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BEIS MOSHIACH

744 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409

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

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:
M.M. Hendel

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

ENGLISH EDITOR:
Boruch Merkur
editor@beismoshiah.org

ASSISTANT EDITOR:
Berel Goldberg

NO CHOICE BUT TO BE A CHASSID

Since he has a connection with the Rebbe, he is compelled to behave as a chassid. * There is no alternative. One must fulfill the directives of the leader of the generation!

Translated by Boruch Merkur

Every individual is aware of the connection he has had – as well as the ongoing relationship he has – with the Rebbe Rayatz, leader of our generation. And it is especially relevant that the leader of the generation has put himself in a position whereby he would have a connection with him. [Being that the Rebbe himself established this relationship] the bond is, therefore, eternal (whether he likes it or not). For this reason, one is compelled to conduct himself in accordance with the directives of the leader of the generation, with regard to spreading Judaism and the well-springs of chassidus outward, etc., etc.

I repeat: Since he has a connection with the leader of the generation, he is compelled to behave in this manner; he has no choice to act in any other way.

Of course, one may argue that he does in fact have a choice, etc., [whether or not to follow the Rebbe's directives], drawing the following inference from a more stringent relationship, his relationship with the Creator himself. If with respect to the commandments of G-d Alm-ghty he has a choice, and the foreknowledge from On High [of his decision] does not compel his choice, etc., how much more is this the case regarding the directives of the

leader of the generation.

Says Chassidus: Not necessarily so! G-d's omniscience and [even] His commandments actually do not compel compliance, on the basis that "The heart does not reveal to the mouth" (Zohar Chadash on B'Reishis 8:1). That is, this matter is not revealed or manifest in the realm of speech, etc., whereas regarding the commandments of the leader of the generation, the matter is manifest and revealed in speech. Moreover, it has even been expressed in terms of practical action, to the extent that the Rebbe has devoted himself with self-sacrifice to the matter. Thus, where the Rebbe is concerned, it does in fact compel compliance.

There is no alternative. One must fulfill the directives of the leader of the generation!

And in response to his argument that he will eventually get around to doing it [to following the Rebbe's directives]: True, there is the concept of G-d being long-suffering, etc. But when we're speaking about the commandments and directives of the leader of the generation, he has personally proclaimed and underscored that the intent is to get involved in it now, and he has said that he means this very person, and he has stated that the intent is that he should be "the axe upon the wood," active-

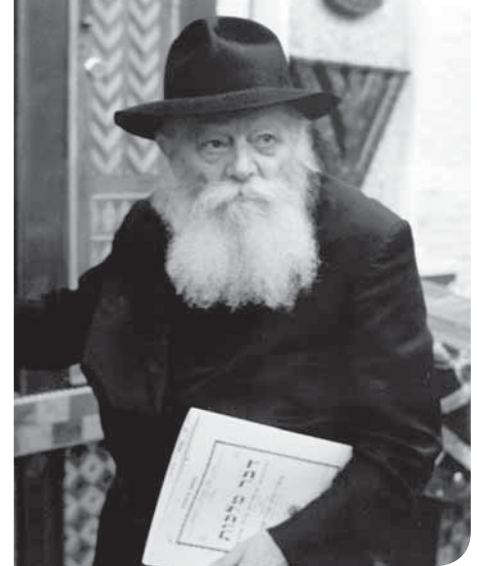
ly doing! Therefore, it is not to be put it off for later!

The only alternative is to, G-d forbid, wage war against the leader of the generation, thereby fighting against one's very own being, [for one's true nature is to be] obedient to the directives of the leader of the generation!

Since he knows that there is no choice but to fulfill the directives of the leader of the generation, and ultimately he will be forced to conduct himself in this manner, it is better that he should do so immediately from the onset, in a manner of benevolence and mercy [from On High] (insofar as there would then be no need to force him, etc.).

The statement the Rebbe Rayatz made at the beginning of his leadership is well known – that he wishes that the conduct [from On High] should be with benevolence and mercy, etc. Similarly, there is the well-known saying of the Rebbe Rayatz: "A chassid is clever." Therefore, knowing that ultimately he will have no choice, and that he will be forced to behave this way – he does so from the onset, and of consequence it will indeed be with kindness and mercy, etc. ■

(From the address of Shabbos Parshas VaYikra 5743, bilti muga)





DOUBTS IN EMUNA? SO WHAT!

Dear Editor,

I usually enjoy Dr. Aryeh Gotfryd's articles. They are often thought provoking and are written in a light, witty style. That being said, I have to object to the "What's a Secular Lubavitcher To Do" in issue 774 and the follow-up article, "Inreach" in issue 778. It seems to me that the approach in these articles and the ones that we are told are yet to come, are not in line with the approach of Chabad, and consequently, I don't think it is helpful to those who are struggling – and worse, could very well be harmful.

Just recently, in our daily Tanya (Chapter 29), we learned that when the spies sent by Moshe had a "crisis of faith," Moshe told them that Hashem was angry with them and had sworn not to allow them to enter the Land. What value did this Divine anger have, asks the Alter Rebbe, if they did not believe in G-d's ability to subdue the 31 kings?

The answer the Alter Rebbe gives us is, **"Jews are believers, children of believers. It was only because the sitra achra clothed in their body had risen against the light of the holiness of the divine soul with its impudent arrogance and haughtiness, without sense or reason. So as soon as Hashem became angry with them ... their heart was**

humbled and broken within them ... but Yisroel had believed in Hashem all along.

"From this, every person in whose mind there occur doubts concerning faith in G-d can learn that these doubts are nothing but the empty words of the sitra achra which raises itself against his divine soul. But Yisroel are believers..."

So the response to the unfortunate Lubavitcher bachur (issue 774) who started questioning his faith and is now only religious on the outside is *not* to get into discussions about Faith and Reason and quote mathematicians and discoveries in physics. We got pages of this in "Beis Moshiach" instead of the view of **Chabad and the Rebbe!** Shmuel Klatzkin told us that the Rebbe wrote to him, "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." Klatzkin had questions about the authorship of Torah and evolution and the Rebbe did not address them at all!

There are stories about Chasidim who had crises of faith and the Rebbeim did not engage in philosophical discussions with them because their crisis was seen as a "takeover" by the Yetzer HaRa whether because of

eating things that are *metamtem ha'lev v'ha'moach* (spiritually contaminate the heart and mind) or just because the Yetzer Hara impudently and arrogantly gains a foothold and isn't chased out!

A young man went to the Tzemach Tzedek with doubts in emuna. The Tzemach Tzedek's response was, "So what?" The man was shocked and said, "But I can't live this way" (the Lubavitcher bachur echoes his complaint), to which the Tzemach Tzedek said that the fact that you care so deeply demonstrates that you have deep faith.

Today's mindset is such that we feel that the proper approach is to validate everybody's feelings and thoughts and then to analyze and explain everything. With this in mind, our rewrite of the story in Chumash would have Moshe saying to the people, "I hear you. You're afraid to enter the Land because you think Hashem won't be able to conquer the 31 kings. I understand. It's scary to think of facing those powerful rulers." Is that what Moshe says? No! He blasts them, saying G-d is angry with you and okay, you don't want to go, so you won't!" And their reaction is to immediately back down, whimper, and say, we want to go!

We readers don't know the bachur, his background, and what made him begin doubting a few years ago. What we do know is we don't need to explore "basics such as, is there a G-d and how do we know (issue 778)." Leave that for Arachim and Discovery, whose programs

"A young man went to the Tzemach Tzedek with doubts in emuna. The Tzemach Tzedek's response was, "So what? ... If you didn't have faith, it wouldn't bother you."

are about proving the truth of Torah etc. In Chabad, we operate based on the truth that Jews are “believers, children of believers” who have a Divine soul which is veritable part of G-d above, and we expose Jews to p’nimius ha’Torah and nigleh of Torah, to Tanya and Halacha, and the light and holiness of Torah pushes away the doubts raised by the

sitra achra.

“Beis Moshiach” is not the place to recreate Avrohom Avinu’s experiment in trying to figure things out. He wasn’t a “believer, a child of believers.” We are. In “Beis Moshiach” we should be reading about the Alter Rebbe’s advice in chapters 27-29 about how to rage at the animal soul, how to be glad we can fulfill

the mitzva of “not straying after our hearts and eyes” etc. About how the Rebbe advised people to be *mei’siach daas* (divert their minds) from their worries and troubling thoughts, and about the power of simcha to get us out of negative states. Please rethink the upcoming articles.

Y. Rothstein

FAITH & REASON: EXPLORING THE INTERPLAY

Dear Rabbi Rothstein,

On the surface of things, you and I are in a conflict over how to speak (or write) to a Lubavitcher *bachur* who has a crisis in faith. I’d like to summarize the issue in Yiddish. In a nutshell, your suggested response to heretical musings is “Fehl!” (to castigate) whereas mine, could be summed up as “Nu?” (implying to educate).

I wouldn’t say you are wrong. My point is that you need to educate before you start to castigate.

Let me explain with a parable. At Chassidic farbrengens you can sometimes hear the main speaker tell of a bluebird slowly freezing to death on the forest floor in February. Too weak to even shiver, the miserable little bird is about to expire in its last puff of frosty breath.

Just then, as if to add the ultimate insult to the ultimate injury, a cow walks by and relieves itself right on top of the hapless creature. You would think that would be it – a terrible end to a lousy story, but no. The heat

from his new surroundings thaws him out and warms him up to the point that he pulls himself out of the dirt, hops on top of the patty, and full of joy starts singing away at the top of his little lungs.

A fox walking by in search of supper hears the call of the bluebird and comments, “*Feigele, feigele, du ligst in ... vos zingst du?* – Birdie, birdie, you’re covered in manure; what are you

Here’s the point: he doesn’t see it as dung; he sees it as a new lease on life.

A story within a story. My great-aunt, *a”h*, once came to visit from abroad. We served her tea into which she dumped numerous spoons of sugar, so many that it looked more like sugar with tea than tea with sugar.

I told her, “So much sugar

“He knows what happened after Moshe yelled at the Jews in the desert. These things don’t reach him and don’t teach him. Why? Because his faith is behind a locked door and screaming is not his key. His key just might be reason.

singing about?”

Adjusting the parable *marshal* to our context, you could say – the bluebird is the *bachur*, his Yiddishkeit frozen over in *galus*. He warms himself with the manure of secular society, rationalist atheism, and now he’s singing from atop his own little dung heap.

isn’t good for you!” and she just laughed and laughed. She saw I was puzzled so she explained. “When I was in the concentration camp with your mother, I was deathly ill for three weeks in the infirmary. I desperately needed sugar but the rations were very small. For those three weeks your mother and her cousin gave me

their sugar rations too, and that's all I lived on for three weeks. Sugar saved my life. And now you want me to believe that it's bad? Never!" And she laughed again.

I could have told her, "*Feh!* It's bad!" from today 'til tomorrow – it wouldn't have helped. It saved her life. The fox could tell the bluebird, "*Feh!* It's manure!" It wouldn't help. It saved his life.

And what will happen to the *bachur* if I tell him, "*Feh!* Doubts are *treif!* Stop! Deep down you do believe"? Will it change anything?

He's a guy who went through our system. He has rabbinical ordination. He's an expert in our system. He read that Tanya you quoted about yelling at the evil inclination. He knows what happened after Moshe yelled at the Jews in the desert. These things don't reach him and don't teach him.

Why? Because his faith is behind a locked door and screaming is not his key. His key just might be reason.

You speak a lot about "the approach of Chabad" in matters of faith and reason. The Rebbe's ways are more rich and diverse than you portray. He is a faithful shepherd and a shepherd of faith. Like Moshe, he gives tender grass to the tender youth and tough grass to the tough elders. To the tough, one can say, "*Feh!*" But to the tender, better to ask "*Nu?*"

By "*Nu?*" I mean make him think. Put the ball in his court – put the burden of proof on the atheistically inclined and counter by showing how weak his "proofs" really are. When he sees how silly these arguments are, he will drop them of his own accord.

Have you never read the Rebbe's "Emuna U'Mada," "Mah

Rabbu Maasecha Hashem," or "Mind over Matter"? So many letters there take the rationalist approach to negate secular worldview. This is what drew me to Chabad in the first place. This is what Avrohom Avinu did. And this is why I use the Abraham Principle – to expose the logic of our first father Avrohom, for it is *his* logic that actually encapsulates the common ground between modern science and traditional faith.

Sincerely,
Aryeh Gotfryd.

PS There is much more to say about all this but I think the argument above is complete enough to draw sound conclusions. Here I would like to add just two example.

First is "Chovos HaLevovos" by the Spanish *rishon* Rabbeinu Bachya, whom the Lubavitcher Rebbe loves to quote so frequently.

Right from the outset, he tells us how important it is for one to prove to oneself the existence of G-d, not just to believe in it. He, like the Rambam and the Rebbe, associate this with the mitzva of wholehearted acceptance of G-d's Oneness, i.e. "...*Hashem echad.*"

In Chapter 3, the "Chovos HaLevovos" establishes that we are obligated to investigate G-d's oneness logically. In Chapter 4, he gives us axioms and methods to do so. In Chapter 5, he gives three proofs of creation *ex nihilo* and then goes on to demonstrate how G-d must even now exist, and also how He is necessarily One. Later he establishes the obligation of reflecting on the wisdom inherent in nature and how we determine G-d's great goodness from that. Only after these basics does he get

into service, trust, dedication, repentance, discipline and love.

Our Lubavitcher *bachur* needs to go back to basics such as these: Yes, I can ask about G-d's existence. Yes, I can use assumptions and rules to explore G-d's unity. Yes, I can consider logical proofs that G-d is One and He makes all our somethings from nothing. Yes I can look at nature and understand how G-d is good. Once that's in order then there is a basis for *Boruch... Ata...* then I feel more secure that there is Someone to talk to, who does indeed care.

The second example is from the Rebbe himself and we will perhaps publish it here as a separate article. An English rendition appears at the beginning of Chapter 1 of "Mind over Matter: The Rebbe on Science." There the Rebbe responds to an observant Jew who asks for "convincing proof, palatable for a skeptic, that demonstrates conclusively that G-d exists."

In his reply the Rebbe does not use any harshness, issues no demands, refers to no Scriptural or Rabbinic references nor to any principles of faith. He just answers the question. He uses reason and science to prove G-d.

This too is the way of the Rebbe, the way of Chabad. And by the way, it is in the middle of that very letter where I first saw that philosophic gem which I refer to as the Abraham Principle. I realized that the concept is so subtle and so powerful that it deserves to be magnified and elaborated upon and hence – if the editors will permit – I will resume in the next issue my series entitled "The Abraham Principle." ■

(contact info@arniegotfryd.com or 416 858 9868)

MIRACLES AMID THE DESTRUCTION

At 12:51 in the afternoon, C-C (abbreviation for the name of the major New Zealand city) began to shake. It was the second quake to hit the city of almost 400,000 people in five months, and New Zealand's most deadly natural disaster for 80 years. * Miraculously, there were only two people in the Chabad house at the time when there are usually many more. The shliach, Rabbi Shmuel Friedman, who works with Israeli tourists, tells about this literally earth-shattering experience.

By Shmuel Friedman - Prepared for publication by Nosson Avrohom

We arrived in C-C, New Zealand just two and a half months ago but my personal involvement with the city began nearly five years ago. That year I was studying for smicha at the Machon HaSmicha in Melbourne, which is nearby. A few weeks before Pesach I got a phone call from R' Aharon Cohen, who worked in the city at the time. He asked whether I was willing to go with some other bachurim to organize a seider there for Israelis.

The Israelis used C-C as their base from where they went out on long trips in the south of New Zealand.

I was happy to do it. He promised to take care of the financial end of things and our responsibilities were the spiritual/Chassidic part. Another bachur joined me and we went. We advertised the event throughout the city, in hotels and other places where Israelis congregate. We bought huge quantities of matzos, vegetables, and wine. We had about 200 Israelis joining us

and they stayed late into the night as we recounted the story of the Exodus.

A short while later, Rabbi Mendy Goldstein from Crown Heights went to C-C as the permanent shliach. He first went to another city, where we met; I wished him success in his challenging shlichus so far away.

Four years later he had accomplished a tremendous amount with the local community as well as with the many Israelis who visit. He was ready to bring





R' Shmuel Friedman with his son.
In the background, the devastation following the earthquake



another shliach to help him. I had gotten married in the interim and had one child. Mendy called me and urged me to join him. “You’ve got to come back,” he said.

After receiving the Rebbe’s bracha we decided to do it. His plan was to open another Chabad branch due to the large amount of work with the local community and the tourists. My shlichus was mainly with the tourists.

Unlike other locations, most of the tourists that come to us

are from kibbutzim or people who are very far from observing a religious life. For many of them, the Chabad house is their first encounter with religious Jews and with authentic Jewish values.

I often hear tourists talk about how turned off they are by Judaism as it is presented back home but the truth is, aside from the fact that they are educated not to like religious Jews who are different than them, they are completely ignorant of Judaism. Part of our work is to

serve as a bridge for them, so that when they return to Eretz Yisroel they will look at things more objectively and with less suspicion and even revulsion.

The Chabad house is open to tourists at all hours of the day and night. They can enter at



The front of the Chabad house, shortly before the earthquake

any time, have something to eat, use the Internet, and of course – read Jewish books and put on t’fillin. Since I’ve been in the city on a permanent basis, I know of dozens of girls who lit Shabbos candles for the first time in their lives and dozens of men who put t’fillin on for the first time and had an aliya to the Torah.

Just three weeks ago, at the end of the Shabbos meal, a tourist came over to me and said he wanted to speak to me privately about something that bothered him all his life. Now, after the meal, he said his view had changed.

He told me, with tears in his eyes, how throughout his life he recoiled from religious Jews. There were times he opted to cross the street when he saw one of them. He told me in a voice choked with emotion that this was the first time he was participating at a proper Shabbos table and he was astounded by the beauty. This was the first time this young man felt a real Jewish atmosphere devoid of stereotypes. He sang with us and even took an active part in the minyan. “This is an experience I will never forget,”

he said. “My entire outlook has changed.”

He said he had been raised on a kibbutz and had never put on t’fillin. They had not taught him that it’s necessary to keep Jewish tradition. We arranged to meet on Sunday before he went off hiking and that’s when he put on t’fillin for the first time in his life. Judging by how excited he was, I am sure that wasn’t the last time.

The Shabbos before the earthquake, someone who had served as deputy minister in Shamir’s government joined us. Instead of my talking about the Rebbe, he did. He told about fascinating yechiduyos that he had and about the Rebbe’s prophetic vision and the people around the table loved it.

WHEN THE EARTHQUAKE HIT

Every day we had dozens of people at the Chabad house. Many of them put on t’fillin and learned. There were regular shiurim on a level that enabled anyone to participate. What interrupted all this was an unanticipated earthquake.

Miraculously, unlike a typical day, there were only two people in the Chabad house at the time of the quake when we normally had dozens. It was just I and a tourist by the name of Tom. I don’t think I’ll ever forget him. We were in the middle of an intense conversation when suddenly, at one in the afternoon, the earth began to shake with no prior warning. All the chairs and tables began moving and we were terrified. The building began to shake like a lulav. We slid from corner to corner. Rocks crumbled from the ceiling and the walls began to break. Cracks appeared and within seconds the walls began to fall.

Instinctively, I began running for the exit but it wasn’t easy since the tremors thrust us back into the room time after time, and it was only by a miracle that we managed to reach the door from where we jumped to the stairs outside the building.

Tom, who just a few moments earlier had been deep into questions about faith, began screaming the Shma. Even when we were outside, he continued screaming Shma. For the first time I saw the power of the Jewish soul. I have no explanation for how we emerged alive and well, without even a scratch except for *shluchei mitzva einam nizakin* (emissaries to do a mitzva are not harmed).

Out on the street the scene was frightening. I was very worried about my wife and baby. If the Chabad house had collapsed, my own home could have fallen apart too. I ran towards the house.

All phone lines including cell phones were not working and you couldn’t call anyone. Tom went along with me. Outside there was destruction and

mayhem as though someone had dropped a mighty bomb on the city. All the roads and cars were obstructed by cement blocks. Parts of buildings were strewn about. People were screaming which is so uncharacteristic of New Zealanders.

People were concerned about their dear ones and they looked in shock. I ran home, jumping over rocks and being careful not to get hurt. What normally took a short time, took a long time to traverse. You had to be alert, looking down for rocks and cement that filled the streets and looking up in prayer that nothing fell on you. I kept hearing the sound of things falling and breaking.

MY WIFE AND CHILD WERE WAITING

Here and there I continued to see big cement beams continue to fall from buildings, and people running in fear for their lives. I finally got home and was relieved to see that my wife and son were fine. The building was badly damaged but had miraculously not collapsed. I immediately took them out of the building, fearful that it could collapse at any minute.

My wife was in a state of shock. She told me that the baby had been sleeping when the earthquake began. When the building began to shake she wanted to get to his room but could not. It was only after the tremors stopped that she reached his room and found him awake, not making a sound but holding out his arms to be picked up. She picked him up and was rushing to leave when I came in.

Without anyone telling us what to do, we rushed to distance ourselves from the more developed areas. In the center of



Tourists at the Chabad house in better times

the city are many tall buildings and any minute a slight wind could bring them down. It was at this point that I realized that I had a shlichus to do, to take care of Jews. We sat down in a small park on the edge of the city, not far from my house, and I decided to make a list of the Israelis who were in the city in order to keep track of where everybody was. Word spread quickly that we were in the park and the Israelis flocked to us. I wrote down each person's name and the number on their identity card.

This is how I found out about something amazing that a group of Israelis, who had been in combat units and were trained as medics, did. Minutes after the earthquake, they burst into buildings, putting themselves in danger, and saving the lives of many people. Word of their daring deeds got around and made a big Kiddush Hashem. Many people owe them their lives.

They told me about some of the people they rescued who, if they had not applied a tourniquet, would not have survived more than a few minutes.

Unfortunately, Israelis are experienced in situations where speed is the name of the game. Over here, the rescue teams work slowly and methodically, afraid of making a mistake.

As time passed, more and more Israelis gathered in the park. At first I called (when service was restored) all the Israelis who were in touch with the Chabad house and checked that they were okay. For a few hours I felt relieved, thinking we had emerged intact, but that proved to be a mistake.

Due to the huge volume of cell calls it was hard to get through and every call I was able to make, made me happy.

I slowly became cognizant of the miracles. Whoever was in the center of the city during the earthquake and emerged alive, is a walking miracle. Even the locals realize that the tragedy could have been a lot greater, although the prime minister called it the greatest tragedy in the history of the country. More and more Jewish tourists came to the park, all of them talking about the devastating quake. By nine that



The entire area closed off

night there were nearly ninety Israelis there.

Many parents back home began calling me to find out if I knew where their children are. I told them what I knew, based on my list. The list was constantly updated and it was given to the embassy and from there it was sent to the situation room in the Foreign Ministry. That was a smart thing we did, because many Israelis had no way of calling. Internet connections were down and most of them don't have mobile phones. Those who did have phones lost them in the commotion. Many of the women were traumatized and just wanted to return home and they needed to be calmed down, as did the rest of the crowd.

OUR TRAGEDY

In the evening, two girls and a guy showed up, all of them sobbing. They were new tourists who had recently come to the city and hadn't yet visited the Chabad house. They said they were in a van during the earthquake but their friend, 23-year-old Ofer Mizrachi from Kibbutz Magal,

who was the driver, screamed that they should get out of the van and find shelter. He intended on getting out of the van too but although they were saved, he was buried under a chunk of cement that fell from a building on the front of the van where he sat. He was killed in an instant. They didn't stop crying. A trip that was supposed to have been fun and full of adventure had turned into a painful tragedy.

They kept repeating that he saved their lives when he realized the danger but he had not saved himself. That is when I realized that we had sustained losses too and it was very painful. It was hard to face the pain of these young people whose good friend had perished before their eyes. We all shared the pain even though none of us knew Ofer. We tried supporting one another and at some point, some of them opened sifrei T'hilim and together, we began reading p'sukim in the merit of those who were not yet found so a miracle would happen and they would all emerge safely.

At night, the police took us to a large "refugee camp" that had been built in one of the city's big parks. The city center was closed by the police and military forces. Nobody could go in or out. Rescue forces worked even more slowly fearing that more buildings would collapse.

Huge tents were erected in the makeshift camp and they brought food and drinks, mattresses and blankets. We stayed there that night. Small groups of tourists stayed in other camps that were built near the airport. On Wednesday morning they flew all the Israeli tourists as well as local residents to a northern island far from the city center which was still a danger zone.

My wife and I remained in the city in order to be able to continue looking for Israelis and to help the Mizrachi family release the body of their son and enable him to be buried as soon as possible. In the meantime, the ambassador and the consul arrived and we began working together – they, on the diplomatic front and me, on the practical front.

That day we still had about thirty names of Israelis who had not made contact. Many of them were hiking and hadn't even heard about the earthquake and didn't think of calling their parents. It was only when they came back to civilization and found out what happened that they contacted us, and every day our list shrank. By Friday there were only two names left of people we knew had been there during the earthquake and we feared for their lot.

PERSONAL MIRACLES

Friday morning my wife left on a flight to Melbourne to recover from the terrible experience and in any case, there were no tourists left in the city. It was still dangerous and we don't recommend that anyone visit here in the upcoming months until everything returns to normal.

I spent Shabbos with a local Jewish family. It was a sad and quiet Shabbos, not the kind I was used to with a hundred guests and lots of simcha and divrei Torah. I felt lonely. Some other Jewish local families came to the house to be together at this time. It was consoling that nobody had been hurt within the local Jewish community.

There is not a building or house that did not sustain at least some cracks and some of them had walls collapse. You can literally see the miracles. In other

countries, after an earthquake like this you would hear about tens of thousands of killed and many wounded. This time, despite the sorrow over the tourist who was killed, the vast majority was alive and well.

On Shabbos I met Mrs. Chana L. She and her husband Avi live here and are members of the local community. She asked me to accompany her to her home since she wanted to show me something. When we got there, I saw a demolished house. The walls of the kitchen had collapsed and everything was in a shambles. You couldn't live in this house any longer. I looked around and asked her to tell me how she survived.

It turned out that shortly before the earthquake she decided, completely unexpectedly, to visit a pregnant friend who has several children and was having a hard time managing. In addition, the woman's husband was out of town. She decided to surprise her friend and prepare food for her and the kids.

During the earthquake she wasn't at home and when she returned to see what had happened to her house, she couldn't believe her eyes – it was completely destroyed. She could well imagine what would have happened if she had remained at home.

Everybody here has a story of their own personal miracle.

THE CHABAD HOUSE IS STILL CLOSED

C-C is the main city in the southern island and that is where tourists go. The Israelis land here, get hold of a car, and spend weeks driving all over the gorgeous country. They leave



Retrieving the Sifrei Torah from the Chabad house

from here, from the Chabad house, and return here. At the Chabad house they meet to ask questions and exchange information about where they should go next. A few weeks before the big trip they are in the city making arrangements and some of them work to earn some money. Before they return to Eretz Yisroel they stay here too and visit the Chabad house every day. I know all of them by name.

The airport was closed because of the earthquake and the hospital was emptied because of fear of collapse but later on it reopened. Phone lines were destroyed and water pipes burst, flooding the streets. Many cars were buried under the rubble. The local electric company said that in the most hard-hit areas it would take at least two weeks to restore service. Many people had been stuck in office towers and firemen had to use special extended ladders to extricate them from the roofs of buildings.

It was first on Shabbos that I began to realize how everything had come to a stop. On Motzaei Shabbos we went back to review the lists with the people from

the embassy. At first we had 85 people who had not made contact and then it was done to two: Ofer Levy and Gabi Ingel, 22 year olds from Rechovot [ed. whose bodies were subsequently identified]. We went to all the hotels, hostels and places where Israelis go; we went through lists of thousands of names in order to find the names of Israelis that we were missing. It was hard work but we had a sense of mission.

At this point, we are working on getting Ofer's body released [ed. It was subsequently released and he was buried in Eretz Yisroel]. The bureaucracy is difficult but we know that the sooner he is buried, the better for his neshama. At the beginning of the week, volunteers from the IDF's Rear Command who specialize in searching for missing people under rubble came to help out but the local government did not allow them to operate and we are working on this too, together with the embassy.

Everything moves slowly. Just now, nearly a week after the tragedy, the government

Continued on page 41

WORLD NEWS: GEULA UNFOLDING

Another amazing detail that shows how all this is Moshiach's effect on the world is that it's happening with hardly any bloodshed. In earlier generations, every revolution and change of regime was accompanied by clashes between those who wanted to change the situation and those who wanted to preserve it. Hundreds of thousands of people, even millions, paid with their lives in these clashes, which turned into bloodbaths. Today, amazingly, revolutions of a much larger scale are taking place; revolutions that are changing the face of the world, and it's all happening with hardly any bloodshed!

By Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Ginsberg

Mashpia, Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim Rishon L'Tziyon

DOING IT ON YOUR OWN

The celebrated mashpia, R' Mendel Futerfas a"h related:

The Alter Rebbe was once walking with his colleagues, the *chevraya kadisha*, the students of the Maggid of Mezritch. On the way, they saw one of the Chassidim of R' Chaikel of Amdora, standing and davening Shmoneh Esrei. It was apparent that this Chassid – and these tzaddikim were able to tell – was davening with all his heart and his G-dly soul was shining in all its glorious might.

His colleagues said to him: What do you say? Look at how that Chassid is davening!

The Alter Rebbe replied: Indeed, he is davening well and his neshama is illuminated, but the truth is that it is not he who is davening but his master, R' Chaikel of Amdora who is davening.

The approach of the tzaddikim of Poland, as the tzaddik R' Shlomo of Karlin expressed it in a play on words on the verse, "*tzaddik b'emunaso yichyeh*" (a tzaddik

lives by his faith), was don't read it as *yichyeh* but *yichayeh*, meaning that the tzaddik, with his avoda, gives a chayus to his disciples and followers. What the talmidim need to do is strengthen their connection and utter subservience to the tzaddik and then they can receive what the tzaddik provides for them.

Concluded the Alter Rebbe, in accordance with the approach of Chabad: I will not provide this for my Chassidim. They cannot rely on what is given to them as a gift. They will have to toil, working hard on their avodas Hashem on

their own, and it might amount to very little but what they have will be truly theirs.

MOSHIACH FIXING THE WORLD

This point, about doing the work yourself without relying on revelations from above, is one of the cornerstones of the Chabad philosophy but it takes particular expression with our Rebbe. I've written in this column on more than one occasion about the work we need to do, especially after 27 Adar and 3 Tammuz, while knowing with a certainty that it is not we who are doing it but a deeper expression of the Rebbe's *kochos*. This is also explained in the famous *maamer*, "V'Ata Tetzaveh" that the Rebbe gave out to everyone before 27 Adar 1 5752.

On the one hand, the main point of the revelation of the Etzem, the revelation of the essence of the soul which is rooted and united with G-d's essence, is (not so much what is accomplished through Moshe Rabbeinu uniting the Jewish people with Hashem but afterwards,) by "*v'yikchu eilecha*" (and they will bring to you) – through the *avoda* of the Jewish people on their own. They, as it were, add to Moshe Rabbeinu. It is through this that "to raise up an everlasting light" is accomplished, that the *avodas* Hashem is firm and eternal without changes, whether in a time of evil decrees ("*erev*") or during good times ("*boker*").

On the other hand, we need to remember and to know (as it explains at the end of the *maamer*) that "they will bring to you" is a continuation of "*v'ata tetzaveh*" – Moshe's commanding and uniting the Jewish people with Hashem.



“Revolutions of a much larger scale are taking place, revolutions that are changing the face of the world, and it's all happening with hardly any bloodshed! This is the direct result of Moshiach who is working to “rectify the world in the kingdom of G-d,” to bring the entire world to justice.

However, this time we will focus on the fact that the Rebbe stresses that the activities of Moshiach in the world, including among the nations of the world, to rectify the world with the kingdom of G-d, are also done in a way of "*avoda b'koach atzmo*." This itself shows that they are activities of Moshiach. We see this openly with the events occurring in the world lately. What is happening in the world these days is astonishing. Upheavals are taking place that are taking down governments and changing the lives of millions of people. Dictatorships are (hopefully) turning to democracy.

It seems to me that what has been said and written lately,

including in this magazine, put more of an emphasis on the Rebbe's warning that the Egyptian government is unstable and should not be relied upon for a peace treaty, and not enough of an emphasis on the fact that what is happening is the Rebbe as Moshiach is rectifying the world for the kingdom of Hashem!

It's true that we don't know how things will play out as far as the Jewish people and Eretz Yisroel are concerned, and some people are very apprehensive about the Muslim Brotherhood and of radical Islam in the style of Iran which might overtake all the Arab nations. However, we cannot ignore what is happening in front of our eyes when the

Rebbe tells us how to relate to things through Geula eyes.

In the sichos of 3 Tammuz 5751, Mishpatim 5752, Toldos 5750 and many other times, the Rebbe explained who is responsible for the modern day revolution in Russia. It went from being the Soviet Union, a superpower before whom the world trembled, an oppressive government which did not allow free exit and did not allow Jews to practice their religion, which championed atheism – to a country whose government champions justice and peace on the basis of faith in a Creator, which enables and even helps Jews keep the Torah and allows people to leave at will whether to Eretz Yisroel or other countries.

This bloodless revolution, said the Rebbe, was the work of the Rebbe, his father-in-law. It began with a battle against this government from the outset, by the Rebbe Rayatz, through his shluchim, secretly and with incredible mesirus nefesh. They made chadarim, yeshivos, shiurei Torah, shuls and mikvaos. They encouraged Jews to keep Shabbos and kashrus and to provide their children with a proper chinuch, etc. This battle lasted for decades under horrendous conditions. As a result of it, the Rebbe Rayatz was arrested and was nearly executed, *r"l*, until his Geula that began on 3 Tammuz and was finalized on 12 Tammuz. After that, religious activities continued secretly. And it was these activities of the Rebbe that slowly changed the tide until the battle ended in a victory with the change in government.

The Rebbe emphasizes that although we don't see how the Rebbe toppled the previous regime and replaced it with the new one and it looked like the actions of a people who opposed the corruption of the previous government, it is specifically in this that we see the Rebbe's actions, because when the Rebbe does something he does it in a manner in which it doesn't come only from above, because then the tachton, that which is down here on earth, doesn't really change. He does it *through* the tachton so that the tachton himself comes to the realization that the previous situation was untenable and had to change. So he himself, under his own power, changes the situation and the government.

It's when the tachton on his own arrives at this conclusion, without someone telling him and convincing him, that we see the infinite G-dly power of Moshiach whose activities in the world are so pervasive that the tachton does what needs to be done on its own.

This is also the reason, says the Rebbe, why it took so long, **sixty years** since the arrest and liberation on 3 Tammuz and 12 Tammuz, with immense suffering along the way, because the plan is to make an enormous change in the world so that the tachton reaches the conclusion, on his own, to act the way Hashem wants him to act. It takes a long time for the tachton to get it ...

All the changes in the world contiguous to the collapse of the Soviet Union – the dismantling of weapons, the end of the Cold War and the arms race between the superpowers, worldwide

efforts to end the era of war and continue in the spirit of cooperation and mutual aid for the good of all – are a result of the work of the Nasi HaDor, Moshiach Tzidkeinu (yes, those are the words of the Rebbe in the sicha!).

The proof, said the Rebbe, is that logic dictates that wars bring devastation to all, even the winners, and everybody suffers. It would be better for everyone if they cooperated and helped one another rather than invest in weapons, and nevertheless, there have been wars for thousands of years and nobody came up with this simple thought – to stop fighting and start cooperating! What suddenly happened now that everybody became so smart? It's Moshiach, who announces that the time for Geula has arrived and it's the result of rabbanim who paskened that the time for the Geula has come and we have someone who is b'chezkas sh'hu Moshiach and "harei zeh Moshiach b'vadai." This had such an effect on the world that the world itself understands that we need to behave this way.

Another amazing detail that shows how all this is Moshiach's effect on the world is that it's happening with hardly any bloodshed. In earlier generations, every revolution and change of regime were accompanied by clashes between those who wanted to change the situation and those who wanted to preserve it. Hundreds of thousands of people, maybe more, paid with their lives in these clashes, which turned into bloodbaths. That's the way it was with the French Revolution, with the Communist Revolution, and with many smaller revolutions in places all over the globe. It was obvious that the old guard would mightily oppose the drastic change that



The revolution in Tunisia took place on Yud Shvat... and Mubarak's resignation on Zayin Adar.

would pull them down, and with the entire government including the military and police in their power, would do all it could to preserve the status quo. On the other side, the freedom fighters were prepared to pay with their lives to change the situation.

While today, amazingly, revolutions of a much larger scale are taking place, revolutions that are changing the face of the world, and it's all happening with hardly any bloodshed! This is the direct result of Moshiach who is working to "rectify the world in the kingdom of G-d," to bring the entire world to justice as it says, "then I will transform the nations to a pure language for all of them to call in the name of Hashem and to serve Him together." The fact that we don't see Moshiach talking to anyone directly about it is only because

the activity here in the tachton is more p'nimius'dik and strong which makes the tachton arrive at the right conclusions himself and make the requisite changes.

Whatever has been written so far can be found in the Rebbe's own words.

IT'S ALL BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE

In addition to the above, we need to "open our eyes" and see how the truth of what we have been told manifests in the world. Have you paid attention to when the various amazing current events took place? The revolution in Tunisia took place **on Yud Shvat** after sixty years of leadership (see above what the Rebbe said about the collapse of communism taking place sixty years later). In Egypt, the demonstrations began **during**

the week of the sicha of Parshas Mishpatim, from 26 Shvat and on and culminated with Mubarak's resignation on **Zayin Adar** – the day Moshe Rabbeinu was born. The Rebbe emphasizes in the D'var Malchus that Moshe's birth is the birth of all the Jewish people, which is why their mazal is strong and helps them. Right after that, upheavals began in Iran and southern Sudan, Libya etc. We see the fulfillment of what the Rebbe said about these being the activities of Moshiach to rectify the world.

We need to recognize the miracles and thank Hashem for them. This should encourage us to do "all that we can" to bring the Geula. We eagerly await the moment when the entire world will recognize that the Rebbe is Moshiach and he is the one who is behind all these happenings. ■

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REB MOSHE, DER GELLER

Rabbi Moshe Nisselevitch a”h was a Chassid and yerei Shamayim who was moser nefesh for others. During the period of persecution in Samarkand he started the organization Chamah, despite the great danger this entailed.

By Shneur Zalman Berger

Rabbi Moshe Nisselevitch a”h, known as “Moshe der geller” (Moshe the Blondie) was born on the second day of Rosh Hashanah 5684/1923 in Kremenchug in the Ukraine. His parents, R’ Chaim and Sarah, raised him to a life of mesirus nefesh. His father, who was a *shadar* (fundraiser) for the local Yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim, kept his son at home, refusing to send him to public school, but due to an informer he was forced to send him to school for a short while. Even then, he insisted that Moshe not attend on Shabbos, which caused the family to suffer persecution and threats. When the noose began to tighten around him, he escaped to Kutais in Georgia and his family followed him.

R’ Moshe studied in the Yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim that was established there and was greatly influenced by the Chassidim, R’ Shmuel Notik (may Hashem avenge his blood) and R’ Betzalel Wilschansky a”h.

After several years of learning Nigleh and Chassidus, World War II began and the talmidim had to face the draft problem. Due to the need for manpower, the army became very strict and even someone who had been exempt until then, was drafted. Any young person who walked in the street was suspected of being a deserter and was interrogated by the authorities. R’ Moshe was once walking in the street at night when he was suddenly apprehended by some soldiers. When they saw he had no documents on him, they took him to the draft office where he was referred directly to the commander who knew that the bachurim in Kutais avoided being drafted.

The commander began to laugh, “You are against the Revolution, against the government. You must be drafted into the army in order to help the war effort.” After pouring out his wrath on R’ Moshe, he told him, “Go home, take leave of

your parents and bring your most essential belongings so you can be drafted immediately.”

R’ Moshe went and never returned. He was caught a short while later and brought to the commander again who was furious. He held a revolver to R’ Moshe’s head and said, “I will have pity on you only because I know your parents. Go home and come back to be drafted. If you don’t do so, I will personally shoot you in the head.”

R’ Moshe promised he would return and left. He told his friends what had happened and said he had no choice but had to be drafted. The oldest among the T’mimim was R’ Moshe Morosov (who passed away recently) and he said, “You’re not going.” R’ Moshe protested that the commander would kill him if he didn’t return this time but Moshe Morosov said, “And if you are sent to the front, you won’t be killed?!”

The bachurim came up with

a plan thanks to which R' Moshe was able to remain in Kutais until the end of the war without being drafted.

ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE

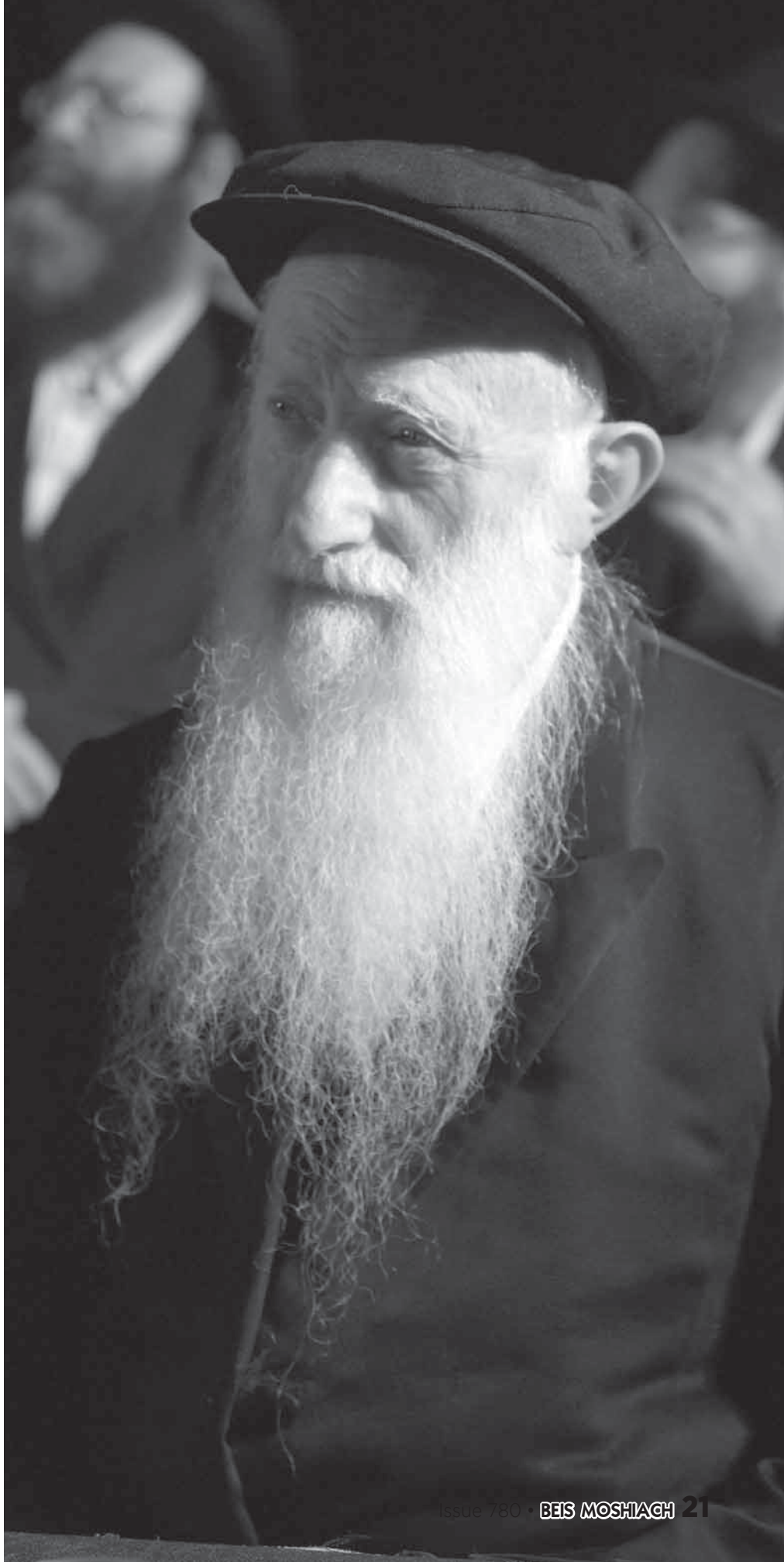
When the war was over, R' Moshe tried to leave the Soviet Union but was unsuccessful as he related:

“After World War II, there was a way to leave the country using false Polish passports. The rabbanim of the time ruled that we must flee Russia, even on Shabbos. That’s what happened with me; I had to travel on Shabbos to Lvov, the border town.

“Together with my mother and sister we boarded the train to Moscow (from where we would have to get to Lvov). The trip took days. Before Shabbos I took out all my papers, money and other muktza objects from my pockets and put them amongst our luggage. Shabbos morning the train stopped at a station in Kubishev. My mother and I got off the train. An announcement was made that the train would stay there for half an hour but not five minutes had passed and the train suddenly began moving! My sister was left on the train without us and my mother and I were stranded in the station without our papers or money!

We walked around the train station until policemen stopped us and accused me of being a German spy. After a brief interrogation I was released. With the help of Jews from a nearby town, after Shabbos I bought tickets for another train that left for Moscow.

Since our papers and money had been lost, we waited for over three months in Moscow until forged documents were



obtained for me which I needed in order to travel to Lvov and from there, to cross the border into Poland. Since I had no money for the documents, they got tickets of soldiers that were purchased cheaply but when they were examined in the Kiev station they discovered that I was a civilian using a soldier's ticket. I was taken off the train and once again I found myself alone in an unfamiliar city.

A short while later, the communists figured out that Chassidim were escaping from Russia with forged documents. Many were caught and whoever didn't make it across the border remained under communist rule for many more years, including myself. Since I was afraid of being caught, I disguised myself and fled the city."

R' Moshe changed his last name to Friedman and was known by all as Moshe Friedman or by the nickname "Moshe der Geller."

CHAMAH

From the Ukraine, R' Moshe went to Uzbekistan where he joined the Chassidim in Samarkand. In 5716/1956 he married Mara Malachovsky. The wedding took place in Prunza and for the last sheva brachos the couple returned to Samarkand.

In the period after the wedding, R' Moshe started the Chamah organization which stands for Chaburas M'zakei HaRabbim. His friend Hilke

Zaltzman, one of the heads of Chamah for fifty years, told how the organization began:

"In 5716/1956, R' Moshe spoke to my brother Berel, and with Leibke and Berke Shiff and a few other young Chassidim, about founding an organization for the purpose of preserving Judaism, spreading Torah, and providing economic assistance for Jews in Russia. In those years, this goal was completely outrageous, but R' Moshe managed to get some of the others excited. He infused that first meeting with an air of mystery. The young Chassidim were invited to a secret location where they laid their hands on a Tanya and swore to work with mesirus nefesh for an organization whose activities would be in accordance with the Rebbe's guidance and leadership. He later included me in the organization.

"At first, the organization was called Chaburas Ahavas Yisroel (Chai), but then R' Moshe called it Chaburas Mezakei HaRabim (Chamah). The organization's goal was two-fold: to spread Torah and the wellsprings and to provide financial relief for Jews in distress. The organization had several divisions that were responsible for relief work and work to promote Jewish chinuch. It was all done secretly, of course, and we even kept this secret from our relatives. The fundraising was also done clandestinely."

A yeshiva was founded in Samarkand under the auspices

of Chamah where a group of bachurim from Tashkent, Samarkand and the area learned. R' Nisselevitch took care of everything; places for them to learn, paying the salaries of the teachers and food for the pupils. Many things were done to strengthen the youth of Anash. In various ways they also taught Judaism to the local Bucharian Jews.

The work expanded but R' Nisselevitch and his friends yearned for a response from the Rebbe. Did their activities give him nachas? They tried sending messages a number of times but did not receive a response.

Before Rosh HaShana 5727/1966, when Naftali Estulin left Russia, R' Moshe gave him a detailed report about all Chamah's activities and asked him to give it to the Rebbe. About a month later, the heads of Chamah received a letter from Naftali in which he wrote that "grandfather" (= the Rebbe) wanted to know how Aunt Nechama was and if she had enough helpers. This line, short but quite meaningful, inspired them greatly. The very fact that the Rebbe had heard about their activities and inquired about them encouraged them tremendously.

Since at this time, the work had expanded, R' Moshe wrote to the Rebbe that Aunt Nechama felt that she needed additional people to help her. A while later, the Rebbe responded by saying that Aunt Nechama had to look for builders from her own social circle.

"MOISHKE THE BLONDIE - THE HEAD OF THE MAFIA"

Everything was done with utmost secrecy and yet word got out as R' Zaltzman relates:

"As much as we tried to



The commander began to laugh, "You are against the Revolution, against the government. You must be drafted into the army in order to help the war effort."

maintain secrecy in all our work, especially with farbrengens, there were times that we overdid it. One of those times, which is most memorable was the Yud-Beis Tamuz farbrengen that fell on Shabbos that year. We held the davening and farbrengen in one of the houses in the Bagishomol neighborhood. There, in a huge yard, lived Refael and Moshiach Chudaitov, Moshe Nisselevitch and others. At that farbrengen, we went a bit “out of our keilim,” and did not keep things quiet and we enabled many people to participate. Among the participants were several of whom we were suspicious of but we had had a lot of mashke and continued farbrenging. As for the danger, we hoped G-d would watch over us.

“A short while later, one of our group, one of the most reliable, was summoned by the KGB. At first he thought he would hide and just not show up but when he got a second summons, he decided to run to his relatives in Moscow for a while. When he returned, he received another summons. He saw that he could no longer hide and he went to the lion’s den.

“As luck would have it, he fell into the hands of the infamous interrogator, Akchurin. This Akchurin was a Moslem Tatar and appointed by the KGB for Jewish affairs. At the beginning of the interrogation they showed him that they knew nearly everything that he knew about himself. Incidentally, they yelled at him for not being honest at his job and even for stealing from the government. These were well-concealed facts that until that moment he thought nobody knew about but him.

“After that introduction they asked him a direct question: Do



R' Moshe Nisselevitch and his sons in Samarkand before he left for Eretz Yisroel

“R' Nisselevitch took care of everything; places for them to learn, paying the salaries of the teachers and food for the pupils. Many things were done to strengthen the youth of Anash.

you know Moishke the Blondie the head of the Mafia? We know that he organizes underground Jewish schools, they said, and although this is legal, everything has to be written down in the government offices.

“He knew where they were heading with that. They pretended that the crime wasn’t that serious and claimed it was just a matter of registration so he would be convinced to tell them what he knew in the hopes that the information wouldn’t harm anyone. He denied having any connection with Moshe. ‘I don’t know a man by that nickname and I don’t know about the activities you referred to.’

“Then the chief interrogator said: You should know that we know that you organized a

farbrengen in Bagishomol (and he took a paper from under his desk so he could pronounce the word ‘farbrengen’).

“After he left the KGB office unharmed, he hurried to Moshe and told him what had happened. They obviously knew plenty about our work but due to the political climate at the time, they could not arrest us and they only sought to frighten us.”

There were also happy moments. One day, R' Moshe received a small package from R' Naftali Estulin who had left Russia already and in the package was a small container with crumbs of lekach from the Rebbe! Each crumb was given to a Lubavitcher family in Samarkand and the Chassidim were overjoyed.



Leading his son Eliezer to the chuppa



Giving a pidyon nefesh to the Rebbe

Almost twenty-five years after failing in his attempts to leave the country, R' Moshe Nisselevitch together with his wife and three children, experienced the fulfillment of the Rebbe's bracha and they left Samarkand, though not before he handed over the running of Chamah to members of the Bucharian community who supported the organization for years to come.

On 12 Iyar 5731/1971 they arrived in Eretz Yisroel and settled in Nachalat Har Chabad. A month and a half later they had twins.

WHO WROTE TO THE REBBE?

Upon his arrival in Eretz Yisroel, R' Moshe wanted to continue his work in being mekarev Russian Jews together with his friends who had worked alongside him in Samarkand.

He wrote to the Rebbe about his having arrived and about his plans to continue his communal work together with his friends who were coming from Samarkand. A few weeks passed with no answer forthcoming from the Rebbe.

One day, R' Binyamin Gorodetzky, the Rebbe's representative in Europe, came to visit Eretz Yisroel. He invited all the recent immigrants to a special meeting at the Devorah Hotel in Tel Aviv where he was staying. Everybody came, and of course R' Moshe was there too.

After he greeted the immigrants, R' Binyamin began to speak about the importance of communal activity in Eretz Yisroel. R' Moshe concealed himself in a corner of the hall while closely following the proceedings. When nobody reacted, R' Binyamin asked directly: Who wrote to the Rebbe that he wants to continue

working on behalf of the klal?

All were silent. R' Moshe was quiet too but he realized that the Rebbe had sent R' Binyamin regarding the letter he had sent.

After everybody left the meeting, R' Moshe went over to R' Binyamin and told him that he had been the one to write to the Rebbe about continuing in askanus. R' Binyamin asked him: What do you plan on doing?

R' Moshe told him his ideas for spiritual activity among the thousands of immigrants who had come from the Soviet Union, and how he was waiting for his friends to come and join him in his sacred work.

R' Binyamin told R' Moshe that he would give him \$1000 towards his work every month, and said he would not mix in to his work, telling him what to do and how to do it and that R' Moshe should carry out his plans. R' Binyamin sent him \$1000 each month and then the funding came through R' Efraim Wolf, the menahel of the central yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim. Chamah received this support for 23 years!

45 MINUTES IN YECHIDUS

R' Moshe went to the Rebbe

“The Rebbe asked him, “Why didn't you come up when you were called?” R' Moshe said he was shy. The Rebbe said, “If so, how do you want to be involved with spreading the wellsprings?” R' Moshe said, “G-d will help.”

for Tishrei 5732/1971. That Tishrei was very special since many Russian immigrants had gone to see the Rebbe. Those for whom it was their first visit received a special gift from the Rebbe, 70% of the cost of the ticket.

At one of the farbrengens, the Rebbe said to the guests that whoever ran a yeshiva over there (in Russia) should come forward and receive mashke. Some Chassidim pushed R' Moshe to go but he was shy and didn't move until finally, someone else went up to the Rebbe and received the mashke instead of him.

At kos shel bracha on Motzaei Rosh HaShana, when R' Moshe passed by the Rebbe, the Rebbe asked him, "Why didn't you come up when you were called?" R' Moshe said he was shy. The Rebbe said, "If so, how do you want to be involved with spreading the wellsprings?" R' Moshe said, "G-d will help."

Before his return flight, R' Moshe had yechidus that lasted 45 minutes. He gave the Rebbe pictures of the talmidim who learned in the secret yeshivos and the Rebbe guided him in how to run Chamah in Eretz Yisroel.

R' Moshe was ambitious. He dreamed of working with large numbers of people, and quickly. He told the Rebbe of his plans but the Rebbe calmed him down and told him that he should start off by putting a desk in the branch of Tzach in Tel Aviv. The Rebbe also told him to call the organization Chamah and not to use the name Chabad.

When R' Moshe returned to Eretz Yisroel and he gave the hanhala of Chamah a summary of the yechidus, R' Yehoshua Raskin bought an office desk from the flea market and put it in



R' Moshe (in the center) with immigrant children at yeshivas Achei T'mimim in Rishon L'Tziyon

the branch of Tzach in Tel Aviv. That's how the work began. After only a month and a half, they decided to expand and with the Rebbe's blessing an independent office was opened on Nachmani Street in Tel Aviv.

Rabbi Chadakov called the office, with the Rebbe on the line, and said they should register Russian immigrant children in suitable schools.

R' Yosef Ladaiov was enlisted for this work and some other energetic bachurim who had worked back in Samarkand. They began circulating among the Russian immigrants, mainly among Bucharian Jews, and getting them to register their children in religious schools.

At a certain point, there was a big demand for religious schools but unfortunately, there weren't enough places for them all. R' Nisselevitch and his colleagues started an educational program in Ashdod and from there, the students went to learn in yeshivas Achei T'mimim in Rishon



R' Moshe Nisselevitch with Mr. Zalman Shazar

L'Tziyon.

In Teves 5733 the talmidim were moved to Kfar Chabad to a new program founded by Chamah: Yeshivas HaBucharim. Rav Berke Schiff was appointed the principal and together with R' Simcha Gorodetzky, R' Shlomo Maidanchik, the mashpia R' Mendel Futerfas and R' Shmuel Chefer, the school got off the ground. For a short while it was under the auspices of Chamah. Thousands of children learned in this school over the years.

Next on his agenda, R' Moshe started Beis Chana in Tzfas and



The Rebbe thanked R' Moshe for offering him his years as a gift

this too was under the auspices of Chamah. Once again, once the school was established, Chamah left the school in the hands of the local administration and went back to its usual activities.

Along with starting these schools, preparations began to build the Chamah center in Nachalat Har Chabad. With the start of *perestroika* in the Soviet Union, Chamah got back to work in that country along with the work being done in Eretz Yisroel with new immigrants.

Over the years, R' Moshe received answers, financial support and special instructions from the Rebbe. As usual, he kept all this to himself and only thanks to his friends do we know a little bit about the Rebbe's relationship with Chamah.

R' Moshe used every moment to be mekarev more and more Jews to Torah and mitzvos. His *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe was unbounded.

After the Rebbe's heart attack that occurred on Shmini Atzeres 5738, there were Chassidim who

offered their lives for the Rebbe. R' Nisselevitch didn't hesitate and he wrote to the Rebbe that he offered his entire life as a gift to the Rebbe! The Rebbe responded with this famous answer:

Thank you for your brachos and wishes for healing and health. With the kindness of Hashem, the Healer of all flesh who does wonders, and in the merit of the prayers of the public that stood by me, my health has improved ...

It has already been said that whoever blesses is himself blessed by Hashem according to His blessing, whose addition is greater than the original, materially and spiritually. With blessings for length of days and good years and success in your holy work.

PERSONAL HIDDURIM

R' Moshe had certain practices that, when necessary he did publicly, but hiddurim that pertained to him alone he did privately. He took many hiddurim upon himself that he heard about from various sources. For example, in *netilas yadayim* he committed to extra care even as a youth in Kutais.

His children remember him washing his hands with a number of cups of water and using a few towels and this was after repeated checking of his hands. After washing his hands until the end of the meal, you could not touch his hands, and if they were touched he would wash again. This made him nervous throughout the meal until he decided to eat while wearing gloves.

A LOVE FOR TANYA

He had a special regard for the Tanya. He always had a small one in his pocket and there was

always a Tanya on his table. In recent years he devoted himself to the subject of Tanya. Seven years ago he published *HaTanya Kadisha v'Kocho HaEloki* which is a compilation about the importance and holiness of the Tanya from the sichos and letters of the Rebbeim and from a reshima that he wrote from the Chassid, R' Chaim Avrohom Duchman a"h. The reshima had been stored in jars in the earth in the yard of the Nisselevitch home and when they moved to Eretz Yisroel they brought it along with them.

He directed his son Yosef Yitzchok to publish booklets for children that explain Tanya, in many languages, as well as a commentary on the Tanya in Russian. These are widespread today and are a big part in spreading the wellsprings outward.

He planned on writing s'farim on *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe and about the mitzva of *tz'daka* according to the teachings of the Rebbeim and from stories of Chassidim. On his bookshelf there were many post-its with notes and ideas about the writing of these books and he made notations in many s'farim.

He wasn't interested in making money with these s'farim. His first book about Tanya was sold cheaply and this was his plan for the other s'farim, to just cover the costs.

Despite his stature and his age, R' Moshe conducted himself in a friendly manner with everyone. His acquaintances will tell you that he was the first to greet them and he showered them with blessings. His head was busy with hafatza and Chassidus and his feet were on the ground. When he said Kaddish you heard him and when he said Yechi,

nobody missed it. His children say that he did this intentionally for he wanted everyone to hear what needed to be heard.

LIVING WITH MOSHIACH

R' Moshe lived with the topic of Geula. While still in Samarkand, when someone wanted to leave the city for a while, R' Moshe would warn him that Moshiach was about to come and the person might be stuck somewhere when Moshiach showed up.

In the 70's he would write to

the Rebbe and address him as "Admur Melech HaMoshiach." This is the reason why he was unwilling to buy a cemetery plot for himself and why, every year, he put his Kinos into *sheimos* because he did not expect to recite them the following year.

At davening and public events he would cry out the prayer and request, "Yechi ..." and whoever heard him say it could not help but be moved.

R' Moshe had a heart attack at the beginning of Kislev and in examining him, the doctors

discovered that he had cancer. He passed away the night of Purim Katan and was buried in the Chabad section of Har HaZeisim. He is survived by his wife and children: R' Eliezer – shliach in France; R' Chaim – shliach in Talpiyot, Yerushalayim; R' Dovid – shliach in the Har Yona neighborhood of Natrat Illit; R' Sholom Dovber – Tzfas; R' Yosef Yitzchok – director of Chamah, Nachalat Har Chabad.

R' Moshe's loss is keenly felt and the consolation is that he left five sons who are outstanding Chassidim. ■

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Upon this statement I affix my signature, Sunday 20th Tamuz 5766



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THE YEHUDI VS. THE IVRI

“The Yidden could not tolerate such sacrilege brought about by the false “Ivrim”, and despite the heartbreak this entailed, the Jews separated themselves from the name “Ivri” and took upon themselves the name Yehudi.” * A translation of a poignant and electrifying sicha delivered by the Rebbe Rayatz in the year 1941. Beginning with a detailed account of the story of Purim, the Rebbe addressed the crisis facing the Jewish nation in his time. * Originally said and published 70 years ago, the sicha is uncannily relevant to our times. * Purim Sichah of 1941 Part II.

Translated and adapted from the original sicha

At the time of the Purim story, Mordechai HaYehudi (“the Jew”) held a position of prominence as one of the outstanding Jewish leaders of the time, living in a most central location, in the capital of the 127 countries that made up Achashverosh’s kingdom. He was in close contact with all the Torah Jews throughout all the lands of Diaspora, as well as those who were still living in Eretz Yisroel. However, notwithstanding his great influence in all matters within the Jewish community as well as in the king’s palace, he devoted his life to Jewish education.

Mordechai, in his capacity as a Jewish leader, was well aware that what stands at the epicenter of Judaism is education of its youth, and that this chinuch must be carried out by religious

teachers. Thus, he organized schools staffed with teachers who were pious Jews, Jews who understood the importance of, and who put their whole emphasis on, implanting within the hearts of the Jewish children the belief in Hashem, love of the Torah, and self sacrifice for Yiddishkait.

While the affluent, assimilated Jews were living a hedonistic lifestyle, Mordechai with his dedicated group of teachers were raising a large number of Jews, true Talmidei Chachomim (Torah scholars) and committed to mitzva observance, who then matured to adulthood and themselves made sure that their own children as well would have an authentic Jewish education. These parents were also burdened by the concerns of making a livelihood and then,

during the time of Haman’s evil decree, were even prepared for martyrdom, nevertheless they still faithfully sent their children to learn Torah.

For ten years, Haman schemed and plotted as he rubbed shoulders with the members of the king’s governing committees. Through well thought-out machinations, Haman was able to get himself appointed as one of Achashverosh’s close advisors. His wealth, accumulated through treasures he had found, was the single most important tool in his successful rise to power (see Midrash, Esther Rabba 7:5).

Haman’s prestige rose more and more. Considering that he originated from an inferior caste where the most valuable commodity was honor, the king established Haman at the highest rung of his inner circle of advisors. He then made an edict that all citizens, even the highest princes, must bow and prostrate themselves before Haman. This was the ultimate boost to the ego of the lowly Haman HaRasha.

The correct and original title of the Jew is “Ivri”. It says in the pasuk: “And the survivor came, and told Aram the Ivri”. This is how the Jews referred to themselves throughout the generations, from the time of Avrohom Avinu and on. The connotation of the title “Ivri” is that the Jewish nation is descended from Avrohom Avinu. To describe Avrohom Avinu is superfluous. Avrohom Avinu was the first who made Hashem’s name known to mankind. He showed everyone that Hashem, Blessed Be He, is the Creator of

the world and that He directs the world with Divine Providence. He also taught the world how to serve the Creator. Despite all his physical and material challenges, he nevertheless pursued this holy task of spreading the truth of Hashem.

The title “*Ivri*” is a designation of honor that crowns the Jewish nation and which expresses the great self-sacrifice each Jew possesses to fulfill and perform the holy and divine Torah and mitzvos, in all times and places. That is how Yidden, “*Ivrim*”, have lived throughout the generations. With great perseverance and self-sacrifice, men and women, old and young, have kept the Torah and mitzvos.

However, within this general description, there developed a new situation. When the era of the “Kingdoms of Yehuda and Yisroel” began, the fulfillment of Torah and mitzvos began to deteriorate, and the thousand years of vibrant Judaism and the traditional “*Ivri*” concept developed a different face. The term “*Ivri*” previously reserved for the observance of Torah and mitzvos temporarily assumed a political implication.

From the very first day, from the time when our forefathers’ progeny were crowned with the superior designation and name “*Ivri*”, they were called “*am Hashem*,” the nation of Hashem.

The entire world, even Amalek, knew that Jews are the descendants of Avrohom, that they are the Chosen Nation, meaning that they are the nation of Hashem. But when the political “*Ivri*” arose, he proclaimed himself to the world as a member of a national state, meaning he severed the *nation* (“*Am*”) from *Hashem*, Who defined it. And one of the first things he did was to take certain parts of Torah



and mitzvos and reform them. Thus, within the Yidden there developed two types of “*Ivrim*”, one a Torah and mitzvos “*Ivri*” and the other, a political “*Ivri*.”

With this introduction, the

words of Yona the Prophet become abundantly clear: “And he told them ‘I am an *Ivri*, and Hashem, the G-d of heavens, I fear’”. (Yona 1:9) Yona did not suffice with the name “*Ivri*”;

instead he found it necessary to add the qualification implied by the words “Hashem the G-d of the heavens I fear”. This was because at that time there already existed the two above-mentioned types of “*Ivrim*” – the true kind and the false kind. And therefore Yona had to add the distinction of yiras Shamayim to demonstrate to them that he was from the true *Ivrim*.

The Yidden could not tolerate such sacrilege brought about by the false “*Ivrim*”, and despite the heartbreak this entailed, the Jews separated themselves from the name “*Ivri*” and took upon themselves the name *Yehudi*.

The name *Yehudi* (see Megilla 13a) implies that the Torah Jew is distancing the political “*Ivri*,” who serves idols as a means to support his political ends. But more crucially, the name *Yehudi* also indicates that the stamp of self-sacrifice is dictated directly by the *pintele Yid* to fulfill mitzvos and to battle with all the aberrant deeds of those who want to deny Hashem, His Torah, and His promise to redeem us.

As one of the king’s closest advisors, Haman HaRasha (“the Wicked”) was very well acquainted with the political “*Ivrim*”. He socialized with them often, and they ate and drank together. Yet Haman, in his fraternizing with the political “*Ivrim*”, never found their ancestry to be in issue. In all his interactions with them there was not a scintilla of recognition that they were of Jewish stock. When

they spoke the Hebrew language among themselves, Haman didn’t even take notice. In addition to all his positive dealings with them, the political “*Ivrim*” bowed down and prostrated for the rasha, and when Haman HaRasha proceeded with his anti-Jewish scheming and libeling, it did not phase them. Thus, Haman could not comprehend why Mordechai was different than the rest of the “*Ivrim*”. He – Mordechai – is a political person, Haman reasoned with himself. He is a polyglot, and he frequently meets with the highest sovereigns, so why is he – Mordechai – different than the other “*Ivrim*”?!

Finally the matter became clear to him. Haman’s advisors told him that Mordechai is a *Yehudi*, and they clarified for him the quintessential difference between an “*Ivri*” and a *Yehudi*. “*Ivri*”, they explained to Haman, is a political title which could refer even to a Jew who opposes the Jewish religion, and may have beliefs antithetical to those held by the true Torah Jew. It is just a term signifying a superficial classification, denoting and implying no more than a certain country and a certain nation living there, and it has nothing to do with the religion and the lineage of the person it is referencing. The name *Yehudi* however, symbolizes the true Jew, who believes in G-d, Blessed Be He, and fulfills Torah and mitzvos with the greatest self-sacrifice and devotion.

Haman HaRasha, who had the best feelings of friendship

towards the political “*Ivri*”, felt the greatest enmity and hatred to the true *Yehudi*. It was only then that he truly understood why Mordechai not only refused to bow, but he would not even “stand up for or tremble before him” (Megilla 5:9).

Honor can be given in one of two ways, and these two different ways stem from two different sources. The first type of honor originates in recognition and the second kind of honor is a result of trembling and fear.

To explain: the honor that comes from recognition comes as an outcome of reverence. However, honor than results from fear comes as an outcome of trembling and intimidation. These two distinct modes of procuring honor are brought out in Hebrew “*kam*” (standing up) and “*zah*” (trembling). When a person feels reverence for another person, he stands for him out of respect for his greatness. On the other hand, someone who is afraid of authority will show him respect out of terror and with trembling. The Megilla retells that Mordechai “*Lo kam v’lo zah*” (he did not get up nor did he tremble). Haman was bothered by Mordechai’s not standing up as well as by his not trembling. Haman – no matter how puerile and intoxicated he may have been – was very well aware that the great honor that he was afforded by the king’s subjects was not a reverential respect, but a respect borne from fear. Because he had unlimited powers given to him by King Achashverosh to punish anyone and in any way he wanted, everybody therefore feared him and gave him respect with great trembling. ■

(To be continued be”H)

“Haman HaRasha, who had the best feelings of friendship towards the political “*Ivri*”, felt the greatest enmity and hatred to the true *Yehudi*.”

CHASSIDIC BIRTHDAY TRIPS



Chassidim dancing
near the plane on their
way to the Rebbe

When Chassidim go to the Rebbe for the first time they consider that their spiritual “birthday.”

*** This week, stories about people whose lives were transformed by going to the Rebbe.**

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelevitz

shliach, Beit Shaan

In the HaYom Yom for 30 Shvat the Rebbe Rayatz tells us: “Many Chassidim considered the day they arrived in Lubavitch to be their “birthday.” We shluchim can tell about hundreds of mekuravim who went to the Rebbe and were “reborn.” Interestingly, this does not only happen before 3 Tammuz but today too, people go to 770 and feel the spiritual power of “Beis Rabbeinu Sh’B’Bavel.” They go home full of chayus, having made good resolutions, and they proudly tell about the spiritual experiences they had, even years later.

I think there must be millions of people in the world who went to the Rebbe at least once and then don’t forget this visit for the rest of their lives. You can say that all mekuravim to a Chabad house can be divided into two groups: those who went to the Rebbe and those who haven’t

gone yet. Those who went are proud to say, “I got a dollar from the Rebbe,” “I attended a farbrengen,” “I was in 770, Chabad world headquarters.” It’s only natural that whoever went to the Rebbe feels a connection to Chabad and the Chabad house, and this expresses itself in attending davening, shiurim and farbrengens at the Chabad house “as though” he was born in Chabad.

THE POWER OF THE REBBE

The following story shows that not only when a person is aware that he is going to the Rebbe, does it have an effect on him, but even someone who goes to the Rebbe without planning to do so is lifted by the Rebbe and is saved, materially and spiritually.

Rabbi Yitzchok Lifsh, shliach in Tzfas, told this story:

One Friday night in Tishrei 5743/1982, Shabbos Parshas Haazinu, I was sitting with some friends in the zal of 770 when I noticed two backpackers. They came over to us and began asking questions: Who are you? What is this building? Where can we meet the Lubavitcher Rebbe?

They said they had just come from a long trip to India, California etc. I told them the story about the Ramban (Nachmanides) and his student R’ Avner who went off the derech and eventually did t’shuva because the Ramban could show him his name in Parshas Haazinu, a story the Rebbe told at the farbrengen the year before.

One of the guys said in amazement, “Did anyone tell you that my name is Avner? The story is incredible, especially for me, and especially after what I went through and what brings me here tonight,” and Avner began telling his story.

“Like every Israeli kid I finished the army and went for a long trip to the Far East to ‘find meaning in life.’ I ended up with some cult where everybody convenes every day in the presence of the guru and each person is allowed to go up to

the mike whenever he wants and say whatever he feels like saying. The philosophy of this cult is that there is no privacy, no limits, anybody can say whatever he wants, when he wants, with the guru occasionally interjecting his comments.

“One day, I was at this gathering and looking around I saw, to my amazement, that more than half of the people were Jews. I felt the need to speak up and I went over to the platform, took the microphone, and began to sing, ‘Adon Olam.’ I thought I would sing solo but suddenly, people joined in from all over the room, almost everybody sang, there in the ashram, about Hashem, the Master of the world.

“The guru suddenly came over to me and asked me to explain what the song means. I began to think, what *did* the song mean? I explained the little that I knew. I was moved when I realized that this was the first time in my life that I was thinking about the words of this prayer to the Creator.

“He listened, thought for a while, and then said to me and everyone, ‘You should all know that we have enormous powers. We could have conquered the world with our philosophy long ago; there is only one thing that weakens us and prevents world domination and that is the Lubavitcher Rebbe who sits in New York.’

“As soon as I heard that, I said to the guru, if that’s the problem then I’ll bring the Lubavitcher Rebbe to you. (Avner had no idea what a Rebbe is and what Lubavitch is; he thought the Rebbe was some public figure). I immediately left for the US. I was just at Shlomo Cunin in California and I heard from him how great the Rebbe is. I realized

that the Rebbe can’t be brought anywhere but I could go to him. Now, my friend and I want to get to know the Rebbe.”

Avner and his friend stayed in 770 where Avner became a baal t’shuva and he eventually studied acupuncture. He was born anew.

FROM A CHRISTIAN SCHOOL TO A CHASSIDIC YESHIVA

Rabbi Moshe Akselrod, shliach in Atlit, shared the following story with us from the time he learned in 770:

One day, a fellow named Shlomo came to learn in yeshiva. He learned with us for a few months and then went to another yeshiva. It was only when he told us something about his past that we realized what a transition he had undergone.

Shlomo said that his family was Israeli but not quite religious. “My parents went so far as to register me in a Christian school. When we came to America, I was ten and I went to public school and being among non-Jews didn’t even bother me.

“When I graduated I worked in my uncle’s store here in New York. He was a little more connected to Judaism than I was. He is the one who took me on Motzaei Shavuot to stand on line and get kos shel bracha from the Lubavitcher Rebbe. I stood in front of the Rebbe for a few seconds, received the wine, and then and there, for no apparent reason, and without anybody trying to persuade me, I decided that I would be going to yeshiva.”

Shlomo started from zero and went up and up with Mishna, Gemara, and Chassidus, and he established a fine Chassidic home.

HE KEEPS GOING BACK FOR MORE

Rabbi Eliezer Weiner, shliach in Beit Shemesh, relates:

A few years ago, we started something new at our Chabad house. I organize a group of mekuravim to go to the Rebbe for Yud Shvat. The first time we went, someone I’ll call Shmuel joined us. He had gotten involved with Chabad while abroad. He attended all the t’fillos, shiurim and farbrengens as well as the goodbye farbrengen we held in 770 on our last day there. At this farbrengen, I asked every person to tell us what this visit to the Rebbe had done for him.

When it was Shmuel’s turn, he hesitated. He is a quiet, introverted person and not accustomed to addressing a crowd, but since he had to say something, he said: I did not believe that I would dance in 770 and sing “Yechi” because I am usually a bystander who watches the dancing, but here the simcha is so contagious and it’s all with Ahavas Yisroel that I just naturally joined the dancing.

Half a year went by and in the middle of that summer Shmuel went to R’ Weiner and said, “I have to go to the Rebbe again. That visit warmed me up but now I feel that I’m beginning to cool off so I have to go back ...”

Shmuel ended up holding out for another few months and then joined the group that went for Yud Shvat again.

Another year went by, Yud Shvat was approaching, but no group had been organized from Beit Shemesh. Shmuel told R’ Weiner that it made no difference whether there was a group or not, he had to go. It’s a few years now that Shmuel “considers

the day he went to Lubavitch” as his set time for going again and he spends Yud Shvat with the Rebbe. Each trip “warms” him up and he takes on another Chassidic practice whether it’s davening with a gartel, a shiur in Chassidus, or drawing other people in.

WHAT A TRANSFORMATION!

Rabbi Yosef Elgazi, shliach in Kiryat HaYovel (who was mentioned in this column a while ago in the story about the baal t’shuva who turned his car garage into a Chabad garage) tells an astounding story about personal transformation as follows:

About ten years ago, someone came to the Chabad house from a family with problems. He attended the local high school but most of his time was spent dealing with his problems instead of concentrating on school. At a certain point he moved in with his grandfather. The situation deteriorated further and the boy sank into a depression, grew his hair long and spent most of his time idle, i.e. surfing the Internet. Occasionally I tried renewing our connection and getting him involved in more productive activities but “nobody was home.” Years went by with the situation growing more complicated.

At the beginning of last Tishrei (5770) I came up with a daring idea – to send him to the Rebbe. I went to see him and I told him that we have a donor who wants to pay for someone’s trip to the Rebbe. The kid didn’t understand what I was talking about but I just told him that he was flying in two days.

He spent two weeks in 770 that included Sukkos and

Simchas Torah. To be honest, even over there he didn’t exactly get into things but the moment he returned to Eretz Yisroel a real change began. Instead of his long hair he started growing a beard. Instead of foolish websites he attended minyan and shiurim. Right after that he got a job at the “Chabad garage.” He gets up every morning at 5:30, goes to the mikva and then to Shacharis and from there he goes to the garage where he works at two positions as secretary/manager and as teacher/mashpia of all the employees. He wears a big Yechi yarmulke and gathers all the employees and explains to them about learning Chitas and Rambam and shares many ideas from Torah and Chassidus.

EVEN A LUBAVITCHER CAN BE REBORN

Rabbi Boruch Lipkin, shliach at moshav Merchavia, relates:

A few years ago I participated in a farbrengen of Chassidim in Migdal HaEmek. Rabbanim and shluchim said divrei Torah and recounted Chassidishe stories. Then one of the mekuravim began emotionally telling about his recent trip to 770 from where he had just returned. He said that until he made that trip he was absolutely opposed to proclaiming the Rebbe as Moshiach through “Yechi” and the like. When he went to Crown Heights he tried hanging around people who thought as he did, but as soon as he went to the big zal of 770 and joined the davening and farbrengens, and learned with some bachurim he realized that this is where the chayus and hiskashrus to the Rebbe can be found. “It is here that you feel that the Rebbe is chai v’kayam.” He announced at the farbrengen that he had changed his opinion

and he loudly proclaimed, “Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V’Rabbeinu, Melech HaMoshiach L’olam Va’ed.”

Rabbi Moshe Stern a”h, a teacher in a Chabad school and prison chaplain for Shaata prison, was at this farbrengen. After the mekurav said his piece, R’ Stern said, “The fact that even today, after 3 Tammuz, a person can go to 770 and have such a deep experience to the extent that he changes his way of thinking, proves that the Rebbe is with us. Each of us can and must ‘do t’shuva’ and strengthen his connection with the Rebbe MH”M.”

R’ Lipkin added that he knows of a bachur in a Chabad yeshiva who went to the Rebbe for Tishrei and was “reborn.” He returned full of enthusiasm in all the Rebbe’s inyanim; he learns the Rebbe’s sichos altogether differently, he keeps the s’darim, and it’s all done with simcha as he learned in 770. He became a Chassid, thanks to Tishrei in 770.

EACH TRIP GIVES ME NEW STRENGTH

Rabbi Chaim Becher, shliach to Givat Zev, told me about a close friend of his by the name of Asher who is a big contractor and a donor of the Chabad house who goes to America occasionally. On every trip he makes sure to go to the Rebbe. Asher says that every time he visits the Rebbe it strengthens him in all aspects of Judaism, Torah and mitzvos. In addition, whatever he asks of the Rebbe is fulfilled within a short time.

Today, Asher is a regular at the Chassidus shiurim at the Chabad house and he takes part in all the Rebbe’s mivtzaim in Givat Zev. ■

REDEMPITIVE HEALER

R' Pinchas Landa of Kfar Chabad has produced over forty unique herbal healing formulas. Among wellness practitioners, he is considered a genius in treating skin conditions. What started as a hobby inspired by his father turned into a high-demand skill on the road to redemption.

By Nossan Avrohom; Translated by Michoel Leib Dobry

Many people still associate the words “alternative medicine” with exotic concoctions, pseudoscience, and flaky spirituality. In practical terms however, more and more people in the Western world are turning to alternative forms of healing in search of better cures for their physical ailments. Despite the fact that there is no precise definition for alternative medicine, it primarily consists of all forms of treatment not included in conventional methods of medicine. Many alternative treatments have become more and more accepted over the passage of time. Treatments such as hypnosis, which had been totally disqualified about two decades ago, are today considered as alternative means of conventional healing.

R' Pinchas Landa from Kfar Chabad has produced no less than forty unique herbal healing formulas for a variety of ailments,

most of which are creams for a wide range of skin problems. Among his fellow experts in the field of alternative medicine, he is considered a genius of area of dermatology. Not all those involved in the health field know how to prepare mixtures of essential oils and healing herbs on their own, thereby producing a medication or cream, highly recommended as to its effectiveness. The subject of this article, however, whose love for natural medicine came from his father, and learned its secrets over a period of at least thirteen years, possesses sufficient knowledge and understanding to do this himself. But if you ask him, he'll say he is only a beginner.

When I recently heard from my friends in Kfar Chabad about the tremendous expertise of someone who sat near me in the central synagogue of Kfar Chabad since I had been a

young boy, I raised an eyebrow in surprise. R' Pinchas, a rather quiet and reserved Jew, is not the type of person whose presence stands out. He even recoiled at the very idea of doing this interview at first, but he eventually agreed only in order to serve those who might avail themselves of his remedies and medical advice.

Over a period of two long hours, we spoke about the field of natural medicine, its implications, its medical effectiveness, and of course, the creams he invented after several years of studying homeopathy, naturopathy, Chinese and alternative healing.

HIS EYES WERE SAVED IN THE MERIT OF THE REBBE'S ANSWER

He was born in the Shikun Hei neighborhood of B'nei Brak. His father, Rabbi Yisroel Mendel





recited the *Krias Shma*, he sang every word with the appropriate intonation.

“When he arrived in Eretz Yisroel, he married my mother, who had emigrated from Morocco, and they settled in B’nei Brak’s Shikun Hei neighborhood.

“My father was very interested in natural healing, and not many people knew about it. Our home was filled with books in English on alternative medicine. I recall that my father would periodically travel to a bookstore in Tel Aviv and purchase a new book that dealt with the subject. After his passing, Jews whom we didn’t know came to comfort us. They all told us that they had health problems, and they came to him to receive proper treatment and nutrition, which significantly lessened their pain and suffering.

“We are talking about a time when natural healing was not the ‘trend’ as it is today; only a few people understood anything about it and even fewer dealt with it. My father helped people without asking for anything in return. When he worked in the local mikveh, he gave advice to anyone who requested it. I remember how people would stop him in the street and ask about their health problems, and he gave them advice and direction with great patience. He would often ask them to wait until he consulted one of his books and give them the best possible solution. As a boy, I found myself taking an interest in this subject. I really got into it. I would frequently read my father’s books for hours...”

However, for many years, this great connection that R’ Pinchas had with alternative medicine remained nothing more than a hobby. He had an understanding

Landa, had emigrated to Eretz Yisroel several years earlier from the United States. His whole family had come there from Poland even before the outbreak of the Second World War, thus escaping the clutches of the Nazis. They were affiliated with the Gerer chassidim, whereas R’ Pinchas’ father was the only one who became a Lubavitcher chassid. “One fine day, people told him about the Rebbe Rayatz, his great character, his conduct, his customs, and his self-sacrifice, and my father wanted to see all this with his own eyes. He visited 770, found the atmosphere extremely appealing, and underwent a complete transformation.

“From that moment on, he decided to become a Lubavitcher chassid. During those dark days, the state of Judaism in the United States was not a particularly glorious one, and many were searching for their true path. In Lubavitch, my father found

the love of his soul. By his very nature, he was most reserved and didn’t speak much, a gentle and introverted person who did not share his thoughts and life story with those around him. The only thing that he would tell us was that when he was twelve years old, he was in yechidus with the Rebbe Rayatz and was privileged to receive a bracha from him, but he refused to give more details.

“One day during the ‘Shiva’ after his passing, family members from the United States arrived to offer their condolences, and they told us what they had heard from their parents. It turns out that the Rebbe Rayatz blessed my father in Yiddish that he should be a tzaddik. This bracha was known to his generation of family members, but we his children had heard nothing about it. My father was a very simple, calm, and quiet man, but in matters of Torah and mitzvos, he performed them with great enthusiasm, desire, and excitement. When he

of the subject from his father and the books he read, but he never thought of turning this into the central focus of his life. After getting married, he worked for a living as a Torah scribe and kashrus supervisor – until 5756.

It was six years after his marriage when an event occurred that pushed him to start investing more seriously in the matter. “One day, I woke with a feeling of tremendous inner pressure in my eyes. I hoped that it would pass with time, but the pressure merely intensified from day to day. When the pain wouldn’t stop, I went to see an ophthalmologist, and after a series of tests, he said that he had strong reason to believe that this was a case of glaucoma, a seriously degenerative retina disorder that could eventually lead to blindness. The doctor’s pronouncement hit me like a clap of thunder on a clear day. When I returned home, I quickly put it all in writing and placed it in a volume of ‘Igros Kodesh’. I was frightened and bewildered, but the Rebbe’s answer was so clear that it left no room for any doubts or concerns on my part. The answer dealt with a Jew who had a problem with his eyes, and the Rebbe referred him to a doctor to examine him... I saw this as a bracha to make a more serious examination, which I would do the very next day.

“At the conclusion of the letter, the Rebbe gave instructions for the t’fillin and mezuzos to be checked, which I did without delay.

“I arrived at the medical center the following day for a more thorough examination to determine the source of the problem. During the tests, I noticed doctors moving in and out, one after another, with great

nervousness. I was worried that they had discovered the worst or – who knows – perhaps something even worse? At a certain point, I heard them calling the department director, a highly reputable physician, to receive his professional opinion. He came in, made his examination, and said: The mark that appears on the scope is just a birthmark.

“It turned out that the diagnosis by the first set of doctors was incorrect. I was overjoyed. They released me from the hospital, and after a few days, the pain and pressure simply disappeared. It had apparently just been a virus.

“This ‘experience’ gave me the push I needed to start learning natural medicine. I decided not to settle just for what I knew, but to complete my studies in the best places available in Eretz Yisroel. At first, I learned in Reidman College, an institution in alternative medicine where I studied homeopathy and naturopathy. After completing these subjects, I moved on to Shelem College, where I learned Chinese acupuncture and healing.

“In recent years, I have been completing a massive study of the medical value in combining herbs and essential oils. I prepare creams from these mixtures, particularly for skin disorders, and this is my area of expertise.”

▪ **Do you also diagnose skin problems?**

“Despite the fact that I can make such diagnoses, I try not to do so. Instead, I ask people to come to me with diagnoses from physicians in the field of modern medicine, and then I prepare the appropriate compound that can deal with the problem. In most cases, modern-day medicine does not have creams and ointments

that can properly deal with the heart of the problem, merely with symptoms.

“The first cream that I prepared after months of tests was a cream designed to treat hemorrhoids. I saw that natural healing didn’t provide a satisfactory answer to this ailment, and I heard about many people who had to endure an operation in order to solve the problem. I made a dough comprised of essential and herbal oils, adding dry healing herbs, and I saw that the composition produced effective results. Not only did it bring immediately relief, it also cured the ailment, and I marketed the product to health stores. With more serious cases, I prepare a cream with a much higher concentration to provide even faster relief.”

This was the first cream that R’ Pinchas began to produce and market in B’nei Brak health stores. They tried it, and the customers haven’t stopped coming since. He then proceeded to develop the other forty products he has created – forty creams for forty medical ailments, primarily skin problems. “Over time, I have learned the correctly balanced dosages for each remedy, both in specific and general cases – each one according to the degree of the problem. I gathered the correct knowledge and also learned from practical experience. Combining the two creates a good product at a very high quality.

“I am currently in the process of getting all my creams approved by the Israel Ministry of Health.”

▪ **Why did you choose to focus specifically on skin problems?**

“Each person invests in the field that he likes. There are those who like to deal with diagnoses

and give people the appropriate medication. I am less drawn to the diagnostic area, less interested in receiving patients and diagnosing them. What interests me more is developing the medications, despite the fact that I learned the diagnostic field for many years.

PREPARATION FOR THE REDEMPTION

R' Pinchas made the plunge into the medical field after receiving the Rebbe's bracha. "I'll never forget how it started. A woman came to me with a serious problem. I prepared a special cream for her according to the correct dosage, and I felt a strong need to write to the Rebbe and request his bracha. Theoretical expertise was one thing; practical success was something else. I got into this field because it was important to me to help people. Within the heart of every natural healer, there is a hidden desire not just for the economic profit that the patients pays for the service, but also to provide a remedy for their pain, and above all, the fact that they understand that natural methods really can solve their problems effectively.

"The Rebbe's answer was most encouraging, and the letters received since then have been filled with brachos. In fact, the woman called me just a few days later, at a loss for words to express adequately her thanks and appreciation. Everything had disappeared as if it had never been there. The rest is history. I saw that it was good, and I continued to produce additional quantities. From the people who were helped, I learned what the proper dosages should be. G-d placed medications to all medical problems within nature – all we have to do is find them."



Anyone who follows after the development of natural healing in the world can not fail to connect this to the prophecy of the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach that we are standing about a step from the True and Complete Redemption. "Conventional medicine is about constantly fighting the bad, the opposite of the outlooks of Redemption and the teachings of chassidus, which explain that bad is inwardly good, and therefore we also utilize it to create a better reality. This axiom is at the heart of natural medicine – not to break the bad, but to fortify the good and positive energy until the body and all its strengths will combine and work together in harmony.

"Natural medicine deals with the root of the problem, and we know that the source of all illnesses in our world stems from the impurity that exists within it. Therefore, when Moshiach comes, there will be no hunger for bread, no thirst for water, no illnesses – everything will be complete because the spirit of impurity will pass from the earth, and people will no longer deal with healing the body, rather improving it. There's another fundamental aspect to natural medicine: instead of waiting of problems to come along – purify and advance the body

before a problem is discovered. Natural healing possesses a great deal of spirituality, and we see clearly that if the spiritual design functions properly, it then becomes much easier to deal with the damaged physical design."

In conclusion, R' Pinchas asked to clarify something: "People are too lazy to be examined by a professional and undergo a diagnosis. They come into the health store and ask the salesman to suggest some of his medications for the problems they think are ailing them. Most of these storeowners don't know the first thing about making a proper diagnosis. Their sole interest is selling and in great quantities. People put out a sizable amount of funds for oils and medications that they may not need at all. If they would just go for an orderly examination, they would save themselves a lot of money, because maybe the medication they need is right in the kitchen. People buy concoctions because they saw an ad in the papers, and I tell them, 'Go get examined.'"

*

We check the clock, and we see that two whole hours have passed already. The interview was most interesting, and we discussed many subjects, most of which were left out because there just wasn't enough room for it all. I part from R' Pinchas, the same R' Pinchas I had known all these years, calm and tranquil, and his top priorities are providing help and showing care for others. Even before I leave his house, he quickly goes back to his office. He has to start editing the special health section for one of the newspapers. "The first edition elicited numerous positive reactions, and I am now working on the second one," he says with great satisfaction. ■

PURELY A MIVTZA

For three decades, Rabbi Fishel Jacobs has been completely dedicated to promoting one of the Rebbe's mitvzaim—family purity. Author, public speaker and paskening rav, we are happy that Rabbi Jacobs found the time to share his experiences with us.



Interview by S. Burshtein

Regarding disseminating family purity, imagine you were given the opportunity to save an entire Jewish city from being destroyed, G-d forbid. Of course, you would do that and with complete self-sacrifice. Furthermore, you would be grateful for having been given a chance to perform such a wonderful meritorious act. The magnitude of spreading family purity is greater. It is literally saving lives.

HaYom Yom, 9 Nissan

Throughout his career, Rabbi **Fishel Jacobs** of Kfar Chabad has been releasing books on a wide range of subjects. For example, the memoir *Israel Behind Bars—True Stories of Hope and Redemption*, documents his enthralling thirteen years as a rabbi in the Israeli Prison Service, and is now in the process of becoming a feature Hollywood

film.

His most well known books are the many *s'farim* he's penned on practical Jewish law, *halacha*, in use worldwide. These, augmented by his ongoing public service, have created nothing less than a revolution in one of the Rebbe's *Mitvzaim* Campaigns, a long-time effort we'll be focusing on here.

SB: Please, share with us a little bit about your latest projects.

Rabbi J: Recently, my book, *Family Purity—A Guide To Marital Fulfillment* became available in digital format (.mobi). That means users of the Kindle application on PC, Mac, Kindle, iPhone, iPad, Windows Phone 7, Android and Blackberry can now instantaneously download and begin accessing it on any of these devices.

This is the first book on the subject with this capability.

But, I'd like to give a little

historical perspective to see where we were when we first started publishing. That way, I'll be better able to explain why I'm so excited about where we are today.

Rabbi Jacobs' eyes widen, he speaks with enthusiasm about a subject in which he has obviously invested dozens of years.

It was in 1975 (5735), that the Rebbe included Family Purity as one of the mitzvot in the original Ten *Mitvzaim* campaign.

Four years after that, in 1979 (5779), I began studying in *yeshiva/kollel* in Kfar Chabad. At that time, the only books available in these laws were basic English pamphlets and some scholarly *s'farim* in Hebrew.

Consequently certain subjects were quite neglected, in terms of being taught throughout the community and therefore neglected regarding observance. By the way, when I say 'community' I'm referring to the

worldwide community.

In particular, there is a very technical area of *halacha* involving recording family data, based on a complex chapter in *Shulchan Aruch*, the details of which are outside the scope of this interview. For comparison sake, some of your readers are familiar with the intricacy of the laws of calculating the New Moon, and other lunar calendar *halachas* from Rambam study. I believe the mathematical and conceptual detail in family law surpass those.

After receiving *smicha* in 1986 (5746), I started giving classes in these laws. And, for two reasons, I began summarizing and recording these technical laws. First, I did so for my own instructional use. Secondly, I imagined that if *we*, in *Eretz Yisroel*, which is ripe with learned *Rabbanim shlita*, were encountering difficulties, undoubtedly many other people worldwide were, too.

Simultaneously, I hired a number of computer graphics people to create graphs, calendars and charts specifically designed for this project. That soon proved unsuccessful and a year later I found myself forced into mastering the graphic programs to create these elements by myself.

SB: Yourself?!

Rabbi J: That was the reality of it. Creating elements that exacting is extraordinarily time-consuming. It adds up to *thousands* of very expensive man-hours. The only pragmatic solution was to do it myself.

Another year of intense writing, editing and creating passed. Then, in 1989, with the approbation of Rabbi Yerushlavi *shlita*, we released the first edition of *Zemonim*, a 32-

page compendium of *halachos* with accompanying graphs and expertly laid out ten-year calendar.

Zemonim was immediately and enthusiastically embraced by *anash*. Within a month, the national *N'shei Chabad* convention featured *Zemonim* and distributed hundreds to its counselors to use as a learning aid.

Concurrently, my overall commitment to this field continued to grow.

I realized that no one had ever written a complete book on family law, in English, according to Chabad custom. I found that incredible. In the year 1990 (5759), I began to compile the material, which would eventually grow to be my most well known book, *Family Purity—A Guide To Marital Fulfillment*. We'll come back to that in a second.

In the year 1998 (5759) I published an entire 230-page *seifer*, in Hebrew, on *one* chapter of *Shulchan Aruch* (*Yoreh Deah*, *Simon* 189). Titled *Chochmat HaTahara* (translation: Wisdom of Purification), it was a commentary whose aim was to simplify these laws for other rabbis and students.

The head rabbi of Jerusalem, Rabbi Shalom Mashosh *z"l*, wrote in his approbation, "The work of a craftsman, expressing Torah's most intricate laws, in a way accessible for the thirsty masses." Rabbi Binyanim Adler, author of *Nisuim K'Hilchosom* (Marriage in *Halacha*), wrote, "This book, *Chochmat HaTahara* fulfills its own name by systematically presenting each law, from its scriptural source, through Talmud, until its present day application."

But, it was *Family Purity* that would eventually demand ten

years of daily work to ready for publication.

SB: Ten years!

Rabbi J: Yes. First, *all* books in *halacha* must be exacting. However, *s'farim* which conform to the writings of the *Alter Rebbe*, Tzemach Tzedek, and their successors demand even more exactitude. All told, *Family Purity* has over three thousand footnotes.

Also, I wanted to include things other similar books never had. For example, issues from the wife's perspective, general advice, and a human warmth not always found in *halacha* books. The book, *Zemonim*, which by then had become extremely popular was translated and sold together with *Family Purity*, under the name: *Times*.

Until today, it is the only book on the subject with an approbation from the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States & Canada, who wrote, "This book is to become accepted and standard," the Chabad Rabbinical Court of *eretz Yisroel* called it a "Comprehensive compendium!" and Rabbi Marlowe *z"l* wrote, "Praiseworthy!"

In December of 2010, *Family Purity* underwent its fourth printing.

SB: Sounds like a lot of activity.

Rabbi Jacobs: (Laughs) It's never ending. Every year, since it was first released until today, *Zemonim* is republished anew, each time including the next ten-years' calendar. To date, over 20,000 copies are in use in Hebrew-speaking homes worldwide.

However, since the technological era began to explode around us, I had

LETTER OF THE REBBE

I was very happy to hear that you are spreading family purity—something, sorrowfully, not promoted enough today. My greater anguish, though, is seeing otherwise G-d fearing people not speaking about it out of mistaken modesty.

My father-in-law was precise calling the *yetzer ha'ra* 'the clever one' because it knows exactly how to make each of us do the wrong thing. His father said it's also called the 'animal soul,' not because it's always like a big bullish animal. Rather, sometimes it's like a clever fox—and you need tremendous wisdom to decipher its tricks. Sometimes, it even masquerades itself to appear like a humble or good-hearted *tzaddik*.

Everyone's *yetzer ha'ra* fits his/her personality specifically.

All the above is true regarding *not* spreading family purity. Jews, by nature, are 'merciful, modest and compassionate.' The *yetzer ha'ra* uses these very traits to stop people from speaking about something which is critical for the well being of each and every Jew, their children, grandchildren ad infinitum.

I have just asked my secretary to send you our English booklet on family purity.

Igros Kodesh, 21 Cheshvan 5711 (1950)

“In March 2009, the first of these sites, www.MikvahCalendar.com, was launched. It presently offers five language options, and all major schools of halachic thought... Combined, these sites serve over thirty thousand users, and that number is growing.

dreamed of bringing this *mitvza* up to the times. For many years I contacted people, and made attempts.

Finally, in Sept. 2005, I was contacted by Mrs. Rivkah Bloom, someone I had never met. "What do you think of an online family purity site?" she asked. "What do I *think*?" I responded. "It's one of my greatest dreams."

That began a four-year period of hard work. I'm not a programmer, but from the depth of the questions they were directing to me, I can attest to the intensity and thoroughness with which they approached the subject. I strongly encouraged and helped them prepare the

halachic programming and the overall presentation.

As a result, in March 2009, www.MikvahCalendar.com was launched. It presently offers five (!) language options, as well as all major schools of *halachic* thought.

To varying degrees, I've given extensive assistance to the other two sites serving this purpose. These, too, are wonderful, and each has unique and important features, too numerous to detail here.

For example, mikvahminder.com, additionally offers an ovulation calculator, numerous *halachic* options, *yahrtzeit* reminders and more; whereas,

mymikvahcalendar.com is refreshingly instructional, highly sophisticated and free for users.

Every one of these sites was produced through enormous dedication. I believe the public owes all their respective founders and staff a great deal for the incredible service. I've personally approved all of these sites and serve them on an ongoing basis.

Combined, these sites serve over *thirty thousand* users, and that number is growing.

It is tremendously gratifying to see an area in Jewish law, which barely fifteen years ago was sidelined, now being spread further and faster than I ever imagined possible.

SB: Let's speak about motivation. Why have you spent such a great portion of your life dedicated to this *mitvza*?

Rabbi J: Believing very deeply in the good you're doing has an extraordinarily great influence on your actions. I believe very strongly in the benefit to the Jewish home and family that this *mitvza* brings. During an average month, I respond to hundreds of inquiries from all around the world, from the morning to late at night. I feel this is a holy mission, to help people.

SB: What's the latest development?

Rabbi J: As I noted earlier, *Family Purity* has just been released in digital format. Now, users of Kindle on any of the devices we mentioned can have instant access to the book. Kindle app is a free download for all those devices. We have been able, for now, to keep the price at an extremely low \$9.99.

Digital format is a major development for a number of reasons. First, numerous aspects of this subject are time-sensitive,


and not always do people have access to the book.

The second major benefit is the powerful finding tools, answers to virtually any question can be found with the click of a button.

SB: What's next?

Rabbi J: I have on my desk a manuscript in progress being prepared for publication. It's a compilation of *thousands* of *piskei dinim* I've answered over the last few years through phone calls and particularly the (anonymous) emails I get constantly. I'm anxious for these to see publication, as they respond to many situations in real life, most of which (I think) have never been decided *halacha l'maaseh* before.

Parenthetically, all this public service costs money; and anyone interested in underwriting any of it should please contact me directly.

 All said and done, if this were not one of the Rebbe's *mitzvaim*, I doubt we would have had the energy and strength to have overcome so many obstacles and reach so many goals over the years.

My greatest aspiration, though, is to bring this *mitvza* out into the greater populace of Jews. By that I mean those who are not currently what one would call 'observant.' I believe we have a lot of work still ahead of us. I'm working with a couple of groups, now, to expand outreach and will keep you posted.

All said and done, if this were not one of the Rebbe's *mitzvaim*, I doubt we would have had the energy and strength to have overcome so many obstacles and reach so many goals over the years.

If all the Rebbe's *mitzvaim* are, and he said so many times, geared to preparing the world

for the ultimate and complete redemption, regarding this *mitvza* it is even more apparent. In fact, regarding this one he wrote "Spreading these laws is in preparation for that time when the entire physical world itself becomes purified and 'All flesh will see that all is created from His mouth.'" (*Likkutei Sichos* vol. 20 pg. 227)

Note: For updates and to view books-in progress, see: www.RabbiJacobs.com.

The free download of Kindle, for all devices is available on Amazon.com.

The digital format of *Family Purity* is also available on Amazon.com. ■

Continued from page 15

began asking for help from foreign countries. It asked the Israeli government to help with sanitation, water purification and mobile structures so they can deal with the tremendous damage caused to the city. Until it's all over, we are not thinking of the next stage. Our thoughts are focused on finding Israelis and then we'll see what we'll do next.

You still can't enter the Chabad house as the entire area is closed off. I keep on writing to the Rebbe in my mind and asking for him to guide me and help me in this trying situation. One of the most difficult times for me, when I turned to the Rebbe, was at the Friday night meal.

We are used to simcha and dancing with our guests and there I was, making Kiddush for a few people and I felt that everything had collapsed and whatever we had built up had to be started over again from zero whether in relationships with people or in terms of a well established Chabad house, and who knows when it can reopen and when tourists will show up again? Will we yet sit with dozens of tourists, sharing a Shabbos meal together?

A few weeks before the earthquake, the shliach Mendy Goldstein went to Australia to fundraise for the mikva we planned on building. There is no mikva anywhere on the southern island. We were supposed to

sign a contract on a piece of land where a big, beautiful Chabad house would be built. The contract was going to be signed on the eve of the day the earthquake took place and now all our plans were down the drain.

But it must be said loud and clear, despite the sadness over the loss of lives and property, we know that great miracles took place here. Fortunate are we that we are Chassidim. We remain unfazed by the difficulties. We are shluchim and as long as we need to be on shlichus, we will carry it out. I have no doubt that all the events taking place in the world are paving the way for the Rebbe's hisgalus. May it happen immediately. ■

BRING A KORBAN, NOT A SACRIFICE!

By Rabbi Heschel Greenberg

Founder and Director of the Jewish Discovery Center of Buffalo



VAYIKRA: THE BOOK OF AFFECTION

The third and central book of the Torah, VaYikra, is named after its opening word, which translates as “And He called.” At first glance, it is strange that the name of a book—the central book—should be so ordinary. All this word seems to be saying is that G-d called Moses before speaking to him. What is so significant about G-d calling Moses?

Rashi explains that G-d calling Moses was a sign of the affection He had for Moses. Accordingly, “VaYikra” reflects the love G-d has for Moses, and by extension, for His people—the Jewish people.

What is the central theme of VaYikra? Korbonot, which is usually translated as sacrifices. That these laws are prefaced by the word VaYikra, a word which connotes affection, compels us to conclude that the sacrifices were expressions of G-d’s love for us.

Now the question is why does the offering of sacrifices serve as an expression of love and affection?

AN EXERCISE IN TRANSLATION

One answer lies in the true translation of the Hebrew word “Korban”, which actually means “closeness” rather than sacrifice. The korban was G-d’s way of letting us get close to Him. And, indeed, there is no greater sign of affection for another than allowing that person to get close to us.

This is especially true with regard to getting close to G-d who is Infinite. How can a finite being get close to an Infinite G-d? The answer is that it is impossible. However, G-d, just as He transcends the finite world, so too does He transcend the limits of the infinite. And it is His love for us that motivates G-d to transcend the parameters of both the finite and the infinite. The Talmud coins an expression “*Ahava docheket et ha’basar*,” that love can impel the flesh and overcome the limitations of space that two people occupy. Similarly, G-d’s love for us allows the diametrically opposite realms of the infinite and the finite to meet.

One may still ask a question: Granted that the Korban is not just a sacrifice but rather G-d’s way of demonstrating His love for us, by which He allows and enables us to get close to Him. But why did we have to offer animal sacrifices? And why do we pray for the restoration of the sacrificial order in the future Temple?

There is a two-part answer to this question:

THE PROOF OF TRUE LOVE

First, our offering a Korban involves seeking to fulfill G-d’s will. It is the ultimate expression of our love and desire to get close to another when we do what the **other** wants of us even if we fail to understand why they want it and what is in it for us. If we only give someone that we love a gift that **we** appreciate, then we are not expressing true love. Only when we give them what **they** want regardless of how we feel about it does it represent a gesture of genuine and unconditional love.

Second, we must reiterate that a korban is not really a sacrifice. And this is not just a matter of semantics. There is a fundamental difference between a sacrifice and a korban. A sacrifice implies destroying one thing to preserve something else which we deem more important. A korban, by contrast, represents

“The korban was G-d’s way of letting us get close to Him. And, indeed, there is no greater sign of affection for another than allowing that person to get close to us.”

preserving the original, albeit in a different and higher form.

If we think about it, every physical object we use can also be viewed either as a sacrifice or as a korban. For example, when we eat any piece of food, we can view it as the destruction of its original beauty and form for the greater good. That would mean that we sacrificed an apple because we deem our nutritional needs to be more important than leaving the apple the way G-d made it prior to our intervention.

There is a more accurate way of looking at the consumption of that apple. The apple has now been converted into human energy with all of the benefits that ensue from human ingenuity that were nourished by the consumption of that apple. In that scenario, the apple you ate is not destroyed and thus sacrificed for a greater good. Rather the apple is now transformed into a higher life form and has assumed a new and more sublime identity.

The korban we offered in the Beit HaMikdash involved a representation of every form of existence. It required salt—a mineral; flour, oil and wine—vegetation; an animal and a Kohen—a human being. These four aspects of creation offered in the Temple represented all the inanimate, vegetative, animal and human forms that exist throughout the world. When the Kohen offered this korban he was

“The apple you ate is not destroyed and thus sacrificed for a greater good. Rather the apple is now transformed into a higher life form and has assumed a new and more sublime identity.

in effect taking all of existence and elevating it to the level of the Divine. Nothing was sacrificed. Everything was elevated. Externally, it may look like a sacrifice, but the inner dynamic of the korban is the validation of all that is offered to G-d.

MATURITY: SACRIFICE OR GROWTH?

Perhaps an analogy from the human maturation process will be helpful to put the korban concept into a perspective which will also help us come to grips with the way life will be in the future Messianic Era.

When a child grows and develops into an adolescent and then into an adult he or she does not sacrifice his or her childhood to become an adult. If a child were to sacrifice his or her childhood and be compelled to mature overnight into a full-fledged adult it would be traumatic, daunting, and overwhelming. Rather, a child takes his or her childhood identity and elevates it into a higher form of life. So that while the state of child-hood remains in the adult personality, it is now an elevated child; who is absorbed

and subsumed within the more sophisticated state of adulthood.

THE ENTIRE WORLD A KORBAN

The ultimate manifestation of the korban ideal will be realized in the Messianic Age. First, the Temple offerings will be reinstated as the Torah states, and we make reference to it countless times in our liturgy. Second, all of existence will undergo the process of korban-elevation, not sacrifice.

Many people fear the unknown and particularly the Messianic Age when we imagine the drastic changes which will occur. Will we recognize ourselves and the world around us? Will the Messianic Age delegitimize our Galut/exile existence?

The answer is that the changes that will occur will not destroy or negate anything that exists in the present that is positive. Gradually and seamlessly we will grow and take our present state of mind into a higher and more delightful state—the ultimate growth and validation; the ultimate korban, united with our Creator. ■

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A SOLDIER GOES WHERE HE IS SENT

Reb Avrohom Dunin a”h was a “man of chinuch,” heart and soul, and a true Chassid. That is what drove him to leave home and hearth for six years to run the Chabad School in moshav Brosh in the South of the country. There, in his tiny office, he ate and slept. In this chapter, he speaks of those years and also tells of his efforts to bring a “Tank” to the South * Part 4 of 7

Interview by Chaim Cohen

SIX YEARS AWAY FROM HOME

Let’s go back to your main shlichus – chinuch. After teaching in Taanach, you suddenly ended up on the other side of the country at moshav Brosh in the south.

Yes. At a certain point in my teaching career, I was asked to help out in the Chabad school in Brosh. I would call Brosh “the Taanach of the south.” The mentality, the students, the level – it was all more or less the same as Taanach. This time I was asked to be the principal.

I went south while my family remained in Taanach. My wife worked (and still teaches) in the Chabad school in Taanachim and so she couldn’t leave. This went on for six years.

When they asked me to run the school, I think it was a Friday. I called Rabbi Chadakov to ask him for the Rebbe’s guidance and bracha. The question was also, if I was to take the job, should I move there. The Rebbe’s answer was that for the meantime, the family should stay in Taanach.

When R’ Avrohom Dunin talks about those days, he doesn’t say much about the difficulty and mesirus nefesh of living for six years apart from his family under sub-par material circumstances. He slept and ate in his office in the school.

For Shabbos he would travel from one end of the country to the other under the difficult traveling conditions of those days, in order to spend Shabbos with his family in Taanach yet he

would not forgo being in school on Fridays. Some Fridays, his family made the reverse trip because R’ Dunin had to be in Brosh for Shabbos. But he didn’t spend time on these details because to him it was the obvious thing to do and every Chassid in his place would do the same.

A TANK IN THE SOUTH WAS A NOVELTY

I still remember your slogan from back then, “*Havu tank l’darom!*” (bring a tank to the south)

(smiling): Yes. I remember that ... At first, Lubavitchers in Afula and Natzrat Ilit used all kinds of vehicles as “tanks” and they began talking about the need for a large vehicle that would be a real mitzva tank. They came

up with the idea of buying a commercial vehicle like the post office had, with a large, empty area in the back which would be ideal and would be like the American style mitzva tanks.

After much discussion, Dovid Nachshon took the original idea a giant step further and he brought the first tank to Eretz Yisroel, a real American “tank” (RV). The official name was *Nayadot Chabad l’Tzafon Eretz Yisroel* (Mobile Chabad tanks for the north of Eretz Yisroel). The tank was used all over the north of the country.

When I arrived in the south, I felt that a tank was lacking and I asked Anash to please *havu tank l’darom* – bring a tank to the south. Boruch Hashem, I was able to buy a tank for the south whose headquarters was Moshav Brosh.

One of the things I did in Brosh was enlarge the reach of the school. Till then we accepted only local children and from then on we began holding registration in the peripheral communities too. First we tried in Netivot and then Ofakim. The tank was used to transport students and for mitzvaim of course.

At that time, my eldest daughter Sarah got engaged to Yisroel Hershkowitz. It was around Sukkos time. Once wed, the young couple lived in Lud. Then they considered going on shlichus to Ofakim where they would be able to recruit students to the school in Brosh.

“My daughter and son-in-law (who felt that shlichus is part of the life of a Chassid) received the Rebbe’s consent and they went on shlichus to Ofakim in the summer of 5740/1980. One of the first things they did was to drum up registration for the school in Brosh. Boruch



The “Mitzva Tank” in Taanachim

Hashem, they have magnificent mosdos of their own now. They have a school for girls along with a Chassidic Middle School, a school for boys, and six nurseries. He came to help another school but ended up opening several successful schools of his own.

“Our second daughter married Zev Pizem and they went on shlichus to Sderot. Our third daughter was a teacher in Netivot for a while and today she is the principal of the Chabad school in Ofakim.

“So you could say that out of my ‘temporary’ shlichus in Brosh, another two points of shlichus were added with three families of shluchim in the south.”

“When I finished my official work in Brosh, I got an offer from the Reshet Oholei Yosef Yitzchok to form an alumni association. The appealing offer included a monthly salary, an office, etc. I began putting together lists of graduates but didn’t receive my salary.

“I got involved in opening a school in Acco (as I will tell you soon) and in order to stop working on the alumni lists I hired a secretary, on my own, to work on it. After a while I realized that I would not be getting paid by the Reshet for this work and I abandoned the idea of a national alumni association. Something good came out of it though, a list of local alumni on the moshavim and peripheral cities. Over time I contacted all of them and every year I send them mishloach manos which included lekach and mashke from the Rebbe and later on, mashke mixed with the Rebbe’s wine. There was nosh and a paper that I prepared about Purim that I printed especially for our graduates. We did all the work of making these mishloach manos at home.

“One year, my wife Rochel won a raffle of a trip to the Rebbe and I joined her. We went to the Kinus HaShluchos on 22 Shvat. Since it was close to Rosh Chodesh Adar when we prepared the mishloach manos, I prepared



R' Avrohom Dunin with Jews of Taanachim

the wording of the paper while I was in Crown Heights so I could take it home and copy it without delay.

"On Friday I submitted the paper to the Rebbe along with a letter that explained that I include this paper with the mishloach manos. On Sunday, I stood on line for dollars and the Rebbe gave me a dollar and I kept walking. I suddenly heard them calling me back and the Rebbe gave me another dollar and said, 'This is for the mishloach manos.'

"I was sure that since we were getting close to Adar that everybody received an extra dollar for mishloach manos. A little poll I conducted told me that I was the only one and I realized it had to do with the page I had submitted on Friday. At that time,

the *Kfar Chabad* magazine had a section with news from 'Beis Chayeinu' which included 'gems' from the dollar distribution and they included my experience as an unusual occurrence.

"One year, if I'm not mistaken it was a Shnas Hakhel, I made a Kinus for local graduates. I sent out invitations and planned a surprise for them – our guest of honor, the beloved Itzke Gansbourg, principal of the first Reshet school. The mood at the event was nostalgic and warm.

"We keep in contact till this day and try to attend the simchos of all the graduates."

I understand that retiring from chinuch is not an option for you ...

"After I retired from my official position that was funded by the Education Ministry – as I said, my last job was at moshav Brosh – I was asked to open a Chabad school in Acco. The background to this was as follows:

"R' Nosson Oirechman and R' Yosef Mekmel had a network of preschools for boys and girls. Since the nearest Chabad school was in Krayot, and it was a real schlep to get there, they wanted to open a school for those who graduated from the preschools. That's where I came into the picture.

"We made house calls to

convince parents to register their children and boruch Hashem, the school opened. It was unofficial, of course, without a permit and therefore, it got no budget. Since Nosson had a good relationship with the mayor, he got some help from him but we got no financial assistance from the Education Ministry. This naturally affected the teachers' salaries etc. In the end, after a period of success, the school had to close. What a pity.

"Even now that I am officially retired from chinuch, I am still involved in a project called *Somech Noflim* at the elementary school in Migdal HaEmek in which students who need special encouragement and attention, get it."

We heard that talmidim look forward to visiting with you because of the special treat you give them.

"I came up with the idea, maybe somewhat pioneering in this country, that instead of giving candy I give little boxes of raisins from America. I bring lots of boxes with me so I'll have enough for a long time. It's healthy, compact, and liked because it comes from America, where the Rebbe lives.

In the next installment, read about the criminal file that was opened on R' Avrohom due to a misunderstanding. ■

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