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# ONE WHO HAS NO REBBE HAS NO CONNECTION WITH G-D

There are those who question why it is necessary to have an intermediary interceding on our behalf before G-d. The person with this question is a learned man, a Torah scholar, etc. He is great enough – he claims – to negotiate his relationship with G-d without an intermediary. He doesn't need a Rebbe! \* Nadav and Avihu, of course, were extremely great, having attained the loftiest spiritual heights, but since “they taught Torah law in the presence of Moshe, their master,” they were severely punished – on account of their lack of proper deference to their master.

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Translated by Boruch Merkur

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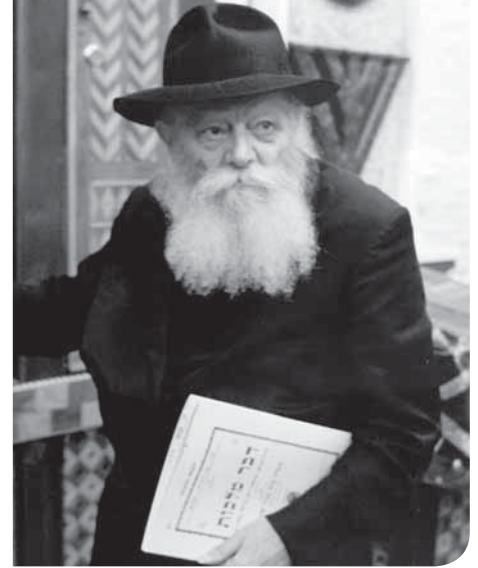
## WHY DO I NEED AN INTERMEDIARY?!

Immediately at the beginning of the Torah portion, Shmini, Rashi focuses on the words, “And a fire emerged from before G-d,” citing the commentary of Rebbe Eliezer: “The children of Aharon did not die accept for the fact that they taught Torah law in the presence of Moshe, their master.” [...]

There is a well-known letter of the Rebbe [Rashab], whose soul is in Gan Eden, that is relevant to this topic. The Rebbe writes that there are those who question why it is necessary to have an intermediary interceding on our behalf before G-d. The person with this question is a

learned man, a Torah scholar, etc. He is great enough – he claims – to negotiate his relationship with G-d without an intermediary. He doesn't need a Rebbe!

If he has a question on a law in the Torah, he has a Gemara with which to consult. If the Gemara is too lengthy on the topic, he has the Shulchan Aruch, with its clearly stated rulings, [including for example] the concise, practical commentary of Be'er Heitev, etc. Regarding difficulties in fear of Heaven (how he can attain it) – for that he has the Rambam, [Rabbeinu Bachaye's] *Chovas HaLevavos*, among many other works. Why must he have



a Rebbe? A Rebbe is not at all something that he is lacking!

## JUST ME AND G-D; NOTHING ELSE

The entire world – he reasons – is G-d and himself; there is nothing else. G-d, the true existence, and himself, the created existence – nothing in between. Besides these two [G-d and himself] there is nothing else in existence!

He continues to argue that it is true that prior to the Giving of the Torah, up until the time when the Sanctuary was assembled, they needed to approach Moshe [for assistance], for only Moshe was able to receive the Torah at Sinai – as it is said, “Moshe received the Torah at Sinai” – and only he was able to erect the Sanctuary and draw down the Divine Presence to the earth, “I will dwell among them.”

(It is explained at length in the maamer of the Rebbe Rayatz's passing [i.e., *Basi L'Gani*] that (after the Divine Presence withdrew to the Seventh Firmament, on account of sin), six righteous individuals [succeeded in reversing that process and they] drew the

Divine Presence down, all the way to the First Firmament. But only Moshe Rabbeinu (who was the seventh) accomplished the “I will dwell among them,” drawing the Divine Presence down from the heavens to the earth.)

However – the man proceeds to argue – after the Giving of the Torah, he has the entire Torah independently and he doesn’t need anybody. He has “the Torah and G-d” and he himself comprises “the Jewish people,” and “The Jewish people, the Torah, and G-d are all one” (Zohar III 73a). Apart from this, there is nothing else.

### **CONTRADICTING THE OPINION OF ONE’S TEACHER IS LIKE OPPOSING G-D HIMSELF!**

In response to this assertion, there is an explicit lesson in Rashi: Rabbi Eliezer comes and says that, given the lesson to be learned from the story of Nadav and Avihu, this line of reasoning is ruled out from the onset.

Nadav and Avihu, of course, were extremely great, having attained the loftiest spiritual heights – to the extent that Moshe told Aharon that “they are greater than me and you,” and G-d referred to them as “‘with those who are close to Me (I will be sanctified)’ – with My chosen ones’ (Rashi).” But since “they taught Torah law in the presence of Moshe, their master,” they were severely punished. That is, on account of their lack of proper deference (*bittul*) to their master.

Thus, [to underscore the latter point] Rashi cites the name of the Talmudic statement’s author, Rabbi Eliezer:

**“Even after the Giving of the Torah, it “is like opposing the Divine presence,” for one still needs a Rebbe, a Moshe Rabbeinu, as described in the verse, “I stand between G-d, your L-rd, and you to tell you the word of G-d.” Connecting with G-d must be through an intermediary, a Rebbe. If not, it “is like opposing the Divine presence.”**

Rebbi Eliezer was praised [by his contemporaries] in the most complementary and fantastic terms, lauding his wisdom and outstanding prowess in Torah knowledge. Nevertheless, it is Rebbi Eliezer who said, “One who articulates words of Torah that he had not heard from his teacher causes the Divine presence to depart from the Jewish people.”

### **I STAND BETWEEN G-D, YOUR L-RD, AND YOU**

The Gemara tells about Rebbi Eliezer that when they came to ask his opinion about a certain law, notwithstanding the fact that he was extremely revered, “as the Torah when it was given at Mount Sinai” – to the extent that a rock that he sat upon was referred to as “Mount Sinai” – nevertheless Rebbi Eliezer said that he could not respond, “because he never says something that he had not heard from his teacher.” Indeed, “contradicting the opinion of one’s teacher is like opposing the Divine presence.”

That is, even after the Giving of the Torah, it “is like opposing the Divine presence,” for one still needs [a Rebbe, a Moshe Rabbeinu, as described in the verse] “I stand between G-d, your L-rd, and you to tell you the word of G-d.” Connecting

with G-d must be through an intermediary, a Rebbe. If not, it “is like opposing the Divine presence.” To be precise with the wording: It is not that he is “lacking (the Divine presence)” but “contradicting/opposing” – he is separated from the Divine presence, separated from G-d Himself!

If so, how is it possible that one could have Torah but no Rebbe?!

Who among the Jewish people is as great as Nadav and Avihu? Their only sin was (as expressed in the saying), “The children of Aharon did not die accept for the fact that they taught Torah law in the presence of Moshe their master.” Yet the devastating effect of this shortcoming impacted not only them; it caused the opposite of the revelation of the Divine presence among the Jewish people!

So too in every generation, every year, and every day – “One who articulates words of Torah that he had not heard from his teacher causes the Divine presence to...” If one has no Rebbe it is impossible for him to have the Divine presence!

*(From the address of Shabbos Parshas Shmini 5726, bilti muga)*

One of the most beautiful islands in the world attracts thousands of tourists—Jewish tourists, including Israelis, looking to forget their Jewish identities in this faraway exotic place. Little do they know that this is the place where they will find it. The Mexican island of Cozumel is the story of a remarkable shlichus.

By Nosson Avrohom



# TROPICAL SHLICHUS IN COZUMEL

**T**he Chabad house in Cozumel, Mexico recently had its first reunion in Eretz Yisroel at the classy Nova Hotel in Tel Aviv. Numerous tourists and well-known businessmen who visited the Chabad house, religious and not-yet-religious, young and old, reserved their places for this evening. Some of them wanted to

reminisce about the wonderful time they spent at the Chabad house while others came to salute the tremendous work being done on one of the most beautiful islands in the world. The hundreds of responses demonstrated how effective the shluchim, R' Dovid Caplan and R' Shlomi Peleg have been since their arrival on the island.

What began as two bachurim on Merkos Shlichus for Purim and Pesach attempting to help the struggling community, has turned into a veritable empire of programming. With the help of another pair of shluchim, Chabad in Cozumel offers a full array of Jewish services: a beautiful shul, a preschool, a kosher restaurant, a store with kosher products,



special programs with tourists, farbrengens, gatherings, and a soon-to-be-completed mikva.

“When we arrived on the island there were a few Jewish families and local businessmen, but there wasn’t one community to unite them,” explains Dovid Caplan. “There was a little room where they would congregate on the Yomim Nora’im without a minyan and without a rabbi to direct them. People didn’t believe we would stick it out. Previously a rabbi from another organization tried, but he left after a few months, having found it difficult to keep mitzvos in such a distant place. Not only did we stay, but we brought shluchim to a nearby town as well – Rabbi and Mrs. Chaim Brod.”

## COZUMEL - ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR ISLANDS IN THE WORLD

The Caribbean island of

world, including tourists from the hotspots of Cancun and Tulum.

Cozumel attracts not only those looking for fun, but also those interesting in nature. In Cozumel there are naturally protected beaches. Also, the government of Mexico established the Cozumel Reef National Marine Park where people are forbidden to touch or remove any marine life. This is of great interest to people fascinated by an unsullied environment. Although only 90,000 people actually live on the island, six million pass through it every year. In fact, last year Cozumel was the most visited place in Mexico.

So, what are Jews doing on Cozumel? “An Afghan Jew opened a successful diamond business here,” said Dudi about the first Jew settling on the island. “He was extremely successful and now he has many branches. Other Jews followed him and they work in diamonds

“One day, I met a Lubavitcher fellow in Crown Heights who worked for a diamond company on the island.” “I had just come back from shlichus to Jamaica, another Caribbean island. This man told me about Cozumel and about the wonderful Jews he met there. However, nobody was working with them and they wanted a shliach. He said many Jewish tourists visited the island and a shul and kosher restaurant were desperately needed for the locals and tourists. When we expressed interest in working there, he connected us to a wealthy Jew who lived there.

“It was before Purim and we decided to go for Purim and Pesach. Our local contact gave us information about more Jews on the island. None of them thought we were serious. ‘You won’t stay here,’ they all said. They told us about the rabbi who gave it a try but gave up. At the time, kosher food was unavailable, kosher



Cozumel is known for its exotic beaches, which make surfing and scuba diving the main attractions. Due to the clear water, divers can explore the magnificent underwater world of multicolored fish and coral reefs, while surfers can take lessons from the international surf champion Nacho Gutierrez. The island also boasts expensive hotels and jewelry stores that draw people from all over the

and jewelry as well. About one hundred Jews live on the island, on a regular basis, but 120,000 pass through each year. Some of them come for a day on cruise ships traveling from the United States to the Caribbean. !

## GETTING STARTED

Chabad outreach on the island began a little over two years ago. Dudi explains the beginning,

food there, not to mention other things. But we had received a Chassidishe chinuch and we explained to them the definition of shlichus. They thought we were naïve. Their skepticism only strengthened our resolve.”

“The man in Crown Heights, who told us about the island, obtained a nice amount of money for us. After we took care of many logistical details, we



Dudi Caplan and Shlomi Peleg

**“The Rebbe then goes on to extol working in Mexico over other locations. We were stunned. There couldn’t have been a clearer answer.**

left for Cozumel with matzos, wine, Hagados, and s’farim. We were able to take food for three months. Before boarding the plane, we asked the Rebbe for a bracha through the Igros Kodesh and we opened to encouragement and brachos. The Rebbe wrote a letter to someone who had lived in Crown Heights for a long time and went on shlichus. The Rebbe told him to draw strength from his stay in Crown Heights and to use it afterwards in spreading the wellsprings.”

“At first we intended on doing Merkos Shlichus. We were joined by Dudi Shagalov, who had also finished shlichus in other locations. We arrived on a direct flight from New York. The ‘Diamond International’ company helped us find a place

to live and during our first days there we visited all the Jewish families we had heard about. At each home we extended an invitation to come and take part in the special Purim event we were planning. Reactions ranged from the warm to the cynical. The cynics wanted some peace and quiet but alas, Chabad had reached them on Cozumel too.”

“Amazingly, all doors were opened to us. We saw *siyata d’Shmaya* (heavenly assistance) every step of the way. We went to the biggest bakery on the island whose owner welcomed us and despite the relatively small order we made, agreed to let us kasher the place. Many of the non-Jews in Cozumel were pious Christians who asked us about our tzitzis and yarmulkes. They had only

respect for us.

“We invited the shliach, Rabbi Shai Amar of Florida to our opening event. A local audio systems company decided to give their sound system for free for the event.”

“A few hours before the event we had no idea who would show up. We prayed that all our efforts would be worthwhile and, thank G-d, it was better than we imagined. All the Jews who lived on the island came, men, women, and children. Not one skipped it. We had brought mezuzos to sell. It would have taken us weeks to arrange times to visit and put up mezuzos and we managed to do this in one evening. Each family received a special gift with a beautiful picture of the Rebbe. People were moved to tears.”

“That was the beginning. We’ve done follow-up work ever since. We went to the little room that was meant to serve as a shul and saw that it didn’t have even one Torah. We arranged for a Torah to be sent and opened the shul. We began hosting Shabbos meals and each time we invited a different family. We were told by a few families that ever since the rabbi left the island, they had tried to keep Jewish life going but had stopped because of difficulties due to lack of knowledge.

“On Yom Kippur, before we came to the island, there was one person who davened in the shul. We took the place and breathed new life into it. After we had a grand Hachnasas Seifer Torah, we held a fundraising campaign for s’farim, baruch Hashem, people in Crown Heights responded generously and now there is a bookcase full of s’farim in the shul. Today, two years later, there are daily minyanim in the shul as well.”



## THE REBBE WRITES ABOUT MEXICO!

After three months of intensive work and an infusion of Jewish life in Cozumel, it was time to leave.

“We saw how what we had done had made tremendous inroads, especially with young people, and we felt that something extremely positive was happening here. Entire families were inspired! What would happen when we left? I pictured a five year old by the name of Tal who had so much Jewish pride. Whatever he heard from us he did, and he would insist on it at home. He was a special neshama the like of which are not encountered every day. One day, his mother came to me, complaining about the transformation her son had undergone. She was upset that he would not eat anything unless the rabbis checked it out to see if it was kosher. From Tal’s teachers we heard how he went around the classroom with pride that he was born a Jew and he did not eat what they ate and how the Creator loved him. I never met a child like this before.”

“He wasn’t the only one. Many of the kids enjoyed their exposure to Judaism. Because of the children’s interest in the lesson, we decided to remain on the island for a while longer and to open a school for them. Just then the Mexican flu began to spread and most of the tourists left Mexico because they were afraid they would catch it. On the island itself the residents tried to stay at home. They all wore facemasks and gloves. We didn’t know what to do. We were thinking of reverting to our original plan and leaving but just as we didn’t leave for Mexico without the Rebbe’s bracha, we



Havdala in the Chabad house



A public Menorah in Cozumel



A chuppa outside the Chabad house

wouldn’t leave Mexico without his bracha.

“In the letter we put into a volume of Igros Kodesh we wrote about our indecision. On the one hand, the shlichus was very successful. We had prevented much assimilation and had fortified the walls of Judaism. On the other hand, our original intention was only as part of the Merkos Shlichus program. Were we the ones to lead this

transformation?”

“The answer we opened to left us dumbfounded. It was in volume 26, page 162:

**Rabbi ... Avrohom Mordechai Hershberg,**  
**Greetings,**

**In response to your letter which reached me after a great delay, which also contained a matter that you refer to as a “personal matter,” but after asking your pardon, it’s actually**

## WHEN HER BUBBLE BURST

The Chabad house has produced a beautiful booklet with the t'shuva story of Karen Avidan, a Israeli tourist who passed through the Cozumel She is presently learning in a Chabad school in Eretz Yisroel. Karen wrote her story and this is an excerpt from one of the chapters:

In many stories about people who became baalei t'shuva or got more involved in religious life, there is a behind-the-scenes story about great people who helped them reach that point. My story begins in Cozumel, a stunning Caribbean island belonging to Mexico. Like many young people my age, I left home after the army to see the world with lots of grand plans but little money. After about three months of traveling in which I saw seven different countries, I arrived in Cozumel, knowing we would be staying there for a maximum of one night.

We were in Playa del Carmen (the point on the mainland from where one goes to Cozumel) in our hostel when the owner of the hostel told us about a booklet that the Chabad house publishes for Israelis. It's a booklet that tells about the island and is given to anyone who visits the Chabad house. The hostel owner told us that we would understand it since was in Hebrew. We read it, were impressed by the island and decided to visit for a day and return to Playa.

When we got to Cozumel it was a Friday and since we knew about the Chabad house we decided to go there for Kiddush. The evening began with prayer, of course. I had no interest in it since even if I wanted to pray (and I didn't), I didn't know how. After the t'fillos we waited for everybody to come and Kiddush was recited. We sat down to eat and the atmosphere was special and as time passed it became even more and more special – the songs, the niggunim, the table talk, the laughter. It all made me feel at home.

After a while, Dudi, the shliach who started the Chabad house in Cozumel with his friend, said a d'var Torah. The sack of resentment about religion that I carried around with me began to weigh heavily. I tried not to get into an argument about Judaism because knowing myself, I wouldn't say it in the nicest way and it could cause tension at the table. Anyway, I never gained anything from these discussions. The people were so wonderful. It just wouldn't have been nice.

But all these reasons were not enough to keep my mouth shut and I found myself in a stormy debate with Dudi about the meaning of life and the logic behind Judaism. To my surprise, it was different this time. The answers I got didn't go round in dizzying circles but hit the bull's-eye. The answers sounded utterly reasonable to me. This had never happened to me before. The conversation went on till late at night with more questions and more answers.

Shabbos afternoon I was in shul, eager to continue asking my questions. But when I arrived, Dudi had already prepared a book for me, *Eich, Lama, u'Madua* (which I highly recommend. This book answered many questions for people coming from the non-religious world and seeking answers with their feet on the ground. To my surprise, the book provided answers that had no need for a follow-up debate. The answers satisfied me. The next night I couldn't sleep. I felt as though someone was pulling the rug out from under my feet.

Everything I had believed until that day, all the stigmas, everything I had lived, it all burst like a bubble. I didn't know what to do with all this information. Now I couldn't run away from it because I didn't believe in it and it sounded foolish to me. My beloved bubble had burst! Now I couldn't go back to my bubble because it no longer existed. I could not say I did not see the truth, because someone had opened my eyes ...

an extremely general matter regarding the position of chief rabbi of the Federation in London etc.

The rule is, *yachid v'rabbim*, *halacha k'rabbim* (in a dispute between an individual and the many, the law follows the view of the many) from which we understand, apparently, that this rule also applies to the benefit of an individual and the benefit of the many. Based on this, in my opinion, there is no doubt that the necessity of the work in spreading traditional Judaism, especially in the area of kosher chinuch, in the South American countries including Mexico and the places nearby, is incomparable to London, even if you want to say that there are big opportunities in quantity and quality to do this in London, especially when the opportunities there are limited due to reasons that surely you know about ...

"The Rebbe then goes on to extol working in Mexico over other locations. We were stunned. There couldn't have been a clearer answer. Later on, someone told us that Mexico appears in the entire set of Igros Kodesh only three times. That day in the Chabad house we only had one volume. We decided that in light of this answer we would remain on the island and continue doing our work. We brought out R' Yoel Benzion and Rochel Esther Forta and their three children."



## EVER-EXPANDING INFLUENCE

The arrival of additional shluchim stepped up the pace of activities at the school so that it became daily instead of only on Sundays or before holidays.

“When people saw we were intent on remaining despite the hardships, they treated us even more seriously,” said Dudi Caplan. “People realized we had come to establish something permanent. More and more people became embarrassed to have a gentile girlfriend or to eat non-kosher in public especially after we opened a kosher restaurant.”

“Because of the development of the sense of community, the message got through to people that we were different than other peoples of the world. When a person can’t bring his spouse to shul or to Jewish events, he quickly realizes the difference. I remember that in the early days of our work here we met an Israeli girl who would eat in non-kosher restaurants and saw nothing wrong in doing so. When she started coming to us for Shabbos, it was because she heard about the good food we served. On the first Shabbos she raised questions about Jewish law that prohibited everything, especially on Shabbos. Her questions didn’t bother us. We knew that an attack is a sign that the neshama is on fire. We patiently explained what true freedom is for a Jew, not the freedom to do whatever one pleases but the freedom to not do and thereby uphold morality and values. One Shabbos followed another and she began taking an interest in Judaism. She asked for Jewish books to read.”

“Before too long she finished reading all the books we had



The front of the Chabad house

“When we opened the mezuzos, oy vey! Written on a piece of paper in Hebrew were the words, ‘G-d should protect this house, Amen.’

and she wanted more. Whenever someone was coming from New York to visit we would ask them to buy books for us. By profession, she trained diamond salesmen in how to convince customers to buy the diamonds and once she realized the true significance of life she began feeling her job was superficial. She left her work even though this cost her plenty of money and now she is learning in Machon Chana in Crown Heights. With G-d’s help, she will soon be marrying a bachur from Montreal.

“There are numerous stories like this one. About ten young people changed their lives from one extreme to another and many others have made significant strides in the right direction.

“We have a shiur that we give in the homes of members of the

community who want to learn more about Torah and mitzvos and implement this at home.” In our first weeks on the island, I got a phone call in the middle of a shiur late at night. An Israeli, who was only a recent acquaintance, screamed, ‘Rav Dudi, you must help me, it’s a matter of life and death!’ His name was Lior and he sounded like he was using his last bit of strength. He told me he was on the other end of the island where his dune buggy had overturned. He was injured and couldn’t extricate himself. I quickly ended the shiur and we went to the place where we thought he was, together with some people from the shiur. When we got there, we found him semi-conscious with fractures all over his body. We called for emergency services



Rabbi Grossbaum on the roof of the mikva

and in a complicated night maneuver he was brought to the local hospital where he stayed until he recovered. He works as a manager in manufacturing and development for a local firm and when I visited him I asked him why he had called us when he had many friends in Cozumel and we had just arrived three weeks before."

"He said that the battery in his cell phone was down to nothing and every move he made was very painful, so he knew he could make only one phone call. When he thought about who to call, he knew that if he called Chabad, they would do all they could to help. His answer moved us very much. We told him that there is a Rebbe who taught us to be concerned about every Jew.

"The most special thing about the work here is the warm and personal connections we make. Not long ago, a fellow wearing a knitted kippa came to us and we spoke about how we can connect to the Rebbe these days through the Igros Kodesh. He wasn't convinced though he wasn't cynical about it. He really

liked us and throughout his stay on the island he came along with us. We tried teaching him all the things that he would be unlikely to encounter in Eretz Yisroel. At some point he confided in us that before he left he had met a girl and on his return from this trip he wanted to get engaged to her but he was afraid she would turn him down.

"This guy helped us a lot because he owned a catering establishment and he was quite gifted at preparing quality food. He took on the job of preparing all the food. Before leaving he agreed to write to the Rebbe. The Rebbe's answer in volume 10, page 313 nearly knocked us off our feet:

**I was pleased to receive your letter informing me of the good news that the wedding took place in a good and successful time and properly, in all respects. May it be Hashem's will that all the brachos that you were blessed with be fulfilled in their entirety, as Chazal say "whoever is granted good, it is for length of days," surely in other areas success will shine too.**

"What could be clearer than that? About two weeks after he returned to Eretz Yisroel we got a phone call from him with the happy news that he was engaged. They married three months later."

\*\*\*

"A few months ago we did a big mezuzah campaign through which we reached Jews that we had no prior connection with. We didn't even know they were Jews. There was a woman from Holland who had run a very profitable stationery company and we got a call from her to come and check her mezuzos. When we opened the mezuzos, oy

vey! Written on a piece of paper in Hebrew were the words, 'G-d should protect this house, Amen.' Of course we told her that this was not a mezuzah. She changed it on the spot and expressed her regret that over the years she had kissed mere paper. She joined our circle of mekuravim."

## INGENIOUS IDEA

Unlike other places in the world in which tourists decide whether they want to enter a Chabad house or not, in Cozumel every tourist comes through the Chabad house. The biggest tourist attraction on the island, up until a few years ago, was diving off the incredible beaches. The first year on the island, the shluchim came up with an ingenious idea. They sat down with Cozumel businessmen and produced a booklet with ninety attractions. The booklet offers a discount of up to 70% for Israelis. However, in order to get it, tourists have to visit the Chabad house.

"People come to us both for the booklet and the services we offer. Israelis come especially for the kosher store with products from Eretz Yisroel, as well as the quality restaurant. Likewise, every evening we have a farbrengen bringing up key issues in Judaism, discussing and learning them."

The shluchim are also in touch with government officials and other prominent people on Cozumel. They are invited to every important event that the municipality does and are considered the religious experts on Jewish matters by the local police.

"When Jews get in trouble with the law or are involved in car accidents, we are the first to be told. We've been to the prison to



extricate Jewish inmates.”

Last Chanuka the shluchim put up a huge Menorah on a tall lift. At the Chanuka party, the “Who’s Who” on the island, famous people, businesspeople, members of the council, etc.-- were all present.

There is a famous radio program *called Shagrir* that is broadcast from California, where Israelis talk about Judaism in their part of the world. Every week, the pair of shluchim from Cozumel are on this program sharing their experiences.

The shul in on the island is unique. There is probably no other shul on the globe that has such a wide variety of Jews visiting it on a daily basis. There are even street signs in Cozumel that say “Beis Knesses”, directing people who are looking for the Chabad house.

“The shul is a constant center of activity. Nearly every week, bar mitzvas are celebrated for the young and old. There is even a special program in which the shul can be toured. Visitors receive a beautiful album that tells the brief story of the shul and then they enter and see the children at their studies. At our store nearby they buy souvenirs and Judaica items and T-shirts with the Rebbe’s ten mitzva campaigns. Then the tour group convenes in the hall and listens to a short speech. The end of the tour is near the Aron Kodesh where each person has his picture taken. At this point we suggest they roll up their sleeves and put on t’fillin. Sometimes I spend three to four hours putting t’fillin on with them all. They are very inspired because Cozumel is the most unexpected place to encounter Judaism. People go on vacation and think they won’t find anything Jewish. I end up hearing fascinating stories about



“At the Chabad house we have a big board and we ask people to write what they did that day to bring the Geula.

*hashgacha.*

“We also take a picture of anybody with a moving story, especially a story of the Rebbe, and there are quite a few of those. Someone came into the Chabad house recently, a Jew from Chicago by the name of Sheldon Robinson, whose father paid the mortgage for 770 way back when. He told us about the warm relationship his family had with the Rebbe Rayatz and with the Rebbe.”

“Just recently we had a guest who considered himself Reform. We took a picture at the end of the tour and he suddenly burst into tears. I asked him what happened and he cried and said, ‘If only my father was here to see me putting on t’fillin.’ He lived in Ft Lauderdale, Florida with no fewer than four shuls near his

house but he had never put on t’fillin. He had heard about t’fillin from his father but had always refused to put them on. ‘The last thing I dreamed I would find on this island was t’fillin,’ he said as he sobbed.”

## COZUMEL IS READY FOR GEULA

In Cozumel the shluchim emphasize the Besuras Ha’Geula and the Rebbe’s request to publicize the prophecy of Geula to the world:

“At the Chabad house we have a big board and we ask people to write what they did that day to bring the Geula. Every farbrengen begins with each participant sharing their personal ultimate wish and when it’s our turn we talk about the hisgalus of the Rebbe and we explain



why this is also a personal wish in addition to being a collective one. I always repeat that we have a vision, ‘kabbalas p’nei Moshiach.’”

In Cozumel we see how the world is ready for Geula. On the island there is a large gift shop. It’s part of the biggest souvenir chain in Mexico. The manager, a local non-Jewish woman, hung up a big sign about Moshiach over the store and guards it zealously.

“Part of our shlichus is to work with the local population and spread awareness of the Sheva Mitzvos B’nei Noach. Non-Jewish businessmen who are associated with us, talk to their Jewish customers and send them to us. Input from a non-Jew is very influential.

“We work closely with Rabbi Moshe Nunez who does a lot of work with the Sheva Mitzvos and even wrote a sort of Shulchan Aruch for the people who follow them. There are thousands of non-Jews who declare that they observe these laws. We recently went to wish mazal tov at a wedding of two gentiles who committed to observing the Sheva Mitzvos. They are gentiles and they know it but they conduct themselves according to Jewish values,. Why? We don’t know; it’s something G-dly. Whatever we say is sacred to them. They don’t try to be Jews; they simply want to connect to the Creator in the most authentic way. Quite a few Jews who met them were strengthened in their Judaism.”

Shlomi Peleg tells about a Sheva Mitzvos project that started ten months ago:

“We saw that many local Jews were interested in learning about the Jewish way of life. But we know that in order to bring the Geula, it’s not enough that

every Jew keep the Torah but gentiles have to keep the Sheva Mitzvos. On Cozumel, we started a project that has been adopted by most of the schools as part of the curriculum. And Information about Sheva Mitzvos is taught twice a year to all the classes.

“We also have bi-weekly meetings attended by the police commander of Cozumel, owners of tourist companies, architects, contractors, government figures and other dignitaries in key positions. We convene with these influential people in order for them to influence all the residents in turn. They look to us as spiritual guides. Here, it is easy to see how the entire world is searching for meaning. People are disgusted by the pursuit of luxury and material attainments. They are thrilled to hear that there is depth and meaning to life. Since we began the project, gentile children have started volunteering to help the needy, they’ve started youth groups and are taking an interest in Eretz Yisroel. Most people here respect Judaism. There have not been any anti-Semitic incidents.”

Last year, the Chabad house began building a mikva to serve the residents and visitors to Cozumel, Playa del Carmen, Cancun and Merida.

“Many religious couples as well as those who aren’t yet, started coming to the island and we felt it was necessary to build a mikva. The ocean is sometimes rough and not convenient for immersing. We’ve gotten a lot of help from Mr. Albert Gad, owner of the biggest diamond company on the island, and R’ Shlomo Markowitz of Mexico City. Rabbi Gershon Grossbaum of Minnesota, an expert in the construction of mikvaos, is responsible for the halachic

details and is supervising the construction. An affluent Jew has volunteered his expertise – he is one of the biggest architects in Mexico. We are hopeful that we will finish the mikva this year.”

As a result of the work the shluchim did in Cozumel, the community of Playa del Carmen requested shluchim of their own. Rabbi and Mrs. Chaim Brod were brought out “There are plenty of Israelis on Playa del Carmen. We used to go twice a week and work with the local Jews and tourists until the local community asked us to come for Shabbos.t. We closed off an entire floor of a hotel and made Shabbos there. Hundreds of Jews stood on the street for the davening, demonstrating Jewish pride. Since the work had become more firmly established, they begged us for permanent shluchim. We passed their request to the shliach in Mexico, who sent out the Brods.”

## DANCING WITH THE TORAH

After many years of waiting, the community in Cozumel received their own new Torah, the first in the history of Cozumel. It was a donation from the Sephardic community in Mexico City. In honor of the event, there were many guests from the area and even from Eretz Yisroel. The completion of the writing of the Torah took place in the Varol home. The many guests who came for the event sat with the rabbi to finish the last letters and when it was done they burst into song and danced the Torah to the Chabad house. This was the first time in history that Cozumel had seen Jews dancing in the streets in honor of the Torah. Mamash Yemos HaMoshiach!

# Behind the Itamar Murders

By David Suissa

**I**t is fashionable when talking about the “peace process” to focus on hope—to try to nurture the moderate elements among our “peace partners” and constantly inject good faith and good will to keep the process moving “forward.”

Because I crave peace by nature, I’ve always had some sympathy for this approach, which is why I have many friends on the left and why I occasionally take a break from my hard-nosed realism to indulge in more dreamlike and wishful prose.

This is not one of those times.

When I saw the horrifying pictures of the Jewish family members in Itamar who were stabbed to death in their own home—Udi and Ruth Fogel (36 and 35 years old), their children Yoav (11), Elad (4) and Hadas, their 3-month-old daughter—I thought of recent reports on the glorification of terrorism in Palestinian society.

It was impossible not to connect the dots.

In the reports, from Palestinian Media Watch, I learned that Dalal Mughrabi, the terrorist who, in 1978, was responsible for the most lethal attack against Israel, is now immortalized by having

the following named for her: two elementary schools, a kindergarten, a computer center, summer camps, football tournaments, a community center, a sports team, a public square, a street, an election course, an adult education course, a university club, a dance troupe, a military unit, a dormitory in a youth center, a TV quiz team and a graduation ceremony.

I also learned that today, a Palestinian child can walk to school along a street named after the terrorist Abu Jihad, who planned a bus hijacking that killed 37, spend the day in a school named after Ahmad Yassin, the man who founded Hamas, play soccer in the afternoon in a tournament honoring terrorist Abd Al-Basset Odeh, who killed 31, and end his day at a youth center named after Abu Iyad, who was responsible for killing 11 Israeli Olympic athletes in Munich.

These are the heroes of Palestinian society—not Abraham Lincolns and Albert Einsteins and Martin Luther Kings, but murderers who crave the spilling of Jewish blood.

Before you rush to defend our “new and improved” Palestinian “peace partners,” note that it

was Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas who funded a computer center named after Dalal Mughrabi in 2009, and who supported the naming of the square in her honor in 2010.

“Of course, we want to name a square after her,” he said to Al-Hayat Al-Jadida on Jan. 17, 2010.

And who sponsored a sporting event named after one of the most prominent terrorist of all, Abu Jihad, in May 2010? None other than PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, the man who is building the “new” Palestine.

Just last year, Mahmoud Al-Aloui, a member of the Fatah Central Committee, said in an interview in Al-Hayat Al Jadida: “It is our right and our duty to take pride in all of the Shahids (martyrs), and it is our duty to convey this message in the most direct manner to the generations to come.”

He wasn’t kidding. Only a month ago, PA President Abbas awarded \$2,000 to the family of a terrorist who attacked two Israeli soldiers in December.

And the very day before the Itamar murders, PA presidential advisor Sabri Saidam delivered a speech reported in Al Ayyam, in



which he emphasized that “the weapons must be turned towards the main enemy [Israel] and internal differences of opinion must be set aside.”

This glorification of Jew-hatred and murder in the name of martyrdom—which marinates all strata of Palestinian society—is happening under the watchful eyes of our Palestinian “peace partners,” who have convinced most of the world, and many Israel supporters, that the real obstacle to peace is not Palestinian incitement to murder but Jewish building of apartments in East Jerusalem.

Even if you’re a passionate peacenik, you have to admit that this is a joke. What does Jewish construction have to do with a Jew-hatred that has been burned into Arab hearts since before the first settlement or even Israel ever existed?

What else but Jew-hatred can explain the consistent refusal by Palestinian leaders to recognize a Jewish state and prepare their people for the inevitable compromises that peace with Jews will require?

As Sari Nusseibeh once said, “How can we Palestinians expect Israel to think we want co-existence when our position on the refugee issue has been tantamount to a call for Israel’s destruction?”

So, here’s my message to my friends in the peace camp. You’ve done an amazing job of telling the world that a peace agreement with the Palestinians is really, really important, and that Israel is primarily responsible for the absence of this agreement.

In fact, you’ve done such an amazing job of blaming Israel that my friend Gary Rosenblatt, editor of the Jewish Week in

New York, wrote last week that Israel has become a “source of embarrassment” for many American Jews. Imagine that.

Well, now you have a chance to make amends and bring some balance to your message.

In honor of the children who were stabbed to death in Itamar, you can release this statement to the world: “It is really, really important, for the sake of peace, that Palestinian leaders eliminate the glorification of terrorism and Jew-hatred that permeates their society, and begin immediately to teach the benefits and compromises of peaceful co-existence with a Jewish state.”

Who’s brave enough in the peace camp to sign their name to that statement?

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# Teaching in Yiddish: Moshiach's Language

The Rebbe addresses his Chassidim in Yiddish. \* Is it better to teach in English or Yiddish? \* What are the Rebbe's guidelines?

By A. Lerer

Chazal say<sup>1</sup> that one of the merits by which the Jewish people left Egypt was **"They did not change their language."**

In a sicha<sup>2</sup> by the Rebbe Rayatz, he explains that this refers to **"Der Yiddishe galus shprach"** (the Jewish language of exile) which in recent generations is Yiddish.

The Rebbe explains<sup>3</sup> at length in a sicha<sup>4</sup>, that there are indeed, special qualities that Yiddish has which are not found in other languages. For hundreds of years, Jewish practice in chadarim, yeshivos, and battei midrash, has been to speak, learn and translate words into Yiddish (Chumash, Mishnayos, Gemara)<sup>5</sup>.

As told in the HaYom Yom<sup>6</sup>, "The Baal Shem Tov used to teach his Talmidim a Shiur in Gemara... The Baal Shem Tov would translate the words (of the text) into Yiddish."

We see the same point in Tanya<sup>7</sup>, "...The Baal Shem Tov z"l would say divrei Torah in Yiddish and not in Lashon HaKodesh..." Likewise, have all the Rebbeim spoken (and said Chassidus) in Yiddish.

So it's understandable why the Rebbe so strongly demands that the language spoken in chadarim be Yiddish and not another language, as we can see in the following letters:

B"H, 20 Cheshvan 5714

The hanhala of the yeshiva and Talmud Torah in Kfar Chabad

... In response to your question that until now you had classes where the language of instruction was Yiddish and you are uncertain about this concerning the upcoming term because of a number of reasons that you mention in your letter and you ask my opinion.

Despite the reasons you mention, you must continue speaking in Yiddish in these classes as it was until now...

... At a time that you see that the "other side" fights for every little thing and nothing is of importance other than victory,

Should not our complete Torah be any less than their matters [and as such] we need to preserve even the "shoelaces," and even more so in a matter that pertains to chinuch, in which it

is very hard to gauge ahead of time the consequences of a slight change in childhood on the rest of a person's life in this world.

To explain this at length would surely be superfluous for those such as yourselves<sup>8</sup>.

\*\*\*

B"H, 6 Shevat 5714

... Learning "Ivris b'Ivris" – it is known how greatly the Rebbeim fought this (despite the "claims" of the "educators" who sought, as it were the "benefit" of the Talmidim, which are the reasons cited in your letter)

It is better and easier that the candidates for teachers should learn the Yiddish language.<sup>9</sup>

\*\*\*

We see from here how teaching in Yiddish is important.

However, there are many teachers and mechanchim that question this in a situation where the talmidim are not familiar with the Yiddish language. Shall the teacher's language of instruction still be Yiddish, and should he also translate (*taitch*) the words of Chumash, Mishnayos etc. into Yiddish, because of the benefits therein? Or rather should he



teach it in the language most familiar to the students, since this is what they best understand?

The Rebbe answered this question, as we shall see in the following letters and oral answers.

B"H, 15 Iyar 5728

The honorable representatives of the parents of the students of the Talmud Torah in Kfar Chabad

... I acknowledge the receipt of your letters and its point... the question about the language of instruction with the talmidim of the Talmud Torah.

... my opinion is, that since the main purpose of the Talmud Torah is to be *mechanech* the students to fear of Heaven and love for Him, and to teach them the *Toras Hashem* and its mitzvos whose "measure is longer than the earth and is wider than the ocean"<sup>10</sup>, which our Sages have therefore warned us<sup>11</sup> about interrupting the learning of the *tinokos shel beis rabban* (schoolchildren) to the extent that we are even forbidden to do so for the purpose of building the *Beis HaMikdash*.

Based on this, it is understood

that the language they should use to teach the talmidim is not the main thing, rather the points that were mentioned – the effectiveness and the increase in quantity and quality in the knowledge of Torah and the mitzvos.

Obviously, in a place where the language has an impact on matters of fear of Heaven and the like, this must be taken into account when determining the language of instruction.

2) What is also obvious is that you don't change the language of instruction in the middle of the year for a number of reasons (if there is nothing outright compelling you to make the change).

3) Under certain circumstances, when parents want to establish the language of instruction, on condition that it has no connection to fear of Heaven and matters of *Shulchan Aruch* etc. then a language should not be forced on the parents but should rather be explained to them; if they are not right in their claims; and as in similar instances – that the language of instruction is established by the

majority of the parents since we always follow the majority.

As for your mentioning special qualities of the Yiddish language, it bears looking into whether acquiring these advantages is the task and responsibility of the school or the obligation of the parents and the atmosphere in the home.

...And my final point here is as follows:

It's very surprising that you don't mention at all an essential matter concerning the students of the Talmud Torah which is, that from a number of sources I have heard negative reports about their behavior, especially on Shabbos and Yom Tov as well as Erev Shabbos and Yom Tov, and in shul on weekdays too.

Although some responsibility lies with the teachers of the Talmud Torah since the *chinuch* of the talmidim according to Torah also concerns their behavior outside the walls of school, especially in a holy place such as a *beis knesses* and *beis midrash*, still, a significant part and perhaps the main part is the parents' responsibility, the father and mother, who are supposed to

instill good character with all the means at their disposal,

And even if they are busy this is their main obligation. This is so when they learn in school; all the more so on Erev Shabbos and Yom Tov after midday and on Shabbos and Yom Tov, when the main responsibility is on the parents.

Since every single matter needs to be utilized for Torah and fear of Heaven, I fervently hope that the enthusiasm and *koch* that was generated concerning the language of instruction which, as mentioned, practically applies only soon before the start of the school year, will certainly be used and in the greatest measure to guide the talmidim in good middos and in matters of Yiras-Shamayim, that are not part of the Talmud-Torah's curriculum, such as brachos, proper t'filla, respecting parents, teachers and the elderly and proper behavior among people (as these are the special lessons for the days of S'fira to act respectfully to one another).

And immediately upon receiving this letter they will have a meeting of all the parents, Ashkenazim and Sephardim, who want one language or another, and they will discuss this problem – the behavior of the students, and in addition to this their behavior in school as far as keeping to the schedule, obedience etc. and will discuss this with the requisite seriousness, a discussion that leads to action.

On the spot they should choose a committee of the parents who will take responsibility for this conduct from now on, and they will have a number of parents carefully supervising with an alert eye the talmidim...as well as other measures to correct the situation as soon as possible and

to improve it in an ever increasing manner.”<sup>12</sup>

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B”H, 28 Nissan 5717

...R' Dovid...

...You wrote asking what the language of instruction should be for the bachurim and talmidim.

Since it is most important to inform them of the Mitzvos of Hashem and those things that we may not do, as this relates to actual practice, obviously there is no time to wait in these lessons until they understand a language other than the one they are accustomed to, and therefore, you need to teach them in the language they presently understand and use the entire time at your disposal to influence them and not for teaching a language, but rather to instill them with a spirit of Yiras Shamayim, Ahavas Hashem, and Ahavas HaTorah<sup>13</sup>.

B”H, 13 Iyar 5717

You write asking whether the learning with your son should be done specifically in Yiddish and not in English.

Since you and your wife know Yiddish, and the hours your son spends in school are very limited as is the practice in this country. Therefore, the accustoming your son to speaking and understanding Yiddish should rather be something you and your wife are involved in, and in school, until he is used to Yiddish, he should learn in the language that he is more used to, so that he acquires greater knowledge<sup>14</sup>.

B”H, 5 Kislev 5704

To the outstanding young man, R' Yehuda Tzvi Fogelman, Buffalo

Regarding the question about the language of instruction.

As you describe the situation,

our advice is to teach the children, temporarily, entirely in English, and at the same time to make an effort, over time, for them to learn Yiddish too, and then you can switch the language of instruction to Yiddish<sup>15</sup>.

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Let us summarize the **various two** Horaos that seem contradictory:

1-Sometimes you should insist on speaking in Yiddish.

2-Sometimes you should not insist on teaching in Yiddish; on the contrary, one should not compel the students to learn in Yiddish but in the language that is easiest and most understood by them.

Though, over time Yiddish should also be taught and then you can switch to teaching in Yiddish<sup>16</sup>.

The two instructions are not really contradictory, but are dealing with different scenarios, as follows:

(1) When then Rebbe says the language should not be switched from Yiddish to another language, it is because (as it says in the letter) until that time, they had classes where the language of instruction was Yiddish, and obviously, this should not be changed.

(2) When the students do not understand Yiddish, they should not be taught in Yiddish, but in the language they understand.

Now, one may ask:

Since the Rebbe says, “to use all the time at your disposal to influence them and **not for teaching a language** but to instill them with a spirit of fear of Heaven, love of Hashem, and love for His Torah.”

How will this coincide with the Rebbe's Horaa, that “at the same time to make an effort, over



time, for them to learn Yiddish too.”

We will understand this by first hearing what Rabbi Cousin *sh'chyichyeh*, former principal in the Chabad yeshiva in London, related:

“In the 1970’s, most of the students in our school spoke exclusively in English and the question arose regarding the language of instruction in school, whether to teach in Yiddish or English since some of the parents demanded that Yiddish be used even though most of the students did not (yet) understand Yiddish.

“Since I did not know what to do, when I had yechidus with the Rebbe at that time, I asked him what to do. The Rebbe told me:

**“If they want the students to be taught the Yiddish language, then speak Yiddish with them in the lunchroom and in the yard at recess but don’t use the Chumash as the “tool” to teach them Yiddish. They should study Chumash only in the language that they understand.”**

Similarly, the Rebbe stated his opinion on this in yechidus with Mr. Frank Lautenberg in 5732:

**“I am not (in favor) of ... the yeshivos who are very enthusiastic about forcing the people to teach all subjects in Yiddish, Gemara etc.**

**I am not enthusiastic about it. We are spending a lot of time to learn a new language and after they have learned it, they have a language barrier, they cannot speak fluently, then are thinking in English, and it is a pity on the time lost, as I said before, “the building is burning!” It is not a normal time. And to say it in a good way, it is a computer era, a computer must have the results in one second.”<sup>17</sup>**

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So too, and in even stronger language, the Rebbe responded to R’ Aron Dov Sufrin a”h, who served for nearly forty years as Director of Education of Lubavitch Foundation, London UK

Notes from Yechidus, 20 Adar II 5725

Issue:

Most of the children in our school (The school referred to is Lubavitch House School in London UK) speak English at home. However in each class there are at least half the parents who would like their children to be taught in Yiddish, and one



**If their children will be taught in Yiddish, which is a strange language to them, they may develop distaste to everything they learn. This will affect them in the future development of their personal Yiddishkait.**

child has left because of this.

There are one or two others who may leave because we do not teach in Yiddish.

On the other hand, there is one or two who may take their children away to other schools if we do start teaching the children in Yiddish, and it will also deter parents of the English and German type from sending their children to us.

Yet there is a possibility that if we would go over to teaching in Yiddish, a small percentage of frumer children may join our school.

Under the present system we have adopted, we are introducing Yiddish into each class (as the Rebbe Shlita may have noticed from the curriculum I handed in), but there is still dissatisfaction amongst some of the parents.

We therefore wish to know what our policy should be for running the school, to teach in Yiddish or English.

The Rebbe’s Response:

**Tell the parents who want everything taught in Yiddish that they most probably also want their children to grow up to be shomrei Torah u’mitzvos, Torah observant Jews.**

**If their children will be taught in Yiddish, which is a strange language to them, they may develop distaste to everything they learn<sup>18</sup>. This will affect them in the future development of their personal Yiddishkait (Judaism)<sup>19</sup>.**

**It is appropriate to speak to them in Yiddish during their playtime, recess, breaks, or when telling them a story as this will help expand their familiarity with the language; however, not when teaching them formal Yiddishkait subjects.**

\*\*\*

The Rebbe’s view is clear.

Since the responsibility of the teacher is to use every moment for teaching Torah and Yiras Hashem, they must speak in the language the students understand, whether it’s Hebrew, Yiddish, English, French etc.

Especially as the Rebbe says, **“In a place where the language has an impact on matters of fear of Heaven and the like, then this must be taken into account when determining the language of instruction, in accordance**

**with this.**

So, it is obvious that when you speak in the language that the children understand best, you will be more successful in instilling Yiras Hashem. But not when you speak in a language unfamiliar to them.

What a pity for every day and every lesson that the student does not understand. It's a loss that cannot be regained.

Let us also add the point made by a senior experienced Melamed, as follows:

When 80-90% of the students are struggling to understand Yiddish, it adds another roadblock against success in learning.

As is, it is already quite challenging for a teacher to teach to 20-25 students at different comprehension-levels. And, this adds more to the misery. For while the teachers are "drilling" the Yiddish taitchen (20 or more times!!) to the English-speaking students, who anyway don't grasp it well, since it's not their language, they naturally (as the Rebbe said) get "turned off".

At the same time, the Yiddish-speaking kids are bored out of their box! Because they "got it" the 1st or 2nd time!!! So, they are simply wasting their time hearing the "taitch" an additional 18 times, so they too, get "turned-off" (and in many cases, become the "trouble-makers" of the class). So it's a total "lose-lose" situation.

The fact is, however, that many of our schools still insist on teaching (and "taitching") in Yiddish, although for most of the students, this is **not** their language. This is apparently not in line with the Rebbe's clear instructions!

So, let us embark on a

revolutionary idea that seems to be perfectly in line with the Rebbe's view, and that is to accustom all the children in **preschool** to Yiddish by speaking exclusively in Yiddish ("Total immersion").

Consequently, by learning in Yiddish in preschool for two years (nursery and kindergarten), the children (age 3-4) will quickly pick-up the language, and so much faster than when they are older (age 5-6 etc.)<sup>20</sup>.

Since several years ago, **Ohr Menachem** and **Beis Chaya Mushka** (both of Crown Heights) have implemented this idea, where there is **total Yiddish immersion** in the entire pre-school.

The results are amazing: Year after year, from grade to grade, these children are learning totally in Yiddish, with absolutely no comprehension difficulties (so far as Yiddish is concerned). There even are children who play with their friends in Yiddish!

**Summary: Considering all the above, it is clear from the Rebbe's Horaos, that in order to (rightfully) teach our Talmidim in Yiddish, and succeed in raising them to be Ehrliche Yidden, Shomrei Torah U'Mitzvos, then, it must begin with total Yiddish immersion in Pre-School.**

By doing so, we will surely see, with Hashem's help, a tremendous advancement on the part of the students, including their behavior, so that they become true and loyal Chassidim of the Rebbe, Ready to march to the Geula!

4) That was said in connection with the siyum of Tanya on the radio in 5741.

5) See also Igros Kodesh vol. 10, letter #2987, "the Rebbe, my father-in-law would say, that deep and heartfelt [feelings] express themselves in Yiddish..."

6) 13 Cheshvan.

7) Igeres HaKodesh, 25.

8) Igros Kodesh vol. 8, letter #2271

9) ibid letter #2388

10) Iyov 11:9

11) Shabbos 119b, Hilchos Talmud Torah ADHZ perek 1, halacha 10.

12) Igros Kodesh vol. 25, letter #9491,

13) Igros Kodesh vol. 15, letter #5404

14) ibid, letter #5444

15) ibid volume 21, letter #7787

16) Ibid.

17) To hear the actual recording of this Yechidus, visit [www.chinuch.co](http://www.chinuch.co) and click on "More", then "Teaching in Yiddish" (English article, at the bottom of page 11, click on the (small black) audio button.

18) This explains too why it is that when the teacher teaches in Yiddish, those students who do not speak Yiddish are usually behind in learning and are struggling to keep up with those who speak Yiddish, who usually do far better in their studies. (Compiler's note).

19) The Rebbe is perhaps indicating a(n additional) prevention against "drop-outs". (Compiler's note).

20) Though one may ask: Since preschool is a place for learning Torah, shouldn't the children be spoken to in the language they understand? How can you speak to them exclusively in Yiddish when that causes bittul Torah?

There are two answers to this: 1) Chazal say, "Sometimes, the wasting time from Torah is its foundation," (see Likkutei Sichos vol. 34, p. 31), and therefore, if the situation is such that it will lead to "the wasting time from Torah" for the sake of Yiddish, where do you think it makes the most sense to do this, in preschool where three and four year olds learn just a little bit or in higher grades? 2) As said, the younger the child, the less time it takes to learn a language.

1) Mechilta Bo 12:6

2) Likkutei Dibburim vol. 3 p. 406

3) See Likkutei Sichos vol. 21, p. 446 and the footnotes there.

# DRINK TO RECTIFY THE DRINKING



Rabbi Heschel Greenberg,

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## SHMINI AND PURIM: TO DRINK OR NOT TO DRINK

We are still in the month of Adar, a month of joy. The Festival of Purim occurred, this year, in the week that we read the parsha of Shmini. *Shaloh* stresses the connection between a weekly parsha and the holiday with which it intersects, even when, on the surface, it seems that they have nothing in common. What connections can we find between Shmini and Purim?

One obvious connection is the reference to a Kohen not drinking wine before entering into the Holy Temple to perform the service there. Aaron's sons, we are told by our Sages, perished on the day the Mishkan (the portable Sanctuary in the desert) was dedicated, precisely because they did not anticipate that command and entered these holy precincts in an intoxicated state.

Purim, too, has much about drinking. It begins—as recounted in the Megilla, the Book of Esther—with the detailed description of the Persian monarch's orgiastic party that lasted for 180 days! And this was then followed by another really wild party that lasted for another seven days at which time the King Achashverosh, lost his head, figuratively speaking, and his queen, Vashti, lost her head, quite literally.

For the Jews these parties were also tragic. Our Sages reveal to us that Jewish participation at this party was the reason G-d threatened them with annihilation. According to the Talmud this threat was due to “enjoying the party of that evil man” (King Achashverosh). According to some interpretations that party was thrown by the King to celebrate what he thought was the total dashing of the Jewish people's hopes—based on Biblical prophecies—that the Holy Temple would be rebuilt.

The Talmud explains that Achashverosh miscalculated the end of the seventy years that was prophesied as the length of time it would take for the Temple to be rebuilt. When the seventy years passed—according to his miscalculation—and the Temple was still not rebuilt, Achashverosh was convinced that these prophecies would not materialize, and thus he celebrated.

That celebration was essentially a celebration of the defeat of the Jewish nation and the loss of their most cherished institution—the Beit HaMikdash. For Jews to join in this celebration was so egregiously insensitive and sacrilegious that G-d sought to jolt them out of their—figuratively speaking—drunken stupor, reflected in, and exemplified by, their physical state of intoxication which

occurred at that infamous party.

On Purim, in accordance with Talmudic fiat, we therefore have the obligation to drink more than usual. By engaging in drinking and still remaining faithful to our Jewish identities and hopes for the rebuilding of the Temple we correct the negative consequences of the drinking that precipitated the threat of Haman in those days.

## UNTIL YOU NO LONGER KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CURSED IS HAMAN AND BLESSED IS MORDECHAI

The Talmud makes an incredible statement with respect to the obligation to drink on Purim: “One is obligated to become intoxicated on Purim until one no longer knows the difference between cursed is Haman and blessed is Mordechai!” There are literally hundreds of interpretations of this cryptic statement, all of which insist that it cannot be taken literally.

Based on the foregoing analysis we might suggest a new interpretation:

The Book of Esther relates that the feast hosted by the King was according to the will of “*ish v'ish*,” which means to comply to each man's will. The Talmud states that the expression *ish v'ish*, which when translated



literally means “man and man,” refers to two of the people who were placed in charge of this feast: Mordechai and Haman. Now we all know that Haman’s intentions and involvement in supervising this feast were not favorable to the spirit of the Jewish people. He certainly did not intend for them to come out of the feast inspired to go out and build the Holy Temple, and for that we certainly should not hesitate to repudiate Haman in the harshest of terms: “Cursed is Haman”.

However, we must try to understand Mordechai’s role at that feast. He certainly could not have wanted the Jewish people to participate in this blasphemous orgy of a banquet. But Mordechai was still in galut/exile. Even after the miracle of Purim, Mordechai was bound by Persian authority and so still could not build the Holy Temple as long as—in the words of the Talmud—“We are still subjects of Achashverosh.” So Mordechai had to limit his influence to that of one who was put in charge of the party in order to minimize the damage to Jewish spirits (no pun intended). And for that he should certainly be blessed.

However, both Mordechai (unwillingly) and Haman (more than happy to oblige) were involved in this party that had at its goal the continued subjugation of the Jews to a Persian monarch in a world without complete Redemption as exemplified by the lack of progress in the building of the Beit HaMikdash.

So on Purim, we must rectify the negative aspect of the drinking party that celebrated galut. And to that end it does not suffice to rejoice through drinking in a way that reviles Haman because he wanted to denigrate the Jews and, on the other hand, to extol

the virtue of Mordechai because he tried to salvage some of their spirituality. That would not be a complete reversal of the harm done to the Jewish people at that party. In order to rectify that party we must also recognize that even Mordechai’s role at that time (though, of course, due to no fault of his own) fell short of the mark. Because even after the miracle of Purim, let alone at the time of the feast that he supervised, there was no Beit HaMikdash; the Jewish people still remained in galut.

Hence on Purim we no longer are satisfied with cursing and repudiating Haman and blessing Mordechai for salvaging and preserving some portion of our Jewish spirit and dignity. We want much more than that; we want Purim to get rid of the Galut entirely—with the imminent coming of Moshiach and the building of the Third and final Beit HaMikdash, that is, a complete and total Redemption.

## AMALEK AND KOSHER FOOD

Another connection between this week’s parsha of Shmini and Purim is the subject of Kashrut, the Jewish dietary laws, specifically which animals we may consume and which are forbidden to us.

According to one Midrashic opinion, the banquet that Achashverosh threw for the citizens—including the Jews—of Shushan was not entirely kosher. And it was that transgression of partaking of non-kosher food and wine that precipitated the heavenly decree that would threaten these Jews with annihilation.

What is the conceptual basis for the connection between Kashrut and the events surrounding Purim?

One way of explaining the connection pertains to the integrity of the Jewish people as a people that does not shed its identity. While Judaism includes many signs that identify us as Jews such as the Mezuzah on our doorposts, the T’fillin we wear on our heads and arms, the Shabbat and Jewish holidays, etc. there is always the threat that we may still assimilate into foreign cultures that will adulterate or even negate our Judaism.

What Mitzvah has the capacity to prevent us from such acculturation? It is Kashrut that counters that threat because it compels us to dine together with those who share the same dietary restrictions and whose way of life is similar. The greatest bulwark against assimilation is the observance of these laws of Kashrut. Likewise on a spiritual level, the eating of kosher food generates the requisite spiritual energies that line our souls and bodies with the resistance to the infiltration of attitudes and beliefs that are anathema to Judaism.

Historically, when Jews lose their commitment to Kashrut and begin the process of assimilation into non-Jewish society, many ultimately choose to return to the Jewish fold as a result of their encounter with anti-Semitism. When they discover the degree to which they were rejected by those very people they sought to join, and when they realize how these people even seek their destruction as we’ve seen in Germany during the era of the Holocaust, the Jews then return to their own people and their own religious life.

Thus, there are two diametrically opposite ways that the Jewish people have historically countered the forces of assimilation:


The first is through their

observance of the Torah in general and Kashrut in particular. The second is through the diabolically evil forces of the very nations into whose culture they wished to enter.

We can now understand a most cryptic statement of our Talmudic Sages: “The most righteous of the animal slaughterers is the partner of Amalek!” Amalek is identified in the Torah as representing the most wicked of nations and the arch enemy of the Jewish people. How can anyone think there is even the remotest connection between any notion of a Jewish profession, let alone one who provides us with both kosher food and Amalek?

My grandfather, Rabbi Yaakov Aryeh HaLevi Grossman of blessed memory, provides an ingenious explanation of such a connection in his work *Darkei Yaakov*:

Both Amalek and the providers of kosher food have become strange bedfellows because they share one thing in common, albeit for opposite reasons. Both serve the interests of Jewish unity and fidelity to their traditions. Kashrut, as we have explained, is the strongest fortification against the intrusion of alien ideas into the Jewish community and to the Jew remaining within the Jewish fold. And, paradoxically, Amalek, too, in his own diabolical way shocks us into realizing the necessity of our remaining Jewish. The threat from the Hamans of the world serves to jolt us out of our reverie and delusion that we are welcome in other societies and that we can graze in foreign pastures. Thus, ironically, the providers of kosher food (“The most righteous of animal slaughterers”) and Amalek are indeed partners!

 By engaging in drinking and still remaining faithful to our Jewish identities and hopes for the rebuilding of the Temple we correct the negative consequences of the drinking that precipitated the threat of Haman in those days.

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### **“UNTIL YOU NO LONGER KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CURSED IS HAMAN AND BLESSED IS MORDECHAI”—REVISITED**

We can now find a second novel interpretation of the enigmatic passage in the Talmud that people should drink on Purim until they no longer know the difference between cursed is Haman and blessed is Mordechai.

However, in light of the above we might suggest the following explanation:

Haman, the descendant of Amalek, is the most reviled figure in all of Biblical literature. And Mordechai, the hero of Purim, is obviously one of its most beloved figures. Yet when Purim comes we can realize that Haman was actually, in a most bizarre way, Mordechai’s partner in bringing the Jewish people to their senses. Mordechai did it by inspiring them to be faithful to the Torah, particularly the laws of Kashrut. And Haman accomplished the same—and perhaps even more—when he unleashed his diabolical plan to annihilate them.

So on Purim we no longer are to know the difference between these two opposite personalities. Both became partners in the Divine drama that brought the Jews back to their roots.

There is also a flip side to this lack of distinction between cursed is Haman and blessed is Mordechai. For so much of our existence and especially in the last century—and continuing

today through the likes of the contemporary Persian Haman and others—we have had our fill of Amalek and his attempts at destroying us. We have had ample opportunity to return to our own people and Torah as a result of these Haman-like threats. Historically, many will argue, Anti-Semitism (“Cursed is Haman”) did as much—if not more—to unite the Jewish people as did the positive inspiration we derived from the “blessed Mordechais” of the world.

However, now we are situated on the very threshold of Redemption. And, as foretold by our Prophets and Sages, we are therefore on the verge of eliminating the Hamans as well. It therefore behooves us to reverse the equation in favor of accentuating “Blessed is Mordechai.” Previously, we would get our jolt of inspiration from the Hamans and would equate it with the inspiration we used to get from Mordechai. Now we are to shift gears and give preference to the inspiration we get from the Mordechais and equate that with the shock value of the Hamans.

In simple terms this means that no longer should we have to resort to negative stimuli to restore our Jewish consciousness. Instead let us unite as Jews through the positive influences and under the banner of the Rebbe, the Mordechai of our generation, and his campaign to strengthen our observance of Kashrut, one of the main themes of this week’s parsha.

# IF I DANCE, WILL I BE HAPPY?

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**A person can live seventy-eighty years and provide life to demons! \* You can be a big tzaddik but it's more important to be mekushar! \* But what does that mean? \* How does it apply to Adar?**

By Rabbi Zalman Notik

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One Friday, the Baal Shem Tov told his disciples to find a guest for Shabbos. They began seeking but did not find anyone. Still, the Baal Shem Tov insisted that they find someone for Shabbos.

With just a half hour before Shabbos and no guest in sight, they went outside the town of Mezhibuzh and waited at the crossroads until they saw a Jew with a heavy sack on his shoulder. They asked him if he had a place for Shabbos and when he said he did not, they suggested he come to the Baal Shem Tov. The man was happy to follow them.

Upon seeing the guest, the Baal Shem Tov rejoiced and he was in an elevated mood throughout the Shabbos. At the third Shabbos meal, the Baal Shem Tov sang. Then he stopped the niggunim and said he wanted each person to say a D'var Torah. There were sixty talmidim sitting

there in the shape of a letter *ches* and the guest was on the left. They took turns starting from the right with each one saying a d'var Torah. When it was the guest's turn the Baal Shem Tov told him to say a D'var Torah. The man said he had nothing to say. The Baal Shem Tov asked him: Can't you say something short? The man said he did not know how to learn.

"Say just one Mishna."

The man said he didn't know anything.

"Didn't you attend school? At least tell us about Avrohom Avinu."

The simple man did not know just what the Baal Shem Tov wanted and thought he was being asked to tell any story he knew.

"I will tell you what happened to me," he said. "Yesterday, Friday, I was released from prison by the *paritz* (squire). I was in the pit for an entire year where I constantly heard voices

coming from the earth. I didn't know whether these were voices of humans or demons and I was afraid to move.

"In my last week in the pit I got up my courage and I bent down to the ground and asked whether they could hear me. They said they could. 'Are you humans or demons?' I asked them. 'We are demons,' they replied. 'I want to ask you some questions.' 'Ask,' said the demons. 'I have noticed that you have a peculiar practice of crying all week and then laughing on Friday night. What is the meaning of this?'

"The demons answered, 'We are a group of demons that live off the sins of one Chassid. He fasts all week and when it comes Friday night he wants to eat, but because of the fast his stomach is shrunken and he cannot eat fish and meat. He recites Kiddush over wine and then his wife serves him a cup of milk. After he drinks the milk he waits half an hour and then he eats his Shabbos meal. But every time his wife brings him the cup, we make sure that some of the milk spills and then he gets angry at her and shouts, 'I fast all week and you spill it?!' 'Sometimes he even threatens that if the milk spills one more time he will go with her to the rav [for a divorce]. All week we worry about whether we will manage to get the milk





to be a Chassid of the Baal Shem Tov and thanks to that, he heard this story at the right time and place so he could be saved. In short: You can be a big tzaddik but it's more important to be *mekushar* (connected) to the Rebbe!

What does it mean to be *mekushar* to the Rebbe? To learn the D'var Malchus every week and to understand from the sicha what the Rebbe wants me to do in the week to come. Why the D'var Malchus specifically? What does it have that is not in Likkutei Sichos or in the Sifrei HaMaamarim?

The answer lies in the fact that these sichos were the last sichos on that parsha that we have heard to date. Since these are the last things we heard the Rebbe say on these parshiyos, this is what we need to do now!

In the D'var Malchus of Parshas Truma, the Rebbe says that in life, a person goes through many things, good and not good, and if he rejoices in the month of Adar whose mazal is "healthy," then it will all turn to good. So Chassidim dance in Adar in order to fulfill the Rebbe's *horaa* (instruction) with body and soul.

Amalek loves two expressions: *amolike* (Yiddish for the way it used to be, the olden times) and *ulai* (maybe). We sometimes hear people refer to *amolike reid* – that which was said long ago. They explain that the Rebbe said that *then* but *today* things have changed ... Others use the term *ulai* – maybe this and maybe that. These calculations are made instead of straight and clear thinking.

Chassidim need to erase these two terms from their lexicons. We need to know that whatever the Rebbe said is eternal, now too, and is not in doubt.

to spill again but when it comes Friday night and he yells, we are so happy because we cause many sins to be done and that is what sustains us.'

"But how come last week you cried much more than usual and last Friday night you laughed more than usual? The demons answered, 'This week we were in grave danger. The Chassid had resolved not to get angry at his wife and he decided, "I will pour the cup of milk in the afternoon and put it in the closet so that on Friday night the cup of milk will be ready for me." On Friday, he poured the cup of milk and placed it in the closet and then he went to the mikva and to shul. Suddenly, his wife heard someone outside selling firewood at half price. She began looking in her husband's wallet for money. The wood-seller knocked at the door and lowered the price even more. In her haste to find money she opened the closet and the cup of milk fell and broke.

Friday night, the Chassid came home in a joyous state of mind. This time, he would not be angry with his wife. It would be peaceful. He opened the closet and the cup wasn't there. He looked around and saw that it had all spilled out. When he asked his wife what happened, she began to apologize. He was furious and he said, "Now I

know that you always spilled my milk on purpose. I wasn't sure until now but now I know the truth. On Sunday we are going to the rav for a divorce."

Said the demons, "If all week we cried because we didn't know how it would work out, that night we laughed much more than usual because we had been successful."

When the man finished his story, the Baal Shem Tov began to sing. When he finished it was Motzaei Shabbos and the beis midrash was in darkness. He told them to light candles and they saw that the talmid sitting on his right had fainted. It turned out that he was the Chassid told about in the story.

## TO EACH HIS OWN REJOICING

Polish Chassidim and Chabad Chassidim tell this story but each group learns a different lesson in avodas Hashem. Polish Chassidim learn that it is forbidden to treat a wife like that and that nobody should be treated in that way. Disparaging a Jew gives life to demons and we want peace and tranquility.

In Chabad we learn that a person can live seventy-eighty years and provide life to demons! This Chassid had the *siyata d'Shmaya* (heavenly assistance)

Of course each person can rejoice in his own way. If you want to rejoice by learning a topic in Gemara, please do, and in the month of Adar learn more than you usually do and by doing so you will be happier than usual. If dancing is your thing, dance more than you usually do. But stick to what the Rebbe said: anything that makes you happy.

The Mittlerer Rebbe writes in a famous letter to a person whose son had died and who was grief-stricken by this that he ought to be happy – and if you are not happy inwardly, then at least do something joyous outwardly, i.e. dance.

### WITHOUT “P’SHTLACH”

It says that the Jewish people were commanded to do three mitzvos when they entered the Land: appoint a king, eradicate Amalek, and build the Beis HaMikdash. In a footnote in the D’var Malchus of Parshas B’Sshalach, the Rebbe says that each of us has a little Amalek in our heart. The first thing to do to overcome this Amalek is to appoint a king, because if there is a king, then you can eradicate Amalek.

What is Amalek? There is a maamer from the Rebbe Rashab, “Zachor es asher asa lecha Amalek” (Remember what Amalek did to you) 5665. In this maamer he describes various types of Amaleks and we will try to translate them into practical terms:

One type of Amalek is when you tell a Chassid a “Rebbe miracle” and he says it didn’t happen or it was just a coincidence. That’s a coarse Amalek. There is a more subtle Amalek as in when the Chassid believes, but he has doubts about the greatness of the miracle.

There was a person who did not have children for ten years and the Rebbe told him to check his mezuzos, blessed him, and he had children. I heard hundreds of stories like this about the Rebbe. I’m interested in a more complex story with lots of details, not an “ordinary” miracle like that. That’s also an Amalek, one who makes the Rebbe very great and capable of doing many miracles, but meanwhile Amalek tells him he doesn’t want to hear about “routine” miracles.

There is an Amalek that we say is the gematria (numerical equivalent) of *safek* (doubt). When Hashem told Avrohom Avinu to make a bris, He did not tell him what part of the body this entails. Avrohom understood on his own that when Hashem said “circumcise every male” that it is the part of the body which differentiates a male from a female. No p’shtlach.

I once heard from R’ Mottel Kozliner a”h that it’s a good thing Avrohom did not ask his friends what a bris is and where to do it, or he would have cut off his beard because that is also what differentiates males and females. It was because he did not ask superfluous questions and did it all with simplicity that he was able to do what Hashem wanted him to do.

Questions like “Perhaps it’s like this or maybe it’s like that?” are Amalek questions. If the Rebbe says to rejoice and Chassidim go and dance, then that’s the way it’s supposed to be because the simple expression of simcha is dance.

But Amalek comes along and asks, “Says who?” Maybe you should hum a niggun under your blanket and that will make you happy!

The Baal Shem Tov once

told his talmidim that before he became known as a tzaddik he was once sitting in a beis midrash and studying Torah when suddenly, an old man with a white beard came out of the Aron Kodesh and said to him, “Come, I will teach you the entire Torah.” The Baal Shem Tov said, “No, get out of here.” He knew that this was the Satan. When his talmidim asked him how he knew, he said, “I saw that his face was sad.”

We are Chassidim and we need to learn everything from the Rebbe. When the Rebbe came in for davening and left afterward, it was always with a happy niggun. Simcha is top priority to the Rebbe. And yet, today when people say we need to dance and sing, others say: What are we, dancers?

The Rebbe has opened a treasure for you. He said that the simcha of the month of Adar transforms all undesirable things of the entire year into something good. Instead of arguing, be b’simcha!

### THE NESHAMA CRIES OUT - MOSHIACH

After all this, there are still some people who will say – but it’s just not me! I’m not the type. I’m a quiet person by nature, not the overtly happy kind of person.

There is a maamer from the Rebbe, “Lo Yechanef Od Morecha” 5721. In this maamer, the Rebbe sets forth one of the foundational ideas of the Seventh Generation. He quotes from a kabbalistic work of the Arizal called *Mevo Sh’arim* where it says, “The secret of the *levushim* (garments) is very great.” What does this mean?

When a fool reviews wise words said by a wise man –

says the Rebbe – ultimately, he will become wise. The same is true for a cruel person that if he repeatedly does kind things, he will become a kind man. The question is, what makes their nature change?

The Arizal says the secret of the levushim is a very great secret. Although the garments are merely external, they have the ability to affect the p'nimius.

At a farbrengen, the Rebbe Rayatz told about a Chassid who had a dream on Rosh HaShana in which he saw that he would not live out the year. Right after Rosh HaShana he went to the Rebbe (the Rebbe Rayatz does not say who) and told him about the dream. The Rebbe calmed him down, saying, “dreams speak of vanity,” but the Chassid was not placated and was very worried.

On Simchas Torah everybody danced while he sat on the side and cried. Then he said to himself, the Rebbe wants me to be happy so that's what I need to do. He got up and began to dance. After Simchas Torah he went back to the Rebbe and in yechidus the Rebbe told him that there had been a harsh decree against him but when he danced on Simchas Torah he eliminated it.

His heart was probably heavy even as he danced and his dancing was just out of kabbalas ol, and yet this was able to annul the harsh decree upon him. This is the inyan of the Seventh Generation, the s'fira of Malchus – to do everything the Rebbe says even if it's with kabbalas ol and not with genuine inner feeling.

## BOTTOM LINE

Learn the D'var Malchus every week. How? Like a Chassid going in for yechidus and hearing

“Suddenly, an old man with a white beard came out of the Aron Kodesh and said to him, “Come, I will teach you the entire Torah.” The Baal Shem Tov said, “No, get out of here.” He knew that this was the Satan. When his talmidim asked him how he knew, he said, “I saw that his face was sad.”

it from the Rebbe.

There is a horaa in the D'var Malchus that a Jew ought to rejoice in Adar in a way that is “above reason.”

In a footnote to the D'var Malchus of Ki Sisa, the Rebbe says: It says, “A person should drink until he doesn't know the difference between cursed is Haman and blessed is Mordechai.” Is there ever a drunk who doesn't know the difference between cursed is Haman and blessed is Mordechai? The Rebbe explains that when something good happens to a person, he says, “Ai, blessed is Mordechai,” and when something bad happens he says, “Ai, cursed is Haman.” But the drunk does not differentiate between cursed is Haman and blessed is Mordechai and he acknowledges that whatever Hashem does is good. That is what the Rebbe says, that through simcha what is revealed is that everything is good.

Sometimes people will say about a person that he does a mitzva because of honor or social pressure – to be accepted by others. So the Rebbe writes in the D'var Malchus, even if you are sure that people are doing mitzvos for ulterior motives, they still did the mitzvos. Even if it seems to the person himself that he is doing a mitzva for ulterior motives, the truth is that he is doing it because of the G-dly soul. Look at everything with a good eye.

A Jew cries out for Moshiach because his neshama cries out for Moshiach. Even if it seems to you to be motivated by other motives, the Rebbe says it isn't.

Like the story about Rabbi Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev when there was no esrog in Berditchev. A merchant arrived in town with an esrog and R' Levi Yitzchok wanted to buy it from him. The man refused until R' Levi Yitzchok agreed to buy it with his share in the World to Come.

The first night of Sukkos, the Jews of the town refused to allow the man into their sukkas. The man figured out that R' Levi Yitzchok was behind this. He went to R' Levi Yitzchok's sukka and R' Levi Yitzchok refused to let him in. The man wanted to fulfill the mitzva of sitting in a sukka and R' Levi Yitzchok told him if he returned his share in the World to Come, he would let him in. The man agreed and R' Levi Yitzchok exulted and said that now he would give the man his share in the World to Come as he deserved it, and not as a business deal.

From here we see that even if a Jew does things for ulterior motives, in a moment of truth, when he wants to sit in the sukka, he will agree to forgo all.

The Rebbe says Moshiach has been revealed and we just need to open our eyes!

L'chaim!

*(Said at a Chassidishe farbrengen)*



# THE REBBE'S RESPONSE TO TERROR: “BUILD ANEW”

The Rebbe gave us the answer long ago about how to react to events like the horrifying massacre that took place last week. There has been a construction freeze in Yehuda and Shomron till now. Now is the time to build new neighborhoods throughout these lands. It's the call of the hour.

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By Shai Gefen

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## WRITTEN IN BLOOD

These words are written in tears, immediately after the funeral for the five members of the Fogel family of Itamar, may Hashem avenge their blood. Beyond the personal sorrow over this great and horrific loss of two parents and three of their children who were butchered by evil people, may their names be erased, we need to remember that the writing has long since been on the wall – in red.

The prime minister of the State of Israel agreed to give in on everything, even the settlements in the Jordan Valley. Netanyahu is the man who spurred on these evil excuses for humans and gave them the legitimacy to perpetrate murder. If you can negotiate with them in order to restore to them the “legitimate rights” of the Palestinian people (as Menachem Begin promised them) and the settlers are invaders, why

shouldn't wild animals released from their cages after roadblocks were taken down, murder people?

In recent weeks, the prime minister has devalued the blood of the settlers in the most brutal fashion. Netanyahu gave the order for rubber bullets to be shot at settlers from close range. For the first time, the army under his rule began training reservist soldiers in how to shoot at their fellow Jews. So why shouldn't monsters come and finish the work?

Netanyahu's government has blood on its hands. It is a government which stopped construction throughout Yehuda and Shomron not only in the interior, but even in those areas that are considered to be ours by consensus, such as Yerushalayim, Maaleh Adumim, Ariel and Modiin, while everybody remains silent and enables this to happen.

Some of them even enjoy the lying games Netanyahu is playing by promising 400 new units in the wake of the recent atrocity. His announcement serves merely to assuage people's anger and in the meantime he continues to prepare for his Bar Ilan 2 speech about all his wonderful concessions.

Each day that passes without a massacre like the one that took place in Itamar, is a miracle. Netanyahu suddenly blames the Palestinian Authority. What a joke. If the murderers are that bad, why does he sit with them to discuss peace? Why is he ready to uproot tens of thousands of people and to establish a Hamas state in Yehuda-Shomron? In exchange for what?

## ONLY THE LIKUD

It's important to remember that indeed, “Rak HaLikud Yachol” (Only Likud Can). Likud is a corrupt party that engendered Kadima. It's a party that hurt us the most while showing its hooves and saying “I am kosher.” Sharon, Olmert, Netanyahu, Shamir, Begin – all of them are Likud. Time after time Likud has demonstrated that all those who abandoned the Torah, end up betraying all that is sacred and precious, including the very ideals that they were raised on.

Mr. Netanyahu, I say to you: It says in Megillas Esther, “Relief and salvation will arise

for the Jews from somewhere else, but you and your father's house will be destroyed." Even in your exalted position you ought to remember that nobody is invulnerable. Look at what happened to your predecessors: Rabin, Sharon, and Olmert who thought they were running the world. Look at their political end. Don't forget where you came from and where you are going.

## **MORE ACTS OF TERROR SINCE "PEACE" WAS MADE**

The Rebbe's sicha from Simchas Torah 5742 sounds as relevant as ever:

**Their only point is that for the sake of peace, they have to do everything, and therefore, they can endanger the security of Eretz Yisroel for the sake of "peace." There is no such halacha that for the sake of peace you can endanger the welfare of Eretz Yisroel; on the contrary, pikuach nefesh (danger to life) puts aside everything else!**

**They see for themselves that since the signing of the peace treaty, there have been more terrorist acts. They say explicitly that these acts of terror are a result of the signing of the peace treaty, seeing that through pressure they can achieve what they want. They say, "We have consumed and will consume more."**

**These acts of terror end with numerous korbanos (sacrifices) of Jewish people, may this not happen. There was an incident that took place now in Antwerp, a respected Jewish city. [On October 20, 1981, a truck bomb exploded outside the Portuguese Jewish synagogue in the center of Antwerp, Belgium. Three people were killed and**



The Fogel home in Itamar in the Shomron

**“ Netanyahu gave the order for rubber bullets to be shot at settlers from close range. For the first time, the army is training reservist soldiers how to shoot at their fellow Jews. So why shouldn't monsters come and finish the work?**

106 wounded. The attack took place in the diamond district of Antwerp, shortly before Simchas Torah services were to begin. It followed by one year the 1980 Paris synagogue bombing, which took place Erev Simchas Torah.] **From now on, may there be no more such incidents.**

**Likewise, there are instances of terrorism which they hide and don't publicize so the public isn't frightened and can sleep at night in peace and quiet without knowledge of what is going on, so the public can't make a commotion: How is it possible**

**that they continue the same approach of withdrawing and capitulating when pressured even though they see the serious consequences of this approach!**

**To prevent these complaints on the part of the public they hide incidents of "partial death (i.e. non-fatal wounds)" (as a result of these acts of terror) to the point that they even hide cases of "total death" (i.e. fatalities), heaven save us.**

**As said before, when terrorists see that Jews cave in to every little pressure, it spurs them on to increase their acts**

of terror and to demand more things. Therefore, Jews must stand firmly and not give in to any pressure and in a way of "so that they hear and are fearful" that the Jewish people are a strong nation and they have the material wherewithal to stand strong!

All the more so is it forbidden to capitulate to pressure and return that which affects the security of Eretz Yisroel and that which poses a literal danger to life – on these things it is forbidden to concede altogether. The only matters open for discussion are those not associated with the security of Eretz Yisroel, that which does not affect shleimus ha'aretz, shleimus ha'Am, and shleimus ha'Torah.

### THE RESPONSE TO THE ATTACK

The Rebbe already gave us the answer as to how to respond to the heinous attack in Itamar. Parallel to the fact that until now they froze construction in Yehuda-Shomron, the response

should be building additional neighborhoods throughout Yehuda-Shomron. This is what the Rebbe said on Chanuka 5740:

Building a new neighborhood – first of all, it pertains to shleimus ha'aretz and one cannot estimate the reward for construction in Eretz Yisroel. And aside from the reward, it simply strengthens Eretz Yisroel.

In addition, building a new neighborhood (and the like) in Eretz Yisroel shows the world that those who speak foolishly, saying it's possible to give away even a little bit of Eretz Yisroel – are not the true owners of Eretz Yisroel!

Especially when even the nations of the world are not the owners over it! The nations of the world already said openly that they were not the ones who thought and expected these lands to be handed over – this is something that Jews insist on. One Jew compels another Jew to say that when they give away parts of the land, this will bring peace.

Since the Torah was given "to make peace in the world," peace must be according to Torah! Giving away land that causes "the land to be open before them" (which is the situation) – is opposite of the Torah and Shulchan Aruch!

So this "peace" is the opposite of Torah and nothing good for anyone will emerge from this "peace." This is one of the reasons why the non-Jews don't accept these land concessions, since "their mazal sees" – their mazal up above sees that if they take the land, it will bring them only ill fortune, and will be no less detrimental to them than the ill fortune of the Jews.

All the fears that the Jews want to frighten themselves with – they should know that this fear is less than the fear of "the sound of a blowing leaf." Since even a "blowing leaf" (which they fear) [i.e. America] began to openly publicize that they never thought they would give away everything they gave.

Continued from page 41

grand scheme of things, so they were not the organizing force.

Clearly, whatever that force or being was, had to have two properties. It had to be external to the parts of the system, and it had to be more powerful than them, to keep all the parts in systemic order. Given that the system under consideration was now not

just the sun and the moon but indeed the heavens and the earth as a whole, being external to it all implied being transcendent, and being more powerful than it all meant being omnipotent.

So now Abraham was looking beyond the system for a transcendent, omnipotent force responsible for creating and managing the entire physical

universe. Okay, you may think, problem solved, odyssey over, monotheism established. . . or is it? Abraham might not have jumped to the One G-d idea quite yet. But "Why not?" you may ask. "How many transcendent, omnipotent beings are there?"

To be continued.

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# ABRAHAM PRINCIPLE

It's official. The most powerful concept in world history was developed by a child thinking deeply about food. Yes, he was Jewish. And no, it did not have to do with his mother. Part 2



By Aryeh Gotfryd, PhD

None of the parts has any inherent control over the others and yet we know that the harmonious and unified functioning of the entire system is itself a phenomenon and must be due to some cause.

—*The Rebbe, Mind Over Matter*, p.6.

## PLURALITY

What is the Abraham Principle?

What concept did that venerable sage actually innovate? And how did he figure it out?

The most authoritative information I could find about all this comes from what one might call family records – ancient and mediaeval rabbinic sources like the Midrash HaGadol, the Midrash Rabba, the Talmud and Maimonides all referring us back to the year 1948. (No, not that 1948. You are thinking of the year that the modern State called



Israel was formed. I mean the year that the Patriarch Abraham was born according to the Jewish calendar, 1948 years from Creation, some 3800 years ago.)

There it explains how Abraham since his earliest childhood was an exceptionally inquisitive and independent

thinker obsessed with trying to figure out why things were the way they were. Of course kids tend to be that way in any case and Abraham was neither the first nor the last. But he was unique in how far he would push the logic.

His context was pagan. His parents were pagan, his neighbors were pagan. In fact paganism was the only religious expression in the Mesopotamian culture that he was born into. What this means is that they believed in many gods – a whole collection of separate powers each guiding its own part of the natural world.

People were not stupid. They realized they were powerless against the forces of nature and that there is more to life than meets the eye. They also realized that these forces can oppose and conflict with each other or they could also be independent of each other. What they did not realize was the unity behind the forces of nature. So when they wanted rain, they prayed to a

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article is not for Lubavitcher Chassidim per se. It is intended as a bridge between a secular mentality and a Torah one, to allow the "pre-observant Jew" permission to believe and even more – so that he sees that science and philosophy themselves can be used to promote faith. A Chassid doesn't need this. A Chassid should follow, rather, what it says in Tanya perek 29 and in many igros from the Rebbe.

rain god. When they wanted to be blessed with children, they prayed to a fertility goddess.

By the way, people today think they are smart because they believe in one whereas others believe in many. But if you stop to think about it, what do we do if the One G-d says to do something we don't want to do? We say to ourselves, "Well... there are more important things than what He wants right now." So now there is a greater reason than G-d for doing this or that? Aren't we making that reason into a G-d?

Ever heard of the Almighty Dollar? And that's in addition to all the official religions that practice one form or another of pagan worship.

The way Chabad.org summarizes the Midrash, it tells us that *"Abraham started with this question: Why should we bow down to idols, gods that we ourselves make? We should bow to the earth, for it produces crops that sustain us. Therefore, he began to worship the earth."*

Of course he didn't stop there, but I'd like to dwell on this stage of his thinking, just for a moment. Would you have thought of doing that if you lived back then? Everybody's doing the socially acceptable thing because that's the way you do it. Don't ask questions. Just accept it. Does this sound familiar? How free are kids today to question the wisdom of their parents, their teachers, their culture? I wonder.

I think it was a pretty smart cognitive leap for a three-year-old. You eat food. Where does it come from? For those of you who think it grows in Aisle 3 in the grocery store, I'll tell you: It grows from the ground. So why pray to some statue you made yesterday when the ground that

gives or doesn't give its bounty has been sitting around forever. If there is a spiritual force behind that, let's talk, the child thought. I want dinner tomorrow. I'm not interested in a drought or a crop failure. If I'm going to say please and thank you, I'm going to do that to the right being. So he prayed – whoops, to the earth – but he prayed.

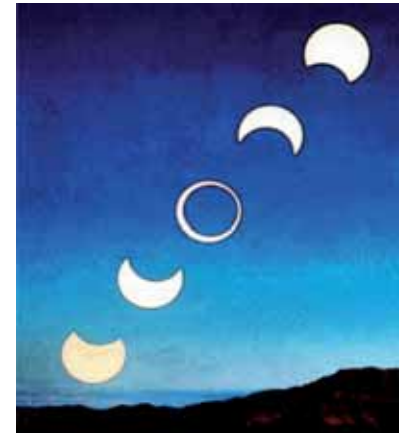
But this leaves us with a question. Why should anyone imagine that the earth knows anything at all about our needs? Why should one imagine that it hears prayer? Or that it controls one's destiny? It's just dumb dirt, right? One would normally be tempted to just write this off to pagan foolishness, but the fact that Abraham himself took this step in life (albeit as a child), and that it's recorded in the Midrash as part of Torah proves that there is a lesson in it for us.

It seems to me that the lesson is that Abraham understood that there has to be consciousness somewhere involved in the earth/food/human ecosystem. How so? There are three things here, none of them conscious of how food from the ground sustains a human. Carrots don't know me. I don't understand them. But there has to be consciousness of what the carrot can do for me as well as what I can get from it somewhere. Otherwise how else could a dumb carrot do such a sophisticated job as sustain a human's life?

It made sense to Abraham at the time that the common factor is the earth. I need the earth. Carrots need the earth. It's big, it's everywhere and everything is connected with it. Voila! The conscious powerful beneficent being is the earth! Okay, so it's wrong, but a good try nonetheless.

Now back to the story. *"Then he saw that the earth needs rain, and began to worship the sky."* This is deep. He sees the earth is not in control of its own food-giving ability. It depends on some external factor, rain, and that comes down from the sky. If the sky is the source of the rains then the sky is ultimately in charge of whether I eat and therefore whether I do or do not live. Besides, it's bigger. Much, much bigger. But a thinking person realizes that the sky is not the be all and end all either. What good would the sky be for sustaining life without the sun?

*"Later, he saw that the most*



*brilliant creation in the sky was the sun, and began to worship it. Afterwards, when the sun set and the moon rose, he began to worship the moon. When the sun rose the next morning, he did not know what to do. He did not see which was stronger: the sun or the moon. So Abraham continued in a quandary, questioning what was the true G-d."*

So much for the Midrash.

Let's step back and look at Abraham's quest as a logical problem. By this time the question was larger than who's taking care of dinner. He realized that just like he needs his

lackings filled so does everything else. By now he was seeking some entity capable of creating and sustaining the world as a whole. With nothing more than the world itself to go by, he had to work by inference.

Knowing that everything that happens, happens for a reason, Abraham set out to discover that reason. Put another way, he set out to explore what it is that's responsible for the existence of... well, you name it: Matter, energy, motion, and life on the grandest scale imaginable. A theory of everything, if you will.

No wonder, then, that he tried worshipping the sun. It is huge, powerful, and immensely influential. It is our preeminent source of light and heat. It drives the hydrological cycle and makes the plants grow and the animals thrive. It sets the days and seasons.

Today, we can overlook the sun. There are countless thousands of people who wake up indoors, take elevators down to subways, commute to skyscrapers they access from underground, and return home at the end of the day after shopping, dining and taking in a show, all without stepping outside. But back then, who knows, in a Middle Eastern Bronze Age society, it was probably a no brainer to imagine the sun as the creator of all.

But the sun has its limits. The moon rules the night. Tides, biorhythms and moods are all heavily linked to lunar cycles. Recent studies have even shown that the frequency with which animals bite humans is closely linked to the phases of the moon. And if the moon can act where the sun cannot, it shows a certain greatness above and beyond the sun itself. So Abraham worshipped the moon.

Now he could have stopped right there, like the rest of his compatriots. Each heavenly body with its own sphere of influence. Radiate and reflect, give and take, positive and negative, masculine and feminine, duality works fine for many cultures and faiths. But not for Abraham. He recognized duality, yet he suspected an underlying unity. But why?

## UNITY

The sun and the moon have a special relationship. While different as night and day (in light, in heat, in motion, in phases, and in seasons), they nevertheless share two remarkable qualities. First, they are exactly the same angular (or apparent) size, even though the sun is huge and far and the moon is small and close. Second, their paths intersect every once in a while resulting in spectacular eclipses. Whoever has witnessed a total solar eclipse knows the awe and wonder this majestic event evokes. It was obvious to Abraham that the coordination of the sun and the moon was not a mere chance phenomenon.

Abraham understood that most basic principle of human logic that everything that happens, happens for a reason. The very fact that solar and lunar sizes and motions are coordinated is itself a something, albeit an abstract something, which requires an explanation. The sun and moon should be viewed as an orderly system with a suitable cause.

Now the question was, what could the cause of this systemic property be? Could the two-part, sun-moon system originate in a duality or other plurality, say pantheon, of forces? Remember that Abraham had no clue about monotheism at the time. He

addressed his question first using the pagan cognitive tools that were his heritage.

Well, he probably thought, if it were the case that some divine plurality created the system, what was coordinating the parts of that higher plurality? And if nothing was coordinating the higher plurality, then how did their coordination come to be? Abraham wasn't ready to drop cause and effect. Ascribing the natural system to a supernatural system only pushes off the coordination issue. Abraham concluded that there had to be ultimately one factor unifying the sun-moon system. But what was it?

## BEYOND WITHIN

What could be coordinating the sun-moon system?

One possibility was that the control was within the system. That would mean, in effect, that the sun and the moon were coordinating themselves. But that



did not seem feasible because seeing their individual orbits and properties, it was clear that the sun was not controlling the moon and the moon was not

controlling the sun. Therefore the control must be some factor which is not the sun and not the moon. Perhaps it was the earth, but that could not be because the earth was itself integrated systematically with the sun and the moon, for after all, that's why Abraham worshipped them originally. The stars and planets too had their regular, integrated motions and specific roles in the

**Continued on page 38**



# SAVED BY A CHASSIDUS SHIUR

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Raising children on shlichus \* Divine Providence  
in Hafatza \* Medical emergencies and miracles \*  
Part 6 of 7

Interview by Chaim Cohen

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**Let's go back to the early years of your shlichus and hear about the difficulties you had in raising your children on the distant moshav, Taanach.**

"The girls were taught as they are in all Chassidishe homes, according to the clear principles of Chassidus and Halacha. During vacations they spent time in Kfar Chabad."

Here the daughter, Mrs. Sima Pizem, shlucha in Sederot, interjected with her perspective about the chinuch she and her sisters received:

"We played with girls in the moshav but we were friends on a limited basis (although in my class there were two girls who became close and eventually established Chassidishe homes). My father gave us a yardstick by which to measure what we did. He would say, 'If the Rebbe would walk in now, would he derive nachas from you or not?' That's what kept us in line, doing the right thing to give nachas to the Rebbe."

"Another thing my parents emphasized a lot was hiskashrus."

For example, they woke us up for every broadcast of the Rebbe. That meant getting up in the middle of the night and going to the school – where the farbrengen was broadcast – while it was dark outside. We had 'Broadcast Notebooks' in which we wrote the words we heard in the sichos. We were little girls, second and third graders, and we didn't know much Yiddish and yet our parents knew that the Rebbe's words would penetrate and be precious to us. Later on I heard that other families adopted the same idea.

"When I finished eighth grade I knew I would be going to Beis Rivka in Kfar Chabad. My older sister had paved the way for me. Then along came R' Eliezer Ceitlin who said that Beis Chana in Tzfas needed chizuk through the registration of Lubavitcher girls. My father decided this was important and therefore I was registered there to support that school; it was a matter of shlichus. I was very opposed to the idea but I agreed to have my father ask the Rebbe. When he received the Rebbe's positive

answer I accepted that shlichus is shlichus, at all times and in all places."

**You have many mekuravim whom you taught about Judaism and Chassidus over the years. Can you tell us some stories in which you saw divine providence directing you to a particular person?**

The first incident I will tell you which fits with the idea that the Rebbe chooses those neshamos that are connected to him, is about the Fash family. We have to go back to the early days of mivtzaim, this time, to the beginning of Mivtza Neshek.

As I already told you, each of us was a walking Chabad house and we looked for every opportunity to include others in fulfilling the Rebbe's instructions. If the Rebbe said, for example, "Every woman and girl should light Shabbos candles," he meant that we should reach every Jewish woman and girl. We felt the weight of the responsibility and all of us, without exception, used every encounter to convey the Rebbe's messages. There were lives at stake.

This is the reason that one day, when I was on a bus to Yerushalayim via the Jordan Valley, I began working to convince an American girl who was traveling with me. She said she was a volunteer at Kibbutz Ein HaNetziv in the Beit Shaan valley. I could see that she was open to further contact; the problem was that I had forgotten to ask her name.

When I returned from that trip, I tried to enlist a volunteer to look for the girl. Surprisingly, and not at all in line with the general atmosphere, I did not find anyone to help in my search. If I had a more precise address with a name, that would be one thing; but to look for an anonymous American girl who traveled on a bus with a Lubavitcher – that was too much to ask.

In the end, there was someone who couldn't refuse, as unrealistic as the assignment was, and that was my wife. Although she does not speak English, she took Rivka Kletzi (today Pelleg) with her and they set out together. Their mission: to find an American girl who volunteered at Ein HaNetziv, who traveled on that day in the direction of Yerushalayim.

After many inquiries they found out that the girl had already returned to the US. But the person they spoke to said, "Wait, don't go. There is someone who is looking for you, wait a little bit more."

"Us?" they asked in surprise. Who knows that we are here? How odd!

Then a sweet girl came towards them whose name was Ziva Fash. Apparently, she had been searching for them for a long time. She didn't actually know she was looking for Mrs. Dunin and Rivka Kletzi, but she

was looking for a way to get more involved in Jewish life.

Until this day, the story is told along with a moral: Don't look askance at any initiative, as peculiar as it may seem. You can never know where the Rebbe is leading you.

Ziva and her family were *niskarev* through our family and through the rest of Anash. We were supportive throughout their difficult journey and they were close with us and other families until they were able to stand on their own feet and open a Chabad house at Kibbutz Ein HaNetziv.

Ziva and her family along with her husband Isser, who is a faithful partner, received dozens of letters from the Rebbe when they first started out. I remember that at a particular time they were having so many problems, one of them a *chinuch* crisis. It was clear that the Rebbe would tell them to move to Kfar Chabad because the Rebbe could not possibly favor remaining in a place that posed so many obstacles to a proper *chinuch*. Yet as much as we think we know the Rebbe and can anticipate what his answer will be to certain questions, we constantly learn that we know nothing when it comes to *daas elyon*. Ziva's story is a perfect example of this rule. I don't have the exact wording here but the Rebbe's answer was – **obviously their place is at the kibbutz.**

The Fash family is still at the kibbutz, of course, and they have a beautiful family including a married daughter who is on *shlichus* in Efrat.

Another person I was able to be *mekarev* was a lawyer named Mordechai Lemberg. He lived in the south of the country and was sent to the north to help in a difficult criminal case. It was a murder perpetrated in Shaata

prison which is on the way to Beit Shaan and none of the investigators had come up with the murderers. Mordechai, who was known in judicial circles as a brilliant lawyer with tremendous potential, was called in to contribute his talents to unravel the mystery. He was successful and this led to a promotion – being appointed Government Attorney for the northern district.

At a certain point he moved to Afula with his family and they came to the Chabad house to buy *mezuzos*. We got to talking and as I usually do, I invited them to learn some Torah. Mordechai



R' Avrohom Dunin with one of the Lemberg boys

was willing to hear what we had to "sell," on one condition – that I answer all his questions (and here he added a somewhat demanding clause) – that all my answers be acceptable in a court of law.

**That's a formidable requirement. Did you fulfill it?**

(Smiling): Apparently so ... The facts speak for themselves. The Lemberg family is known as a Chassidishe family which is especially devoted to the Rebbe. They have children, T'mimim,

who give much nachas to the Rebbe, their parents, and to all around them.

**People say you are “accustomed to miracles” from the Rebbe ...**

We live in Chevel Taanach which is an area comprised of three moshavim. I live in Moshav Meitav where we are the only Lubavitcher family and so we don’t have a minyan. The first moshav from the direction of Afula is Avital where there is a shul for youth with a few Lubavitcher families. One year, we went to Moshav Avital on foot to celebrate Simchas Torah with local Anash in nusach Chabad.

In the middle of the fifth hakafa I did not feel well. I didn’t think it was anything serious. On the way home at eleven o’clock at night, we passed by the house of a nurse. We told her how I felt and she realized immediately that I needed urgent medical care. She called Magen Dovid Adom and I was brought to the hospital in Afula.

I stayed in the ICU as I had had a heart attack and they had me undergo a catheterization to see whether there was any blockage. I didn’t realize this was something to ask the Rebbe because they stated it as fact. The test showed that there were three blockages and I needed bypass surgery.

I figured there was nothing to ask, and I just requested a bracha. To my great surprise, I received this unusual answer: Do as a *rav posek din* advises.

The Rebbe’s usual wording is “*rav moreh horaa*.” In any case, I began to look for someone who fit the title of a “*rav posek din*” which sounded like a rav with a strong and clear opinion. That is how I got to Rav Landau. Rabbi Landau made it

clear that he could not offer an opinion without the facts and he asked whether we knew a top cardiologist. Since we did not, he got to work looking for one and I want to mention that he worked quickly and I was very impressed.

That is how we got to Dr. Miller, a nationally acclaimed cardiologist who worked at Ichilov hospital in Tel Aviv. Dr. Miller asked to see the film from the catheterization and said I could be treated with a stent and did not need an operation. We reported to the Rebbe that we had consulted with Rabbi Landau and what Dr. Miller said. The Rebbe said we should do as Rabbi Landau said. We understood from this that we should continue consulting with Rabbi Landau and that is what we did.

I went to Ichilev to be treated by Dr. Miller. The treatment was successful and two arteries were opened. That was the first miracle.

Ten years later, I was in Natrat Ilit giving a shiur that was started by R’ Shmarya Harel for employees of Magen Dovid Adom in a place near the Mobile Mitzva Tank office. Among the participants was someone named Meir Amsalem, an ambulance driver for Magen Dovid Adom. He was the moving spirit of the shiur who got the other guys to come.

While I was in the tank office I took the time to type the material for the parsha booklets on the office computer. One time, in the middle of typing, I felt some pressure in my chest. It lasted long enough that I couldn’t ignore it. I began to sweat and realized that something serious was going on.

Meir came and ran to call someone to do an EKG. Based on the results they put me in the

ambulance while simultaneously a mobile ICU came racing from Afula. Meir stayed with me as a friend and student and also as part of his job. On the way we encountered the mobile ICU and I was transferred to that and quickly brought to HaEmek hospital. A doctor on the mobile unit immediately diagnosed the problem as being caused by blood coagulation and he gave me a blood thinner. Then I was hospitalized in the hospital’s ICU.

**We heard that during your stay in the hospital it looked more like a zal of Tomchei T’mimim than an ICU ...**

As I mentioned, I had been in the middle of preparing material. It had to go out regularly, every week. I compiled the sichos, worked on them, and Meir devotedly continued publishing them. Later on they wanted to put in a stent and I went to Ichilev where they said that this time I needed bypass surgery. What would happen with giving out the material? The schools received them as usual! Meir continued to help me produce the material so we wouldn’t miss a week and the faxes flew between Natrat Ilit and Ichilev hospital with the material, corrections, and the finished product! Today, Meir is one of the dear members of Anash of Natrat Ilit.

I consider the second miracle, that I had a heart attack near Meir and Magen Dovid Adom, to be thanks to the Chassidus shiur. I always say that if you are connected to the Rebbe and carry out all his instructions, you only come out ahead, materially and spiritually.

The third and biggest miracle of all, your readers probably know better than me.

(To be continued be”H)