



## FEATURED ARTICLES

**8 70 YEARS IN 770**  
By Shneur Zalman Levin

**16 HOW THE MINIATURE  
MIKDASH GREW GREAT**  
By Yisroel Yehuda

**30 SEVEN SEVEN ZERO**

**32 TO LIVE WITH THE REBBE  
IN 770 - 770LIVE!**  
By Shneur Zalman Berger

**42 FIGHTING FIRE WITH  
LIGHT**  
By Nosson Avrohom

**50 VIGNETTES OF THE ALTER  
REBBE**  
Compiled by Y Ben Boruch

**52 STANDING GUARD AT  
TEMPLE MOUNT**  
By Shai Gefen

## WEEKLY COLUMNS

**4 D'var Malchus**

**36 Parsha Thought**

**38 Moshlach & Science**

**56 Shleimus HaAretz**

Beis Moshiah (USPS 012-542) ISSN 1082-0272 is published weekly, except Jewish holidays (only once in April and October) for \$160.00 in Crown Heights. USA \$180.00. All other places for \$195.00 per year (45 issues), by Beis Moshiah, 744 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY and additional offices. Postmaster: send address changes to Beis Moshiah 744 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409. Copyright 2010 by Beis Moshiah, Inc.

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

# BEIS MOSHIACH

744 Eastern Parkway  
Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409

Tel: (718) 778-8000  
Fax: (718) 778-0800  
admin@beismoshiah.org  
www.beismoshiah.org

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:**  
M.M. Hendel

**ENGLISH EDITOR:**  
B. Merkur  
editor@beismoshiah.org

**HEBREW EDITOR:**  
Rabbi S.Y. Chazan  
editorH@beismoshiah.org

# THE HOLY TEMPLE IN TRANSIT

BEIS RABBEINU SH'B'BAVEL

“The home and synagogue of my holy father-in-law, the leader of our generation ... is the place of the future Temple itself, and not only that, but there the future Beis HaMikdash will be revealed, and from there it will go to Yerushalayim. This idea is suggested in the name ... 770, which has the same gematria as “paratzta” (you will spread out).” • In honor of Issue 770, Beis Moshiach presents a translation of a selection of the famous and fundamental sicha “Beis Rabbeinu Sh'B'Bavel.”

Adapted by Rabbi Zushe Kohn

## THE MASTER'S HOUSE: A HOLY TEMPLE

“I have been for them a Small Temple in the lands where they arrived”: Even in the Diaspora, in the lands of the Exile, and during the time of the Exile, there exists a minor Holy Temple — a microcosm of “the great Holy Temple of Yerushalayim.” Scriptural commentators describe this Divine abode as “second to the Holy Temple.”

The Talmud records a discussion regarding the nature of this minor Holy Temple:

**Rabbi Yitzchak said: “The [minor Holy Temple is embodied in] the synagogues and study**

**halls of Babylon.” Rabbi Elazar said: “It [is embodied in] the house [of worship] of our master in Babylon.”**

... [The Master's House is a study hall]: The title “Rabbeinu” — “our Master/Teacher” — is borne by one who teaches Torah to disciples; the house of Rabbeinu is the study hall (where Rabbeinu teaches his disciples Torah). Since [the Master's House is a study hall], it is also a synagogue — “We would study [Torah] in the synagogue” — for Torah study and prayer services are to be conducted in the same place.

Yet the Master's House possesses a distinct advantage



over other synagogues and study halls, as we learn from the following Talmudic exposition:

**“What is the meaning of, ‘G-d loves the gates of Tzion more than all the dwellings of Jacob’? [It means] G-d loves the gathering places that are metzuyan [distinguished by the resolution of] Torah law more than [He loves] the synagogues and study halls. ... Since the day the Holy Temple was destroyed, G-d has no [place] in his world but the four cubits [where] Torah law [is studied].**

Maharsha explains:

“Incorporated in the Holy Temple was the Chamber of Hewn Stone, from which issued forth the Sanhedrin's Torah rulings. The Divine Presence certainly resided [there] with them. But now that the Holy Temple lies in ruins, the four cubits of Torah law...a fixed place from where [Torah] instruction issues forth to the people of the city...takes the place [of the Chamber of Hewn Stone].”

## WHERE G-D RESIDES IN GALUS

To take it a step further: It stands to reason that the future Holy Temple (which “will descend from On High [fully] rebuilt and perfected”) will first be revealed in the place of exile where it “moved and settled” (i.e., the Master's

House in Babylon), and from there, relocate to Yerushalayim.

[This hypothesis is based on the following reasoning]:

The Divine Presence will continue to reside and be revealed in the primary Minor Temple of the Diaspora even at the very moment of Redemption. In the words of the above-cited Talmudic segment, “Even at the time of their Redemption, the Divine Presence will reside with them, for it is written, ‘And G-d your L-rd will bring back your captivity’: Instead of saying, ‘*V’heishiv*,’ [meaning, ‘He will bring back’], the Torah says, ‘*V’shav*,’ [meaning ‘He will come back’].’ This teaches us that G-d Himself returns from the Exile, the Divine Presence resides with the [Children of] Israel in their place of exile, in the place “where the Temple moved and settled,” and from that place, G-d returns with all the [Children of] Israel to the Temple in Yerushalayim, to settle and reveal His Presence there forever.

The fact that “G-d will return from exile together with them” - that is, from the Minor Temple (already identified as the House of our Master in Babylon), “where the Holy Temple moved and settled” - means, in effect, that [the Master’s House] is the very place where the redemption of the Divine Presence - that is, its total and complete revelation (and not just a partial revelation, as occurs in the Minor Temples) - begins and is fully realized. This [level of revelation] is the very function of the future Holy Temple.

In other words: Just as the Divine Presence returns to Yerushalayim from the place in exile where it resides, so does the future Holy Temple (the purpose of which is to house the indwelling and revelation



**To take it a step further: It stands to reason that the future Holy Temple (which “will descend from On High [fully] rebuilt and perfected”) will first be revealed in the place of exile where it “moved and settled” (i.e., the Master’s House in Babylon), and from there, relocate to Yerushalayim.**

---

of the Divine Presence) return to Yerushalayim from the place in exile where it “moved and settled”; it becomes revealed in that place first, and afterwards relocates to its proper place in Yerushalayim.

One may suggest that the [notion of the Holy Temple making its initial return at the Master’s House] is alluded to in Maimonides’ choice of wording [in his description of the qualifications of Moshiach]: “If he...built the Holy Temple in its place ... [he is definitely Moshiach].” [One may ask, what nuance of meaning is imparted by the addition of the word, “*b’m’komo*” [“in its place”]? Conversely, why does Maimonides not name the place explicitly by saying, “if he...built the Holy Temple in Yerushalayim?”

The answer may be that since, grammatically, “*b’m’komo*” can also be rendered as “in his place,” Maimonides is alluding to Moshiach’s place in exile (that is, before he is recognized as “definitely Moshiach”). [That is to say] while still in exile - where he dwells, and awaits and anticipates redeeming the Children of Israel and the Divine Presence that accompanies them, from exile - Moshiach builds a (Minor) Temple that is a semblance and a microcosm of the Temple in Yerushalayim (like “the synagogue that moved and settled” - i.e. the

[synagogue where] the Temple moved to [from Yerushalayim] and settled in), as a preparation for the future Holy Temple, which will first be revealed in that place, and will then return from there (with G-d and the Children of Israel) to Yerushalayim.

There is another angle — beyond its virtue as a synagogue and study hall of distinction — from which to further appreciate the preeminence of the House of our Master in Babylon over the other synagogues and study halls of Babylon. The Master’s House is distinguished in terms of whose house it is: it is the house of “our Master” (the Master of all the Children of Israel and of all those in exile); it is the house of the Leader of the generation, [of whom we have been taught], “The Leader is everything.”

[The significance of this is as follows]:

The indwelling of the Divine Presence in the Holy Temple takes place primarily within the Children of Israel (on account of their distinctiveness — “Israel and the Holy One, blessed be He, are all One”). This we know from Scripture, which, in commanding the Children of Israel to build the Tabernacle, states, “I shall dwell in their midst,” and not “I shall dwell in its midst.

In exile too, any revelation of the Divine Presence takes place primarily within the Children of Israel, as underscored in

the opening statement of the Talmudic passage presently under discussion: Come see how beloved are [the Children of] Israel to G-d, for wherever they are exiled, the Divine Presence is with them.”

Furthermore, [even] the revelation of the Divine Presence [that took place in] the [structure of] the Holy Temple was due to the Temple being the place where all the Children of Israel gathered, as Scripture says, “When all of Israel will come to see the face of G-d, your L-rd, in the place that He will choose.”

In a similar vein, the indwelling of the Divine Presence in the synagogues and study halls takes place on account of their being places that host gatherings of ten, [or many tens] of Jews — “In every house of ten [Jews], the Divine Presence resides.”

This is also one of the reasons why the synagogues and study halls of exile are called Minor Temples: In the Great Temple [in Yerushalayim] where all the Children of Israel gathered, the totality of the Divine Presence — known as the Congregation of Israel, the spiritual source of the earthly Children of Israel — was revealed, whereas in the synagogues and study halls of the Diaspora, where tens of Israelites gather, [but not the entire nation], only part, as it were, of the Divine Presence, is present and revealed.

In light of this insight, we can better appreciate the preeminence

of the House of our Master in Babylon: Since it is the fixed location (the House) of the Leader of the generation (whose [comprehensive soul] includes [within it the souls of] all the Israelites of the generation), it follows that the totality of the Divine Presence (and not just the part that resides upon (and is revealed within) every gathering of ten Jews) resides (and is revealed) there.

This [indwelling and revelation] is a semblance and revelation of the Divine Presence in the Holy Temple, which “moved [from Yerushalayim] and settled [in the Master’s House].” It is this [indwelling and revelation] from which comes the indwelling and revelation of the Divine Presence that occurs in all the synagogues and study halls of the Diaspora, as we find with regard to the Holy Temple, that the entire world was illuminated by its light.

One may [further] suggest that since the Leader of the generation includes [within his soul, the souls of] the entire generation, his house is akin to, and an example of, “Talpiyot” — “a hill towards which all mouths turn” — as the Sages expounded with regard to the Holy Temple.

An additional, and very significant, distinction of the House of our Master in Babylon is its preeminence with regard to the [Messianic] Redemption:

Like Moses (the first

“Leader of the Generation”) our [current] Master and Leader of the Generation is also the generation’s Moshiach (i.e. redeemer) — “the first redeemer is the final redeemer.” Indeed, it is well known that in every generation “there is one individual so righteous as to be worthy of being the Redeemer, and when the time will come, G-d will be revealed to him and send him, etc.” It is logical to assume that this is the Leader of the Generation, as we find explicitly with regard to Rabbi Judah the Prince, of whom Rav said “If he is among the living, he is our holy Master” — i.e., if Moshiach is from the ranks of the living, he is certainly our Holy Master, the Leader of the generation.

From this it is understood that the primary function of the House of our Master in Babylon concerns the redemption from Babylon (exile), by means of the power it grants the Jewish People to accomplish their mission of transforming Babylon (i.e., lands that are not part of Israel) into the land of Israel, as in the well-known instruction, “Transform this place (that is not part of Israel) into Israel.” This transformation is accomplished first and foremost through the establishment of synagogues and study halls (Minor Temples) in “the land to which they came.”

From these Minor Temples holiness issues forth to all the lands of the nations, hastening, accelerating, and effecting the realization of the promise, “In the future, the land of Israel will spread out across all the lands” — i.e., [in the future] “the entire world will be on the level of present-day Israel.” The land of Israel in turn will be on the level of present-day Yerushalayim, as in the teaching of the Talmudic

**“The House of our Master in Babylon is not only the primary Minor Temple of Babylon — where the Temple “moved and settled” — but also the very place of the future Holy Temple, where the Temple will be revealed, and from where it will return to Yerushalayim.**

Sages that, in the future, Yerushalayim will spread out across the entire land of Israel” — [i.e., the holiness of Yerushalayim will be extended throughout all of present-day Israel] through the synagogues and study halls of the Diaspora relocating to and becoming attached to the Holy Temple.

Having as its main function the ingathering of the synagogues and study halls of Babylon and their reestablishment in the land of Israel, appended to the Holy Temple, makes the House of our Master in Babylon (not only the primary Minor Temple of Babylon — where the Temple “moved and settled” — but also) the very place of the future Holy Temple, where the Temple will be revealed, and from where it will return to Yerushalayim.

The implications of all of the above with regard to the Master’s house of the present generation — i.e., the house (the synagogue and study hall) of my saintly teacher and father-in-law, the Rebbe, Leader of our generation — will be appreciated with the following introduction:

[of the Chamber of Hewn Stone].”

## BEIS RABBEINU SH'B'AMERICA

... America is...the place of exile of the Children of Israel, since that is where the majority of them, and their main infrastructure, are to found. Indeed, one may suggest that this is one of the reasons the Leader of the Generation (“the Leader is everything” — the previous Rebbe) lived in America for ten years, and from that place specifically, disseminated Torah and Judaism, and spread the wellsprings [of Chassidim]

“Seven Seventy” is the address number of the Master’s House, and the name by which it is referred to by all of the Children of Israel. “770” has the numerical value of the word “paratzta,” burst forth, as in the verse “You shall burst forth (*u’faratzta*) westward, eastward, northward and southward.”

outward through his disciples and emissaries in all the rest of the lands where the Children of Israel settled.

[The significance of this insofar as it relates to our discussion of the Divine Presence is that] since the Divine Presence accompanies the Children of Israel wherever they are exiled, it follows that since in this final [period of] exile, the majority of the Children of Israel and their main infrastructure, along with the Leader of the Generation, are to be found in America, the exile of the Divine Presence is also in America. More specifically, it is in the Master’s House, which parallels “the synagogue of Hutzal and the Shaf Veyativ synagogue of Nehardea” (serving in place of the Holy Temple in Yerushalayim). And it is from the Master’s House that the Divine Presence issues forth to all the synagogues and study halls around the world.

One may suggest that the [inner] reason [why the Children of Israel and the Divine Presence are located specifically in America at the current time] is that as the last generation of the Exile and the first of the Redemption, this generation culminates and completes the “deeds and [Divine] service of our duration in exile” - i.e. [it is we who culminate and complete] the process of transforming the lands of the nations into the land of Israel. This we accomplish by

elevating the Lower Hemisphere, the very lowest place among the lands of the nations. By elevating the lowest of places, the other lands of the nations are automatically elevated.

This task is accomplished through the Master’s House of the Lower Hemisphere, from which light issues forth to the entire world, transforming it (even its furthest reaches) into the land of Israel.

This [elevation of the entire world] is what the Sages had in mind when they said, “In the future, the land of Israel will spread out across all the lands,” and, “In the future, Yerushalayim will spread out across the entire land of Israel.” [The latter phenomenon will occur] by means of the synagogues and study halls of the entire world becoming affixed to the Holy Temple. [This will all transpire] with [the coming of] the true and complete Redemption, at the hand of our righteous Moshiach, the Leader of the Generation, who is the Moshiach (i.e., the Redeemer of the Israelites) of this generation, and who is, furthermore, and very importantly, the Leader of Chassidism, by virtue of whose dissemination outward (even to the outward beyond which there is no outward) we bring about the coming of the Messianic king.

... “Seven Seventy” is the

**Continued on page 15**

# 70 YEARS IN 770

In newspapers of the time you can read about the excitement felt by the Chassidim with the purchase of this building and the establishment of the Rebbe's residence. \* It is 70 years now since 770 was purchased and the premises transformed from an ordinary building on Eastern Parkway to the Headquarters of the Nasi HaDor.

By Shneur Zalman Levin

**S**even, seven, zero. Seems like an ordinary string of numbers, and yet, just mention 770 to any Chassid and you will see how his senses perk up and his entire being radiates yearning. It is a building in a row of buildings on Eastern Parkway but it is not one of them. While not any higher, it towers above the rest.

770 is a key word in the lexicon of any Chassid – bachur, child or elder. When someone says, “I’m coming from 770,” “I’m flying to 770,” “I’ll be in 770 tonight,” or “I miss 770,” everybody knows exactly what he means. The three numerals express the height of aspiration for any Chassid.

770 is not only a particular location, nor is it merely a house number. During the past seventy years, this building has become a

symbol for hundreds of thousands of Jews who derive their chayus from here; for whom this building is a source of joy and bitachon, faith and courage. To seekers and those who have lost their way, 770 provides a clear worldview. For countless souls who have spent time there studying Torah and praying, this building and the heavenly bounty that flows forth from it form a beacon of Torah, emuna, and guidance in the service of Hashem.

Most evenings, chuppos take place next to 770. Young Lubavitcher couples want this important milestone in their lives to take place near this holy edifice.

The Rebbe said several times that the number 770 is numerically equivalent to the words “Beis Moshiach” and “paratzta” – the slogan that

became not only associated with the Chabad movement but its ideological theme – to burst forth from within the four walls and reach every Jew in the world.

The end of Elul marked seventy years since the building located at 770 Eastern Parkway was transformed into the Center of World Jewry. Back then, who would have believed that this would take place?

## THE BUILDING COMMITTEE

9 Adar II, 5700/1940

Europe was at war. Nevertheless, it was a joyous day for Lubavitcher Chassidim





## A PLACE OF REFUGE

The lights are on 24 hours a day. Thick volumes of the Talmud are never closed. The singsong of the Chassidim and bachurim in the yeshiva as they learn does not stop until dawn, which is when the first minyan begins. In addition, the “people” including the simple folk and their leaders, the cream of American Jewry and World Jewry, constantly flock to enter the walls of this house.

Some come to learn, but mainly they come to the Rebbe, to consult with the Lubavitcher Rebbe, to hear from his holy mouth a piece of advice, insight and guidance, a good word.

“770 Eastern Parkway” – that is the colloquial name for the Chabad empire. These headquarters are located in Brooklyn in New York. Overseeing its activities is a man of science and Torah, luminary of the generation, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn, known as the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

(Shlomo Nakdimon – *Cheirut*, March 16, 1962)

in America. The Rebbe Rayatz had arrived safely with his family from war torn Poland to the United States. It was a year after the start of World War II and the invasion of Poland by the accursed Nazis, which had put the Rebbe’s family and the talmidim of yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim in grave danger. World Jewry breathed a sigh of relief when the Rebbe and his family miraculously escaped.

The Chabad k’hilla in America in those days consisted of a handful of families because the rest of the Chassidim remained in Poland and Russia. Still the Rebbe chose to set roots down in

America and to lead his dynasty from there.

When the Rebbe’s ship dropped anchor in America, a delegation of Chassidim, rabbinic representatives and government dignitaries awaited him, and he and his family were welcomed with great honor.

Members of Agudas Chassidei Chabad arranged for the Rebbe to stay temporarily at the Greystone Hotel in Manhattan, an arrangement which ended up lasting several months. For Pesach the Rebbe was hosted in Lakewood by the wealthy Chassid, R’ Kaleb Poston.

Despite the urgent need for



The building as it looked shortly after it was purchased.

a permanent residence for the Rebbe, the Chassidim had a difficult time finding just the right place that would serve to house the Rebbe and all his activities. They needed a building that could serve as the private home of the Rebbe and his household, as a beis midrash and shul, and that would be located in a suitably Jewish location. All these criteria made the task of “finding a building” quite a challenge.

A committee was formed for this purpose, the “Vaad L'Maan Hakamas Beis Chayeinu” (Building Committee for the Residence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe). R' Shlomo Aharon Kazarnovsky headed the committee along with the secretary, R' Dovber Chaskind and the members: Rabbis Shmuel Levitin, Dovber Rivkin, Eliyahu

Simpson, Yisroel Jacobson, and Menachem Mendel Cunin.

After Pesach they got down to business. Some problems arose regarding the purchase. The head of Agudas Chabad and the special building committee wrote a private letter to certain individuals among Anash and said as follows:

*“Dear friend, with Hashem’s help and thanks to those that provide assistance for the Rebbe Shlita, you being one of the distinguished men among them, we were able to rescue the Rebbe from the Nazi danger and to bring him and his household to this country, to life and success.*

*“The Rebbe and Beis Chayeinu have been here for over nine weeks and still do not have a permanent residence and are living in the Greystone Hotel.*

*Obviously, our role is not yet over. We tried mightily to purchase a suitable home for Beis Chayeinu but unfortunately, were not successful.*

*“Now, with Hashem’s help, a suitable building in a desirable area became available that can be gotten at good terms but we need the help of our friends, Anash, for each one to take on a part of the work which needs to be arranged within a few weeks.*

*“That being the case, we are asking you to participate in an urgent meeting that will take place, G-d willing, on Sunday, Yom Alef of Parshas Naso, July 2, 1940, at 4:00 pm at the Greystone Hotel, Broadway corner of 91<sup>st</sup> Street, New York – which will be attended exclusively by select individuals.*

*“It is superfluous to emphasize the importance of this meeting and therefore, we are certain that without any doubt or hindrance you will attend in a timely fashion, ‘and salvation with much counsel.’”*

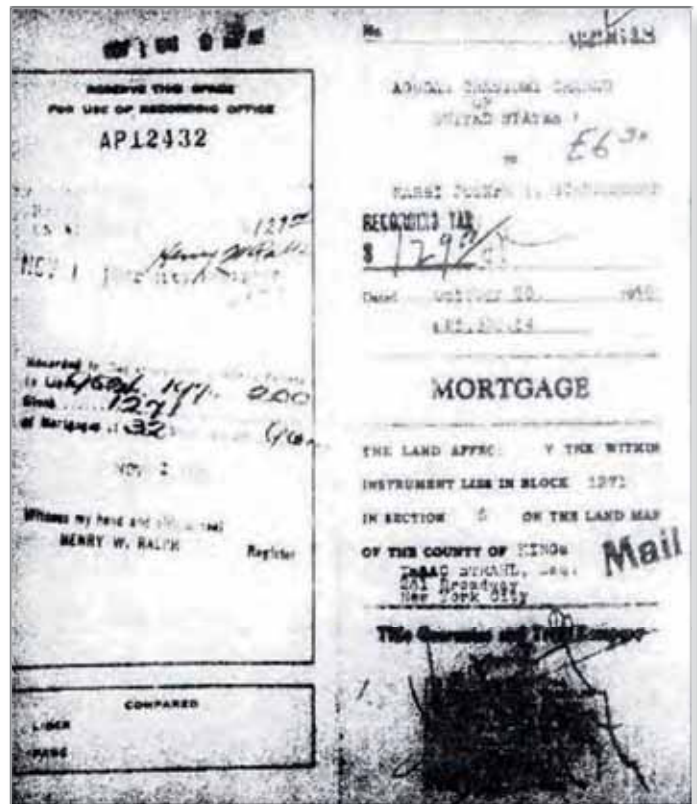
The letter is signed by R' Chaim Shneur Zalman Kramer, President of Agudas Chabad, Rabbi Shlomo Aharon Kazarnovsky, head of the building committee, and R' Dovber Chaskind, secretary.

## LUBAVITCH IN AMERICA

The intense work of the Vaad and those who helped them was successful and 770 Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn was purchased in Av. On 5 Av, when the purchase of the building was about to conclude, the members of the Vaad sent another letter to those select individuals amongst Anash who were helping in various ways, in which they expressed their hope that this purchase would effectively



A letter written on the stationery of the Building Committee



Mortgage payment for the building

establish a nerve center for all Chabad activities worldwide, uniting all Jews as a prelude to the third Beis HaMikdash:

“We hope that with Hashem’s help, good days will yet come for the Jewish People, and amongst them Anash Chabad, and that the holy edifice – Beis Chayeinu of Lubavitch will be established and built here in America. All of Anash and those who descend from Anash remember and have engraved in their psyches the esteem and holiness that existed previously amongst Chassidim towards the spiritual life and light of Chassidus by our holy Rebbeim in Lubavitch.”

## HISTORIC EVENT

770, which later became the focal point of Chabad Chassidim and the Jewish people as a whole, was bought from a wealthy doctor

named Rosenman. He bought it in 1933 for his private dwelling and his clinic. Seven years later it was up for sale at a relatively low price – about \$30,000 – after it was foreclosed by the bank. It has three floors, a basement, and a nice amount of space to either side of it.

The building is in the old Gothic style and of quality construction. Heavy oak doors with copper doorknobs lend authenticity to the period style. The flooring and ceramic tiles in the various rooms were imported from Italy. The rooms on the upper floors were furnished and paneled and the two front rooms on the first floor were also magnificently furnished. In the basement was a large, furnished room that was used by its owner for events. The building even had an elevator, a rare accouterment in those days. Those in the know

said that the previous home owner had put over \$200,000 into the house, a huge sum for those days. The building was made out of the best materials, as though the owner knew the degree of durability that would be necessary in the future.

In newspapers of the time you can read about the excitement felt by the Chassidim with the purchase of this building and the establishment of the Rebbe’s residence. In the diary of the Rebbe Rayatz (published in Seifer HaMaamarim 5700, under the heading of “a diary of one of the passengers,”) this day, Friday, 12 Av, is singled out:

**“Today the purchase of the building 770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, New York was completed and the keys were given to the Rebbe.”**

Immediately afterwards, as later recounted by Rabbi Shmuel

## ON THE UNIQUE QUALITIES OF 770

In the Rebbe's sichos over the years, there were unusual phrases that extolled the place where the Rebbe Rayatz davened and where he worked for the last ten years of his life. For example, on Shabbos Parshas Haazinu, 5750, the Rebbe said this astonishing line, "since this is the house of Hashem – surely the Rebbe my father-in-law (together with all tzaddikim) are to be found in the same place that Hashem is found."

However, the most amazing phrases are printed in kuntres *Beis Rabbeinu Sh'B' Bavel* where the Rebbe says that the dwelling and revelation of the Sh'china in Beis Rabbeinu in Bavel is similar to that of in the Beis HaMikdash, and from this location, the dwelling and revelation of the Sh'china is drawn to all the holy places in the world. This building is called "Talpiyos" for all mouths turn towards it like to the Beis HaMikdash.

The Rebbe goes on to say that the main purpose of Beis Rabbeinu in Bavel is the Geula and the gathering of all shuls to Eretz Yisroel. This is the site of the future Mikdash, from whence it will be revealed and will return to Yerushalayim.

The Rebbe thus establishes that until that moment that the third Mikdash descends, attaches to 770, and continues together with it to Yerushalayim, 770 continues to be the primary miniature sanctuary of galus times, where the Sh'china dwells and is revealed, something like the way it dwelled in the Beis HaMikdash in Yerushalayim.

There are also explicit expressions about the eternal holiness of this place: "The permanent place of Beis Rabbeinu, his shul and beis midrash, the center of Lubavitch for the last ten years (an entire era and "all follows the conclusion") of the Rebbe my father-in-law Nasi Doreinu, and also after his passing holiness does not move from its place; on the contrary, in a way of "ascending in holiness" and "adding and continuing" until the coming of the righteous redeemer."

"The avoda of spreading Torah and Judaism and the wellsprings outward from Beis Chayeinu (770) continues with greater strength ... and Beis Rabbeinu (770) is "talpiyos" for over fifty years (5700-5750/1940-1990), "forever."

Levitin, one of the members of the Vaad, in a letter – the Rebbe Rayatz came to visit the new building and gave instructions about how to arrange the shul. A minyan of men were present at the time and they davened Mincha and Maariv. After the davening the Rebbe sat down to say l'chaim with them. The Rebbe wished **"that Hashem allow that this building be a dwelling of permanence of the soul – for Torah and avoda, and a temporary dwelling – because soon we will be in the Holy Land with our Moshiach."**

A few weeks later, on Sunday

of Parshas Nitzavim, 19 Elul, the Rebbe Rayatz and his household moved to their new dwelling. When the Rebbe first arrived at the shul set up on the first floor he said, **"Yehi ratzon that the prayers be with a p'nimius (es zol zich davenen) with the pleasantness of genuine inner avoda."**

Since then, 770 Eastern Parkway has become synonymous with Chabad and Lubavitch. All who took part in this project felt that this was something lofty indeed, far beyond a technical arranging of a place to live. By purchasing this building for Beis

Chayeinu they were planting the vineyard of Chassidus in America.

Two days later, on Tuesday the 21<sup>st</sup> of Elul 1940, the official Chanukas HaBayis took place in the large room on the second floor with a large crowd. It was a day of rejoicing and a personal holiday for every Chabad Chassid. In moving words the Chassid, R' Avrohom Pariz describes that great day:

"I cannot describe in writing the light, joy and satisfaction that were on the faces of all those present. One could see that for everybody, this was a spiritual simcha of holiness."

The Rebbe Rayatz held a big farbrengen for all Chassidim and even said a maamer on the pasuk, "On Three Things Does the World Stand."

Joy filled their hearts and the building seemed surrounded by light. This wasn't an ordinary simcha for a mundane matter; all felt that the purchase of this building was a momentous occasion in Chabad history.

At this time, Crown Heights was a modern Jewish neighborhood. Some residents were not thrilled with the arrival of the Rebbe and the influx of his Chassidim, immigrants from the Old Country. They felt that opening an Orthodox shul and yeshiva in this exclusive neighborhood would lower the value of their homes. They even organized a petition to this effect. Little did they realize that down the road, the neighborhood would be saved from crime and violence only by virtue of the Lubavitcher Chassidim with the Rebbe MH"m's presence.

For Rosh HaShana 5701/1940, the first celebrated in 770, Agudas Chassidei Chabad put an ad in the first issue of

*HaKria V'HaK'dusha* about “the new building for the Lubavitcher Rebbe in Brooklyn, 770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, New York.” The announcement said:

“The new building has three floors which Agudas Chassidei Chabad in America and Canada recently bought, which will serve as the center of the worldwide Chabad movement.

“The central offices of the Central Yeshivos Tomchei Tmimim and the Pidyon Shvuyim fund will be in 770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, New York.

“In addition, a large shul was founded there, where they will daven on the Yomim Nora'im and the rest of the year.

“With the opening of the new center of Chabad worldwide on Eastern Parkway, all letters sent to the Pidyon Shvuyim fund and the offices of yeshivos Lubavitch should be sent to the following addresses: main offices of yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim, 770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, New York; Rabbi Schneersohn, Keren Pidyon Shvuyim, 770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, New York.”

## THE DEEPER SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONCEPT OF A BAYIS

On 19 Cheshvan, 5701, about two months after they moved into 770, the Rebbe Rayatz answered his mother, Rebbetzin Shterna Sara's question about payments for the building. The Rebbe also enumerated the sources of the money.

This is what the Rebbe wrote:

**Regarding your question about the building, it cost \$30,000, \$5000 as a down payment and another \$25,000 as a twenty year mortgage with payments of \$1350 a year.**



The entrance to 770 in 1949

**All who took part in this project felt that this was something lofty indeed, far beyond a technical arranging of a place to live. By purchasing this building for Beis Chayeinu they were planting the vineyard of Chassidus in America.**

**Renovations cost \$2000. A total of \$7000 was needed. \$5000 was raised among the Chassidim and another \$2000 was taken as a loan.**

**The rental income will pay the loan, the costs of a maintenance man, and other expenses. I am paying \$200 a month, Chana is paying \$70 a month, the offices \$50 a month, the minyan (i.e. shul congregation) – I don't know how much.**

This letter shows us how poor the Rebbe's household was, that they could not afford payments for the building.

It was not until ten years later, in 5710, after the passing of the Rebbe Rayatz, that the mortgage was paid off by Rabbi Yosef Robinson. The Rebbe

considered this a significant milestone and not just a technical matter, and he farbrenged with a small group of Chassidim. This was Rosh Chodesh Sivan, 5710. The Rebbe spoke about the inner significance of the concept of a “house” and about the great z'chus in redeeming the Rebbe's house quickly. He said that this is a “communal building for all Klal Yisroel.”

The Rebbe used unusual expressions at this farbrengen such as:

**During the ten years that the Rebbe, my father-in-law, lived in this house, money was still owed for the building, and therefore it wasn't a complete purchase. From this we understand how great is the z'chus of that man whom the Rebbe, my father-**

## IN THE FIFTIETH YEAR

As we entered the 50<sup>th</sup> year since the purchase of 770, a momentous event took place in connection with this great and holy edifice.

Over the years, the Lubavitch community grew tremendously. The Yomim Tovim, especially during Tishrei, sees 770 packed to the rafters with thousands of people. Every year it got more crowded and it was clear that soon, not every Chassid would be able to see the Rebbe blowing the shofar or at hakafos on Simchas Torah since places were limited.

Discussions and plans about expanding the large zal took place but nothing actually was done until 17 Elul, 5748/1988, Erev Chai Elul. That day, the Rebbe davened at home on President Street as he did throughout the year of mourning for his rebbetzin. After Mincha the Rebbe gave out dollars for tz'daka. Mr. David Chase, a member of Machne Israel told the Rebbe that he planned on enlarging 770. He invited the Rebbe to attend a ground breaking ceremony that he wanted to hold that day at 5:00.

To his surprise and the surprise of all, the Rebbe agreed to attend on condition that Mr. Chase would speak in Yiddish. The Rebbe shook his hand throughout this conversation and said that if Mr. Chase prepared a speech in Yiddish, he would be happy to attend. Mr. Chase agreed to the deal.

The Rebbe's agreement to take part in the ceremony on such short notice put the organizers of the event (which was going to take place quietly and modestly) into high gear. Within minutes they had prepared the area in front of 770 and a platform was erected for the Rebbe with a lectern and microphone. A makeshift pyramid on the street accommodated the large crowd that showed up for the event. A sign was hung in front of the building which said, "*Gadol Yihiyeh K'Vod HaBayis, L'Shana Tova U'Mesuka.*"

At precisely 5:00 the Rebbe drove up. He delivered a ten minute sicha about the significance of the phrase "ground breaking." The Rebbe explained that this alludes to the breaking and bittul that ought to take place at these events. One should acknowledge that everything is given by Hashem and not G-d forbid "my strength and the power of my hand made me this wealth." The Rebbe spoke about the spiritual significance of laying the cornerstone, comparing it to the Evven HaSh'siya in the Holy of Holies, from which the world was established.

After the sicha it was Mr. Chase's turn to keep his end of the deal. He began by speaking about the great privilege to build the Rebbe's beis midrash and



The Rebbe speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony

worldwide center. He described how he saw the Nazis during the Holocaust destroying the shuls in his city and at that time he did not believe that the day would come when he himself would build a shul. Until this point, Chase spoke in English. Then he added, "Rebbe, I don't know what to tell you except that I promised you that I would say a few words in *Mama Lashon*. All I can tell you is, *Ich hub dir lib zei'er zei'er a sach* (I love you very, very, much). Next time we get together I promise I'm going to be able to speak more *Mama Lashon*. G-d bless you."

The Rebbe was leaning on his lectern and watching Chase and his face lit up as Chase addressed him. Chassidim who spent years with the Rebbe did not recall a look like that ever before.

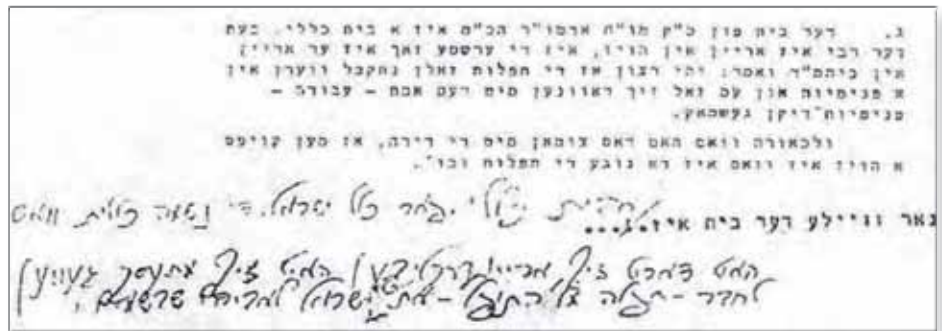
The Rebbe then asked his brother-in-law Rashag to speak. Rashag mentioned that it was 91 years since the founding of yeshivos Tomchei Tmimim and it was a particular z'chus to expand the Rebbe's building on this date, for it also served as the central yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim. He blessed the Rebbe with outstanding success and nachas from all the Chassidim.

The Rebbe descended from the platform and approached the hole that had been dug for the cornerstone and took a shovel and dug a little bit. Then he bent down to place a large stone. He took the shovel again and covered the stone with dirt. Then Mr. Chase, the secretaries and the rabbanim were honored with filling the hole.

The Rebbe walked towards the fence and stopped and said he wanted to distribute dollars for tz'daka. A lectern was brought from the platform and the Rebbe began giving out dollars. At first it was chaotic since dollars had never been given here before, but soon things got organized and a line formed. A band played joyous niggunim. The dollar distribution lasted an hour and a quarter and then the Rebbe was driven back home.

in-law granted the merit of redeeming the house by paying up what was owed, for by doing so the building was acquired and became completely the Rebbe my father-in-law's possession.

The truth is that the very fact that the Rebbe, my father-in-law left the debt and waited ten years for this Jew to come and redeem the building is itself a great z'chus. The Rebbe does not want to receive from just anyone. There are those the Rebbe wants to receive from and those he does not want to receive from. This illustrates how great is the z'chus of this Jew, for the Rebbe, my father-in-law waited ten years for him to redeem the building. ■



The Rebbe's notes on the sicha of Rosh Chodesh Sivan 5710

The Rebbe does not want to receive from just anyone. There are those the Rebbe wants to receive from and those he does not want to receive from. This illustrates how great is the z'chus of this Jew, for the Rebbe, my father-in-law waited ten years for him to redeem the building.

#### Continued from page 7

address number of the Master's House, and the name by which it is referred to by all of the Children of Israel. "770" has the numerical value of the word "*paratzta*," burst forth, as in the verse, "You shall burst forth (*u'faratzta*) westward, eastward, northward and southward." This alludes to the fact that from this house light issues forth to the four directions of the world, and in such a manner that it breaks limitation, elevating all four directions of the world to the level of the land of Israel ("In the future, the land of Israel will spread out over all the lands"). This [elevation of the entire world] includes, and refers especially to the establishment of all the world's synagogues and study halls in the land of Israel, attached to the Holy Temple, with the coming of the true and complete Redemption at the hand of our righteous Moshiach, of whom Scripture says, "You have surly burst forth (*paratzta*)..." Indeed the Sages expounded:

"This [Scriptural declaration] refers to Moshiach, as it is written, 'The one who breaks forth (*ha'poretz*) will go before them.'"

The number 770 represents the number 7 in its most complete form — as each of its digits is comprised of 10 (the complete number), for a total of 70; moreover, as each of its digits is comprised of 100 (ten times ten), for a total of 700; finally, as the two figures (70 and 700) are combined into one: **770**.

The significance of this is as follows:

"7" is connected with the existence of the world, which was created in seven days — the Seven Days of Building (which are expressions of the seven Divine Emotional Attributes) — and it is connected with the world's refinement at the hands of the Jewish people, who are divisible into seven categories of Divine Service, represented by the seven branches of the Menorah. In its most complete form then —

i.e., in the form of "seven hundred and seventy" — the number "7" represents the thorough completion of the Jewish people's mission of refining the world via the actions they perform and the divine service they carry out throughout the duration of exile, after which they are redeemed from the Exile, and return to the land of Israel.

...In light of what has been explained above regarding the greatness of the House of our Master in Babylon — that it is the place where "the Temple moved and settled" and it is "the very place of the future Temple" to the extent that the future Temple will first be revealed there, and only then return to Yerushalayim — we can appreciate the great merit each and every Jew has been given to participate both bodily and financially in its construction, as a preparation for the imminent descent and revelation of the future Temple. ■

(Seifer HaSichos 5752, pp. 465-475)



*The Rebbe MH"M in kuntres Beis Rabbeinu Sh'B'Bavel said: Also outside Eretz Yisroel, during exile, there is a miniature sanctuary which is like the great Mikdash in Yerushalayim.*

# HOW THE MINIATURE MIKDASH GREW GREAT

Nobody believed that the small and narrow space where ambulances parked would be transformed into a world center for Chabad that would hold thousands of Chassidim. • Yisroel Yehuda tells the story of the construction and expansion of the big Beis Midrash in 770 over a fifty year period, replete with anecdotes and other interesting firsthand accounts • Presented for Issue 770.

By Yisroel Yehuda

## IN THOSE DAYS...

Before 770 became the famous headquarters of Chabad it was the clinic of a local doctor. When the building was purchased

in 5700/1940 it included only the three original floors of 770. To the left of 770 (where the big zal begins today) there was a parking area for ambulances. The incline in the floor which you

see today to the west of the zal extended a bit further that it does today until the stairwell which leads from the basement level to the first floor. There were large doors in the western wall where the ambulances parked under the building.

When the building was purchased, people thought it would serve the needs of the Rebbe and his family and the small flock of Chassidim. Aside from the small sukka porch that was built on the second floor so that the Rebbe Rayatz wouldn't have to go downstairs to eat in the sukka, nothing else was changed. The small group of Chassidim managed just fine with the small zal during farbrengens and t'fillos.

Little by little a more spacious area became necessary. More



people, even those who were not Lubavitchers, began attending the Rebbe's farbrengens and the small zal was too small to contain them all. The need became more pressing already back in 5714, just three years after the Rebbe officially accepted the Chabad leadership.

They began using the old ambulance parking lot in the yard of the building where they davened and held small farbrengens. The big farbrengens of Yud-Tes Kislev, Yud Shvat and Purim were held in other halls in the Crown Heights area.

A new name was coined for the ambulance parking lot – *shalash* (parking lot in Yiddish). The shalash was a neglected area and they had to do a good job of fixing it up for farbrengens and t'fillos. Those in charge fenced in the shalash on the northern and southern sides, in other words, on the sides facing Eastern Parkway and Union (where there was an exit to the yard); overhead they spread out a tarp, which was exchanged for s'chach on Sukkos. The area was a very makeshift, temporary sort of place.

Obviously, the conditions weren't the best. In the winter

months it was freezing. Because it was relatively low due to the incline, when it rained the shalash would turn into a mud puddle with the water sometimes reaching one's knees! Sometimes, when the water had still not dried, they would make a special path for the Rebbe on benches over the water. The path extended until the Rebbe's place in the southeast corner. You can imagine how the Chassidim felt when they crowded in for a farbrengen and it suddenly began to rain. Drops of water dripped through the tarp on their heads. The people would get wet from above and below.

On Simchas Torah 5718/1957, the Rebbe wanted to farbreng in the shalash but the Chassid R' Yochanan Gordon told the Rebbe that downstairs it was "cold and dirty." During the farbrengen, the Rebbe said that you need to learn a lesson in avodas Hashem from everything and the lesson from the gabbai saying that downstairs it was cold and dirty is that from Above they are telling us that after all the avoda of the month of Elul, Rosh HaShana, the Aseres Yemei T'shuva, Yom Kippur and Sukkos – here, in this world down below, it is cold and dirty.

## THE FIRST EXPANSION: TRANSFORMING THE SHALASH

It was only at the end of 5719 that serious work began to turn the shalash into a permanent, regular structure, insulated from the rain, cold and wind.

Construction began before Rosh HaShana 5720/1959 and the Rebbe's place was fixed, as usual, in the southeast corner. R' Zalman Blesofsky built a special bima (platform) for the Rebbe to sit on during farbrengens. The bima was unique in that when it wasn't in use it could be lifted up and folded against the wall, which left more room for people to sit.

On the bima, in the direction of Union Street was a window which was open and behind the Rebbe. During farbrengens the bachurim would use it and stand there in order to see the Rebbe, but after a brief time the Rebbe said the window should be closed.

The shalash structure ended where today there is a big pillar in the western part of 770.

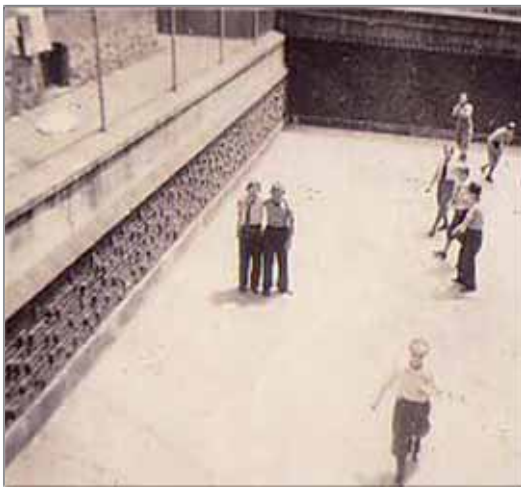
One day, five nice chandeliers donated by the Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka were hung in the Beis Midrash. Then, for ventilation



The facade of 770 and the building next door in a picture of 16 Adar 5709/1949



The Rebbe davening in the shalash in the 50's



Lubavitcher children playing in the shalash around the year 1943



Sukkos 5717/1956 The Rebbe watching the parade of children in the shalash

they made special windows in the ceiling of the shalash, which was adequate under normal conditions, but during farbrengens etc. it was still overly warm.

At this point, with the Beis Midrash of 770 being finally a respectable structure that could contain hundreds of people, the large farbrengens were no longer held in various halls around the neighborhood, but rather they were held in 770. Rabbi Yehuda Blesofsky – who in those days was still a boy – describes the

crowding and heat in the Beis Midrash during farbrengens:

“As a boy I would go up on the roof of the shalash where you could feel the heat rising up to the windows in the roof. We kids would throw leaves and the like through the windows and due to the heat vapors which rose from below, the leaves would rise and fall...”

That year, Rabbi Yaakov Lipsker (who years later became a gabbai in 770) built a platform for Krias Ha'Torah. The bima was made ready for Simchas Torah. Until that time, the platforms

for Krias Ha'Torah were broken every year during Simchas Torah because of the crowding. This time, R' Yankel built a bima that was made almost entirely of one piece and it was able to withstand the elements for about thirty years until 5749 when it was replaced.

## THE SECOND EXPANSION

A man by the name of Aharon Klein lived in Crown Heights in those days. R' Aharon Klein was born in Vienna to a family famous for its charitable deeds and for its lineage of great rabbis. When the winds of war began to blow in

Europe, his parents immigrated to England and thus their lives were spared the cruel fate of their brothers who remained behind.

When England entered the war against the Nazis, security forces arrested all German citizens who lived in England as well as all those who spoke German. This was in order to make it difficult for the German Intelligence forces to find spies to work for them. The British did not differentiate between perpetrators and victims and even arrested Jews who were German born or who spoke German. That policy existed even though it was hard to imagine that a Jew would spy on behalf of those who sought to murder him. Those who were arrested were sent to detention camps in Canada.

R' Aharon was arrested and sent to Canada. In the camp there were severe shortages of Jewish items such as Siddurim and other religious books not to mention kosher food and a place to daven. Although R' Aharon was not a Lubavitcher Chassid he sent a touching letter to the Rebbe Rayatz in which he asked the Rebbe to intervene on their behalf and help them in their plight.

The Rebbe Rayatz got involved and sent them various Jewish items. In addition, he sent a letter to the mashpia, R' Shmuel Levitin who had been sent by the Rebbe at the end of Cheshvan 5702/1941 in order to help establish Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Montreal. In the letter, the Rebbe inquired as to the condition of the detainees in the camps and whether it was possible to learn with them.

A half a year later, around Pesach 5702/1942, some of the Jewish bachurim were released and they joined the new yeshiva in Montreal. They were joyfully



21 Tamuz 5721/1961 A farbrengen in the shalash for guests who came from England on the first charter flight. In this picture you can see the improvised windows – wooden frames with plastic curtains, which were put up temporarily until regular windows were installed



The farbrengen of 29 Elul 5722/1962 In the picture you can see the new windows and one of the chandeliers

welcomed by the bachurim-shluchim who were learning there and in honor of their release the Rebbe even sent a special letter in which he blessed them with a double mazal tov for their release and for their entering the yeshiva.

R' Aharon learned in the yeshiva for a few years and then married his wife Zissel. They lived in Montreal for a few years and then moved to Crown Heights.

R' Aharon loved Lubavitch in general and the Rebbe Rayatz and the Rebbe most of all. His wife

said, "Lubavitch loved us and we love it." R' Aharon always looked for ways to help make the Rebbe happy. One year, he brought the Rebbe a Menorah made of gold. He wrote to the Rebbe that he knew the Rebbe would not use it but a king needed something like this. Then R' Aharon bought the Rebbe a gold cup with a gold plate that was worth about \$7000 in those days! Some Lubavitchers wanted to join him in giving this gift but R' Aharon refused. One year he offered the Rebbe in



yechidus that he would head a certain fund raising appeal and the Rebbe accepted his offer and announced it at the following farbrengen.

The Rebbe reciprocated R' Aharon's great love. When R' Aharon became sick, the Rebbe's secretaries called his house nearly every day to ask how he was, on the Rebbe's behalf. The Rebbe also sent his doctor to examine R' Aharon.

At the beginning of the 60's, Jews began fleeing Crown Heights. Until then, Crown Heights had been a major religious neighborhood but because other elements began buying houses in the neighborhood, Jews left for Williamsburg, Boro Park and Flatbush. The Rebbe urged people to stay in Crown Heights but the mass flight continued.

R' Aharon looked despairingly at those who left. He knew that if Crown Heights were to remain a Lubavitch headquarters in the years to come, and if Jews were to be able to move about freely, they had to do something to enlarge and consolidate Jewish control around 770. This base would give Jews the fortitude to remain in the neighborhood, enabling them to move about freely and securely. He envisioned Crown Heights growing and expanding and it was clear to him that 770 had to be expanded for the growing numbers of Chassidim.

**R' Aharon bought 784 and 788 in the winter of 5725 with the money coming directly from the Rebbe. The Rebbe did not want additional partners in the purchase of the buildings since he did not want more "balabatim" of 770. The Rebbe agreed to accept payments from only one person and that was Aharon Klein.**

## LARGE SCALE ACTIVITY

770, as most people know, is not one of those synagogues that is spotless and gleaming, as in the manner of other large synagogues in America. Additionally, the constant foot traffic, events and farbrengens, make the job of basic maintenance that much more challenging (although every effort is made to try to keep it respectable).

The story is told of a high-ranking Jewish judge in New York, who came with his father to visit 770. When the two of them entered it happened to be not long after a major farbrengen, and the place looked pretty much as you would expect. Benches were piled on top of each other, tables were strewn about, and people were running around in all directions. The two who were used to gleaming and lustrous Reform "temples" were stunned.

Suddenly, the judge turned to his father and said, "You can see that this is no ordinary synagogue. This is a place of large scale activity..."

At that time the buildings 784 and 788 on Eastern Parkway were residential dwellings in which Jews lived alongside blacks. One day, R' Aharon had yechidus and he brought up the idea of enlarging 770 until Kingston Avenue. The Rebbe asked: Are you sure we will need such a big shul?

R' Aharon answered confidently: You will need it even bigger than that.

R' Aharon bought 784 and 788 in the winter of 5725 with the money coming directly from the Rebbe. The Rebbe did not want additional partners in the purchase of the buildings since he did not want more "balabatim" (people in charge) of 770. The Rebbe agreed to accept payments

from only one person and that was Aharon Klein.

R' Aharon bought the buildings under his own name and not under the name of the "Building Committee" that worked to expand 770. The reason for this isn't clear and there are various versions: One says that the bank would not lend such a large sum of money to a shul because it did not have the proper guarantees for such a large loan. R' Aharon, who ran a number of organizations such as Colel Chabad in America, was probably more well-known in banking circles and this is why he bought the buildings under his name. Another version says that this was the Rebbe's decision since the Rebbe did not want illegalities – which take place with nearly all construction – to be officially under Chabad's name. In any case, R' Aharon bought the buildings under his name and sold them afterwards to Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch.

R' Aharon, who had this difficult job, began working diligently to achieve the goal of expanding 770 into the underground level of the adjacent

buildings as quickly as possible. By nature he was a methodical person and he did not tolerate delays and inaccuracies in even the smallest details. When he took on any task he worked to complete it down to the last details.

From the moment he started the work, R' Aharon was completely immersed in it so that even his wife complained to the Rebbe that since the building began she hardly saw her husband. The Rebbe once met R' Aharon at the construction site and said to him: When I come from my house I see you here and when I go back home I see you here. When do you sleep and eat?

After R' Aharon bought the buildings in the beginning of 5725, he began preparing for the renovations. The first and biggest problem was the tenants! In order to begin renovations, they had to get the tenants out of their apartments. The law protects tenants and it is hard to remove them from their homes against their will. So R' Aharon had a lot of work to do in convincing the tenants to leave. Some did leave immediately, others left only after being convinced of the importance in doing so or after being paid to leave, while some refused to leave. They liked their location and had no interest in leaving.

R' Aharon waited with due patience until the last minute but then he did not hesitate to use some original methods to do what he had to do and expand 770 as the Rebbe wished. In one instance, he experienced an open miracle from the Rebbe:

It was the end of 5727, after nearly two nerve-racking years in which R' Aharon did all he could do to persuade the tenants to leave. He spared no effort or



Yud Shvat 5724 The walls of the shalash were still not finished



The shul Erev Shabbos in the 60's. In the center of the picture you can see the reading table that R' Yankel Lipsker built. On the right is the Aron Kodesh.

money and ultimately prevailed with most of the tenants leaving. They began the preparatory work on the first floor of the building (the level where the Ezras Nashim is today).

One tenant, a black man, insisted on staying in his apartment on the first floor, thus delaying the construction. One day, when the tractor was clearing the area next to the man's apartment, R' Aharon directed it slowly but surely towards the wall of the apartment. Another little bit and another little bit until the tractor scoop broke into the man's wall. The man, whose reason for staying in the

apartment was gone, packed up his things and moved that same day.

A few days later, R' Aharon received a summons from the court. The man was suing him in court. R' Aharon knew he didn't stand a chance since he had blatantly broken the law that protects tenants and he was liable to be penalized to the full extent of the law. Nevertheless, he decided not to tell the Rebbe so as not to aggravate him. But you can't hide from the Rebbe and one day, when the Rebbe was on his way home, he met R' Aharon near the construction site. The Rebbe said that he could



Curtains between the shul and the women's section

tell that something was amiss. R' Aharon told the Rebbe about what happened and said he did not see any way out. The Rebbe told him – go to court and don't look for a lawyer, just represent yourself. Admit whatever you are accused of and then make one request of the judge, that since you are a Jew and the Jewish month of holidays is coming up, you would like to postpone the carrying out of the sentence until after Tishrei.

This was an obscure and surprising instruction but R' Aharon did precisely as he was told. He represented himself in court and before the sentencing he made his request of the judge. The judge approved his request and not only postponed the carrying out of the sentence but the sentence itself.

The sentencing was postponed and postponed until this very day!

## 5727: THE POWER OF BACHURIM

After all the apartments were vacated and after they had razed the entire first floor of 784 which was closer to 770, R' Aharon began looking for contractors who would accept the job of

expanding the Beis Midrash. In the meantime, the plan was to expand only under the building closest to 770 while 788 was used, for the meanwhile, for bachurim from the yeshiva and a number of Lubavitcher families.

On 26 Av 5727/1967 R' Aharon wrote a report to the Rebbe with an update:

*Enclosed is another eighteen [dollars] for the expansion of the Beis Midrash in 770, which one way or another should be finished by the upcoming Rosh HaShana. Since, as it is now, the Beis Midrash is very crowded and Anash deserve to have a more spacious Beis Midrash.*

*Of all the estimates that I received to date there is only one who is interested enough in the construction that if they sign a contract with him now, he is ready to get to work next week and will work under the constant supervision of an architect and he is willing to sign an agreement that our lawyer will draft and offer every guarantee.*

*Next Sunday, 28 Av, another two contractors will be here who will give estimates.*

The Rebbe's answer was written on the margins of the note: **2 receipts** [for two times chai, one for the construction and one for something else.] **I will mention it at the gravesite for success.**

Three days later, on Rosh Chodesh Elul 5727/1926, R' Aharon wrote another report to the Rebbe from which we see how matters progressed:

*On Sunday another two contractors were here regarding expanding the Beis Midrash. One said it would take three months and the other one said it would take six to eight weeks. They cannot begin until after Rosh*

*HaShana and the cost is from \$70,000-\$80,000.*

*The only contractor who promised to begin construction immediately and also promises that we can daven there on Rosh HaShana, who is also interested in doing the work and accepts penalties if he does not keep his promises – says that if we want it ready for Rosh HaShana we must decide today or tomorrow. (He is Italian). The cost, he says, will be about \$65,000 including supervision by an engineer.*

*Aharon Moshe ben Perel Klein*

The Rebbe jotted his response in the letter itself. Regarding what he wrote that the contractor was willing to undertake the construction, the Rebbe noted: **If he has a good reputation in his field, and the engineer likewise, look into his offer.**

Regarding what he wrote that the contractor agreed to accept any penalties if he did not fulfill his obligations the Rebbe wrote: **Surely in an official manner.**

As to the contractor's nationality: **Surely he knows not to work on Shabbos etc.**

It's hard to know precisely but it seems that they made an agreement with this contractor.

The construction began during the first days of Elul 5727 and the contractor worked extremely quickly so that the nearly impossible could be accomplished – finishing the work within a month and preparing the expanded Beis Midrash for t'fillos that Rosh HaShana. Just for comparison's sake, when you do renovations in the typical home it takes a few months and this was a very large area under somewhat complicated construction conditions - working in a basement of the existing building. Completing the work in

that amount of time was utterly unrealistic.

In order to understand what happened during construction, it's important to describe what 770 looked like before it was expanded. It looked as follows:

The shalash was described above. As shown in the diagram in the box, between the shalash and building 784 there is a pathway on the sidewalk level (4). The path was above the level of the wall that bordered the shalash (2). The shalash itself is below sidewalk level. Then there are two buildings 784 and 788 that are attached underground, but at street level they are separated into two. On the side of 788 facing Kingston were stores that faced the street.

Whoever wants to see for himself the progression of the expansion within 770 can mark it based on the pillars in the big zal. In 770 there are three pillars that line up the length of the zal. These are the biggest, thickest pillars among the pillars in 770. The first pillar is in the back of 770 and it marks the end of the area of the shalash and the beginning of 784. The next two pillars are towards the front of 770. The second pillar (in the middle) is the end of 784. The space between this pillar and the next pillar is the space between the buildings that existed then. From the third pillar and on is 788.

In the first stage of construction it was necessary to dig from the first floor of the two buildings until under their basements in order to create an area with a high ceiling. The second stage entailed breaking the walls separating between the shalash and 784 and then renovating the basement of 784 to serve as a prayer hall. The



Bachurim banging the cement wall with a pipe



Bachurim looking at the results of their labor

company that began working in Elul 5727 began the preparatory work on 784. Lubavitchers from that time remember the t'fillos that took place in the shalash with blockades on the eastern side to separate people from the construction site. The work was done quickly and it seemed as though it would in fact be ready by Rosh HaShana.

Then the problems set in. When the workers tried breaking the wall that bordered the shalash, they discovered a huge wall, three feet thick, made of cement fortified with iron (2).

The length of the wall was the width of the entire shalash – 20 meters! Breaking a wall this size and strength took a long time and the conclusion of the construction was delayed time and again.

Rosh HaShana had passed and Chassidim were unable to daven with the Rebbe in the new zal, and there was no end in sight. The delays got on the nerves of the residents of Crown Heights, especially those of the bachurim who looked forward to the moment when they could daven in the spacious shul as the Rebbe wanted it to be.



The demolition of the massive wall finally ended a little before Sukkos 5727. Those keeping on eye on the construction breathed a sigh of relief. At least by Sukkos the new Beis Midrash would be ready. But they were disappointed once again. The workers discovered that the wall of 784 was not an ordinary wall but was also thick and strong and much of it contained iron. This wall served as a support to the western side of 784. In order to break it without weakening the building they needed guidance from an engineer. Although it wasn't as intimidating a wall as the previous one, it was still significant. The overseer of the work (who was a religious Jew) said they could not finish breaking the wall that day and could do so only at a later opportunity. Nevertheless, the workers began breaking a little bit of the wall (about the width of two doors and the upper part) and then gathered their tools and left.

Anash and the bachurim understood the following – the following night was Yom Tov and the workers would only be able to do a little bit; they certainly would not finish breaking the wall. On Chol HaMoed no work would be done. So the work would not resume until after Simchas Torah. In other words, the entire month of Tishrei was lost. The bachurim walked around the construction site in frustration, glaring at the huge wall that thwarted their great joy over a new shul.

Then one of the bachurim

had a brainstorm. “Why can’t we break the wall ourselves?”

His friends looked at him as though he was crazy. “Who, us? Without tools and without professional guidance you think we can accomplish in a few hours what the workers say will take a few days?”

The bachur did not back down. He took a big pipe that was meant to be used for the heating system. It was supposed to extend from the basement until the fourth floor, which is why it was long and very heavy. It took several bachurim to lift it. They went up on the Kria bima (in the shalash (3)) and banged with the pipe against the wall in the place where the workers had already begun demolition. The wall moved a little and a few rocks fell to the ground.

The bachurim hooted happily. Within seconds the bachurim had turned into a contracting company. They banged against the wall again and again while others piled up the rocks that fell and loaded them onto wheelbarrows. Others emptied the wheelbarrows outside. The work continued apace and their enthusiasm rose with every rock that fell to the ground. The work continued all night and although some bachurim were injured slightly they just focused on the work at hand.

Slowly but surely the huge wall gave way. Towards morning the exhausted bachurim looked at what they accomplished. 748

and the shalash had become one building. They would be able to daven with the Rebbe in the new Beis Midrash! They completely ignored the fact that 784 was suspended in the air (remember, they had planned on taking down the wall only after consulting with engineers). They didn't care that the floors of the two buildings were not level and that the entire Beis Midrash was filthy and covered with dust. The main thing was having a Beis Midrash. They moved the Rebbe's bima and the Aron Kodesh to the new eastern wall. And only then did they go off for a nap before Yom Tov began.

That is how the second expansion of 770 ended. When the workers showed up the next day, Erev Yom Tov, they couldn't believe their eyes. The big wall from yesterday was no longer there! Not much remained to be done. They placed a ramp to connect the floor of the shalash with the floor of 784 and cleaned the place up. As Yom Tov began, Anash waited excitedly for the Rebbe to enter. It was the first time the Rebbe would be visiting the new Beis Midrash.

A few minutes before Mincha the crowd hushed and the Rebbe came down from his room and entered the large zal. He moved quickly to his new place as he glanced about him and one could see the great happiness on his face. Anash relate that the Rebbe “walked and walked and walked” until he reached his place. They were not yet accustomed to the size of the new zal. It seemed the Rebbe had a very long walk to reach his place.

On Simchas Torah of that year there was still dust throughout the building, which is why everybody left the Hakafos with white pants.

One of the bachurim said that

**Then one of the bachurim had a brainstorm. “Why can’t we break the wall ourselves?” His friends looked at him as though he was crazy. “Who, us? Without tools and without professional guidance you think we can accomplish in a few hours what the workers say will take a few days?”**

## EVERYBODY WANTS TO SEE THE REBBE

in the apartments of 778 that were near 784 you could clearly hear the Rebbe's voice through the walls.

Yet along with all the simcha the Rebbe also saw the great danger in taking away a vital part of the building without preparing replacement supports. Anash say that the next day, at the farbrengen, the Rebbe sat in his regular place, which was close to the break between the two buildings and during the farbrengen the Rebbe frequently looked at the break where you could literally see that the building would collapse. The Rebbe's face looked extremely serious.

The very next day they put thick iron beams in to strengthen the building so it wouldn't collapse.

After Yom Tov R' Yankel Lipsker brought wood and constructed four wooden benches which he donated to 770. Shortly after the construction was completed, he decided to build a new Aron Kodesh for the Rebbe's shul. He asked the Rebbe whether he could build the Aron into the wall and the Rebbe said no.

R' Yankel brought a worker who built the wooden frame of the Aron and then he did the rest of the artistic work himself with the help of his son Zalman, who is today one of the gabbaim of the shul. That is how the Aron Kodesh of 770 was built and it graces the eastern wall till this day.

Throughout the construction and expansion R' Aharon Klein was on the scene, putting his heart and soul into the work and hardly returning home. There is no doubt that R' Aharon's mesirus nefesh (self sacrifice) stood by him and all the Chassidim to expand 770 – Beis Rabbeinu Sh'B'Bavel – Beis Moshiach – in

At the end of 5749 some innovations were made at the initiative of current gabbai Zalman Lipsker. Following the Rebbe's nonstop encouragement to build more and more, R' Lipsker renovated his own home and then he thought of replacing the old bima used for Kria that his father made twenty years earlier. He consulted with his brother Berel, the mashpia, and together they decided to do it. Berel asked permission of the gabbaim and when they gave it, they wrote to the Rebbe. The Rebbe answered affirmatively and even contributed money towards it.

The costs amounted to \$18,000 which R' Zalman got from an anonymous donor. They brought the bima to 770 for Rosh HaShana 5750.

Then R' Zalman had the idea of replacing the steps that go up to the Rebbe's bima on the east side of the shul. R' Leibel Mochkin donated \$4000 for this.

When he finished these two projects, R' Zalman decided to start what he finished and to replace the steps leading to the platform used for the Torah reading. He tried to raise the money but was unable to.

One day, as he walked around 770 thinking about how to raise the money, he saw R' Yossel Gutnick standing nearby and talking with the secretary R' Klein. He went over to R' Klein and complained that each time the Rebbe went up to the reading table, the steps shook and it was terrible. Yossel asked Zalman: How much does it cost? Zalman said it would be around \$4500. "Do it and tomorrow there will be a check in R' Klein's office."

In 5750 R' Lipsker came up with another new idea. Since there was a new, high bima he thought it would be a good idea for the Rebbe to dance during his Hakafa in the center of the bima so the thousands of people would be able to see the glorious sight. Until that year, the Rebbe danced on the floor in an area hemmed in by metal tables and only those few nearby could see the Rebbe while the rest of the crowd could barely do so.

He put the bima in the center of the tables but left enough room on the floor so that the Rebbe could do as he pleased and dance on the floor as he always did. Naturally there were people who did not like the changes and R' Zalman had to sleep all night on the new bima.

During the Hakafos, those involved in the construction were nervous – would the Rebbe accept the change? When it was the Rebbe's Hakafa, the Rebbe walked towards the place where they danced. When he saw the bima he motioned in surprise. R' Meir Harlig went over to the Rebbe (as prearranged by R' Zalman) and said everybody wanted to see the Rebbe during the Hakafos. The Rebbe smiled broadly and went up the steps of the bima.

The Chassidim were ecstatic. From all over the zal they could see the Rebbe as he danced with the Torah.

Fortunate are those who witnessed this!

a way that it would be "praised, renowned and glorious," as the Rebbe put it in a letter to him, as a nachas ruach to the Rebbe.

### THE THIRD EXPANSION

In the years following 5728, the Rebbe continued to demand

of R' Aharon that he continue the expansion even under 778. You can see this in a letter that R' Aharon wrote to the Rebbe on 22 Iyar 5728 where he reported to the Rebbe about his T'fillin Truck (as the first Mivtza Tank was called). The Rebbe's answer written in the note was: **Thank**



**you for the good news, may you relate good news finally also about the expansion of the shul and the building.**

The expansion was delayed until the end of 5733. It may have been delayed due to lack of money.

As usual, the construction began at the last minute. This time too they planned on finishing everything by Rosh HaShana. This time they did not hire a professional contractor to oversee the work but the gabbaim themselves did so. It was R' Zalman Lipsker who personally supervised it on behalf of the Building Committee. The foreman was a tall non-Jew who worked with just one hand but – as the expression goes – “he worked like two goyim.” R' Aharon was not as involved with this construction.

The work proceeded quickly. The gabbaim contributed significantly to the pace of the work, as at night some of their children would finish what the workers had not completed that day. They included R' Zalman Blesofsky, his son Yehuda, R' Zalman Lipsker and his brother Yosef Yitzchok.

During the expansion they had to dig under the stores that were open to Kingston on the street level. In order to strengthen the ceiling during the construction they placed some support beams. Towards the end of the work they decided to remove those beams so as not to interfere with the acoustics in 770. The engineer told them what had to be done and they were ready to take down the beams.

For some reason, one of the members of the Building Committee was nervous about this and he consulted with a different engineer and asked whether it was dangerous to

take them down. The engineer's response was there is always a risk. This committee member went to the Rebbe and expressed his fears that the entire building 788 would collapse. The Rebbe said that if there was any danger, they should not remove the beams.

A while later – still in the middle of construction – a small tractor was operating in the area of 770. It collided with one of the beams and the beam was knocked out of its place and remained suspended in the air.

That committee member who was on the scene was terrified that the entire building would come down. After a few minutes passed and nothing happened, he realized it was a mistake on his part to prevent the removal of the other beams. An opportunity had been missed to make 770 look much better. But everything that happens is by Divine Providence and over the years many Chassidim and bachurim used those beams to get a better view whether it was for the blowing of the shofar, Hakafo, etc. Video cameras were also hung from these beams.

The night before Rosh HaShana 5734 the entire building was almost ready except for the eastern wall, which was made of bricks that were not painted and needed to be finished. These bricks were donated by a wealthy person who apparently also brought along a mason to lay the bricks. In those days, stone was very expensive and as the years passed these bricks became one of the symbols of 770.

Over the brick wall they made a curvature in the wall, as advised by an architect, so that the chazan's voice would be thrown backward towards the

congregation who would be able to hear him better.

That last night of the year, a number of gabbaim worked to finish the construction by morning.

Erev Rosh HaShana something peculiar happened. The Rebbe came out for Slichos in the middle of the night without prior announcement and the Slichos were recited in the small zal upstairs.

Erev Rosh HaShana 5734 the large zal was as big as it could get. The floor was still crooked and all of 770 was on a slant (until they straightened it out some years later). The paneling was not up yet either and the Ezras Nashim on the Eastern Parkway side was just a cemented open area, but overall the construction was complete.

After the Yomim Tovim work resumed. R' Zalman Lipsker put up wallpaper on the walls to give them the same color as the rest of the building. Some Chassidim finished the Ezras Nashim and also built stairs to the second floor from the Ezras Nashim.

The third expansion did not include the area under the Ezras Nashim on Eastern Parkway. A few years later, on the eastern side, they made a room for coats and lockers, which afterward became a sort of anteroom until the stage when they renovated the bathrooms downstairs. Then this room and the electrical closet were removed and they opened the entire area under the Ezras Nashim.

Under the Ezras Nashim is also where the *lishka* is, as the Chassidim who go to 770 call it. It's underneath the Ezras Nashim on Eastern Parkway and is definitely one of the important elements of 770. It's hard to

imagine 770 today without the faithful services provided from that room or as many fondly call it, *lishkas osei chavitin* for the lishka in the Beis HaMikdash where they prepared the food.

## THE LAYING OF THE CORNERSTONE

Over the years, the Lubavitch community grew tremendously. The holidays, particularly those in Tishrei, brought thousands of people to 770 and it was so crowded that it could be said that four people stood on one tile. From year to year the crowding increased. It was obvious that soon enough, not every Chassid who wanted to see the Rebbe during the shofar blowing or the Hakafof of Simchas Torah would be able to do so.

Plans for enlarging the big zal as much as possible were discussed for a long time but nothing happened until that day, 17 Elul 5748, Erev Chai Elul. That day, the Rebbe davened as usual as he did throughout the year of mourning for the Rebbetzin, in his home on President Street. After Mincha the Rebbe gave out dollars for tz'daka.

Mr. David Chase, director of the Friends of Machne Israel Fund, approached the Rebbe and said that he planned on enlarging 770. He explained all the details to the Rebbe and then invited the Rebbe to participate in a cornerstone laying ceremony that day.

To his surprise and to the surprise of all, the Rebbe accepted the invitation though he made it conditional on Mr. Chase speaking in Yiddish. The Rebbe shook his hand throughout the conversation and Mr. Chase agreed to the deal and said, in

Yiddish, that he would see the Rebbe at 5:00.

The Rebbe's agreement to attend the ceremony on such short notice put the organizers of the ceremony (who had planned on a modest, quiet event) into a tizzy. Within minutes they had prepared the earth in front of 770 for the event, and had erected a platform for the Rebbe with a lectern and microphone. A large crowd began streaming towards 770 and stood on makeshift pyramids that had been set up on the sidewalk. On the front of the building a sign was hung which said "Gadol yihiyeh k'vod ha'bayis – l'shana tova u'mesuka" (Great will be the glory of this house - a good and sweet year).

At precisely 5:00 the Rebbe drove up. He got out of the car and walked towards the platform from where he delivered a sicha for ten minutes. The Rebbe spoke about the meaning of the name given to events of this kind – a "groundbreaking." The Rebbe explained that this alludes to the breaking and bittul (nullification) that needs to accompany these events. Everything is given by G-d and is not, G-d forbid, coming from "my strength and the power of my hand made me this wealth." The Rebbe compared the laying of the cornerstone to the Foundation Stone of the world, which is located in the Holy of Holies.

After the sicha, Mr. Chase began his speech by acknowledging the great privilege he had to build the Beis Midrash and headquarters of the Rebbe, relating emotionally how he saw the Germans destroying the shuls in his city. Back then he did not believe the day would come when he himself would build a shul. Until this point Mr. Chase spoke in English. Then he said (in English): Rebbe, although I



The Rebbe placing the cornerstone

promised to talk in Yiddish, what can I do when I've forgotten this language almost completely and it is hard for me, but this I'll say: Rebbe, *ich hub dir lib zei'er zei'er a sach* (I love you very, very much). He concluded by wishing the Rebbe health and success.

Throughout this time the Rebbe leaned on the lectern, bent over a bit towards the speaker and watching him. The Rebbe asked Rashag to speak. Rashag said it was 91 years since the founding of Tomchei T'mimim and it was a special privilege to expand Beis Raboseinu Nisi'einu, which serves also as the central yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim. Then he blessed the Rebbe with outstanding success and with nachas from all the Chassidim.

The Rebbe descended from the platform and went over to the hole that was dug ahead of



time for the cornerstone. He took a shovel and began moving the dirt aside. Then he bent over and placed the rock into the hole, took the shovel again and covered the rock. Then Mr. Chase, the secretaries and rabbanim were honored with filling the hole.

The Rebbe walked towards the opening in the fence that surrounded the area and stopped and said he wanted to distribute dollars. The lectern from the platform was brought over. At first it was chaotic because they had never thought about how to create a line to receive dollars in that area, but order was quickly restored and people began to pour in as the band played happy tunes in the background.

The dollars were given out for about an hour and a quarter and then the Rebbe left for home to the sounds of singing.

### **5753 - 770 SHIFTS DIRECTION TOWARDS THE BALCONY AND REBBE'S ROOM**

During the period of “our illnesses he bears and our pains he suffers,” a number of changes were made in 770. Before Rosh HaShana 5753 a special room was constructed above the pyramids that were built in the back of 770. We saw the Rebbe in this room many times over a year and a quarter and it was from this room that the great news emerged to the world with the Rebbe encouraging the singing which expressed a yearning for the hisgalus: Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V'Rabbeinu, Melech HaMoshiach L'olam Va'ed.

In order to be able to see the Rebbe from all parts of the zal, the five chandeliers hanging in the back of 770 were taken down.

For Simchas Torah of that

## **CLOUDS IN 770**

As the big shul of 770 was enlarged, cooling it off became a problem. The shul is underground and there are no (or hardly any) windows. Over the years the gabbaim added more and more air conditioning vents but they were not up to the task as thousands crowded into the shul, especially on Simchas Torah when it was unbearably hot and stuffy.

The solution was a machine they rented every year before Rosh HaShana, Yom Kippur and Sukkos. The truck was parked on Kingston Avenue and had a huge air conditioning unit. Large pipes extended from the truck to the second floor of 770 (number 788) where they drilled a hole in the floor through which the pipe blew cool air into the shul. This created an interesting phenomenon. While down below it was overly hot, the air conditioner was producing very cold air and this caused clouds to form!

year, people wondered whether the Rebbe would want to come down for Hakafo with the Chassidim. To make this possible, they built the balcony with steps on the left that led down to the platform that the Rebbe danced on in previous years. They also installed higher wheels on the platform. Sadly, the Rebbe did not come down for Hakafo that year.

From the time the Rebbe began davening in the new room to the west of 770, people's eyes were constantly focused over there. The chazan who had stood on the east side all the years, stood near the Rebbe's room and faced east. This was to enable his voice to be heard in the Rebbe's room.

### **5755 - RENOVATING THE ENTRANCE TO 770**

In 5755 the entire facade of 770 was renovated. In addition, fifty bathrooms were built in the basement. The area where the bathrooms had been previously was demolished and the zal was expanded significantly and additional seating was added.

The old ceiling, which had electrical and air conditioning

pipes sticking out, was replaced by an esthetically pleasing and acoustical ceiling which added to the attractiveness of the Beis Midrash. Regarding the old ceiling they say that once, a wealthy person went to visit 770. He was escorted by the head secretary, Rabbi Chadakov. The man was familiar with Chabad from the place he lived in where the Chabad house was a beautiful building. He was sure that if the local Chabad house was so nice, 770 – Chabad headquarters would be magnificent.

When he walked into 770 he saw four old brown walls and dozens of unattractive pillars with peeling paint. When he looked up he saw, to his dismay, the pipes on the ceiling. R' Chadakov asked him, “Tell me sir, do you have a yacht?”

When the man said he did, R' Chadakov asked him, “What is the most important room on your yacht?”

The man thought and then said, “The truth is that the most important room is the engine room because without it, the boat could not move.”

“Of course,” said R' Chadakov in feigned naivety, “the engine room, as the most important



Plans for the new building and Beis Midrash

room, is sparkling clean, is it not?”

“Are you kidding?” responded the wealthy man as he tried not to laugh. “The engine room is the dirtiest room on the boat. It is full of dirt and engine oil and the noise is unbearable. I myself have only visited that room a few times.”

“Indeed,” said R’ Chadakov. “You should know that this is the engine room of Lubavitch. If not for this room, Lubavitch could not move.”

Chassidim relate this story (see box) though we don’t know who the man was but the point of the story is well-taken and is an accurate reflection of 770 as seen through the eyes of the Chassidim.

## RECENT RENOVATIONS

Additional renovations were made in 770. At the beginning of 5761 a new Ezras Nashim was built facing Union with about fifty seats. In the winter of 5762 parts of the Aron Kodesh were painted with 24 carat gold, a contribution from a wealthy donor, as it says in the Rambam in Hilchos



Beis HaBechira, “It’s a choice manner of performing the mitzva to strengthen the structure and to raise it up according to the abilities of the people as it says, ‘and to elevate the house of our G-d,’ and glorify and beautify it according to their abilities. If they can coat it with gold and make it greater in deeds - this is a mitzva.”

\*\*\*

We have completed the story of the construction of the central shul of Lubavitch, Beis Rabbeinu Sh’B’Bavel, but its construction is

not complete. In the meantime we know the uniqueness of this shul for “the special advantage of (the shul and Beis Midrash) of Beis Rabbeinu over other shuls and battei midrash in Bavel, being the main ‘miniature sanctuary’ which Hashem gives the Jewish people in exile in place of the great Mikdash in Yerushalayim.”

However, we pray and look forward excitedly for the completion of its construction – as the Rebbe MH”M desires – together with the construction of the third Beis HaMikdash. ■

# Seven Seven Zero

Three digits that allude to an entire universe. One building, with its familiar structure, towards which millions of eyes across the globe look. But it's not just an address; it's a symbol. A symbol to hundreds of thousands of chassidim who draw their energy from this house; a symbol to Jews for whom this place serves as a source of trust in Hashem and true happiness; a symbol of a firm and concrete path in serving our Creator.

Thus, it is not surprising that 770 Eastern Parkway is one of the most emulated building in the world, with replicas in almost every continent, and arguably, the most well know address in the world.

For Issue 770, Beis Moshiach presents a stunning gallery of 12 Seven Seventy replicas around the globe.



Original 770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, New York



Kfar Chabad, Eretz Yisroel



Rutgers University Campus, New Brunswick, New Jersey



S. Paulo, Brazil



Buenos Aires, Argentina



Camp Gan Israel, near Montreal, Canada



Gayley Avenue, Los Angeles, California



Ramat Shlomo, Yerushalayim, Eretz Yisroel



Kiryat Ata, near Haifa, Eretz Yisroel



Melbourne, Australia



Milan, Italy



Pico Boulevard, Los Angeles, California

# To Live with the Rebbe in 770 - 770Live!



*Picture a shliach in Alaska or Katmandu, tired after a long day. Suddenly he feels a longing for 770. Presto! – with a few clicks of his mouse he’s in 770, seeing and hearing what’s doing – participating in a farbrengen, hearing the speakers, lectures, and stories that go on into the night – satisfying his longing for Beis Chayeinu. • It’s not a dream; it’s the website called 770Live.org • Rabbi Yaakov Linchner and Rabbi Reuven Blau describe how it happened.*

By Shneur Zalman Berger

[Disclaimer Regarding Using the Internet: The directors of the site say that the site is for those who, for whatever reasons, are already connected to the Internet, but a chassid who wants to go on the Internet should consult with his rav or mashpia.]

**A**vremele Rainitz and Shmuel Kraus have been friends for years, but they went their different ways after they married. Shmuel moved to Antwerp, and

Avremele lived in Eretz Yisroel for a short time after he married.

During that brief period of time, Avremele thought a lot about 770, and went to the 770Live website regularly to see what was happening there. One Monday afternoon, Avremele was watching the Rebbe’s *minyan* that began *davening* at 10 a.m. They were up to *Krias ha’Torah*, and Avremele watched as the *gabbai*,

R’ Menachem Gerlitzky, said *Mi Sh’Beirach* for a new mother.

Avremele saw that R’ Gerlitzky had a cellular phone in his hand. He said the *Mi Sh’Beirach* and gave the name for someone who lived far away, yet wanted his daughter to be named in the Rebbe’s *minyan*. When Avremele heard the name Chaya Mushka bas Shmuel, he suddenly remembered that his friend in



Antwerp had a newborn baby girl. He knew who was calling the *gabbai*!

Less than a minute later, Avremele called Belgium and wished Shmuel *mazel tov* on the birth of Chaya Mushka. Then he quickly enlightened his friend as to how he knew the baby's name so fast!

This true story accentuates the uniqueness of 770Live: the instantaneous ability to "live with the Rebbe," with 770, at all times.

It began as a joint dream of two Chassidim, one in Eretz Yisroel and one in the U.S. Their dream was realized by setting up a website that broadcasts live from 770 around the clock. This was made possible only through a tremendous amount of work and resources.

It actually began twelve years ago, when Rabbi Yaakov Linchner from Rechovot founded "N'chayeg v'nishma" (Dial and Listen), a computerized telephone system that people around the

world call and hear *sichos*, *niggunim*, *shiurim*, lectures, etc.

Back then, Linchner was dreaming of a "Dial and See." "It was a dream, because at that time the technology didn't exist, not even among wealthy or high-tech people," Linchner explains. "The Internet was in its infancy, and the concept of broadband, which is needed to transmit a voice and live video, was unheard of.

"Only two and a half years ago, when the technology sped up tremendously, I was able to set up a test site which would transmit only sound. I connected the site to Dial and Listen and many people listened to the Rebbe's *sichos* and classes on *chassidus*. These were the first attempts to create a live connection to 770. They had a certain measure of success, and we hoped to make further progress.

"You know, technology doesn't stand still. Every day new high-tech inventions appear in the marketplace, so a year ago it was possible to get the most advanced components needed to broadcast video on-line."

At first R' Linchner wanted

to go to 770 to set up a camera in order to broadcast the video live, but after asking the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh*, he got a negative response. In the meantime he fundraised for the new project. When he had the money he needed, he asked again and received a positive answer. That night he was on the plane to 770.

"I arrived at 770 and discovered that things were far more complicated than I had thought. The technology is not simple. While I was fretting about what I was supposed to do, I became acquainted with R' Reuven Blau, who has a lot of experience with communications via computer for *hafatzas ha'Chassidus*. Back in 5742 he was involved in spreading the wellsprings over computer bulletin boards, which was known as KosherNet. Later on, in 5748, he and his brother Meir put up the Crown Heights News Line, which used telephone lines. I was surprised to hear that he had been thinking for a long time about live broadcasting from 770 to the whole world via the Internet.

"It was a few hours before the



“Just imagine,” says Yaakov Linchner with sparkling eyes, “a *shliach* in Alaska or Katmandu, tired at the end of the day, suddenly yearns for 770. With a few clicks of the mouse he can go to 770, and see and hear what’s going on and even participate in a *farbrengen* in honor of a special date, or a *siyum* in Rambam, and hear the speeches, the lectures and the stories that last into the night.”

banquet at the *Kinus HaShluchim* in 770 last year, and we really wanted it broadcast live. Since it was only a few hours before the event, we decided on an audio broadcast only. The first speech was that of Rabbi Shneur Zalman Gurary. Shortly before the broadcast, R’ Linchner called a few Lubavitch centers around the world to inform them that the banquet would be broadcast live.

None of the listeners in their homes could imagine how many obstacles there were for Blau. “I had many complicated technical problems,” he says. “You can count on your fingers the number of people in the world who know how to build a website that constantly broadcasts video live. There was nobody to consult with, so I was forced to put together equipment and invent solutions almost from *ayin* to *yesh*, and all in less than three hours! Despite my previous experience in computer communications I can attest that the live broadcast took place in a supernatural manner, only with the *ko’ach* of the Rebbe MH”M.”

Four months later, in Adar of 5760, Linchner came to 770 to celebrate the *bar mitzva* of his son. He came with a state-of-the-art camera and new equipment, but he soon realized that developing a site like this would cost tens of thousands of dollars.

The one who gave the principle sum to complete stage one of the site was Rabbi Meir Gutnick, who had heard about the original idea and donated the sum on the spot.

On Yud-Alef Nissan 5760, the first live video broadcast of 770 could be seen via Internet. Hundreds of net surfers went online and watched the live broadcast of the Yud-Alef Nissan *farbrengen*. The first live broadcast was a success, and those who ran the new site began working energetically on upgrading the technology so that any *chassid* anywhere in the world could watch what was going in 770 day or night. Naturally, the site was named 770Live.

Since then the camera has been in the center of the large *zal*, facing the *farbrengen* dais, and it operates 24-hours a day (except Shabbos and Yom Tov, of course). There are microphones in the *beis midrash* recording the goings on, operating during *t’fillos*, *shiurim*, *farbrengens*, and special events.

The site has two bases of transmission - one in Manhattan and the other in New Jersey. What if there’s a problem? What if the camera doesn’t work properly, or the computer in 770 is down? Blau immediately heads for 770, even if he’s in the middle of working or it’s late at night. He locates the source of the problem and opens the lines.

“Any good thing has problems,” he says modestly, “and the more important something is, the bigger the problems. I’m happy that my wife and eleven children, *bli ayin ha’ra*, feel like partners in this important project and understand the need to drop everything and run to 770.

“We’ve improved the quality many times over compared to when we started, and today we are definitely close to the highest level of technology available in the entire world, so that anybody can watch and feel like he’s in 770.”

Word has gotten out about Linchner and Blau’s expertise; even non-Chabad groups have asked them to broadcast their events over the Internet.

During Sukkos the camera was brought out to Kingston Avenue for the *Simchas Beis HaShoeiva*, and anyone who couldn’t make it to 770 for Tishrei was able to join in the traditional, huge *Simchas Beis HaShoeiva* celebration.

“Just imagine,” says Yaakov Linchner with sparkling eyes, “a *shliach* in Alaska or Katmandu, tired at the end of the day, suddenly yearns for 770. With a few clicks of the mouse he can go to 770, and see and hear what’s going on and even participate in a *farbrengen* in honor of a special date, or a *siyum* in Rambam, and hear the speeches, the lectures and the stories that last into the night.”

Feedback is enthusiastic. The directors of the site happily relate that there are *anash* around the world who go online to watch the Rebbe’s *minyan* three times a day. “Chassidim and *shluchim* all over the world who long to be in 770 can do it easily now,” says Blau.

**Where are the people from?**

“Everywhere! Japan,

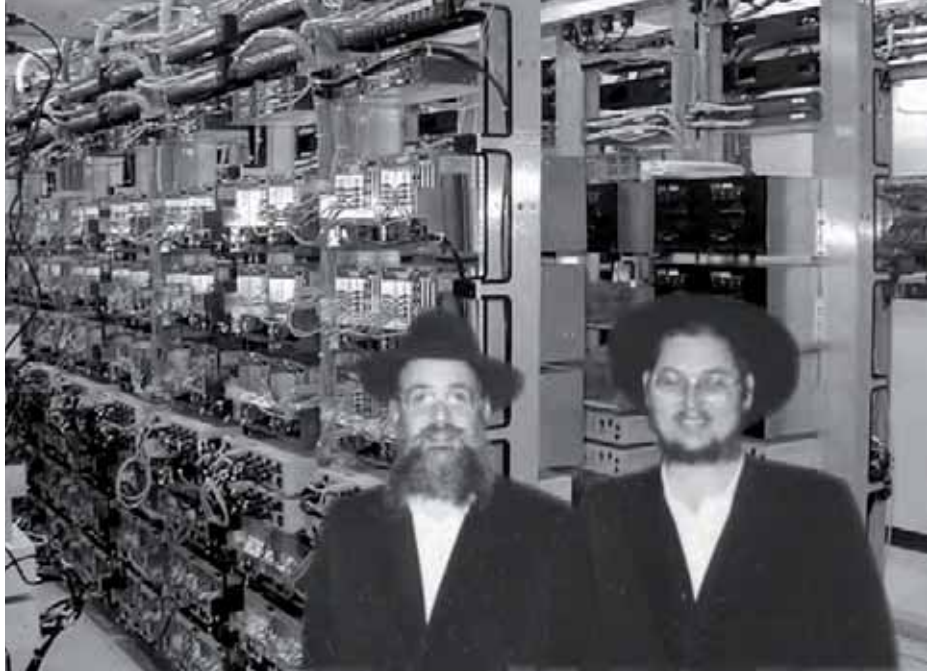
Argentina, England, France, India, Eretz Yisroel, Brazil, etc. Sometimes I'm surprised to get an e-mail from *shluchim* from places I didn't know Chabad had a presence. They all thank us for the *z'chus* to be able to be in 770 at any time."

Here's one e-mail they got: "Hello, I want to thank you for your hard work in getting the website up. I am 13 years old and I'm a *shliach* in Calgary, Alberta in Canada. We don't have a school here, and 770Live helps me tremendously. I hear *shiurim*, *sichos*, etc. It's great! I wish you success, and that you keep up the good work. *Yechi HaMelech*, Chani Matusof."

Another e-mail message: "*Yashar ko'ach! Yashar cheila*, this past year I *davened* (when possible) nearly every *t'filla* with the Rebbe's *minyan* and learned the weekly *D'var Malchus*..."

There are also requests like: "Hello. I have a very important request. My name is Devora and I'm the mother of ... I haven't seen him for two years already since he left for the Rebbe on 25 Elul. Tomorrow could you aim the camera in his direction so that I can see him? He recently arrived in 770 from *shlichus* in Japan, and will be there for a few days, and maybe I can see him with your help. Thanks a lot!"

The website also operates as a tremendous force for *hafatzas Yahadus* and *Yiddishkait* in the world. Here's an e-mail that arrived a month ago: "I am a Bobover *chassid* and I have a Rebbe who is a great *tzaddik* like R' Shlomo, *zt"l*, but I learned a little bit about your Rebbe and his *sichos* through this site. This website has given me a different perspective about the entire movement (Chabad), which I had



R' Yaakov Linchner and R' Reuven Blau and the new and improved broadcasting center which enables thousands of people to simultaneously connect to the site.

looked upon negatively. Take care of the site, thanks."

A Jewish man from somewhere in Italy asked whether he could be assisted in finding a *shidduch* because there are no Jews where he lives.

A young man from Cholon wrote: "I wouldn't describe myself as religious the way you define it, but I still enjoy learning *Tanya* through your website."

**What are your plans for the future?**

**Linchner:** "The site is constantly developing. We are putting in a great deal of work to include a number of new projects.

"We hope to dedicate different sections for Chabad *mosdos* around the world so they can broadcast audio *shiurim* on a regular basis. If, for example, the Chabad *yeshiva* in Tzfas wants to broadcast a *shiur* on *inyanei Moshiach* and *Geula*, we will help them with the appropriate equipment at a minimal price."

Currently, a new, modernized version of the site is in the final stages of construction by website developer Mr. Elrom Lulai. Among the changes: tapes of

hundreds of Chabad *niggunim* from *Seifer HaNiggunim*, archives of video tapes produced by Liros es Malkein, and a plan to broadcast classes around the clock on *Moshiach* and *Geula* that are given all over the world. Wherever there's a need, equipment can be installed to allow viewers to ask the lecturer questions.

**Where's the money coming from?**

You would think that such an advanced website needs lots of money, but the directors of the site don't elaborate, except to say, "The budget works on miracles. Hashem gives the daily budget, with each day having its own miracle," says Linchner. Blau adds, "Despite the miracles we'd be happy to get some help in order to expand our work."

In conclusion, Reuven Blau says, "Our main goal in setting up the site is to bring every Jew to the Rebbe, and to bring the Rebbe to every Jew. The site is called 770Live because everybody can see 770 live. Through the site, you can draw *chayus* from 770 to anywhere in the world." ■

# WHO WILL BE THE AARON'S OF OUR GENERATION?

By Rabbi Heschel Greenberg



**I**n last week's parsha the Torah recorded G-d's lengthy entreaty to Moses that he be the one to liberate the Jews from Egypt. Moses at first demurs. One of his arguments was that he has a speech impediment. In Moses' words: "for I am heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue."

G-d refutes his argument by telling him: "Who gave man a mouth... is it not I, G-d? So now go, I will be with your mouth, and I will teach you what to say."

Moses was still not willing to go. He asks G-d to send someone else. According to Rashi he meant his brother Aaron. G-d responds to that proposal by saying that Aaron will be happy that Moses was chosen and that G-d will put the right words in Moses' and Aaron's mouths.

The parsha ends with Moses going to Pharaoh and demanding that he let the people go so that they may serve their G-d. Pharaoh responds by making the already unbearable situation even worse, whereupon Moses protests to G-d for having sent him.

This week's parsha picks up where the last one left off. G-d rebukes Moses for questioning Him and then proceeds to give Moses the mission of telling the people that they will be liberated. The people, however, did not listen to Moses because of the new and harsher circumstances: "They did not listen to Moses "due to shortness of breath and hard labor."

Moses then argues: "If the children of Israel did not listen to me, then how will Pharaoh listen to me? I have sealed lips."

G-d then instructs Moses to use Aaron as his interpreter and proceed to display miracles to Pharaoh.

There are several glaring questions that arise when we compare the content of last week's parsha with this week's parsha:

Moses already used the argument that he had a speech impediment, and G-d refuted it by saying that He will be with Moses and instruct him.

Another salient difference between G-d commission to Moses in last week's parsha as compared with His instructions to him in this week's parsha:

In last week's parsha G-d does not appoint Aaron to be Moses' interpreter for Pharaoh. G-d merely tells Moses that Aaron would assist him in delivering the message to the people. Nothing is said about him being the one to transmit Moses' words to Pharaoh. And even that role given to Aaron came only after Moses told G-d that he should send Aaron instead.

Yet in this week's parsha, G-d tells him to appoint Aaron to be his interpreter for Pharaoh specifically.

The questions therefore are:

First, why did Moses bring up his original "discredited" argument about his speech

disability when G-d already refuted it in last week's parsha?

Second, why did G-d not appoint Aaron to be his interpreter for Pharaoh in the first place? Why did He wait for Moses to once again invoke his speech impediment in this week's parsha to assign this new role of interpreter to Aaron?

Third, why did G-d not tell Moses to perform the miracles for Pharaoh in last week's parsha? G-d only told him to perform these miracles for the Jewish people, but not for Pharaoh. In this week's parsha, G-d tells Moses and Aaron to perform the miracle of the staff turning into a serpent followed by the Ten Plagues?

Fourth, when Moses mentions his disability in last week's parsha he refers to himself as being "heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue." Yet in this week's parsha he describes himself as one who has "sealed lips." What's the difference between "heavy of mouth and tongue" and "sealed lips?" And why the change of language?

The answer to all these questions perhaps lies in the state of the Jewish people before Moses went to Pharaoh and their mindset after he was spurned by Pharaoh and the exile was made more pernicious.

As long as the Jewish people believed that Moses was sent by G-d to liberate them, there was no need to perform miracles for Pharaoh. Their faith was so

powerful that it could “infect” everybody. The key to Moses’ success in touching Pharaoh’s cruel heart was the faith of the people. When G-d told him that the people would believe that was sufficient for the success of Moses’ mission.

When a Jew is filled with conviction and faith, the Pharaoh’s of the world hear them loudly and clearly even if their speech is inchoate and garbled. They do not have to be endowed with oratorical skills. Words suffused with pure faith and profound conviction in G-d and in His mission, suffice to penetrate the heart of even the most cruel tyrant.

At that juncture, Moses did not really need Aaron to be his interpreter. Aaron’s role as Moses’ accomplice was only intended to accommodate Moses’ request that Aaron be chosen as the liberator. Moses, his speech impediment notwithstanding, would be able to get the message through to Pharaoh despite his physical disability, with or without Aaron. Moses did not need an interpreter and did not need to perform any miracles for Pharaoh because he had the power of the faith of the Jewish people whom he was representing.

But when Moses’ saw how his words backfired and had actually exacerbated the already intolerable plight of his brethren, Moses blamed himself for his failure to convey the divine message in an untainted fashion. “Obviously,” Moses must have concluded, “If the message is G-dly and the people who I am representing are pure in their faith, the fault must be with me, the messenger.” Moses, therefore “complained” to G-d by saying, “why did you send **me**?”

Now in this week’s parsha,



**The power that we give our leaders is based on a Torah principle that “there is no king without a nation.” Without the nation’s acceptance of their leader as their leader; without the people embracing of their leader’s, the leader’s abilities are also compromised.**

---

when G-d tells him to go again to Pharaoh, Moses’ reaction is even stronger and his argument buttressed. His argument was thus: If the Jewish people were no longer filled with the same degree of receptivity to the message of Redemption and were not responsive to his words, how will Pharaoh listen to me?

Moses meant by this that if his impaired speech had any power it can only be because of the faith of the people he is representing that is channeled through him. But if the people are no longer generating the energy to him though their faith, he was now doubly impaired:

The first impairment was based on Moses’ humble perception, that his physical impediment mirrored his spiritual shortcoming. But, now there was an additional factor that did not exist before: The fact that the people he represented were no longer imbued with the same intense faith and were no longer channeling their convictions to him meant that he was now totally incapable of getting through to Pharaoh. His power base was compromised and, in his own mind, he himself lacked even the most rudimentary communication skills.

Moses thus employs a much stronger term to describe his speech impediment. Whereas in last week’s parsha he characterizes his disability as being “heavy of mouth and heavy

of tongue,”—heavy but not sealed—in this week’s parsha he describes himself as having “sealed lips.” This implied that he felt that he was now totally incapable of transmitting any meaningful message.

G-d therefore “tweaks” the nature of the mission. Now Aaron was going to be the main speaker to Pharaoh. In addition, they will henceforth perform miracles to compensate for the lack of overt faith by the people. True Moses is still the main liberator, for only the humble Moses was the transparent soul, who could channel G-d’s words unfiltered and untainted, but now Moses’ power will be channeled through Aaron.

The lesson from the above is that even Moses’ ability to communicate and liberate was influenced and affected by the faith of the nation. It is the nation that gives their leader the power to lead and liberate.

The power that we give our leaders is based on a Torah principle that “there is no king without a nation.” Without the nation’s acceptance of their leader as their leader; without the people embracing of their leader’s, the leader’s abilities are also compromised.

Thus, it was the Jewish people’s faith in the words of Moses their leader that

**Continued on page 58**

# ANOTHER KIND OF SPACE



By Dr. Aryeh Gotfryd, PhD

**T**he school bus was parked at the side of the road, engine idling. The driver was idling too, perusing his morning paper over coffee and donut, comfortably perched atop one of those large, green utility boxes that punctuate each block in my quiet suburban neighborhood.

The scene was familiar to me, since his morning ritual coincided with mine as I would drive past on my way home from “shul”. I often wanted to speak to him but this time it was easier since I hadn’t taken my car. As I approached, I could hear the droning, baritone hum from the electrical transformer directly beneath where he was seated.

I knew that he was courting a little-known but very serious health risk from the electromagnetic field generated by that transformer. Some magnetic fields are healthy – this type is not. Years ago, I spent months researching and consulting to local homeowners and several levels of government on the health effects of electric and magnetic fields from power transmission.

I also knew that he didn’t know. To complicate things, he probably wouldn’t want to know either. He’d found a comfortable spot and a quiet few minutes to enjoy the warming sunrise before starting work. Why should I ruin his day just because I happened to be aware

of exactly how many times over he was magnifying his risk of persistent migraines, hormonal imbalances, malignant tumors and genetic defects in the second generation?

Someone once told me that guilt is the biggest motivator in the world and I decided I’d feel less guilty blowing his breakfast than letting him play Russian roulette with his future generations.

“Good morning!”

“Hi there.”

“Listen, I have to tell you that where you’re sitting at the moment is a very dangerous place. There’s a magnetic field of at least 100 milligauss right now bathing your body and the health risks are major, even from a short exposure. I know. It’s my profession.”

“What are you talking about? You think the City would leave these things lying around on every block if they were so bad? I sit here all the time and I’m fine.”

“Well what if I were to bring out my gaussmeter and show you just how intense this field really is compared with safe levels? Would that make a difference?”

“Don’t bother, that’s okay. Have a nice day.”

Gaussmeters are amazing things. You get close to an electric blanket, the back of

an old computer screen or a power transmission line and watch the numbers soar – It’s like having a sixth (or seventh?) sense. It’s another dimension of reality: There’s space, time, and electromagnetism. But to the bus driver it wasn’t real, it wasn’t relevant.

Not everyone has the same sensitivities.

Two people visit the Western Wall for the first time. One cries from overwhelming emotion. The second says, what are you getting so excited about? It’s just a pile of stones. The first one says, what’s the matter with you? Don’t you feel the holiness of this place? The second shrugs his shoulders.

I have a relative who can tell who is calling without call display. I’ve seen someone pass his hand over a particular mezuzah and declare it defective – correctly. As for me, I have no such skills. I have to physically pick up the phone to identify the caller and physically read the mezuzah to find a defect. And about the Wall, I know that it’s holy, but my spiritual sensitivity is more on the level with the second tourist.

It would be great if someone could invent a spiritual yardstick, some kind of Kedushometer. Turn it on, point and click, and determine which foods are kosher, who washed their hands, and which way to

Yerushalayim. Then people like me could join the ranks of the spiritually sensitive, albeit with the help of an assistive device.

The truth is that someone did invent a Kedushometer. It's called the Torah and it's the best assistive device ever made. It tells us what is spiritually pure and what is contaminated, what is holy and what is profane. As surely as a Geiger counter clicks up a storm in the presence of a hidden source of radioactivity, the Torah's holiness scores rise as we approach the Land of Israel, climb as we reach Yerushalayim, ascend as we enter the Temple mount, and uptick off-scale at the Holy of Holies.

The Mishna teaches that inside the Holy of Holies, the place of the Ark was dimensionless space. When you measured it, it took up 2.5 cubits; when you measured around it, it took up no space at all. So was it there or not there? Potentially it was both. In measurement it was either one or the other. In reality it was neither. In short, a paradox. And this is really the hallmark of holiness, that it defies logic. G-d transcends understanding so G-dliness is revealed most pristinely in what cannot be understood, the paradox. The measure of divinity is that it is immeasurable.

A similar thing occurs in nature. It is called the quantum paradox. When we observe subatomic particles we can choose to see their wave property in which they pass through two holes of a barrier at the same time. Alternatively we can choose to observe their particle property in which case they pass through only one and not the other. It depends

**And this is really the hallmark of holiness, that it defies logic. G-d transcends understanding, so G-dliness is revealed most pristinely in what cannot be understood, the paradox. The measure of divinity is that it is immeasurable.**

---

on how we look at it. Like the Holy of Holies, the quantum is potentially in both states. In measurement it is only in one and not the other. And in actuality it isn't really in either state.

In a world sustained by divine energy 24/7, it comes as no great surprise that the very fabric of creation at the most fundamental level, the quantum, expresses the same enigmatic quality that one finds in the place of the Divine Presence, the Holy of Holies. For one G-d made them both.

Our Kedushometer, the Torah, tells of another place where the Divine Presence manifests itself in much the same way as it does in the Temple in Yerushalayim. That place is the synagogue and study hall of the exilarch. In our times, the Rebbe explains, it is 770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY.

Not everyone has the same sensitivities.

Two people visit 770 for the first time. One is overwhelmed with awe and spiritual awakening. The second enters and feels like he is in a train station. Could there really be such holiness in 770 like that in the Temple? I am not from the most spiritually sensitive so on my own I would have no clue. But if the Rebbe's words are clicking on 770 like a spiritual Geiger counter, I will bet my bottom dollar that the hidden energy is there.

Besides, 770 passes the

quantum test, as follows.

Tradition has it that while we are in exile, "Lubavitch is our Yerushalayim, the Rebbe's synagogue is our Holy Temple, the Rebbe's room is our Holy of Holies, and the Rebbe is the Ark which houses G-d's Holy Torah."

As you may recall, the place of the Ark is another kind of space. Measuring it, it takes up space and measuring around it, it doesn't. It's potentially both there and not there. Depending how you look at it, it either is or it isn't. And in reality, it is neither.

Does the Rebbe, MH"M, fit this paradigm, so to speak? Potentially one could say that the Rebbe is both physically present and physically absent. It's a superimposed reality that is up to the observer to determine. But according to what you decide, he is either somewhere local in the physical world and not everywhere or he's more generally present everywhere, but not in a specific place. In reality, he is none of these, i.e., not just an omnipotential, and not just this way or that.

And what about the Rebbe's followers? Are they subject to quantum duality too? If the Rebbe is present in this world then he has Chassidim here too. But without a Rebbe here in this world, there are no Chassidim also. So the Chassid either is or isn't, he has to make up his mind, but never fully does.

How do we resolve the paradox? With an exile

**Nobody promised us that today would make sense. Indeed if we force it to make sense we would lose the most important aspect, the Great Beyond that comes as a paradox, visiting us in many ways. Hence the Rebbe is here yet intangible, Moshiach is present yet beyond reach, the Mikdash is a pile of stones yet awesome, and 770 is a train station, yet the Temple emerging!**

mentality we never will. We need to first accept the reality of a higher dimension, a realm of holiness that we know about but may not know directly.

There are exercises to help us with this. One of them is the parable of Flatland, which is kind of fun and may be useful too. People in Flatland exist in only two dimensions, length and width. They can move left and right and back and forth but not up and down because that is the third dimension, which they don't have. Some Flatlanders are circles, some are squares and so on, but when they look at each other they don't see those shapes, they just see lines. Those shapes can only be seen from the third dimension so Flatlanders don't even fully understand their own reality.

Flatlanders try to explain life in two dimensions to their friends, the Linelanders. Lineland is a one dimensional world where the inhabitants may be longer or shorter but when they look at each other along their straight line world, they don't see variations in length, all they see when they look at one another is a point.

"Hey Mr. Line," a Flatlander might call out.

"What was that!" the Linelander exclaims, surprised by a voice from the Great Beyond.

"It's me, over here!"

"Where? I don't see you, not in front, not behind."

"I'm not in front of you or behind you, I'm beside you."

"Beside? What does beside mean?"

"This way, in the second dimension."

"Second dimension? Don't be silly. There is no second dimension. There's only one. You see? Front and back. Just one dimension."

"But don't you see that I'm not either direction, I'm somewhere else? That's another dimension."

Now while all this is going on, Mr. Cube, a Spherelander, a denizen of the third dimension (the one you and I inhabit), decides to show the Flatlander a thing or two.

"Hey, Mr. Circle,"

"What was that!" the Flatlander exclaims, surprised by a voice from the Great Beyond.

"It's me, over here!"

"Where? I don't see you, not front, back, left or right."

"I'm not that way, I'm here, above you."

"Above? What does above mean?"

"It means in the third dimension."

"Third dimension? Don't be silly. There is no third dimension. There's only two. You see? Front and back, that's one. And left and right, that's the other. Just two dimensions."

"But don't you understand that I'm not in either direction, I'm somewhere else? That's what I mean by another dimension."

Now while all this is going on, a Spiritualander (otherwise known as a 4DLander) decides to show Mr. Spherelander a thing or two.

"Hey, Mr. Cube,"

"What was that!" the squarish Spherelander exclaims, surprised by a voice from the Great Beyond.

"It's me, over here!"

"Where? I don't see you, not front or back, left or right, up or down."

"I'm not those ways, I'm here, beyond you."

"Beyond? What does beyond mean?"

"It means in the fourth dimension."

"Fourth dimension? Don't be silly. There is no fourth dimension. There's only three. You see? Front and back, that's one. And left and right, that's two. And up and down makes three. That's it!"

"But don't you understand that I'm not in any of those directions, I'm somewhere else? That's what I mean by another dimension."

When you are trying to deal with higher dimensions, they seem spiritual, ephemeral, otherworldly, even imaginary. But just like each higher dimension has more to it than a lower world, so too, that which is above us, call it the Rebbe

dimension if you will, includes our reality yet transcends it. So where would that leave us?

With the paradoxical fact that the world as the Rebbe describes it, is also a paradox. It is a world where everything is purified, yet impurity abounds, where all the blessings of redemption are at hand, yet people are suffering. A world that is exile, redemption, both and neither.

Nobody promised us that

today would make sense. Indeed if we force it to make sense we would lose the most important aspect, the Great Beyond that comes as a paradox, visiting us in many ways. Hence the Rebbe is here yet intangible, Moshiach is present yet beyond reach, the Mikdash is a pile of stones yet awesome, and 770 is a train station, yet the Temple emerging.

The world is like a symphony and we are at the second last

chord. It sounds like noise but when all the voices resolve, we will understand how today's noise makes tomorrow's music.

In the meantime, if a capable person offers to show you a glimpse of reality beyond your understanding, through the lens of a Kedushometer, don't brush it off. You just might experience life at a whole new level, and that will help make this world another kind of space. Moshiach NOW! ■

## Crown Travel International



- Express service
- Fully Computerized

331 Kingston Ave.  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Flr) Brooklyn NY 11213

**(718) 493-1111**

Fax: (718) 493-4444

Get your tickets within minutes!



## SAVE MONEY TODAY!!



Get a *FREE* analysis on your credit Card Processing!

**Call Today 888-468-3256 x 2770**

Better rates guaranteed - If we can't save you money we will pay you \$100  
For a limited time - get your CC Terminal or software set up absolutely FREE

It's a matter of ONE minute and ONE fax.

Contact Mendy Chanin at 888-468-3256 ext: 2770, [mendy@dalmiao.com](mailto:mendy@dalmiao.com)  
Dalmiao, LLC 5th Floor 245 W 17th St, New York, NY 10011

New Businesses Welcome | Exclusive Referral Program | Organization Charities Partnership

## Esther's Party Grill

463 Albany Avenue Brooklyn, NY 11213 718-735-4343

**CATERING ON OR OFF THE PREMISES**

**CORPORATE ACCOUNTS**

**WELCOME. SHLUCHIM; SPECIAL  
RATES FOR SHABBATONS &**



COME SEE

OUR BRAND NEW  
**SUSHI BAR**

OPEN FOR IN HOUSE DINING

**TAKE OUT & CATERING**

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE  
**BEIS DIN CROWN HEIGHTS**

**FREE DELIVERY TO YOUR HOME OR OFFICE**

# FIGHTING FIRE WITH LIGHT

---

Following the conflagration in the Carmel coast settlements, we visited with Rabbi Menachem Tal, shliach to the area for twenty years. When he started out, there were many opponents but he won them over with his perpetual smile. Today he teaches Judaism and Chassidus to thousands of families who live in his shlichus domain. As for the fire? “It’s also a segula for growing rich spiritually,” he says, as he hopes to expand even further.

By Nosson Avrohom

---



**R**abbi Menachem Tal has been on shlichus to the Carmel coast settlements for twenty years now. His shlichus embraces twenty moshavim and kibbutzim and three youth villages, all of which were badly damaged in the terrible recent fire. In three yishuvim, the fire destroyed dozens of houses and the damage to the surrounding area was enormous. In other yishuvim the residents had to live under a thick cloud of smoke and with the acrid smell of fire. Whatever they endured, the morale of the people in the days following the extinguishing of the fire is at a deep low. "The main work now," says R' Tal, "is to visit people and cheer them up."

This interview with R' Tal took place late at night, still before the fire was entirely put out. When I reached him, he was finishing up visiting the tents erected by the various security forces around the yishuvim and offering the soldiers and policemen the opportunity to light the Menorah. Every few minutes our conversation was interrupted by another Menorah lighting. His goal during this crisis – and during ordinary times, too – is not to skip over a single Jew, for each Jew is a diamond.

When he first came to Ein Ayala, he met blue-collar workers and laborers, farmers and artists, people with strong values, "the good old Israelis," as he puts it, the kind who can fix anything. But the beginning of his shlichus wasn't easy at all, and he wasn't exactly welcomed him with open arms. Many people looked askance at this religious Jew in black who invaded their territory. But as time went on, their suspicions turned into great love and admiration for him and his



Rabbi Tal bringing the light of Chanuka to residents of the Carmel

**As long as the police had not evacuated us, we would do our thing. Many parents showed up and we decided to ignore the smoke and act as though there was no fire.**

work. "A moshav isn't a city. All you have to do is enter one home and it's like you entered the entire moshav."

His first activities centered on the youth, the generation of the future. He started a Tzivos Hashem club, Mesibos Shabbos, and massive programming before holidays. On Purim, Chanuka, and Pesach R' Tal visited every single home.

"Today it's almost impossible because the number of people has doubled and redoubled in recent years. But back then we would prepare mishloach manos, doughnuts or shmura matza and go from house to house." One of the mekuravim who spoke with us said there is not a single person who does not know R' Tal. "His presence is felt and influential."

### WORKING UNDER FIRE

Before hearing about shlichus in ordinary times, we wanted to

hear about the current tragedy in Carmel.

"The fire caught us in the middle of preparing for a children's Chanuka party. I serve as rabbi of the Chabad Talmud Torah in Kfar Sitrin. On my way to the Kfar we saw a lot of activity involving policemen and rescue vehicles. We heard about the fire but nobody believed at that time that it would get as big as it did. We've had fires here before but they all ended fairly smoothly one way or the other. In any case, many parents called to find out if the party would be taking place or would be postponed.

"We found out that they were evacuating the yishuvim of Beit Oron and Nir Etzyon, but since they had not decided to evacuate Kfar Sitrin at that point, we decided to carry on with our plans despite the chaos. We told the parents that this is the holiday of light and we need to increase the light. As long as the police had

**In the conversion examination, they asked him whether the Torah is read at Mincha on Shabbos and he answered, sometimes yes and sometimes not. They asked him what he meant by that and he said that on the irreligious moshav, sometimes there was a minyan at Mincha and sometimes there wasn't.**

=====

not evacuated us, we would do our thing. Many parents showed up and we decided to ignore the smoke and act as though there was no fire. The party began and I started speaking about the meaning of Chanuka but my address was interrupted when one of the residents came in, hysterical, and yelled that the police said we must evacuate.

"We did not even consider canceling or limiting our programs; on the contrary. When I arrived at moshav Megadim I saw that they were also about to be evacuated. The heavy smoke reached the houses of the residents and it was hard to breathe. One of the mekuravos there asked me whether the fire had reached Ein Ayala and when I said that it hadn't, she asked to stay with us. Of course I agreed. On the way to my house I stopped at every gas station, store or any other place where people were gathered and we lit Menorahs. Together with other shluchim from Chaifa and Tirat HaCarmel and with the help of the bachurim we visited the rescue personnel and firemen.

"Many mekuravim from the moshavim called and asked whether they had to leave or could remain and I told them all that as long as the police did not announce an evacuation, they should stay. We continued our activities as usual and put on t'fillin with many people. Mainly we boosted people's morale."

The firemen, with the help of the planes, finally gained control of the fire and put it out. The people who had been evacuated from their homes were allowed to return, but many of them had nothing to return to because their homes had been consumed by the flames.

"The house of one of my mekuravim in Ein Hod was completely burned. He had an interesting story. He had lived in South Africa for many years where he met a non-Jewish woman and married her. They had three children. Nevertheless, he is very warm to Judaism and he decided to move back here when his son was thirteen. He even considered buying him t'fillin.

"When he met me I explained that his son is not Jewish so buying t'fillin for him was a waste of money, but he bought them anyway and left them in a closet in his room. When the boy became of draft age the army said he was Jewish but he protested that he wasn't a Jew since his mother was not Jewish. He even wanted to undergo a proper conversion and start observing mitzvos. His father asked me to supervise him in his conversion process and I was happy to do so. 'If it is a serious, Orthodox conversion, I'll do it,' I said. His son began coming to us for Shabbos.

"One day he went to take a test at the Rabbanut and he

came back with an interesting story. They asked him whether the Torah is read at Mincha on Shabbos and he answered, sometimes yes and sometimes not. They asked him what he meant by that and he said that he was with R' Menachem Tal on shlichus at a moshav that was not religious and sometimes there was a minyan at Mincha and sometimes there wasn't.

"The rabbis would not approve his conversion until his parents' kitchen was kosher. Two weeks ago I spoke to his father and said I would come in a couple of weeks to kosher the kitchen. When I spoke to him today, he told me that I did not have to come because his entire home went up in flames and in the new house, he promised, there would be separate dairy and meat sections in his kitchen."

## **EGGS ON THE SHLIACH'S HOUSE**

R' Tal started his shlichus when he was still a bachur and was a new mekurav to Chabad himself. He grew up in Mizrachi circles and attended Kfar HaRoeh and the shiurim on Tanya and Chassidus that were given there appealed to him. He and his brother Shimshon, shliach in Hod HaSharon, decided to continue learning in yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Migdal HaEmek. There he joined the tankistim on the Mobile Mitzva Tanks.

"Whenever I had off from yeshiva I wouldn't go home to Petach Tikva but would go around with the tanks to moshavim and kibbutzim. After I married I continued with the tanks.

"Two years earlier, the rabbi of Ein Ayala left the moshav and they were looking for someone to take his place. The search went

into high gear when one of the residents sat Shiva for his father and there was no minyan or rabbi to guide him. Rabbi Shimshon Halperin of Natzrat Ilit worked in those moshavim at the time. That resident asked him to find them a rav. R' Halperin passed on the request to the commander of the Mobile Mitzva Tanks, R' Shmaryahu Harel who referred them to me.

"The agreement between myself and the moshav committee was that I would get the house designated for the rabbi. Since I was eagerly looking for a shlichus, I was thrilled with this idea, but asked the Rebbe first. The answer I got was to 'consult with knowledgeable friends.' The shliach in Tel Adashim, R' Refael Levinson, was a friend of mine and I consulted with him. The decision was that in the first phase, until they got to know us and would get used to us, we would go there only for Shabbos and if that worked out we would move to the next phase and live on the moshav."

In the first year after their marriage the Tal couple lived in moshav Tzafraya near Kfar Chabad. R' Tal learned in the kollel housed in the 770 replica in Kfar Chabad, and his wife worked as a preschool teacher in Rechovot.

"Every Shabbos we would pack up our food and go to spend Shabbos in Ein Ayala. We would return on Motzaei Shabbos. The first program we did was on Chanuka. People were suspicious of us. I remember overhearing a conversation between two women. One said to the other, 'What do you think of these blacks who came to us?' and the other woman said, 'They happen to be nice, they don't bite.' That's when I realized what good advice



Rabbi Tal at a farbrengen with residents of the yishuv

it was to take it step by step. The Rebbe's advice to consult with knowledgeable friends helped the people grow accustomed to us, and we to them. Remember that this was a small moshav in which everybody knew everybody. It took people time to get to know us and to understand that we weren't coming to turn their lives upside down.

"At first the young people did not know how to react to these 'blacks' who were invading their moshav. One Shabbos they even showed us their displeasure by throwing eggs at our house and then hiding. I decided not to be frightened or angry. I went outside and, knowing they could hear me, I said, 'Whoever wants to come in for a Shabbos meal is invited.' They were curious and so they slowly emerged from their hiding places and joined us. Since then, every Friday night they gather in our house.

"Erev Shabbos I would prepare contests and riddles on the parsha and they would come to hear Kiddush and taste the challa and we would eat together. The younger kids would come before Shabbos and we would

do Tzivos Hashem activities with them, complete with the p'sukim and missions. Every child in the yishuv would spend that time with us. I remember there was one girl who came regularly and then we didn't see her for a few weeks. After about a month she reappeared. When we asked her where she had been, she said that her parents were afraid that she would become religious when she started washing her hands and they forbade her to come. 'So why are you here now?' we asked and she said that she told her parents that she was going to her grandmother who lives on the other end of the moshav.

"We had another interesting story. One day before Pesach a car stopped near me and one of the residents shouted towards me, 'You are missionaries. You take our children and teach them p'sukim and brachos and we don't want this. Leave them alone!' I wasn't rattled. I simply explained that the mitzvos are his, too, but if it still bothers him, nobody forces his kids to come. When he heard this, he smiled and said, 'I only wanted to test you.' He apologized and said,

**One Shabbos they even showed us their displeasure by throwing eggs at our house and then hiding. I went outside and, knowing they could hear me, I said, ‘Whoever wants to come in for a Shabbos meal is invited.’ They slowly emerged from their hiding places and joined us. Since then, every Friday night they gather in our house.**

---

‘I wanted to see how much you believe in what you say.’

“For a long time my wife worked in the preschool in Zichron Yaakov. When our shlichus work grew, she left her job and both of us were busy in ‘spreading the wellsprings.’ This was in the second half of 5752. We wrote to the Rebbe that we want a bracha for a Chabad house on the Carmel Coast and the Rebbe nodded and gave his blessing. The hardest problem was – how were we going to support ourselves? The solution came from an unexpected direction. Tzach had a special budget and we received 10,000 shekels. At the time, this was equivalent to several salaries.

“Lag B’Omer on our first year on shlichus fell out on a Motzaei Shabbos. On Erev Shabbos I ran from my house to the shul in order to take care of some final details. One of the neighbor’s dogs saw me running and chased after me and bit me on the leg. It wasn’t a deep bite and I got off lightly. On Motzaei Shabbos, late at night, after a successful Kinus, I went for a tetanus shot and the people in shul discussed how much I would be compensated by the dog’s owner. The dog’s owner himself asked me what he owed me and I said I had a different idea. The man’s house did not have a mezuzah and we agreed that he would put up a mezuzah by way of ‘compensation.’ Whenever

I pass by and see the mezuzah, I remember being bitten.”

## SOUL STORIES

The Rebbe has often said that there are Jews in distant places and there is nobody involving themselves with them; the responsibility is ours. The Tal family takes this message very seriously. There are many Jews living in their area on moshavim and small kibbutzim whose knowledge of Judaism is minimal. R’ Tal has committed to reaching each and every one of them.

“During the last Shmita year, the religious newspapers wrote about one of our residents who decided to observe the mitzva of Shmita even though he didn’t seem religious. They made a big deal about his personal sacrifice despite his being far from the ways of Torah. But we Chassidim know that no Jew is far. In any case, this man’s story is very interesting.

“During our first year at the yishuv, I didn’t know where I would get the money for the public menorah. This man heard about my concern and told me he had built a big Menorah and he wanted to give it to me. Since then we became good friends. He is a warmhearted Jew even though he is not religiously observant. When I had to contend with serious health problems a few years ago, he was the one who got people together to say

T’hillim for me and even made a good resolution – that if I recovered he would start wearing tzitzis. And he did it. He’s a farmer who works day and night, unfortunately including Shabbos and Yom Tov, but he always wears tzitzis.

“Two years ago he read about the mitzva of Shmita and although he did not fully grasp the depth of the mitzva he decided not to work that year, come what may.

“As someone who knows him well, I know that this was a completely irrational decision for him. He is a hardworking man and not working his fields requires real sacrifice on his part. Throughout that year he was occupied with the mitzva of Shmita. He called about every detail, and he turned to the religious farming community in Komemius in order to learn the most stringent way of observing Shmita. He has many farming tools, which he rents to people in the area. Not only did he lose a lot of money by not working but he also did not rent out his tools. He did this in the most sincere way, without anticipating the wealth of the eighth year.”

One of the moshavim in the Ein Ayala area which was hard hit by the fire was Ein Hod, a small artists’ colony where many artists and soul-seekers live. R’ Tal works there too in spreading Judaism.

“There is an ongoing shiur there. There is still no shul and so the shiurim are in people’s homes. There was a family there that became very interested in Judaism. We became very close with them and koshered their kitchen. On Purim of that year, fifteen years ago, we decided to hold a farbrengen in their house. The big Purim party there became

a tradition. Every Purim we visit them and have a farbrengen with the people of that yishuv.

“That family left the yishuv but the family that took their place decided to continue the tradition and also became very interested in Judaism. Not only that but they even have a shul in their home. One of the residents, Dovid Ayda, became interested in Judaism and serves the acting shliach there. He takes care of all Jewish matters. Last Sukkos, he put up a public sukkah.

“Another resident who got involved thanks to the Purim seudos is Had Shmueli, a famous sculptor. A few years ago, he put up a big outreach tent for tourists that hike through the area under the auspices of the Israeli hiking society, Shvil Yisroel. His wife, an Ethiopian, underwent halachic conversion. Their son was born close to the date of the Alter Rebbe’s birthday and they named him Shneur. Half a year ago this child saw a picture of the Beis HaMikdash and began to cry bitterly over its destruction. Instead of going to a karate class that his parents registered him for, he wanted to learn Torah in order to hasten the coming of Moshiach and the building of the Beis HaMikdash. His father, who told me this, said he was flabbergasted. He had no idea where his son learned about these concepts. ‘Why would a little boy prefer studying Torah,’ he asked me.”

Speaking of special souls, R’ Tal told me about other interesting people whom he met and with whom he keeps closely in touch.

“One wintry day I got a phone call from a woman who wanted me to send her material about Judaism - tapes, videos and written material. She said that



Rabbi Tal at a Chanuka party for children of the yishuv

she and her husband have a horse farm in the woods near yishuv Bat Shlomo. I was happy to help her and I invited her to one of the shiurim that we have in her area. She sounded interested but did not show up and that was the end of our connection. Days passed and I forgot about her.

“During the second half of summer vacation we do a big Shela campaign (religious instruction for public school children during off hours and vacations). I remembered this family and decided I had to do something with them. I called her and she agreed to have me visit. When I got to her farm I immediately saw that these were unusual people. Her husband was a black American and she was an Israeli who was searching, and somewhere along the line their paths had crossed. When he came to Eretz Yisroel he felt strongly attached to the land, the people and the atmosphere, and he decided to convert. On the farm he walked around with his tzitzis out and a big yarmulke and he drew his wife after him.

“I offered to learn Tanya together with him and he was

willing. I could see I was exposing him to a wonderful new world. He was a mystic who searched for meaning in life and found it in Torah and mitzvos. They named their children Biblical and Talmudic names. They were thrilled about this relationship and agreed that the girls from Mivtza Shela should come and teach their children Judaism on the farm. At the next farbrengen we held at the Chabad house, he was the guest of honor and told his life’s story. The family has recently left the farm and moved to Afula, where they keep in touch with Chabad.

“We don’t always realize how one small act of ours, which doesn’t seem significant, can accomplish so much. There was a fellow from yishuv Ein Carmel who became interested in Judaism. We once tried to recall when his interest began and he said that he came to the kibbutz as a kid and he remembered how the Lubavitchers would gather them together and talk to them about Judaism. It had made an impression on him back then.”

R’ Tal has so many stories to tell. At nearly every kibbutz

**He is a hardworking man and not working his fields requires real sacrifice on his part. Throughout that year he was occupied with the mitzva of Shmita although he says he is not religious. He called about every detail in order to learn the most stringent way of observing Shmita.**

The many mekuravim and residents of R' Tal's shlichus district are very familiar with writing to the Rebbe through the Igros Kodesh. When they have a problem or are unsure about something, they visit the Tals and ask to write to the Rebbe.

"An amazing story happened here recently. A young woman came to us who suffered from diabetes. She was pregnant and the doctors had dire things to say about the health of the baby that would be born. Of course they advised that she abort.

"We sat down to write to the Rebbe and the answer we opened to was in response to a woman who wanted a bracha from the Rebbe for her pregnancy and the Rebbe blessed her with an easy birth and good news. I told her that with such a clear answer she had nothing to worry about.

"We gave her a dollar from the Rebbe, a Chitas and a pushka. She gave birth to a healthy baby girl and the doctors called it a medical miracle. The parents knew that there was more to the miracle than medicine.

or moshav he has at least one contact who became Chassidic and are now a big help to him in shlichus. The stories of all these special people need to be told some day. They are an integral part of shlichus even though they don't appear on the official roster of shluchim and shluchos.

"We know someone who spent years in Thailand and fell in love with Thai food. When he returned home he started a company that produces this kind of food. He

would go to the different festivals and stir-fry noodles and rice.

"There was no actual problem with Thai food, but his Thai wife and daughter were definitely a problem. When I first met him he was completely alienated and then he began moving in the right direction. His daughter converted through the Rabbanut. By attending the religious preschool in yishuv Nir Etzyon she spurred on the family's religious involvement. She came home with brachos and hand-washing as well as the weekly parsha.

"His non-Jewish wife also began keeping mitzvos but she wasn't committed to living a Torah life and she returned to her parents' home in Thailand. The daughter's interest in Judaism continued and her father checked out different places and decided Chabad is where he wanted her to be. He studied Chassidus in the yeshiva in Ramat Aviv and his daughter goes to a Chabad school in Krayot. He met a Jewish woman and they married. Within a few years he made a complete turnabout in his life."

## MESIRUS NEFESH FOR CHINUCH

In addition to the shlichus work in the yishuvim, R' Tal is involved in another sort of shlichus – that of chinuch. He is the rabbi of a Talmud Torah (religious elementary school), which he helped found four years

ago. Few believed the school would last, and even fewer thought it would grow.

"The Talmud Torah opened with the collaboration of several Chabad houses in Atlit and Tirat HaCarmel. The beginning is very hard but we are already seeing the school grow year by year."

R' Tal says that for over twenty years he and his children traveled every morning to Chabad schools in Krayot and come back in the evening, a trip that takes an hour and a quarter each way. "By opening the school we enable other parents to send their children to a Chabad school and our children have a shorter, more comfortable drive." It took great mesirus nefesh but the Tal family and the other shluchim realized that this is part of life on shlichus.

The bureaucracy they have to deal with is complicated but the school, which started with a class for boys, has opened another class for girls. The members of the administration are the local shluchim. For the first school year they rented space and the second year they learned in two shuls. Today, four years later, they rented a building in Kfar Sitrin.

"We put a great emphasis on teaching Chassidishkait and hiskashrus to the Rebbe. The students feel that they are on shlichus. It is still family-like and small. Every member of the administration has to raise a large sum of money for the monthly salaries. The city council has only agreed to renovate the building and to install air conditioners. We open to the Rebbe's answers and guidance all along in the Igros Kodesh. At first, Mrs. Akselrod ran the school and now it is run by Rebbetzin Almaliach, the wife of the rav from Atlit.

## IMPACTING THE CHILDREN

Every shliach knows that summer camps have the power to make major changes in young people. Many men who are running Chassidishe homes today got started in those camps.

“Our day camp is one of the cornerstones of our school. We were planning to hold the camp during the second month of vacation so as not to interfere with the council’s camp, but changed the schedule when we saw that there were children from religious homes who did not attend the regional camp during the first month.

“In the first year, the council head was furious and we had to wander from moshav to moshav during the two weeks of camp. He forbade everyone from giving us a building. The number of campers was high, about 90 children, a very large number considering the area we are in. The yishuvim here are small and far apart from one another and it is hard to get people involved like in the big city.

“Since then we make a camp every year during the first month of vacation and Mivtza Shela during the second month. It has a powerful impact.

“I was recently in someone’s home to put up mezuzos and I heard the children in the pool singing the 12 P’sukim like Chabad children. At the school in Nir Etzyon they asked the children about the possibility of adding some Torah studies and one of the kids mentioned, as an example, the 12 P’sukim. The rabbi of the school told me this incident and said with a smile, ‘You did a good job.’ I thought, these p’sukim will be with this child all his life. Who knows where he will end up but he will

always know and remember what the 12 P’sukim are. There are children whom I meet years later, who are starting families themselves, and they talk to me nostalgically about the Chabad camp they attended, even though it wasn’t the only camp they attended in their lives.”

## A SHLIACH BUSY WITH INYANEI GEULA

R’ Tal is a shliach who lives with the Besuras Ha’Geula.

“Moshiach doesn’t push people away. I was at the Kinus HaShluchim this year and one of the points the speakers addressed was, what is the “*ofen ha’miskabel*” the Rebbe referred to. I think it was Rabbi Wilschansky who said it means if it sits well with you; if it sits well with you, it will be accepted by others. I spoke with one of the shluchim who told me that he convinced someone to make a bar mitzva on a Monday instead of Shabbos in order to prevent the desecration of Shabbos. Not every shliach has the courage to do this, but this was important to him. He told me that this mekurav was a Leftist who hated religion but he (the shliach) did not concede and worked on him until he succeeded.

“I pointed out that this was important to him and so he succeeded despite the odds. Likewise, a shliach who feels strongly about inyanei Moshiach will be successful too.

“I spoke with someone who was interested in starting classes on Moshiach and Geula and he asked me which topics to talk about. I asked him whether he had opened a book on the subject. The teachings of the Rebbe on this topic are legion. If it is clear to you that this is one of the



Rabbi Tal visiting a resident of the yishuv

principles of faith, and you live and breathe it, it will be easier to convey this to others.

“Our district rav, R’ Gavriel Surani signed on the P’sak Din that the Rebbe is halachically Moshiach. He comes from Italy and was a talmid of Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu and he knew that his rebbe admired the Rebbe and studied this subject.

“On every brochure that we publish, we write, ‘In anticipation of the complete Geula’ or ‘may the Beis HaMikdash be built.’ The Rebbe says that everything must be permeated with Geula and if I call mekuravim and forget to say, ‘Yechi HaMelech,’ they remind me.”

## THE GOAL - TO REACH EVERYWHERE

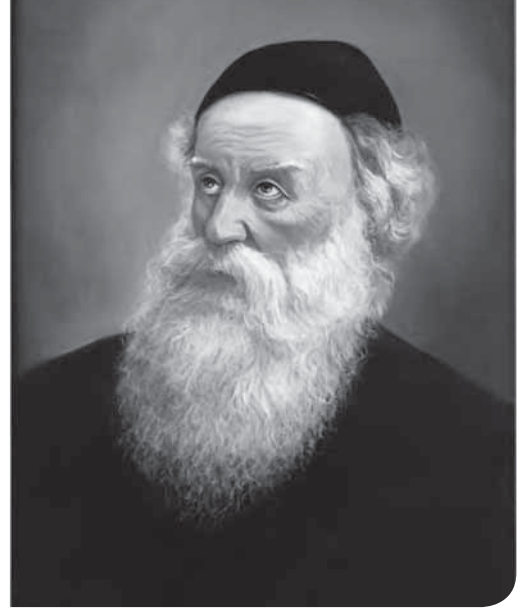
R’ Tal’s goal is to grow and expand. He is working hard to develop the Talmud Torah in Kfar Sitrin and the next stage is bringing more shluchim to the twenty yishuvim and kibbutzim under his jurisdiction.

As for the massive recent fire? R’ Tal says, “After a fire you become rich, not only materially but spiritually.” ■

# VIGNETTES OF THE ALTER REBBE

A compilation of stories about the Alter Rebbe from the notes of R' Avrohom Weingarten, l'ilui nishmas his son, R' Matisyahu Aryeh Leib Hy"d. \* Presented in honor of 24 Teves, the hilula of the Alter Rebbe.

Compiled by Y Ben Boruch



## THE MASKIL, THE GAON AND THE REBBE

Chassidim would say that when someone came to the Rebbe, to Liozna, he would not leave without an answer.

In the time of the Alter Rebbe there were Maskilim ("enlightened ones") who trivialized all that is holy. One day, the Maskilim wanted new material to make a mockery of the Chassidim and they also wanted to make fun of the Misnagdim (those who oppose Chassidim).

The Maskil who arrived in Vilna went to the Vilna Gaon and asked him a question in Hebrew grammar: What is the difference between the synonyms for joy: *gila*, *rina*, *ditza*, *chedva*, and the Gaon answered him according to Rashi.

The Maskil said that one could refute Rashi's explanation and say a different explanation. When the Gaon heard this he turned around to face the wall (to indicate the man wasn't wanted) and the aides came and led the Maskil out and then beat him, tied him up and spit on him.

The second Maskil went to Liozna. His name was Meir.

Wanting to play a prank on the Alter Rebbe, he wrote a *pidyon nefesh* in which he asked for a *tikkun* (rectification) for a sin that he did. The sin was that he urinated on his tzitzis by the light of the moon (or the light of the sun). He signed the *pidyon nefesh* with a fictitious name.

When he walked in for yechidus and gave the note, the Alter Rebbe read it with his real name and said in his usual singsong, "Meir'l, no more, no more."

The man fainted and subsequently became a great Chassid of the Alter Rebbe and did not leave Liozna.

## PERHAPS THERE IS A MASTER

The Alter Rebbe once sent a certain Chassid to Petersburg to speak to a minister regarding some rescue mission. The Chassid found out that this minister was a Jew who, in his youth, had visited the Alter Rebbe in Liozna and then, sadly, converted to Christianity.

The Chassid met with the minister, who received him

graciously and then asked him to come visit him in his house. This was a Friday and when the Chassid heard this invitation it was very awkward. Although it was Erev Shabbos, he had no choice since he needed to annul the decree, so off he went to the minister's home. Upon arriving there, the Chassid saw that the wife was lighting Shabbos candles and he was very surprised.

The minister noticed his amazement and said: "You should know that despite my wealth I have no peace of mind because of Rabbi Shlomo of Karlin."

The minister went on to relate:

"When I was younger, I was at the Alter Rebbe and he sent me on a mission to R' Shlomo Karliner. When I got there, R' Shlomo said to me:

"*Yungerman, yungerman, efshar iz fort da a Ribbono shel olam!* Perhaps, after all, there is a Master of the universe!"

"These words of R' Shlomo burn within me constantly and give me no rest."

And this was the Alter Rebbe's intention in sending him to R' Shlomo Karliner. In the end, he did t'shuva.

## THE HIGHER YOU GO, THE FURTHER YOU SEE

After the passing of the Maggid of Mezritch, the Alter Rebbe went to study under R' Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk (see sicha leil Simchas Torah, 5748). One Simchas Torah, as they were saying Ata Horeisa before the Hakafos, R' Menachem Mendel told the Alter Rebbe that he could not say Ata Horeisa since he saw 100 explanations in the words and he had not yet achieved them in avoda!

The Alter Rebbe replied: The rule is that wherever a person stands, he can see a higher place that he did not reach yet, and when he reaches that higher place, then he can see an even higher place, and so on. So too in this case, when you achieve, with your avoda, all 100 explanations, then you will see another 100 explanations, and there is no end to it.

R' Mendel liked this and he said Ata Horeisa.

## HEALED FROM THE MASHKE

The famous Chassid R' Binyamin Kletzker was once dangerously ill, and it was at this time that the Alter Rebbe married off one of his children. R' Binyamin proclaimed that come what may, he must attend the wedding or his life was no life!

When the doctors saw that if he did not attend the wedding,

The Maskil wrote a pidyon asking for a tikkun for urinating on his tzitzis by the light of the moon and signed it with a fictitious name... He walked in for yechidus and gave the note...

his life would be in even greater danger because of his anguish, they decided to bring him to the wedding and watch over him closely there.

During the wedding meal the Alter Rebbe gave him mashke and R' Binyamin was immediately healed.

## THE GREATNESS OF THE LITVAK

The Chassid, R' Avrohom'ke of Zemin related:

The holy R' Yisroel of Ruzhin would say: There was once the question, who is greater – the Maggid or the Baal Shem Tov. My father, R' Sholom of Prohovitch said that my grandfather, the Maggid, was greater because he had a talmid like the Litvak (the Alter Rebbe who was from Lithuania).

Since we can prove that the Maggid was greater than the Baal Shem Tov because he had a talmid like the Litvak, from this we can understand the greatness of the Litvak.

## REB BORUCH VS. THE ALTER REBBE ON MOSHIACH

Rabbi Shaul Bick related that

he heard from R' Dovid Tzvi Chein of Chernigov:

They once asked the holy R' Yisroel of Ruzhin what he said about the dispute between R' Boruch of Mezhibuzh and the Alter Rebbe. R' Yisroel said:

When the Baal Shem Tov's soul ascended on Rosh HaShana 5507 and he was in Moshiach's chamber, he asked Moshiach: When are you coming? Moshiach answered: When your wellsprings spread outward.

Hearing this, tears flowed from the Baal Shem Tov's holy eyes because in order for Moshiach to come the wellsprings of the teachings of Chassidus would have to descend and spread forth so much, even to the masses who are considered "outside."

Therefore, R' Boruch of Mezhibuzh, who was a biological grandson of the Baal Shem Tov, empathized with his grandfather's tears (and did not agree to spread the wellsprings outward). But the Litvak (the Alter Rebbe) understood that the coming of Moshiach did indeed depend on the spreading of the wellsprings outward, and therefore he sacrificed his life in order to fulfill the Divine intent.

R' Yisroel concluded: And he (the Alter Rebbe) is right. ■

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



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

# KINGSTON HOTEL



9 1 7 - 6 9 1 - 5 2 1 2  
7 1 8 - 4 7 3 - 5 9 3 7

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





# STANDING GUARD AT TEMPLE MOUNT

Mishmar HaMikdash is an organization whose purpose is to revive the mitzva of “guarding the Mikdash” which, according to halacha, applies nowadays too. \* 1500 people volunteer to stand at the entrance to the Temple Mount dressed in uniform and wearing special badges and they guard the Mikdash.

By Shai Gefen

Guarding the Mikdash is one of the only mitzvos associated with the Beis HaMikdash that can be done nowadays, even though we cannot fulfill the mitzvos of korbanos (sacrifices), hatavas ha'neiros (preparing the wicks), and many other mitzvos. The mitzva of guarding the Mikdash, according to many poskim (halachic authorities) and the Rebbe in his sichos concurs, still applies.

The first to raise the issue and look into this topic of guarding the Mikdash was the Chassid, R' Moshe Meshel Gelbstein a”h (1834-1904 or 1907), a Chassid of the Tzemach Tzedek who moved to Yerushalayim 160 years ago. He wrote *Mishkenos L'Avir Yaakov* which deals with the topic of guarding the Mikdash nowadays. R' Gelbstein not only wrote about it, he also tried to revive this mitzva, but this did not work out.

Many years passed since then and the closer we get to the hisgalus of Moshiach, the more the mitzva of guarding the Mikdash gained impetus. In a sicha of Shabbos Parshas Shmini, 5750, the Rebbe said that apparently, “in this generation, when according to the signs in Chazal that this is the generation of the ‘heels of Moshiach,’ the last generation of galus and behold Moshiach comes, the first generation of Geula – there ought to be greater concern that there be guards there when the Beis HaMikdash descends!” The Rebbe went on to qualify that what he said applied only in a spiritual sense since we know that G'dolei Yisroel in general and our Rebbeim in particular did not physically endeavor to fulfill this mitzva.

In recent years a group of people has formed, led by Rabbi

Neria Offen, who decided to renew this mitzva – being very careful to keep to the halacha. We spoke with R' Neria Offen and asked him to tell us how this mitzva is being done, especially in light of the sensitive security situation on the Temple Mount.

#### **You started Mishmar**

**HaMikdash.** Before getting into the technical details, please fill us in on this mitzva.

This mitzva has a number of details. First, there is the core basis of the mitzva, “awe of the Mikdash” which is a mitzva that applies even nowadays, “and you shall be in awe of My Mikdash.” In addition, there is the mitzva of sending out those who are *tamei* (ritually impure), a mitzva which pertains especially nowadays when, unfortunately, many people who are impure due to contact with the dead enter the Temple Mount area. In the time of the Mikdash there were guards whose job it was to warn people about the prohibition of entering the Temple Mount area.

The Chassid, R' Moshe Weber once spoke with the Lubavitcher Rebbe about the obligation of guarding the Mikdash and following this, R' Weber set up an organization of guards who did this mitzva of sending away those who were impure.

**Are there other mitzvos associated with guarding the Mikdash that apply nowadays?**

Yes. In addition to “awe of the Mikdash,” there are things that are done out of respect. This is why guards were placed around the Mikdash area at night so that the area would not be deserted. Even nowadays, when we don't have a Beis HaMikdash, the mitzva of guarding the Mikdash is done both by day and by night.

**When did this issue of**



**guarding the Mikdash first come up?**

What we know is the first to address the topic was R' Gelbstein, who tried very hard to revive the issue of guarding the Mikdash. He was a *daas yachid* (the only to hold his view) and many others opposed him, which is why he was unable to do as he wished in this matter.

**Why was there opposition to fulfilling this mitzva in galus?**

The Rebbe explains in his sicha that there was an issue of *pikuach nefesh* (danger to life) and therefore, our Rebbeim, despite their working devotedly to support the settlers of Eretz Yisroel, were not involved in this matter of guarding the Mikdash. The Rebbe quotes the explanation of the *Mishkenos l'Abir Yaakov* (R' Gelbstein) who says that the reason we did not see this being done was because there was no permission from the government to do so, and not seeing this mitzva being done over the years was no proof.

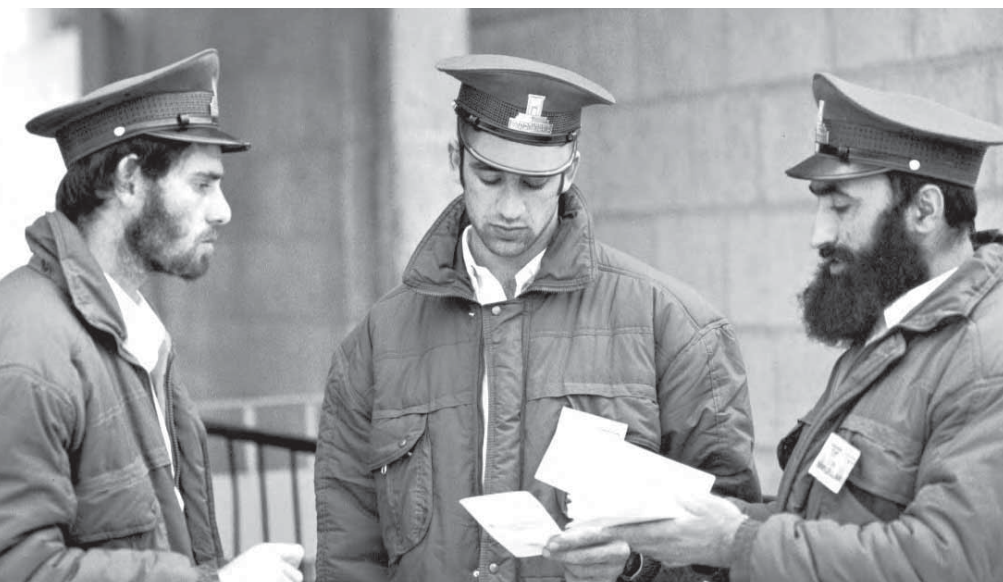
It should be mentioned

that the issue of guarding the Mikdash is more important today than ever, even more than in R' Gelbstein's day. In those days, every Jew knew that it was forbidden to ascend the Temple Mount (aside from a few rebels), but today, sad to say, many Jews innocently ascend the Temple Mount in ignorance, which is why there is the mitzva of sending away those who are *tamei* in which we remind people of the holiness of the area. There is no question that guarding the Mikdash is more necessary now than ever.

**The question is, why is there a need to guard a place where “foxes roam?”**

The Rebbe says “even though it is desolate, it remains holy.” In other words, even though the place is destroyed, the holiness did not depart.

The reason for respect for the area also remains, as the Rambam writes, “it's a positive mitzva to guard the Mikdash even though there is no fear of enemies or of bandits, for the guarding is only



to place guards near the Magreb Gate, the gate through which Jews enter to the Temple Mount, and warn them not to go up.

This got underway on 15 Shvat, 5760. Over 1500 people volunteered. Four guards a day, each one gets one day a year. The guarding is done every day from 9 until 4. They have special uniforms and badges that say Mishmar HaMikdash with a symbol of the gates of the Heichal. They wear a special cap and a jacket embroidered with purple and blue.

According to the mitzva of guarding the Mikdash, the guards need to be out in the open since they are an honor guard and not there specifically because of bandits and enemies.

**Were you apprehensive at first?**

Definitely. We didn't know if we would be successful; after all, it's a new idea and not one that was accepted – there was opposition in the past.

At first, the Israeli police in the area were not happy with us and they said that in our uniform we could be mistaken for policemen. After some time they got used to our presence and the division is clear – the police are there to preserve order and the Shomrei HaMikdash are there to preserve the honor of this holiest place for the Jewish people. They saw that we do no harm and our goal is to bring honor to the Mikdash and to warn people not to enter.

**Where do the volunteers come from?**

From all segments of the population. There are residents of the Old City, ultra-Orthodox Jews and even rabbanim. Among our supporters are Rabbi Yaakov Ariel – rav of Ramat Gan, Rabbi Dov Lior – rav of Kiryat Araba,

**“A gentile tourist who saw us said to one of the guards, “If the faith of the Jews is so great that even after 2000 years they stand here to preserve the honor of the Temple which was destroyed, I am certain you will see it rebuilt.”**

out of respect; since there is no comparison between a palace that has guards and a palace that does not have guards ...” Based on this, the Rebbe explains that this mitzva applies nowadays, too, after the destruction of the Mikdash. The Rebbe gives a reason, that part of the Beis HaMikdash, like the Aron and Aharon's stick, are hidden under the area of the Holy of Holies.

**Why did you decide to undertake this mitzva – aren't there more vital mitzvos?**

The topic of guarding the Mikdash makes our waiting for Moshiach and the feeling that he is about to come much more tangible. In connection with this, the Rebbe quotes something interesting from the book written by R' Gelbstein. It says that this mitzva never lapsed since as soon as the Mikdash is rebuilt, there

will be an immediate obligation to guard it. This will be the first mitzva that will apply the moment we have the Beis HaMikdash.

What we are doing today is a *zecher* (to commemorate) this mitzva and the goal is to remind everyone that the Temple Mount is not merely a mountain that once had the Mikdash on it but is the place where the third Beis HaMikdash will soon be built. Am Yisroel will ascend the Temple Mount once again three times a year. This is one of the goals: to increase awareness.

**How did the idea come up?**

I am a talmid of Rabbi Yitzchok Ginsburgh of Kfar Chabad. Many years ago R' Ginsburgh raised the topic of doing something to commemorate the mitzva of guarding the Mikdash. With R' Ginsburgh's consent we decided

and Rabbi Yitzchok Ginsburgh. It's something any religious person can join because there is nothing political about it and it has nothing to do with demonstrations.

Anybody who believes that we will soon have the Beis HaMikdash and wants to give honor to the place can join. It's a rare mitzva associated directly with the Beis HaMikdash that we can fulfill even now as we wait for its rebuilding.

#### **What feedback have you gotten from the public?**

We've received a variety of responses. Many people view it positively but there are some who view it negatively. One thing is for sure, waiting expectantly for the Beis HaMikdash has become something people are more conscious of. Now many people understand that the topic of the Beis HaMikdash and guarding it is not just some utopian fantasy which doesn't pertain to our times, and to us, that is the most important thing.

There are also people who are moved by it. A gentile tourist who saw us said to one of the guards, "If the faith of the Jews is so great that even after 2000 years they stand here to preserve the honor of the Temple which was destroyed, I am certain you will see it rebuilt."

#### **Do you have any special**

**“The Rebbe says “even though it is desolate, it remains holy.” In other words, even though the place is destroyed, the holiness did not depart.**

#### **instructions for those who serve as guards?**

There are no special instructions except that they stand in place in a dignified and calm manner without getting drawn into arguments. According to the halacha, the guards can sit if they wish. The halacha also says that they would patrol the area, so when there is more manpower we patrol in order to emphasize this idea of honor for the Mikdash.

#### **How was the guarding done in the time of the Mikdash?**

According to the halacha, the Kohanim would stand guard in three places and the Levites in 21 places, and there was an Ish Har HaBayis (Man of the Mount) in charge who would arrange patrols and check up on the guards. If he caught someone not standing on duty or asleep, he would whack him with a stick.

One of R' Gelbstein's chiddushim (novel ideas) was that the guarding today can also be done outside the walls of the Mikdash. The Rebbe even writes that the mitzva of guarding can even be done outside the walls

of Yerushalayim. The main thing is the guarding of the Beis HaMikdash. R' Gelbstein also says that the mitzva of guarding the Mikdash is not in the category of avoda in the Mikdash, which is why it can be done even by those not of the tribe of Levi.

#### **Do you distribute material on this subject?**

Yes. There is material that explains the topic of honor and awe of the Mikdash. Up until not that long ago, there was a sign up there from the Rabbanut which said it is forbidden to ascend the Temple Mount. The sign was removed, though, so the matter of sending people who are tamei away is more important than ever.

Certain groups have exchanged the vision of the real Geula for some other vision. People are satisfied with the State and see it as the fulfillment of a prophecy and they forget the main thing which we have been awaiting for 2000 years. We, with our limited abilities, are trying to do something to give the minimal respect to this sacred place since we anticipate the rebuilding of the Mikdash imminently. ■

## **Make a “Mivtzah Kashrus” in your own computer!**

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

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

That's why J Net was created.

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

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

experts that will solve your problems fast.

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

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

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

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



# FAKE CONVERSIONS IN THE IDF

Today's reality presents a picture of the exact situation that the Rebbe had already outlined decades earlier in his letter to Mr. David Ben-Gurion. The Rebbe prophesized that Zionism was leading to the rise of a generation that will speak the language of the Tanach, but which will regard the holy Torah as a foreign entity. The only comfort is that just as these prophesies by the prophet of the generation have been realized, so too will the prophecy of "Behold Moshiach coming."

---

By Sholom Ber Crombie

Translated by Michael Leib Dobry

Recently, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu met with a group of soldiers undergoing a pseudo-conversion in the Israel Defense Forces. "We can't allow harm to befall the IDF," he proclaimed there, essentially repeating the mantra of a chorus of politicians who supported the recently proposed "IDF Conversion" Law. "I have promised that we will do everything to protect IDF soldiers," Bibi declared before the group, as if this was a question of whether or not the IDF would receive the honor it deserved. He spoke about "protecting IDF soldiers" without explaining how this had any connection with granting a stamp of approval as "Jews" to those who are simply not Jewish.

Bibi is a politician, and he needs pictures that look good in the newspapers. For this, he

is prepared to deceive himself and the Jewish People. It isn't for naught that he runs to be photographed with a group of soldiers undergoing "conversion" whom even the Chief Rabbinate of Eretz Yisroel refused to recognize as "converts". In this manner, he is portrayed as the protector of the weak and of our military men in uniform.

However, even he knows that this is a blatant falsehood. And what would happen if someone would decide that anyone who passes an army medic course can be called "Doctor"? Would those same politicians start screaming then, as well, that for the honor of the Israel Defense Forces, we have to "protect the soldiers" and grant them the title "M.D."?

There's something very basic here that Israeli politics simply hasn't understood for years now. Only traditional Judaism can determine who is a Jew, because

a Jew is someone who fits the criteria set up by Judaism itself. This is the only explanation that can be given to the definition of a "Jew". Therefore, anyone who doesn't meet the standards of Judaism cannot be called a Jew – plain and simple. You perhaps can call them "Israelis" or "IDFniks" or any other title that Shimon Peres wants to bestow upon them. But a Jew is only someone who belongs to Judaism, and not to some other club.

The current law is meant to recognize the "quickie conversions" of the army rabbinate, without the need for Chief Rabbinate sanction. We're talking about a totally insane process, particularly when you consider the fact that in recent years, the IDF has undergone a complete transformation in rabbinical matters. While the army rabbinate had previously been headed by a fully Torah observant rabbi (even though he wasn't always much of a Torah scholar), today the army rabbinate is headed by former pilot Rafi Peretz. This is no longer a post represented by a bearded rav, wearing the halo of "chief IDF rabbi". Now it's more along the lines of a chief religious officer, who is in charge of the technical aspect of the army rabbinate. It is within this framework that the politicians seek to keep the entry gates to the Jewish People wide open.

At the beginning of last week, it was looking like the ultra-Orthodox parties had achieved a great victory, when pressure from the Shas Party compelled Netanyahu to bury the law before it was presented for Cabinet approval. The Russian immigrant party, "Yisroel Beiteinu", which wants to do everything possible to have the one million Gentiles from the former Soviet Union

living in Eretz Yisroel registered as Jews, seemed on the brink of acquiescing to that.

But by the end of the week, everything had changed, presenting a totally different picture. At the very last moment, the Yisroel Beiteinu Party decided to bring the “IDF Conversion Law” for an initial parliamentary vote, passing it by a large majority. The atmosphere in the Knesset chamber was reminiscent of the days of the legislation to amend the Law of Return, only this time, the ultra-Orthodox factions joined the battle, unlike the days of the “Who is a Jew?” debate, when they failed to understand how relevant it was to them.

During this round, they at least tried to oppose. Yet, despite their acknowledgement of the grave situation, their opposition was registered with a weak voice. The ultra-Orthodox Knesset Members claimed that they can’t make a call to grant exclusive authority for conversions to the Chief Rabbinate, because even their conversions are not done seriously and are not always valid. On this point, they are right, and today, every G-d fearing Jew knows that the only conversions that can be considered bona fide are those performed in private rabbinical courts run by reputable ultra-Orthodox rabbinical authorities.

No one should console himself that he has saved his own soul reasoning that it will be obvious to whoever looks into it what type of conversions can be treated seriously. That being the case, one may ask, what difference does it make that another million Gentiles are registered as Jews through the back door of the Israel Defense Forces? But indeed it does make a difference.



Binyamin Netanyahu with a group of soldiers undergoing “conversion”

Those campaigning on behalf of the IDF “conversion” law have their own slogan: “Fighter in Battle, Yes – Jewish, No?”, they ask with sarcastic disdain.

Two years ago, during the last Knesset election campaign, they had a different slogan: “No citizenship without loyalty”. To put it in more positive terms, if a person shows loyalty to the state, he can be a regular citizen. From the point of view of these people, the determining factor over whether a person is fit to live in Eretz Yisroel and be part of the nation is the question of loyalty. This serves as a reminder of the dangerous things that Shimon Peres said a year ago about the children of foreign workers. “They grew up here, they speak Hebrew, and they want to serve in the army. They are Israelis in every respect,” said Peres, as he buried with his own hands the remnants of Zionism, which is gradually disappearing from the horizon.

The crumbling of the Zionist outlook among the generation that has been raised here in Eretz Yisroel is a testimony to the state of decay of the movement. They think there was a need to observe mitzvos and cling to Jewish values

only while in the Diaspora. In Eretz Yisroel, they claim, there is only one mitzvah: serving in the army and being a part of the state. The Zionist leaders tried to uproot all signs of Judaism and sought to establish a new religion – the Israeli religion.

Foolishly and incorrectly, they claimed that this is what will preserve a strong Jewish People – turning our back on Judaism and the heritage of our forefathers, and establishing a new generation that will be Jewish simply because it serves in the Israel Defense Forces.

At this point, the modern-day Zionist leaders, such as Peres and Bibi, have sunk so low as to think that if there is a non-Jewish community here, prepared to serve in the army and speak Hebrew, it has thereby become a part of the State of Israel and the Jewish People. Therefore, it is no wonder that they think that politicians can determine who has the authority on conversions, and that they are the ones who will decide what rabbinical view should be accepted in Torah matters. For when they say “Jew”, they don’t mean a Jew connected to traditional Judaism, rather to a

new religion of Israelism fostered by Zionism.

By Divine Providence, the storm over army conversions reached the headlines together with the storm over the letter signed by prominent rabbinical authorities calling upon Jews not to rent apartments to Gentiles in Eretz HaKodesh.

These two issues are interrelated, as those who oppose the p'sak din of the rabbanim are the same ones who oppose Israel's separation from the nations of the world. They have difficulty accepting the fact that this land is inhabited by a chosen people which has received Eretz HaKodesh as an everlasting gift for an everlasting nation. They find it hard to understand the problem of assimilation of the

Jewish People among the Gentile nations here in the Holy Land.

From their standpoint, the halachic prohibition of "Do not be gracious to them", which forbids finding favor and granting a place of dwelling to Gentiles in Eretz HaKodesh, is "racism". Soon enough, the politicians might propose a law removing the words "For You have chosen us among all nations and tongues" from the prayer liturgy, on the grounds that it is a racist statement.

If just sixty years ago, the founding generation of Zionism still clung to our rightful claim to Eretz Yisroel, and its leaders established the Jewish National Fund to buy land from the Arabs, today it's all crumbling from within. Instead of "Zionism", they seek "enlightenment". This is only

natural when the foundations are so shaky.

Today's reality presents a picture of the exact situation that the Rebbe had already outlined decades earlier in his letter to Mr. David Ben-Gurion, in which the Rebbe prophesized that Zionism was leading to the rise of a generation that will speak the language of the Tanach, but which will lash out at everything and for whom the holy Torah will be a foreign entity. The only comfort upon seeing this situation is that "greater is the attribute of good than the attribute of retribution", and just as these prophesies by the prophet of the generation have been realized, so too will there be realized, immediately mamash, the prophecy of "Behold comes Moshiach", and he is already coming. ■

---

### Continued from page 37

empowered him to have his words penetrate Pharaoh's heart.

What is true about every leader from Moses' onward is especially true of the relationship between the people and Moshiach, the final leader and redeemer. The Baal Shem Tov states that each and every Jew possesses a spark of Moshiach. If our spark is strong it empowers Moshiach to actualize his Messianic potential and execute his role as the redeemer of the Jewish people.

If there is a weakness in the faith of the people because of the harsh conditions of exile, there are two alternatives:

The first is to find the right people to be the Aaron's who bring Moshiach's message to the people. Aaron's ability to open the hearts of the people is due to the closeness of Aaron to the people.

While Moses is referred to as the "escort of the King" meaning that he was G-d's "representative" to the people, Aaron is the "escort of the queen," he is the representative of the people to G-d. Aaron, though he "merely" interpreted Moses' words and received his power from him, had the advantage that he was closer to the people than Moses and was therefore able to reach into them and expose their true faith.

In our generation that was declared by the Rebbe to be the "last generation of exile and the first of the Redemption," it is our task to be the Aarons to bring Moshiach's message to the world and thereby inspire the entire world with the message of Moshiach's imminent arrival to usher in the final, complete and permanent Redemption.

Our generation is also witness to unprecedented miracles. The most notable arguably—although,

we take it for granted—is the freedom for millions of Soviet Jews. No generation has seen so many miracles in their own personal lives as we have seen. These displays of G-dly power coupled with fulfilling our role as "Aarons" should serve to strengthen our faith in the coming of Moshiach. Our strengthened faith, in turn, will further enhance the effectiveness of the "Aarons" of the world and ultimately strengthen the hands of Moshiach to rid the world of its "Pharaohs" and all of that which is undesirable, and usher in the age which Maimonides—whose 806th yahrtzeit we will be observing this week, on the 20th of Tevet—describes in the end of his monumental work, Mishneh Torah, citing the prophet Isaiah: "The entire world will be filled with the knowledge of G-d's as the seabed is covered with water." ■