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# NOT A TRUE EXILE BUT A PAPER TIGER

The fact that Pharaoh can force him into backbreaking labor – it is not Pharaoh King of Egypt who truly forces him! Rather, when G-d wants to test a Jew, He wields an axe, rod, or stick. But this is only “the axe in the hand of the woodchopper.” G-d checks whether he will stand up to the challenge and be strong in his Judaism. It is then that the exile is not real! \* Part 2 of 2

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Translated by Boruch Merkur

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## THE PARADOX OF OUR TIMES

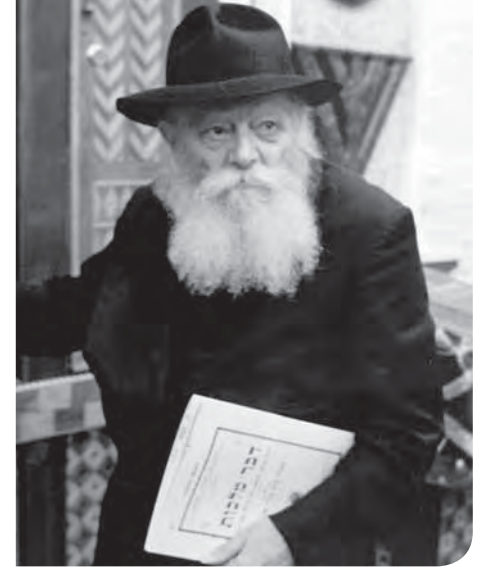
[It has been established above that the Jewish people at the time of the exile in the Land of Egypt had such faith in the word of G-d regarding the promise of the exodus, as they had heard it from Moshe Rabbeinu, that to them it was exactly as if the matter has already come to pass. That is, to them, even from the time of Rosh Chodesh Nissan, two weeks before the exodus actually took place, it was if they had already been redeemed. The lesson for us today is that we must attain the same degree of faith, knowing – with a certainty that is as if it had already taken place – that if we return to G-d, we will be immediately redeemed from this final exile.]

Nowadays, a Jew must summon this degree of faith even though he did not hear the words directly from Moshe Rabbeinu; he believes with simple faith that everything said in the Oral Torah is true (and how much more so regarding what is

stated in the Written Torah, as elucidated by the Oral Torah). Indeed, the Torah demands of a Jew that he rejoice in the Month of Redemption, just as if he had already been redeemed. And as all requirements of the Torah, it is not demanding that one present himself as if he rejoices – a contrived, disingenuous joy. Rather, the Torah of Truth demands of a Jew a true, sincere expression of happiness.

Even prior to experiencing the redemption on Pesach, a Jew must know, from the beginning of the month of Nissan, that this is the Month of Redemption. And this perfect faith is despite his knowing that we are presently in exile, being well aware of the fact that the Onset of Redemption (*Is'chalta D'Geula*) has not yet taken place. In fact, the exile has actually increased in strength with the passage of time.

To illustrate this paradox with a look at the cycle of the darkness of night: It is specifically at the final moments prior to the break of dawn that the darkness increases in strength, a process



that is even observed as a natural phenomenon. Similarly, in comparison with the darkness of former days and years, the darkness of exile in recent times is doubled and redoubled, in manifold strength. But this is not the forum to speak at length about a matter connected with pain and suffering.

## SHABBOS HA'GADOL: TIME TO LIVE WITH THE REDEMPTION

Notwithstanding the profound and growing darkness of exile, a Jew is told that he must know, as soon as Rosh Chodesh Nissan, that it is the Month of Redemption. And since it is now Shabbos HaGadol, then, in the words of the Alter Rebbe (*Shulchan Aruch* siman 430), “It has been established for generations” – it has been set up, on a permanent basis, in absolute terms, that in every generation, when Shabbos HaGadol comes around, “A great miracle took place there.” Indeed, this is the preparation for the beginning


of the redemption of the exodus from Egypt (as the Alter Rebbe writes (ibid 430:2)).

How much more so is this the case when only three days remain prior to the Holiday of Pesach, when one must prepare [in a more practical way] for “the time of our emancipation.” At this time, a Jew is told that he needs to assume behavior that reflects true freedom, exactly as if the true and complete redemption through our righteous Moshiach had already begun.

### **G-D FORBID TO CALL OUR TIMES “REDEMPTION”**

At the same time, however: G-d forbid to call our present condition [in exile] “redemption”! Even if a Jew lives in a country that accommodates his Torah study and Mitzva performance, living like a Jew and conducting all of his affairs with complete freedom, not experiencing discrimination for being a Jew amongst Gentiles (in a place where it is in fact that way) – one should nonetheless know that even in such a place, Jews are in a state of exile. In fact, all the while that we have not returned to our holy land through our righteous Moshiach, “And he builds the Temple in its place,” it is the most deeply-rooted and harshest exile possible.

It is just that within exile itself, G-d is tempering the severity of this Jew’s circumstances, in order that he will be able to devote every opportunity toward the proper intent, and in so doing, quicken the advent of Moshiach and the Onset of Redemption, leading to the further unfolding of the process of redemption, until the true and complete redemption is fully realized.

 **Seen in this light, this is not a true exile but a paper tiger, intended to test the Jewish people to see if they will not panic, but firmly commit themselves to G-d and Judaism. Indeed, they are entrusted with a key to free themselves and nullify the exile, as in the above example of self-imposed confinement.**

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### **IN EXILE DURING “THE TIME OF OUR EMANCIPATION”**

A Jew might ask: How is it possible to know, on the one hand, that “On account of our sins we were exiled from our land,” and on the other hand he is told that already from Rosh Chodesh Nissan – and even more so, from Shabbos HaGadol – one must experience “the time of our emancipation”? In fact, the closer it gets to Pesach, the more “the time of our emancipation” gains prominence in him, and he is then asked to truly perceive that this is a concept of redemption. How is it possible to simultaneously maintain these two opposing beliefs?

The explanation of the matter is as discussed several times (we will at least review the main point here):

The true expression of a person’s freedom is with regard to his feelings and his conduct, and in a very subtle way it is even dependent upon the superficial conditions and circumstances that surround him, from the outside.

It can be that a Jew is in the Land of Egypt, subjected to forced harsh labor, yet he knows and feels – when he comes home – that the sole “proprietor” that has charge over him is G-d Himself. The fact that Pharaoh King of Egypt can force him into backbreaking labor – it is not

Pharaoh King of Egypt who truly forces him! Rather, when G-d wants to test a Jew, He wields an axe, rod, or stick. But this is only “the axe in the hand of the woodchopper.” G-d checks whether he will stand up to the challenge and be strong in his Judaism. It is then that the exile is not real!

### **INCARCERATED IN ONE’S OWN PRISON**

For example, when a person causes himself suffering and restricts himself, it is apparent that this is not a true incarceration, since he is in control of his own circumstances. He personally chose to resist and not to give in to his [true] will, for whatever reason. And for the moment, he locks himself into this place and this servitude. However, notwithstanding the confines to which a person submits himself, he still remains free, being that any moment he is able to change and resolve to go where he wants and do what he desires. Then he will truly feel that this is not actually servitude but freedom.

So too, in our case. There is the promise that “[Moshiach will come] today – if you will listen to His voice.” And the Gemara says in Sanhedrin that it is dependent upon the Jew. When he begins to conduct himself in a manner of “if you will listen to His voice,” [he is immediately redeemed]





**“At this time, as Pesach approaches, a Jew must assume behavior that reflects true freedom, exactly as if the true and complete redemption through our righteous Moshiach had already begun.**

as Rambam writes, “the Jewish people repent and **immediately** they are redeemed.”

Seen in this light, this is not a true exile but a paper tiger, intended to test the Jewish people to see if they will not panic, but firmly commit themselves to G-d and Judaism. Indeed, they are entrusted with a key to free themselves and nullify the exile (as in the above example of self-imposed confinement).

### **THE SOUL NEVER WENT INTO EXILE**

Even if for some reason it does not work out, then – as stated above – when a Jew finds himself in exile, he knows that “the soul never went into exile” and exile does not rule over it, as in the well known saying of the Rebbe Rashab, whose soul resides in Heaven. That is to say that with regard to Judaism, exile has no capacity to change anything, insofar as these matters pertain to the [eternally emancipated] soul (though done by means of the body).

When the soul is given primacy and the body is recognized as being secondary, a Jew understands that he is indeed free. This is because the head is indeed the main thing not the feet, for in the head the soul rules, and the souls reigns over the heart. In this sense, those who strive for spirituality

are truly free on account of the soul never going into exile. [...]

### **G-D IS ON OUR SIDE**

In this regard, there is a lesson for every Jew.

Even when in exile, even a darkness that is double and redoubled, when a Jew resolves to begin for and prepare for “the time of our emancipation,” a kosher and joyous festival of Pesach, then G-d assists him, and the difficult challenges keep diminishing.

In fact, G-d helps him prepare not only himself, his household, his family, etc.; He even helps him assist a second Jew [one who is not in his immediate sphere of influence] prepare for a kosher and joyous Holiday of Pesach, by providing him with financial assistance (*maos chittim*), and the like. So too with

regard to disseminating Judaism by means of publicizing the laws of Pesach to those who still do not know, in every place one can reach. When they are also prepared in a kosher manner, then Pesach is “kosher and (also) joyous.”

Then a Jew is completely free spiritually, even amidst the final days of exile. The personal freedom of an individual Jew then joins together with a second Jew and a tenth Jew, until the chain reaction reaches thousands and tens of thousands and even millions of Jews, bringing about “the Jewish people are immediately redeemed” – the freedom of all the Jewish people from all distractions. And this process will be in a manner whereby they will be able to complete the final moments of exile in tranquility and go out to receive our righteous Moshiach with the true and complete redemption, according to the promise that “in Nissan they are destined to be redeemed.” ■

*(From the address of 11 Nissan 5736, bilti muga)*

# ABRAHAM PRINCIPLE

Until now we've discovered that the key to the Are We or Aren't We Paradox is tzimtzum, the "curtain" that separates the human perspective from the Divine. Here we explore why that is important. Part 5.

By Dr. Aryeh Gotfryd, PhD



## HIDE AND SEEK

G-d doesn't want robots.

If He did, He wouldn't have hidden so well from His creations. But hide He did, so now we are busy trying to peer behind the veil, to discover the ultimate, to transcend, to awaken.

Or not. Sometimes we are busy with other things and the veil is just a veil, soon forgotten.

The story is told of a rebbe who found a child crying and asked him what's wrong. "I've been playing hide – and-go-seek and I was hiding but my friends stopped looking for me and went away." The rebbe cast his eyes heavenward and said, "Master of the Universe. Your children have been looking for you so long and

you have hidden so well, that they have stopped looking for you. Come out of hiding and return to your children!"

Abraham knew that Divine concealment has a purpose. Without it, there could be no free choice. Why would anyone do anything wrong if they knew that the Master of the universe was watching intently, judging our deeds, planning our destiny, awaiting our decisions? If we saw the One Above watching us, what merit would there be in virtue?

British researchers have recently found that a picture of eyes is all that's needed to elicit honest behavior. They randomly varied the posters placed over a common lounge honor box where college staff and students would contribute coffee money in the absence of any cashier. When the picture hung above the box was of flowers or a landscape, the coffee money deposited was fairly token, but whenever a picture with eyes was posted there, contributions went up by a factor of three!

Even the *idea* of being watched keeps people honest. How much more is that the case when we realize that there really is a consciousness soaking up our actions and calculating the consequences.

The curtain separating Divine knowledge from human awareness grants us freedom and independence, values that we cherish. Abraham knew that freedom is a test, and tradition maintains that he was tested to the hilt. By mastering his mind and heart, he passed his tests, choosing at every opportunity to establish ethical monotheism as the cornerstone of his life.

## GESTALT

*gestalt* (guh-shtält') *n.*

*"A configuration or pattern of elements so unified as a whole that its properties cannot be derived from a simple summation of its parts."*

Abraham was an ecosystems analyst par excellence. One of ecology's key concepts is that there is a harmony and balance to ecosystems. It's a holistic notion where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Abraham, observing nature, recognized that there's more to nature than its parts, and in this way came to recognize the Creator of all.

Birds too see ecosystems. Most songbirds, rather than homing in on one species of tree or shrub, will respond to the overall look of a habitat consisting of many different vegetation variables, like tree size, structure, canopy cover, shrub density, ground cover, and distance to the woodland edge. In short they form a gestalt, or overall impression, something quite separate from this or that detail.

We are and are not like the birds. A bird sees a nature-gestalt and understands whether it's a place to make its home.

Abraham saw a nature-gestalt, and recognizing the unity behind it, resolved to make it a home for its Creator. ■

# HIS WEAKENING CONVICTION IS IN ORDER TO APPEASE A TROUBLED CONSCIENCE

The Rebbe's letter, published for the first time, from the t'shura of the wedding of Simpson and Stock.

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By the Grace of G-d  
26<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz, 5725  
[1965]

Brooklyn, N.Y.

Blessing and Greetings:

I am in receipt of your letter of July 13<sup>th</sup>, in which you ask for guidance how to influence an old friend who had been quite frum in the past, but has weakened in his convictions.

Needless to say, it would be difficult for you to accomplish much by way of correspondence alone. Therefore, it would be well for you to find some mutual friends on the spot, who could exercise their influence in the desired direction, while your correspondence with the party in question would act as a further stimulus from time to time, being guided by the mutual friends on the spot as to when and what to write to your friend.

As a general observation, I want to tell you of my experience which has convinced me that in most cases such as you describe, the true reason for the weakening in the convictions was not the result of a more profound study or deeper insight, but rather on the contrary; it came as a result of the fact that the convictions which one has held have proved an obstacle to the enjoyment of

certain material aspects in life. And, human nature being what it is, one wishes to appease one's troublesome conscience by trying to find faults with the convictions and spiritual aspects.

In view of the above, the most effective approach in most cases is not to attempt to debate the spiritual matters, convictions and beliefs, but rather to try to bring the person closer to the kind of daily life and activity which bring their fruits also in this material world. I have in mind an activity in the Jewish community, or in the field of Kosher education in particular, where he could see the good results of his work, and at the same time gain personal satisfaction from his success. The discussions mentioned above would only be of secondary importance, so as not to leave any of his questions unanswered.

What has been said above, is in general terms which would apply to most cases. However, there are undoubtedly special factors connected with the individual himself, especially with his personal character, etc. Therefore, any action directed at influencing him should first be consulted with people who know him personally, and would know his reaction to such efforts.

A further point which is also valid almost always is that in such a situation a wife or a fiancée can accomplish a great deal, perhaps not so much directly as indirectly. This should therefore also be considered as a channel of influence. For as I gather from your letter, the person in question is still single. Therefore, it would be very well for him if his friends could find him a suitable Shidduch.

Incidentally, insofar as "scientific proof" that the Torah is G-d-given is concerned, which seems to bother your friend, the fact is, however strange this may seem, that the best proof is still the oldest, namely that the Torah was transmitted from generation to generation in an unbroken and uninterrupted chain of tradition, from the time of the Divine Revelation at Mt. Sinai and the giving of the Torah in the presence of 600,000 adult male Jews (several million Jews in all), to the present day. There is no stronger scientific verification of any fact than the Revelation at Mt. Sinai, which has been attested to by so many witnesses from generation to generation.

With blessing,

# YITZHAK SHAMIR'S PESACH PIDYON

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**On Chol HaMoed Pesach 5750, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir wrote a letter and pidyon nefesh to the Rebbe in which he asked for a bracha and thanked the Rebbe for his efforts in thwarting a Leftist government. \* The shliach who worked behind the scenes was Rabbi Motti Gal who tells us all about it.**

By Menachem Ziegelboim

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**T**wenty-one years have passed since the events of Pesach 5750 or as it was called then, “*ha’targil ha’masriach*” (lit. stinking scheme, or the dirty trick). You might recall that Shimon Peres and the Labor government colluded with Shas to cause the fall of the Shamir government. Peres also turned to Agudath Israel and invited it to join a new narrow coalition under his leadership.

Lengthy negotiations were held with the “Liberals” led by Yitzchok Moda’i and with Avrohom Sharir who defected from the Likud to Labor and was supposed to be the sixtieth vote that would tip the scale. In the meantime, Shamir led an “interim government.”

The Knesset members belonging to Agudath Israel were in on the top-secret negotiations, but not all Knesset members knew

this, including Rabbi Eliezer Mizrachi. It was only at a certain point that he was included, but by then he no longer had the ability to make any changes. The ministerial portfolios were agreed upon already and Agudath Israel were promised two, Labor and Welfare/Housing. Everybody assumed that Peres would soon be the prime minister. In an interview that he gave to one of the big newspapers he confidently announced, “In another two days I will be prime minister.”

But then two Agudath Israel Knesset members, R’ Avrohom Werdyger and R’ Eliezer Mizrachi, announced that they could not support Peres because of his slogan, “land for peace.” And that’s how Peres’ plan that was developed over the course of several months to form a government of the Left and the religious, led by him, whose intention was to make peace with

our Arab murderers (which was considered a crime at the time), came to an end.

During that period of intrigue and plotting, R’ Motti Gal, director of the Chabad house in Ramat Gan, who had never been involved in politics, felt uneasy with the ongoing developing drama. He knew, as did many others, that a process was being put into motion that would lead to the establishment of a government that would not be to the liking of the Rebbe.

One Motzaei Shabbos, after Maariv, he had a strong feeling that as a Chassid who cared about what the Rebbe wanted, he had to go and do something. The people who davened with him at the Chabad house on Rechov Uziel in Ramat Gan, say that after Havdala he went over to them and announced, “I am going to do something about this and until this problem is solved,





R' Mutti Gal with Mr. Yitzhak Shamir

I'm not coming home."

**What motivated you to get involved in this?**

"I have no logical explanation for it. I felt what in Chassidus is called an *is'arusa d'l'eila* (spiritual arousal from Above) and I went to work. I had a feeling that I would be successful with the Rebbe's kochos."

R' Gal then asked the rabbanei Chabad privately what they thought of the dangerous proceedings that were unfolding and whether they thought these were to the Rebbe's liking. Then, on his own, he started going to various people to exert pressure on them to torpedo the attempt to form a Labor government and to support a strong government of the Right. He went to old army friends who had political positions in Likud, he made appointments to meet with people, and wherever he went he spoke persuasively for his cause.

**“He was in constant contact with the chief of staff... with the chairman of the Likud Youth, and with key political figures including Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir... He was not authorized to speak on anyone's behalf, certainly not on behalf of any organization. He was just a private person, a Lubavitcher chassid.**

Thanks to his efforts, the Rebbe's position began to be heard more and more by those who were in decision-making positions. Those who wanted to, listened; those who didn't, ignored him. In any case, matters began to heat up which brought in its wake nasty attacks from various directions. R' Gal was surprised and felt bad about it, but continued doing what he felt he must.

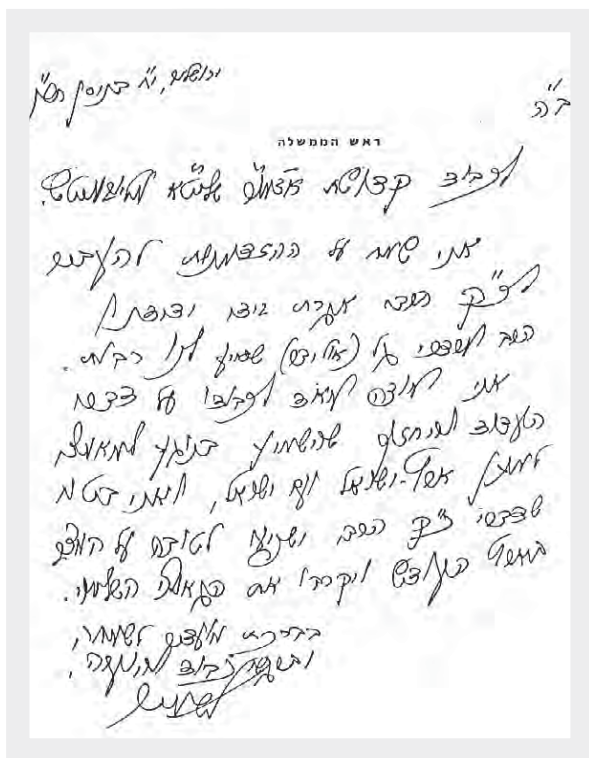
He was in constant contact with the chief of staff of the prime minister's office, Yossi

Ben Aharon, with the chairman of the Likud Youth Movement, Michael Ratzon, with Knesset members from various parties and with people in the prime minister's inner circle. If you know R' Gal, you know that these connections quickly became warm relationships because that's the kind of person he is.

He met with key political figures numerous times including Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir whose government was a question mark.

He was not authorized





Left: Prime Minister Shamir's letter to the Rebbe  
Right: The Rebbe's letter to Yitzhak Shamir.

to speak on anyone's behalf, certainly not on behalf of any organization. He was just a private person, a Lubavitcher chassid, who was conveying the Rebbe's views and trying to do away with the prevalent confusion.

"The goal was to convey the Rebbe's position about defending Eretz Yisroel," he says.

(Not many people know this but about a year and a half later, R' Gal joined the prime minister's entourage to the Madrid Summit. His purpose was to help solidify a unified position and strengthen Jewish pride in the authentic Jewish spirit).

### What was Shamir's reaction?

"I met with him dozens of times that Nissan. He heard the positions and helped as much as he could until Peres' plan fell through and the president assigned him the task of putting together a coalition government."

They got along so well that, "After a government of the Right was formed, we nearly managed to get a Tanya study group going in the prime minister's office.

"During the many meetings I had with Shamir and his advisors, there arose the real possibility of having an official broadcast channel run by ideological religious figures on the right, as a means of supporting the government's tack on a conceptual level."

How did someone without any political experience and without political clout manage to so quickly get into the inner circle of the "top brass" of the State of Israel?

R' Gal shrugs. He has no clear answer to that question. After much thought he says, "I think I had the z'chus of the Rebbe working through me. As I said earlier, I began with an inner, spiritual push and that's what kept me going throughout

that time. I felt that things were being done with the utmost clarity and the utmost speed and I realized that these abilities that were given to me were not of this world."

On 18 Nissan 5750, Chol HaMoed Pesach, a few days after the Rebbe's birthday, R' Gal said to Shamir, "I want to take a letter from you to the Rebbe. We Chassidim call it a *pidyon nefesh*, and you can ask the Rebbe for a bracha. I am planning a trip to the Rebbe and I would be happy to take a letter with me."

R' Gal remembers the expression on Shamir's face. "His face immediately became serious and turned inwards for two minutes and then he asked all present to leave the room. He sat alone and wrote to the Rebbe, without a secretary, without a typewriter (or computer), without official signatures or ceremonies; just in his own handwriting as a Chassid writes to the Rebbe. He wrote a brief

letter which ended with the words, "I am certain that the words of the Rebbe will positively affect the situation in the Holy Land and hasten the complete Geula."

When he finished writing, he opened the door and gave the letter to R' Gal. R' Gal asked permission to keep a copy for himself. Shamir agreed and R' Gal made a copy (see photocopy).

That day, R' Gal left for 770 and when he arrived, he gave the letter to the Rebbe's secretary, R' Groner.

"Then one day, R' Groner called me at the place where I was staying and said that I should come to 770 right away to get a response for Shamir. When I got there, I was given an envelope and told to personally give it to the prime minister."

R' Gal saw this as a sign of the Rebbe's gratitude:

"It was after a month of intensive work on my part, in the course of which I didn't see my family and friends. I was consumed by meetings and traveling to prevent the establishment of a Leftist government. I know that the Rebbe saw all that had I gone through and in a very sensitive manner, he wanted to repay me for my efforts.

"The reward was that I was able to be the shliach from Shamir to the Rebbe and then from the Rebbe to Shamir."

When R' Gal arrived at the prime minister's office he said he had a letter for Shamir from the Rebbe. When Shamir heard this he called for a press conference in order to publicize the event and to express his appreciation for the Rebbe's letter.

"Shamir took the letter and I saw he was excited to receive it.



Shamir reading the Rebbe's letter

Although he's an intellectual sort and usually undemonstrative, his joy and excitement were apparent. I sat facing him and didn't read the letter but he asked me to explain it to him. It goes against protocol to go behind the prime minister's desk especially in front of reporters but he called me over kindly and said, 'Come here and explain what the Rebbe says.'

"To my great surprise, I saw that the Rebbe's letter was

written in the style of his letters to Chassidim without any special flourishes and full of acronyms. I saw this as a "response" to a letter written the way a Chassid writes to his Rebbe devoid of the fanfare of being prime minister. Throughout my interactions with him I saw that he considers the Rebbe a step above."

R' Gal concluded his story with a line that the Rebbe told him once at "dollars" – "It gave me much nachas ruach." ■

# PESACH WITH THE REBBE

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**Rabbi Shlomo Rainitz, who had the privilege of this holy service between the years 5724-5728, shares his experiences at the Pesach s'darim and Yom Tov meals with the Rebbe.**

By C. Rainitz

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**R**abbi Shlomo Rainitz begins his memoir as follows:

I went on K'vutza in Cheshvan 5724/1963 and was sorry to have missed out on Tishrei in "Beis Chayeinu."

Not long afterward, R' Moshe Orenstein – the secretary of the Rebbe Rayatz who later worked for the Rebbe MH"M – approached me and asked, "Are you interesting in working upstairs?"

I didn't understand precisely what he was referring to but when a distinguished person like him asked for help, I was happy to oblige without knowing that by doing so, I was "connecting" myself to "Beis Rabbi," and consenting to set the table for the Yom Tov meals and being with the Rebbe throughout the meals together with the senior and honorable Chassidim.

I later found out my responsibilities: to help the cook on Erev Yom Tov, to set the table in the home of the Rebbe Rayatz on the second floor of 770 where



R' Shlomo Rainitz

Rebbetzin Nechama Dina lived and where the family and guests ate the meals, to serve the food during the meals and to clear off the table afterward. By doing this work, I had the privilege of getting very close to Beis Rabbi and being witness to and present

at many things, some of which I will relate here.

I began working a few days before Pesach 5724/1964. The work was done in Rebbetzin Nechama Dina's kitchen. I cracked eggs, checked and dried lettuce, and grated maror. Rebbetzin Nechama Dina would be there and warn me, "You have to be extremely careful. You didn't know Baba Rivka (the wife of the Rebbe Maharash). She was very particular. I want everything here to be as it was in her house."

Of course we were exceedingly careful so that everything was done according to the letter and hiddurim of the law.

The cook was once unsure about the kashrus of a certain chicken part. Rebbetzin Nechama Dina did not understand what the cook was saying and she asked me what was going on. I told her, "Nothing, she's making a question out of nothing." The Rebbetzin did not accept this and told me to ask the "the house rabbi," Rabbi Shmuel Levitin.



Without looking at it, he told me to discard the contents of the pot. When he saw my surprise he said, “Although according to halacha there is no problem with it, since you came to ask I made the pot treif because in Beis Rebbe a shaila is treif!”

Every Erev Pesach someone else would do the B’dikas Chametz in the home of the Rebbe Rayatz, and one year, I did it. Rebbetzin Nechama Dina called me to the bedroom and asked me to take down a certain suitcase and open it and told me to take out the items inside and shake them out. There were the Rebbe Rayatz’s tallis, several passports, and other things. I took note of a large white handkerchief that was wrapped around something. She told me to remove the handkerchief and I saw a broken silver snuffbox. I didn’t have a chance to examine it because the Rebbetzin took it from me and put it near her. Afterward, I thought that maybe this was the Alter Rebbe’s snuffbox from the story in which he removed the cover.

Before Pesach, Rabbi Rodstein sent me to 770 to mark down which distinguished guests had come for Pesach. Rebbetzin Nechama Dina took the list and together with Rabbi Rodstein made a list for every single meal of Yom Tov. My job was to invite the guests for the particular meal they were invited to and based on the list, to set the table with the silverware and Kiddush cups (the Rebbe did not have a particular cup) and two challos for Lechem Mishna.

The head of the table was the place of the Rebbe Rayatz which was fully set. On his right sat Rashag (R’ Shmarya Gurary, the son-in-law of the Rebbe Rayatz), and on his left sat the Rebbe who conducted himself throughout



R’ Shlomo Rainitz learning in the small zal 770

**“Rebbetzin Nechama Dina would be there and warn me, “You have to extremely careful. You didn’t know Baba Rivka (the wife of the Rebbe Maharash). She was very particular. I want everything here to be as it was in her house.”**

all the meals like a Chassid in front of his Rebbe. He would barely talk and if someone asked something, he would answer with great seriousness. On Rosh HaShana he did not speak at all.

I also saw this emuna p’shuta (simple faith) that the Rebbe Rayatz was alive in the conduct of Rebbetzin Nechama Dina. One time, it was a Yom Tov that came out on Shabbos, I was missing two challos for one of the guests and I couldn’t get any from the bakery. We couldn’t allow all but one person to have Lechem Mishna and having no other option, I took the challos that were set up for the Rebbe Rayatz and put them in front of the guest’s place. Before the Rebbe came up for the meal,

Rebbetzin Nechama Dina came to check out the table and when she discovered what I had done she asked, “Where are my husband’s challos? Quickly put down two challos!”

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The Rebbetzins sat in a nearby room during the meals. I still remember how Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka would look from the doorway and the Rebbe would look in her direction and only when he saw that she was listening would he make a quiet Kiddush.

One time, when the Rebbe finished reciting Kiddush and prepared to go over and wash his hands, he noticed one of the older guests washing his hands. The Rebbe didn’t want to make

the person feel uncomfortable and so he paused in the room and waited until the man finished washing. When I saw this, I began rushing towards the man to tell him that he was keeping the Rebbe waiting. In a second, the Rebbe noticed this and put out his hand and since I didn't notice this in time, I ran into his hand. The Rebbe looked at me and smiled broadly. Naturally, I did not continue on my way.

Erev Pesach afternoon, everybody including me went to the Rebbe and received matzos for the seder. Seder night it was customary for the people at the Rebbe's table to go down to the yechidus room and take matzos for their personal ke'ara. Since

very rare kiruv because the Rebbe almost never gave anyone from his matzos (except for the time that he gave the shluchim who returned from Australia). I had always noticed that he took the remaining crumbs and did not leave anything behind.

I noticed that the Rebbe was particular about using only his right hand to eat and he never used a knife. If something needed to be cut, he used a fork. He would use a lot of salt on the fish so it lost its taste. At one of the meals, someone present asked him about this and the Rebbe said that there were certain things that were not instructions for all to learn from and he did them because that is

to say it in a louder voice, with a niggun and great kavana. Everybody crowded in to hear the Rebbe.

For many years Rabbi Yaakov Katz of Chicago would read and sing the Hagada. One time, when he went down to take matzos, I heard the Rebbe ask him, "Do you remember how the *Shver* (the Rebbe Rayatz) sang the Hagada?" he answered that he thought he sang thus – and he began to sing. The Rebbe listened and said, "No." So he asked how, and the Rebbe said, "I don't know but I remember that it wasn't the way you said."

There were often leftovers of the Rebbe's food and I would eat them. There were also other "clients" who asked me to keep some of the Rebbe's food for them and they were thrilled when I brought it to them. One time, after the s'darim, when I removed the Rebbe's plate from the table, someone tried to grab the remains and as a result, a fork fell. The Rebbe turned around and looked and after that nobody tried to grab any of the leftovers from me.

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Rabbi Sholom Ber Gansbourg worked with me. We decided on the allocations of jobs: he served the first course, the fish, and I served the soup. He served the meat course and I served the dessert.

Every year I would put a large silver soup tureen that had belonged to the Alter Rebbe, on the table, and each of the people – starting with the Rebbe – took a few spoons of soup from it and added it to the soup already in their own bowl. That year, after I had put the tureen down and got ready to bring in the soup in the individual bowls, I saw something that shocked me. The

**“The Russian woman who helped the Rebbetzin had put kneidlach into the bowls. I said, ‘Kneidlach are gebrochts!’ She saw how shocked I was, and figuring that she would have some fun, said, ‘Don’t you know that on the second day of Yom Tov we eat kneidlach?’”**

I had already received matza from the Rebbe, I did not go downstairs to take matza before I set the table.

At the seder, before eating the fish, I sat down at the other end of the table. The Rebbe asked me, "Why didn't you go down to take matzos?" Rashag repeated the question, "My brother-in-law asks why you didn't go down to take matzos?"

I didn't dare answer the Rebbe and I responded roundabout to Rashag that I had already received matzos together with the others. The Rebbe called me over and took a piece of matza from his own ke'ara and gave it to me. This was a

what his father did, and he held highly of the Munkatcher and did as he did.

Each person had a plate which served as a ke'ara upon which all the simanim were placed. The Rebbe ate a k'zayis of maror but before he did so he squeezed it with a teaspoon to remove the moisture.

In the middle of the seder they would open the door and only certain people were allowed to enter. At "Sh'foch Chamaz'cha" and "Hallel" everybody was allowed to come in.

The Rebbe would read the Hagada quietly. At the last part of the Hagada, he would start

Russian woman who helped the Rebbetzin had put kneidlach into the bowls. I said, “Kneidlach are gebrochts!”

She saw how shocked I was, and figuring that she would have some fun, she said, “Don’t you know that on the second day of Yom Tov we eat kneidlach?”

“No, that’s what we do only on the last day of Pesach!”

“What are you saying? You think you’re going to teach me?! I’ve been working here for many years already.”

I was at a loss. I wanted the Rebbe to eat the soup because that year the maror had been sealed and it was sharper than usual and the Rebbe had coughed a lot when he ate it. I didn’t know what to do. Having no choice, I went over to the Rebbe and told him there was a problem and that she had put in kneidlach by mistake.

The Rebbe asked, “Is the soup in the bowl from the same soup?” I said it was. From the Rebbe’s reaction I understood not to serve it. I went to the kitchen and told the woman that we would not eat the soup. She laughed and said, “It’s not gebrochts. I made them out of potato starch.” I went back to the Rebbe and told him this and he said, “Nu.” So I began to serve.

The Rebbe did not want to eat the soup since it had merely been said about it that it was gebrochts. And yet, the Rebbe knew that as long as he didn’t eat, nobody else would eat either. So the Rebbe took some spoons of soup from the Alter Rebbe’s tureen and put it into his bowl and began to cut the kneidlach. When everybody saw this, they all began eating and only after the Rebbe saw that everybody was eating did he put down his spoon.



R' Shlomo Rainitz in the big beis midrash in 770

**“I can’t forget how she would take the book, go to the yechidus room of the Rebbe Rayatz, remove the previous book from the desk and replace it with the new book. As she did so, she would talk to her husband and remain standing there and talking for several minutes.**

When people noticed this, they stopped eating and the bowls remained nearly full. I removed the full bowls from the table to the annoyance of the woman who made the kneidlach.

One year, the Rebbe went downstairs to farbreng after the seder, as was customary in those days, and I stayed behind to wash the dishes and straighten up. When I finished, I wanted to go to the farbrengen but to my surprise, Rebbetzin Nechama Dina stood there near the door, holding on to the mezuzah with both her hands and was deep in prayer. I couldn’t leave since she blocked the doorway.

My heart was with the crowd downstairs while I was upstairs, pacing back and forth, trying to get her attention, to no avail. Time was passing maddeningly slowly and I was plotting to be downstairs. It was only three quarters of an hour later that she

finished her davening and I was free to go.

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After I finished my work on Pesach, the Rebbetzin gave me a check for \$25 which I refused to take. She yelled at me, “If you don’t want to take it, you can leave. We don’t keep servants here. Whoever works, is paid.” Of course after that I took the money but my real reward was something entirely different.

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My connection with Beis Rebbi continued on weekdays and wasn’t only on Yomim Tovim and this was because I worked in the office of Merkos L’Inyonei Chinuch. Every new book that was published was immediately given to the Rebbe and my job was to bring a copy to Rebbetzin Nechama Dina too. I can’t forget how she would take the book, go to the yechidus room of the Rebbe Rayatz, remove the



## AFTER MANY YEARS, THE REBBE SOLVED THE RAMBAM IN A MOMENT

A few years after the passing of my father, my mother remarried Rabbi Shmuel Zalman Shapiro who was a Litvishe gaon and was a rav in Denver, Colorado.

One Shabbos they came to Crown Heights to visit me. During the Friday night davening I had him sit with Rabbis Levitin, Kazarnovsky, Simpson and Duchman. After a few minutes I saw them hugging and kissing. Later on, he told me that he was from a Lubavitcher family and his two brothers learned in Lubavitch and the Chabad rabbanim had known them well. But when his father died, he was sent to learn in a Litvishe yeshiva and that is why he did not grow up in Chabad.

On Sunday I arranged a yechidus for him and he spent about half an hour with the Rebbe. When he came out he was agitated, his face was red and it looked like he had been crying. I was frightened. I wondered what had happened in yechidus. After he calmed down I asked him about it and he said that for many years he had had a difficult question in the Rambam and he had visited many g'dolim of all backgrounds who tried to resolve it but to no avail. Now, in yechidus, he had asked the Rebbe and to his amazement, the Rebbe got up, took a Rambam off the shelf, and began reading it with inflection. Then he suddenly stopped and said: Here you pause and then you continue. "I was stunned. For years I had read this Rambam and couldn't understand it while now, within seconds, the Rebbe read it with the proper intonation and did away with my questions. Where was I for forty years? How did I not know of his greatness all these years?" he concluded sadly.

previous book from the desk and replace it with the new book. As she did so, she would talk to her husband and remain standing there and talking for several minutes.

One time, in the year 5727/1967, shortly before the outbreak of the Six Day War, I went up to visit her and she was involved in a conversation with her daughters about the situation in Eretz Yisroel and how the French president, Charles de Gaulle had placed an embargo on selling arms to the State of Israel. Rashag's wife said her political commentary and the Rebbetzin's helper said her piece too. Only Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka remained quiet. Her mother asked her, "Moussia, what do you say?" Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka said, "I don't know what to say."

Her mother said, "What do you mean, 'I don't know.' Is there something you and your husband don't know?"

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When the Rebbe went up to the second floor and would meet his mother-in-law, he would move respectfully to the side and allow her to pass. One time, I was present at such an encounter when Rebbetzin Nechama Dina said to the Rebbe, "I don't feel well and they all tell me to see a certain doctor." The Rebbe said, "I don't think you need to call that doctor. You can call Dr. Seligson."

Later on I heard the Rebbetzin say, "He thinks Dr. Seligson is a bigger doctor than Dr. ..."

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As a bachur on K'vutza, I had some interesting stories with the

Rebbe:

On occasion, a certain mentally ill person would come to 770 who was considered dangerous. One time, we heard that this fellow was waiting for the Rebbe near his house on President Street. A few of us bachurim ran over and met him near the house. I went to check the driveway.

That night, the Rebbetzin came to take the Rebbe home by car. Just as I was checking the driveway, the Rebbe came out of his car and opened the door to the house before the Rebbetzin and had her enter first. The Rebbe suddenly noticed me and asked, "What's going on?" I told him about the crazy man who was in the area and the Rebbe said, "Go to sleep and read the Krias Shma and all will be fine."

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One hot summer day I was standing in the doorway of 770 to rest a little. The way I stood, I was blocking the doorway. I suddenly felt someone put his hand on my back and move carefully to the side so as not to disturb me. I looked to see who it was and out of the corner of my eye I saw the beard of a very familiar person. It was the Rebbe who was heading towards his mother's house to make her tea and to walk with her.

A short while later, I was asked by Rabbi Dovid Raskin to move my desk to the new Tzach office that opened in building 778. It was a heavy desk and while I was carrying it, a sharp pain shot through my back and I felt I was going to collapse. I dropped the desk in the middle of the street and ran to the sidewalk to lean against a wall and recover. I somehow, miraculously, made it. Then I felt that by the Rebbe placing his two hands on my

back a short while before, he had “preceded the blow with the cure.” It could have had an altogether different ending.

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During the year of mourning for the Rebbe’s mother, the Rebbe davened before the amud. That was our (the bachurim’s) opportunity to pay attention to the Rebbe’s conduct during t’fillos.

I was a gutsy guy and I hid a tape recorder in the Rebbe’s shtender to record the Rebbe’s davening. On that tape you hear the Rebbe reading the Haftora of a fast day (it was 17 Tammuz) and when he said the words, “when the rain and snow come down from heaven,” you can hear a thunder clap in the background and it began to pour.

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I had another “little miracle.” I once recorded Maariv and something took place that made some of the bachurim yell at me that I had to erase the tape. I went up to my room and couldn’t believe what I was hearing. As I listened to the tape I could hear everything before Maariv clearly, and then you hear shhhhhh, which indicated that the Rebbe was coming in, and from that point on you don’t hear anything. It’s not that it stopped recording. It continued for another 20 minutes without sound.

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Four years went by in which I celebrated Yomim Tovim with the Rebbe. After Tishrei 5728, when I was a chassan, Rebbetzin Nechama Dina said to me, “That’s it. Now we have to look for someone else. We only have bachurim working here and you have to be with your wife.”

So I was replaced by Rabbi Chaim Boruch Halberstam.

Even after I was married, I



Arranging the Rebbe’s bima

**“Her mother asked her, “Moussia, what do you say?” Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka said, “I don’t know what to say.” Her mother said, “What do you mean, ‘I don’t know.’ Is there something you and your husband don’t know?”**

would go up with my children to wish the Rebbetzin a “good Yom Tov.” She always inquired about their welfare and I’ll never forget the aura of majesty and holiness surrounding her.

I worked for a company that produced plastic slipcovers for furniture. One day, I came home from work and my wife told me that a woman by the name of “Schneerson” had called and wanted to make an order. I called her back and was sure it was the wife of a rabbi named Schneerson who lived in East Flatbush. The thought that it was Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka did not enter my mind. So when I called, I spoke in a businesslike tone, “Mrs. Schneerson, this is Rainitz, how can I help you?”

She mentioned that she was

Schneerson from President Street and I froze and then quickly began apologizing. When I went to the Rebbe’s house on President Street, I did my work. When I finished, the Rebbetzin spoke to me about my family and took interest in the details. That only made me more impressed by her nobility.

When she wanted to pay, I refused to take any money but she insisted and she said, “I want you to use the money for your household’s needs.” She also made sure I would have other customers. A few months later she called to order something for a friend.

These are my memories, and I cherish them every waking moment of my life. ■

# “UNITY!”

## THE REBBE’S PLEA

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A Chassidishe farbrengen with the Rebbe’s secretary, Rabbi Leibel Groner, who farbrenged on Motzaei Shabbos 3 Nissan 5739/1979 in a shul in Nachalat Har Chabad. \* The following was transcribed and translated from a tape and we left the style as is, with the flavor of a Chassidishe farbrengen after a few l’chaims.

### A CHASSID NEEDS TO KNOW WHAT THE REBBE IS “LIVING WITH” NOW

L’chaim, Chassidim!

A certain person would write letters to the Rebbe and he would receive a letter from the Rebbe that we call “klali-prati.” The letter contained a subject in Chassidus with sources and notes. When this man sent a letter to the Rebbe, the Rebbe said he should be sent one of these “klali-prati” letters.

Some time later, the Rebbe received a letter from him in which he had apparently complained that the Rebbe did not write him a personal letter. The Rebbe wrote back – I thought you wanted to know what I am occupied with now – in Yiddish he said, “*In vos ich koch zich yetzt*” – but since you don’t seem interested in that, I will write to you as you wish.

We need to think about this for it’s a deep vort. “In what does

the Rebbe koch zich now” – if the Rebbe is interested in it and involved in it, then as Chassidim we need to follow suit.

What concerns the Rebbe and what does the Rebbe complain about all the time? When we see that after a farbrengen he wants to know what was actually done about the things he spoke about at the farbrengen, this has to affect us on a practical level. If not, there is no excuse or reason in the world. There is no Jew, no man or bachur here who is not concerned about the Rebbe’s health and nevertheless, the question is, if you are so interested in the Rebbe’s health and you know how much the Rebbe kocht zich in a certain subject, why aren’t you enthusiastic about it?

When R’ Nissan came to America the first time, he farbrenged and it was amazing. R’ Nissan is a Chassidishe Yid. At that time, the Rebbe made an appeal for money and when

R’ Nissan farbrenged, he said: I heard that when the Rebbe gives out lekach or matzos before Pesach, there are lines until Brooklyn Avenue, but I haven’t seen, when the Rebbe announces an appeal, that the next day there should be lines until Brooklyn Avenue with people wanting to give money to the Rebbe. When you can receive something from the Rebbe, then you’re a “fine Chassid” and you stand next to the Rebbe and say: Rebbe, give me lekach, give me matzos. But where are you when the Rebbe asks for something from you?

R’ Nissan spoke about another point at that farbrengen which doesn’t pertain to our topic but it’s along the same lines. When R’ Nissan came to New York for the first time he farbrenged Sunday morning. The next day, the Rebbe asked what he farbrenged about. R’ Nissan wasn’t told about this but I will tell you. They told the Rebbe that R’ Nissan had farbrenged on two





points: the first point, that he remembered that by the Rebbeim, the Chassidim didn't push their face in front of the Rebbe since each one knew where he was holding spiritually.

I remember, R' Nissan sat upstairs in the small zal, where the Rebbe davens Mincha on a weekday. He shouted: You know what's doing by you, so how can you shtup your faces in front of the Rebbe? Aren't you ashamed?

R' Nissan yelled. He saw that an older person stood at the farbrengen and a young bachur pushed him and stood in front of him so he could be in front of the Rebbe. Asked R' Nissan: Why are you pushing your face in front of the Rebbe? You know what you are and who you are, what are you pushing for?

In any case, when the Rebbe asked what R' Nissan had farbrenged about, there are times they are afraid to tell the Rebbe but this time we wanted to tell,

**“We need to remember and not forget for an instant that there is no forgetting by the Rebbe and no mistakes; you can't lie to the Rebbe.**

and we said that R' Nissan had asked the men and bachurim why they pushed to be seen by the Rebbe.

The Rebbe's response was, “Indeed why.”

We cannot forget, not even for a moment, where we are holding.

### **EVERY JEW YEARNS TO SEE THE REBBE**

I am from the younger generation and older men are sitting here – R' Avrohom [Zaltzman], R' Tzemach Dovid [Skolnik], and for me to speak is hardly appropriate, but the way it goes is that you speak because we want to do what the Rebbe wants, and this is something that needs to be spoken about. Once and for

all, we need to discuss how we must do what the Rebbe wants.

Before I left for Eretz Yisroel I went to Rabbi Chadakov and told him that I was leaving in a few minutes and he gave me a shlichus to the “young shluchim” and said a very geshmake vort. This is what he said: Tell them in my name that I have no doubt that every Jew who has a connection to the Rebbe, wants to do what the Rebbe wants. I am sure that every Jew yearns to be with the Rebbe and wants to see the Rebbe. But there is one problem and I don't know what to do about it. The problem is – and you can repeat it in my name – that we want the Rebbe to think as we do and then we can do as we please. The time has come for

**“The Rebbe wrote back – I thought you wanted to know what I am occupied with now – in Yiddish he said, “In vos ich koch zich yetzt” – but since you don’t seem interested in that, I will write to you as you wish.**

Chassidim to do what the Rebbe wants, and not what they want. The time has come for them to think about what the Rebbe really wants.

### **THE REBBE SAID HE IS S’FIRAS HA’MALCHUS**

There is a Jew who goes to see the Rebbe and he has a tremendous z’chus. What is this great merit? He gets to hear from the Rebbe things that nobody else hears, things about himself, about the Rebbe himself. Not private things, we are talking here about the Rebbe’s greatness, amazing things, and when the Rebbe sits with this man he tells him things such as these.

One day, this man came out of yechidus and he told us, I have a vort that will make you dance. I spoke to the Rebbe today and got up my courage and asked the Rebbe why he is so hidden. And he told me that the Rebbe said that this is the s’firas ha’malchus and the idea of this s’fira is concealment; that is the chiddush of the s’firas ha’malchus.

The man said: Take mashke! The Rebbe admitted that he is the seventh s’fira; it starts with the Alter Rebbe and he is s’firas ha’malchus!

There was a story, the details don’t matter, but the Rebbe said: You should know that you can’t fool me. All the “clever ploys” they write to me, that doesn’t mean that I don’t know the truth; I know the truth. There are things that I do, not because I hold that

they should be done, but because that is what the matter demands.

We need to remember and not forget for an instant that there is no forgetting by the Rebbe and no mistakes; you can’t lie to the Rebbe.

What is being demanded? One thing, there are inyanim – do them, be involved with what they are involved with “Up Above.” We need to know that we have to be involved in those things that the Rebbe is involved in. There are people who, when they have yechidus and come out, don’t know what they should do, and there are people who have yechidus and the Rebbe clearly tells them what to do – they are so happy.

Someone, not a Lubavitcher, a grandson of the Sanzer Rebbe [the Divrei Chaim of Sanz] went to the Rebbe. His father was a Rebbe and he had a connection with Lubavitch. This was in 5712. He called and said he wanted an appointment. When he came out of yechidus he said, I don’t know what I’m supposed to do. I asked the Rebbe and the Rebbe said such and such, and I can’t figure it out.

Half an hour after him, a man came out of yechidus looking euphoric. When I asked him why he was so happy he said that the Rebbe told him to do such-and-such, in detail.

You need a special z’chus for the Rebbe to tell you exactly what to do. Today, the way it works is “do as per the counsel of knowledgeable friends” or

“as a rav advises,” etc. When the Rebbe says something clearly, you need to listen and do it. The Rebbe wants us to be involved in his matters.

We need to accustom ourselves to be involved in those things the Rebbe is involved in and not because we have to. The Rebbe said a few weeks ago, they write me a *duch* (a report) and they only do things so they can write it in a report. Tzach writes me a *duch*, why? Since they know they have to send me a *duch*, therefore they have to do something so they’ll have what to write, so they do things in order to fill a report – this is not what I want. Don’t write a *duch* because you have to write a *duch*; write a *duch* because things were accomplished that you’re reporting about!

### **THE REBBE WANTS ACHDUS AMONG THE CHASSIDIM**

The Rebbe kocht zich in various things. Recently, the Rebbe kocht zich in achdus, “go and gather all the Jews” (as it says in the Megilla). Take out the sichos said before Purim, learn all the sichos the Rebbe said before Purim until today – I’m talking about all the sichos concerning one point, achdus. What is achdus? Achdus, the Rebbe says, is that you take an interest in what is going on with other Jews; when you don’t want to lie to others, you don’t want to interfere with others, you don’t want to cause harm to others. All cheshbonos (calculations) don’t exist.

I go into the Rebbe and sometimes the Rebbe tells me things he doesn’t say in public. What my z’chus is, I don’t know. The Rebbe needs a golem, a piece of wood – it says that in the

future even the walls will talk. A piece of wood stands there and is spoken to. The Rebbe asked why there is no achdus among the Chassidishe yungelait; I know that one wants to ... the other.

I'm going to repeat the exact words the Rebbe said. I wouldn't repeat this just for naught. There are things that I never say, bli neder, but this is something that is pertinent – "one wants to tear off the head of the other," and for nothing, just for himself. Why is it this way?

The Rebbe began talking about "go and gather all the Jews." The Rebbe then gave out a letter on the 7<sup>th</sup> of Adar, a letter that was publicized all over the world. There is a journal called *HaMaor* in America and the Rebbe said to send the letter to be printed in that journal. After they prepared the letter for print, they gave it back to the Rebbe for a final edit. That is how it works, when you print a letter, if the Rebbe wants to add something, it's given back to the Rebbe.

The letter was on the Rebbe's desk for two days and the Rebbe didn't say anything about it. I have a rule which is, when the Rebbe doesn't say anything, the letter is proofread and sent to be printed. I went into the Rebbe on Thursday night or Wednesday night and the Rebbe told me they shouldn't print it because he wants to add something.

At twelve o'clock at night, the Rebbe read it and gave the letter back with additions. What did the Rebbe add? He added a P.S. which said:

"Boruch Hashem, Rosh Chodesh Nissan" – the letter was written on 7 Adar and the Rebbe added these words about Rosh Chodesh Nissan. I don't remember it precisely but I'll tell you the gist of it. The Rebbe



**“The Rebbe told me before Purim: My inyan, the reason they gave me this position, is to draw G-dliness down to this world, but they don't allow me to do so since there is no achdus.**

wrote that whatever was written about the mivtzaim of Purim, since Pesach is approaching, it applies to the mivtzaim of Pesach. And the Rebbe wrote, what is Rosh Chodesh Nissan? This year, Rosh Chodesh Nissan comes out on a Thursday. According to the Mishna at the beginning of the tractate Megilla, this is a "yom ha'k'nisa" (day of gathering). Rosh Chodesh Nissan has this additional quality in that it's a day of gathering like it says "go and gather all the Jews." What connection is there between Rosh Chodesh Nissan and "go and gather all the Jews?" When Mordechai gathered the Jews, it was right before Pesach. The Midrash says it was the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> of Nissan, the week of

Pesach.

Whatever topic the Rebbe talks about, he speaks about achdus.

### **I WAS GIVEN THIS POSITION TO DRAW ELOKUS DOWN TO THE WORLD**

The Rebbe told me before Purim: My inyan, the reason they gave me this position, is to draw G-dliness down to this world, but they don't allow me to do so since there is no achdus.

The Rebbe says it once, twice, three time, and according to my calculation even four times. Maybe not four times in a row, but the rule is that when the Torah wants to emphasize that



**“When the Rebbe gives out lekach or matzos, there are lines until Brooklyn Avenue, but I haven’t seen, when the Rebbe announces an appeal, that the next day there should be lines until Brooklyn Avenue.**

a certain thing is compulsory then two times is enough, and that is the way it has to be. The Rebbe spoke once and twice. The Rebbe spoke about it on Parshas Sh’kalim and Parshas Ki Sisa, and more, and it all revolves around achdus.

Then it was Purim and the Rebbe spoke about achdus again. At the farbrengen on the Shabbos following Purim, the Rebbe spoke about achdus yet again. Since the Rebbe said before that, “*az dos iz mir nogeia in mayn inyan*” (it pertains to me, in my inyan), I don’t understand how there could be such a lack of achdus!

Yungelait! L’chaim! The Rebbe demands achdus among people. As long as there is someone who doesn’t want to help another, he doesn’t want to do something for another because the other will profit, the Rebbe says this is not achdus. Achdus means to do good for another with mesirus nefesh. This is what we are talking about here.

### **THE REBBE DEMANDS ACHDUS OF ALL OF US**

I once was in yechidus. I went in not as a secretary and the Rebbe demanded something of me. I didn’t say anything but the Rebbe realized that I did not understand how I could carry it out with my abilities. I stood there and looked at the Rebbe. The Rebbe looked up and said: Don’t think about how much I am demanding of you; I demand ten times more of myself.

A few weeks later, R’ Nissan (Nemenov) had yechidus and when he came out of the Rebbe’s room he farbrenged and said: I will tell you a vort from yechidus, a geshmake vort. The Rebbe told me that he demands that I demand a certain thing of the bachurim. I looked at the Rebbe. How? How is this possible? The Rebbe replied: When I go out to a farbrengen and I demand something of the Chassidim, before I do so, I estimate to what extent the Chassidim can carry it out. If I estimate that they can do at least 50% of what I ask, then I ask it of them.

Said R’ Nissan: Don’t look at it from this angle; look at the opposite angle – how much the Rebbe wants to demand but doesn’t. That is what is meant by a Chassidishe Yid. The Rebbe has rachmanus on us. He demands things of us expecting only 50% to be implemented.

What does the Rebbe really want of us? The Rebbe wants us to be completely removed from any self-interest, to be 100% devoted to what he wants.

R’ Shmuel Levitin once said to the secretaries, you are in the four cubits [of the Rebbe] – always find the good in Jews. At every opportunity, seek the good in Jews. That’s the way it ought to be.

The Rebbe once asked me how so-and-so did such-and-such. I sought a z’chus for him, an excuse, a rationale. The Rebbe said to me, he could have done it differently; he is afraid.

If we listened to the Rebbe, as R’ Nissan said, what the Rebbe really wants of us, it would be altogether different.

There was a time when the Rebbe would say how much money so-and-so should give for “Ata Horeisa” on Simchas Torah for Machne Israel and Merkos L’Inyonei Chinuch. Four or five years ago the Rebbe stopped specifying amounts. R’ Zalman Gurary said to the Rebbe that people were willing to give what the Rebbe told them to give, and they wanted the Rebbe to tell them an amount.

The Rebbe said: My *hasagos* (conceptions) are incomparably greater than theirs, and they won’t be able to tolerate my hasagos. Do them a favor and tell them not to ask me.

### **PRECISELY CARRYING OUT WHAT THE REBBE WANTS**

There is a maamer that the Rebbe said in 5712. Beis Nissan was on a Friday and on Shabbos, 3 Nissan, Rabbi Yolles came from Philadelphia. In those days the Rebbe would daven Mincha at 1:30. They finished Musaf at 12:00 or 12:15 and at 1:30 the Rebbe would enter the shul to daven Mincha, and then the Rebbe would go home until Maariv. He would return five minutes before Maariv.

That Shabbos after the davening, R’ Chadakov said they should tell the people not to rush to leave after Mincha. They understood from this that something was going to happen. At Mincha, after Aleinu, while they said Mishnayos before the final Kaddish, the Rebbe sat down. And after the Mishnayos the Rebbe began saying the maamer, “Am Zu Yotzarti.”

One of the points the Rebbe made was the difference

between ratzon (will) and seichel (intellect). Seichel is – today you learn a little, and whatever you understood, you understood. Tomorrow you learn a little more, so tomorrow you understand more. What you learned and understood yesterday, you understood. That’s seichel, but tomorrow you will understand more.

What is ratzon? This is how the Rebbe put it in the maamer, “*a horele*” (a hair, i.e. precision). Otherwise, it’s not ratzon. In ratzon there are no parts; it’s either ratzon or it’s not.

Each person wants to do the Rebbe’s ratzon. It’s either what the Rebbe wants or, if it’s different by a hairsbreadth, it’s not that we’re doing a bit of the Rebbe’s ratzon. No! It’s that we did not do what the Rebbe wants, altogether.

You can learn Chassidus for many years. You can learn sichos for many years. But when it comes Shabbos and the Rebbe says a sicha, this is the sicha of the day and this is what is demanded today.

The years the Rebbe said inyanim in Igeres HaT’shuva – it was printed in R’ Yehoshua Korf’s book – he said a chiddush. He said that the ikar (main thing) of t’shuva is abandoning the sin. But it says in t’shuvos and poskim that there must be Vidui (confession)? The Rebbe said in the sicha that this is something extra.

The next day, the Rebbe asked whether there were questions on what he said and I said there was a question. The Tzemach Tzedek says in the mitzva of t’shuva that there are two components: regret for the past and a resolution for the future and then another detail, Vidui. Vidui is part of the t’shuva process and he brings a



The Rebbe leaving R’ Boruch Nachshon’s art exhibit on the floor of offices above 770

**“The same awe you have when you are with the Rebbe should be present when you are in Nachalat Har Chabad.**

proof from the Alter Rebbe from Igeres HaT’shuva, while the Rebbe said that Vidui is an extra!

The Rebbe said: What do you want from me, that I should merely repeat what is written? Things need to be added that are not written.

### WHERE IS THE SEICHEL?

The Rebbe told me a vort. The day before I came here the Rebbe spoke to me. One of the things he said was: I don’t demand much seichel from the Chassidim, but they can have a little seichel. Where is the little bit of seichel?

Someone with even a little bit of seichel should be caught up with the question – why

shouldn’t the Rebbe have *hana’a* (pleasure)? There are Chassidim from whom the Rebbe has *hana’a* because they are devoted heart and soul.

### SEE WHAT MIVTZAIM ACCOMPLISH?

On Motzaei Shabbos we need to tell a story about the Rebbe. A man called from Eretz Yisroel whose daughter was seriously sick and he wanted someone to tell the Rebbe right away and ask for a bracha. The note given to the Rebbe had the girl’s name and the name of the person asking for a bracha. The Rebbe wrote two things: *Azkir al ha’tziyon* (I will mention it at the gravesite) next to the girl’s name, and next to the

man's name he wrote: Involved in mitvzaim?

The Rebbe gave back the note and I called the man and relayed the Rebbe's answer. A few hours later the phone rang and it was the same man and he said that after I had told him the Rebbe's answer he went directly to the offices of Tzach in his city and asked them for work to do. "They gave me work and I'll tell you what it is and I want you to tell the Rebbe." I said fine.

I wrote another note and gave it to the Rebbe. A few days later the Rebbe asked me: What's happening with the girl? I said I hadn't heard anything. The Rebbe told me to call and find out. I called and they told me that the doctors conceded that this was unbelievable and the girl was fine. I told the Rebbe and what did the Rebbe say? Now you know what mitvzaim accomplish!

Let's think about this for a moment. The Rebbe says we should do mitvzaim: Ahavas Yisroel, Chinuch, Torah, T'fillin, and the rest of the mitvzaim. The girl recovered after her father went to the offices of Tzach. When he heard that the Rebbe asked about mitvzaim he made a connection between that and his daughter.

We need to do what the Rebbe says and we need to do it happily. The Rebbe tells us to do mitvzaim – so we do it.

In 5711-5712 I was in the office and although I was a talmid in yeshiva I hung around there. The phone rang and R' Nissan Mindel answered the phone. It was a period of time when the Rebbe would walk into the office of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch, i.e. whatever the Rebbe wanted taken care of, he would personally bring into the office and then would go off to his corner and take what he

needed.

The Rebbe walked in, in the middle of R' Nissen Mindel's conversation. I stood on the side and the Rebbe saw R' Nissen talking on the phone. The Rebbe took care of some things and he heard what R' Nissen was saying. The Rebbe asked him to pause and to tell him what he was talking about. R' Nissen said it was a woman who said she had sent a letter to the Rebbe about her husband who was not well and had wanted a bracha from the Rebbe. She had received a letter from the Rebbe in which he gave her a bracha and he added that if she did not light Shabbos candles, she should start lighting. She was calling to ask what connection there was between Shabbos candles and her husband's health. She didn't understand it.

R' Nissen tried explaining to her that if the Rebbe said something, she should do it. The Rebbe stopped him and said, tell her as follows: If you believe in me and that is why you wrote and asked for a bracha, believe me when I tell you to light Shabbos candles and that it will help your husband. For if you don't believe me, why did you ask me altogether?

I heard the Rebbe say this. What does this tell us? If we believe in the Rebbe, we need to do what the Rebbe says, even if we don't understand the connection.

## THE REBBE SEES ALL

This story happened two months ago. I got a phone call from a man who wanted a bracha for his grandfather. I asked him for the name and he told me, and he added that his grandfather is a Chassidic Rebbe in a certain city who asked that his name be given

to the Rebbe since he was in bad shape and he wanted a bracha.

I gave the note to the Rebbe and the Rebbe said he would mention it at the gravesite. I called the man and told him that. A few days later he called and said his condition was worse. I don't understand, he said, the Rebbe said he would mention it at the gravesite and that is a bracha, so why is his condition worse? I told him I would ask the Rebbe. I wrote a note with the name and added that the man's condition had worsened.

The Rebbe told me that if he doesn't mind I would suggest he check his t'fillin and mezuzos. Now this man was a Chassidic Admor with Chassidim and the Rebbe was suggesting that he check his t'fillin and mezuzos!

I called the man and said he should tell his grandfather that the Rebbe suggested, if he didn't mind, to check his t'fillin and mezuzos. A few days went by and I didn't hear anything from him. Then one day, I was told in the office that someone had left a message for me to call. I called him and he said: I told him that the Rebbe said to check his t'fillin and mezuzos and we checked them and everything was kosher. Tell the Rebbe.

I wrote a note that said I was informed that all was kosher and sent it in to the Rebbe. When I went to the Rebbe's office the Rebbe gave me a note and said to relay it. The note said: *Pele gadol* (very surprising), they should check the mezuzos again, and the t'fillin shel rosh. They should check to see whether there are doorways without a mezuzah.

I called the grandson and repeated what the Rebbe had written in the note. A few days went by and I heard nothing. Then the phone rang and it was



so-and-so who said, tell the Rebbe that we asked the sofer and the rav to come to the house again to check all the t'fillin and all the mezuzos and all the doorways. He found two doors without mezuzos. I asked the man, what do you think about this? He said, by us (Galicianer Chassidim) we say that this is ruach ha'kodesh, the Lubavitcher Rebbe sees everything.

I asked him about the t'fillin and he said they were kosher. I said, ask the sofer to check them again. Two days later he called back and said, I will ask you not to tell anyone, just the Rebbe. I agreed. He said that the Rabbeinu Tam t'fillin shel rosh were pasul in such a way that they could not be fixed and he needed new parshiyos. He asked me again not to tell anyone because he didn't

want his grandfather's followers to know that their Rebbe had pasul t'fillin shel rosh.

For the Rebbe to write, "pele gadol" is very unusual, and as I mentioned before, you need a special z'chus for the Rebbe to tell us what to do. The Rebbe doesn't want to show us what he knows about people. He wanted to do a favor for this special man, a rav as well as a Chassidic Rebbe, but we need to know we have a Rebbe and the Rebbe sometimes reveals things that we understand because we see it.

What is the purpose of all this? The purpose is that we should have no doubts that the Rebbe is in Nachalat Har Chabad as he is in 770, and the same awe you have when you are with the Rebbe should be present when

you are in Nachalat Har Chabad.

The Rebbe is in 770 Eastern Parkway and he knows what is going on in Nachalat Har Chabad, in Kfar Chabad, in Melbourne, and South Africa and the world over. As the simple woman said, the Rebbe has a passport with no limitations. My passport enables me to travel to certain destinations. The Rebbe's passport enables him to travel to any country he wants. He can choose to travel to Nachalat Har Chabad and he immediately sees what is doing there and he sits in his room and sees Nachalat Har Chabad with all the buildings and people and what is going on there.

L'chaim! ■

*From a t'shura for the wedding of  
Binyamin Wolf. We thank them for sharing it.*



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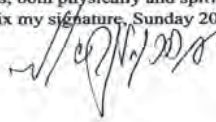

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## CELEBRATING FREEDOM:

# PESACH BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN

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The story of servitude and liberation in our generation is reflected in the story of Mrs. Sarah Lerner of Tashkent, Uzbekistan. • The initials USSR in Hebrew are numerically equivalent to that of Mitzrayim and the stories of galus and Geula are indeed parallel. • Shmura wheat in exchange for tractor replacement parts, goose fat made kosher for Pesach on Chanuka and a sick-leave pass for Pesach – these are some of the highlights of the “holiday of freedom” in the land of oppression.

By Miri Levin

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Jewish life quietly bloomed in Soviet Russia. In hidden places even amidst the horrific searches and arrests, the Jewish neshama yearned for its Creator.

Mrs. Sarah Lerner reminisces about living a life of mesirus nefesh to maintain one's Jewish identity. It was step after step that built an “island of Geula” within an “ocean of servitude.” The “Chag Ha'Geula” to preserve the freedom of the Jew was something that remained relevant all year long.

### FIRST THINGS FIRST - PLANTING THE WHEAT

“We prepared for Pesach all year round,” began Mrs. Lerner in describing her childhood. “I was born in Tashkent in Buchara in 5704/1944. My parents' families were descendants of generations of rabbanim who observed Jewish practice under the most difficult conditions. My father was an engineer who worked in a manufacturing complex for the manufacture of airplanes. He served in a senior position and we lived directly opposite the complex. Our

family arrived in Tashkent from Moscow, where the complex had originally been built. After World War II, it was moved from Moscow to Tashkent due to difficulties in obtaining food for the employees. The government parceled out land near the city so that starving citizens could raise food there on their own.

“The first thing my father did when he got to know these ‘city farmers’ was to convince them to plant wheat. Most of the farmers grew fruits and vegetables. But my father, who thought about Pesach at the beginning of the year, made sure to hire someone



The brothers Chaim Tzvi and Dovid

who would grow wheat. During the harvest, my father would organize groups of G-d fearing Jews from the community who bought the shmura wheat at ridiculously overpriced rates, quadruple the usual price. This was the only way to ensure that the farmer would be willing to plant wheat for the next year too."

Being punctilious in mitzva observance was hard and complicated. One of the first things a Jewish mother needed to do was sew an opaque curtain to hide the Shabbos candles.

## PESACH ALL YEAR ROUND

"Despite the difficulty, and perhaps because of it, our thoughts were constantly preoccupied with coming up with creative solutions.

"Being religiously observant was a carefully guarded treasure that we could not reveal to anyone. I did not enter a shul during the years I lived in the Soviet Union. The minyanim were partially secret. Even when I was in Moscow for my wedding, I went to the mikva near the shul but did not dare to enter the shul itself. We were an academic

family and if we were caught visiting this 'most dangerous place in the country,' we would be in big trouble."

This was the reason that every Yom Tov required months of planning; all the more so the Yom Tov of Pesach.

"The end of the summer was the grape picking season. My father would buy large quantities of grapes. He had huge jars that contained 8-10 liters and using our Pesach dishes we would prepare a nice supply of wine. The wine was put into small bottles that were well sealed and



## WHEN THE POLICE CLOSED THE BAKERY

Mrs. Lerner relates:

Between the years 5703 and 5705, my in-laws were in Dushanbe where they became good friends with a traditional Jewish family. Their home in Dushanbe was in one of the sections that enjoyed a special gift – a heavy Russian oven.

One of the times that the matza bakery was discovered while they were in middle of “forbidden work,” the bakery was put under lock and key by the police. Having no choice, the k’hilla turned to my father-in-law. Well, he had an oven in the middle of the room.

I’d better not describe how the room looked after the baking, especially when the room had just been plastered a few days earlier ...

kept out of sight for Pesach.”

Chanuka entailed another activity besides secretly lighting the Menorah. That was the season to kasher chickens and geese for Pesach and the making of schmaltz for the holiday only three months away, a very short time in Soviet terms.

“This was common practice for all members of the Jewish community in Tashkent. Well-known Chassidim lived in Tashkent at that time including R’ Boruch Sandler who taught the children Chumash and Rashi, R’ Avrum Binyamin Rabinowitz who edited a newspaper in Yiddish in Warsaw before the world war. A classic Chassidic figure from that time was the rav of the k’hilla, R’ Yaakov Shneur Zalman Pevsner. He was known as R’ Zalman Buber for the town he came from. He had learned in Chabad Lubavitch in his youth and was even the chavrusa (study partner) of the Rebbe Rayatz! He was a short man with a very hoarse voice because of the tuberculosis he acquired when exiled to Siberia for ten years due to his underground Jewish activity. The joy in life that he radiated despite his travails, and his personality, impacted the entire community. He passed away while still the rav, on Erev Pesach. My brother

was the last one to go to him that day to sell his chametz.”

### EVEN IN RUSSIA - KOL DICHFIN

Preparing the matzos was a major activity. After step one, obtaining the flour that had been guarded since the harvest, came the grinding.

“My father’s connections with the manager of the flour mill helped the k’hilla with this process as well. The mill was made kosher and my brother and I were enlisted to sift the flour. Long tables were covered with white sheets and we, in chef outfits, sifted enough flour for twenty families! A local bakery, rented for the purpose, underwent a professional ‘spiritual makeover’ for the baking of the matzos.

“My father always prepared a huge quantity of matzos which he later sent to many Jews in the city. He took a token fee, ‘wholesale price’ as he put it, even though the actual costs were very high.”

Pesach night under the Soviet regime, the directive to feed “all that are hungry” and “all that need” was fulfilled, despite all the danger.

“Seder night in my family included no fewer than fifteen people. We were very wary of informers. We were so frightened but my father brought guests anyway. The winter of 5707/1946 was stormy, even by Russian standards. One day, my father heard about a Polish bachur who had made the shul his home. Without hesitation, my father offered him an alternative dwelling, our home. The bachur stayed in our home until he was able to make suitable arrangements for himself.”

### GEMACHIM FOR MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL NEEDS

That wasn’t the only incident of that kind. The home of the young Sarah Lerner after she married was also a home of chesed.

“Mutual aid and chesed were a family tradition. My grandparents on both sides lived in Samarkand in Uzbekistan. My maternal grandfather, R’ Avrohom Yaakov Plant, who was known as Yankev Dayan, started a chesed organization during the war. One of the gemachim he started was a place open 24 hours a day where you could get plenty of hot water. In Russia, this was vital.

“My grandfather got together some men who were divided into 16 pairs. They circulated three times a week in the hospitals and brought the Jewish dead to burial.”

For Pesach, he arranged a gemach for food that provided kosher meals for starving refugees. This was the period when Polish prisoners who spent time in Siberia, were released during World War II. They arrived in Samarkand lacking everything. Starvation and typhus threatened to finish them

off. For many of them, these meals were the only fuel their bodies received on Pesach.

“My paternal grandfather, R’ Aharon Krogliak, provided food products for refugees. Many people ate at his table and enjoyed both material and spiritual sustenance. An ongoing shiur that he gave to older single men remained etched in their memories for many years to follow.”

## PRESERVING JEWISH LIFE

After their marriage, the young couple lived in their parents’ home in Samarkand. Mrs. Lerner recounts:

“My in-laws had a secret minyan, shiurim and a kosher mikva in the yard for the use of Anash who could be relied upon to keep a secret.

“My mother-in-law was very afraid of drunks. One time, when she was home alone, a Russian drunk entered the house. The door hadn’t been closed properly and he took advantage of the opportunity and walked about the house. My mother-in-law didn’t know how to get rid of him. Just at that moment, R’ Michoel Mishulovin came out of the mikva in the yard. He instantly realized what was going on and he approached the drunkard and said nicely but firmly, ‘Let’s get out of here.’ The drunkard looked at him through half-closed eyes and said, ‘A holy man like you doesn’t need to behave like this.’

Mrs. Lerner worked as a teacher in a nursing school. Due to her job, the difficulties involved in preparing for Pesach did not end when the holiday began.

“Final exams were given before Pesach. I was appointed to the examiners’ committee. The tests were given two or



From right to left: The brothers Chaim Tzvi, Yaakov and Dovid

three times a week and after exam season the members of the committee met for a graduation party. On ordinary days I said I was on a certain diet and ate pitot and fresh vegetables. Pesach, which began in the midst of the festivities, posed a big problem for me. The Uzbek tradition has it that not eating with a host is a grave insult. How could I refrain from eating chametz without arousing the ire of my colleagues? The solution lay in the guise of a ‘sick-leave pass’ for

ten days for a serious injury of my right hand which was a made up story.”

## REPLACEMENT PARTS FOR MATZOS

In Samarkand too, preparing for Pesach required strategic planning which included finding kosher for Pesach wheat. This was just as complicated as it was in Tashkent.

“The climate in Samarkand is warm and the rainy season

## THE REBBE'S LETTER CAME 36 YEARS LATER!

Mrs. Lerner relates:

"Our connection with the Rebbe was kept up despite the limitations in our communication. Like today, we waited with a shidduch suggestion until we had the Rebbe's approval. My husband asked the mashpia to send a letter to the Rebbe and then we waited for an answer. And we waited ... and we waited .... For two months! It was no wonder since the letter was sent to Eretz Yisroel and from there to the United States. A letter like that could not be sent directly to the US from the Soviet Union unless you wanted it buried by the censors.

"The Rebbe's response was sent to Rabbi Shimshon Kahane of Eretz Yisroel and he gave it to one of my acquaintances who gave me the good news. Only then, could we conclude our 'business.' But that wasn't the end. The end of the story took place much later, in 5763/2003. R' Kahane moved from Kfar Chabad to Yerushalayim and in moving, he found forgotten items and papers. That is how he came across an old letter that had the Rebbe's *haskama* and *bracha* for the Lerner couple (who had grandchildren in the interim). He rushed to give the letter to my son in Yerushalayim and I got it on Chanuka as a most original gift: an artistic frame that contained the Rebbe's letter from 36 years earlier!

"I was thrilled. In my hand I hold the Rebbe's regards, regards that were sent 36 years ago."

begins late. Obtaining flour that is guarded from the time it is harvested was very difficult. Buying flour openly in the Soviet regime was suicidal. As for a bribe, forget about it! So how could we obtain flour some other way? My father-in-law was blessed with a sixth sense and he contacted one of the *kolkhozes* in the area. At harvest time, he would show up with an offer for the farmers. The harvest on a *kolkhoz* is done with tractors which are readily available in Russia. Everything would go fine until one of the tractors developed a problem. Replacement parts were very expensive and so, the tractor would sit idle. My father-in-law got replacement parts and with some members of the *k'hilla* he offered them to the farmers in exchange for the right to harvest the wheat. That is how they got flour that was kosher for Pesach.

"There were often glitches. Late rains suddenly flooded the

fields and they had to start all over again ..."

## WE ARE BROTHERS

Mrs. Lerner remembers an incident that highlights communist servitude:

"Professor Lerner was a close acquaintance of my husband but was not a relative. His mother was Jewish but his wife was not. When his mother died, he asked my husband to arrange for a Jewish burial for her. My husband explained that at night, T'hilim needed to be said near the body. The professor thought a bit and then said, 'I have a Jewish friend. Many are afraid of him but I trust him. I can call him to fulfill this Jewish obligation for my mother.'

"The name of the friend Massis, sounded very familiar to my husband, and when he saw the man, it jogged his memory. The man had a square jaw and

something about his face was familiar to my husband. My husband asked him, 'Don't you live in that town in the Ukraine and your mother's name is Chanche?'

"The friend blanched and turned to the professor and blurted in terror, 'Nobody knows that. That man is from the KGB.'

"My husband calmed him by saying, 'Don't be afraid. When I saw your face I was reminded of a story of my mother about her cousin Chanche who has a very gifted family and also happened to have a square jaw.'"

This story, like all good stories, had a happy ending. The cousin who had been discovered in such a surprising way, invited the Lerner family to his house.

"His wife welcomed us very warmly. 'Eat, eat,' she urged us, 'everything here is treif.' That was the concept she remembered. She had learned just two mitzvos from her friend whose house she had stayed in during the war – to fast on Yom Kippur and to eat matza on Pesach. She asked me to help her obtain matzos since the local bakery she had gone to was not clean enough for her. I arranged matza baking for us and thanks to her, I had two kilograms of *shmura* matza for Pesach."

## LET MY PEOPLE GO

The death of Stalin, which along with him buried his diabolical plans for the Jews of the Soviet Union, was a miracle. From that point on, things eased up a bit when it came to religious persecution. After the Six Day War, Russian Jewry was greatly inspired and the murmuring turned into a loud voice, "Let my people go!"

"Two years later, my husband returned from a Yud-Tes Kislev



farbrengen in Samarkand where we lived. It was 3:30 in the morning and he said excitedly, 'The mashpia, Yenkel Nisselevitch, 'Der Geller,' conveyed an awesome message from the Rebbe – 'Salvation is at hand. Knock on the gates and the gates will open so wide that whoever wants to, will be able to leave.'

"Just one year later, Russian Jewry saw the fulfillment of this prophecy. The first people to get visas were the Friedman family. A year later, R' Leib Chatzarnov, his wife and five children, asked for visas in an original way. They went to the visa department in Moscow with folding beds. They announced, 'We are not budging from here until we get our visas!' Their visas were issued the fastest in the entire Soviet Union!

"In 5731/1971 the gates opened wide and planes with 300-400 Jews left the Soviet empire."

Mrs. Lerner concluded on a personal note:

"The Geula with the Exodus from Egypt and the Geula with



R' Zev Krogliak with his mechutan, R' Shloimke Maidanchek

the exodus from Russia, show us how the ultimate Geula will be. Although we don't see the light on the horizon, the Geula will come. When my husband was a boy and he sat at a farbrengen, the talmidim spoke with their teacher about what it would be like when Moshiach comes. The teacher explained it like this, 'You will be able to stand in the

street with t'fillin and daven and a policeman will come and will be unable to do you harm.'

"Look at what we have today! Throughout the former Soviet Union we have hundreds of families of shluchim who are generously helped by the government. We just need to open our eyes!" ■

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# THIS YUD ALEPH NISSAN: BE A CHASSID, RAISE A CHASSID

When 11 Nissan approaches, a Chassidishe Yid starts thinking about the Rebbe and what he is about. Of course, who are we to understand the Rebbe? But the truth is that even thinking, “I don’t understand the Rebbe” is also a “hisbonenus” that leads to inspiration. • Thoughts about chinuch and hiskashrus. • An interview with Michoel Mishulovin, mashpia of Anash in Nachalat Har Chabad-Kiryat Malachi. • Part 2 of 2

Interview by Mendel Tzfasman

Pictures: Shlomo Neimark

## ACTING IN GEULA FASHION

**What does “living with Moshiach” consist of? How do we do it? What should we do when we try, but it doesn’t “go?”**

Of course, if someone doesn’t live with Moshiach in a p’nimius’dike way, i.e. it’s not coming from inside of him, then all the good and wonderful things he says and does will be superficial. When things are only superficial, they don’t affect you. Torah study has the power to enable things to be done in a p’nimius’dike manner, and in this case, we are talking about learning inyanei Moshiach and Geula.

The “Chassidishe parsha”

explains the verse, “*Adam ki yakriv mi’kem korban la’Hashem*” – that when a person wants to get close to G-dliness, it needs to be “mi’kem – from you,” it depends on you. In another place it explains that the Torah is called “adam” as it says, “*Zos ha’Torah – adam.*” In other words, the ability to bring a Jew close to Hashem is through Torah, even Nigleh of Torah, and all the more so Chassidus, p’nimius ha’Torah. This is the *is’arusa d’l’sata* – spiritual arousal from below, when you want to make an effort to approach Hashem. As Chazal say, “I created **Torah** as a *tavlin* [spice/remedy],” and in our case, learning inyanei Moshiach and Geula.

That same Evil Inclination

about whom Hashem says Torah is the way to deal with it, refers to all things of this world that confuse a person and entice him away from working to bring about the Rebbe’s hisgalus. It makes no difference what the reasons and excuses are. In order to rise above the Yetzer Hara, we have Torah, Nigleh and surely Chassidus, which refines a person, and especially inyanei Moshiach, and Geula.

When a Chassid begins studying inyanei Moshiach, even a few lines a day, the concepts fill his head and he suddenly begins to think about Moshiach in his daily life. Furthermore, if he invests in this study and has set times to learn it and review it, if he really works at it and farbrengs



with the concepts he learns, then the Torah has the power to make a change in him and he begins “living with Moshiach.”

When he learns and understands what Moshiach is about, when he understands what a revelation of light there will be when Moshiach comes, he will realize what is worth his time; he will start to yearn for the Yemos HaMoshiach and the lofty giluyim. All this is aside from the best part of all, which a Chassid only needs to contemplate briefly, and that is seeing our Rebbe again.

To sum it up – I don’t know of any chayus in Moshiach that is not associated with Torah.

**When I learn inyanei Moshiach and Geula, how can I know whether I am doing things**

**with an emes and a p’nimius?**

People used to say as a joke that the way you know is simple – if someone asks you for a loan of \$1000 until Moshiach comes and you tell him, “Oy, until then?” that shows how real your emuna is. Conversely, if you have no problem with it, that shows you truly believe that Moshiach is coming imminently.

The truth of the matter is, we don’t need anything to prove whether our emuna is real or not. If a person doesn’t fool himself, he knows how affected he is by the inyan of Moshiach. Do we truly live with Moshiach all the time? How much do we long for Moshiach? Sometimes, we are even embarrassed to say too much about Moshiach at a farbrengen. You keep it to only a

few words so nobody should get upset.

We are all sensitive to our physical circumstances like what’s doing in our bank account, while those things that should take center stage in our lives are often pushed to the side.

Yud-Alef Nissan is a day of cheshbon ha’nefesh for each of us and a real cheshbon ha’nefesh leads to action.

**And still, what is the way to attain avoda p’nimius?**

You first have to clarify what you mean by “p’nimius.” P’nimius has so many levels; it’s not just black or white, p’nimi or chitzoni. Rather, there is more p’nimius’dike and less p’nimius’dike. There are times that a person operates from the p’nimius of his soul and times



**“We are all sensitive to our physical circumstances like what’s doing in our bank account, while those things that should take center stage in our lives are often pushed to the side. Yud-Alef Nissan is a day of real cheshbon, cheshbon ha’nefesh for each of us and that leads to action.”**

that it is less so. Do you want a person to be at 100% all the time? We all want the Geula and we all know that the Rebbe is true and what he says is true, and yet, we don’t always live with this truth because you need avoda for this and “you don’t buy p’nimius in the store.”

As to your question, there is a way to make it more p’nimius’dike and that is through avoda p’nimis, meaning, when a person uses his heart, and what is the avoda of the heart? T’filla. To daven with kavana, paying attention to what the words mean, to think Chassidus before davening, and of course working on oneself to suppress the Yetzer and do what the Rebbe wants and not what we naturally want to do.

Obviously, there is no set amount for this and if a person says, “I attained p’nimius,” that’s as good as telling us that he is very far from it. It’s an ongoing avoda.

Again, as mentioned earlier, Torah is the answer. If a person learns Torah without yeshus (ego), he can ensure that what he learns is taken in with a p’nimius.

In the maamer, “Lo yichanef od morecha 5721,” the Rebbe explains that through chitzonius you can affect the p’nimius and it’s explained there that the “levushim” – garments (thought, speech and action), which are external, affect the p’nimius. How can we reconcile this?

In this maamer, it explains that since nowadays it is hard to change the p’nimius ha’nefesh, as it says in the *Mevo Sh’arim* – the levushim are very powerful. The Rebbe explains, based on an answer of the Alter Rebbe to the Misnagdim who said Chassidim are hypocritical, [citing the Mishna that states] that if a person makes believe he is lame and blind, etc. [in order to fool people to get tz’daka] he will eventually end up lame and blind, and the positive is way greater than the negative and so these Chassidim [who are not on the spiritual level that they seem to be] will eventually attain these levels. The Rebbe explains that levushim have the power to beautify and change the p’nimius.

However, you have to understand that these levushim-garments we are talking about garb the soul and so when a person is “just” using these levushim, he needs to be careful not to use the garment of action to do things that are the opposite of what Hashem wants. He should only do mitzvos, close his eyes to evil, etc. And with the garment of speech he should be careful not to speak rechilus, lashon ha’ra, idle talk, cynical talk etc. and use his power of speech for divrei Torah, to encourage a friend, for davening with kavana, heartfelt T’hillim, etc. As for the garment of thought, if a person is careful about his thoughts so that he doesn’t think badly about

another person or have thoughts that are not directed to Hashem, then surely these “garments” will affect his p’nimius.

**So are you saying that learning Torah, inyanei Moshiach and Geula, is avoda p’nimis or is it that I learn with the garment of speech and this external action affects my p’nimius?**

Both are true. In chapter 5 of Tanya, the Alter Rebbe compares Torah study to food and the advantage is that just like when a person eats nourishing food, he doesn’t have to think and intend for the nutrients to enter his body and give him strength, iron and vitamins, the Torah works in the same way. And still, the Alter Rebbe says there, “and the Torah is food as well as a garment for the intellectual soul which garbs itself in her [the Torah] during studying and learning; all the more so when he utters words of Torah.”

What we know for sure is that if a Chassid only relies on inspiration from Above, on an auspicious day like Yud-Alef Nissan, and won’t do his own work whether with good resolutions, by learning inyanei Moshiach and Geula and strengthening his hiskashrus – it says in Likkutei Torah that when the auspicious time passes, the inspiration will dissipate.

**Let’s get practical. The Rebbe says that everything we do and all of shlichus needs to be permeated with the inyan of kabbalas p’nei Moshiach Tzidkeinu. How do we do that?**

When a Chassid knows that the Rebbe has placed such an emphasis on Moshiach, then if he has a feeling for the Rebbe and is mekushar, whenever he does something good he will think, if only this tips the scale and brings

the hisgalus of the Rebbe MH”M.

When you learn the sichos of 5751-5752, you can’t remain apathetic. The Rebbe clamors so much about the coming of Moshiach so that a true Chassid can’t help being inspired and yearning for Moshiach and to see the Rebbe; so when he puts on t’fillin, says a bracha, and helps someone, he connects it all to the Rebbe’s hisgalus.

The same is true with even the most mundane things like eating. A Jew eats in order to have the energy to serve Hashem and a Chassid knows that he serves Hashem and fulfills mitzvos in order to bring about G-d’s intention – Yemos HaMoshiach. Also, as the Rambam says, having a healthy body is one of the paths in avodas Hashem.

Surely, when meeting another Jew, we should tell them about how wonderful the mitzva is that they are doing and that it can tip the scale and bring Moshiach. Obviously, even when he publicizes about Moshiach and says “Yechi HaMelech,” he doesn’t forget that it’s all being done to bring about the hisgalus of the Rebbe. So what you have is, a Chassid who is constantly thinking about Moshiach and he starts “living with Moshiach.” But to reach this stage you have to learn inyanei Moshiach and the last sichos we heard from the Rebbe, because it is only with the power of Torah that we can achieve this state in which we think of Moshiach at every moment.

## EVERY PERSON HAS A QUALITY YOU DON’T HAVE

In the sicha of 28 Nissan, the Rebbe demands, “do all that you can to bring Moshiach.” What can we do that hasn’t been done yet?

I remember that when the Rebbe said the sichos of 5751-5752, he said that we need to “open our eyes.” I was reminded that when the Alter Rebbe told the Chassidim to “live with the times,” nobody knew what he was referring to until they asked his brother who asked the Alter Rebbe who explained that he meant to live with the parsha of the week.

“Living with the times” is not so mysterious and yet nobody knew what the Alter Rebbe meant until he explained it. That is what I thought back then, and I think that this point, “opening our eyes,” is not quite understood. Every year we review the 28 Nissan sicha and are shaken up by what the Rebbe said. Then we wonder what we can do about it. One person says to learn about Geula (I mean that of course the Rebbe himself said to do that but the “debate” is on what to focus our attention) and another person says we need to publicize about Moshiach, etc.

But the Rebbe tells us in the sicha that the proof that we haven’t done enough is that we are still in galus! The fact is, the years have gone by and we are *still* in galus and don’t see the Rebbe. That tells us that there is something we need to do.

First and foremost, we must remember and emphasize simple faith in what the Rebbe said. The Alter Rebbe in Tanya quotes the Gemara, “Along came Chavakuk and established them on one principle,” on emuna, as it says, “and a tzaddik lives by his faith.” Jews in general are “believers, children of believers,” especially Chassidim of the Rebbe, since a Rebbe’s inyan is *raya meihemna* – to be the faithful shepherd who provides faith for his Chassidim and Jews, as it says, “and shepherd faith.”



“It’s very simple... If we look favorably at others, that leads directly to achdus.

And the Rebbe told us directly, not as a possibility and maybe, that Moshiach is coming and we are the final generation of galus and the first generation of Geula. The years have gone by and the Yetzer Hara tries to cool us off.

We must retain our simple faith and not allow our rationality to confuse us, even when it’s holy intellect or *lamdus*. We must focus on what the Rebbe said. The Rebbe said in the sicha of Parshas Shoftim 5751 that he is not just a judge and advisor but the prophet of the generation about whom it says, “listen to him.” We are not allowed to second-guess him or test him. So if the Rebbe told us, by way of prophecy, that Moshiach is coming, then we have to firmly believe that the Rebbe will be revealed as Moshiach and we need to get ready for this.

**What good thing do you think we should give the most attention to?**

In my humble opinion, achdus. I don't want to say that this is holding things up, but I think that if we were all unified we would have had the Geula long ago. Any delay is inexplicable and the Rebbe himself said that there is no explanation for it, so who am I to give a reason? And yet, if we unite, it was worth mentioning it.

**All Lubavitchers uniting? Sounds like a dream, to the point that we sometimes daven that the Rebbe should come if only for the sake of achdus. How can we demand this of everyone individually?**

It's very simple. Look at everyone with a "good eye." Find good things in others and focus on them. Every person has some good quality that you don't have; a good midda, hiddur mitzva, a chumra you don't do, etc. If we look favorably at others, that leads directly to achdus.

Aside from that, like R' Mendel would always enthusiastically repeat what the Alter Rebbe says in Tanya, "do not think in your hearts of your fellow's evil." Simply do not think badly about another and constantly look for the good.

This is a very powerful thing, because first, every good action of a Jew in general and a Chassid in particular, affects the world, as Chassidim would say, if a Chassid in a certain part of the world is lax in hiddur mitzva, that causes a Jew somewhere else in the world to abandon Jewish practice. Good is much more potent than evil so if each of us thinks positively about another, it will have an effect.

Aside from this, each general activity starts from the person

himself. When each of us makes a personal decision to think well of another, we will suddenly see that the other person who, we either didn't think about until now or we thought about negatively, is a Chassidishe yungerman. We will sit down together to farbreng and "as waters reflect a face, so too man's heart to another." From individual hachlatos we will see an enormous impact within Anash.

## **YEARNING FOR THE REBBE WHILE IN RUSSIA VERSUS YEARNING FOR THE REBBE TODAY**

**When you were in Russia you had mesirus nefesh to keep Torah and mitzvos. Today too, each person has mesirus nefesh, mesirus ratzon, to fulfill Torah and mitzvos and to carry out the Rebbe's instructions. What can the younger generation learn from the mesirus nefesh of your generation in order to be able to handle the influence of the street, peers and the Yetzer Hara?**

The fact is that our mesirus nefesh was different. Our test was poverty while today, the test is wealth. For us, the test put us in a state like the olive that is squeezed to extract the oil. The tests and pressure didn't lead us to follow our heart's desires. We were constantly in fear, being careful to avoid getting caught. Maybe, because of this, the Yetzer Hara wasn't so "expansive," but rather more pressured and "contained."

The Rebbe himself said that there were Jews in Russia who were constantly on guard and withstood the test but when they came to free countries later on, they didn't necessarily observe everything.

The test for young people today is much greater and withstanding tests today is much more complicated because the Yetzer Hara is clever and knows his clients. When a Chassid today who did not grow up with the mesirus nefesh of Russia closes his eyes to avoid evil and goes on mitzvaim and goes on shlichus and deals with daily spiritual difficulties, this is no less great than the mesirus nefesh of Russia. Just for this alone, the Rebbe should be nisgaleh.

What kept us going back then was the Rebbe. The youth learned from the great Chassidim, from their parents, from the mashpiim, and the generation prior to ours learned everything from the Rebbe (Rashab or Rayatz). They conveyed to us their chayus and hiskashrus to the Rebbe.

**What about the young people of today who did not see the Rebbe?**

Nu, Hashem should help that they see the Rebbe immediately.

**And in the seconds before that, what can keep our youth going?**

Even videos are a great thing because you're not only seeing a picture but what the Rebbe did, sichos, giving out dollars, farbrengens, etc. In the meantime, in the seconds remaining before the hisgalus, watching the Rebbe on video is terrific and is very important for the young generation's hiskashrus.

**Your situation in Russia and your hiskashrus to the Rebbe there comes to mind when thinking about our lives after Gimmel Tammuz. You knew there was a Rebbe and yet you didn't see him. Many of you saw the Rebbe only in your forties.**

Right. Over the years, we



kept ourselves going by looking at a picture of the Rebbe Rayatz and the Rebbe Rashab. I remember a small, famous picture of the Rebbe Rashab sitting on a chair. We learned that every movement and action of the Rebbe is literally a reflection of "Up Above," like it's brought in s'farim that when the Baal Shem Tov would raise his hand, he would raise up all of the Order of Hishtalshlus to G-dliness, and when he lowered it, he would draw down a revelation of G-dliness throughout the Order of Hishtalshlus.

They taught us to look at the Rebbe's picture. When we saw that the Rebbe Rashab had one hand open and one hand closed, we knew that this wasn't happenstance and that every move is according to the will of G-d. I remember that we would gaze upon the picture and through that, we would connect with the Rebbe and live with the Rebbe.

Remember that we didn't have video that is "live" and enables you to get to know the Rebbe to some extent. All we had was one little picture that was hidden in a book so they wouldn't catch us with a picture of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

Obviously, we also put a lot of work into learning the Rebbe's (Rayatz) teachings, in learning maamarim in depth and we had Chassidishe farbrengens with the great Chassidim who shaped our Chassidic image.

**You didn't see the Rebbe when he accepted the nesius and there were no Chassidim to tell you, firsthand about the Rebbe, so what made you become Chassidim of the Rebbe MH"M?**

We found out about the passing of the Rebbe Rayatz a



half a year later, in Elul 5710. We "got to know" the Rebbe only around 5720! In other words, we knew at a certain point that the Rebbe Rayatz's son-in-law had accepted the nesius, but we knew nothing about him until around 5720. That's when we got a photocopy of an unedited sicha from the Rebbe's farbrengen. It was first then that we became Chassidim of the Rebbe.

**What is the first thing you remember about the Rebbe?**

At that time, a while before 5720, the first things we got from the Rebbe were a small Tanya, a Siddur and HaYom Yom. The Rebbe would send these with tourists who could come and go relatively freely. They would visit Chabad communities with these items and "forget" a tallis, t'fillin, s'farim in shul. We could not go over to them and they could not approach us, in fear of the informers who were everywhere.

When we got a HaYom Yom, we suddenly realized how great the Rebbe is through the brief aphorisms he chose to include in it. By the way, the s'farim did not always reach us as books. First, the books arrived in Leningrad and the Chassidim would learn them and then

send them or copies of them to other Chassidim throughout the country.

**What about letters from the Rebbe?**

Letters to the Rebbe? That was a rarity. Fear of getting caught was tremendous and we could not write freely. When did we write? When we wanted to get married. Without an answer from the Rebbe, marriage was impossible. I can tell you what happened with me, that in order to receive an answer from the Rebbe about a shidduch, we secretly wrote a letter to R' Berke Chein who was already in Eretz Yisroel and he wrote a letter to the Rebbe. When he received a positive answer, he sent us a letter, all with the greatest secrecy.

**In conclusion ...**

We are in the *hechste tzait* and in an auspicious time, the month of Nissan. "In Nissan they were redeemed and in Nissan they will be redeemed." May Hashem help us make use of these final moments to rise up a bit above the gashmius, and may we see the Rebbe and celebrate Yud-Alef Nissan with the Rebbe at the third Beis HaMikdash with all Am Yisroel. ■

# I DON'T NEED YOUR GOLD, I WANT YOUR SOUL

By Rabbi Heschel Greenberg, Director and Founder of the Jewish Discovery Center of Buffalo.



## THE TORAH HAS PITY ON OUR MONEY

In this week's parsha the Torah details the manner in which Aaron—and all subsequent High Priests—were to perform the service on Yom Kippur. Normally the Kohen Gadol-High Priest would wear golden vestments. However for the special service that involved his entry into the Holy of Holies (the inner precinct of the Sanctuary) on Yom Kippur he would wear white linen garments.

One would have imagined that precisely the opposite would be the case — that when the holiest Jew (the Kohen Gadol) enters into the holiest place on earth (the Holy of Holies) on the holiest day of the year (Yom Kippur) that he should wear the most precious and ornate garments. Why then was he commanded to remove them and, instead, only to wear the plain white linen garments?

The Talmud and Midrash anticipated this question and responded to it in two ways. The Talmud (Rosh Hashanah 26a) invokes the legal principle: "*Ein kateigor na'aseh saneigor* — a prosecutor cannot become the defender." In other words the Kohen Gadol's service was to atone for the sin of the golden calf in addition to other sins. Vestiges of that sin still continue centuries after the original incident of the

golden calf and, in fact, will only be removed with the coming of Moshiach in the era of the final Redemption. And since gold was the source of their transgression, wearing golden vestments would have aroused the incriminating memory of that tragic sin. Gold is compared to a prosecutor because it is what caused this most heinous transgression. It could therefore not serve as a source of atonement for that very sin; it cannot become the "defender."

The Midrash adds another answer to this question as to why the Kohen Gadol would not wear his golden vestments when entering the holy of holies: "The Torah has concern over the money of the Jewish people."

This answer is puzzling. Using the logic of "the Torah having pity for the money of the Jewish people" one might have argued that it should not have been worn at all throughout the year. So why is it that on the one day when it would seem most appropriate to use the most exquisite of the garments was it denied? Furthermore the Kohen Gadol did, in fact, wear the golden vestments on Yom Kippur. Only when he entered the Holy of Holies he was required to remove the golden ones and don the plain linen garments.

Commentators explain that there is a law that prohibits the

use of the priestly garments used in the Holy of Holies for any other occasion; even for the next year's service. Hence if he were to wear his golden vestments, he would have had to purchase new ones every year. This would have constituted an extraordinary expense of the Jewish people's money.

However, it is clear that the golden vestments were not just for decoration. They were the physical manifestation of spiritual adornment and richness. And if wearing golden vestments meant that he would now be equipped with the most effective means of enhancing his spiritual stature, why was he denied that power when it would have seemed most needed?

## DEFINING PITY

To answer this question we must delve more deeply into the Talmudic principle that "the Torah has pity on the money of the Jewish people." This principle is often substituted in the Talmud (Menachot 89) for the opposite rule: "There is no place for poverty in a place of wealth." This means that in the Temple they were not to skimp on the things that were necessary for its service. Why is it then that in some instances they valued and incorporated gold and other signs of affluence because they reflected a parallel dimension of

spiritual wealth, while in other instances they would avoid incurring such extra expenses?

To answer this question we must examine the use of the word “pity” employed by the Talmud and Midrash in this regard. Where else do we find the concept of “pity” in our tradition?


The answer to this question can be found in the order of Passover Seder when we eat the Romaine Lettuce as one of the forms—and indeed the most preferred form—of bitter herbs. The Aramaic word for Romaine Lettuce is *chasa* which the Talmud (P’sachim 39a) translates as “G-d has pity.”

Moreover the very name for this Holiday of Passover in Hebrew is Pesach. One of the translations of Pesach, as rendered by the classical Aramaic translator Onkeles as well as Rashi, is “G-d had **pity**.”

At this point we should pause to better understand of the dynamics of pity, or mercy, and how it ties in with the more basic translation of Pesach—also rendered by Rashi—as Passover.

When a person is deserving of assistance the helper does so not out of pity or compassion but out of a feeling of doing what is right. When however someone does not deserve to be helped, and despite that we do help this person, we call this an act of pity or compassion. The act of compassion is to pass over and ignore the arguments that favor our not helping that person. Compassion involves passing over and circumventing one’s own sense of justice and fairness.

In theological terms, G-dly compassion involves revealing a dimension of G-d that transcends the parameters that He Himself created and made part of the

 “There is no place for poverty in a place of wealth.” This means that in the Temple they were not to skimp on the things that were necessary for its service.

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operating system of the universe. Such compassion is an expression of the ultimate miracle. In fact the greatest part of the miracle of the splitting of the Red Sea was not the suspension of the natural law that governs the flow of water. Rather, the greatest part of the miracle was that G-d ignored the argument of the angels who declared: “Both of these groups are idolaters; what distinguishes one from the other?” To save the Israelites G-d had to overrule the angels who are the representatives and advocates of the very system that G-d Himself put into place.

We can now understand the concept that “the Torah has pity on the money of the Jewish people” also on a higher level. It does not just mean that we try to save money to avoid impoverishing the community. It also may mean that there are times that G-d overrides the system of money and articles of value such as gold, and renders the benefits that accrue from, unnecessary.

### THE VALUE OF GOLD

Gold, money, and all of our material resources are part of G-d’s creation, which provide us with the means to serve G-d. Indeed, the Midrash tells us that G-d created gold specifically for the construction of the Mishkan, the Holy Temple in the desert, as well as subsequent sanctuaries. Out of sheer benevolence, G-d allows us to enjoy the use of gold as well. But we must always remember that gold and, by

extension, all material goods are intended for a higher purpose.

How do we prove our worthiness to G-d? One measure of our relationship with G-d is determined by the way we utilize our resources—particularly our most precious resources—to serve Him. The more we are willing to spend on helping the needy, supporting Jewish education, purchasing supplies for the Shabbat and Jewish Holidays, et al, the more we show how much we appreciate the real reason we have been given all of these possessions. This is the mode of serving G-d in a state of wealth.

However on Yom Kippur the Kohen Gadol, when he entered into the Holy of Holies, did not wear his golden vestments because he did not need them; he transcended them. As he entered this holiest place on earth he touched the Essence of the Divine, which was far beyond gold, and every other expression of sophistication. He overrode the system in the same manner that G-d overrode His own system by taking us out of the Egyptian exile. Thus on Yom Kippur when in the Holy of Holies, the Kohen Gadol no longer needed to prove his/our spiritual worthiness. He/we no longer need the gold to serve G-d. He/we can serve Him with the simplest of garments, with the simple, sincere and pure expression of our souls. At this juncture G-d does not need our sophistication; He wants simplicity.



“One measure of our relationship with G-d is determined by the way we utilize our resources—particularly our most precious resources—to serve Him.

### THE CONNECTION BETWEEN PARSHA, PASSOVER AND SHABBAT HA'GADOL

And here we see the connection between the Torah reading—which discusses the Yom Kippur service—and the upcoming Passover Holiday. Both of these holy days have the twin elements of compassion and passing over. On Yom Kippur the Kohen Gadol divests himself of and “passes over” the conventional use of gold and glitter—“the Torah has **pity** on (i.e. empowers us to override the need for) the money of Israel.” Similarly, on Passover G-d has pity on the Jewish nation and overrides His system of justice to liberate them from Egypt as they were, unadorned. (Indeed, there is a custom in some communities to wear a kittel—the white garment that is worn on Yom Kippur—at the Seder. Both days express the idea of G-d not looking for wealth but

preferring our simple devotion that emanates from the soul.)

The Shabbat before Passover is known as Shabbat HaGadol, the Great Sabbath. Countless reasons have been given for the distinction this Shabbat enjoys in being so named. This year's reading of the parsha, which best highlights the role of the Kohen **Gadol**, ties in with Shabbat HaGadol. Both feature the idea of “gadol” which means “great”. Shabbat is the day that provides us with the inspiration and power we need for the events of the forthcoming week. Hence it is this Shabbat that endows Passover with the power of Divine mercy, enabling us to pass over all the obstacles to Redemption.

### RELATIVE WEALTH

The final Redemption is modeled after the first liberation of the Jewish people from Egypt. However there is one significant difference between

them. Whereas the Exodus from Egypt required an act of Divine compassion because they did not yet earn their worthiness, the final Redemption is different. Thousands of years of dedication and sacrifice for G-d, His Torah, and His people have made us a most spiritually wealthy and deserving people.

Despite our wealth, i.e., our worthiness, and notwithstanding all of our investments into the ultimate Redemption, we will reap much more. We will then discover infinitely more than however much we have put into it. Our incredible efforts and accumulation of wealth today are really rather poor and minuscule relative to the wealth which we will receive in the future.

This is how Chassidic thought interprets the enigmatic words of the Talmud (Sanhedrin 97a) that Moshiach will come when we are distracted from his coming. The original Hebrew words *hesech ha'da'at*, however, convey a far different meaning: Moshiach's coming will reveal such glory and grandeur that they will exceed our wildest imagination. May we see the complete fulfillment of this promise, Now! ■

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# MY PESACH SHLICHUS

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For decades, the Rebbe would send packages of matza a few days before Pesach for distribution. Generally, the ones who delivered them were distinguished rabbinic and Chassidic personages. This is why it was most surprising when a few days before Pesach 5743/1983, R' Shmuel Levin and his wife Ayala, a newly married couple, were chosen to carry out this important mission. \* Mrs. Ayala Levin of Nachalat Har Chabad, reminisces about this shlichus and the surprising yechidus they had.

By B. Oriya

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It was a special scene that was repeated every year starting from the year 5717/1957. A few days before Pesach, the Rebbe would send packages of matza to Eretz Yisroel for them to be distributed among the Chassidim. The Rebbe sent the matzos to the Vaad HaRuchni of Kfar Chabad for them to give it out to the residents of the village and to other Chassidim. The Rebbe would usually also include money in Israeli bills to be distributed as well.

The matzos were taken to Eretz Yisroel by special emissary and were not shipped like ordinary packages. Generally, the ones who delivered them were distinguished rabbinic and



Rabbi Shmuel Levin receiving a dollar for tz'daka from the Rebbe in 5752

## “Why did the Rebbe veer from the usual practice and choose a young couple for this important mission? Why did Ayala merit to be the only woman, throughout the years, to be the one to bring the matza?”

Chassidic figures like the mashpia R' Avrohom Drizin (Maiyor), R' Shneur Zalman Garelik – the rav of Kfar Chabad, R' Moshe Yair Weinstock and R' Ezriel Zelig Slonim. These were prominent Lubavitcher rabbis and askanim in Eretz Yisroel.

However, one year, 5743/1983, the Rebbe chose a young couple who had married just half a year previously, R' Shmuel and Ayala Levin of Nachalat Har Chabad.

Why did the Rebbe veer from the usual practice and choose a young couple for this important mission? Why did Ayala merit to be the only woman, throughout the years, to be the one to bring the matza? We asked Mrs. Levin to tell us about it.

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I went with my husband to see the Rebbe in Adar 5743. It was my first time visiting the Rebbe. All too soon, that special time came to an end and we had tickets to fly back to Eretz Yisroel on 6 Nissan.

In the morning, my husband received a phone call and was told that the Rebbe's secretary, Rabbi Groner, was urgently looking for him. My husband didn't know what to think; apparently this was something important from the Rebbe!

He went quickly to 770 and R' Groner asked him when he was flying. When my husband said the flight was for that day, R' Groner told him that the Rebbe had chosen him to be his agent to bring matza to Eretz Yisroel.

“Right after Mincha, follow the Rebbe to the library. Don't tell anyone.” My husband asked whether I could join him, and the answer was, “That is what the Rebbe intended.”

Things moved so quickly that I didn't have time to absorb the enormity of it all. I had grown up in a Lubavitcher home but I had attended Beis Yaakov and didn't know how to properly “digest” what was taking place though I felt that it was a great z'chus to be the Rebbe's emissary.

Another thought went through my mind. About two weeks earlier, in the days following Purim, we had a “general yechidus” that was designated for guests. I wrote a *pidyon nefesh* beforehand with all my requests but did not receive any answers at the yechidus. When I left the yechidus I burst into tears and said to my husband, “We had yechidus and the Rebbe didn't answer any of my requests.” My husband calmed me down by saying that the Rebbe gave us brachos along with the general brachos for the rest of the guests.

Now, when the Rebbe called for us in particular, I felt that the Rebbe wanted to bless us personally. We arrived at 770 before Mincha. My husband wore a sirtuk in honor of the occasion and his friends, most of whom were not married, poked fun at his wearing a sirtuk on a weekday. He didn't respond since we were told to keep it a secret.

After Mincha was over in the

small zal, the Rebbe came out with R' Groner after him, and my husband and I followed R' Groner. People considered it a chutzpa to follow the Rebbe, along with a woman no less. Some thought we wanted to ask the Rebbe something and they shouted that we shouldn't take time away from the Rebbe.

R' Groner rushed to the library to arrange the packages of matza and we quickly followed the Rebbe. I remember that the Rebbe walked very quickly and we had to work hard to keep up.

We arrived at the library where the staff of the library and the Rebbe's secretaries were. We stood in the middle of the room facing the Rebbe. The Rebbe's face was constantly shining.

The special event began with separating *challa*. The Rebbe took *challa* from the matzos, and then he took a large package of matza that was on the couch, to give it to my husband. The Rebbe began dragging the package himself and my husband leaped forward and lifted the package together with the Rebbe. The Rebbe gave the package to him and said, “Give this to the Vaad HaRuchni of Kfar Chabad. Ask them to distribute it to everybody as they did last year and with additions. And also to give this to tz'daka as they do every year.”

The Rebbe gave me and my husband, separately, a five-shekel note. Then the Rebbe wanted to give the Israeli bills for bracha and tz'daka which he gave every year. My husband held out his hand to take the bills and then came the surprise. The Rebbe told him with a big smile, “She should also take part in this,” and he gave me the bills. It was a large brown envelope with hundreds of five shekel bills.

Then the Rebbe handed us



two “general letters” for Rosh Chodesh Nissan and told us to learn the letter together on the plane!

I remember that we studied the letter for nearly the entire flight since I don’t read Yiddish and it took a long time to make my way through it.

In conclusion, the Rebbe blessed us, “You should have a happy and kosher Pesach and all the preparations should be made in a good and successful time.”

My husband said that in those moments, when the Rebbe blessed us, he wanted very much to take the opportunity to ask for a bracha for children. He hesitantly said, “Rebbe,” and the Rebbe, as though reading his mind said, “And may we hear good news constantly, all the time.” The Rebbe said this bracha with a broad and fatherly smile.

I felt that this was the answer to all my questions in yechidus. I felt confident that the Rebbe had blessed us with children and with all the other things I had asked for. This bracha accompanies me and my family throughout life.

It was an awe-inspiring experience. The Rebbe showered us with brachos. Before we left, the Rebbe added, “May it be a year of Geula, speedily in our days, mamash. Travel in good health and may it be a happy and kosher Pesach.” When we left, the Rebbe’s gaze followed us until the car.

We took the matzos with us as we left for Kennedy airport where, with the help of Rabbi Kuti Rapp, the matzos were put on our El-Al flight.

As soon as we landed we gave the matzos and money to the Vaad HaRuchni of Kfar Chabad.

Before Pesach, the Rebbe sent



Rabbi Shmuel Levin and Rabbi Kuti Rapp (left) with packages of matzos at Kennedy airport



The five shekel note that we got from the Rebbe

word that we were to be given three matzos for the night of the seder as payment for our efforts. Our excitement with these three matzos from the Rebbe is indescribable.

If that wasn’t enough, a year later our oldest daughter was born.

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In conclusion, Mrs. Levin adds:

“Throughout the years, every time I visited the Rebbe I felt that the Rebbe was trying to be mekarev me in particular whether in a ‘general yechidus’ or when

he gave out dollars for tz’daka. Each time, I felt that the Rebbe was showering me with special brachos, but the biggest kiruv of all was when the Rebbe picked us to be his agents to bring the matzos.

“Throughout the years, I asked the Rebbe about everything, big and small, and boruch Hashem, I received many answers. Even in the period after Gimmel Tammuz, I ask the Rebbe through the Igros Kodesh and I always open to an amazing answer.

Ashreinu that we are Chassidim! ■



# Shalom Bayis

By Rabbi Daniel Schonbuch, MA

**T**oday's families are spending more time working and less time communicating face-to-face than at any other time in history. Despite all of the advances in technology couples are reporting less marital satisfaction and more *Shalom Bayis* problems now than ever before.

The Rebbe explained that the decline of *Shalom Bayis* is particularly acute now, in the final exile, as exile itself is a result of the lack of *shalom*, as our Sages state in *Yoma* 9b. Thus, the closer we come to the conclusion of exile, the greater is the

opposition from the “opposing forces” which seek to prevent bringing about *shalom* in the world as a whole, and particularly between husband and wife (*Igros Kodesh*).

A fellow Lubavitcher, Rabbi Daniel Schonbuch, MA, is helping couples resolve their *Shalom Bayis* issues peacefully and learn skills that can enrich their marriage and increase their levels of bonding and attachment. For over 11 years Rabbi Schonbuch has been counseling teenagers and families in Crown Heights and more recently began to focus on marriage counseling.

After having written a book about parenting teenagers called “*At Risk, Never Beyond Reach*,” he recently released a new book on marriage called “*First Aid For Jewish Marriages*” that teaches practical tools for making marriage work.

We met with Rabbi Schonbuch in his Crown Heights office to discuss marriage counseling, his work helping families, and how couples can enhance their marriages.

## How did you get started in Marriage Counseling?

I began working with families and teenagers at risk in Brooklyn when I moved to Crown Heights to start a new position in an outreach organization. I was surprised to see how many teenagers were straying from their parents' traditions and I was wondering if there was something I could do to make a difference in their lives. At the time I started writing a book to help parents learn how to communicate more effectively with their teenagers.

During the first few months of working in the community I began to see several developmental and social patterns that could be looked at to predict at-risk behavior. Teenagers, for example, who as children had learning disabilities, ADHD, depression and anxiety, and those who came from troubled families, had a greater likelihood of presenting more at-risk behavior.

I also started realizing that many (but not all) problems originate in the home and can be attributed to issues pertaining to *Shalom Bayis*. Since then I focused primarily on marital counseling. In my mind, if I can get a couple to work more peacefully and productively with each other, it would be much

easier to help their children deal with their own issues.

### **What is the secret to working with couples?**

Learning to work with couples is not a simple task. However, being a *Lubavitcher* and having the guidance of the Rebbe makes the job much easier. I have found that the most advanced techniques in marriage therapy – and the ones that actually work – are based on the ideas that the Rebbe talked about in his *Sichos*, *Maamarim*, and *Igros Kodesh*. In my practice I therefore combine the most sophisticated therapeutic techniques while at the same time share with couples the instructions the Rebbe gave to achieve *Shalom Bayis*.

### **How did you get started in this field who influenced your style as a therapist?**

While enrolled in a marriage therapy program, I had the pleasure of training under Dr. Sue Johnson, one of the most the most effective marital therapists in the world. She is based in Ottawa, Canada, but frequently travels to the United States to train therapists on her techniques.

Sue Johnson bases her work on the writings of a not-so-well-known British psychiatrist named John Bowlby who worked with displaced children after the Holocaust. Bowlby began his career by watching thousands of mothers and children interacting and discovered that almost every mother adopts one of three styles of attachment with her child: secure, anxious, or avoidant. Bowlby was trying to categorize attachment behavior and eventually developed what he later called “Attachment Theory.” He believed that every person has a deep desire for “attachment” but will express this in different

ways.

According to Bowlby, most people are raised by a “secure” mother who was able to listen to their emotions and was responsive to their needs. However, some are raised by a mother who is anxious and worried and unsure of their parenting abilities. These mothers are called “anxiously attached.” Still, there exists another type of mother who avoids her children and denies them warmth, comfort and affection. These mothers are



**Watching thousands of mothers and children interacting, he discovered that almost every mother adopts one of three styles of attachment with her child: secure, anxious, or avoidant.**

classified as being “avoidantly attached.”

Inevitably, according to Bowlby, every individual is deeply influenced by their mother’s attachment style. So much so that many years later, when a person matures and is ready to marry, they often maintain the same attachment style they learned during childhood.

For the first time, Bowlby’s theories helped therapists understand why some couples feel secure in marriage and lead happy lives; while others find themselves angry, worried, or avoidant in their relationships. Attachment theory helps marriage counselors understand complex patterns of interaction and how to help the couple modify their attachment style in order to become more responsive to their spouse’s emotional needs.

While learning about attachment theory I was struck by how close the term “attachment” is to the Chasidic

understanding of “*hiskashrus*.” *Hiskashrus* is the way we connect to G-d, the Rebbe and to other Jews. *Hiskashrus* is also an imperative since there is an inherent connection between our souls and G-d, ourselves and the Rebbe, between every single Jew, and ultimately between a husband and a wife. *Hiskashrus* with the Rebbe occurs when we learn *maamarei Chassidus*, read the Rebbe’s *sichos*, and associate with *Yididei Anash* and the *tmimim* in their learning and *farbrenging*.

*Hiskashrus* in marriage occurs when couples begin to see that they are truly two halves of the same soul separated only by their physical bodies and emotions.

I therefore believe that a successful marital therapist is participating in bringing change to world. When you increase “attachment” and bring more unity in people’s lives you are actually making a “*dira b’tachtonim*” and helping reveal G-dliness in the world. This is the reason why I share the Rebbe’s insights during therapy. When a therapist brings the Rebbe “into the room” and places their marriage within the context of each person fulfilling their G-dly role, couples become enthusiastic in doing their part to achieve a higher sense purpose in their lives.

### **How do you marital therapy?**

A marriage therapist needs to begin the process of healing



**“You can teach him that when he enters the door and his wife seems critical, she is merely seeking closeness and comfort. Conversely, she can be shown that her criticism causes her husband to feel belittled, driving him to withdraw to protect himself.”**

marriages by being very empathic with both individuals and not just taking sides with one person over the other. That means that the first goal is to empathize deeply with each person's perspective and emotions. From experience I have seen that some counselors tend to side with one person or the other. This is a tremendous mistake.

Usually, one person is bringing in the other one reluctantly into counseling. Most often it's the wife cajoling her husband to go for marital therapy. Since this is true in most cases, it would be a tremendous mistake to make the reluctant person feel that their opinion doesn't matter or that their feelings will be dismissed. As I learned from Johnson, it is a key principle to “draw in” the more avoidant personality and make them feel that their feelings are important and will be listened to carefully and with respect. Once you have their ear, then you can deepen the introspective process and bring the couple closer together.

As I sit with couples I often reflect on how the Rebbe would connect with people. During *yechidus* many people related that when they entered into the Rebbe's office they immediately felt that the Rebbe understood them and was able to connect with them “where they were.” He understood the power of listening and concentration and connecting to every Jew. Therapists can learn from

the Rebbe on how to create a “therapeutic alliance” with his patients and to make them feel that they are important and valuable.

### **How do the Rebbe's teachings guide you in counseling?**

The goal of attachment-oriented counseling is to show the couple that they are currently maintaining an emotional “dance” which keeps them apart and distant from one another. For example, take the case of a wife who feels all alone with the children and the pressures of the home and when her husband returns home after a hard day of work greets him with comments like “Where have you been?” or “You promised to be home an hour ago and I'm losing my mind”. Inevitably, the person receiving that kind of *musar* feels criticized, belittled, or controlled. And, when they experience these kinds of “crushing” feelings, they tend to withdraw and become even more avoidant. As the pattern continues a wife may begin to sense that her husband is withdrawing and begin to pursue him with more criticism, which will only spark a greater withdrawal. At this point you are usually left with two people performing a “dance” where one person pursues closeness and security while the other withdraws and feels misunderstood. Both individuals feel distant, angry, and detached.

Through attachment

counseling therapists help couples reinterpret each other's behavior and understand how the “dance” has taken over their marriage. For example, you can teach the husband that when he entered the door and his wife seemed critical, she was merely bidding for closeness and comfort. Additionally, the wife can be shown that her criticism causes her husband to feel belittled and that will only cause him to withdraw and protect himself.

It is remarkable to note that the Rebbe already suggested this approach in the *Igros* when he explained that “... In most instances, the cause of such a situation [viz., the degradation of a relationship between two individuals,] is that one person is under the impression that there is a diminution of sentiment on the part of the other person towards him. That individual further thinks that it would belittle his honor if he were the one to take the first step; particularly, when he finds no fault within himself for the degradation in the relationship. However, in almost all instances, this [seeming distance between the two individuals] is but a figment of one's imagination – which almost immediately becomes obvious as soon as steps are taken to bring about a greater degree of intimacy.”

In my estimation, the Rebbe is a remarkable “therapist” who understands how to motivate individuals to change. He gives us tremendous insight into what motivates a person and how to initiate change in their lives.

*For speaking arrangements and consultations, Rabbi Schonbuch's contact information can be found at his website [www.JewishMarriageSupport.com](http://www.JewishMarriageSupport.com) ■*

## MO'OS CHITTIM

### To All Anash and Temimim wha' Sholom U'vrocho!

Excerpt of a Sicho Kedoisho, which speaks for itself

The Jews will be redeemed solely through tzedakah... In particular, this applies with regards to the matter relevant at present, maos chittim, tzedakah given for Pesach that includes all of the needs of the holiday.

Our involvement with this must be in a manner of ratzo and shov, i.e., **one should not wait for the tzedakah collector, but instead, rush to give him *maos chittim* on his own initiative (*ratzo*). Moreover, even after he has already given maos chittim, he should go and give a second time (*shov*)....** For one who has been blessed should increase his gifts according to the blessing he has been given. And who ever increases will be given additional reward. Indeed, there is no limit to this additional reward. From the sichos Shabbos Parshas Vayakhel-pikudei, 5750

It is well known that "Kupas Rabbeinu" endeavors to continue implementing all of the holy projects and activities which the Rebbe has established. Amongst these activities is the Rebbe's practice to extend financial aid to those families in need of their various Pesach necessities.

Accordingly, we are at this time urging and requesting each and every Anash member and Tomim uhjha to contribute generously to "Kupas Rabbeinu," in order to enable the administration to provide for these families and thus afford them with the opportunity to celebrate Pesach with contentment and joy.

Regarding this Mitzvah it is stated: "Whoever increases (in giving) is praiseworthy."

Unfortunately, the amount of families in need of this financial assistance is more than generally assumed. As such, the more generous your contribution to "Kupas Rabbeinu," the greater the number of families receiving assistance will be.

And since, with regard to all Mitzvahs we are instructed to act with Simcha and zest, it is all the more pertinent with regard to the aforementioned, as it is of paramount importance that the funds be received and distributed as soon as possible.

In the merit of Tzedakah which hastens the Geula, may we merit the true Geula Shlaimah, with the revelation of Melech HaMashiach – The Rebbe Nasi Doreinu, immediately, Mamash.

Chag HaPesach Kosher V'Sameach, *Vaad Kupas Rabbeinu*  
**Rabbi Sholom Mendel Simpson** **Rabbi Yehuda Leib Groner**

P.S. 1) The traditional "Magvis Yud Shevat, Purim" can also be sent at this time, as well as all other Magvios.

2) All funds should be sent to the following address only; Donations are tax deductible

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## THE REBBE'S REISH LAKISH

From gang leader to yeshiva bachur to askan in Mivtza Moshiach, this young man's life was hanging by a thread when he was saved by a miracle. Today, he translates and distributes the "D'var Malchus" sichos in English!

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelevitz – Director, Chabad House, Beit Shean, Eretz Yisroel

Translated by Michael Leib Dobry

In the sicha from Parshas Tazria (as printed in "Likkutei Sichos Inyanei Geula U'Moshiach – VaYikra"), the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach explains the words of the Gemara (Sanhedrin 98b): "What is the name of Moshiach?... Metzora of the House of Rabbi." The Rebbe explains that just as leprosy appears in a person's external skin, so too the task of Melech HaMoshiach is to repair the end of generations and the lowest levels of the Jewish People.

Not only the Rebbe but his shluchim too sometimes deal with bringing back Jews who were far off the path, both spiritually and physically. They bring them back to their roots, and only those shluchim with the special strengths they received from the m'shaleiach have outstanding success in redeeming these souls and leading them to the path of the king. Thus, we have the following story:

### FROM THE HEIGHTS OF STREET LIFE TO THE DEPTHS OF CHASSIDUS

He looks like a shining chassidic young man, quite vigorous and amiable, and indeed he is. The most amazing aspect to his life story is the nature of his pursuits just a few short years ago and how with the tremendous powers of his soul, he made a complete one hundred and eighty degree turn in favor of the unique projects that serve as his main interest today.

R' Yankel Meislin was born twenty-three years ago on Long Island to non-Torah observant parents. Yankel studied in public school, which maintained the constitutional separation of religion and state, as is customary in the United States, and thus he



received no Jewish values. While he did go to Hebrew school, as he puts it, “that wasn’t worth much except a few good laughs”. Even those subjects that he did learn in school didn’t arouse his interest very much. He made no serious effort in his studies, doing only what his parents and teachers obligated him to do.

However, Yankel achieved considerably greater success in his social contacts. By the age of fourteen, many friends had gathered around him having realized that he was someone with unquestionable leadership qualities. The problem was that his neighborhood was home to a growing number of young hoodlums, and they dragged the new “leader” into their activities. Yankel quickly became the head of a group of misled youth, and over a period of four years, he led them to the fulfillment of ambitions with no cultural, educational, or communal value.

Yankel was on the road to self-destruction. Literal wars were going on around him in the battle to divide the spoils. Many of his friends in those days lost their lives at a very young age in street violence or gun battles. Yankel personally went around with a bodyguard who learned the security profession in some of the most dangerous youth gangs. Human life was considered of little importance in the culture of these criminal elements, and anyone who wanted to stay alive had to invest a great deal of money. Thus, Yankel acquired sizable funds from his unlawful business dealings, literally hundreds of thousands of dollars, and part of the money was invested in cars, bodyguards, and vice.



**The Mafia hitman called Yankel’s mother, anonymously of course, and told her in the clearest possible terms that it was only a matter of time before they would come to rub him out unless he found a new “profession” as quickly as possible.**

### **YOUR MONEY OR YOUR LIFE?**

When Heaven wants to save someone, it can even be through the most dangerous of criminals. This is exactly what happened to Yankel. Of all people, the person who saved him was a Mafia-style killer who was a good friend of Yankel’s bodyguard. It was specifically he who noticed and understood that Yankel must be saved before it was too late. What did he do? He simply called Yankel’s mother, anonymously of course, and told her in the clearest possible terms that her son’s life was in danger and that it was only a matter of time before they would come to rub him out unless he found a new “profession” as quickly as possible.

Yankel’s parents called him in, told him that they know everything, and gave him an ultimatum. “Either you leave our home and never see or speak with us again or you totally give up your dangerous associations and cut yourself off from them completely.” Yankel came from good stock, but he had been lured into the criminal world by his peers and circumstances. His parents’ words penetrated his heart, and Yankel chose the latter option. He left it all behind him – the money, the cars, and the self-indulgence. One day, he simply disappeared as if he had vanished into thin air. Neither his friends nor his foes knew where

he disappeared to even to this very day.

During the initial stage, Yankel went into seclusion in the home of relatives on the other side of New York. Later, he returned home for a few days, but he was careful not to raise his head above window level, because there was always someone watching the house in search of him. To be absolutely certain, his mother called several criminals in a voice that sounded as if she was crying, and asked quite innocently if perhaps they knew where her son was...

### **AKEIDAS YITZCHAK IN THE REHABILITATION CENTER**

At this point, Yankel began a lengthy journey to help rebuild his inner world. One stop along this journey was at a rehabilitation center in Florida, which combined educational psychology with belief in G-d. As amazing as it might seem, it was specifically here where Yankel first started to believe about the Creator of the World, and about true devotion and dedication.

“One day,” Yankel recalled, “someone told us about the binding of Yitzchak upon the altar, and I began to weep. In my mind, I made a comparison between Avraham Avinu, who listened to the voice of G-d and offered his son as a sacrifice, and my own situation, when I nearly killed my parents in sorrow over the nonsense I was involved in...

# "I SHOULD BE OUT OF A JOB - NOW!"

Beis Moshiach Magazine correspondent Michael Leib Dobry spoke with R' Yankel Meislin about his "D'var Malchus" in English project:

**Where did you first get the idea for translating and distributing "D'var Malchus" sichos in English?**

When I first saw a video of the Rebbe, I only understood the subtitles, but when you're dealing with Melech HaMoshiach, you don't want to rely on *Liros Es Malkeinu*, *Living Torah*, or any other intermediary to find out what he is saying. But since I had just recently come to Chabad, and I neither spoke nor understood Yiddish or even *Lashon Kodesh*, how could I approach the Rebbe? Every chassid has his own relationship with the Rebbe, but I had yet to have the opportunity and privilege to greet the King in the literal sense, so what am I left to do in a Chabad House in Florida? With all due respect to these institutions and the fine work they do in spreading the wellsprings



A page from the weekly D'var Malchus booklet in English

of chassidus, I wanted my own relationship with the Rebbe, not one through some noted lecturer or mashpia. Thus, I went off to yeshiva with this goal in mind: When the Rebbe is revealed, I want to be able to speak to him not in the

*lashon ha'medina*, but in *mama lashon* – the Rebbe's language, the language of chassidim.

**How did you start work on this project?**

I sat with a dictionary for a year and a half and went at it, translating a sicha every week from the first two volumes of *Likkutei Sichos*, as per the advice of my mentor, Rabbi Gafni. He told me that since I am doing it anyway, I might as well print them also, and so it began.

Obviously, it was word for word at first and it didn't flow very well, but I kept my goal in mind: I want to talk with the Rebbe. Slowly but surely, I started to speak to the mashpiim in Ohr T'mimim in Yiddish, a little bit here and there, especially Rabbi Gafni, who in his great patience only speaks to me in Yiddish today. As I kept translating, my Yiddish and *lashon Kodesh* picked up and I was able to conduct a conversation. I once heard a story about a chassid from Russia (apparently a baal t'shuva) who came to the Rebbe and said that the Rebbe spoke to

This was the moment when I decided to seek more information about my people and to fulfill more mitzvos. I asked my father to send me t'fillin and holy s'farim, and I started to daven and put on t'fillin. The directors understood that in addition to the rehab, I should also go to a Chabad House."

## AND YOU SHALL LOVE G-D...WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT

To Yankel's good fortune, there was a special Chabad

House in Boca Raton that worked in cooperation with the rehabilitation center. He went there for a Shabbos just like a regular guest, started learning Torah and chassidus, and he soon proceeded to direct all his tremendous spiritual strengths, which had previously been focused on the life of the streets, towards the world of Torah and mitzvos.

In addition to all his hours devoted to study and Chabad House activities, Yankel worked in a Judaica store, where he invested all the money he earned

in the purchase of s'farim in halacha and chassidus, utilizing all his free time to learn from these s'farim. Another sale, more s'farim, further study, and back again – literally in a manner of "with all your soul and with all your might".

At the beginning, Yankel would ride his bicycle from his home to the Chabad House every day. Due to the thirty-minute trip in the intense Floridian heat, Yankel eventually established his residence closer to the Chabad House, and became an active participant and partner in all

him in the Yiddish that he could understand. The Rebbe was careful only to use words that he recognized, so that he could feel like one of the chassidim from the neighborhood. This story gave me the encouragement to continue with this project in pursuit of my objective.

### **What emphasis do you make in connection with Moshiach and the Redemption?**

In a sicha from Parshas Tazria-Metzora 5751, the Rebbe tells the chassidim that everyone should learn the Likkutei Sichos and maamarim of the leader of the generation that have a connection to Moshiach and the Redemption in order to hasten Moshiach's coming. As chassidim, this is our main job. How can we possibly live with Moshiach if we don't know anything about it?

Anyone who is having trouble translating an entire sicha into English, whether from Yiddish or *Lashon Kodesh*, in order to learn it at home for himself, this is what you need! If the length of the D'var Malchus intimidates you a little, here is your answer: Not everyone has the time or patience to sit and

learn an entire D'var Malchus, especially if it isn't in your own native language.

### ***The time has come for D'var Malchus to be in English!!!***

There are many people coming close to Chabad or baalei t'shuva who simply can't learn an entire sicha, and if anyone knows how long they are, their shliach (if he has D'var Malchus in his library) probably won't have time to learn all of it with them. Yet, these people are yearning for Moshiach, and the Rebbe has the answer.

Every chassid wants to fulfill the will of the Rebbe, and we have been urged to learn about the Redemption. The Rambam says if you're not sufficiently well versed in the Laws of Shabbos, chances are that you are desecrating Shabbos. We can't spend one more moment in exile, and we have to learn and live with the Redemption.

### **How can someone get these sichos?**

An Internet subscription costs \$2 a week, \$50 for six months, and \$100 a year. They are sent out on Thursday night before that Shabbos, in pdf form to prevent pirating (not that we

suspect anyone, just to eliminate the yetzer factor). To request a subscription, either individually or in bulk, you may send a message to the aforementioned e-mail address. Discounts will be offered for large quantity orders sent to the shul near you.

Naturally, this is a most expensive project, and we are also hoping to use the funds acquired via subscriptions to print and ship to students who have no way of buying a sicha online, and of course, to Beis Chayeinu – “770”, so that people can learn them on Shabbos. In this day and age, electronics are flying off the shelves, while printers and books are the gefilte fish of yesteryear. Nevertheless, Jews are the People of the Book, and therefore, it is important to print and distribute these sichos especially for Shabbos use to those who can't receive it otherwise.

With G-d's help, we should soon merit the fulfillment of the prophecy of “For the world will be filled with the knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the ocean bed.” The bottom line is that Moshiach should come and I should be out of a job – now!

Chabad House programs.

Yankel visited more and more Chabad centers, among them the Chabad House at Florida Atlantic University, where he met the Rebbe's shliach, Rabbi **Baruch Shmuel Liberow**. Rabbi Liberow assisted Yankel in advancing to the next stage of *hiskashrus*, when he joined a group of young people who traveled to spend Shabbos in 770, where he discovered the large signs – in Hebrew and in English – about the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach and the proclamation of “Yechi Adoneinu”. Yankel was not

embarrassed to ask anyone and everyone about the source and meaning of these signs. He understood more and more that the only remaining shlichus was to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu. Now all that was left to do was to go and learn in a yeshiva.

### **YANKEL IN YESHIVA**

At this stage, Yankel emigrated to Eretz HaKodesh and enrolled in the study program at Yeshivas “Ohr T'mimim” in Kfar Chabad, headed by Rabbi **Shneur Zalman Gafni**. His parents were initially quite surprised that their beloved

son was thinking about learning in...a yeshiva, but the reality of the situation convinced them that this was the best thing for him.

Rabbi Gafni, a rav in the truest sense of the word, gave himself over in his unique style to guiding the new student and helping him in all that was required in his passage to the new world of yeshiva studies. Yankel learned with great diligence, as he thirstily consumed the pages of the Gemara and the Rebbe's sichos, and he even developed a creative idea of his own to translate the “D'var Malchus”



sichos from 5751-5752 into English.

About a year ago, Yankel got married and was privileged to establish a kosher and faith-filled chassidic home in B'nei Brak, while he continued to come each day to Kfar Chabad to learn in Rabbi Gafni's kollel, where he also improved his approach to translating and distributing the sichos in English. Each week, R' Yankel would print and distribute hundreds of copies of the weekly sicha. People both in and out of Eretz Yisroel have ordered subscriptions, available via regular or electronic mail service. The number of Jews who read and learn these important sichos from the Rebbe on a weekly basis has apparently reached into the hundreds – in the merit of this young chassid who left all the “hoo-ha” of this world behind him, and today he is devoted with all his strength to spreading the sichos of the Rebbe.

R' Yankel doesn't forget his “friends” from way back. Every time he visits the United States, he returns to some of the rehabilitation centers that he passed through, as he gives lectures to the new generation about the light at the end of the tunnel. He tells them about the light of chassidus, the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, and the Seven Noachide Laws. He also points to himself and says, “If I



R' Yankel Meislin with Ohr T'mimim rosh yeshiva Rabbi Shneur Zalman Gafni

can, then you can too. If I could extricate myself from the deep abyss where I had been, anyone can.”

During my discussion with R' Yankel, I asked him truthfully: **How do you explain the miracle that you were buried so deep into that world – literally and figuratively – and yet you managed to be rescued and got out of there?**

With the genuine humility of a chassidic avreich, Yankel replied that “my only explanation is that the Rebbe saved me,

because the Rebbe saw my future role in founding the center for translating and distributing the ‘D’var Malchus’ in English. There’s no other way to explain it.”

R' Yankel also asked that I include his contact information for those who are interested in receiving these sichos, which I do so now with the greatest of pleasure:

Yankel Meislin: +972-50-684-5770 (mobile); sichos.ohrtmimim@gmail.com (e-mail).

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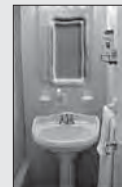
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# BUT WHY, REBBE?

I also wanted to ask for a dollar and a bracha for my mother. But before I could even open my mouth, the Rebbe suddenly stopped, looked at me with his piercing blue eyes and said to me twice in Yiddish, 'Nisht, nisht' No, no. Mustering all the courage I could summon, I asked, 'Farvos Rebbe?' But why?

By Nosson Avraham

Translated by Michael Leib Dobry

I had heard about Dr. **Motti Golan** when I paid a visit to the Chabad community in Eilat. Some weeks ago, as part of his work as a highly reputable lecturer, Dr. Golan stayed at one of the local hotels and came for a visit to the Chabad House, where he spoke about his personal connection with the Rebbe and an amazing miracle that he had experienced.

Dr. Golan, a resident of Petach Tikva, is a graduate of Yeshivat "HaDarom" and the "Moreshet Yaakov" Teachers' Training College, where he served as a counselor and an academic lecturer. Similarly, he has been a school principal both in and out of Eretz Yisroel, a regional supervisor for the Israel Ministry of Education, and a national inspector on the knowledge of Tanach and Jewish studies.

Today, Dr. Golan deals primarily in the fields of education and teaching at the "Yeshurun" preparatory school in his hometown of Petach Tikva, writing Torah articles and personal observations on current events in the various Torah periodicals and websites.



He is a well-known author among the national religious community, a lecturer in Jewish studies and current events, and a panel member on television and radio programs. "I feel that I owe my success in my lectures and guidance to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, who blessed me that I should merit to 'spread your wellsprings outward'. The Rebbe repeated this bracha several times, and ever since then, I have seen and felt that this field has truly received manifold strength."

## THE REBBE'S DOCTOR INVITED ME TO JOIN HIM FOR A SUNDAY VISIT TO 770

"In 5745, I went out on a four-year educational mission to Chicago," Dr. Golan told us upon his return from visiting educational institutions in northern Eretz Yisroel. "I had been given the task of strengthening Jewish identity and values among the students, and connecting them to their heritage, primarily by instilling within them a love for the Land of Israel. As a direct consequence of my responsibilities, I suggested that the school join a preliminary competition for the Bible quiz, which takes place each year in Eretz Yisroel. The suggestion was warmly accepted by the school's principal, a pleasant and affable Jew with a great love for Torah. During my first year working with the school, I was appointed as coordinator for all Bible quiz preparations.

"The first stage was to give some significant reinforcement in the study of Tanach to the higher grades, in addition to their regular classes, in order that we may reach the pre-quiz examinations in Manhattan – where many students come from schools all over the United States – and we could be proud of the knowledge displayed by our students. During those years, I became acquainted with many people from the local Jewish community, among them Dr. Ira Weiss, an expert cardiologist who was one of the doctors of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. My association with him was most unique, and he often told me

about the greatness of the Rebbe, suggesting that I should not pass up an opportunity to meet him.

“The matter was constantly delayed, until 5748, the year I was scheduled to return to Eretz Yisroel. The tremendous investment in the students had paid off, and six girls had been given the privilege that year to travel to Manhattan for the national quiz. Those who succeeded in passing this round of the quiz would be sent to the finals in Eretz Yisroel. Prior to this quiz, a special Shabbos was held for all the competitors. Dr. Ira Weiss came with me to New York for that Shabbos, as he had to be in 770, the following day, Sunday. Every few months, he would pay a call upon the Rebbe in his room, as part of his follow-up health treatment due to the heart attack that the Rebbe had suffered during Hakafos on Shmini Atzeres ten years earlier.

The quiz was scheduled to take place at five o'clock that afternoon.

“You have a special bracha coming to you,” Dr. Weiss told me, and he asked that I join him for a trip to see the Rebbe. This time, I decided to accept his offer. We were very close friends. ‘No one will ask you any questions at the entrance if you come with me,’ he promised. ‘They’ll think that you’re a member of the medical staff.’ And so it was.

### **THE REBBE TURNED TO ME AND ASKED WHO I WAS AND WHAT I WAS DOING IN THE UNITED STATES**

“We traveled together on the subway train that headed directly to the central Chabad beis midrash on Eastern Parkway. We entered through the side door, and the Rebbe was busy

distributing dollars for tz’daka and a bracha. We stood near Rabbi Binyomin Klein, and facing the Rebbe’s secretary, Rabbi Leibel Groner.

“The Rebbe stood to the left side of the stand, and there we were, five people together – Dr. Weiss, the secretaries, the Rebbe, and myself. Just then, the women’s line began to pass. The Rebbe gave out dollars to the women, one by one, many of them passing by with miraculous order, and the Rebbe blessed each and every one of them. Once in a while, a woman would stop and make a special request. The Rebbe listened, spoke a few words in blessing, and the line quickly moved along. The sight was most unique, but at a certain point, as the time rapidly ticked by, I felt that I was about to lose out on the quiz for which we had worked many long days. I gently tapped on the wrist of Dr. Weiss standing near me.

“I’m responsible for the six winning girls,” I whispered into his ear. He didn’t respond right away, as he was totally absorbed by the Rebbe’s brachos. The one who noticed me first was the Rebbe, who looked at me with a broad and loving smile. I can feel tears welling in my eyes as I recall that moment. Then, as the women’s line stopped, they closed the door and prepared to let in the men, but first the Rebbe turned to me and asked who I was and what I was doing in the United States.

At the time, I was in a state of serious doubt whether I should continue my work in the field of education or turn to the business world. Before going out on my educational mission, I had a most successful publishing company in northern Eretz Yisroel. I was due to return home in the coming months, and the indecision

on this matter was constantly pecking away at me.

Should I resume a position in education or should I leave it all in favor of developing my publishing business? When I raised the question before the Rebbe, I felt like a student standing before his teacher. The Rebbe’s eyes struck me like two powerful beams of light, eyes of prophecy, pure and clear. ‘When your wellsprings have spread outward,’ the Rebbe replied.

“The Rebbe repeated these words several times during the encounter, and I understood that I should continue my work in education.

“After this bracha, I asked the Rebbe to give a blessing to the six girls for success on their quiz. The Rebbe gave me six dollars, and made me a shliach to give them to the girls.”

### **“EVEN RIGHTEOUS WOMEN PASS FROM THE WORLD”**

“I also wanted to ask for a dollar and a bracha for my mother. But as incredible as it sounds, before I could even open my mouth, the Rebbe suddenly stopped, looked at me with his piercing blue eyes and said to me twice in Yiddish, ‘Nisht, nisht’ No, no. Mustering all the courage I could summon, I asked, ‘*Farvos* Rebbe?’ But why?

“The Rebbe looked at me and I saw his eyes filled with compassion. ‘Even righteous women pass from the world,’ he told me, and my heart skips a beat each time I remember that moment. The conversation then ended.

“I went outside in a state of confusion and puzzlement. What did the Rebbe mean by those last words?

“In the meantime, the men’s





line started moving. When I told the chassidim standing in the doorway about what the Rebbe had said, many of them mentioned that they had never seen nor heard the Rebbe refusing someone who asked for a bracha or a dollar for tz'daka.

"In my mind, I felt a genuine sense of anguish that the Rebbe had cut me off before I had a chance to finish my thoughts and request a bracha for my mother..."

\*

"Meanwhile, I had returned to Manhattan. While the quiz results proved quite successful, my mind continued to be plagued by thoughts over the Rebbe's reply. I was in a state of intense emotion from the appearance and the words of the Rebbe. I realized that I had been privileged to stand before the tzaddik of the generation, the leader of the generation, yet his final words to me remained as an unsolved riddle.

"A few months later, my brothers informed me that my mother had passed away. Over a

period of several months, she had been on her deathbed, but my brothers had kept information on her condition from me in order not to disturb my mission.

"A year prior to my return to Eretz Yisroel, my mother's medical condition was very critical, and she had even been hospitalized after slipping into a coma. However, she miraculously regained consciousness and her condition stabilized. My sister cared for her with great devotion.

During the previous six months, her condition had worsened but my brothers again chose to conceal this fact from me. I was in the middle of my doctorate studies and every time I called to hear how things were, they would tell me that my mother sends regards or she's in the middle of a treatment and can't talk now.

"Only then did I understand what the Rebbe had said: *'Even righteous women pass from the world...'* The strength of a tzaddik...sitting at one end of the world, yet he knows what's happening at the other end."

## EDUCATION - AS PER THE REBBE'S INSTRUCTIONS

Dr. Golan fulfilled the Rebbe's instructions, and upon his return to Eretz Yisroel that year, he abandoned all thoughts of returning to the business world and began his current involvement in the field of education.

Over the years, he has been connected with the supervisory department of the Ort science and technology school network, and as an administrator with Yeshivat "HaDarom" in Rechovot and the "Yad Charutzim" technological high school in Teverya. "I derived tremendous satisfaction from my work until I met with my rav and teacher, Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, of blessed memory, who asked me to return to teaching in the fullest sense of the word and educate generations of Jews in the love of Torah. Since my return to Petach Tikva, I joined the 'Yeshurun' preparatory school, where I have been teaching girls for the past six years." ■

# MOSHIACH NOW: MAKING IT REAL

## Part 2 – Mivtza Tz'daka

Rabbi Gershon Avtzon, Dean of the Lubavitcher Yeshiva in Cincinnati

Dear Reader sh'yichyeh:

The first Mivtza that we are going to discuss is Mivtza Tz'daka. Even though it was not the first Mivtza that the Rebbe initiated, this Mivtza is presented first because of its practical application. Every single Jew – Men, women, children, rich and poor – can and should give Tz'daka.

In addition, this is one Mivtza that we always saw the Rebbe perform personally. Whether it was “Sunday-Dollars”, giving Tz'daka coins to children, or giving out dollars after sichos or at the end of Farbrengens, the Rebbe was constantly distributing money to be given to Tz'daka in order to encourage the performance of this special mitzvah.

The Rebbe started the Tz'daka campaign in the winter of 1974. It was one of the series of Mivtzaim that the Rebbe initiated that year.

The Rebbe (Likkutei Sichos Vol. 2 pg. 410) states that there is a common misconception regarding the translation of the word Tz'daka. The standard translation is “charity”, while the literal translation is “righteousness”.

The Rebbe explains that the connotation of the word charity is that the one giving it is to be applauded for giving away his own money to another

person. However, in reality this is really not the truth regarding Tz'daka, as all money belongs to Hashem and he gave it to us to be used for the right things. That attitude is expressed in the word righteousness, which tells us that Tz'daka is a righteous act. It is to be given with the understanding that the money given was destined to go that person receiving it. Hashem gave it to another Jew in order to give him the opportunity to do a Mitzvah.

There are many different levels in giving Tz'daka and many special segulos associated with Tz'daka. There are many well-known sayings of Chazal about Tz'daka, such as (Shulchan Aruch Yora Deia siman 247): 1) “Whoever has mercy on poor people, Hashem has mercy on him”, and “Tz'daka saves from death!”

It is interesting to note that there is also no limit on the performance of the mitzvah of Tz'daka. Even though Chazal say, “One should not give more than a fifth of his earnings to Tz'daka”, it does not contradict the above statement of the Gemara. This guideline refers to someone who does not need to do T'shuva or fix his deeds and ways, but for someone who is in need of spiritual healing, there are no limits on the amount of Tz'daka that is appropriate for him to give.

Just as there is no limit on the t'shuva that must be done, so too the mitzvah of Tz'daka has no limit. A person would not think of limiting the amount he spends on his physical health, so how much more so would this apply to one's spiritual health (Alter Rebbe in Tanya Igeres HaKodesh 10)

The Rebbe gave us specific guidelines for implementing this mitvza. Firstly, every person should increase in giving Tz'daka. Then, every child should have a Tz'daka-box in their room. Every car and Mikva should have a Tz'daka box. There should be a Tz'daka-box attached to the wall of each home. One should be careful to give Tz'daka before Davening. The Rebbe also instructed that women should give Tz'daka before lighting Shabbos candles.

In the “HaYom Yom” for the 9<sup>th</sup> of Tammuz, the Rebbe writes: “The greatest guaranteed assurance (of Divine assistance) for parents in need of special help and deliverance for their children, is through their support of those that study Torah”.

Moshiach is also a very important component of the mitzvah of Tz'daka. Chazal (Bava Basra 10a) state: “It has been taught: R. Judah says: Great is Tz'daka, for it brings the redemption nearer, as it says, ‘Thus says the L-rd, Keep your judgment and do righteousness [Tz'daka], for My salvation is near to come and My





righteousness to be revealed.”

What is the reason that charity is singled out as unique from all the Mitzvos?

The Alter Rebbe (Tanya chapter 37) explains: The advantage of the mitzvot of action lies in their elevating effect on the body and soul. That is how we can understand why our Sages so greatly praised the virtue of charity, declaring it equal to all the other mitzvot together. In all of the Talmud Yerushalmi charity is called simply “The Commandment,” because charity is the core of all the mitzvot of action and surpasses them all. The reason for this is that the purpose of all these mitzvot is only to elevate one’s animal soul to holiness, since it is this soul that performs them.

From all of the mitzvot of action, there is no other mitzvah in which the animal soul is clothed to the same extent as in the mitzvah of Tz’daka. For in all other mitzvot only one faculty of the animal soul is clothed. For example, when a person wears t’fillin or holds the esrog, his hand is involved in the action. Even this one faculty is clothed in the mitzvah only while the mitzvah is being performed. In the case of Tz’daka, however, which one gives from money that he worked very hard to earn, surely all the strength of his animal soul is involved in the effort of that work, or in any other occupation by which he earned this money which he then distributes for Tz’daka. Therefore, when he gives to this money to charity, money which he earn by applying all the strength of his animal soul, his entire animal soul ascends to Hashem. This is why the mitzvah of Tz’daka is superior over other mitzvot.

But this seems to imply

that if one does not invest all his strength into earning his livelihood, his charity lacks this quality. Yet, as the Alter Rebbe explains, even he who does not earn his livelihood through hard effort, still achieves this great accomplishment through the mitzvah of Tz’daka. Since he could have purchased with this money that he gave for charity, nourishment for the life of his animal soul, he is actually giving his soul’s life to Hashem in the form of charity. Thus, charity comprises and therefore elevates more energy of the animal soul than any other mitzvah.

**This is why our Sages have said that charity hastens the Geula by Moshiach:**

**For with one act of charity one elevates so much of the animal soul; more of its faculties and powers, in fact, than he might elevate through many other active mitzvot combined. As we know, the Era of Moshiach is a result of our efforts in purifying and elevating the animal soul; Tz’daka, which causes this elevation in such great measure, thus hastens the final Geula, may it come speedily in our days! ■**





# GOLDSTONE RETRACTED, CAN BIBI BE NEXT?

That Goldstone expressed his regret in an Op-Ed that was published in one of the most prestigious newspapers in the world, is so very important and sets an example for leaders here in Eretz Yisroel.

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By Shai Gefen

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## UNITY AMONG CHASSIDIM

This column is being written as we usher in the month of Nissan, the month of Geula, a month in which we fervently hope to bring the Korban Pesach in the third Beis HaMikdash. This month also marks twenty years since the Rebbe's shocking sicha in which he gave over the job of bringing Moshiach to each of us.

Before discussing shleimus ha'aretz, one of the wars that Melech HaMoshiach wages, let us give some thought to where we are "holding." For one thing, achdus has become a focal point in Lubavitch these days. This needs to be supported by all of us as we are all Chassidim, children of one father, and we all want to achieve the goal. The Rebbe informs us that with achdus, we can achieve everything, especially in the last sicha that we heard from the Rebbe, VaYakhel 5752.

The move towards unity and good feelings among Chassidim that we have seen lately is part of the upheavals we have been experiencing this year. We have to keep up the momentum and not allow those who are so inclined, to ruin such a vital

initiative that is the recipe for success in all areas.

We need to strengthen this spirit of achdus and allow it to take root in the three "shleimuyos" that the Rebbe champions: shleimus ha'Torah, shleimus ha'Am, and shleimus ha'Aretz, and most importantly – activities to bring the Geula!

In this spiritually elevated month, every action, as small as it might be, has the ability to accomplish a great deal. We need to know how great a responsibility we have while remembering the promise of the Tzemach Tzedek that "unity among Chassidim will lead to the coming of Moshiach."

## RETRACTION

The reaction in Eretz Yisroel to Richard Goldstone's regrets for his anti-Semitic report have been negative. Nobody is willing to give him the benefit of the doubt. People are definitely shocked and wondering what led him to drastically change his mind. Maybe the fall of the Arabs and the weakening of their strength since the revolutions in their countries or maybe he finally "got it" after the shocking

massacre of the Fogel family in Itamar and the ongoing shooting of missiles towards the south of the country. One of the reasons that Yehuda merited kingship is that he confessed, regarding Tamar, saying "she is right."

We are not mind readers, nor do we need to know what motivated Goldstone, but I think that the fact that he expressed his regret in an Op-Ed that was published in one of the most prestigious newspapers in the world, is so very important and sets an example for leaders here in Eretz Yisroel.

Do you recall any Israeli leader who made a mistake? The mistakes that Israeli leaders have made since Begin at Camp David are far more devastating than Goldstone's report. These errors have cost us thousands of dead and maimed and the destruction of dozens of settlements. Has an Israeli leader gotten up and announced, "I erred," "I am sorry for what I did?" I don't recall any such thing as we were taught since childhood that Israelis don't make mistakes.

We need to adopt Goldstone's approach. We are permitted to ask for forgiveness and say we made a mistake.

## THE LEFT IS BANKRUPT

The Left and its theories about peace have long since collapsed. Now is the time to proclaim the truth so all acknowledge it: **there is no peace without Eretz Yisroel and Toras Yisroel** and we cannot concede an iota on this. Until now, they've tried all

sorts of things but all have failed.

Where are the people who told us that our soldiers are in Gaza merely in order to defend a handful of settlers? We said we are in Gaza in order to defend those who live in the south but they disparaged that response – “What?! Those in Gaza will attack Eretz Yisroel?” they asked incredulously.

I remember that I asked, what will happen if they shoot at us (In my wildest dreams I didn’t imagine that they would send missiles and rockets at Beer Sheva and Ashdod. I only referred to shooting), and those on the Left sneered, “So we will go in and take care of them.” These are the very same Leftists who, after eight years of missiles and Katyushas on our southern cities and the Cast Lead War, opposed our soldiers and found them guilty.

There’s no doubt that the year 5771 will go down in history as a year in which all tin gods have crumbled. Including our own. All theories fizzled. Who will convey this message to Menachem Begin, Arik Sharon and Yitzchok Rabin so they see what they caused Am Yisroel, each in his time. From a power that all feared, the State of Israel has become a pathetic entity that everybody beats up on and which is afraid of its own shadow. The Left’s bankruptcy should have led to an extreme change of opinion but it hasn’t worked out that way. Even as the Left is vanishing, there are people on the Right who are glad to fill their place and they are ten times worse than the Left was.

It would seem that the Right’s situation is ideal. Netanyahu can do what he wants and bring a fundamental change so that the topic of a Palestinian State is no longer addressed. Unfortunately,



“Do you recall any Israeli leader who made a mistake? The mistakes that Israeli leaders have made since Begin at Camp David are far more devastating than Goldstone’s report. These errors have cost us thousands of dead.

not only hasn’t he used this second chance he got as prime minister in a positive way, he is using it to our detriment.

### CROCODILE TEARS

Netanyahu has been under attack by the media lately and he sheds the tears of one who is not guilty. Maybe he ought to consider that what the press is doing to him, he did to the Right for the past two years: delegitimizing them; freezing construction; daily destruction of outposts by the Defense Minister; nonstop systematic persecution. Let him stop looking for support and legitimacy among the Right. He has become public enemy #1 and it really makes no difference whether he does this willingly or is coerced. The damage he is

causing is far more dangerous than prime ministers who say their views forthrightly.

Here are a few lines from Ben Kaspit that he wrote in his column about Netanyahu:

*Mr. Netanyahu, we’d be thrilled to know at this opportune time, what your views are. It would be refreshing and of great interest because nobody really knows. Oftentimes, even in this column, you were called upon to reveal your views and stand by them. I wrote here that you are the prime minister who was elected by the Right and it is your legitimate and fully legal privilege to go to the Right. Go. Nobody will have any complaints in principle. What happened is that you gave your “Bar-Ilan” platform and policy speech and then did nothing. You promised German chancellor*



*Angela Merkel that you are going to deliver "Bar-Ilan 2" to air your new views and policies, and just recently you claimed that the whole thing was a fabrication of the journalists. The problem is that you robbed votes from the Right and tried to disguise yourself to the Left. In short, you have no real views and therefore, there is no reason to ask you to change them ...*

The real problem with Netanyahu is that he is an accomplished actor who toys with everyone. In public he obscures his views but he is quietly willing to go very far with concessions and capitulation to the enemy.

The Rebbe speaks about this point in a sicha that was said forty years ago about those who, with their silence, are willing to concede and how these people are far more dangerous than

those who are openly willing to concede.

It is two years already that they are concealing the truth from Am Yisroel. To the nation they say they would never give away land and behind the scenes they have already agreed to give it all, with no negotiations. ...

It's exceedingly shocking. They endanger the lives of three and a half million Jews without the latter even knowing about it.

The crux of the problem is those representatives that remain quiet. From a certain standpoint they are worse than those who speak openly about their desire to give away land because you can still talk to them, but with those who are quiet there is nothing to talk about.

As the din in the Gemara states, that a dayan (judge)

of the Sanhedrin who is quiet is not counted within the 71. Furthermore, if 36 dayanim say innocent and 35 say guilty, he is innocent, but if 70 say innocent and one is quiet, the entire trial is void [it is declared a mistrial and has to be re-adjudicated with 71]. Why is it that when 36 say innocent he is innocent, while if 70 say innocent, the trial is void? Because this is a Sanhedrin and when one is quiet, not only is the entire trial void but it is considered as though there were only 70 judges and not 71.

May those who were quiet, and even those who think in the opposite direction, start to talk and then at least there will be the opportunity to approach them and discuss it with them. (sicha Motzaei Shabbos B'Shalach 11 Shevat 5731) ■

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ב"ה



# TORAH POWER ON SHLICHUS

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelewitz

Shliach, Beit Shaan

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A shliach needs to be learned. Period. It's important to publicize this so the bachurim learning in yeshivos today will use every moment to study Nigleh and Chassidus, Halacha and Agada, diligently, so they will be successful – now and later on – in shlichus.

In the HaYom Yom for 5 Adar II, the Rebbe Rayatz says that an inseparable part of the avodas Hashem of a Chassid is Torah study and he quotes from the Mishna in Avos, “*v'lo am ha'aretz chassid* – an ignoramus is not a Chassid.” If this is so for every Chassid, all the more so for a shliach. An inherent part of shlichus is for him not to be an am ha'aretz. People regularly ask the shliach questions in Halacha, Gemara, Chumash, or for help in finding a source. How wonderful it is when a shliach can answer quickly and clearly.

## THANKS TO LEARNING A SICHA

Rabbi Shmuel Zohar, shliach in Kfar Warburg, relates:

A few years ago I was standing at a bus station on my way to the draft office. Near me stood a “ben Torah” who was not exactly a “friend of Chabad.” He asked me where I was going and I told him I was going to the draft office to get a permit to leave the country since I was planning a trip to the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

He immediately pointed out that traveling out of Eretz Yisroel to visit the Rebbe entailed *bittul*

*Torah* (waste of learning time). I asked him, if Moshe Rabbeinu was in America, would he travel to see him. He answered that only if Moshe Rabbeinu would come up with some *chiddush* (novelty) in Torah, then it paid to go and see him.

If so, I said, you can relax because at the Rebbe you are constantly learning *chiddushei Torah*. He asked me to give him an example of the Rebbe's *chiddushim*. Since it was close to 15 Shevat, I told him the Rebbe's explanation (*sicha* from 5745), a *chiddush* about the custom of eating fruits on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Shevat. It went over well and he had to admit that it wasn't *bittul Torah* to go to the Rebbe.

I asked him where he lives and suggested that he learn Chassidus with a Chassid that I know from that neighborhood. Some weeks later I met that Chassid who told me that a Litvishe man had come to him, all impressed with the *chiddushei Torah* of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, and he wanted to learn more of the Rebbe's teachings. Since then, they regularly learn *sichos* and *maamarim* of the Rebbe (and of all the Chabad Rebbeim).

## WHAT MASECHTA ARE YOU LEARNING?

The shliach to Argentina for over thirty years is Rabbi Tzvi Grunblatt who is known as a Torah scholar. They say that before he went on shlichus to Argentina he was told by the Rebbe to leave ASAP.

R' Grunblatt ordered tickets for the next possible flight but when he arrived at the airport with all his luggage they told him that the plane was about to take off and the doors were closed. They said that even if the pope himself were to show up for the flight, they would not open the doors. R' Grunblatt replied that he was a shliach of the Lubavitcher Rebbe and they had to let him on. They didn't listen to him and the plane took off.

Amazingly, a few minutes later there was a problem with the plane and it had to return. Now they all agreed that the rabbi and his family could board the plane.

Upon his arrival in Argentina, a large gathering was being held for hundreds of local Jews (perhaps that is why the Rebbe rushed him, so he could attend the event) and when he walked in, a certain rabbi said that Lubavitcher Chassidim don't know how to learn. R' Grunblatt went over to this rabbi and began talking to him in learning. He asked him, “What *masechta* are you learning now?”

When the rabbi named the *masechta*, R' Grunblatt began discussing it with him in depth, astounding the man. All the people who stood around and listened saw that the young Lubavitcher rabbi, without any preparation, had displayed extensive knowledge and when word of this got out, hundreds of people flocked to the shiurim that he started and joined the Chabad house activities.

## WHAT IS DEMANDED OF A CHABAD BACHUR

A farmer once asked the Rebbe the following question. Since the Rebbe emphasized going on mitzvaim, wouldn't it be better if the yeshiva bachurim did mitzvaim all week and all day? Why should they learn all week and only go on mitzvaim on Friday afternoons?

The Rebbe answered him using an analogy the man would relate to:

That's the difference between vegetables and fruits. If you want immediate results, you can plant some seeds and within a few weeks you'll have vegetables. But if you want long term results, you plant trees. It requires more work but it results in a tree that produces fruit year after year.

On another occasion the Rebbe told Rabbi Meir (Munke) Gruzman, rosh yeshiva in Kfar Chabad, in yechidus that the bachurim need to be proficient not only in Gemara, Rashi and Tosafos but also mefarshim, Rishonim and Acharonim including Shaagas Aryeh. A bachur who does not learn properly, said the Rebbe, shames me, the Rebbe Rayatz – and the Rebbe went on to list all the Chabad Rebbeim “until the Maggid of Mezritch, the Baal Shem Tov, until Malka Meshicha.”

were also educated to oppose Chabad, but the moment he discovered the depth and truth within Chabad, then according to Torah and according to Halacha, he had to continue learning this part of Torah too.”

That man now regularly attends farbrengens and he speaks publicly about the importance and necessity of learning Chassidus.

## TEACH US GEMARA OR ELSE!

Another shliach (who wishes to remain anonymous) told me that when he went to his place of shlichus, he entered a shul and met a number of people who were in various stages of returning to their roots. He got into a conversation with them and told them that he was there as the Rebbe's shliach and there would be shiurim etc.

They let him know that that they were interested in Gemara classes. “If you give us shiurim in Gemara, we will also listen to the shiurim in Chassidus and work with you but if you don't teach us Gemara, forget it.”

Boruch Hashem, he is a shliach who is a talmid chochom and he immediately began giving shiurim and has continued to do so for many years. His circle of talmidim and friends continues to grow.

This same shliach told me that in his city there are other groups involved in kiruv. Occasionally, those in the other groups disparage the shluchim by saying, “They don't even know how to learn.” G-d forbid, said the shliach, it's possible that someone who started out in a Chabad house might leave Chabad because of these comments and lose the light of

## WHEN LIFE IS HARD

I once heard the following story:

A shliach was faced with numerous problems. After thinking it over he concluded that he should leave his shlichus. He went to the Rebbe and in yechidus he asked the Rebbe to release him from his shlichus.

The Rebbe asked him why he wanted to leave and he said it was because of the many insurmountable difficulties. The Rebbe asked: Why do you ask to leave shlichus when you can ask for a bracha that there be no hardships?

The Chassid realized it was a propitious time and he asked the Rebbe for a bracha. The Rebbe blessed him and the shliach continued in his shlichus.

Wechter of Kiryat Malachi and he went to visit the kollel. R' Wechter began talking in learning with the men and they saw that he was a genuine Torah scholar. Then they discovered that he had come in order to learn Chassidus with them but if they had questions in Nigleh, he was willing to help them with that.

Later on, R' Cohen saw that this introduction broke the ice and a series of Chassidus classes were started with R' Wechter. This had a great impact on all the kollel men. Some of them became Chassidim and the rest maintained a connection with Chabad even when they moved to other cities. They attend Chassidishe farbrengens and actively participate.

“There was one man in the kollel who told R' Wechter, ‘How do you expect me to join the Chassidus classes when I come from a Litvishe home and I was educated with the viewpoint of that “gadol” who strongly opposed Chassidus?’ R' Wechter told him that he himself was close to the Satmar Rebbe where they

## WINNING THEM OVER WITH THE POWER OF TORAH

Rabbi Avrohom Cohen, veteran shliach in Beer Sheva, told me about a kollel of Litvishe men in that city who refused to allow a shiur in Chassidus. R' Cohen invited Rabbi Mendel

Chassidus. Fortunately, in our city, these comments get them nowhere because everybody knows that the shliach gives shiurim in Nigleh *and* Chassidus.

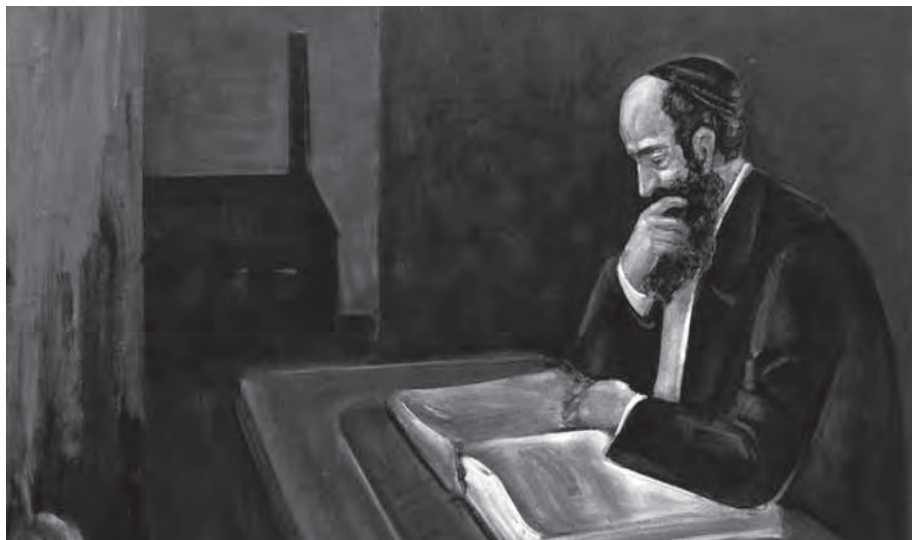
## LIGHT FROM DARKNESS

The Rebbe says that Torah has the power to transform reality, turning even the most negative situations into something positive. For a shliach, this applies not only to winning over opponents to Chassidus, but to all the hardships and challenges one encounters on shlichus. An extreme example is the following story of a shliach (who wishes to remain anonymous) who held a farbrengen in his home for his mekuravim. These were young men who were not exactly (yet) tzaddikim but they were happy to attend his farbrengens and some of them kept some mitzvos.

That farbrengen lasted until late into the night. The shliach and the mekuravim said l'chaim, as is customary and it was only at 3:00 in the morning that the last of the guests left and the shliach could go to sleep.

At 6:00 there was powerful banging at his door. "We are the police, open up." The shliach was still half asleep but when the knocking got more insistent he opened the door. The policemen asked him whether he had had a party the night before, because afterward a fight had broken out between two of the celebrants and one of them had been killed. They wanted to know whether he knew anything about these individuals.

The shliach was horrified by the tragedy and he told them whatever he had to say. The conversation, which began as an interrogation quickly turned to other topics like what is a farbrengen, how do you write



to the Rebbe, etc. The chief interrogator said he wanted to come again to talk to the shliach, privately, and he wrote to the Rebbe several times and opened to answers and brachos that were a big help to him. He joined the Chabad "family" at the same time as he advanced in the police force.

At the end of a course for officers, some of the participants were asked to speak for five minutes in front of 1500 policemen and officers. Our friend the interrogator deliberated over what to say in such a short amount of time. He finally decided that the best thing was to tell everybody about the wonders of the Igros Kodesh, how much it helped him in his personal life and how everybody can be helped with the advice and blessings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

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To conclude with a seasonal story:

In recent years we have run a matza bakery for the children of Beit Shaan. It's a terrific opportunity for the kids to have an enjoyable experience while learning about the laws of Pesach

and inyanei Geula.

One year, I ran into a serious problem. The building that I was given every year for this project was under renovation and the matza bakery could not be held there. I tried getting a permit for some other buildings but nothing worked out. Pesach was rapidly approaching and I still didn't have a building. I had nearly decided to forgo the activity that one year since we had no choice, but after thinking it over I decided to take the difficult route. I told all the schools that I was willing to come to them with all the equipment and they could enjoy the program on their own turf.

Of course they all agreed. They also agreed to host the nearby preschools. That year we had peak attendance with close to 2000 children who met with the Rebbe's shliach, listened to the "talking ke'ara," baked matzos, and learned about Pesach and the Geula.

I was rewarded when a young teacher who came with her class told everybody that when she was a student she went to the matza baking at the Chabad house and that was the only experience she remembered from all her years in elementary school in Beit Shaan!