



FEATURED ARTICLES

8 HOME OF ROYALTY
Menachem Ziegelboim

18 INDUCTION CEREMONY

24 WHAT'S A SECULAR LUBAVITCHER TO DO?
Aryeh Gotfryd, PhD

32 THE 20TH YEAR
Prof. Shimon Silman

36 THE REBBE'S VIEWS ON THE NATIONS
Menachem Ziegelboim
and Yisroel Yehuda

WEEKLY COLUMNS

4 D'var Malchus

16 Moshiach & Geula

29 Parsha Thought

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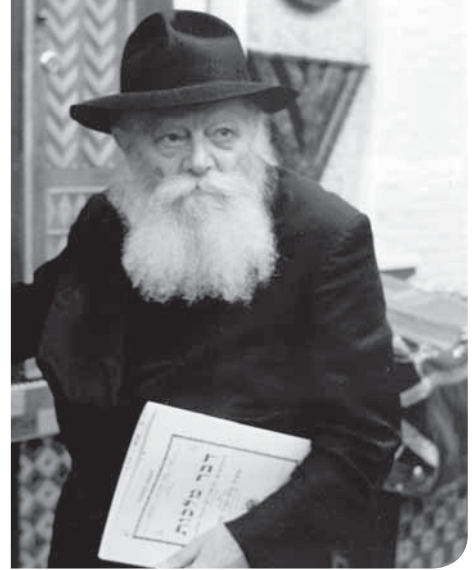
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BASI L'GANI 5731

In honor of Yud Shvat, Beis Moshiach presents a selection of the maamer the Rebbe MH”M delivered on Yud-Alef Shvat 5731, which is being studied this year by chassidim all over the world, in accordance with the custom established by the Rebbe to review each year a section of the Rebbe Rayatz’s maamer “Basi L’Gani” of 5710. • This year we begin the 20-year cycle anew, focussing on the first section of the profound and foundational chassidic discourse. • Part 4 of 4



Translated by Boruch Merkur

6. [As discussed above, the effect of our Divine service, especially the service of *iskafia*, is to bring about a manifestation of G-dliness that even surpasses the revelation of the Divine Presence in Gan Eden, prior to the sin of the Tree of Knowledge. It is not until the future redemption, however, that this G-dliness will be fully experienced. Two innovations are now enumerated regarding the manner of this revelation in the era of redemption.]

Now, in addition to the fact that a) in the future era of redemption we will draw down (through the service of *iskafia* [that had been done in the time of exile]) a revelation that is **not subject to the Concealment**, b) **the Concealment itself will shine**. Indeed, in the future era the Concealment will not actually be nullified, etc.; the Concealment will still exist, but a light will shine forth from it that transcends the Concealment

itself.

The first point – that our service draws down a revelation from before the Concealment – entails an additional innovation. Namely, this revelation refers to both the G-dly light that filled the Void [prior to Creation], that is, the Light that Fills the Worlds, as well as the [even loftier] light that was “withdrawn to the side,” the Light that Transcends the Worlds, as elucidated in the Rebbe Rashab’s Hemshech of 5672.

[With regard to the second point – that the Concealment itself will shine – it is now demonstrated how the latter innovation (pertaining to the Transcendent Light of G-d) does not apply.] The effect of the Concealment is [specifically] upon the light that fills the Void [i.e., the Light that Fills the Worlds]. Indeed, it is not just that the Concealment affects this light in particular but that the Concealment occurred within it,

meaning that it[’s essence] was changed by the Concealment. It then emerged [within the Void] as a fine ray of G-dly light. The Concealment simply did not affect the Light that Transcends the Worlds. Rather, the essence of the Infinite G-d, Who transcends both concealment and revelation, withdrew the Transcendent Light “to the side” [and in that sense it was not manifest throughout the worlds].

[In any case, the fact remains that the Concealment will shine forth with a revelation that transcends the Concealment itself.] On this basis, however, explanation is required. Since the entire existence of the worlds is on account of the Concealment [for the (finite) worlds could not withstand an unharnessed revelation of infinite G-dliness], how is it possible that the worlds should receive a revelation that transcends the Concealment?

It is even more difficult to understand how this applies to the light that fills the Void in particular, which is the Light that Fills the Worlds. Since the Transcendent Light was merely “withdrawn to the side,” the Concealment did not affect it, as mentioned above. Thus, it is not such an innovation to say that

the Transcendent Light should shine into the worlds also after the Concealment. However, in order to facilitate the existence of the worlds there had to be a contraction of the Primordial Light that Fills the Worlds, which entered the Void as a fine ray of light, etc. How then is it possible that the worlds should receive this Primordial Light?

The explanation is that through the Jewish souls' service of Torah study and the performance of Mitzvos, the worlds, as they exist after the Concealment, become vessels fit to contain the light that precedes the Concealment, etc. It is true that concealment and revelation are polar opposites (although the initial Concealment was ultimately intended for the sake of a future revelation), as explained in the *maamer* beginning with the words "Al Ken Yomro HaMoshilim," referenced above). Nevertheless in the future era there will be the innovation that Concealment itself will illuminate. And as explained in the Hemshech of 5666, through the fulfillment of Torah and Mitzvos, done specifically in the physical dimension, and through the refinement of the lower realm, the things of the lower worlds become vessels for G-dliness, etc. The same can be said of deep analysis of the Torah and the determination of Torah law, at the level of receiving the yoke of Heaven, etc. In this manner, all this Divine service completes the Supernal intent of G-d to have a dwelling place in the lower worlds, etc.

Regarding the intent of Creation mentioned in the Zohar Parshas Bo, "in order to be known, etc.," and likewise regarding what is written in

“Prophecy is contingent upon transcending physicality, as explained in the Zohar. But in the future era, prophecy shall be in such a manner that “I shall pour out My spirit upon all flesh, etc.” Precisely the body, which has hitherto served as a means to conceal G-dliness, functioning as an obstacle to the service of G-d – in the future era, the body will be the principal conduit for G-dly revelation.

Eitz Chayim, in order to reveal “G-d’s powers, etc.” – these explanations pertain to the level of Atzilus, etc. [not the lower worlds]. However, this is not the ultimate, true intent, at the level of the essence of the Infinite G-d, etc., implanted within the origin of the world’s creation. Rather, the completion of the Supernal act is what first entered His thought. Namely, the ultimate intent is that there should be the revelation of the essence of G-d, may He be blessed, specifically below [in the physical world], etc.

This mission is fulfilled through the aspect of “Yaakov, My servant,” both with the fulfillment of Mitzvos and the Divine service of refining the lower realm, correcting and refining the Animal Soul and all matters pertaining to the lower sphere, etc., as well as regarding Torah study at the level of “the work of a servant,” etc. Specifically in this manner is there the fulfillment of the true Supernal intent – that G-d should have a dwelling place in the lower realm, etc.

The above sheds light on the saying of our Sages, “It is as difficult to pair them up as the Splitting of the Sea of Reeds.” The difficulty in making couples is that both spouses should maintain their individuality yet

they are to unite. There is a similar paradox with regard to the future era, whose perfection is expressed [in human beings living in the physical realm] by the soul being invested in a body (as in the well known dispute between Rambam and Ramban on the topic), yet the body will be nourished then by the glory of the Divine Presence. Presently the body’s lifeline is the soul, [which unites with the body and sustains it] by means of the person’s consumption of food and drink. But in the future era [a person will not need to eat and drink to sustain the body. Rather] it will be nourished by the Divine Presence itself. As explained on this topic elsewhere, although the body is presently not able to receive [a direct revelation from the Divine Presence], etc., in the future era the body will be in such a state [of refinement] that it will be nourished directly from the Divine Presence.

So too with regard to prophesy in the future era, as it is written, “I shall pour out My spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and daughters shall prophecy.” For prophecy is contingent upon transcending physicality, as explained in the Zohar. But in the future era, prophecy shall be in such a manner that “I shall pour out

“The intent of all this darkness was for Man to establish his Divine mission of drawing G-dly light into the lower worlds through the service of *iskafia*, etc., especially the service of repentance. Indeed, in so doing, Man accomplishes a wondrous innovation, drawing down a Supernal revelation from even before the Concealment.

My spirit upon all **flesh**, etc.”
[Thus, precisely the body, which has hitherto served as a means to conceal G-dliness, functioning as an obstacle to the service of G-d – in the future era, the body will be the principal conduit for G-dly revelation.]

[To summarize in conclusion:] From the beginning of Creation, the revelation of G-dliness was subject to a variety of levels of concealment and descent – the descent engendered by the Sin of the Tree of Knowledge, whose origin is the diminution of the moon, and even earlier, the Shattering of the Vessels, etc., which was all made possible by [their ultimate primordial origin] the First Concealment. [The intent of all this darkness was for Man to establish his Divine mission of drawing G-dly light into the lower worlds] through the service of *iskafia*, etc., especially the service of repentance. Indeed, in so doing, Man accomplishes a wondrous innovation, drawing down a Supernal revelation from even before the Concealment.

However, this innovation can only be said of the level of the Light that Fills the Worlds. But we may assert that [ultimately] the level of G-d's Transcendent Light will also be revealed [as mentioned above]. [In the future era] the world itself will become a vessel for the revelation of the

Transcendent Light, to the extent that the darkness itself [which had served to conceal G-dliness] will shine, as the Baal Shem Tov teaches regarding transforming affliction (*nega*) into pleasure (*oneg*), discussed above.

As a result of our deeds and service throughout the duration of the exile, all this G-dly revelation and the

transformation of the darkness of evil, etc., is accomplished – to the extent that in the future era there will be the concept of the two Great Illuminaries [referring to both the sun (male) as well as the moon (female), which had been vastly diminished], “the female shall surround the male.” Moreover, with the advent of the Messianic King, the Concealment itself will shine. For this will be the innovation of Moshiach – “to bring the righteous to repentance,” “and those who reside in the dust shall rise and sing,” and he [the Rebbe Rayatz] shall be among them, very soon indeed.■

[From the first maamer of Shabbos Parshas B'Shalach, 11 Shvat, 5731; Basi L'Gani Vol. 1, pg. 29-37, bilti muga]





HOME OF ROYALTY

The Rebbe and Rebbetzin's home on President Street was, throughout the years, their private sanctum. Very few people, mainly those who were invited by the Rebbetzin, had the privilege of entering the house. The living room later became a shul, during the year of mourning for the Rebbetzin. • Beis Moshiach, with the help of the "mashbakim," presents a description of the house along with stories from the "inside." • Presented for Chaf-Beis Shvat

By Menachem Ziegelboim

THE ROYAL HOUSE

1304 President Street, Brooklyn, New York. How appropriate for the Nasi to live on a street called "President."

The three-story home looks like other houses on the street. The block consists of two and three-family attractive houses where many Chassidic families reside. Those who live on President Street between Brooklyn and New York Avenues, not only live in the king's neighborhood but on the Nasi's block.

The Rebbe and Rebbetzin bought this house in 5716/1956

after living in an apartment building on the corner of New York and President. Their house was their fortress which only few were privileged to enter and this, by special invitation. Most of the guests went to visit the Rebbetzin by appointment. If you wanted the Rebbe, the address was 770 Eastern Parkway.

An aura of mystery shrouded the house, an aura of holiness and awe for the private home of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin who zealously guarded their privacy.

Not only didn't Anash and Chassidim enter the house; for years they avoided standing near the house, like royal palaces where people are discouraged from loitering. When Anash or the neighbors needed to walk by, they would do so quickly. The guests among them would steal glances at the house, and that would be all.

THE HOUSE WAS SUDDENLY OPENED TO THE PUBLIC

The first time the doors were opened and the public was allowed to enter was after the passing of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka a"h on the night of Chaf-Beis Shvat 5748/1988. Towards morning they brought the Rebbetzin's holy body back from the hospital and the women from the Chevra Kadisha laid her on the floor of the living room. Shifts were arranged for bachurim to recite T'hilim. This was the first time they were entering the inner sanctum, which had been closed to them until now. At first, these shifts were organized, but as more people wanted to participate the shifts shortened and a long line wound its way near the house.

When the news of the

Rebbetzin's passing began to spread, Anash and the bachurim flocked to the house. This was the first time that Chassidim gathered outside the house, as they waited for developments and news. It was very cold outside, typical of February in New York but people remained there, eager to hear reports about what was going on inside the Rebbe's house.

Those who went inside, into the inner sanctum, left in a state of shock. They were teary-eyed and pale. Each one found a private spot to try and absorb the goings-on. Those who were able to muster the strength, said T'hilim. Every so often you could hear a Chassid sighing.

One of the bachurim who went inside the house, wrote up his impressions the next day:

"It's hard. Very hard to digest the reality. People are entering the Rebbe's private abode. Until today, nobody had access to the house. Except for the few who worked there, everybody knew the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's house was off-limits and people's awe kept them away to the extent that they were even afraid to walk on the pavement near the house when the Rebbe was in 770. And now... the situation arouses deep emotions in all of us."

"MY FATHER ALWAYS SAID TO LOOK FOR A MODEST- LOOKING HOUSE"

Other than invited guests, those who worked in the Rebbe's house were so few as to be counted on one hand. They were on the premises throughout the day and some of them were even there at night.

The *mashbakim* (*mashbak* = *meshamesh b'kodeh*, lit. one who serves in the holy, i.e.

personal aides to the Rebbe and/or the Rebbe's family) worked in the house, as opposed to the secretaries who worked in the offices of 770. After the passing of the Rebbetzin, most of the mashbakim agreed to talk about things on the "inside," sharing stories that revealed a little bit about the royal lives lived in the royal house, lives that were private for decades.

With the mashbakim's input and with the help of diaries that were written over the years, we will try to familiarize you with the Rebbe's house that, since 22 Shvat, was a place of t'filla and farbrengens – whether during the first year following the histalkus (passing) or occasionally in later years.

Shortly after the Rebbe and Rebbetzin moved to this house, the Rebbetzin told one of the trusted aides, R' Yaakov Holtzman, "My father [the Rebbe Rayatz] always said to find a house that looks modest on the outside, even if you decorate it inside."

Mashbak R' Sholom Dovber Gansbourg said that one time, when he was talking to the Rebbetzin, she said, "My father told me that when a house is purchased, it should be simple and not one that 'puts out people's eyes.' So when we needed to buy a house, I tried to look for a simple one and we bought the house on President Street. However, when I sat on the porch, two bachurim passed by and I heard one comment to the other (about the house), 'What a nice house.' Nu, what do you say to that?"

Said R' Gansbourg, "The Rebbetzin did not change anything in the structure of the house but with her talents made

B'DIKAS CHAMETZ IN THE REBBE'S HOUSE

The Rebbe put enormous work into checking for chametz each year. This work took hours, sometimes till late at night, with the Rebbe looking into holes and cracks. The Rebbe looked in every corner for chametz.

After the passing of the Rebbetzin, the Rebbe told mashbak R' Gansbourg to check for chametz in his house, according to his instructions. This was the reason that the b'dika took a long time for him too and was very exhausting.

"Although I never said anything about this to the Rebbe, the Rebbe asked me on several occasions to take someone to help me. Although I tried to do so, unfortunately I was unsuccessful because I only wanted someone who would be suitable and those who were suitable were unwilling.

"One of the times the Rebbe asked me to get help, I told him that I tried to get people to help me but they weren't willing. The Rebbe told me to tell them that if they helped me, they would receive matza from him.

"On my way from 770 to the Rebbe's house later on, I met R' Shlomo Eidelman a"h who asked for my help in some matter. I figured that since he was already talking to me, I would ask him for help in doing the b'dika on the first floor and basement where I had permission to bring in another person. He happily agreed.

"For some reason I did not tell him about the matza the Rebbe promised to the one who helped me with the b'dikas chametz. Likewise, I did not tell the Rebbe that I had done as he had asked.

"When the Rebbe distributed matza Erev Pesach, I was standing there just as R' Shlomo came. The Rebbe suddenly turned to me, with R' Shlomo observing what was going on, and asked me whether someone had helped me with the b'dikas chametz. I pointed at R' Shlomo who was standing opposite me. The Rebbe said, 'He is a Kohen, you have to ask his forgiveness,' and he gave him matza.

"After this incident, I did not ask R' Shlomo for help again. However, in his goodhearted way he offered his help with the b'dikas chametz on many occasions as well as with anything else in the Rebbe's house, but I did not accept."

BaKodesh P'nima

this simple house into a house that radiated royalty."

The main entrance to the house is on President Street. The entrance opened into a narrow foyer through which you went directly into the large living room, which took up a large part of the first floor. It was this room which was turned into the place where the Rebbe davened and delivered his sichos in 5748.

Throughout the years there were two semi-circular couches

in the center of the room where the Rebbetzin would receive her guests. Aside from these couches, there was hardly any other furniture.

Various visitors to the house say the house was very simply furnished and yet it was in good taste. There was barely an unnecessary item; just what was needed.

On the right was a breakfront with various commemorative items that the Rebbe received.

Only on rare occasions were guests invited further into the house, into the dining room where there was a large table with eight chairs. Here too, most of the space was devoid of furniture. Mrs. Malka Wilschansky described the room:

"On my first visit to the Rebbetzin, I went with my maternal grandmother, Rebbetzin Leah Karasik. She would visit the Rebbetzin every year when she came from Eretz Yisroel for Tishrei.

"The Rebbetzin opened the door. My grandmother extended her hand to the Rebbetzin and then I did too. The Rebbetzin then led us through the living room to the dining room.

"Before our visit, they told me to pay attention to all the details of the Rebbe's house, including the breakfront in the living room which contains silver items from earlier Rebbeim, but I was so overwhelmed by emotion that I did not remember to look at anything. The visit took place in the dining room. We sat down at the table, which had an urn with hot water, cups, and refreshments. Before we went, they told me that the Rebbetzin would offer something to eat, but it wasn't customary to eat in the Rebbe's house. During the visit I thought to myself that I wasn't sure I knew which gave more honor to the Rebbetzin, to eat or not to eat from what she prepared."

Near the dining room was a small room with cabinets for the chametz and Pesach dishes and another corner cabinet (where spices were kept year round and where the Rebbe locked up the actual chametz that he had sold for Pesach), a bathroom and a sink as well as the elevator.

There were two flights of stairs inside the house. The first was off the living room and led to the second floor, and the back stairs were off the large dining room with a door between it and the dining room. One of the Chassidim who frequented the Rebbe's house, would occasionally come to discuss matters with the Rebbetzin. When they spoke about personal matters, the Rebbetzin would stop and say, "There are people in the house so it's not a good time to talk now."

Afterwards, the Chassid told him, “When I heard the door close, I told the Rebbetzin there was someone in the house. She said, ‘It’s Sholom. You can talk. Sholom is not in the house...’”

In a corner of the dinette, between it and the dining room, was a telephone stand that had a pushka on it. When the Rebbe came home to eat supper, he first took the pushka and put it on the table and then put a nickel in. He also gave a nickel to the Rebbetzin for her to put in the pushka. Mashbak R' Chesed (acronym for Chananya Sinai Dovid) Halberstam related that



“In later years, when my son Aharon, Hy”d, was there, the Rebbe would also give him a coin to put in the pushka.”

There was also a Chumash on this stand with a Siddur at the back (Rostover Siddur), which the Rebbe used for bentching. Friday night, after the meal, the Rebbe would say the *Shnayim Mikra V'Echad Targum* in this Chumash.

The Rebbe would light the menorah in the opposite corner, in the doorway between the dining room and the dinette.

On the side of the dinette was a tiny kitchen, which was astonishingly old-fashioned. It didn't look as though anything had been changed in decades. There were marble counter tops and cabinets on both sides of the kitchen. There was an old, plain refrigerator in the corner. In the center there was an oven and nearby a dairy table. Opposite the refrigerator was the sink where the Rebbe washed his hands for the Shabbos meals.

On the kitchen porch was an ancient icebox, which served as a storage closet. During the year of mourning, chassanim (grooms) and their families would receive the Rebbe's Siddur to daven Mincha over here.

From the kitchen there was another exit to the back yard. The porch, which led to the outside, also served as a sukka for the Rebbe and Rebbetzin from 5738 and on (in earlier years they would put up a sukka on the third floor). Starting in 5742 the Rebbe and Rebbetzin spent Shabbos and Yom Tov in the library building adjacent to 770. Nevertheless, the Rebbe told R' Gansbourg to continue building the sukka at home.

DACHA IN THE REBBE'S YARD

The back door led from the kitchen to a small porch that had a few steps that led into the back yard that was green and well tended.

R' Halberstam related:

“One summer the Rebbetzin said we would go buy porch chairs for the porch overlooking the backyard. We went to Long Island and bought the chairs and when we returned, the Rebbetzin asked me to open the chairs and put them on the porch. We sat and waited for the Rebbe to come home for supper.

“As we spoke, I suddenly saw the Rebbe standing in the doorway of the porch. I immediately stood up and moved to the side. The Rebbe came out on the porch and I quickly headed for the kitchen. From the kitchen window I could see the Rebbe sitting down, opening his sirtuk and speaking with the Rebbetzin about the *dacha* (summer home) that the Rebbe Rashab bought from the squire of a town in Russia, which was very nice. After two or three minutes, the Rebbe got up and said to the Rebbetzin, ‘Nu, for this year we have fulfilled our obligation of *dacha*. Let's go eat supper.’”

Shem (Shemi) Rokeach related that he visited the Rebbetzin many times when he was a boy, thanks to his grandmother:

“We once visited the Rebbetzin on Chol HaMoed Sukkos and the Rebbetzin gave us ice cream. We went to the sukka behind the house and I sat on a chair and my brother sat on a chair. Then R' Gansbourg appeared and when he saw where my brother was sitting he exclaimed, ‘Get up! That's the Rebbe's chair,’ and my brother jumped up.”

The house is similar in size to others in that row of houses on this street and nearby streets but to little Yosef Yitzchok Holtzman (today a rabbi at SUNY Downstate hospital) who visited the house many times thanks to his father, R' Yaakov Tzvi Holtzman, the house seemed huge. With a child's innocence he asked the Rebbetzin, “Why do the Rebbe and Rebbetzin need such a big house? There are no children here.” And without waiting for an answer he said, “Aha, there probably used to be children here and they grew up and got married and now the house is for you alone.”

The Rebbetzin smilingly replied, “Right, right, all the Chassidim are the Rebbe's children.”

“THE SIMPLICITY AND LACK OF SPLENDOR AND MODERNITY STAND OUT”

The night the Rebbetzin passed away, all the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's personal possessions that were on the first floor were removed as R' Gansbourg relates:

“When I returned from the hospital and was with my brother Mendel and Dr. Moshe Feldman near the Rebbe's house, Dr. Feldman called the Rebbe and told him the terrible news since I couldn't do it. The Rebbe asked to speak to me. I took the phone as I held the Rebbetzin's clothes, her coat, and her handbag. The Rebbe said nobody should enter the house before they brought the Rebbetzin. Since I naively thought the Rebbe meant to include me too, I asked, ‘Where should I put the Rebbetzin's things?’ referring to the items I was holding. After some silence on the other end of the line the

Rebbe said, 'What do you mean? You can go in.'

"One of the mashbakim tried to go in but amazingly, all his attempts to open the door with the house keys failed. The same thing happened when he tried to enter through the back door.

"After I entered the house, the Rebbe intimated that I should clear out the first floor so that when they came to daven there, it would be empty of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's things. I took everything that was there but with some items I wasn't sure whether the Rebbe wanted them to be in a certain spot. When I asked, the Rebbe told me to do as I saw fit."

The ambulance came with the Rebbetzin at 5:30 in the morning. The Rebbe walked out slowly. With his head bent a little and his eyes opened wide, he looked at the casket and the Chevra Kadisha who carried it. The Rebbe followed them into the house. After they lit candles the Rebbe went up to the second floor.

At this point, Anash and the bachurim began reciting T'hillim near the Rebbetzin. This was the first time the house was opened to the public. At first they entered by lottery with each group having ten minutes, but when the crowd grew, a line formed with thousands of people who wanted to enter and say T'hillim. The way it worked was, a group of several dozen went in from the front door for about five minutes and then left via the back door and a new group entered. The following was written by one of the bachurim in his diary:

"It was hard to take in details but the simplicity and lack of splendor and modernity stand out and the house looks very simple. The floor, for example, had no carpet and the walls had

no tapestries and the like. You finally reach the kitchen which is at the end of the house. Before the kitchen are wooden stairs that lead to the next floor. You enter the kitchen and there, on the right side of the small room lies the Rebbetzin wrapped in a white sheet with plant stalks under her head. Her head was to the south and two large candles were lit near it. It was heartbreaking. You stand in line and say T'hillim as you slowly move towards the exit. The tears keep coming. Within a few minutes you are out the back door to a small porch, which has a few steps leading to the

backyard.

"The T'hillim was said until morning when the women of the Chevra Kadisha came in to do the tahara. Throughout all these hours the Rebbe stayed in his office on the second floor. About ten minutes before the funeral, the Rebbe came downstairs and spent some time alone in the room with the Rebbetzin.

"At 12:00 the Rebbetzin was taken out the front door where thousands of people waited to escort her to 770 and then to Montefiore cemetery in Queens.

"President Street, which had always been a quiet street,



THE SUKKA IN THE REBBE'S YARD

Mashbak, R' Gansbourg related:

Every year as Yom Kippur approached, I would rush to put up the Rebbe's sukkah on the porch of the house on President Street since right before Sukkos I was very busy [Mashbak R' Halberstam built the sukkah boards which were very nice and this greatly pleased the Rebbetzin]. The Rebbetzin told me to cover the sukkah with a lot of s'chach.

Even after more than a year had passed since the Rebbetzin's passing (and the Rebbe ate and slept in his room in 770), he continued to visit this sukkah on Sukkos. On his visits the Rebbe would eat in it, drink tea, and shake the Dalet minim he had in the house.

One year, he did not visit this sukkah. Seeing this, I decided that since the Rebbe hadn't used it, it was no longer needed and the following year I did not put it up before Yom Kippur. On Motzaei Yom Kippur, after Havdala, the Rebbe said to me, "On Motzaei Yom Kippur we need to talk about the sukkah. You will probably make a sukkah there and try and eat at least one meal there."

Although there wasn't much time I managed to build the sukkah and to have at least one meal in it. In 5753, as Sukkos approached, I asked the Rebbe whether to put up the sukkah and the Rebbe nodded and smiled broadly. I put up the sukkah that year and in 5754 and in the years following Gimmel Tammuz 5754. I also continued eating at least one meal in it, as the Rebbe told me to do.

BaKodesh P'nima

was full of people who came to pay their last respects to this exceptional and modest woman."

THE HOUSE WAS OPEN TO THOUSANDS

After the funeral the Rebbe returned to his house from where he continued to lead the Chassidim. This was the first time since he became Nasi that he did so, because until this point he worked in his room, *Gan Eden HaElyon* in 770. From that day and for the entire year of mourning, the house was open to thousands of Chassidim who came to daven with the Rebbe and to attend farbrengens.

For the first Mincha, only a few dozen shluchim who had come to the funeral from around the world and were returning home that same day, were

allowed in. This was because of the relatively small quarters which could not contain anywhere near the size of the crowd that usually davened with the Rebbe in 770.

At Maariv that same day, things were organized alphabetically as to who would daven in the Rebbe's minyan at each t'filla. After the davening the house was open to more people who wanted to enter and console the Rebbe.

The big living room, which is where the Rebbetzin hosted her guests, turned into the central beis midrash of Lubavitch for a year. The couches were moved and a chazzan's lectern was set up for the Rebbe who davened for the *amud* all year, as well as an Aron Kodesh. The Rebbe sat in a corner of the room for the Shiva and received consolation.

Over the coming months, the secretaries' work moved to the house and was overseen by R' Leibel Groner who sat in the dinette.

Every Sunday the house was opened to the public who came for "dollars," a practice which did not stop during the year of mourning. The Rebbe opened his home to tens of thousands of people who wanted his bracha and to meet him face to face.

The first time the Rebbe gave out dollars from his house was at the end of Shiva, after Mincha. All were tense with anticipation as they waited to see what would happen henceforth. When word got out that dollars would be given from the Rebbe's house, people were very excited.

"What happened that day on quiet President Street is indescribable!" wrote one of the bachurim in his diary. "The crowd grew from moment to moment. The long line extended the length of President Street, turned at the corner of New York and from there to Carroll! The Rebbe stood where he had sat Shiva all week and people passed by steadily for four hours!"

The Rebbe davened the three t'fillos before the amud in the corner of the living room that had turned into a beis midrash. Not all who wanted to could participate since the room was too small, so people were chosen by lottery. It was considered a great privilege to be able to enter and daven in the Rebbe's minyan. The scene was engraved in their hearts: a quarter of an hour before the davening began, the people entered. They put on t'fillin and waited for the Rebbe to come downstairs. The Rebbe's lectern was under the two-branched wall sconce. The chair was on the side. In the center

of the room was a small table with a portable *bima* on top for the Torah reading. Heightened emotion was apparent on the faces of all present as the hour of 10:00 approached.

When the time came, a small noise could be heard from upstairs. Everyone moved to create a wide circle around the staircase that connected the two floors. The Rebbe appeared wrapped in his tallis and crowned with t'fillin. His face was serious and the sight was very *malchusdig* (royal). When the Rebbe came down he went directly to the amud.

When the davening and the gabbai's announcements were over, the Rebbe went back upstairs.

Usually, at the end of the t'fillos, the crowd left the house within a few minutes so that the house could revert to its original function as the Rebbe's private home. It once happened on a Friday night that R' Gansbourg waited until everybody had left so he could set the table. One of the people tarried.

"I didn't feel comfortable telling him to leave. However, I felt very uncomfortable about starting to set the table while someone was in the house. When I told the Rebbe how I felt he said, 'Why does it bother you? Let him be there.'"

"THE KING BROUGHT ME INTO HIS CHAMBERS"

At Maariv at the conclusion of Shiva, the Rebbe told the gabbaim to arrange a farbrengen l'ilui nishmasa as is customary, with great pomp and many people. The Rebbe gave \$100 as his participation in the farbrengen. When, at the end of



The Rebbe burning the chametz on the back porch of the house.

davening, the gabbai announced the farbrengen, the Rebbe motioned to him, to his surprise, that the farbrengen would take place in the house.

Right after the announcement the Rebbe went upstairs to his room. A few minutes later, R' Groner relayed a message from the Rebbe that the Rebbe wanted the entire farbrengen to take place in the house. Two tables were set up with bottles of mashke and the Chassidim who were there sat down to this most unusual farbrengen.

The news spread quickly that by the Rebbe's instruction, a farbrengen was taking place in the Rebbe's house. Large numbers of Chassidim flocked to the Rebbe's house. Around the table sat the elder Chassidim and mashpiim led by the rabbanim of the Crown Heights Beis Din and other rabbis. Around them, in the living room, stood hundreds of Chassidim and bachurim. Every few minutes a group left and another group came in. Inside, the Chassidim related stories about the Rebbetzin.

"The tremendous emotion

that everybody felt cannot be described and there is no need to describe it," wrote one of the T'mimim. "Chassidim are sitting in the palace of the king and farbrenging. Those were a few hours of elevation above the earth."

On the first Shabbos following the Shiva, unlike the Shabbos of the Shiva, the Rebbe remained at home. "It is hard to express the feeling ... when we don't know how Shabbos in 770 will look without the Rebbe there." Only married men and chassanim went for the Shabbos t'fillos but many bachurim went near the house and listened to the Rebbe's Kaddish recitals from near the window.

One bachur sums it up like this: "Although the Rebbe has been working from his home on President Street, it seems that other than this nothing has changed, whether it's dollars every Sunday with thousands passing by, or the Rebbe's trips to the Ohel on Sundays and Thursday." ■

GEULA: WHAT WE BELIEVE

Part 7

By R' Gershon Avtzon, Menahel - Yeshivas Lubavitch Cincinnati

Dear Reader sh'yichyeh:

In our previous article, we discussed the “Korbanos – sacrifices” that will be brought in the third Beis HaMikdash. We were left with a question:

How often will we be visiting – and **what changes will there be in – the Third Beis HaMikdash?**

It is not clear what the exact measurements and design of the Third Beis HaMikdash will be as Rambam writes in his Hilchos Beis HaBechira 1:4:

“The [design of the] structure built by [King] Solomon is described explicitly in [the Book of] Kings. [In contrast, the design of] the Messianic Temple, though mentioned in [the Book of] Ezekiel, is neither specific nor explained. Thus, the people [in the time] of Ezra built the Second Temple according to the structure of Solomon, [including] certain aspects which are explicitly stated in Ezekiel.” Still, we do know that the third Beis HaMikdash will be bigger in size. This is clearly stated (Chagai 2:9) “The latter building will be greater and bigger than the first”.

There are some commentaries that say that this verse includes and is also referring to the second Beis HaMikdash, for it was bigger and lasted longer – 420 years compared to 410 years – than the first. Notwithstanding according to all opinions the verse is also referring to the third

Beis HaMikdash.

In addition to its own size, the Beis HaMikdash will have another very special addition. All the Synagogues from around the world – current synagogues and those that were destroyed over the years – will return to Eretz Yisroel and be connected to the third Beis HaMikdash. This is seen from the Gemara (Megilla 29a) where it states:

“It has been taught: R. Eleazar HaKappar says: The synagogues and houses of learning in Babylon will in time to come be planted in Eretz Israel, as it says, For as Tabor among the mountains and as Carmel by the sea came. Now can we not draw an inference here a fortiori: Seeing that Carmel and Tabor which came only on a single occasion to learn the Torah are implanted in Eretz Israel, how much more must this be the case with the synagogues and houses of learning where the Torah is read and expounded!” (See Maharsha that explains that the synagogues will be connected to the third Beis HaMikdash.)

One may wonder: In what order will all the synagogues be connected to the Beis HaMikdash? The Lubavitcher Rebbe (Kuntres Beis Rabbeinu Sh'B'Bavel Ch. 3) explains, that it depends on its importance and usage in the time of exile. The synagogue in which the leader of the Jewish people

in the time of exile prays, will be directly connected to the Beis HaMikdash.

This is all in addition to a very basic difference between the three Battei Mikdash. While the first two were destroyed after a period of time – 410 years and 420 years respectfully – the third Beis HaMikdash will be eternal. The reasons for this difference are two-fold: For one thing, the first two Battei Mikdash were built by man – who are finite and limited beings – while the third Beis HaMikdash will be built by Hashem (and Melech HaMoshiach putting up the front doors). The second reason is that the first two Battei Mikdash were destroyed because of sin – strife amongst Jews, idolatry, bloodshed and incest – but in the era of Moshiach there will be no sin and evil.

How often will we visit the third Beis HaMikdash?

In the times of the first two Battei Mikdash, the Jewish people were commanded to be “Oleh Regel” – to make spiritual pilgrimage to the Beis HaMikdash three times a year. These took place on the three Biblical holidays of Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkos.

This will change in the era of Geula. The Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni to Yeshaya 66:23) states: “It shall come to pass that at every new Moon and on every Shabbos all flesh – humankind –



will come to bow before Me, says Hashem.” (Isaiah 66:23).

The Midrash comments:

“How is it possible that all humankind will come to Jerusalem every Shabbos and every New Month? (How can Jerusalem contain so many pilgrims?) Rabbi Levi says that in the future Jerusalem will be like the entire Land of Israel, and the land of Israel will be like the entire world.

And how can they come on the New Moon and on Shabbos from the ends of the world? The clouds will come and carry them, bringing them to Jerusalem and they will pray there in the morning. This is as the Prophet praises them: “Who are these? Like a cloud they fly, like doves to their cotes’ (Isaiah 60:8).”

One may ask about the apparent contradiction with the words of the Torah. The Torah says that you need to go only three times. The Sages (shu”t D’var Yehoshua 1:9) already addressed this issue. They explain, among other reasons, that in reality, even in the time of the first two Battei Mikdash the Jewish people should have come to the Beis HaMikdash every Shabbos and Rosh Chodesh. Being that it was technically impossible, Hashem only commanded us to come three times a year. Since in the era of Moshiach it will be possible – as we will have “clouds” to travel on – we will visit every Shabbos and Rosh Chodesh.

What effect will these frequent visits have on the Jewish people?

To appreciate the answer, we first must clarify the purpose of the pilgrimage to the Beis HaMikdash. In addition to being the place where we give thanks and bring sacrifices to Hashem,

it also serves as a focal point from which the Jewish people receive inspiration. By coming to the Beis HaMikdash and seeing all the miracles that transpire there on a daily basis (see Avos 5:5), one is reminded of G-d’s infinite greatness.

This awareness leads to complete self-nullification to Hashem. As we say in the Musaf Amida (for Yom Tov) “Because of our sins, we have been exiled from our land... and we cannot ascend to the Beis HaMikdash and be seen and prostrate ourselves before you...”

What is the difference between bowing and prostrating? When one bows, he acknowledges someone else’s greatness, while keeping his own presence and identity. This is analogous of someone who recognizes Hashem’s greatness but has yet to let go of his own identity and desires. When one prostrates himself, he is completely giving himself up to another existence. This is manifest in how a Jew becomes 100% devoted to Hashem’s will.

Such a high level of divine service is only possible to attain – for a regular Jew – by coming to the Beis HaMikdash and witnessing Hashem’s infinite glory first-hand. This experience gives us the power to free ourselves of the natural self-limitation that we impose on ourselves and on our lives. It heightens our spiritual sensitivity and awareness.

One can barely imagine the impact this will have on every Jew, once we will visit the Beis HaMikdash very Shabbos and Rosh Chodesh. This heightened spiritual awareness and identity that will be taking place in the times of Moshiach will have another effect on the Jewish

People: All Jewish people will attain prophecy!

The Navi (Yoel 3:2) writes: “Afterwards, I will pour my spirit on everyone and your sons and daughters will give prophecies...” Many commentaries (e.g., Midrash T’hillim on Psalm 14) comment that this is a direct result of words that were said by Moshe Rabbeinu. In Parshas B’Haalos’cha (11:25-29):

“The L-rd descended in a cloud and spoke to him, and He increased some of the spirit that was on him and bestowed it on the seventy elders. And when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, but they did not continue. Now two men remained in the camp; the name of one was Eldad and the name of the second was Medad, and the spirit rested upon them. They were among those written, but they did not go out to the tent, but prophesied in the camp. The lad ran and told Moses, saying, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp!”... Moses said to him, “Are you zealous for my sake? If only all the L-rd’s people were prophets, that the Lord would bestow His spirit upon them!”

Parenthetically, we know that all prophets need to wear a special garment to show the people that they are prophets. Will all Jews have to wear this garment in times of Moshiach? See Likkutei Sichos Vol. 31 pg. 164 for an answer.

Once we mentioned prophecy, we still need to clarify:

What will be the role of “Eliyahu HaNavi” in times of Moshiach?

This we will explain in our next article

For Rabbi Avtzon’s audio shiurim on Moshiach: www.ylcrecording.com ■



Induction Ceremony

RABBI YOSEF YESHAYA BRAUN WAS INDUCTED AS MARA D'ASRA AND MEMBER OF THE CROWN HEIGHTS BEIS DIN

Thousands of Chassidim, residents of Crown Heights, and guests participated in the official induction of Rabbi Yosef Yeshaya Braun as Mara D'Asra and member of the Crown Heights Beis Din. Rabbi Braun, who was elected with a majority of votes, will serve on the Crown Heights Beis Din together with Rabbi Avrohom Osdoba and Rabbi Aharon Schwei. • On the dais sat rabbonim, mashpiim, members of the Vaad HaKahal, and distinguished guests. • Many people around the world watched the event live on 770live.com.

Large signs announced the *hachtara* (induction) that would be taking place in 770 and thousands of people flocked there at the designated time. The large beis midrash was full and all eyes were on the dais where the new rav, Rabbi Yosef Yeshaya Braun sat with his father – Rabbi Eliezer Braun, Mara D'Asra Rabbi Aharon Yaakov Schwei, the Av Beis Din of the *zabla* – Rabbi Avrohom Boruch Rosenberg, and other rabbanim, mashpiim, members of the Vaad HaKahal, menahalim and shluchim.

The atmosphere was electric.

After years in which the Badatz of Crown Heights was lacking a third rav, the long awaited moment had arrived. Rabbi Braun has joined the other two members of the Badatz, Rabbi Osdoba and Rabbi Schwei so that together they comprise a Beis Din Tzedek, which is what the Rebbe wants. By participating in this *hachtara*, the crowd was fulfilling a *hora'a* from the Rebbe to hold a special event for the *hachtara* of new rabbanim in Crown Heights. As the Rebbe put it, in the sicha of Shabbos Parshas Shlach 5746:

It is proper to hold a

farbrengen in connection with the appointment of rabbanim, in which all participate – rabbanim, netzigim and led by the vaad for elections and the appointment of rabbanim, and the entire congregation – participating as “one man with one heart.” (Likkutei Sichos vol. 28, p. 258)

The room was darkened as a video of the Rebbe was shown from 2 Adar 5748 in which he speaks at length about the necessity of listening to a Beis Din of three Chassidishe rabbanim, an appropriate choice of video for



Photographed by
Boruch Ezagui



THREE GENERATIONS OF RABBANIM

Rabbi Braun's grandfather once passed the Rebbe for "dollars" and asked the Rebbe for a bracha that his grandson, whom he described as a "great lamdan," continue to do well in his learning. The Rebbe responded, "There is a principle that holiness does not move from its place, especially k'dushas ha'Torah."

Now, with the appointment of Rabbi Braun as rav of Crown Heights, he sees that a closing of a circle with three generations of rabbanim.



the induction of Rabbi Braun as the third rav.

The emcee was Rabbi Sholom Dovber Schapiro, Rosh Kollel of the Torah Center in Manhattan who opened the special gathering with "Yechi" and thanking Rabbi Rosenberg, head of the special Beis Din that made the decisions about holding the elections, for coming. Rabbi Rosenberg had to leave shortly after the event began because of prior commitments but he expressed his joy over a successful conclusion to the Beis Din issues and the hachtera of Rabbi Braun.

Rabbi Schapiro mentioned, by way of introduction, how strongly the Rebbe felt about the election for rabbanim, quoting the famous line, "I am turning away from everything else that occupies me and am occupying myself with this." He then called upon Rabbi Schwei to speak.

Rabbi Schwei expressed the great happiness that all present felt and said that *SheHechiyanu* needed to be said, albeit without Hashem's name. What was the great simcha about? He said, "Everybody knows that when you have a question which you need to ask a rav, if the rav paskens



Rabbi Yosef Yeshaya Braun, is a scion of a renowned Rabbinical family. His grandfather was Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Braun, who served as a Rav and Posek in Flatbush and the author of the celebrated series “She’arim Metzuyanim BaHalacha” on Kitzur Shulchan Aruch. The Rebbe recommended those S’farim and even disclosed his extensive use of them. His father, Rabbi Chaim Elazar Braun, a tremendous Talmid Chacham who serves as the Rav of the Shaarei Tziyon community in Flatbush, carries on his ancestors’ pursuits and has published the continuation of the series “She’arim Metzuyanim BaHalacha” on Shas (15 volumes have been published so far).

It was in this atmosphere of rabbinic scholarship and community leadership coupled with Halachic analysis and scrutiny that Rabbi Braun was raised. It comes as no surprise that his siblings too serve in important Rabbinic capacities: his brother Rabbi Moshe Shmuel Braun serves as a Rav and Dayan in Monsey, while his brother Rabbi Avraham Yaakov Braun serves as an esteemed spiritual leader in the Nitra community.

As a youngster, R’ Braun attended yeshivas Chasan Sofer and Kochav M’Yaakov Tchebin. Then he learned in yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim in Kiryat Gat followed by Oholei Torah zal and then yeshiva g’dola in Sydney. When he completed his shlichus in Sydney he learned in yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim Lubavitch – 770 until he married.

Rabbi Braun had the privilege of being one of the “Chozrim” of the Rebbe’s farbrengens during the early 90’s, and was noted for his precision in preserving every word and utterance of the Rebbe. After marrying his wife Yehudis, daughter of the Mashpia Rabbi Berel Lipsker, member of “Vaad Lahafotzas Sichos”, he pursued his Rabbinic training, and in addition to the numerous hours of ‘shimush’ which he performed with his father and grandfather in Halachic rulings, he had the privilege of doing ‘shimush’ with the greatest Rabbanim and Poskim of our time, both within Chabad and without.

The Mara D’asra of Crown Heights, Rabbi Yehuda Kalman Marlow, famous for his short and concise Halachic decisions, recognized Rabbi Braun’s rare grasp of Halachic knowledge and his excellent communicative talents, and requested that Rabbi Braun formulate detailed Piskei Din for public consumption on his behalf. The two spent hours together, delving into Halachic complexities. Till this day, Rabbi Braun remains in contact with the biggest Poskim, and is regarded as someone with a great proficiency in Halacha who is capable of accessing the rarest sources.

The tremendous knowledge which Rabbi Braun has acquired in various Halachic fields, as well as in the Rebbe’s Sichos, has led numerous authors of S’farim to send their work to him for Halachic review. He has also participated in his father’s series, “She’arim Metzuyanim BaHalacha”, providing editorial

that it’s permissible, of course you’re happy; if he paskens it’s forbidden, then “there is no simcha like resolving doubts.” Since a rav can’t be a posek on his own and even Moshe Rabbeinu added battei dinim, each additional rav is a great simcha for the community.

“The Gemara says that when they gave smicha to Rav Zeira, there was such great simcha and as the commentators explain, it was because a rav was appointed

whose ‘insides were like his outside.’”

R’ Schwei elaborated on the importance of paskening halacha with yiras Shamayim for only then does a rav merit to have “G-d with him.” He said that surely all the participants at the event were giving nachas to the Rebbe who was bestowing many brachos upon them and that certainly this event was hastening the hisgalus of the Rebbe MH”M. He concluded with “Yechi.”

Rabbi Schapiro reviewed a sicha from 5747 in which the Rebbe explains the advantage of Crown Heights rabbanim over other rabbanim in that the rabbanim of Crown Heights are elected by the community and not by a group of askanim as is prevalent in other places.

Rabbi Nissan Mangel, rav of the K’sav Sofer k’hilla in Crown Heights and distinguished senior Lubavitcher rav, was called upon to speak. On behalf of the

assistance.

Fifteen years ago Rabbi Braun moved to Sydney, Australia, where he served as the Menahel Ruchni of the Mesivta and as a lecturer at the girls' seminary. A short while later, the members of the Tzemach Tzedek Community Centre turned to him and requested that he assume a Rabbinical position. Rabbi Braun acceded to their request and immediately entered his new role with great vigor. He invested a lot into his personal relationships with the members of the community, while concurrently establishing a Yeshiva G'dola as well as a Machon for Smicha.

With time Rabbi Braun has become one of the most distinguished Rabbanim of Sydney. He serves as an executive member of the Rabbinical Council of Sydney, and was the former vice-president of the Rabbinical Council. Rabbi Braun maintained a special relationship with Rabbi Yitzchok Dovid Groner a"h, the Rebbe's shliach to Australia.

Despite dedicating most of his time to Rabbanus and the leadership of the community, Rabbi Braun still devotes much time to Chinuch and Shalom Bayis. He arranged a special course for his community members on the subject of parental involvement with their children's studies, as well as a seminar on Shalom Bayis and a course on engagement and marriage.

Rabbi Braun's expertise in education has led the Department of Education of New South Wales (one of the five states of Australia) to appoint him as governmental representative overseeing the Limudei Kodesh curriculum for matriculation in all of its schools. Rabbi Braun was also appointed as a member of an exclusive three-member body which is assigned the task of writing the syllabus, curriculum, as well as serving at the helm of the examination committee.

In addition to his Torah studies and Halachic

expertise, Rabbi Braun is a friendly and sociable family man, who also utilizes technological advancements for his community's benefit. He responds to Shaalos and inquiries via email, and additionally sends a weekly email to his community consisting of a relevant Chassidic perspective on topical issues, a Halacha feature, and more. Rabbi Braun's excellent articles on Chinuch and Shalom Bayis are featured regularly on Chabad websites such as Chabad.org and Chabadworld.net.

Rabbi Braun champions Achdus and cooperation. Despite the differences of opinion between Chabad communities in Sydney he was able to bridge those differences and promote unity. In recent years the two communities hold joint farbrengens and activities. He maintains good ties with the local Shliach Rabbi Pinchas Feldman and with the Rabbanim and community leaders of Melbourne and Sydney's Chareidi and Modern Orthodox communities. He has been invited numerous times to lecture at the "Yarchei Kallah" of the Chareidi Adass Yisroel community of Melbourne.

Last summer, Rabbi Braun was asked by senior Chassidim in Crown Heights, who were aware of his special qualities, to run in the elections for third rav of Crown Heights. They wanted someone of his caliber with a youthful spirit and with broad knowledge.

Rabbi Braun acceded to their request although it is hard to leave a community where he invested nearly ten years and to uproot his family. He ran in the elections which took place at the end of Elul. Close to 2000 Crown Heights residents voted, a particularly large turnout, and he won 1004 votes and was elected as the third rav. His energy, great knowledge, good humor and positive outlook will serve Crown Heights well.

community he expressed the wish that the new rav would be one of the "anshei chayil" mentioned in the week's parsha of Yisro. He explained the "chayil" of "anshei chayil" to refer to Chassid, Yerei Shamayim, Lamdan.

He addressed Rabbi Braun directly and said, "When you go with the ko'ach of Torah, you are assured that all will listen to you!" Rabbi Mangel mentioned a number of problems that need correcting in the community and

wished the new rav much success in his new role.

Rabbi Braun's father, Rabbi Chaim Eliezer Braun, rav of the B'nei Tziyon k'hilla in Flatbush and son of the famous gaon, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Braun a"h, author of *Sh'arim Metzuyanim B'Halacha* blessed his son and mentioned how his son learned many things from his grandfather in all areas of Torah.

He quoted the Gemara in Eiruvim, "when Shlomo enacted

the laws of eiruvim and netilas yadayim, a heavenly voice was heard that said, 'my son, if your heart be wise, My heart will also rejoice.'" He explained why Shlomo was praised for making these two enactments – since these two things are necessary to guide Jewish rabbanim and leaders. On the one hand, they have to be *me'uravim b'daas ha'briyos* – the aspect of "eiruvim," but on the other hand, they need to be above them, the aspect of netilas



Rabbi Braun receiving the Ksav Hachtera, standing with Zaki Tamir, Yossi Hackner, and Fishel Brownstein



Rabbi Braun with his father-in-law, Rabbi Lipsker (right), and his father and Rabbi Schwei (left)

yadayim, and then Hashem says, "My heart will also rejoice."

He concluded with the famous Gemara (Taanis 5b): "How does one bless a great person? To what does this compare? To a man walking in the desert, hungry, tired, and thirsty. Suddenly, he finds a tree with delicious fruit, pleasant shade, a cool spring running alongside it. He eats

and drinks, and rests. When he is ready to leave, he asks, Tree, tree, how shall I bless you? That you shall produce sweet fruit? You already do. That you shall provide good shade? You already do. That there should be a cool stream by your side? There already is. Rather, may it be so that all cuttings planted from you shall become just like you. So it

is with a great person ... your descendants shall be like you."

Then came the official induction. The crowd stood up as the members of the election committee along with the members of the Vaad HaKahal gave Rabbi Braun a framed hachtera document. It was a historic moment for Crown Heights. The crowd sang the Hakafo Niggun for a long time as Rabbi Braun was blessed by the distinguished people on the dais. Then they sat down and with great anticipation waited to hear the new rav's first speech.

R' Braun first spoke in Yiddish about the halachic question – was he required to say the SheHechyanu bracha on being inducted as rav and concluded that he was not. Then he switched to English and said that it was upon consulting with his mashpia that he took on this position and that he sees it as a shlichus. He declared that he would be focusing on the future and upon bringing peace and unity to the community.

The Berchiner rav, the young rav of Ungvar – Rabbi Amram Klein, and Rabbi Mottel Gurary – rav of the Chevras Shas shul in Crown Heights all briefly spoke and blessed the new rav. The Rosh Vaad HaKahal, Zaki Tamir spoke movingly about how now that we've been *mashlim* the Beis Din of Crown Heights, this is a holy moment, a truly special and historic moment. He said it's not him or any individual who runs the community but the Rebbe who runs the community, the Oibershter who runs the world and all that happens is by hashgacha pratis. He made a request that everybody financially support the community's rabbanim. "We are at the threshold of a beautiful beginning,



Rabbi Nissan Mangel
(photograph by Levi Yisraeli)



Rabbi Aharon Yaakov Schwei
(photograph by Levi Yisraeli)



Dayan Rosenberg with Rabbi Schwei

a beautiful opportunity... this is the beginning of a relationship with every single person and their leaders on the Beis Din Tzedek of Crown Heights."

Rabbi Abba Paltiel was the final speaker who wished Rabbi Braun success in his new position. He said that for him, this was such a great simcha that he was sure that

he could say the SheHechiyanu bracha with Hashem's name.

The emcee closed the event by repeating what the Rebbe said in the sicha of 13 Nissan 5726, that the Tzemach Tzedek said, when asked what would be the lot of the Chassidim, that 1) there are the sons 2) the achdus of the Chassidim would bring them to

Moshiach. The Rebbe said that since in our generation we don't have the first item, we must have achdus and this is what will bring us to greet Moshiach.

Mashpia, Rabbi Sholom Dov Lipsker, father-in-law of Rabbi Braun, proclaimed "Yechi" and the crowd sang and danced.

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What's a Secular Lubavitcher To Do?

Out of 200 articles I've published on the subject of Torah and Science, none has generated so much reaction as this one. It's not my writing that has changed – it's who I am writing to that has jolted my readership. It seems that “inreach” is the new frontier for all of us who care about “outreach.”

By Aryeh Gotfryd, PhD

With every advancement in science, the underlying unity in the physical world has become more clearly discernible... this unity in Nature is the reflection of true monotheism in its Jewish concept.

*The Rebbe, Mind Over Matter,
p. 185*

Dear Dr. Gotfryd,

I am on the verge of a nervous breakdown with no one to turn to. I've spoken to a lot of people, nothing has helped so far and someone suggested you because you are a logical person.

I am a Lubavitcher bachur, went through the system, got smicha. Things were really fine until a couple of years ago when I started questioning my faith. One thing led to another and now I'm only religious on the outside... My friends and family my teachers, they are totally within the system so I have absolutely no one to talk to.

I'm 25 years old. I'd love to get married and raise a family, but with whom? And how? Should I look for another mixed-up secular minded Lubavitcher to marry? And then how would we raise our kids? I'm terrified of that. That's why I stopped dating.

Not that I'm exactly an atheist myself. I think there must have been a creator, complex things don't just make themselves.

My issue is: Does he/she care about us people over here in this small, little planet amongst billions of other stars and planets? Did all the things in the Torah really happen like it says? So why aren't there miracles today? What about all the disasters and wars and suffering, and especially to our people? And what about all those other religions in the world? We think theirs is wrong but that's what they think about ours... And if ours is wrong, why should I be so careful about everything I do from morning to night?

Doctor, I am stuck between a rock and a hard place. I can't accept it but I can't let it go and I can't go on like this. Most of my friends who went through this just “fried out”, but I can't just walk away because I'm still looking for the truth. I desperately need someone who can think out of the box to help me. I can't tell you how many people I've spoken to. Nothing helps. It's gnawing away at me all the time.

Thanks for your time,
Shalom D.

[This is my abridged rendition – His “short as possible” presentation was 10 times longer, well over 3,000 words and filled with pain, frustration and doubt – I changed his name and age to protect his identity – We spoke at length over the phone and I suggested some stuff to read, but I think there are more Shalom D.'s out there. I am writing to him, to them and those who love them, too.]

Dear Shalom D,

Although I don't know you, I hear your problem and I feel your pain.

You mention thinking out of the box. The way you see things is that Faith is the box and Reason is out of the box. I question that.

Let's take, for example, a famous discovery by a brilliant 20th Century mathematician by the name of Kurt Gödel. It's called the incompleteness theorem and it has two parts. Simply put, Gödel proved that any logical system is incomplete, and that any complete system must be illogical.

Let's put this in context. Here we have a fellow who historians call “one of the most significant logicians of all time” making the

most famous pronouncement of his illustrious career and what does he say? That logic itself is always inside the box and if you want to get out, be ready to embrace the irrational.

Let's take another example, this time from the world of Physics. Physics is a good subject for people who embrace logic such as you and here's why. Logical people generally want things demonstrated to them empirically. Empirical things are those which can be observed, measured and analyzed rationally. Science is the pursuit of knowledge using empirical methods, and physics is the most basic of all natural sciences.

Scientists often work by analyzing, which means to break something down into its component parts to see how it works. For physical objects that means decomposing it into atoms and even smaller bits. The branch of physics that deals with tiny stuff like that is called Quantum Physics and it is absolutely weird. Or to be more exact, its methods are very sensible but the facts about nature that it has uncovered are absolutely weird.

The discoveries of Quantum Physics are so bizarre that Albert Einstein called them "spooky" and only accepted them after 25 years of trying to disprove them. Erwin Schrodinger, the scientist who earned the Nobel Prize for writing its equations said, "I do not like it and I'm sorry I had anything to do with it." Even Niels Bohr, who was the first champion of Quantum Theory said, "If you think you have understood it, you most certainly

haven't."

The piece of the puzzle I'd like to present to you, Shalom, is a quantum concept called observership and it was developed by John Wheeler, arguably one of the greatest minds in physics of all time. Four of his students earned Nobel Prizes; his book, "Gravitation," is still the standard text on Einstein's theory; he was a co-founder of nuclear energy; and he invented the concept of a "Black Hole" in space.

Observership is the idea that there must

observer decides to observe it as either a particle (in which case it went through only one slit) or as a wave (in which case it went through both). The observer acting in the present determines not only what things are but also what they were in the past!

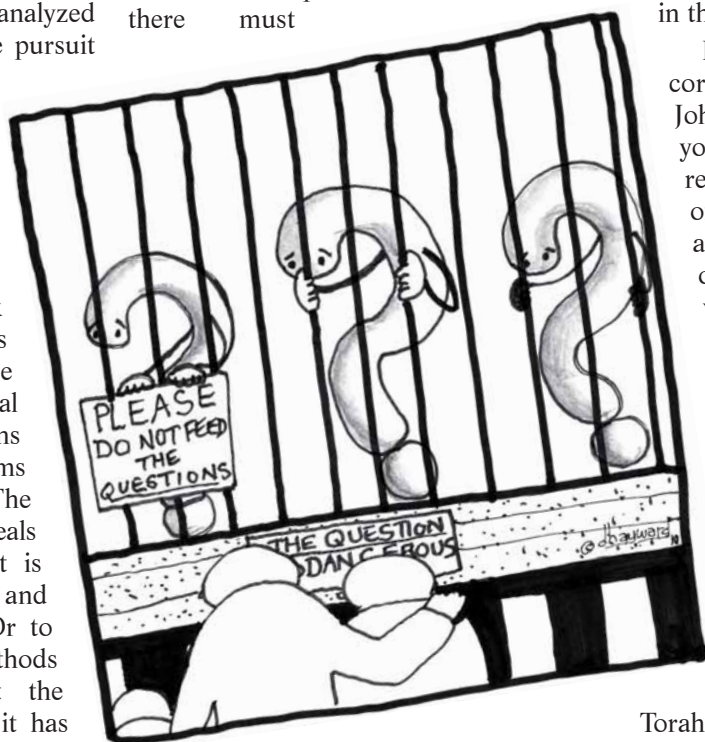
This addresses your central question, which is: Does the Creator care about us? Observership is His way of saying, "Yes, He does. And if you look closely, you will see how you make all the difference in the world."

I had a written correspondence with John Wheeler which you might enjoy reviewing. The story of that is online at www.chabad.org/81944. He wrote me about his respect for and interest in the Chabad Rebbeim and their works and included a photocopy of an article he wrote for scientists and philosophers, which has a surprising

Torah, twist.

Wheeler, addressing a joint meeting of the Royal Society and the American Philosophical Society, tries to come to terms with the surprising fact that human beings are just as important to the existence of the universe, as the universe is for the existence of us.

To explain it, he found nothing better than a Midrash – that's right a Talmudic legend – about a dialogue between Avraham Avinu and Hashem. And to clarify he includes a 40-line footnote with a



be a conscious human observer for physical reality to emerge from a potential to actual state. Observation makes things happen. In Wheeler's unrefuted view of the quantum, people are co-creators of reality and not only now but reaching back into the past, all the way to the beginning of time.

He validated this notion with "delayed-choice" experiments, where a quantum goes through a two-slit barrier and then the

dozen more Talmudic discussions and references, all reviewed by a panel of Jewish scholars (most of whom have Nobel Prizes of their own).

Shalom, I think this story has a special significance for you. You, like Avraham Avinu, have decided to take an individualistic path. Not satisfied with what family and society was telling him, he needed to figure things out his way. He too started with a logical approach – that’s how he negated idolatry and asserted there was one invisible and all-powerful force.

But what exactly was his logic? You can find an exploration of it in a blog called the Abraham Principle that you can find on the left navigation of my www.arniegotfryd.com website. There I trace Avraham Avinu’s cognitive journey back to one singular concept and then apply that at many levels with some amazing results. I invite you to follow those blog posts one by one if you truly want to have a logical point of view.

The idea is that whenever there are parts A and B that together form an organized structure or system, and A has no intrinsic control over B, nor does B have any intrinsic control over A, then there must exist some coordinating entity C that is external to them and more powerful than them, since it has the capacity to hold them together in some unified way.[1]

This bit of logic alone can elevate you step by step from a hodge-podge random world, to

an orderly one with a hierarchy of material causes, to the possibility of polytheism, to the necessity of monotheism.

Then the same logic takes you to various conclusions within this Being. First, it cannot have a form. Next it cannot be limited in any way. That leads to the kabbalistic notion of “tzimtzum lo k’p’shuto” which means that it is logically impossible for the Creator or First Cause to be somewhere in the heavens above without simultaneously being right here as well. This Cause conceals Its existence from us while not concealing anything from It.

That in turn leads to the necessity that the Creator made a world in order to hide and then be found, and that the finding must be by a human or at least some sort of being with enough intelligence to understand the Abraham Principle. Knowing that the Creator made the world in order to being discovered by man, Avraham set about to let others know, for after all, they are also here for ostensibly the same reason! Hence he started teaching even before any revelation to him.

It also explains why there was a revelation of The Being to Avraham, and why he spent a lot of money of feeding people in order to promote the message. The Abraham Principle is a subtle philosophical concept and not everyone is so intellectually inclined. On the other hand, everyone likes to eat and Avraham’s “Chabad House” with its feed ‘em and teach ‘em

outreach style attracted those types to his mindset as well.

Another implication of the Abraham Principle is that material reality is constantly dependent on a flow of creative energy, the Chassidic doctrine of continuous creation. In modern physical terms that’s referred to as the vacuum fluctuations in a transcendent, formless “field” of consciousness that all matter depends on.

That makes the universe a constant miracle in a world that is made for man, a pretty major sociological and cosmological outcome considering the simplicity of the logical rule that generated it.

Shalom, we used to live in a society that painted a thick red line between Faith and Science and very few dared cross it. That situation really lasted only about 200 years and in principle it ended about a hundred years ago. Still there are relics, throwbacks to 19th Century materialism and rationalism, pseudoscientists who claim that if it’s not physical it doesn’t exist; if it’s not sensible it isn’t relevant; if it skips across time and space it didn’t happen. These people are out of touch with science the way it is today and you should be aware of that.

You should also be aware that it’s not only a few eggheads who talk like this. The whole theme has hit mass media with a raft of books and movies like *The Secret*, *What the Bleep*, and *the Matrix*.

At this point you might be thinking, “Fine, there is a G-d, logic and science bring us to that, but then what?” Which religion, and which style within the religion, and how much must we do?

You mentioned your quest for truth. I believe that if you honestly

“Don’t cover yourself with a skeptical philosophy. If you do, you will always be stuck. If you just say, “Not right now Hashem, I’m busy,” it’s not ideal but it’s more honest and the path to t’shuva is clear.

analyze your options regarding religion and lifestyle, your quest for truth will lead you right back to where you started from: Chabad. But people are not only motivated by lofty philosophical goals. They also want happiness and peace of mind, an easier life and personal freedoms.

I know two young men, friends, who were both dissatisfied with the rabbinic Judaism in which they were raised. One was considering becoming a Christian and the other simply stopped observing. They were having a discussion and the dropout got really angry at the wanna-be convert. I asked him what makes him think he is any better.

He said, "Look, I may be lazy, I may be rebellious, but at least I'm honest. I'm telling G-d, 'Sorry I'm not interested in keeping all these mitzvos, it's too much work.' He's saying to G-d, 'You aren't interested in the mitzvos anyway, and Christianity agrees with that.' That's how he thinks to justify himself.

If doubts are driving you from your faith, that's one thing. If it's the burden of Torah and mitzvos that is driving you to doubt, that's something else. Don't cover yourself with a skeptical philosophy. If you do, you will always be stuck. If you just say, "Not right now Hashem, I'm busy," it's not ideal but it's more honest and the path to t'shuvah is clear.

I'd like to switch subjects and close on the subject of deeds. You are obviously very anxious over your turn of mind and mood and I am frankly worried for your mental health and stability. It's for that reason that I suggested to you on the phone that you take up some small chesed project for a half hour once a week. Call a



The Rebbe wrote back very concisely and did not go into any sort of argument except one- - "You came to Torah because you knew there was something your grandparents had that you wanted and needed and that is why you will stay."



sick relative. Visit a senior. Help a kid with homework. Clean up your mother's kitchen.

Stepping outside your mental misery will give you a breather and allow fresh ideas to sink in. For you thinking out of the box means to relax your logic and let life flow. Doing a chesed will attach you to something higher than yourself, but without feeling religiously pressured. Let me know how it goes.

Sincerely,

Aryeh Gotfryd

[1] Mind Over Matter, p. 6.
Emuna U'Mada, p. 6.

READER REACTION

"Shalom" and I remain in contact but he would prefer that I not post his replies and I'm going to respect that. In the meantime here are some reader reactions.

Reb Aryeh--

An excellent piece. As always, whenever Wheeler is mentioned, we're in a great place. (I was introduced to Wheeler through none other than Ken Kesey, who also was the prime motivator for me seeing "Bible" as something hip and personally meaningful- - a huge step in my own journey.)

May I offer something else to the young man? If you think it might help, please forward it along or have him contact me.

I grew up Reform, with a good, broad scientific understanding, though I did not specialize in science (at the time,

I understood about the weirdness of quantum mechanics to some degree, etc.). I had met Chabad during my first year of study for the Reform rabbinate and loved the spirituality. But I was still very stuck in the ideas I had grown up with - - evolution, human authorship of the Torah. Eventually, I had to confront my own perplexity, and wrote to the Rebbe saying that I believe it was only rational to see that the Torah and the world evolved- - yet I loved what I was getting from immersing myself in Torah learning and practice.

The Rebbe wrote back very concisely and did not go into any sort of argument except one- - "You came to Torah because you knew there was something your grandparents had that you wanted and needed and that is why you will stay."

The ultimate argument is the argument from identity, when the person can see that you are not talking outside him, but placing your entire faith on he himself knowing who he is and choosing to live by it. It is the ultimate trust - - and people know when they are trusted and respond to it. It is the most compelling evidence of all - - we are not trying to pull anything over, but leave all the confirmation to them in the most personal way possible.

Kol tuv,

Shmuel Klatzkin

* * *

Dear Dr. Gotfryd,

Your recent response to the young “secular Lubavitcher” reminded me of the years I spent in the Aerospace engineering field. Many of my colleagues were young Jewish engineers with little attachment to Yiddishkeit. Their truths were formulas, and principles that we constantly relied upon in designing spacecraft for special NASA missions and other government agencies.

Very few conversations were held about faith and truth and I was not armed with much in that department myself. It wasn't until the 1960's that I developed a yearning for knowing more about Judaism. In 1972 I came upon a newspaper article about the Rebbe and was so taken by the fact that he was an engineer yet he had a powerful faith and connection to living the will of the Creator. Was this possible for someone like myself to achieve in life?

In time, and with the help of our wonderful shluchim in Long Island Rabbi and Mrs. Tuvia and Chaya Teldon, I was able to bring some of the Rebbe's wisdom to my workplace through sharing of his writings. It has been a fantastic journey since those days and only gets better each day, B"H. Your response to the young man was brilliant and the punchline perfect. Take on one mitzvah and thereby step out of his closed world by performing simple kindnesses for others.

Aryeh Leib Schmidt

I doubt anything anyone says will convince him. Lots of frum from birth people have the problem he has. I have read blogs of people going off the derech. A lot of these people lack critical thinking skills and have been sheltered their whole lives from the world outside of Torah and they get captivated by “logical atheists” who seem to show them what appears to be a much simpler lifestyle where one doesn't have to believe in anything or do anything.

C.F.

I think many people have questions...the question is where those questions lead a person to. Abandoning religion should not be the end result. Perhaps we are missing shiurim addressing today's questions and doubts.

Rivka

Hi Arnie

I'm a Shliach in Queens and I read with interest your reply to the young man.

I know the media is affecting a lot of our youth these days. For example, there are plenty of atheists preaching and debating on the internet and some of them are very persuasive, not so much for what they say but for their human qualities: sincerity,

conviction, patience and respect.

This can be very attractive to our youth. It's hard to be a Lubavitcher nowadays and not be somewhat cynical. The above-described qualities, once the hallmark of a Chassid are, sadly to say, hard to find these days even among those in leadership positions.

You suggested that once he would consider your rationale, all roads would lead back to Chabad. That depends upon more than logic. Chabad is made of individuals but there is also a very strong ‘group think’. This ‘group think’ as a whole is not exalting or perpetuating an ethos of emes.

In issues being adam la'chaveiroi, especially when it involves shluchim/mosdos, the tactics used are sometimes closer linked to the evolutionary theory than creationist; i.e., not that Hashem created both of us and therefore will provide for both our needs, and that I too am entitled to live, but rather ‘survival of the strongest’.

I think that young people will continue to become disillusioned with this aspect of “Chabad” regardless of how rationally compelling the arguments are, if the harsh reality behind the façade does not change.

Rabbi Eli Blokh

Chabad of Rego Park ■

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THE ALEPH, BEIS, GIMMEL OF MOSHIACH

By Rabbi Heschel Greenberg



Founder and Director of the Jewish Discovery Center in Buffalo

When King Ptolemy of Egypt summoned 72 Sages to translate the Torah into Greek, he placed them in separate cubicles. The Talmud (Megilla 9a) relates that a miracle occurred, and they all translated the Torah identically. In fact, they even made the same deliberate modifications in their translation. For example, instead of translating the opening verse in B'Reishis with the words: "In the beginning created G-d" they rendered it, "G-d created in the beginning" so that he would not misinterpret the words of the Torah as a suggestion that a first being called "The beginning" created G-d. That would have supported the idolatrous view of there being a hierarchical system of gods.

Another one of these divinely inspired modifications can be found in this week's parsha. In the section where it discusses the offering of sacrifices to coincide with the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, the Torah states: "He [Moses] sent the youths of the children of Israel [Rashi says they were firstborns], and they offered up burnt offerings, and they slaughtered bulls as peace offerings to G-d." These offerings, our Sages tell us, were part of the Jewish people's "conversion" to Judaism that was part of the Sinai experience.

Instead of the word "*naarei-youths*" the 72 Sages translated "*zatutei*" which has the connotation that Moshe sent distinguished members of the community such as the elders.

Talmudic commentators explain that the reason for this "correction" was to avoid Ptolemy raising a simple question: Why would Moses send mere youths to offer the sacrifices? Wouldn't it have been more appropriate and dignified to send the elders? To avoid this challenge to the Torah, the Sages were divinely guided to mistranslate the word so that it would not offend Ptolemy's sensibilities.

In other words, G-d was willing to sacrifice the accuracy of the Biblical text just so that a pagan monarch would not trivialize the ritual offering of the sacrifices that were associated with the giving of the Torah.

However, this understanding of that "emendation" raises an obvious question: If it appeared so disrespectful to a pagan monarch to have Moses employ mere youths in such an important ceremony, then why, in fact, did Moses send youths and not the more distinguished members of the community?

Perhaps, as some commentators suggest, it was this question that prompted Rashi to interpret the word "youths" as "firstborn." True, they might

have been youths, but they were of a special class of youths—the firstborn who served as priests. Only after they were involved in the sin of the golden calf was the priesthood taken from them and given to the sons of Aaron. The fact that they were young did not diminish their special status within the community.

The above, however, will not completely resolve the difficulty. The original question, somewhat modified, can still be asked: Why does the Torah refer to these firstborn priests as youths and not simply as firstborn? If the Torah had done so, there would not have been a need for the Sages to mistranslate the word as "*zatutei*-distinguished." Even Ptolemy would most likely have appreciated the elevated position of the firstborn, inasmuch as even in pagan societies the firstborn were considered to be special.

The role of youth in Judaism, in general, is central to understanding why the Torah employed the term "youths" here and, conversely, why King Ptolemy would have taken exception to this term.

Ptolemy was not the first Egyptian monarch who could not appreciate the value of involving the youth in Jewish rituals and assigning a central role to them in Jewish life. In an earlier parsha we read how Pharaoh—after the seventh plague and after having been warned of the

devastating consequences of the plague of locusts that was to follow—finally relents and offers to let the Jewish people go. However, curiously Pharaoh asks Moses, “But exactly who will be going?”

Moses replies: “With our youth and with our elders we will go. With our sons and with our daughters...” Pharaoh protests vociferously to the suggestion that the children would be included. In Pharaoh’s mind, religion was exclusively an adult occupation. Thus the Jewish children must remain behind.

Pharaoh’s eventual successor as the king of Egypt—Ptolemy—seems to have had the same ideological aversion to assigning

with an Egyptian monarch’s mentality? Why do they find the inclusion of children in the thick of Jewish practices so objectionable?

The answer lies in the nature of a child to accept and embrace the teachings and practices without reservation. The verse in both Psalms and Chronicles recited daily declares, “Do not touch My anointed ones (Meshichoi)...” The Talmud interprets this as a reference to children who study Torah. They are G-d’s Moshiah’s!

The child’s study of Torah and observance of Mitzvos is untainted by the outer layers of our personalities, which haven’t yet fully developed. The

very word for Egypt in Hebrew—Mitzraim—means boundaries, straits or confinement. The Mitzraim mindset wants the Jew to keep his or her Judaism boxed in to defined borders. It must be measured and redacted to make it palatable to the Pharaohs and Ptolemys of the world.

The emphasis in Torah on the child occupying a prominent and preeminent role in Jewish life tells us that, on the contrary, Judaism is about breaking out of Mitzraim and allowing the hidden energy that comes naturally to a child to be unleashed by everyone.

It may be suggested that the deliberate, Divinely inspired, mistranslation of the word “naarei-youths” parallels the first mistranslation of the 72 Sages referred to earlier. The syntax of the Torah’s opening words, “*B’Reishis bara Elokim*—In the beginning created G-d ...” was altered by the 72 Sages and rendered “*Elokim bara b’reishis*—G-d created in the beginning...”

The Rebbe in one of his discourses (Likkutei Sichos, volume 15) notes that the correct version of the Torah begins with the letter *beis*, the **second** letter of the Hebrew alphabet. In the redacted version, the first letter is an *aleph*, the **first** letter of the alphabet. What does this alphabetic rewording signify?

The Rebbe explains—based on a statement in the Jerusalem Talmud—that the reason why the Torah begins with the second letter is to indicate that the formal, intellectual level of Torah study that commences with Genesis is but the second level of Torah study. Before a Jew embarks on the study of Torah he or she must recognize that Torah is Divine wisdom that transcends our understanding of it. Thus, the Torah begins with a *beis*,

“Even now we must try to live in a liberated way by doing everything the way a child approaches Judaism—with innocence and joy.”

a central role to children in Jewish practice.

Indeed, there are still modern day educators who echo the Egyptian monarchs’ objection to allowing children to be fully immersed in Judaism. They might accept the notion that we must educate the children about Judaism, but why do we have to expose them to the spiritual, mystical, and non-rational aspects of Judaism? Give them only an edited and watered down version of Judaism, and later, when they mature, let them decide on their own what—if any—part of Judaism suits them. “Why indoctrinate them” is sadly a refrain that can still be heard by some in the Jewish community.

What is the ideological basis for this phenomenon? Why are some Jewish people tainted

child is not shackled by worldly conventions, nor is he or she encumbered by the stifling influence of a mature intellect. A child’s embrace of Torah is unqualified, total, pristine, and devoid of any external influences. On the other hand, a much more complex approach is a prerequisite of the adult study of Torah, which requires rigorous intellectual efforts.

If we left the intense study of Torah and the observance of the Mitzvos for the adult years, the Jew would be left without Judaism’s crucial foundation, which is acceptance of G-d’s teaching that transcends reason. The character of that person’s Judaism would not offend even a leader of Egypt because it is confined to one’s intellect and to society’s standards. Indeed, the

the second letter, to underscore that the study of Torah is step number two. Torah study must be preceded by the recitation of the blessings on the Torah in which we invoke the Divine nature of Torah.

When they translated the Torah for Ptolemy, however, that version had to be altered to begin with the letter *aleph*, the first letter of the Torah. From a Ptolemaic or non-Jewish perspective there is no room for the Divine element in Torah as a prerequisite for the study of Torah. Torah study was to them a discipline like any other discipline. Thus there is only one level and approach to Torah—the intellectual approach. The study of Torah to Ptolemy and his ilk is not only step number one, but the only step.

The same is true about his aversion to the role of children in the sacrifices that were offered at Sinai. If Torah and Jewish practice are exclusively intellectual exercises, the involvement of children is uncalled for.

In truth, the children's involvement is not only acceptable; it is the very foundation of all of Judaism. It is the first and most fundamental step—the *aleph* of Judaism—without which adult involvement has no validity and will prove to be as unstable as a building would be without a foundation.

The “adult first” mentality is a product of Egyptian exile. The “child first” mindset is one that liberates us from our limited grasp of Torah and its Mitzvot; it is the ultimate repudiation of Egyptian exile.

But one does not have to be a child in the chronological sense to enjoy the spiritual benefits of the “child first” approach. The

Baal Shem Tov (as recorded in the Chassidic work *M'or Einayim* of R. Nochum of Chernobyl) teaches us that every Jew possesses—at his or her core—a spark of Moshiach. That spark of Moshiach represents the innocent, pure, and unadulterated devotion to the infinite aspect of G-d, Torah and Mitzvot.

When we ask G-d for Moshiach to take us out of exile we are essentially saying to G-d: We want to return to our most essential spiritual state that is not tainted, stifled and suppressed by the outer layers of our personalities. We certainly don't want the Pharaohs and Ptolemys of the world to dictate to us how we should think. We want total freedom to be in touch with the Moshiach/child within us.

But asking for Moshiach is only the first step. We must also live with Moshiach. This means we must not wait for the external Moshiach—the Jewish leader who ushers in the Messianic Age—to compel us to expose our internal Moshiach. Even now we must try to live in a liberated way by doing everything the way a child approaches Judaism—with innocence and joy. We must not allow our natural penchant to be skeptical and cynical to taint our Judaism.

While we are certainly required to learn, understand

and even raise questions about all matters of Judaism, which should be step number two. It must be preceded by the first step: an unadulterated and unconditional acceptance of Torah and a pure desire for the ultimate Redemption through Moshiach that will facilitate our complete embrace of Torah.

In terms of the Hebrew alphabet, step number one, the “*aleph*”, is: Involve your biological children as well as the internal child—the internal Moshiach—in your Jewish life. Instill all of your doings with a Moshiach-innocence. And, of course, focus on the role of Torah and Mitzvot to prepare us for the ultimate Redemption.

Step number two—the “*beis*”—is: Learn what the Torah says about Moshiach and Redemption, applying rigorous analysis and in-depth study so that our minds become saturated with Torah knowledge in general and with a Moshiach perspective in particular.

Step number three—the “*Gimmel*”—is “*Geula*,” the actual Redemption, when the internal Moshiach is completely ignited, exposed, and unites with the Moshiach spark of every Jew because our Moshiach spark will merge with the soul of Moshiach himself who will usher in the true and complete Redemption. ■

Swords Into Plowshares: The 20TH Year

By Prof. Shimon Silman, RYAL Institute and Touro College

This Shabbos, Parshas Mishpatim, marks the beginning of the 20th year since the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach announced that the Swords Into Plowshares prophecy of Yeshayahu (Isaiah) had begun to be fulfilled. Every year at this time (since the mid-1990s) we have reported in this magazine on new developments in the transformation of military science and technology to peaceful uses.

This year, in addition to the Swords Into Plowshares (SIP) developments themselves, a major event has occurred (if I may say so) in that a book has been published which documents many of the major SIP developments of the past 20 years. The book, titled *Scientific Thought in Messianic Times*, by the author of this article, is actually the result of a seventeen-year project to document the proceedings of the Moshiach and Science conferences of the Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib Research Institute on Moshiach and the Sciences. As such, it covers many topics in the areas of Moshiach, Torah and Science but here we will focus on Swords Into Plowshares and review a few examples from the past 20 years.

AN AWESOME SWORD

The most powerful and

frightening sword ever developed was the nuclear sword that threatened to destroy the whole world. There are many ways in which this technology has been transformed to peaceful uses. One application is for the treatment of cancer.

Radiation and radioactive materials have been used in medical procedures for decades, but treatments have often been dangerous, and results, unsatisfactory. In one letter in Igros Kodesh many years ago, the Rebbe MH"M advises someone to have surgery rather than radiation treatment because of the unreliability of the radiation treatment. Now, in the Era of Moshiach, however, with Swords Into Plowshares in progress, great advances in the use of radiation in medical procedures have come about based on the application of military technology.

Back in the 1990s, scientists discovered a very disturbing statistic regarding people who received radiation treatment to destroy cancerous tumors: "Each year, more than 100,000 cancer patients who are treated with radiation in hopes of a cure die with active tumors at the primary cancer site." Not only was the radiation treatment not successful—the patient died—but the tumors remained intact;

the radiation did not destroy them.

Research into the cause for this showed that a serious miscalculation had been made in determining how the radiation should be delivered. Scientists had modeled the human body simply as a "bag of water" and had directed the radiation toward a tumor at a certain location inside this bag of water. What this calculation ignored is the fact that radiation travels in different ways through different media such as muscle, bone, blood and air cavities inside the body. Furthermore, every time the radiation travels through an interface between two such media, it changes direction—just like light (electromagnetic radiation) after traveling through the air, changes direction when it enters water. Thus, in many cases, the radiation had missed the tumor and left it intact.

Where were medical scientists going to get accurate calculations that could take into consideration the different media through which the radiation had to travel? In fact, the physicists at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) had actually made such calculations in connection with their development of atomic bombs.

These calculations were based

on a mathematical theory called the “Monte Carlo Method,” a branch of probability theory. The Monte Carlo Method was developed by the atomic scientists and mathematicians working on the Manhattan Project to build the first atomic bomb. In 1993, a research team at the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory applied the Monte Carlo Method to directing radiation to attack tumors. Their new method, called the “Peregrine System,” simulates the radiation treatment “particle-interaction by particle-interaction.”

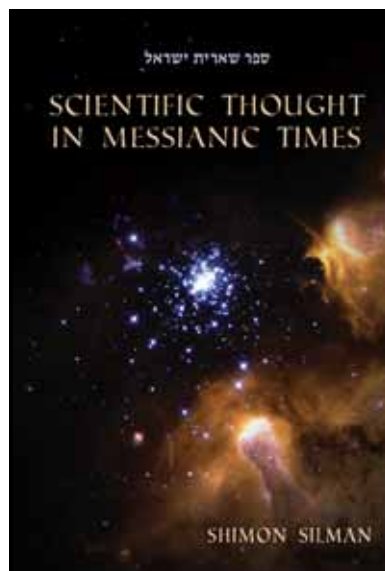
During treatment, a patient receives trillions of photons or particles of radiation. The Monte Carlo Method reconstructs the treatment by selecting a random sample of photon particles and tracking them through a computer model of the radiation delivery device and a model of the tumorous region, based on a computed tomography (CT) scan of the patient. Everything that happens to the photons after they leave the x-ray machine—colliding with an electron in the skin, ionizing a hydrogen atom in the blood, perhaps being absorbed by calcium in the bone—is calculated in the model.

We think that one can hardly find a better example of “Swords Into Plowshares” than this—nuclear weapons transformed into nuclear medicine. Bill Richardson, then Secretary of Energy, thought so as well. In a statement announcing the production and marketing of the Peregrine System, he said: “Peregrine could change the way cancer is treated in America. This technology was developed through advances resulting from nuclear weapons research and with the multidisciplinary scientific expertise of a Department of Energy national

laboratory. This is an excellent example of turning swords into plowshares.”

WHERE HAVE ALL THE RUSSIANS GONE?

Let’s move on from technology to people. When the Soviet Union was at the height of its power, the best and the brightest of its scientists were employed by the military. What



happened to them when the Soviet Union fell? They also had to be transformed into “peaceful uses” or they might be offered employment by militant third world countries.

Just a few days after the Rebbe MH”M’s announcement that Isaiah’s prophecy that they shall beat their swords into plowshares had begun to be fulfilled, President Boris Yeltsin and President George Bush sat down together at Camp David and made a plan to establish the International Science and Technology Center (ISTC) in Moscow. This was to be an institute that would employ

former Russian military scientists to work on projects transforming the technology and science that they had developed for military purposes into peaceful uses. That was to be the entire purpose of the Center.

Over the next two years this became a reality. By 1994 there was a functioning institute of science and technology in Moscow funded by four countries: the United States, Russia, Japan and the European Union. These governments invested hundreds of millions of dollars into the institute.

When the Russian military machine was functioning fully, there were approximately one million scientists, engineers and technicians working for the Russian military. It was estimated that after the fall of the Communist government about 60,000 of these staff members had to be targeted for international science and technology projects. These were the people who were most volatile and dangerous. They were scientists and engineers who, if approached (as many of them were) by Middle Eastern countries to work in those countries to develop their nuclear technology programs, they would be the ones most useful to those countries.

Of the 60,000 scientists, it was estimated that 30,000 were in aeronautical science; 20,000 in nuclear science and 10,000 in biological science. About 20,000 remained employed by the Russian military, Another 15,000 got jobs in the commercial sector and The remaining 25,000 were the ones that the ISTC took on.

Some of the projects that they worked on were the following: Nuclear scientists who specialized in the design of nuclear weapons

“Previously the top Russian biological scientists worked on devising biological weapons to kill people. Now they are collaborating with the United States Centers for Disease Control and contracting internationally to produce pharmaceutical drugs.

were put to work on designing safer nuclear reactors. Russia was notorious for having poorly designed reactors. They disregarded nuclear safety. The accident at Chernobyl was the most dramatic of all of Russia's nuclear accidents, but it was not the only one.

There were many, many incidents of radiation leaks. Parts of Russia are contaminated by radiation. Nuclear waste was not dealt with in any safe manner. Often it was simply dumped into rivers. Many ISTC projects involved putting these nuclear scientists to work designing safer, better and more efficient nuclear reactors, and to clean up the contamination in those areas of Russia that had been contaminated by nuclear accidents and by careless disposal of nuclear wastes.

Chemical and biological specialists who were trained in biological and chemical warfare were given projects involving pollution cleanup. While in the United States pollution is already pretty much under control, in Russia it has always been disregarded. The communist government never concerned themselves with it. Now the chemical and biological specialists are working on chemical and biological pollution problems. Aerospace specialists have been working on projects ranging from designing special environmental observation aircraft to the research of nuclear

propulsion technology for exploration of Mars.

The ISTC has expanded considerably since its establishment in 1994 and is currently involved in many more projects.

In addition to ISTC projects, there are many other SIP transformations taking place in Russia. A particularly noteworthy example is the case of a biological weapons installation called Vector in Novosibirsk, which was transformed into a pharmaceutical research organization now called the State Research Center of Virology and Biotechnology.

Whereas previously the top Russian biological scientists worked on devising biological weapons to kill people, now they are doing research on viruses, collaborating with the United States Centers for Disease Control, contracting internationally to produce pharmaceutical drugs. The same scientists and the same technology which was once used to produce biological weapons are now being used to produce drugs and to research cures for diseases!

THE REST OF THE STORY

About 140 pages of *Scientific Thought in Messianic Times* (Chapter III) are devoted to documenting Swords Into Plowshares transformations. Other chapters discuss issues

such as faith and intellect, creation of the universe and the “uncertainty of science.” The focal point of the theoretical part of the book is the sicha of Parshas Noach (Likkutei Sichos vol. 15, p. 42) in which the Rebbe MH”M explains that the revelations in Chassidus and the developments in the sciences since 1840 are a preparation for Moshiach. Thus, there is an extensive review of the history and concepts of Chassidus and (*l’havdil*) modern science.

There is, of course, a full discussion of the concept of Moshiach, the emergence of the Rebbe MH”M as Moshiach and the everlasting life of Melech HaMoshiach. The last chapter discusses “The Science of Moshiach” i.e. how science is expected to change and what it will be like when the Geula is complete.

There is an analytical biography of Rabbi Yisroel Aryeh Leib and a reproduction of his mathematical paper with a commentary on it. There is enough technical mathematics and physics in the book to keep everyone happy, but the vast majority is non-technical.

In addition to my own writing, there are sections in it based on the lectures of other professors and scientists: Naftali Berg, Yirmiyahu Branover, Aryeh Gotfryd, Alvin Radkowsky, Levi Reiter and Tsvi Saks. The book was reviewed by, and has recommendations from, several well-known scientists.

We hope that the very existence of this book, which brings the revelation of Moshiach to a new depth, will be the last thing that is needed and that we will see the full revelation of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach immediately. ■

THE REBBE'S VIEWS ON THE NATIONS

*Why is Italy the “inept nation”? How did the Rebbeim relate to Germany and how did the Russian czar react to Radatz standing there with a Torah scroll? What did the Rebbe think of the nature of Indians and why didn't the Rebbe see a future for Jewry in Poland? * The following is the first ever collection of statements from the Rebbe about: Italy, the United States, Germany, India, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Poland and Russia.*

** In the sicha of Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim 5752, the Rebbe said that the meeting of heads of state to dismantle weapons symbolizes the beginning of Moshiach's activities and influence on the nations of the world.*

By Menachem Ziegelboim and Yisroel Yehuda



ITALY - AN INEPT NATION

In one his letters (Igros Kodesh vol. 10 p. 94) the Rebbe comments that Italy did not exist in the time of the Avos but only later, during the time of Shlomo

HaMelech when he married the daughter of Pharaoh.

In Hisvaadus Kodesh Shabbos Parshas Savo, 18 Elul 5713, the Rebbe spoke about the *batlanus* (ineptitude) of Italy of those days: “It is necessary to clarify and to ensure one thing. First, what the Rebbe, my father-in-law said that they would say about Italy (which was considered an incompetent nation) that the truth is that it is a country like all others. It

has trains, it has a locomotive, and there are compartments, an engine and steam. It whistles and everything else. Only one thing is missing. They forgot to connect the engine to the other cars.”

The Rebbe learns from what the Rebbe Rayatz said:

“Regarding us, we need to direct everything at ourselves. Each of us needs to know that this is meant for him, not for someone else, but for him.”

(Toras Menachem vol. 9 p. 157)



ENGLAND - COLD MANNERS

In yechidus with Professor Branover the Rebbe said, “When I saw Peter [Kalms, a businessman who received many instructions from the Rebbe especially regarding Russian Jewry], things were so successful, there was great progress, and yet he was still not happy. I expected to see him dancing! How is it that things are so successful and he is still clinging to his English manners? When I smile at him he smiles back; I see that you are working closely together and with unity as I told you on another occasion.”

On another occasion the Rebbe said about him:

“He needs to be less English and more joyous. I will mention you at the gravesite of the Rebbe Rayatz for good news in all your activities.”



THE UNITED STATES - TZEDAKA AND CHESED

There is much that was said about the United States. In the Rebbe’s sichos and letters we find numerous references to the character of the United States, its values and its laws. An entire article could be written about what the Rebbe had to say about

the United States but we will give you just a sampling.

The Rebbe spoke a lot about Chabad headquarters’ host country, the United States of America. On the one hand, the Rebbe emphasized its materialistic aspects, “it has all physical pleasures and they are preoccupied with them.” On the other hand, he spoke about its wonderful qualities, its expansiveness and great generosity.

We are all familiar with the expression that America is a

“This man related that the amount of time he spent on the avoda of mesirus nefesh in the bedtime Shma was ‘precisely one minute,’” and the Rebbe smiled and said, “Apparently he had a watch next to him and in the middle of mesirus nefesh he looked at the watch to see how long his mesirus nefesh had taken.”

“malchus of chesed,” but the Rebbe described the US on many other occasions. The Rebbe said that in America everything is assessed by its price tag and therefore, the Rebbe Rayatz in his time said to write a price on the booklets they produced even though they sent them for free to whoever asked for them. Because the way it works in America is that when you get something for nothing, you don’t treat it with respect.

At the same time, the Rebbe pointed out that the generosity of Americans “especially the tremendous amount of tz’daka which is the special quality of the United States, will draw down Hashem’s tz’daka – the true and complete Geula.”

Elsewhere, the Rebbe describes the good-heartedness of Americans: “It is known,

regarding recent events, that this country – which is founded on tz’daka and chesed, as is known, used its power to help and save people far away even though its citizens gained no direct benefit by doing so. In this we see the compassion of the people in this country. When they heard and saw how people are suffering, even though they are not their relatives, the country roused to help them in accordance with the approach of this country regarding tz’daka; that they help people the world over and they don’t even wait to be asked for

help.” (13 Iyar 5751)

As for pursuing a career and money the Rebbe said, “There are women who look to their friends that their children should grow up and be ‘established’ ... this one as a doctor, that one as a lawyer, and he – at least a shoe shiner.”

What do shining shoes and a “child that is established” have to do with one another? The Rebbe teaches parents a lesson about the American mentality: “In America there is a saying that a shoe shiner is also something important since Rockefeller shined shoes and he became an extremely wealthy man.”

At the same time, stressed the Rebbe, although the dollar is the “holy of holies” in America, nevertheless, upon it is expressed Americans’ belief in G-d: “To

“The Rebbe compared Israeli “democracy” to Russia and arrived at the conclusion that the Russians had what to learn from the Israelis about creating a dictatorship: “A dictatorship like this in the guise of a democracy cannot be found anywhere else in the world, not even in Soviet Russia!”

the point that belief in G-d is engraved on the **money** of the country, and along these lines regarding the general conduct of the country, from the capitol city starting with the president of the country and all those who listen and follow his instructions. For the foundation of it all is belief in G-d.” (Contrast this to the magnate in Eretz Yisroel who recently commented about the idea of writing about faith on the shekel: “Money is money and only money.”)

As in every matter, we need to make use of those things which can interfere with avodas Hashem. So too with the problem of obedience, as the Rebbe writes, “Especially here in America where children don’t listen so much to their parents ...,” “in America parents listen to their children and teachers to their students.” The solution: The Rebbe connects this to the signs of Geula when “youth will shame the faces of the elders.”

The transformation: “And when Moshiach comes, we will be able to proclaim with justifiable pride, here are our soldiers, here is our army, ‘Made in America,’ children raised in America but **complete Jews** who are ready for Geula! (In an unedited reshima: and the Rebbe, my father-in-law, will point at his talmidim and say: “see the children that I have raised,” American bachurim with beards

who conduct themselves on the proper path etc.).



GERMANY - “FROM GERMANY MUCH TORAH AND GREATNESS WENT FORTH, AS WELL AS MUCH SUFFERING”

Over a hundred years ago, our Rebbeim singled out Germany for comment. This country caused us such grief, spiritually and materially with the apex reached during the Holocaust. From Germany came coldness towards Torah and mitzvos as well as the Haskala (Enlightenment) movement. The Rebbe, who lived in Germany for a period of time, referred to the character of a “Daitchel” a number of times.

The Rebbe referred to the holiness of the Maggid who saw well in advance what would happen in Germany: “The Rebbe, my father-in-law, told me that the Maggid of Mezritch gave *yichudim* (unifications) to his disciples for every one of the nations except for Germany.

“Throughout the years this was not understood – why

Germany? However, after many years, over 150 since the time of the Maggid, we ‘get it,’ we understand how great was the tzaddik’s vision, how he saw into the distance, many years hence ...” (sicha of 19 Kislev 5714, Toras Menachem vol. 10 p. 256)

R’ Yehuda Leib Posner married on 30 Shvat 5711. During the reception, the Rebbe asked about the origin of the mechutan on the kalla’s side (Freimark) and when he was told that he was from Germany the Rebbe said, “From Germany went forth much Torah and much greatness” and then he sighed and said, “and also much suffering.”

The Rebbe referred to spiritual suffering aside from the Haskala. In yechidus with the Belzer Rebbe on the night of 10 Adar I 5733, the Belzer Rebbe said that the heretics themselves use “kabbala” and quote things about the first Shmita, the second Shmita etc. to which the Rebbe said: “If they only took it from there that would only partially concern me but they deny the entire Torah! This spirit is sourced in Germany for it is a country designated for spiritual and material calamity.”

The Rebbe also referred to the German “Yekkes.” When the Rebbe lived in Berlin he wrote to someone that he doesn’t know how the Yekkes would manage without being able to say “good morning” the morning of Tisha B’Av.

At a farbrengen in 5713 the Rebbe told the following story:

“The Rebbe, my father-in-law, told about one of the trips his father, the Rebbe Rashab, made to the health resort in Germany. Despite the nature of the local residents who in

all matters gauged themselves with measure and limitation, he learned Chassidus with them and some of them were drawn close to the teachings of Chassidus. One of them was especially interested to the point that he began learning Chassidus and conducting himself in the ways of Chassidus and began working on the 'avoda of mesirus nefesh' (service of self-sacrifice) – in the bedtime Shma when you are supposed to visualize actually sacrificing yourself – even though this went against his nature.'

"This man related that the amount of time he spent on the avoda of mesirus nefesh in the bedtime Shma was 'precisely one minute,'" and the Rebbe smiled and said, "Apparently he had a watch next to him and in the middle of mesirus nefesh he looked at the watch to see how long his mesirus nefesh had taken."



INDIA - PEOPLE WITH FINE MIDDOS

The Hebrew name for India – Hodu – is from the root meaning thanks as well as glory and majesty. The Rebbe spoke about the name in one of his sichos about a verse in Megillas Esther "from Hodu until Kush." It would seemingly have been sufficient to say that Achashverosh ruled the entire world without specifying "Hodu until Kush."

The Rebbe explained that Hodu is from the root meaning

glory and majesty, beauty and light while Kush is black, the opposite of light.

Names of countries tell us about the character of the people of the place and so the residents of these two countries were completely different from one another. In Hodu the people had fine character while in Kush they were cruel. Achashverosh ruled over them all, over all types of characters and personalities throughout the world, good – like in Hodu, and bad – as in Kush.

In a letter that the Rebbe wrote to Zalman Shazar (27 Elul 5717), he noted that the serenity that the Jewish people seek is not the same serenity that the people of India experience: "... and not like the serenity of the people of India *l'havdil*, which is inactive but the serenity that the Jewish people seek which is 'going from strength to strength' towards perfection, goodness and beauty."



SYRIA - ITS NAME IS INDICATIVE OF ITS LOWLINESS

In a sicha (the 2nd night of Shavuot 5711) the Rebbe points at the innovation of the Giving of the Torah, the joining together of the upper worlds and the lower worlds. Before the Torah was given there was a decree that the citizens of Rome (from the root meaning elevation which refers to the upper worlds) could not descend to Syria (from the root meaning wayward, which

refers to the lower worlds) and the citizens of Syria could not ascend to Rome."

On another occasion the Rebbe wrote: "... Regarding your observation about the name Syria being written in the English brochure for Chanuka, when our Sages refer to them as the kingdom of Yavan (Greece) ... and since the name of the kingdom of Yavan includes several countries and a number of kingdoms arose from the kingdom of Alexander the Macedonian (especially when Greece is on the peninsula of Europe and is not the Syria in Asia), in order to prevent the reader from making a mistake they chose the clearer name."



SAUDI ARABIA - AN UNSTABLE EVIL NATION

There is no Jewish community in Saudi Arabia and no reference from the Rebbe to this country except in political terms in connection with Eretz Yisroel. The Rebbe referred a lot to Saudi Arabia when he spoke about the so-called peace process. Back during the Camp David accords, both the United States and the Soviet Union tried to gain Saudi Arabia as an ally. Saudi Arabia, which back then was considered a moderate Arab country, was presented by Israeli politicians as a reliable source, guaranteeing that the oil fields Israel was giving away to Egypt would be replaced by oil from Saudi Arabia.

The Rebbe warned that

Saudi Arabia had an unstable government and that Russia's influence over it was greater than that of the United States. The Rebbe compared Saudi Arabia to the czarist government which fell after 300 years of rule: "You don't need to be a big politician or genius in the ways of politics and war to understand that the most abnormal [situation] is in Saudi Arabia."

"There are three people there from one family who have an income of tens of billions of dollars annually and the only thing sustaining them is that part of the money is used to hire soldiers to protect them. They pay good money for these bodyguards who defend a few people who make tens of billions of dollars ..."

In 5739 the Rebbe mentioned its instability once again and added that there were a number of issues that were being kept secret and Heaven forbid if they aren't resolved very soon!

Another time the Rebbe said, "There is an evil kingdom in Syria in Rabat Amon (modern day Amman, Jordan), in Saudi Arabia and the like, whose hand is extended to take power over, G-d forbid, the nation that dwells in Zion."



POLAND - A NAME ESTABLISHED BY JEWS

The extermination of Polish Jewry during the Holocaust marked the end of a glorious history of Jewry in Poland. In a sicha of Shabbos Parshas

B'Haalos'cha 19 Sivan 5751, the Rebbe spoke about the "kingdom of Poland" as well as what the country is about:

"It is known that when the first Jews went to settle in Poland, they said 'Polin' – *po lin*, rest here. That they would rest here during exile (and this is the real reason why that nation has that name because even if they didn't see this, their mazal saw it).

"*Lina* – resting, sleeping is done at night for the (darkness) of exile is like night. That is to say, that the meaning of 'po lin' is that dwelling here is only in a way of *lina*-rest, during exile, but after that they will leave for the rest place of every Jew – Eretz Yisroel, with the true and complete Geula. On the other hand, it is still in a way of 'lin,' that even though we are still in exile, Hashem helps and there is a place to rest peacefully (relatively speaking)."

The Rebbe spoke about the history of Jews in Poland, referring to the Jewish "Moshke" and the Polish *paritz* (squire, landowner): "As it was during the good years in Poland when the Jewish people lived in peace, and in special times – in a way that 'all ministers of the countries etc. elevated the Jews,' as we know that some government ministers would put their possessions in the charge of Jews (Moshke – as the goyim called them, for their mazal saw the aspect of Moshe in every Jew). The Jewish people used this for good and holy causes according to their intellect ('to your knowledge') along the lines of 'and you took advantage of Egypt' (the opposite of what the goyim did with the possessions when it was in their hands, as is known)."

NO FUTURE FOR POLISH JEWRY

After the almost complete annihilation of Polish Jewry in the Holocaust, most Jews did not return to live there. The Poles stole all Jewish property. Those who sought to retrieve their property were often murdered by the Poles in the years after the war. The few who did return to live there hid their Jewish identity for decades.

Once, when giving out dollars for tz'daka, David Chase (a wealthy man and a philanthropist, supporter of Lubavitch work) introduced Ronald Lauder (another wealthy man and philanthropist and supporter of Lubavitch work) and said that they had just returned from Poland and were planning to visit there again soon. Mr. Lauder wanted instructions from the Rebbe about how to operate there. He said they had visited Cracow and since there were few Jews there, they considered bringing American Jews there in order to rebuild a *k'hilla* (community).

Mr. Lauder: There are also young Jews and they need a *k'hilla* they can join.

The Rebbe: You can send a few Jews for them but it is not possible to transfer an entire community there. If someone were to ask me whether to start a new *k'hilla* in Poland now, I would say frankly that I don't see a purpose in doing so. Today there is a future for Jews in America, in Eretz Yisroel, or England or the like, but not in a country unsuited for Jewish life, for it to have continuity for another three generations or even two. That is an unobtainable goal in Poland.

On the contrary, the attempt

to build a community in Poland can lead the youth to assimilate because there are not enough Jewish girls for the Jewish boys. Since there is nothing there now, it is not right to cause them to remain in that country. So I do not believe that someone should undertake this task, to build Jewish life for youth **there** because there is no purpose.

Conversely, there is great purpose and it would be strongly recommended and not only recommended but this is **pikuach nefesh** (danger to life), to be involved with the older people there. For those for whom it is hard to seek another country and start life anew, it is necessary to provide them with all the means and possibilities to lead a Jewish life there.

As for the youth, as I said, I don't see a purpose for the young generation in Poland or in Czechoslovakia etc. and furthermore, this goes against my belief.



RUSSIA - "THAT COUNTRY"

So much has been said about Russia. In the Rebbe's sichos and letters, as well as in that of the other Rebbeim since the Alter Rebbe, we find numerous references to what Russia is about. With the Rebbe's teachings we could write an entire article about Russia but will quote just a sampling (much was quoted at length in the book *Dedushka*).

Russia, the cradle of the revelation of Chassidus and the



Chabad dynasty, was a country that fought Chassidus from the days of the Alter Rebbe until our times. The sharp and shocking expressions that we heard from the Rebbe were about the Yevsektzim (Jewish communists) or "that country" whose name wasn't even mentioned. Despite the many references to Russia, the Rebbe did not say much about the nature of the country. Perhaps, due to the sensitive situation of the Jews living there, about whom he worried like a compassionate father, he chose not to utter expressions that could anger those who set policy in Russia, who could make life for the Jews there unpleasant.

In any case, we find expressions about the rule of the czars. In connection with the so-called peace talks that Israel signed, the Rebbe spoke sadly about the absurdity of viewing this agreement as an achievement. The Rebbe spoke about Israel's receiving oil from the Saudis and said:

"A situation like this (with one family ruling over millions of

people) was possible 100 years ago when the nation that lived there was oppressed and did not have enough sense to understand this and there was no one to tell them the truth and to say that they had the power to change it, and so they thought this situation could go on forever.

"At first, anyone who was somewhat realistic did not believe that after 300 years of being ruled by the czars, there would suddenly come a number of farmers and a few soldiers and push them off their throne. When it actually happened, all the surrounding nations said that since Russia was a wild country with wild ways and many desolate places and all sorts of wild things, it was fitting that this would happen."

In a sicha of Shushan Purim 5714 the Rebbe described the "drunken czar" of Russia:

"The kings who used to be in Russia could do as they pleased since there was no one over them, no Congress or the like. In recent years there was a drunken czar and when the Jews wanted

to influence him regarding a certain matter, they would go out to greet him with a Torah scroll.

“At that time, Radatz served as rav in Chernigov and when the czar came to visit the town, Radatz did as was customary. He went out to see the czar wearing a sirtuk and carrying a Torah scroll. When he approached the czar he stood still, raised his hand to his forehead (that is what Radatz did – before saying a bracha he would put his hand to his forehead and concentrate on the blessing – that Havaya ‘was, is, and will be as one,’ Elokeinu – He is our strength and our life, etc.) and said the blessing, ‘who conferred from His glory to flesh and blood,’ in a loud voice so that others could answer amen.

“The czar saw a Jew standing there dressed in peculiar fashion, holding a Torah scroll and raising his voice ... and it was explained to him. After Radatz went home, his nephew who was a bit of a maskil asked him: You know that the czar is a drunkard. How

could you treat him that way – blessing him and going out to greet him with a Torah?

“Radatz said: *Petoch* (fool)! He has a governing angel up Above!”

In another place the Rebbe spoke about the peace accords, comparing Israeli democracy to Russia and arriving at the conclusion that the Russians had what to learn from the Israelis about creating a dictatorship in the guise of a democracy:

“A dictatorship like this in the guise of a democracy cannot be found anywhere else in the world, not even in Soviet Russia!

“Woe to us that we have reached this state so that we need to bring proofs from them; that even the ‘corrupt of the nations’ do not behave this way.

“I myself was in Soviet Russia and I know their ways. When they force people to do something, they explain that ‘conscience’ obligates one to conduct oneself according to

communist principles; this is required by Marx’s approach, by the principles of ‘justice and righteousness,’ the approach that it is forbidden to undermine the wages of the worker, and other things like that. They add that if someone expresses his personal conscience in another way, they will put him in jail or send him to Siberia. But to openly and officially announce that someone should vote against his conscience – something like that has not been done by any leader in the Kremlin!”

The Rebbe used the term “that nation” to refer to Russia and was dissatisfied with the term “Iron Curtain.” “... Since there are Jews present who left – as people are accustomed to saying – from behind the Iron Curtain, I don’t agree with that term at all since there is no curtain of iron but merely an imaginary curtain ...” Nevertheless, on another occasion, the Rebbe found a Torah source for the expression “Iron Curtain.” ■

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