guests, including relatives and Chassidim, were invited to the wedding which was going to take place in the Friedman home. The groom’s suit needed a minor alteration and he and his father went to the tailor.

After walking for a few minutes they were suddenly stopped by secret police and Shoel was taken to jail. His sister Chasya relates:

“My father returned home and tearfully reported that Shoel’ke was arrested! It was a shock and we all screamed. The whole family cried. We were beside ourselves with grief. The hours passed and Shoel’ke did not return. We feared for his fate.

“Many Chassidim were arrested during this period in the middle of the night or even just like that, on the street, and taken away. Sometimes the family found out, a long time later, that the person had been exiled to Siberia for an extended period of time or worse, had been shot. You can well imagine how terrified we were.

“Late at night we sat and speculated what may have happened to him and discussed whether to inform the kalla’s family about his arrest. ‘If the wedding does not take place tomorrow, at least the kalla should not fast,’ we said. My father consulted with Rabbi Moshe Chaim Dubrawsky who said the Rebbe gave us kochos (strength) to believe that things would be good and we should not inform the kalla of anything.

“We cried constantly and prayed for his safe return, even though we knew that a speedy release was only a dream. But the miracle happened!

At six in the morning we heard light taps at the window. We were very frightened. Then I heard Shoel'ke's voice and my heart skipped a beat. The tears of sorrow quickly turned to tears of joy. I opened the door and Shoel came in. He was shaken up and said they had interrogated him for hours with torture and threats. They tried to extract information from him about his Jewish activities and about Lubavitchers whom he knew but he remained silent. When they saw they wouldn't get anything out of him, they released him.

"The wedding took place that night with only a few people and we were very apprehensive. Nobody knew what tomorrow would bring."

THE TERRIBLE NIGHT

After the wedding Shoel worked mornings and after that he learned in Tiferes Bachurim with the Lubavitcher boys and men. It didn't take long before these peaceful days came to an end. His brother-in-law, R' Aharon Koznitzov, related what happened:

"Tiferes Bachurim met in shul and we learned Nigleh and Chassidus. There were older people and young men. R' Nachum Trebnik was the teacher for Nigleh and R' Elchonon (Chonye) Morosov learned Chassidus with us.

"Among the men who came to learn was a young man named L.M. They invited him to come and join the shiurim and he came. He knew precisely the days and times that we went to learn.

"Once in a while he would start conversations on political matters and for some reason, we were not sufficiently wary of him. One day, for example, he came and spoke about the possibility of getting 'certificates' (visas for Israel) by requesting them from the chief rabbi of Israel. He suggested that we ask the chief rabbi for such a certificate



Young Shoel on the right



On the right: R' Sender Friedman; in the center: R' Shoel

so we could leave the Soviet Union. He would bring us these 'discoveries' now and then and he carefully watched our reactions and listened to what we said.

"One night in Adar, 1938, late at

night, the NKVD invaded numerous homes, woke up the heads of the families and conducted searches. They looked in every nook and cranny and did not leave anything untouched.

WILL THEY SAY THAT SENDER'S DAUGHTER GOES TO SCHOOL ON SHABBOS?

R' Shoel's sister Chasya tells about keeping Shabbos in Leningrad:

My father, R' Alexander Sender raised us with mesirus nefesh for everything. This is why he refused to allow me to go to school on Shabbos. When the situation became serious and the pressure was enormous, I decided on my own that I would go to school. To avoid carrying I asked my Jewish friend who wasn't religious to take my briefcase. When my father heard about this he refused to allow this. "She is Jewish, too," he said. And I never went to school again on Shabbos.

When I arrived at school on Monday, I trembled in fear. I knew that the school would not put up with this. Indeed, at the beginning of the first lesson, the principal came and called me to his office. "If you do not come again on Saturday, you will have to come here accompanied by your father," he said. When I told my father he said, "If the principal will want to meet with me – let him come to me."

When I went to school the next day, the algebra teacher whispered to me how much she admired my courage. "Next Saturday," she advised, "bandage your right hand and put it in a sling and you won't have to write." When I suggested this to my father he said, "If you go to school on Shabbos, they will all say that Sender's daughter goes to school. I don't agree."

What did I do? I didn't finish school. When I finished the seventh grade I began working in the weaving factory because this work enabled me not to work on Shabbos. I did this work for decades, until I left the Soviet Union. That is how I was able to avoid desecrating the Shabbos.

"That night, 25 Chassidim were arrested. Ten of them (referred to as the 'Asara Harugei Malchus') were shot shortly afterwards. Others were sentenced to ten years or more in exile. Some of them returned after their period in exile while others could not bear the terrible suffering and died of starvation and cold, beatings and lack of strength."

The black car that they all called "the black raven" stopped at R' Shoel's house too. Late at night the NKVD knocked forcefully at his door and without waiting conducted a search. Then they took R' Shoel as his wife cried bitterly.

The black car drove quickly through the streets of Leningrad until it entered the gates of the building of the secret police, Spalarka, where the Rebbe Rayatz

had been incarcerated.

His sister Chasya relates what happened after the arrest:

"In the wee hours of the morning we found that Shoel'ke was arrested. We were in shock. He had gotten married only several months earlier and was already taken away to who knows where. In the morning, my cousin came in tears and told us that her father had been taken away at night. 'And they took Shoel,' I responded, my anguish equaling hers.

"In the morning we realized that there had been many arrests among Anash in Leningrad. When my father heard about this, he immediately packed some s'farim and food and left Leningrad. After a while, we began receiving letters from him signed with a fictitious

name and that is how we learned he was in Kursk, where he hid for two years in fear that he would be discovered and arrested.

"Nobody knew the fate of the prisoners. Rumors went around but nobody knew anything definite. A few months later they told us that Shoel would be sent to Siberia for ten years of hard labor. Usually, exiled prisoners were given the right to part from their families before they left, but this privilege was withheld from him since he was accused of 'high treason.'

"Gentile neighbors and acquaintances, who also loved Shoel, cried over his arrest. Their questions about the reason for his arrest remained unanswered."

Baila, Shoel's wife, remained what is called a living widow. That night was a double tragedy for her since her father was also arrested. Years later they found out that he had been shot shortly after his arrest. Her brother Aharon and the members of the family of R' Meir Friedman (R' Shoel's uncle) were exiled to Kostrama.

Baila remained alone in Leningrad. With the outbreak of World War II she fled together with tens of thousands of other refugees to Uzbekistan.

TALLIS AND T'FILLIN IN SIBERIA

R' Shoel was put, along with many other prisoners, on train cars that were used to transport prisoners. These cars were sealed, aside from one small window in the ceiling that was barred and had thick glass and allowed only a bit of light to shine in.

The traveling conditions were very difficult. His compartment was extremely crowded. In a compartment designed for dozens, there were hundreds of prisoners. They were not given food during the trip and had to suffice with the food

provided before they left. Only water was given to them on the journey. Even though he was weak from the interrogations and hunger, R' Shoel was particular about not eating non-kosher food. He did this with mesirus nefesh and barely ate as a result.

There was one ray of light in the darkness of his life – his tallis and t'fillin, which he had managed to hide and which he closely guarded so they wouldn't be confiscated by the soldiers, who would then punish him severely.

When the train arrived at the labor camp in Siberia, R' Shoel was taken, like the rest of the prisoners, to the barracks where dozens of prisoners lived. The crowding, the suffocating atmosphere and the vile smells were his welcome to his new abode.

The prisoners in labor camps worked at hard labor in sub-human conditions. They were malnourished and it was bitter cold and they were forced to labor for hours having eaten only a little bit of bread. Many expired and some terminated their own lives to put an end to their suffering. R' Shoel was put to work chopping thick trees.

Every morning, after roll call and breakfast, the prisoners were arranged in groups with five prisoners in every row. The groups were accompanied by guards armed with weapons and large, threatening dogs. The path to the forest was through deep snowdrifts.

In the forest, they broke up into squads of 3-4 prisoners. The leader of a group gave each person an electric saw to cut down the trees. They cut the trunk and it fell into the soft snow. Then they cut the branches and tied thick ropes around the trunk and dragged it over the snow to the main work area. There they arranged them in piles, ready for the tractor to take it away.

To ward off the freezing cold,



R' Shneur Zalman Friedman in exile in Siberia

they would make bonfires to warm up their hands and feet. This hard labor was impossibly difficult for R' Shoel, who was not used to work of this sort. He consoled himself with the thought that every day he managed to pour out his heart while wearing tallis and t'fillin. He did this in a different place every day so he wouldn't be caught.

Although food was limited, he was particular about kashrus and since, aside from bread and water, he would not eat, he lost a lot of weight and became sick and weak. When the camp commanders saw he could not continue doing work like that, they transferred him for a while to relatively easy work, distributing bread. He worked many hours but he could take large portions of bread and thanks to this he became stronger and well. Since he was compassionate, when he saw sick prisoners he gave them a little more than their portion of bread.

For periods of time he worked at the hardest labor, building bridges. Despite hard work he was always positive and optimistic that he would survive and be released. It wasn't easy retaining a joyful outlook in a labor camp. Prisoners who lived next to him died of starvation, cold, contagious diseases or by being shot

by guards and yet R' Shoel did not despair. He was in touch with his family via letters and postcards that he sent them in which they saw his great hope and optimism. His sister still has some of the postcards and she speaks of his "golden hands" which drew beautiful pictures.

In the upper part of one postcard he drew endless snow and ice and on the bottom of the postcard a river with a bridge over it which represented Leningrad. On the ice he wrote, "from the frozen tundra," and on the river he wrote, "warm regards!" The second postcard, which was sent to his brother Shneur Zalman, demonstrated his hope. He drew a car with two men in it (he and his brother) with ice in the background (exile) and they were traveling on a road, which lead outside a wall (the walls of prison). On the other side you can see grass and the sun. On the postcard it said, "together with you, happily, in the new year – 1948," the year he was supposed to be released.

From letters he received from home he found out about World War II and the extermination of millions of Jews. He learned about the Nazis who attacked Leningrad mercilessly and about the tens of thousands who were killed by bombs and starvation,

including his father and sister Michla. He also found out that his younger sister Chaya Devorah was killed by the Nazis.

A SHORT PERIOD OF FREEDOM

Government policy was that some of the prisoners who had completed nearly their entire sentence would be released a few months before it was over, but R' Shoel had to serve the entire sentence. In the summer of 1948, after ten years of exile, he was released. He was weak in body but strong in spirit. He and his wife moved to Tashkent and a short while later they moved to Samarkand, where dozens of Lubavitcher families lived.

Rabbi Mordechai Gorodetzky of Nachalat Har Chabad relates:

"I knew R' Shoel from work at the small weaving factory. He had the hands of an artist and he could put together the most delicate parts of the machines. He had never done this work before but within a very short time we were amazed to see how he did this job superbly. He was a Chassidishe Yid, mekushar, and especially refined. He lived in the old city of Samarkand and was involved with Anash there.

"In 1949, Stalin decided that citizens who were disloyal to the country had to be exiled. One of the criteria by which this disloyalty was determined was if a person had spent many years in exile. They

searched for these people, who included many Chassidim, and exiled them again.

"When they began searching we realized that R' Shoel was in danger and we hid him in our house. It wasn't easy since my father was in exile at the time and we were terrified of the government, but I did all I could to save him. In the courtyard of our home were two other houses and in every courtyard or building like this there was a log of the tenants. When the government thought that something wasn't quite right, they checked the log. This usually led to a thorough search of the house.

"One day, they came to check our log. I knew it was dangerous to hide R' Shoel with us and found him another hiding place. An elderly couple of our acquaintance agreed to hide him. Every day I went to his hiding place and brought him food and cheered him up. One day about two weeks later, when I went to his hiding place, the old lady was waiting for me, looking pale and crying. She found it hard to speak but I realized she was telling me the KGB had come in the night and taken R' Shoel and her husband."

So R' Shoel only enjoyed a brief period of freedom. He was arrested after Pesach, 1949, and was taken to the local KGB office where he was interrogated and tortured for a long time. In the winter of 5710, he was exiled to Kyzil-Orda in Kazakhstan. His wife went there to be with him

and they rented a small apartment. The law was that whoever was exiled could not leave that location and once every two weeks they had to sign in at the local KGB office, to ensure they did not run away.

WHO KILLED R' SHOEL AND BAILA?

It was a Tuesday night, 28 Teves, 5710, and R' Shoel and his wife had gone to sleep. They lit a small oven to warm up the house but while they slept, somebody blocked the chimney and the smoke accumulated indoors and asphyxiated them. Nobody knows who blocked the chimney but the rumor was the KGB did it. R' Shoel was only 35.

By divine providence, a Chassid, R' Eliezer Mishulovin of Samarkand was in that town on business. When he heard of their deaths he took care of their burial. Despite the enormous difficulty of digging in the frozen earth, he buried them next to two other Jews.

The family found out about this three months later. His brother Shneur Zalman traveled to Kyzil-Orda to pray at their graves. He wanted to move their coffins to Leningrad but rabbanim paskened that since there were four graves there, it was considered a Jewish cemetery and if they removed two bodies he would be destroying the cemetery.

R' Shoel, whose short life was one of Kiddush Hashem, remained in exile even after his passing.

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WE SAY THERE HAS TO BE A FIRST CAUSE – BECAUSE...?

By Dr. Aryeh Gotfryd

Dear Dr. Gotfryd,

I've heard it said many times that there has to be a First Cause, but why? What is wrong with saying that the world is all made up of basic building blocks such as atoms, protons, etc., which have always existed? Why do you have to say that there was a cause which is above time? It seems unnecessary.

Isaac K.

London, UK

Dear Isaac,

There seem to be two issues here. First, you raise the possibility of time with no beginning, i.e., a past that goes back forever. Second, you suggest that this provides a reasonable alternative to believing that the world was created by some supernatural being.

Let's forget for a moment that the Torah is a reliable source of information on many things including on matters such as these. Let's also forget for a moment that the primary cosmological theory today, the Big Bang, requires a beginning to time and atoms as well. Let's even forget, for a

moment, all the experiments proving non-locality in the laboratory from which scientists infer that the ultimate ground of reality is an indivisible wholeness beyond space and time which is conscious and that physical reality is continuously being recreated by its fluctuations.

Instead we shall assume for a moment that you are correct and that atoms were the first beings. But if atoms were the first beings, and they created everything else, wouldn't that make them G-d? After all, that's what a first being is supposed to do, is it not?

Obviously this was not your intent, to believe that atoms are G-d but your description of atoms does seem to fit the standard definition of G-d nonetheless. If you don't like worshipping atoms, you may want to reconsider.

Another problem with "atoms first" is that it short circuits cause-and-effect reasoning. Why does everything else in the world deserve to have a cause and yet the lowly atom sticks out like a sore thumb? It's even made out of the same stuff as everything else. Something does not add up here.

Besides, if we accept that objects are made of molecules and molecules of atoms, why stop there? What about the quarks that make up the atoms and the gluons that comprise the quarks and the vacuum fluctuations that generate the gluons and the unified field that the physicists accept which transcends and permeates it all.

Regarding your second point, about eternal matter pre-empting the necessity of G-d, we could ask a question. After all, we are Jewish. How does time being infinite impact on whether something has been created or not? There are indeed many infinite things that have been created.

First there is the infinity of whole numbers. Didn't humans create that? Then, between every two numbers there is an infinity of fractions. Humans made those too. Between every two fractions there is an infinity of irrational numbers. There are even certain numbers that are infinite all by themselves. Pi, for example, is a transcendental number, an infinite non-repeating decimal. Then there are mathematical oddities like fractals, Kantor dust, Mobius strips and Klein bottles, all clearly infinite and all purely mathematical constructions by humans. Infinity does not guarantee un-createdness.

On the contrary, one of the best indications of an Infinite One beyond nature is the very fact that the world has infinities within it. For every infinity has an infinity greater than it and the ultimate of all those is the true Ein Sof.

How kind it is of the One Above to hide himself so well that we can deem him unnecessary. Only by choice do we assert the logic that leads us to Him. And in the merit of choosing Him at any moment of our lives, we bring the game of hide and seek to a close, its ultimate close with the coming of Moshiach NOW!

A MAAMER CHASSIDUS IS AN ORDER FROM ABOVE

By Rabbi Boruch Sholom Cohen
Edited by Y. Ben Boruch

For Chanuka we present points from a sicha of the Rebbe Rayatz that was said Friday night, Parshas VaYeishev, Shabbos Chanuka 5706.

SAYING A MAAMER ON CHANUKA

In general, the maamarim on Chanuka were said on Shabbos Chanuka and not on weekdays.

Sometimes it would happen that the Rebbe Rashab would repeat in yechidus the same maamer (that he said on Shabbos) with explanations on the weekdays of Chanuka.

FARBRENGENS DURING CHANUKA

The Tzemach Tzedek would farbreng one night of Chanuka with his children. The Rebbe Maharash would do the same, but he did so briefly. In general, everything was done briefly by the Rebbe Maharash.

The Mittlerer Rebbe would also farbreng briefly.

A MAAMER CHASSIDUS IS AN ORDER FROM ABOVE

During the week of Chanukah, The Rebbe Maharash would sometimes expand on a Shabbos Chanukah maamer for his sons. He would then give a reason why he was reviewing the maamer.

In general, a maamer Chassidus is an order from above.

FILLING THE DAYS

Tuesday (night) and Wednesday belong to Shabbos but you need to

toil on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday so he will be *ba'ya'mim*, completely taken through within the days, rather than the literal meaning of just getting older.

LIGHTING THE MENORAH IN HIS MOTHER'S HOUSE

The Rebbe Rashab would light the menorah in the home of his mother, my grandmother, Rebbetzin Rivka. On Friday, Erev Shabbos he would light the menorah there too even though he did not eat and sleep there.

In the years following the passing of the Rebbe Maharash, the Rebbe Rashab would eat Friday night and Shabbos day in the home of Rebbetzin Rivka. In later years he would only eat there Shabbos by day.

LIGHTING IN THE DOORWAY

The Rebbe Rashab would light the menorah in the doorway between one room and another and was not pleased when someone who was not a member of the household was present.

LEARNING GEMARA AFTER LIGHTING

After lighting the menorah the Rebbe Rashab would sit near the candles for about half an hour. Then he would go home and learn Gemara for an hour or an hour and a half, not necessarily on the topic of Chanuka but according to the order that he learned.

HE TOLD HIS WIFE TO LIGHT

When the Rebbe Rashab had to travel and be away from home for Chanuka, he would tell his wife, my mother, that although she would

hear the brachos of the menorah from one of the Chassidim, she should still light the menorah herself separately.

THE AGE FOR STARTING TO LIGHT THE MENORAH

In “Beis Rebbe” they would start lighting the menorah themselves about a year before bar mitzvah, for reasons of chinuch. I don’t clearly remember when I started lighting the menorah on my own whether it was when I was in Yalta or right after Yalta.

WHAT DID CHASSIDUS ACCOMPLISH?

Once, one Chassid praised another Chassid to the Tzemach Tzedek. The Rebbe Maharash was present and he said about this Chassid that he learns Chassidus. The Tzemach Tzedek replied: Better than nothing but what did Chassidus teach him?

The Rebbe Maharash once praised someone to the Tzemach Tzedek and said he “does” in Chassidus. The Tzemach Tzedek said: Nu, and what did Chassidus “do” to him?

RELYING ON MEMORY

The Rebbe Rashab said that he got more from his father in yechidus than he got from him in public, but he did not write those teachings down since he relied on his memory.

Later on he was sorry that he did not write it down. This was despite the fact that he had a phenomenal memory.

THEY CALLED EISAV A “RAV” TOO!

At a meeting in Petersburg, the Rebbe Maharash said to one of the rabbanim: They called Eisav a rav too!

He said this to him in public.



The Rebbe Rayatz on the last Chanuka of his life in this world

LISTEN TO WHAT THE CANDLES ARE SAYING

The Rebbe Rashab related that one time, the Rebbe Maharash said: We must listen to what the candles are saying!

THE WELLSPRINGS OF CHASSIDUS PURIFY THE IMPURE

The teachings of Chassidus purify the impure. Who are the

impure is to be discussed quietly. Only a new neshama of Atzilus – meaning the Alter Rebbe – could open the wellsprings.

A CHASSIDIC SAYING REVIVES A PERSON!

One must write down the *imros* (sayings), and not only the sayings but the *pisgamim* (aphorisms) as well. A Chassidic saying literally revives a person!

CHINUCH WITH LOVE

By Nosson Avrohom

With thousands of bachurim back in yeshiva it's a good time to focus on chinuch, the goals and means of attaining them, and so we spoke with R' Yaron Ne'eman, mashgiach in Yeshivas Chassidei Chabad in Tzfas.



These days we find that, on the one hand, we are in Yemos HaMoshiach with all the kochos that the Rebbe showers upon us, and on the other hand, we are surrounded by the frightening and degrading influence of secular culture. As parents and teachers, this poses quite a challenge.

We interviewed the mashgiach of Yeshivas Chassidei Chabad in Tzfas, Rabbi Yaron Ne'eman. We discussed expectations from our children, explored ways to help them participate and progress in our world, and asked for practical ideas to improve awareness and deal with challenges. We assume that the potential within the bachurim of 5771 is no less than that of previous generations. It's up to educators to draw out this potential but this has become more difficult over time.

Could it be that the difficulties of recent generations is because our level of expectations is too high and we set ourselves up for

disappointment?

The expectations in the past and present haven't changed. First of all, the desire of every parent and educator, and even of the bachur himself, within the yeshiva framework, is to make the derech of Chassidus and hiskashrus to the Rebbe beloved to them. In this way, they become self-motivated wellsprings and lamplighters in the path founded by the Chassidic leaders since the Baal Shem Tov, right up until our generation.

We need to look at the various "fronts" our children live in starting with the yeshiva front, and on to the community front and the home front, in order to understand what he is going through and know how to deal with it. The most important step in this whole process is to cause that the bachur develop an unequivocal identity as a Lubavitcher so that he will yearn to be Chassidish in all senses of the term.

First and foremost, the forging

of this identity depends on the personal example set by the parents, the staff at yeshiva, and Anash that he meets. In my humble opinion the foundation of it all is in our name Lubavitch, meaning love. When a bachur feels the love of those around him, he will want to emulate those who shower him with love, warmth, respect and caring. It's no secret that love is the key to all success.

What is Lubavitcher love and what makes it unique?

The world is full of illusory pretensions that claim to be love so what makes Lubavitch unique when it says love is the key to success? The truth is that this needs a series of articles to explain it but the point of it is – the love that is taught in our Torah in general and in Chassidus in particular, emphasizes the purpose of love which is to focus on the G-dly essence which is within every one of us.



More specifically, the concept of love as it is understood by the world mainly expresses the experience of loving or being loved. It's an emotion whose source is the sense of self. But what is that self? The emphasis placed by Chassidus is the true G-dly value within every one of us as it is explained in chapter 32 of Tanya, in Derech Mitzvosecha on the mitzva of Ahavas Yisroel and many other places.

And to take it from a general idea to action: We need to look at chinuch from the perspective of love. Every educator must first ask himself the question that needs to reverberate in his mind and heart every single day: In what way am I a Lubavitcher mechanech? Do I love my students? How can I get myself to really love them? And when I love my students, how can I make use of this emotion to get them to love the values of Chassidus and the study of Torah,

the avoda of t'filla, and to do this with discipline and derech erez?

And when I find that I am lacking in love for my talmidim or the people in my community, then I know that I must work on myself to grow whether by consulting a professional or by discussing this with a mashpia and so on. The main thing is that my approach in education must be with love.

To what extent does a lack of love towards a child on the part of a teacher or parent affect his chinuch?

I think that the greatest damage to children developing in our schools comes from the relationship between teacher and student. It sometimes happens that a teacher feels hostility and intimidation that cause him to inflict counterproductive punishments and humiliation. This prevents the student from wanting to receive his influence and to love the system and connect with his teachers.

The same is true in the home. Every parent has to think about the love he has for his children. Even though it is a natural emotion just by virtue of being parents to our children, this love is always mixed with personal pride and side interests that cloud the purity of the love that the child needs and yearns for.

In other words, sometimes the feeling of love or its lack in parents comes from successes or failures that our children have and not from the truth that he is a person worthy of love. A parent hopes for his child to be successful and doesn't seek the true benefit which is his child's personal development based on his abilities and talents, social standing and the environment in which he lives.

Like a teacher needs to do, a parent needs to train himself to view his child objectively, as much as possible, and see what his

natural good qualities and talents are and teach himself to genuinely appreciate them. It's vital to love the child or student as he is and not as you would like him to be.

How can a teacher or parent reading this who wants to improve, begin to change?

A practical suggestion that can help parents and especially teachers is to discuss the students at teachers' meetings and try to focus on their strong points no less than they do on their problems. Every teacher and parent ought to adopt Hashem's fatherly and loving way of looking at us as it says in Parshas Balak: "He perceived no iniquity in Yaakov, and saw no perversity in Yisroel" as it is explained at length in Likkutei Torah.

Keep in mind that the educational system is becoming more and more complicated and the challenges are many, which is why it is critical that teachers and parents get the proper guidance. A parent whose values are cockeyed or whose modes of conduct are unbecoming will naturally bequeath this to his children and will generate an inner opposition and lack of respect in them and confusion between the reality he is dealing with and the values being learned in Chassidus. So too with a teacher – if he suppresses his true feelings towards the students and won't get the proper professional help, then not only won't he endear the values of our holy Torah to his students but he will turn them off to these values.

In the past, professional help like psychological counseling was considered taboo. It was associated with the stigma of psychiatric problems. Today it has become more and more accepted that without professional guidance and the acquisition of professional tools, that one is not likely to be able to deal properly with a public

position, as well as to be involved in chinuch and parenting which involve many personal difficulties, since these difficulties automatically come through.

To what extent is chinuch today different than chinuch in previous generations? Are the ways of handling it different or maybe we need to revive the old ways?

The yeshiva education of our day is definitely different than it was in the past. It requires a personal relationship between the talmid and his teachers, the opportunities in which the talmid can get personal attention and to know that he is loved and he has a place there even if he is not talented and doesn't have great abilities. Part of the job of educators working in yeshivos is to reach each talmid and give him the feeling that the yeshiva is his place, that the staff loves him, accepts him, and believes in his identity as a Chassid.

In previous times, the mashgiach and teacher had to be in the zal and set limits and make demands. He tested the talmidim and gave shiurim. Today, the lion's share of the work of rebbis and mashgichim is in meeting with the bachurim one on one and enabling them to open up and talk about their problems, and being good listeners. The educators need to know that establishing a personal relationship won't adversely affect their authority or their ability to set limits. It is the Torah that established that students are like children and just as a parent knows that along with setting limits and making demands of their children, no less important is their love for their children. A teacher's drawing a child close creates a feeling of respect and admiration and makes the child want to belong to the teacher's world.

So too with parents and their

children, a feeling of openness and connection, friendliness and genuine respect, must be established and not on a basis of successes or disappointments. It needs to be a deep, inner bond.

To facilitate this, the relationship between the parents and the teachers also needs to be more open so that the two parties, who want the best for the child, will come up with a joint plan of how to reach him.

Isn't today's lack of derech ertz for parents and teachers a result of more friendliness and openness?

Today we see the need for guidance in derech ertz when once-upon-a-time this was a natural and obvious way of interacting. Due to the breakdown of barriers and our children's exposure to the general atmosphere and the cynicism in the media there is a greater need to instill our values of *derech ertz kadma la'Torah*. More than ever we need to farbreng about this, write about it and even to have contests though the main thing is setting a personal example.

The hanhala needs to spend time thinking about how to improve their students' derech ertz and shouldn't make the mistake of thinking that this is taking time away from learning or davening, because without proper behavior you can lose whatever you gained in the learning.

People say that today, due to our lower spiritual standing, many bachurim don't find themselves a place in yeshiva.

It's no secret that today, quite a few talmidim have a hard time sitting for long s'darim of learning and finding satisfaction in learning alone. The yeshiva of today is not set up to take in only outstanding students; everybody is accepted, which is why I suggest that a variety of curricula be prepared

whether for groups or individuals so that every talmid can find satisfaction and success in his learning.

For example, there can be halacha tracks in Shulchan Aruch or other s'farim. There can be a track for proficiency and depth in Likkutei Sichos etc. A certain boy can't learn six hours of Nigleh a day? Then instead of wasting precious time with a Gemara and feeling he doesn't belong in yeshiva, he is better off learning material that enables him to feel he is making progress. Otherwise he will be frustrated and feel like a loser, having wasted time and not accomplished much because the yeshiva is about learning and he isn't doing that too well.

Obviously, when a bachur feels that he is accomplishing when he is learning, his love for yeshiva is strengthened and he will want to be more Chassidish, more refined, and have greater self-discipline since he is feeling positive all around. Conversely, if the learning in yeshiva is felt as a burden he certainly won't be involved in Nigleh and Chassidus in his free time or in those things which the yeshiva staff values.

Unfortunately, there are roshei yeshivos who want yeshivos for outstanding bachurim because they don't want to deal with the others who need attention and a learning program that isn't the norm. A yeshiva like this only provides a chinuch for some students and weaker students in Nigleh don't do well here (although they may be stronger in other areas of learning).

I wonder whether there is such a thing today as a talmid who is a p'nimi. Is there chinuch for p'nimius anymore?

I think we need to stop a moment and consider what these concepts are: "Chassid," "p'nimi," "Tamim." Some people think that

due to the times we live in our talmidim can't be genuine p'nimiyim. I think the opposite is true.

Since the thirst for truth and meaning is growing in our generation, and the tools that the Rebbeim gave us, especially in our generation, the seventh, are the ultimate tools for forging dedication to the values of Chassidus, I think it's the other way round.

We know that superficiality is based in matters of the body and animal soul and that p'nimius is the person's neshama. As long as the spirit of G-d, i.e. the neshama, is within us, we definitely have a connection to spirituality, i.e. p'nimius. Proper guidance towards a Chassidic identity means enabling a bachur to have the experience of the derech ha'Chassidus through learning Chassidus as well as darkei ha'Chassidus. How is this done? With proper guidance in the avoda of t'filla, with farbrengens and knowledge of our Chassidic history, with Chassidic role models, together with the soul qualities that exist in our generation.

When a yeshiva bachur's personal experience is satisfying and good, then the values of Chassidus are naturally implanted and he'll adopt them as his own, but if something is lacking and it's not a positive experience, it won't work. For example, if he feels unappreciated by the staff, he won't have the peace of mind to internalize the Chassidus he is learning. He will be preoccupied with his resentments and busy trying to prove himself and raise his standing among the teachers and bachurim, instead of giving the farbrengens his attention.

Another example, when Chassidus is presented in a technical manner that doesn't appeal to the heart and without adapting what is being learned to

I think we need to stop a moment and consider what these concepts are: “Chassid,” “p’nimi,” “Tamim.” Some people think that due to the times we live in our talmidim can’t be genuine p’nimiyim. I think the opposite is true.

his personal challenges in life, he will be left with the feeling that Chassidus is meant for angels and not humans. He'll learn it to discharge his obligation and that's all. Another example, this one from our history – if a bachur doesn't see himself as a continuation of the chain of Chassidim and doesn't feel he belongs among the Chassidic personalities told about in our Chassidic history, then he will be lacking in a sense of roots and in his Chassidic identity.

In short, if his experience is positive he will naturally become a p'nimi and not a chitzon.

So the work of chinuch today is harder than in previous years.

There is a feeling that the shluchim who are mekarev people are far above those who are involved in chinuch. I think that the mechanech, especially these days, represents not only the approach to learning and Torah knowledge but he is leading the charge in the shlichus of establishing the next generation while dealing with difficulties that no shliach out in the world has to deal with. Furthermore, the talmidim in our generation are exposed to the world and the teachers have to develop their own Chassidic character and values far more than the shluchim in Chabad houses wherever they are around the world.

It's an enormous challenge to be an educator these days. It's not only about teaching Torah but

about being a Chabad shliach who is mekarev Jews to their Father in heaven.

When a parent reads this article and wants to correct or strengthen at least one point, what would you recommend?

One of the common mistakes that some teachers and parents make is that they forget that they were once children themselves. They sometimes sense a gap between what they see and what they think they should be seeing when all it is, is a lack of maturity. Adults need to remember that children need to be children and it's not right to demand that they look at the world and at life from the perspective of an adult.

A child likes to play and playing is at the center of his life. If a teacher thinks that a child's playfulness is inconsistent with seriousness in learning and discipline and he clips the child's wings, he will harm the child. The same is true with older boys. We need not feel threatened by the exuberance of youth.

In recent years we are hearing people in Chabad communities describing those young men who express their hiskashrus to the Rebbe with simcha and loudly proclaiming Yechi, as chitzoniym. The truth is, this is the way young people express their enthusiasm and their zealotry for what they hold dear. We adults need to be careful not to dismiss this and

[Continued on page 37]

IT'S ONLY A DREAM. OR IS IT?

By Shneur Zalman Levin

In the Book of B'Reishis there are many dreams: Yaakov's dream, Yosef's dreams, and the dreams of Pharaoh and his ministers *From these parshiyos we see that dreams have always been a way of conveying messages, feelings and insights, sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly. Nevertheless, Chazal say: dreams are just vanity *How does Chassidus view dreams and how did our Rebbeim regard dreams?

We spend about a third of our day sleeping. Whether it's a deep sleep or not, eight hours is more or less what the body needs to renew itself. Chazal say that sleep is "one sixtieth of death." These are hours when a person is not involved in the service of Hashem and is idle. Still, sleep is not merely a waste of time. Aside from the fact that sleep is necessary to give the body the ability to serve Hashem, sleep itself is an auspicious time for many things.

The topic of "Chassidishe sleep" deserves an article of its own. This article is about dreams that are a sort of soul experience that can sometimes move a person very deeply or open the way to new insights, if one is so privileged. Dreams are an inseparable part of man's life experiences. In the Book of B'Reishis there are many dreams: Yaakov's dream, Yosef's dreams, and the dreams of Pharaoh and his ministers. Even Lavan the Aramean

had Hashem appear to him in a dream. From these parshiyos we see that dreams have always been a way of conveying messages, feelings and insights, sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly.

Nevertheless, Chazal say dreams speak of nothing import and we shouldn't pay attention to them. Generally speaking in the world of Chassidus the approach is to ignore them. Our Rebbeim often advised Chassidim not to pay attention to dreams, not to become perturbed by them, and not to get involved in interpreting them or even engaging in the process known as *hatavas chalom* which is meant to transform them into something positive.

This is also the Rebbe's approach for the most part. He was often asked about dreams and he usually told people to ignore them. The apparent reason for dreams being worthless is based on the idea that what you think about during the day you will dream about at night, and





so, many dreams are coming from the person himself and should not be regarded as messages from Above, certainly not a message that obligates one in any way.

You can see this in the positive sense in the HaYom Yom (4 Teves):

There are good dreams in which Torah subjects are made known to the person dreaming. These generally occur through concentrated devotion to Torah study during the day. When someone studies Torah with great diligence or engages in “service of the heart” - prayer - with intense effort, then at night - when his soul ascends to draw forth life for itself from the supernal Life, as explained in Zohar - it is informed of novel insights in the Revealed Torah or Inner Torah, each person according to his diligence in his Avoda during the day.

Obviously, the dreams of the average person are not like the dreams of a tzaddik whose every

movement is directed Above. Yet, even simple people who dreamed of good things should commit to acting accordingly with additional hiddur mitzvah and in the fulfillment of good practices because every positive thing that adds to one’s service of Hashem, is blessed.

Notwithstanding all the above, Jews of spiritual stature are worthy of giving credence to their dreams. For example, one who attains the level of Beinoni and feels a *timtum ha’lev* (spiritual blockage of the heart), “that it becomes like a stone and he cannot open his heart in any way to the service of the heart which is prayer,” is advised by the Alter Rebbe (Tanya chapter 29) to crush himself by meditating upon his lowliness.

One of the ways to sense your own lowliness is by thinking about your dreams:

“Let him further consider his dreams” in order to humble his spirit; for one may learn more about

himself from his dreams than from his waking, conscious thoughts. **“For the most part, they are ‘vanity, and an affliction of the spirit,’ for his soul does not ascend heavenward during his sleep; since it is written: ‘Who shall ascend the mountain of the Lord?’”** — meaning, in our context, Whose soul shall rise heavenward while he sleeps, to see and absorb matters of Torah and holiness, which will in turn be reflected in his dreams? And the next verse gives the answer: **“He that has clean hands and a pure heart”** — implying that the soul of one whose hands and heart are not pure, does not ascend, and that is why his dreams are a patchwork of vanity and foolishness. **“Those originating from the ‘evil side’ come and attach themselves to him and inform him in his dreams of mundane affairs... and sometimes mock him and show him false things and torment him in his dreams.”**

THE REBBE DECIDES WHO TO VISIT IN A DREAM

In one of the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov, you can see the special power of dreams. When a person constantly thinks about the G-dly energy that is within every material thing, says the Baal Shem Tov, he merits to see in a dream at night, at a time when his soul is freed from the constraints of the body, this G-dly energy, as it is unconcealed. The verse in T’hillim says, “And I—in righteousness I will see Your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing Your likeness” — I see Your face in a vision at night for when I look at physical things when I am awake, I perceive that its image, its form and life-force, are from You.

The story is told about a Chassid who asked the Alter Rebbe (regarding a dream): “How do I

know that I am not in the world of the imagination?”

The Alter Rebbe answered: If you were there, you would not see me!

In other words, the Rebbe is the “balabus,” the one who establishes where and when he will be seen by people, including in a dream, and if he appears to someone, it’s not for naught.

The Rebbe Maharash told one of his Chassidim to learn every maamer Chassidus forty times. He said to him: When you learn each maamer forty times, wherever you will be - thoughts of the maamer will occur to you. Consequently, you will always be thinking Chassidus. And this is a rule – what you think about during the day, you will dream about at night, and so you will dream Chassidus. Another rule is that a person does his growing during sleep, so too you will grow in Chassidus. That Chassid related that when he began fulfilling what the Rebbe told him, he would lie down and not want to get up because he was immersed in Chassidus.

The Rebbe Rayatz related a chilling story at the Simchas Torah farbrengen of 5687/1926 about a Chassid who came to his Rebbe – the Rebbe Rayatz emphasized, “I will not reveal who the Rebbe was and who the Chassid was,” and he told the Rebbe that his teacher came to him in a dream and told him that one of his children would die. When he said this, the Rebbe sighed deeply and did not respond. The Chassid sadly remained with his Rebbe for Simchas Torah until after Yom Tov. When he was ready to go home, Parshas Lech Lecha, he asked the Rebbe for a bracha for his son. The Rebbe said: It will be fine.

The Chassid asked for a promise that his son would live and the Rebbe promised. When he was ready to leave, the Rebbe asked him: What was with you on Simchas Torah?

The Chassid said that while all the Chassidim danced, he stood near

The story is told about a Chassid who asked the Alter Rebbe regarding a dream: “How do I know that I am not in the world of the imagination?” The Alter Rebbe answered: If you were there, you would not see me!

the sink and cried bitterly over the decree on his son. Then he remembered that it was Simchas Torah and he washed his face and joined the dancing with joy. The Rebbe said that it was with this simcha and this dancing that he transformed the evil decree to a good one.

To a talmid of a yeshiva who wrote to the Rebbe MH”M about dreams that disturbed him, the Rebbe said:

It is known and hinted at also in statements of the Sages that a person sees only what he thinks about. Dreams are the products of idle thought etc. during the day. When you minimize the cause you will naturally minimize the results. Since there are other reasons for dreams, you ought to be careful with the bedtime Shma, namely that your body should be pure, be careful with the immersion of Ezra, and the mezuzah of the door of your room should be kosher.

QUESTIONS THE REBBE WAS ASKED CONCERNING DREAMS

On occasion, the Rebbe treated dreams as serious matters. In 5717/1957 the great Chassid, Rabbi Yitzchok Dubov of Manchester (who was one of the first Chassidim to be mekushar to the Rebbe and who saw open miracles) asked the Rebbe a number of questions. Among the questions he asked on behalf of someone whose father came to him in a dream. What should be done

about this?

The Rebbe responded:

The *pidyon nefesh* about the man whose father a”h came to him in a dream etc. – he should ask his father’s forgiveness in the presence of ten men for not having kept all the practices of mourning properly. The *p’sak din* of our holy Torah is known that a father who forgives etc. [his honor, his honor] is forgiven. And it would be fitting that he check his t’fillin and the mezuzos of his home.

In another case, a woman asked a similar question and the Rebbe told her:

That you write that your mother a”h came to you in a dream etc. find out whether the burial was done properly (and that she was not autopsied after her death). And check the mezuzos of your home.

In at least two instances the Rebbe simultaneously tells the person to divert his thoughts from the dream and explains the dream’s meaning.

In Adar II 5746/1986 the Rebbe responded to a woman who wrote about a dream she had in which she saw it raining. At first the Rebbe explained:

You saw it raining in your dream, that is a good sign, and you saw a good dream.

But then the Rebbe says:

But in general, don’t think about dreams etc. Rather, daily conduct should be in accordance with the instructions of our Torah of life and the fulfillment of mitzvos about which it says, and

live with them ... with wholehearted faith in Hashem.

At “dollars” one Sunday, 25 Tamuz 5751/1991, a woman told the Rebbe that she saw him in a dream surrounded by a Torah scroll. In the dream, the woman said “You have the Sh’china” and the Rebbe responded, “nuts, nuts.” The woman wanted to know the meaning of her dream.

The Rebbe responded at length, the nut represents the Jewish people. Just as a nut is contained in a shell, both fruit and seeds, and trees grow from it, so too the Jewish people – although outwardly, in their bodies, they resemble the nations of the world, inwardly the neshama makes fruits and fruits of fruits with great success, and it also has flavor ...

In a letter (Igros Kodesh vol. 7 p. 290) the Rebbe explains why not to attribute significance to dreams:

I just received your letter of 24 Sivan...in which you write about a dream that you had. You should remove yourself from this path. You must stop being immersed in dreams. As explained in many s’farim, those whose every detail of their conduct is done according to Torah and mitzvos, a dream too, over which you have hardly any control, contains a lesson and is not for naught – (and at the same time, even in such cases Chazal say that there is no dream without worthless components). On the other hand, with people in our generation with whom there are numerous worthless components, all the more so worthless thoughts with no content, and all the more so without Torah and mitzvos content, with these people it is surely nothing more than just plain dreams. Sometimes it comes from the Evil Inclination’s counsel in order to remove a person from worthy-spiritual matters. So I repeat, do not be involved in dreams at all.

You should give the mezuzos of



the bedroom to be checked as well as your t’fillin and put in the proper effort regarding a shidduch and regarding the business ... in addition to shiurim ... with material and spiritual success (27 Sivan 5713/1953).

DREAMS AND VISIONS OF THE REBBE RAYATZ

The Rebbe Rayatz told about many dreams and visions he had from which he learned various things. His sichos are replete with these matters. This is what he wrote in his diary, 13 Adar I at two in the morning:

My sleep was especially sweet due to the vision I saw in a dream at night. At the time I knew it was a dream and I made an effort to remember what I saw and the conversation about holy matters that I heard; the verses and sayings of Chazal, and the series of stories,

and thank G-d I was able to remember it all, everything in its place. When I woke up at six, after the morning blessings I wrote it all down briefly, the main topics and G-d willing, when I come home I will write at length what I heard, and I am feeling in very good spirits.

The Rebbe MH”M in his *reshimos* tells of a wondrous dream that the Rebbe Rayatz told him:

Today the Rebbe, my master and father-in-law called me to enter his room. He told me that he wants to give me regards from my brother Leib (who lives in Leningrad). I asked him whether he received a letter from him and he said: I heard a maamer Chassidus together with him from the Rebbe Rashab [who was no longer living]. This is what happened. At night I saw the Rebbe. He held a silk handkerchief and his face shone greatly. The last time he appeared this way was in 5668. He said to me:

Mazal tov on your hat. They can enter.

I opened the door and some people entered, including your brother. Slowly he approached (or I approached him) and I hugged him with one hand. My father asked me: Who is this young man?

But after a few moments he said: Ah, I know you. He said Chassidus on the verse, "I am black and comely" ... and you need to ask your brother about this.

After the saying of Chassidus I went over to my father and asked him something and then the entire vision disappeared. I saw it in a wondrously vivid manner. Which city and where this took place, I don't know. I did not see your brother's face. His hat was tilted to the side and he was chewing something. That was the second time I saw my father since your wedding. The previous time too I was wearing a hat but he did not say "mazal tov" to me then. The hat is from my grandfather, the Rebbe Maharash.

The Rebbe related another wondrous story about what he saw and heard from his father-in-law, the Rebbe Rayatz. It's a story that indirectly testifies to the enormous esteem in which the Rebbe Rayatz held his son-in-law. This was on 12 Kislev 5692 when he went to his father-in-law, the Rebbe, who received him graciously and said:

For the dream I had today you ought to give out mashke ...

Then he related the content of the dream in which he saw his father:

My father said to me: Why are you downcast? In your house there is light at night.

The Rebbe Rayatz went on to tell his son-in-law the Rebbe MH"M:

I awoke from my sleep and the moon was shining into the room, but [the Rebbe did not explain what he meant by this but apparently the light of the moon did not satisfy his mind and he did not know whether this is

what his father was referring to].

The Rebbe Rayatz concluded his story with a hint:

Then I went to the library and saw you looking into a holy book –

Letting him know that he felt this is what his father meant when he said there was a light at night – a reference to his son-in-law, Ramash.

So by Chassidim, a dream in which the Rebbe is seen is considered significant and to be treated seriously and not merely as a consequence of thoughts during the day.

It is said about the Chassid, Rabbi Yaakov Landau a"h that when he saw the Rebbe Rashab in a dream there was always some salvation either before or afterwards.

On Simchas Torah 5716 the Rebbe related in the name of the Rebbe Rayatz about a Chassid, R' Zalman Zlatapolsky, a Chassid of the Rebbe Maharash, who yearned to see his Rebbe after his passing. The Chassid consulted with the Rebbe Rashab and after many preparations – one of them, to sleep while wearing a gartel – the Rebbe Maharash came to him.

Then the Rebbe went on to tell of "a young man who behaved improperly in a certain matter. The Rebbe gave over the matter...and I spoke to him about it – and to no avail, until the Rebbe himself came to him in a dream. And still, instead of this causing him to have a positive influence even on others - he himself ... drew the Rebbe to him, into the mud that he was immersed in ... If he had merited, this privilege of seeing the Rebbe's face would have been done **in a completely different way**; but now the Rebbe came to him in order to speak to him about a **lowly matter**, and in the end...

THE DREAM THAT CORONATED THE REBBE

Chassidic tradition relates that one of the determining factors that

led to the election of the Tzemach Tzedek as the third Nasi was a dream!

This is what is told about Shabbos Parshas B'Haalos'cha 5591/1831, which the elder Chassidim designated as "the Shabbos of the inner, essential crown." Why was this so?

After the passing of the Mitteler Rebbe, his son-in-law, the Tzemach Tzedek refused to take on the leadership of the movement. For about three and a half years – Kislev 5588 until Shavuos 5591 – he refused. Many Chassidim went to Lubavitch for Shavuos 5591, rabbanim, melamdim and balabatim (householders) including a majority of elder Chassidim who had been Chassidim of the Alter Rebbe. After Shavuos, each went home. Some of them went via Dubrovna where the mighty gaon R' Nechemia lived. He was a close friend of the Tzemach Tzedek and for a while they learned together. The elder Chassidim visited R' Nechemia. These included R' Isaac of Homil, R' Moshe Vilenker, and his brother R' Zev, R' Zalman Zezmer, R' Pesach Malestovker, R' Yekusiel of Liepli and others.

R' Nechemia told them that he had seen the Alter Rebbe in a dream and he said to him: Why don't you have a Rebbe? *Asei lecha rav!*

I asked Rabbeinu HaGadol who to take as Rebbe and he said: Avrohom is the beginning of the tikkun and Noach was a tzaddik but there is a level before tikkun and it is called Noach for being a consolation. In tikkun, Menachem is Noach with a Mem at the beginning which is the first letter of the Mishna, and a Mem afterward which is the last letter of the Mishna, will console us in the future and is Menachem in the present.

That is what the Alter Rebbe told me in a dream and I understood that we need to travel to Lubavitch. I will go to Lubavitch for next Shabbos,

Parshas B'Haalos'cha, to accept a new Rebbe [referring to the Tzemach Tzedek].

This story made a powerful impression on them and after consulting amongst themselves, they decided to return to Lubavitch and formally accept the Tzemach Tzedek as the leader. Indeed, on Wednesday of that week, they all went to Lubavitch and that Shabbos the Tzemach Tzedek was officially crowned as Nasi. "And Chassidim called this Shabbos of Parshas B'Haalos'cha, 'Shabbos of the Inner Crown' because then even the senior Chassidim ordained and accepted him as Rebbe," concluded the Rebbe Rayatz.

GALUS – A DREAM

Exile is a dream, says the Rebbe in a number of sichos, alluding to what it says in T'hillim, "When Hashem returns the captives of Zion we will have been as dreamers." In an amazing sicha that the Rebbe said on Shabbos Parshas Pinchas 5744/1984, he said:

There is a drush (Chassidic discourse) in Torah Ohr, "Shir HaMaalos b'Shuv etc. Hayinu K'Cholmim," where it explains that the general idea of galus is like a dream. In other words, the "dream" is – not the talk about Geula but, on the contrary, the seeming reality of galus, for what does a Jew have to do with galus? Whereas Geula is – wakefulness, that is the true reality of a Jew!"

The Alter Rebbe said a maamer

THE REBBE PROPHESED A DREAM

The Rebbe once wanted to influence one of the ideological leaders of the workers movement, Mr. Zerubavel Gilad, through his relative the Chassid R' Avrohom Dovid Leselbaum of Kfar Chabad who met with him. The Rebbe wanted him to convey a sign (Igros Kodesh vol. 15 p. 130) from a dream that Zerubavel would **have in the future**: "as a sign and wonder to his relative, that the time has come to review once again his earlier position, he will have a dream subsequent to your conversation with him."

On another occasion, the Rebbe spoke at a farbrengen (Parshas BaMidbar 5724) about a Jew who went to the Rebbe Rashab and said that he dreamt that a certain well-known tzaddik came to him and said that he was fit to be a Rebbe but alas, the Chassidim did not believe him.

The Rebbe Rashab said: If he appears again, tell him to go to the Chassidim.

on the topic of "and the one thousand and seven hundred and seventy-five etc." which alludes to the *keitz* in the year 5603/1842/3 (or 5608) and still, decades before that he announced and said in his teachings that galus is a dream and said this should be publicized just as you need to disseminate all other aspects of Chassidus and Torah in general!

So why the complaint and surprise about repeating the Alter Rebbe's words that galus is a dream and that Geula is the true reality of wakefulness!

Furthermore, in this maamer it explains that "a dream combines two opposites in one topic...and so too galus...a [person] can combine two opposite things, to be busy all day in business ... (and at the same time) in prayer that inspires love..." to cleave to him."

In other words, the emphasis is on the good quality of a dream for despite being immersed in worldly matters a moment before, in one moment he can turn from one extreme to another, to shake off the imaginings of this world and enter a true reality – loving Hashem and cleaving to Him, and all this – because of the advantage of a dream which combines two opposites for its source is higher still.

So too here, it is true that in this moment we are still in the darkness of galus, but since galus is a dream which combines opposites, in one moment the situation can change from one extreme to another, i.e. leaving the dream of galus and entering true reality – the Geula! And the key to this is in the hand of each and every person.

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A HINT TO THE WISE

By Rabbi Shlomo Majeski

The Rebbe writes about the Shpola Zeide in the HaYom Yom:

The Shpola Zeideh ("Grandfather of Shpola"), a disciple of the Maggid of Mezritch, was a man of intense fervor, far more than any of his colleagues - the Maggid's other disciples.

When he visited the Alter Rebbe in Liadi in 5569 or 5570 (1809 or 1810) he related that when he was a child of three he saw the Baal Shem Tov. "He placed his holy hand on my heart and ever since I have felt warm."

A gesture of a Tzaddik, certainly seeing him and hearing his voice, must make an impression never to be forgotten.

Sometimes there are complaints about publicizing the identity of Moshiach and proclaiming "Yechi." These complaints have as their goal the weakening, G-d forbid, of emuna and cooling off people's enthusiasm even though they might be presented in the guise of holiness and hiskashrus. When you look into it carefully you see that the disdain for Yechi is not only a disdain for the concept of Moshiach and the right way to publicize it. It's a disdain for everything holy and dear, to the point of disdain for, and the casting of doubts on, G-d forbid, the concept of "Rebbe," the foundation of all of Judaism!

This article won't go over all the sources in which the Rebbe stresses the importance of publicizing the identity of the Redeemer. I will just refer to one source which I think is not as well known – the sicha of Shabbos Parshas Balak (Seifer HaSichos 5751 p. 692) in which the Rebbe says that "living with the time" of Yemos HaMoshiach means, "to the point of behaving in thought, speech, and action in a way that is appropriate for this unique time when we stand on the threshold of Geula and pointing with a finger - 'behold, this (Moshiach) comes!'"

As I said, I won't get into the sources but will take a different angle – the Rebbe's encouragement of the singing of Yechi for over a year's time. What is the reason that this lofty matter, upon which depends the hisgalus of Moshiach, is expressed primarily by motions of the hand and head?

This question is not only about the encouragement of the singing of Yechi but also about many responses approving the publicizing of the Besuras Ha'Geula such as the Rebbe's approving the publication of *Besuras Ha'Geula* which has the words "K"K Admur Melech HaMoshiach shlita" written in it. Why were most of these positive acknowledgements given by way of a hint?

When you look in Chazal and in Chassidus, you find that the idea of

hinting is generally used to reveal something spiritual that is very lofty and which cannot be revealed in the usual form of speech.

It is very interesting to discover in the Gemara something that is perhaps not so well known – that many halachos were ruled upon by the Amoraim merely with a hand motion. An example would be the Gemara in Yoma (the end of daf 54b) where it brings the explanation of Rav Yehuda for the word *matzlif* which is used by the Mishna regarding the avoda of the Kohen Gadol: "What is like a matzlif? Rav Yehuda showed like someone whipping" (like hitting with a strap that starts at the shoulders and strikes downward - Rashi).

In the Gemara Makos (daf 21a) we find that Rav Sheishes used his fingers to teach a halacha, "He is guilty (of shaving) on the head," Rav Sheishes pointed to the different areas on the head. "And (of shaving with a razor) on the beard, two on this side and two on this side, and one below," Rav Sheishes pointed to the different areas on the beard.

So too the Gemara Shabbos (daf 106a) which discusses the size of the area prohibited by *melaben* (whitening), "Rav Yosef showed the area doubled, Rav Chiya bar Ami showed it straight."

So too in a number of places like the Gemara in Bava Metzia (daf 7a) which brings a discussion in the laws of splitting an item in dispute: "Rav Tachlifa bar Maarava taught before Rav Avahu, two who are grasping a tallis, this one takes as far as his hand reaches and that one takes as far as his hand reaches and the rest they divide equally. Rav Avahu indicated (pointing his fingers heavenward, Rashi) and with an oath" (i.e. he alluded with his fingers that the split requires an oath).

Looked at superficially, you might conclude that there is a common denominator in all these halachic decisions and due to

technical reasons they were decided with “hints,” i.e. hand motions, whether it’s because they are laws in which we need to know precise amounts which can only be done with one’s hands, or for some other reason. But Chassidus explains that there is a special spiritual matter going on here and it’s not a coincidence that these laws were decided by hand motions.

In the Seifer HaMaamarim 5699 p. 188, the Rebbe Rayatz explains the topic of *v’dai la’chakima b’reimiza* (a hint to the wise is enough): “That through hinting you can also uncover a deep intellectual matter which would need hours to explain but someone wise can understand it quickly even with a hint.”

The maamer goes on to bring an example of this from the Gemara in Brachos (daf 46b) where it brings a discussion between the Reish Galusa (leader of the exile recognized by the Babylonian authorities) and Rav Sheishes: “The Reish Galusa said to Rav Sheishes, although you are of the elder rabbis, when it comes to table manners, the Persians are more knowledgeable than you!”

“When there are two couches, the greater one reclines at the head and the one second to him above him (Rashi: when they recline at a meal [they were accustomed to reclining on their left side with their feet on the ground, each man on the his own couch] they recline in such a way that the couch of the second in greatness is at the head of the greater one).

Rav Sheishes asks: When the greater one wants to talk to the other one, he will have to sit up from

his place so that the other one can hear him which is surely not in accordance with his dignity. (Rashi: and if the greater one wants to talk to the other one, he will have to straighten up in his place to sit upright for as long as he is reclining he cannot talk to him since the other one is behind his head and the greater one’s face is turned away, and it would be better if the other one sits below him and listens to him



as he is reclining).

The Reish Galusa responds: The Persians are different because they show with a motion (they hint by demonstrating with their hands and fingers, Rashi).

The maamer asks: We find several times that Rav Avahu, Rav, Rav Yehuda, Rav Yosef, Rav

Sheishes would indicate with their hands. It was their practice to reveal deep wisdom with a hint because what cannot be expressed in words can be revealed through a hint. This is very surprising for how can a physical motion reveal a very deep intellectual idea which cannot even be revealed through speech?

He explains this by first prefacing with a long explanation about the intellectual matters which come in

two forms: the externals of intellect and the p’nimius (internal aspect) of intellect. Then he says: “This is the difference between a hint and speech that in speech only the light of intellect which is the external aspect of intellect can be revealed and apprehended. With a hint you can grasp the entire essence of the intellect which cannot be intellectually apprehended; it needs a wise man to understand a hint.”

Then the question is asked: how is it possible that through a physical gesture the deepest aspects of intellect can be revealed, which cannot be revealed through speech which is the usual way of revealing intellect?

He explains: There are certain matters that are so lofty that there is nothing great enough to contain them and consequently, they cannot be revealed within any vessel. It is specifically through something that has no relativity to them at all that they can be revealed.

The words the Rebbe uses are: “For the essence of intellect there is no vessel that is similar to it and the keilim are merely for the externals of seichel and this is what is revealed through letters of speech. As for a

hint which is not in the realm of a keili at all, it is specifically in this way that the essence is grasped. It's just that it is not revealed since it is not in the realm of a vessel, but through it is grasped and drawn the essence and substance of the seichel."

In other words, it is the lowliness of a movement – which is not even considered a keili altogether – that makes it possible to reveal deep things of the level of Mahus and Atzmus of intellect, things which cannot be revealed within keilim and cannot possibly be revealed within the usual keili of seichel, namely speech. So the reason those laws were finalized with a hand motion is because hinting allows for a revelation that cannot be expressed any other way.

We find this idea in the writings of the Alter Rebbe in Likkutei Torah (Parshas B'Chukosai): "It is impossible to draw down a revelation of G-dliness from the aspect of *sovev kol almin* (encompassing all worlds) through any intellectual grasp and power of thought and speech for thought cannot grasp it at all even supernal intellects etc., only through the aspect of action and the fulfillment of mitzvos as in the idea of 'a hint to the wise is enough.' And it is like a person who cannot speak and explain everything that is in his heart to his friend. What does he do? He motions to him. So too, as it were ... through the actions of mitzvos and their fulfillment is hinted and drawn down from way, way up, and from a very lofty place like with a hint."

In light of all the above, the rulings that were made by a motion consist of a higher spiritual level that could not be revealed in any other way. This idea is borne out in sources in Chassidus which speak about the importance of a movement, like what the Rebbe Rayatz writes in the name of his

father (Seifer HaSichos, kayitz 5700):

"There are two times, each of which, in accordance to his standing and position, becomes 'almost a man' and afterward a 'man.'

"... the time that I became a 'man' started from 5651 when I heard from my father: Our Rebbeim guided the flock of Chabad that a word is conceptualization, Torah; and a movement is guidance, a directive."

So too in Seifer HaToldos – Admur HaZakein (in the story of his arrest and liberation): "The Alter Rebbe was greatly pained that he had to reveal the intention of his master the Baal Shem Tov and explain his ways to gentile ministers. Although he could have pushed them off with a number of answers, he did not want to be separated from even one movement of our master the Baal Shem Tov, not even for a brief time and not even just for appearance's sake."

This enables us to understand some stories of our Rebbeim. In Seifer HaSichos 5703 it tells of a moving conversation between the Maggid of Mezritch in his final days and his disciple, the Alter Rebbe.

The Alter Rebbe said: When the Rebbe told me about [what is done the night before a bris] he said: Why don't you ask me what is done for a Sholom Zachor?

I said: I feel that the holy talks which you honor me with are in a way of "inspiration from above," "dew that drips from Atika Kadisha."

(Then there is a frightening description of the Alter Rebbe's holy face when he mentioned what his Rebbe told him ... This is followed by a continuation of what the Alter Rebbe said).

Upon which it is said "and you shall be silent," do not attempt an arousal at all. My master, the Rav HaMaggid nodded his holy head as a sign of agreement.

In the Seifer HaMaamarim Basi L'Gani vol. 1 p. 263 there is an excerpt from the notes of the Rebbe MH"M: "... When I brought the pamphlet to the Rebbe my father-in-law I found him in his room, where he davens, where they go in for yechidus etc., sitting at his desk and the Siddur (Torah Ohr, Brooklyn 5701) opened in front of him to page 45 – the end of Hodu and the beginning of Posach Eliyahu. I put the pamphlet on the desk and he nodded to express his approval and satisfaction."

In light of the sources brought above we can understand the significance of the nodding of the head as a sign of agreement in these stories. Obviously, there is no need to add a word about the significance of the fact that most of the instructions and encouragement from the Rebbe about publicizing the Geula and the Goel including those broadcast widely on television, were done via a hint, because from everything that was said above we understand the greatness of the revelation being revealed here.

However, we need to emphasize what the Rebbe Rayatz said in the maamer above that there is an important condition necessary in order to understand the hint: "One who is very wise will know from the hint the essence and substance of the idea, which cannot be put into letters of speech."

How do you attain the requisite level of wisdom? The maamer explains: "Although being a chacham is through bittul ... the fulfillment of mitzvos needs to be done through accepting the yoke of the kingdom of Heaven and not for any reason. As in the well-known saying ... if Hashem commanded us to chop trees we would do so with kabbalas ol like all mitzvos, and in order to understand the inner hint in Torah and mitzvos we need to be wise and

to reach the quality of chochma. This can only be done through bittul.”

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, disdain, G-d forbid, for a hand or head motion of the Rebbe expresses a disdain for the foundation of Chassidus and the concept of Rebbe.

Despite this being quite obvious and known by any beginner student, it still seems worthwhile mentioning two sources that clarify this without being able to be interpreted some other way:

In the sicha of leil Hei of Sukkos 5748 the Rebbe told about something the Rebbe Rayatz did that was surprising to him “for quite some time.”

“For the recitation of Hallel, the Rebbe Rayatz would take the lulav along with the two minim tied to it and without the esrog ... and only during the waving of the minim did he pick up the esrog too and hold it together with the other three minim ... Seemingly, according to what we know about how great it is to unite all four minim ... it would be preferable to hold the esrog together with the lulav and other minim throughout the recitation of Hallel ... What is the reason for what the Rebbe did?

“We can explain this according to something else we saw by the Rebbe Rayatz. Those who watched how he did things saw that after each waving he would look at the esrog, apparently to check that the esrog did not get a nick. And one could say that this is why he did not hold the esrog throughout Hallel but only when necessary (during the waving), because of fear of scratching it.

“... We saw this in later years when the Rebbe Rayatz was not that well (while in earlier years, when his health was good, we did not see this (at least I did not) manner of conduct, and therefore extra care was taken ... because the hands

Disdain, G-d forbid, for a hand or head motion of the Rebbe expresses a disdain for the foundation of Chassidus and the concept of Rebbe.

shook.

“We find in the Mishna – “Hillel said a ‘full *hin* measure’ ... a person must say it the way his Rebbe did,” (in instead of hin, or hane instead of hin – he mispronounced the word like his Rebbe) even though the reason for exact repetition does not, in this case, apply to the talmid.

“So too here: since this is what the Rebbe Rayatz did (for whatever reason), some of the Chassidim who took note of his conduct began doing the same thing (to only hold the lulav and its minim during Hallel and pick up the esrog only during the waving and also to check the esrog after the waving) as the Rebbe did.”

So the Rebbe is saying that if the Rebbe Rayatz did things a certain way, for whatever reason he had for doing so, Chassidim did the same because every movement of the Rebbe is holy and there is no such thing as inexact behavior by the Rebbe!

We see this too in a letter that the Rebbe wrote in 5713 (Igros Kodesh vol. 7, p. 58) about the reason for the change from drinking a lot of mashke as used to be the practice:

“1) Because abilities were given to Anash through the many easy maamarim and sichos in matters of explanation and understanding to affect the listeners without the need for copious alcoholic drink; just a little is enough. 2) Since, in recent times in particular, what is demanded of us with extra emphasis is the inyan of spreading the wellsprings **outward**, drinking a lot could undermine this a great deal...

“I found support for one part of this from what I once heard from the Rebbe my father-in-law in Riga who said, ‘I am now (the reference to **now** was not merely to that particular time but to those years since he started drinking less mashke) like after a bit of mashke.’ And although the superficial reason was that the doctors had told him to minimize mashke, obviously this was the external reason and consequently was accepted only by outsiders and not by Anash who know that Chassidus demands p’nimius, and surely this is also an instruction about the matter in general. As it is known that the body is drawn after the head and so Chassidim are drawn after our Nasi, the Rebbe my father-in-law, that his saying that he is now like after having a little mashke is an instruction to all Chassidim and the conferring of ability likewise, to be like this.”

Once again we see clearly that without looking at the reason that seemingly “caused” the Rebbe to say and act that way, we as Chassidim know the facts: this is what the Rebbe did and surely this is a holy thing.

I’ll conclude with how I began, with the quote from the HaYom Yom: “A gesture of a Tzadik, certainly seeing him and hearing his voice, must make an impression never to be forgotten.” May we merit seeing this right now with the hisgalus of the Rebbe MH”M when we will proclaim once again that which he encouraged us to proclaim: Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V’Rabbeinu, Melech HaMoshiach L’olam Va’ed!

LATKE NIGHT ON SHLICHUS

Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelewitz
Shliach, Beit Shaan

The Rebbeim would have a family gathering one night of Chanuka called “latke night.” The Rebbe took this idea out of the family circle to the broader Jewish world and instead of doing it on just one night he said that doughnuts, menorahs and Chanuka gelt should be given out throughout Chanuka.



Chassidishe farbrengen with soldiers by the light of a menorah

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER?

In the HaYom Yom for 28 Kislev, the Rebbe tells us (in the name of

the Rebbe Rayatz, in a sicha of 19 Kislev 5698) about the family latke night that the Rebbeim had on one night of Chanuka with their family, when they would tell stories,

including stories they told from year to year.

What were the stories that the Rebbeim told every year on latke night? The HaYom Yom doesn't say, but in the sicha the Rebbe Rayatz says that the stories had to do with the singing of the *taamei ha'mikra* (Torah cantillation notes) that the Alter Rebbe used for Torah, Haftoros, T'hilim, N'viim, and K'suvim.

The Tzemach Tzedek asked each of the participants, “What do you remember from your encounters with the earlier Rebbeim?”

In this sicha, the Rebbe Rayatz said the Tzemach Tzedek asked each of his sons, and age appropriately he expected each of them to remember incidents with the Alter Rebbe.

The Rebbe Rashab would also occasionally ask his son, the Rebbe Rayatz, “What do you remember?” which accustomed him to remember and to write down what he saw and heard. We need to do the same thing. We need to sit with our family and mekuravim and reminisce about what we saw and heard of the Rebbe, about t'fillos and Yomim Tovim, and convey what we remember along with what we felt.

THE POWER OF LATKES IN THE SEVENTH GENERATION

The Rebbe MH”M has taken the idea of “latke night” out of the family framework and brought it out to the public, and he also did away with the limitation of “one night of Chanuka” and said to distribute doughnuts – as well as menorahs and gelt – throughout Chanuka.

I spoke with old-time activists at Tzach and found out that for many years the Rebbe paid for a significant part (a half or a third) of the expenses of Mivtza Chanuka in the army. When the Rebbe first announced this campaign, the

instruction was to give the soldiers Chanuka gelt and Chanuka delicacies. Anybody who ever participated (and who hasn't?) in Mivtza Chanuka with soldiers knows how welcome the Rebbe's shluchim (and their doughnuts) are.

I myself have met people, not necessarily on Chanuka, who – as soon as they realized that I am a shliach, immediately mentioned the doughnut they got at the Suez Canal or the Beaufort Fort. Of course, they immediately reacted very warmly towards all of the Rebbe's messages.

A Chabad askan told me that a few years ago he was with some friends at a meeting in the offices of Bank of Israel and they asked the manager – as per the Rebbe's instructions – to mint coins especially for Chanuka. The reaction was, "What do you mean?! To make special coins?! Nothing like this was ever done before!"

Then one of the managers got up, took out a tiny nylon bag from his wallet that contained two Chanuka coins from the Rebbe and he told everybody how a few years earlier, Chabad Chassidim had come to the Sinai and had given out a doughnut and Chanuka gelt to every soldier. "If the Rebbe wants to mint coins for Chanuka, we have to do what he wants."

That year, shluchim of the Rebbe distributed new coins with the imprint of a Chanuka menorah on each one, with the word "Chanuka" beautifully embossed on the side.

A DOUGHNUT DISTRIBUTION PLAN

R' Avrohom Dunin, shliach in Taanach for the past forty years, relates:

When we first started out on shlichus, we were the most northern point of Chabad in the country. Our military sector was from Rosh HaNikra until Chadera. Before every holiday we got a huge order of

The Rebbe stood up and called upon then-Prime Minister Menachem Begin to leave the government and resign, for anyone who can't stand up to the pressure doesn't have to stay glued to his chair.

doughnuts, mishloach manos, the four minim, etc. along with many Anash from Kfar Chabad, and we divided all the boxes and manpower amongst all the army bases in our area.

One year, despite all our efforts to distribute all the doughnuts, many of them were left over and it was the last day of Chanuka. Only two hours remained to give them out before the holiday was over. We didn't know where to go because we had gone everywhere. Then one of the men remembered that nearby was the Megiddo military camp with a few hundred soldiers whom we had not yet visited that Chanuka. We immediately got into our cars and rushed off to Megiddo.

We arrived and overran the entire camp with the power of simcha, reaching all the soldiers in the camp with not one soldier left out.

We saw as well as heard the joy of the soldiers who welcomed us with cheers and dancing. It was only towards the end of the visit that one of the soldiers said the following:

"Really, *kol ha'kavod* to Chabad! I'm always reading in the papers about Chabad giving out doughnuts to soldiers and I was wondering how come they don't come to us in Megiddo? For eight days now I've been sitting and waiting, sitting and thinking, when will they come to us? I gave it a lot of thought and concluded that Chabad does things in a well-thought out way. Apparently they first give out doughnuts to combat soldiers who

are on the border and far away and only towards the end of the holiday do they visit army bases in the center of the country, one of which is Megiddo.

"Now I see that I was right. On the last day, at the last moment, here you are!"

SENIOR COMMAND ON LATKE NIGHT

Some shluchim have creative ideas. One shliach on the Shluchim Forum told about a special campaign that he has been doing in recent years. In addition to public menorah lightings, parties and various ceremonies that he attends, every evening he invites a couple or a family from his mekuravim to his home to join in the family menorah lighting. They sing the traditional HaNeiros Halalu and sit around together and eat delicious latkes. "The atmosphere is homey. People absorb the Chassidic ideas and remember them for years to come."

R' Arik Malkieli, shliach among the IDF soldiers, served as a military chaplain for many years and he tells of a similar initiative. Every year he invited to his home the senior command staff of "his" army base. When all the top brass arrived, the barriers fell as they watched the little children lighting the menorah. They sang together and afterwards they enjoyed a performance given by Michael Veigel and R' Tuvia Bolton. R' Malkieli said that even years later, those commanders treated every

R' Haber gave out tasty latkes that his wife had made (in the only kosher kitchen in the state) and then they danced around the menorah (as did a large group of local Eskimos who made their own circle and did their own kind of dance).

religious issue which came up with the utmost respect and this was thanks to the “latke night” and the magical hours spent with the lights and doughnuts.

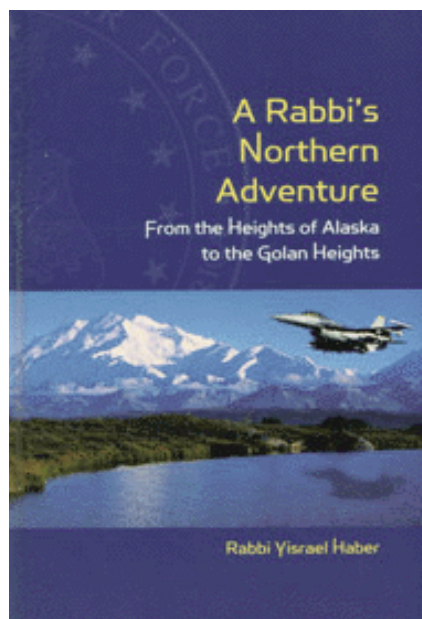
LATKE NIGHT IN ALASKA ON THE SIBERIAN BORDER

R' Yisroel Haber, shliach in the Golan Heights, used to be a chaplain in the American Air Force. He spent a number of years in army bases in Alaska. During this time he established a relationship with the Rebbe as he describes in his book, *A Rabbi's Northern Adventure*.

Chanuka 5734, R' Haber came up with a daring idea. He asked the American engineering corps to build him a giant menorah so he could put it in the northernmost point of Alaska, in the center of Fairbanks. Mind you, Alaska is the largest state in the union and it has four time zones which change as you get closer to the North Pole. In order to get to Fairbanks, R' Haber had to fly for two and a half hours within Alaska!

The engineering corps built him a menorah and provided fuel that would burn for a few hours in minus sixty degrees cold.

R' Haber, the only Jewish rabbi in Alaska, advertised the menorah lighting in Fairbanks. Hundreds of people showed up to see the astonishing sight – a menorah lit at



Rabbi Haber's book

the North Pole. The mayor also attended the special ceremony as did some television crews and reporters who invited R' Haber to talk about Chanuka on the radio.

R' Haber gave out tasty latkes that his wife had made (in the only kosher kitchen in the state) and then they danced around the menorah (as did a large group of local Eskimos who made their own circle and did their own kind of dance).

After the menorah lighting and dancing, R' Haber went to the radio studio of Voice of America with recordings of Nicho'ach (Chabad niggunim) and other Chassidic songs and he talked about Jewish pride in publicizing the miracle of

Chanuka. It's important to note that three miles from Fairbanks is the border between America and Siberia. Back then, American Intelligence knew that Jews in Siberia listened secretly to Voice of America and that night they had a rare opportunity to hear a Jewish rabbi give Chassidic explanations for the holiday as well as Chabad niggunim.

CHANUKA IN QUNEITRA ON THE SYRIAN BORDER

R' Haber skips ahead thirty years to the following story that took place on Chanuka 5764. He was living in the Golan Heights and he knew every military camp and every pathway in the Golan and Mt. Chermom. He made sure to bring the joy of Chanuka to every Jewish soldier as well as a menorah and a doughnut.

“One Erev Chanuka, six of us went to the position closest to the Syrian border, facing the UN encampment in Quneitra. About thirty soldiers were there who could not believe their eyes. “How did you get here?” they asked in amazement. We gave out doughnuts and began singing and dancing. Then we switched hats with them and everybody rejoiced.

“After the dancing we gathered all the soldiers in the mess hall and honored the commander with the recitation of the brachos and the lighting of the menorah. After the lighting and the singing of HaNeiros Halalu, the commander wanted to say a few words.

“I still can't believe my eyes. You should know that for two weeks now I have been asking those above me in my chain of command to send us a band, a singer, some entertainment, but there has been no response. Suddenly, half an hour ago, we heard music over a loudspeaker coming from the entrance. We thought, ‘That's interesting. Who can that be?’ Ah,

Chabad Chassidim are here. You should know that from our perspective it is exactly as if the Lubavitcher Rebbe came to bring us joy at this lonely post. Those in charge of us didn't care about us but the Rebbe in New York sure did."

The officer continued to talk with tears in his eyes. "I am originally from Yerushalayim where I didn't get along that well with the religious Jews, certainly not with the ultra-Orthodox. I felt a chasm between us. But now, after the dancing, shoulder to shoulder, and after you chose me, of all people, to be the chazzan, to say the brachos and light the menorah, I feel that we are one people."

When we left the post we turned the music on again and directed the loudspeaker, at full volume, towards Syria. That is when I remembered the music I broadcast on Voice of America which was heard in Siberia.

DOUGHNUTS FOR CIVILIANS

Doughnuts are not only given out in the army. The Rebbe's shluchim are very particular about this custom of eating fried foods on Chanuka and they enable as many Jews as possible to partake of it whether in senior homes, hospitals, prisons, all over. In my humble opinion, the typical Israeli Chabad house, on one Chanuka, makes a few hundred "latke nights" in one form or another. I take into account all the visits to preschools, the homes of mekuravim, inviting mekuravim, public menorah

lightings, etc.

The bachurim from the Chabad yeshiva in Migdal HaEmek who come to help out at the Chabad house in Beit Shaan every night of Chanuka, come prepared. In addition to menorahs and candles, they bring boxes of doughnuts. They go into every store in the business district and give out doughnuts, put a menorah on the counter, and invite the store owner to light the menorah and publicize the miracle. There is nothing nicer than passing by the business district in the evening and seeing dozens of shop windows illuminated by menorahs, smiling lovingly at the large menorah out in the street that illuminates the entire area.

A LIGHTER FROM THAILAND TO LIGHT A MENORAH

R' Shmuel Gromach, shliach in Beit Dagan, claims that the lights impact even on non-Jews, even if they are unaware of it. Here is his story:

One night of Chanuka, late at night, after all the menorah lightings, we decided to relight the big public menorah because some more Jews would pass by and be reminded of the miracle. We walked to the center of the yishuv, poured in fuel, put in wicks and then realized we had no matches. We didn't know what to do. Cars passed by but none stopped. The street was deserted and there was nobody to ask when suddenly, a Thai fellow walked by.

As he passed us, a lighter fell from his pocket. We tried calling out to him but he had rushed on. We followed the halacha that the loss of a non-Jew is permitted and we considered this a gift from Heaven. We used the lighter to light the menorah.

DOING T'SHUVA THANKS TO A DOUGHNUT

Just as menorahs are lit "in the doorway of the house to the outside," the doughnuts light up the neshama on the inside. The oil that floats above all liquids permeates the neshama and whoever gets a doughnut opens his heart and pocket and puts some coins in the pushka.

R' Dovid Teichtel, shliach in Natrat Ilit and chaplain of prisons and rehab centers all over the country, relates:

I met a Lubavitcher somewhere in the north of the country. He looked refined and Chassidish and had a familiar face. It turned out that he was an ex-con who did t'shuva and was now one of the most well-liked in his community.

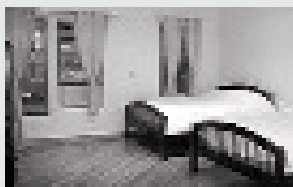
He said to me, "Do you know that it was thanks to you that I did t'shuva? I remember that you came on Chanuka to visit me and to give me a doughnut and you said to the guys in the room that every Jew is holy, like G-d. You quoted a verse, 'I said you are Elokim' and you explained that every Jew is a holy being like G-d. I took you at your word and changed my life."

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WHAT IS A FARBRENGEN?

Written by Rabbi Bentzion Elisha

Notes from an English farbrenge with Rabbi Yaakov Goldberg, at the Hadar Hatorah alumni Malve Malka - 19th Kislev farbrenge 5770.

There once was a speaker who successfully managed to lose his entire audience with his well prepared speech. Some people were sleeping, some were daydreaming, and some were just bored. All except for one individual who was paying close attention to every word.

He wasn't just passively listening. Oh no. He was nodding his head up and down in agreement at times, and sometimes he was shaking his head left to right in disagreement. This phenomenon excited the speaker to such an extent that he continued his speech inspired solely by this one avid listener.

After the speech the speaker went to his listener and thanked him for being so attentive. Without his involvement, he admitted, he would have stopped the speech long ago. However, he was wondering, what was the shaking of the head all about?

The erstwhile listener responded, 'I think you misunderstood me. Let me tell you what happened. I'm a shepherd. I watch and take care of

my goats. Last week I lost one. I looked everywhere for this goat but I couldn't find it. Then I saw that there will be a speech by you and I decided to come and maybe I'll find it over here.

Strangely enough, as you started speaking I was struck by your appearance. You looked like my goat! I was so happy. However I was thinking to myself, wait, I can't be so hasty, I have been looking for a while now for my goat, I have to make sure. I studied your face and I thought yes you are my goat, so I shook my head up and down, but then I would think again, no, you're not my goat... So this went on throughout your entire lecture, as you finished I made my final decision... You definitely are a goat! But, you are not my goat!

What is a Farbrenge?

A Farbrenge is not a speech! What is a speech? A speech, more often than not, is an exercise in disinterest. The speaker, usually, isn't truly interested in what he is saying and neither are the people present. Why? It's very simple.

The hearts of the people that are

supposed to be listening aren't into it since the heart of the speaker isn't into what he is saying. After the speech 'Lo paga, V'Lo Naga' - It didn't hit and didn't touch'. The words, needless to say, didn't affect the listeners or even touch them in the slightest.

A Farbrenge isn't a prepared event. It's not about thinking of what to say, it's about what comes out of your heart.

There's an interesting old Chassidic saying that encapsulates this notion of how Chassidim loathe speeches. It's a play of words on some P'sukim that describe a situation of a Jew who is found to be worshipping idolatry, the punishment for which is to be stoned to death.

"When you are told and you understand (that such an event has happened, that a Jew actually worshipped Idols), you are to inquire thoroughly. If in fact the report is authenticated and accurate - nachon ha'davar- (then) this is an abomination that was committed within Israel.' (Shoftim 17:4)

The saying goes like this: If you are told and you inquired thoroughly, and it is true, 'nachon ha'davar' that the talks in the Farbrenge were prepared - 'muchan ha'davar', then this truly is an abomination that has transpired in Israel!

(The word play is off of the verses words 'nachon ha'davar', which means that 'it is accurate', however the word Nachon is close in spelling and root to the word Muchan which means prepared.)

The Rebbe Rashab would pray before a Farbrenge that the words he says will inspire both him and the listeners.

Why are we repeating the same stories everybody knows again and again? Especially now, everything is in English, you probably heard almost everything already, if not in Hebrew or Yiddish then in English,

so what's the point?

Like Yetzias Mitzraim, the exodus from Egypt, every year there is a Mitzvah to retell the story, so it is on 19th Kislev and every other auspicious time. Sippur, the word story in Hebrew, comes from the word Sapir, sapphire - a shiny gem. This alludes to the act of making shine, referring to make revealed, to illuminate. We retell the stories that we all know to *continue* to shed light and to illuminate this very times we find ourselves in.

Like everything else there is a certain Seder, an order, in a Farbrengen, in which one speaks and others listen. Even though sometimes it could be very hard to listen, nevertheless Halacha states that 'HaShomeia K'Omer Dami', 'the one that hears is like the one that speaks', so really everybody is speaking in a Farbrengen, so to speak.

Interestingly enough, Hafatza and Shlichus aren't just about somebody else; you have to start with yourself, 'Mibsarcha Al Tisalem', don't ignore your own flesh.

The Rashbatz was the melamed of the Friedlike Rebbe when he was a young boy. He also used to help put him to sleep at night. By the nighttime Krias Shema, he taught him to declare and resolve that what was, was, but *tomorrow it has to be completely different*. No matter what today's accomplishments were, no matter what happened yesterday, tomorrow IT HAS TO BE, radically different, better!

How could someone proclaim that 'I'm a Jew in my heart' yet not want to touch a Mitzvah or learn Torah? How could that come to be?

There's a story of the two Masmidim, great scholars, who lived in a certain town. One scholar used to hunch over his Gemara for so many years he was affectionately called 'the hunchback', the other used to sit on a log and learn for

The Rebbe said it's Makas HaMedina. The plague of the nation is sadness, driving many people to be addicted to therapists. A person has to be happy, not Hololos, frivolousness, but real Simcha.

around 18 hours a day for many years to the extent that he created a groove in the log he used to sit on.

In the same town there was a grocery store owner who only used to come to Shul on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. One time, someone came up to the scholar who sat on the log studying and jokingly asked him why he doesn't cut back on his learning a little. Instead of learning for 18 hours a day, since he already learned so much for so many years he could take it easy now in his old age and learn just 17 or 16 hours a day. The Rabbi got very serious and exclaimed that all Jews are interconnected. If he G-d forbid decreased his learning even one hour there will be a domino effect, a downward spiral effecting the Jews holding at lower levels of learning, and then, G-d forbid, the town's grocer will lose whatever connection he has to Judaism and he won't even come to Shul Yom Kippur!

There was a guy who used to daven really quickly. One time, he davened a 'Hodu/Aleinu davening'. - He said Hodu and Aleinu and not much in between. When he came home his wife asked him why he came so soon from Shul. In his own defense he said he doesn't know what she means since he Davened from Hodu to Aleinu.

Later on at night he came home hungry expecting a delicious meal. His wife was on to him, and she wanted to teach him a lesson. She brought out a fish head, and a fish

tail, without anything in between and placed it before her dear husband. Fortunately his wits were as quick as his davening and both the dinner and message were appreciated.

When a person makes an internal gap, thinking this is how I am during davening or learning Torah and this is me at business, he becomes like a split personality. You can't even recognize on the person at work that he was the one davening for an hour or studied Torah for an hour etc.

This kind of split personality behavior on whatever level affects a Yid on a lower level of observance. So much so that it creates a reality where there could be a Jew to whom it suffices to be just Jewish in their heart without having it manifest in DOING a mitzvah or learning Torah.

When going to the Mikva even though you are completely submerged except for one hair, the Halacha is that the Tvila doesn't count! The person has to be completely 100% under the water, immersed in it. The fact that he has even one hair above water proves that he has thoughts somewhere else, he isn't completely 'there'.

In learning Torah, davening and just every day living of a Torah life, a person has to be completely immersed, completely drenched in it. Otherwise, its proof he isn't really there, fully. If a person is davening quickly, while keeping the phone on, so he can speak to someone else, with very important

business or social matters, so how into his davening is he, really?

The Rebbe requested and demanded from all of us to “Do all you can to bring Moshiach!” We simply have to accept all that has been given to us, and just complete the job.

If you look at the first Maamer of the Rebbe he clearly declared his mission, to bring Moshiach. He tried in every which way, through sending Shluchim all over the world, saying Sichos and Maamarim dedicated to this goal, unlike any other Rebbe in history. All the Rebbeim’s work he wanted to actually manifest, by bringing Moshiach and the Geula Shleima.

There was a Chassid of the Alter Rebbe who had a dream while his Rebbe was in prison. He dreamt that the Maggid of Mezritch was at the head of a table surrounded by great Tzaddikim, and the Maggid was distressed, saying to the Tzaddikim present that his favorite Talmid is in trouble, he is in prison and Chassidus itself is in danger.

Immediately the Rashbi created a Beis Din, and they Paskened that the Alter Rebbe should be set free. Since he started revealing Chassidus in the revolutionary way of comprehending the inner aspects of Torah with the Chochma, Bina and Daas of person, when he leaves prison he should spread it even more than before; and that Chassidim should and will always have the upper hand.

When the Chassid awoke, he realized that this dream was no simple dream. That day the Alter Rebbe was set free.

Even though it’s difficult to say, this story very easily connects with our time now where we unfortunately don’t hear the Rebbe say Maamarim or Sichos, we don’t see the Rebbe give dollars etc. ‘The Rebbe is in prison’. However there was a P’sak Din that the Rebbe will be set free and Chassidus will be

spread out much more than before.

Our time is similar to the time period after the 19th Kislev freedom, when the Alter Rebbe’s activities and teachings expanded dramatically in multiple ways.

The Alter Rebbe was in prison for 53 days. This corresponds to the 53 chapters of the Tanya. It was said that it was Mesiras Nefesh for him to be imprisoned. But why? The Alter Rebbe’s whole Etzem, essence, was to spread Chassidus, and in prison he could not.

The Rebbe is someone whose whole life is Chassidus and living out the Baal Shem Tov’s vision of spreading Chassidus outwards, therefore hastening the coming of Moshiach. Not being able to do that is very painful, it’s Mesiras Nefesh.

Who did the Alter Rebbe write the Tanya for? The Alter Rebbe wrote the Tanya because there were thousands of Chassidim needing guidance and there was a limitation of time. He said he wrote it for people he knew, to answer their questions.

Why are the people that are here in a Lubavitch yeshiva? There are thousands of people that were not in Lubavitch Yeshivas or knew of the Rebbe. However all that are Shayach to the Alter Rebbe ‘he saw’ and ‘he knew’ beforehand. He ‘knew me’ and he ‘knew you’ and he foresaw that this Tanya is the prescription for our problems.

The Chassidic movement originally had no name, but people used to call them the Freileche Chevre, the happy folk.

Nevertheless the Alter Rebbe dedicated 3 chapters of the Tanya about Atzvus, sadness, chapters 26, 27, and 28. The Alter Rebbe debated with himself regarding the inclusion of one letter in a word in the Tanya, the Vav in V’chulu or just leave it without the Vav, Chulu, for several weeks... Only over the inclusion of one letter in a word! However he wrote 3 whole chapters

about sadness. Why? Because *no Aveira*, transgression, could lead a person to so much damage then sadness... The Rebbe said it’s Makas HaMedina, the plague of the nation is sadness. Driving many people to be addicted to therapists. A person has to be happy, not Hololos, frivolousness, but real Simcha.

The Lashon said about 19 Kislev, which ‘gave’ us Chassidus, is that it gives Chayus, vitality. Chayus in Avodas Hashem is fundamentally important. It’s like the difference between a living body or the opposite.

When a person does a Mitzvah they should be really excited about it, not excited to get it over with!

People, essentially, want 2 things, truth and life. Imagine the following scenario.

A person is offered that whatever he wishes for will be granted on the condition that he will be put into a comatose state, and through injections, his fantasy life will be fulfilled. What would you answer such a proposition?

Surely, no one wants such a thing. People want life, real life, and truth, not make belief, but real truth. Chassidus brings life, Chayus, to Avodas Hashem, and of course it’s the completeness of truth, the truth in its entirety - Torah T’mima, the complete Torah both Nigla, the revealed, and Nistar, the hidden.

Life can be difficult, with many things that require our attention.

However it’s very important not to get confused, and materialize what the Rebbe, the Rebbeim, have entrusted us *within our everyday life. Don’t lose focus!*

Let’s immerse ourselves completely into Torah as it is illuminated by its inner light, Chassidus and Darchei HaChassidus, the ways of Chassidus.

Hopefully today will be the

auspicious day that the Rebbe will come out of this prison that is Galus together with all of us, and we will be set free in the complete redemption with the coming of Moshiach now.

Rabbi Yaakov Goldberg is an esteemed and beloved educator who merited to be called a Lamdan, a diligent scholar, by

the Rebbe. He is the Rosh Yeshiva of Hadar HaTorah and a Meshiv in Tomchei T'mimim in 770 where he answers questions on all Shas and Halacha.

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[Continued from page 19]

certainly not to knock it because by doing so we wound his psyche. It's the child who is "dry" that we need to worry about.

As the years go by we are seeing tremendous enthusiasm for traveling to the Rebbe for Tishrei. What are your thoughts about this?

First, we cannot knock the enthusiasm and the "lights" that they come back with. We need to

listen and show an interest in all the details and stories they bring back with them. That is part of their shlichus. They did not go to the Rebbe for themselves alone but "brought" the Rebbe to us and their families. They are deserving of our admiration and full attention.

Aside from this, it's worth watching to see what a bachur does with the "lights" and enthusiasm of 770, how he applies them to Cheshvan and the months that

follow. For him too it's a new beginning, an opportunity to get a fresh start and to make good resolutions in areas that perhaps he wasn't successful in last year.

We ought to receive them with open arms. The teaching staff must take advantage of the momentum and the enthusiasm and channel it in the right direction so they can connect the simcha and excitement with life in yeshiva.



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CROSSROADS: NETANYAHU IS WORSE THAN SHARON

By Sholom Ber Crombie
Translated by Michael Leib Dobry

Maybe the miracle will happen and they will understand that Bibi is worse than Olmert and worse even than Sharon. The facts prove that Bibi has failed to build even one home (!) in Yehuda and Shomron since re-assuming the premiership. His predecessor, Ehud Olmert, built three thousand in one year (!), even though he was left-wing.

What hasn't been said about the Prime Minister of Israel? He is under unprecedented pressure, as the Americans put conditions on exercising their right of veto at the United Nations Security Council. The new and modern American jets have been placed in the balance, and as usual it's simply impossible to give the Americans a slap in the face.

However, in the face of all such

claims, the Rebbe stood up and called upon then-Prime Minister Menachem Begin to leave the government and resign, for anyone who can't stand up to the pressure doesn't have to stay glued to his chair. Furthermore, as the Rebbe said, the title of "former prime minister" is also a respectable and prestigious one.

We see in the Rebbe's sichos how

there is a clear approach with no room for concessions. "Anyone who cannot stand up to the pressure", as all the considerations over who will come in his place, or the compromises on "the lesser of two evils", are none of his concern. He must get up and resign.

THE REBBE'S SLOGAN

Perhaps the most nostalgic slogan remaining from the period when the Rebbe cried out against giving away the Yamit settlement was "Anyone who can not stand up to the pressure – should resign." Every Chabad child is familiar with this statement, deeply engraved within the mind of every Chassid.

Whole farbrengens have been built around this statement, where mashpiim teach ways and give instructions in Avodas Hashem from this unique order that the Rebbe stated publicly. However, as with every instruction in Torah, the general principle is that "A verse cannot depart from its plain meaning." First and foremost, we must remember the plain significance of the Rebbe's words.

The Rebbe cried out and pleaded: The pressures are indeed great – America on one side, the Europeans on the other, and in the midst of it all, the Prime Minister of Israel who has to stand his ground. However, just as any tenant committee chairman knows that he can't deceive those residents whom he represents, and if there's a problem, he simply resigns – so too, the Prime Minister of Israel.

The Rebbe also relates to the matter of who will succeed the prime minister after he resigns. During Begin's tenure, many people were worried that his replacement would be Shimon Peres. But the Rebbe stated his position firmly: Who will take your place is irrelevant as far as you are concerned. You must carry out what is incumbent upon you to

do, and if you know that the only way that you can avoid going against the instructions of the Torah is to resign – then that is what you must do.

BIBI'S STORIES

As with all of the Rebbe's prophecies, nothing has changed, and the Rebbe's words sound today even more relevant than ever. The same voices, the same claims, are coming from the Prime Minister of Israel today. He wants to convince us that he is doing his utmost and trying his very best, and if only we would understand the situation he's in and the pressure that he's under, we would realize that we have to submit to the new American dictates of another three-month settlement freeze.

Bibi tries to sweet-talk the Shas ministers and his wavering colleagues in the Likud Party into agreeing to this position. As of the writing of this report, the only Cabinet members who had announced their opposition to an extension of the settlement were Ministers Avigdor Lieberman, Uzi Landau, Moshe Yaalon, and Benny Begin. The others were still undecided. Those wavering included the members of the Shas Party, who announced that they would abstain, just as they did during the vote on the first Oslo Accords seventeen years ago. According to the leaders in the Yesha community, there's still a reasonably good chance that Ministers Eli Yishai and Ariel Attias will change their position and declare their opposition to the new "freeze".

For his part, Bibi takes the American steamroller and pushes it straight onto the backs of his government ministers. Netanyahu speaks to them about "national responsibility", the worrisome

Iranian threat, and how we will be unable to destroy the Iranian nuclear reactor without American support. Even the U.S. fighter jets that Barack Hussein Obama promised to the Government of Israel in exchange for the "freeze" extension is meant to send a powerful message to all those who plan to oppose this dangerous proposal that American guarantees on the State of Israel's continued existence as an independent entity are hanging in the balance.

Until now, it seems that all the threats helped. The deluge of words such as "Americans", "United Nations", and "Iran" managed to influence the patron/mentor of the Shas Party, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, who has yet to instruct his ministers to vote against the

knows the truth: During these past months, the Obama Administration has sought to determine the permanent borders of Israeli sovereignty in Eretz Yisroel. The President of the United States wants to establish facts on the ground – and the facts are that in any location where construction does not continue now, Jews will later be uprooted from their homes *r"l*.

Maybe the general rule regarding a falsehood not known by all to be untrue will help the Shas ministers to grasp at the straw and declare that "after the freeze extension, there will no more freezes." It seems that those were the same declarations made before we entered the previous freeze, when everyone proclaimed, "After the freeze, the government will continue to build with all its strength."

In praise of several ministers, it must be said that they deceived themselves only once – and that's pretty good for an Israeli politician. This is in reference to Ministers Moshe Yaalon, Benny Begin, and Silvan Shalom, who supported the freeze the first time around, but who declared that they will vote against its extension.

On the other side stand a group of opportunists who are primarily trying to keep the jobs that Bibi gave them, whether as a cabinet minister or head of a parliamentary committee. No one has any rational explanation why the freeze should be continued, except Bibi's repeated claims regarding the need to comply with the Americans, as if everything can be offered upon the sacred altar of Uncle Sam.

LOOKING SQUARELY UPON THE SITUATION

We are presently faced with two scenarios: In the first, the decision is made to continue the settlement freeze and establish the permanent



Demonstrating in Yerushalayim against the settlement freeze

proposal, and other "concerned" Cabinet members who are troubled over the state of relations with the United States if we continue to build in Yehuda and Shomron.

EVERYONE AND HIS "JOB"

The whitewashing by the government ministers who speak about supporting another "freeze" is yet another exercise in self-deceit, as they claim that we're merely talking about a delay of the construction in Yehuda and Shomron. But everyone

borders of the Palestinian state – and then we will all have to go out into the streets and make a powerful protest until the government is brought down and the evil decree is abolished. The second scenario is that the decision to extend the freeze will not obtain official government sanction, but Bibi will naturally continue his policies since receiving his mandate – and secure a virtual and total freeze on construction in Yehuda, Shomron, and Yerushalayim. In such a case, the situation will be worse sevenfold, as the motivation for getting hundreds of thousands of people into the streets will be considerably less.

Or, perhaps the miracle will happen and those faithful to the cause of shleimus ha'aretz will look

squarely upon the situation, and they will understand that Bibi is worse than Olmert and worse even than Sharon. The facts prove that Bibi has failed to build even one home (!) in Yehuda and Shomron since he re-assumed the premiership – whereas his predecessor, Ehud Olmert, built three thousand homes in one year (!) even though he was considered to be a left-wing prime minister.

If the miracle occurs, all those loyal to the Greater Land of Israel will now unite to bring down the current government – with its defense minister, Ehud Barak, and its significant Cabinet member, Minister Dan Meridor – and they will proclaim that so it shall be to anyone who dares to harm the wholeness of the Holy Land and

establish a Palestinian state in Eretz Yisroel

Of all the possibilities that appear on the horizon, this is the only option for maintaining the territorial integrity of Eretz HaKodesh. Otherwise, it's already clear that Bibi will continue with his convoy of insane concessions straight into the abyss. Then, he'll throw Shas and Lieberman out of the government, bring in the Kadima Party, and by then it will already be too late.

But until this happens, don't falter along the path that the leader of the generation has taught us: Protest, protest, protest.

"Indeed, the Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps." With G-d's help, we will be victorious!

[Continued from page 44]

concluded his story.

"To tell you the truth, I felt totally banal in the presence of this marvelous Jew, 'Avi'. He invested such vitality, and he achieved so much change in his daily life. But above all, I was delighted by the Divine Providence that enabled me to choose specifically this cab company in order to appreciate and become acquainted with yet another achievement of a shliach and his m'shaleiach.

"We finally arrived at our destination. Before getting out the cab, I told Avi that I was very pleased to have had the opportunity to meet him, and that his life story and his process of kiruv (just getting started) were thrilling indeed. I then said that I will have to be in Beersheva again, G-d willing, in the near future, and I would be most interested in touring the city's historic sites with him.

"As he helped me with the heavy packages, I asked him if he was familiar with the 'Beis Moshiah'

Magazine.

"Of course," he said with a smile. I identified myself as an occasional reporter with the magazine, and I asked for his permission to publicize his story. He was certain that the rabbi would be very pleased.

"The final surprise was saved for the end. Just before parting from one another, he handed me his business card in order that he could contact me prior to my next auspicious visit. But something didn't appear right to me, as the card showed the name 'Daniel', and I had made certain to get into a cab

driven by 'Avi', as he had clearly instructed me.

"My name is Danny," he replied to my complete surprise. "In fact, Avi had gone out to pick you up, but his wife suddenly needed him at the last minute, and he asked me to take his place!"

Divine Providence - - -

(This translation is dedicated to Rabbi Gil and Mrs. Sylvia Blizovski, the Rebbe MH"M's shluchim at the University of the Negev, and the entire Chabad community of Beersheva, City of the Patriarchs.)

[Continued from page 4]

This is indeed a great wonder: Moshe Rabbeinu needed to establish future generations of Torah study, and he knew that all Torah study throughout the generations was dependent upon him, but still he was involved with prayer!

Has this chassid ever heard of something like this before?

While upon Mount Sinai Moshe devoted himself to prayer, as it says, "I fell down before G-d forty days and forty nights, etc., and I prayers to G-d, etc.," meaning that Moshe Rabbeinu prayed for forty days! And being that the attribute of Moshe is the attribute of truth, certainly when he says that he davened – he truly davened!

From all of this it is understood that we must daven and know the meaning of the words when

davening. And when we are davening and understanding the meaning of the words, this must last not only throughout the duration of the prayer but throughout the entire day and throughout all of one's life.

Just like when saying the blessing "You have graced man with knowledge" one does not intend that this should be fulfilled strictly for the time that he is davening but for the entire day and for his entire lifetime – so too in this case. When we say, "May the scion of Dovid, Your servant, speedily sprout forth," the intent is that these words apply throughout the entire day and throughout our lifetime, as followed immediately in the liturgy by, "we hope for Your salvation all day."

If one does not have this in mind, it is the opposite of the Mitzva of prayer, the opposite of the Shulchan Aruch!

The fact that this chassid argues that this is not our way – this argument is entirely contrary to the way of all generations of the Jewish people who follow the Shulchan Aruch. It is contrary to the way of Moshe Rabbeinu and even contrary to the approach of the Avos, who lived prior to the Giving of the Torah. It is contrary to the way of Yaakov Avinu, as well as Yitzchok and Avrohom, for "Avrohom Avinu was a sage and would sit in yeshiva." So too with regard to Yitzchok and so too with Yaakov. And similarly thereafter, throughout all generations. Even when the Jewish people were in a state of suffering, "From the days of our Patriarchs, yeshiva never departed from them. When they were in Egypt, they had yeshiva, etc."

(From the address of Shabbos Parshas Mikeitz, Shabbos Chanuka 5741, bilti muga; Sichos Kodesh pg. 649 ff.)

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Igros Kodesh of the Rebbe MH"M shlita vol. 14 p. 140

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DIVINE PROVIDENCE IN A BEERSHEVA CAB

By T. Yankelevitch
Translated by Michoel Leib Dobry

As we were leaving town, a fellow cabbie got on the air and informed our driver that the rabbi had said to write the Rebbe via Igros Kodesh. Avi, the driver, gave his approval.

A few weeks ago, I was (virtually) on the other side of Eretz Yisroel for various reasons. We're talking about the city of Beersheva, a place with which I am totally unfamiliar. When I thought about making my return trip via public transportation, a "strange" thought crossed my mind: Perhaps it would be permissible for me to indulge myself and travel back home by private taxi? I had a couple of heavy packages with me, and I reasoned that it really would not seem a luxury to save a lot of physical effort. A quick check of my bank account showed that I could afford to make this small one-time exception.

I then began to look for a driver. Since I customarily prefer to give parnasa to those connected with the chassidic community, I called a chassidic driver from the central part of the country, who told me that he would check to see who's available in the vicinity and then get back to me.

Before he called back, a Jew whom I had met said that he also needed a taxi to get to another city closer than my destination, and he ordered a cab from a Beersheva company named "Campus". He gave me the number, I checked the price, which sounded reasonable, and closed the deal with them. Naturally, I called the first driver back to tell him, "Thanks but we managed already."

In the conversation with my driver friend, he said that the reasonable prices were obviously because I was taking a cab from a company named "Campus", where the drivers are probably college students always looking for a little extra money to cover their living and school expenses. Thus, any amount of money is suitable for them, resulting in substantially lower prices.

As I went outside to wait for the cab, my phone rang. The driver, Avi, was on the line, asking for my exact location, as he would be coming in

another seven minutes to pick me up. "Don't get into another cab; just one with a driver named 'Avi'," he made sure to emphasize several times.

For some reason, he sounded more mature than your average student, but I didn't give it much thought. Yet, when "Avi" came a few minutes later, I quickly saw that I had not been mistaken. He was considerably older, and he didn't look to me like a student at all. Nevertheless, he demonstrated the qualities of a young student – very polite and courteous, helping me with the heavy packages as we set out on our way.

Time passed, and I curiously explored the cab's interior. My eyes noticed several pictures of the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, together with other pictures commonly found nowadays in taxicabs. I smiled to myself: The Rebbe is accompanying me on my long journey home. This is not the first time, but I'm happy every time it happens.

A person is led along the path he wants to follow, particularly if he's a Chassid, and especially if he customarily writes for a periodical that publicizes the announcement of the Redemption.

Before we left the city, a fellow cabbie got on the radio and informed our driver that the rabbi



had said that they should write to the Rebbe via Igros Kodesh! Avi, the driver, gave his approval. “That’s a good idea,” he replied. His friend added that they would write the letter together with their rabbi. The word “Redemption” periodically cropped up in the conversation, which then moved on the subject of participation of Torah classes. Eventually, the agreement was that after a day of work and some rest, they must participate in a shiur without excuses.

My curiosity was genuinely aroused in response to what I had heard, which sounded more like something appropriate for 770 than an unknown (bare-headed) cab driver in Beersheva. I felt the need to say a word or two, give some encouragement on writing to the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, and receiving his holy bracha, and this need, dear readers, brings you the following amazing story.

“Avi” the driver began his story with undisguised pride: He learns in the Chabad kollel in Beersheva. While he notes that there are numerous Chabad Houses in Beersheva, he’s talking specifically about the kollel run by “Rabbi [Yosef] HaKohen Hendel”. He says that they have a minyan for davening and Torah classes, given primarily by the shliach and sometimes by other rabbanim, such as the rosh kollel’s

father-in-law, Rabbi Tanchum (Boroshensky). He tells how the drivers at the “Campus” taxi stand constitute an integral part of the minyan held in the bomb shelter. Avi admits that it was difficult at first to change his davening nusach and other customs (!), but he slowly got used to it. “Chabad chassidus has a drawing power that’s impossible to explain,” he says. If he says it, then apparently he knows what he’s talking about.

“All the various customs were also a little hard for the other guys, but the next Shabbos, there they are again, drawn by the magical pull of the davening, the farbrengens, the niggunim... and the shliach who doesn’t flinch when confronted by difficulties or roadblocks, running forward to take on the next objective. It’s clear to him, as it’s clear to all of us, including the shliach himself, that this does not derive from one’s powers, but from the strengths and brachos of the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, which push, support, and lead to success.

“At first, the rav bought the farbrengen refreshments by himself, and we decided that this just wasn’t right. Why should the whole burden be placed upon him? We decided to take turns, and when it was my turn, I received guidance to buy only products that carried the kashrus supervision of Badatz Yerushalayim.

I just happened to be out of town at the time, and I was worried that I wouldn’t get back early enough, so I bought everything there. All the products had kashrus stamps that seemed appropriate to me, and I loaded up on the best stuff available. I couldn’t believe it when the rav explained that certain kashrus stamps were not up to his standards. ‘What??’ I said. ‘Rabbi So-and-So isn’t enough of a tzaddik?’ It was hard for me to accept, but today I understand and act with the utmost stringency.

“Another matter with which my own family had some difficulty was the issue of Shabbos farbrengens after davening, together with the late starting time for Shacharis on Shabbos morning. This didn’t go so well in my household. Up until then, we would eat the daytime Shabbos meal at around noon. All of a sudden, I started coming home from synagogue at two in the afternoon, after Musaf and the farbrengen. By that time, the cholent was already burnt, and my wife... was not all that happy. Today, we’ve solved the problem to everyone’s satisfaction, as the rav moved up the starting time for davening and re-scheduled farbrengens for after Mincha.”

We spoke about the various differences in practiced customs, and then suddenly I was hit by his next question: “Is it true that there

The young man replied most harshly: “I’m not interested in the mayor or his promises. I have a letter here and I’m not leaving without the key.”

are divisions within Chabad?” The truth? I was a bit apprehensive. This was not a particularly favorite subject of mine, and I took a deep breath as I listened to the rest of the question, which (to my great regret) I know by heart already. I started to prepare my standard response that all chassidim believe that the Rebbe is Moshiach, and the debate is merely about how to deal with the publicity...

“But no, ‘Avi’ is talking about another difference of opinion entirely, a much deeper one: ‘Why do some of the Kohanim (primarily in Kfar Chabad) do Birkas HaKohanim every Shabbos, whereas he was taught in kollel that they do it only on Yom Tov?’ Rabbi Hendel, himself a Kohen, had explained the reason to him, and he was pleased to hear the exact same answer from me. I realized that Avi was well-rooted in Chabad customs, down to the most detailed nuances. My heart filled with pleasure to hear such warm and appreciative words on the Rebbe’s shliach – a tremendous *kiddush sheim Lubavitch*. Avi also told about how his rav doesn’t think that he’s all that special or unique, declaring that all Lubavitchers have exactly the same dedication as he does. He asked me if that was true, and I confirmed it.

“As I mentioned, the journey was a long one. We were only half way there, when Avi said that he had something else to tell me.

“How did my connection to Chabad start?, he said. “Yes, there are many Chabadnikim in Beersheva who have t’fillin stands and do lots of good things. My father davens with a prominent local rabbi, and we

belonged to his synagogue.

Personally, I have had my share of spiritual ups and downs – sometimes going to shul, sometimes...

“One day, I got a call to pick someone up, and I waited for the person on a certain street. A young rabbi was standing near the cab, looking for a tenth man to make the minyan, and he asked me if I would join them. I told him that I was sorry, but I was waiting for someone who had ordered a taxi. After waiting for a few minutes, the order was cancelled, and I agreed to the rabbi’s request to help make the minyan. I left the taxi, entered the shelter, and completed the minyan. The rabbi asked if we could stay in touch, and I gave him my mobile phone number.

“Over the following two weeks, he ‘bombarded’ me with announcements on Torah classes and minyanim. I neither responded nor came, but that didn’t seem to bother the rabbi, and he kept inviting me without despair. If a Jew asks you so many times, you simply can’t ignore it, and I eventually decided to come.

“When I arrived, I saw that something was wrong. Looking very upset, the rabbi was explaining to those around him that he had received a letter from the municipal legal department, ordering him to vacate the shelter where he held his activities. Apparently, I had been sent to the right place at the right time. I revealed to the rabbi that I had personal connections with the mayor, and I would apply them immediately to Chabad’s benefit.

“I made a promise and fulfilled it. At the first opportunity, I went to

the mayor’s office, told his personal secretary gently but firmly that I was here, and the mayor quickly came out to greet me. I explained to him the issue at hand, adding that it was simply unacceptable to move the Chabad rabbi and all his activities to another location. The mayor agreed in principle, but he steadfastly said that matters must be conducted through the proper channels, i.e., filling out forms, submitting a request, etc. Yet, he gave his word: The shelter would be Chabad’s!

“A promise is a promise, and I was happy that I could help. Thus, it came as a great surprise to me when I received an urgent phone call from the rabbi shortly thereafter. I was asked to come to the shelter right away, because a representative from the municipal legal department was right there with an eviction notice, demanding that the rabbi immediately give him the key! When I got there, I could see that there was a problem. After exchanging a few words and my stating that I had received an explicit promise from the mayor that the shelter belonged to Chabad, the young man replied most harshly: ‘I’m not interested in the mayor or his promises. I have a letter here and I’m not leaving without the key.’ I called the mayor’s office right then and there, determined to put an end to this unpleasant scene. When he got on the line, I activated the microphone in order that everyone could hear him. I asked the legal rep to repeat the insulting statement he had declared regarding the mayor just a minute earlier, but for obvious reasons, he declined. The mayor then explained that the shelter will be officially turned over to Chabad, and the keys remain with the rabbi...

“From that day forward, the shelter and the Chabad House belonged to the rabbi with neither argument nor objection,” Avi

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